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## **Exploring Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Teaching in Diverse Environments: The Methods of Teaching Cross-curricular Skills in Global Citizenship Education in Japan and South Korea**

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### **Abstract**

In this study, we explore the challenges social studies teachers in Japan and South Korea encounter while addressing sensitive and difficult topics essential for fostering inclusive education. As the educational landscape continues to diversify, these educators often find it challenging to incorporate themes such as human rights, multiculturalism, and global citizenship into their curriculum, especially with a traditional emphasis on competency-based citizenship. Utilizing data from the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey, we investigate the influence of Teaching in Diverse Environments (TEDE) on Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusion (TAI), the mediating role of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in this relationship, and the potential moderating effect of Teaching Cross-Curricular Skills (TCS) within the educational contexts of Japan and Korea. A significant finding from our research is TEDE's role in diminishing stereotypes and enhancing diversity awareness among teachers and students alike. We highlight the significance of diverse classroom experiences, engagement in GCE, and the integration of TCS as crucial elements enabling teachers to effectively tackle challenging topics in social studies. Notably, the influence of TAI on GCE, and the significance of TCS, were observed exclusively in Japan, underscoring the need to focus on classroom dynamics and teacher professional development, rather than solely on the cultural, historical, or macro-educational system context.

**Keywords:** Social studies teachers, Inclusive teaching, Global citizenship education, teacher attitudes, Japan, South Korea.

### **Introduction**

In the last 30 years, there has been a paradigm shift in global educational initiatives, with significant movements such as the United Nations Education for All advocating inclusive educational practices. These efforts have led to a broader perspective of inclusive education, expanding its scope from focusing solely on students with disabilities to embracing and welcoming diversity among learners (Ainscow, 2020). The evolving educational landscape poses unique challenges and opportunities for social studies education, particularly in Japan and

South Korea (hereafter Korea). In Korea and Japan, educational systems are adapting to globalization and the rise of multi-ethnic and multi-racial societies. Korea is advancing multicultural education, emphasizing culturally responsive teaching to support diverse student backgrounds, transitioning from deficit to inclusive pedagogies that value all cultures (Cooc & Kim, 2021). Japan's "tabunka kyosei" or multicultural coexistence, focuses on municipal-level policies to enhance intercultural communication, though it faces criticism for its assimilationist tendencies (Grissler, 2021). Both countries are navigating the challenges and opportunities of incorporating multicultural norms, reflecting a global movement towards embracing diversity in education.

The modern era of globalization significantly affects the dynamics between societies, individuals, and regions, making the cultivation of desirable citizenship a critical issue. Following the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in September 2012, which prioritized Global Citizenship Education (GCE), the discourse on this topic has gained momentum globally. UNESCO's proposal for fostering global citizenship emphasizes values like cultural diversity, human rights, peace, and solidarity. This study adopts UNESCO's (2014, p. 14) definition of global citizenship awareness as "self-awareness," aiming to nurture global citizens through an understanding of social issues, critical thinking, empathy, respect for cultural diversity, and responsible actions from local to global levels. This definition underlines the goal of educating individuals who contribute to a more peaceful and sustainable world, emphasizing universal human rights and social justice.

Our research is situated at the intersection of these developments and aims to critically examine and strengthen social studies teachers' attitudes toward inclusion (TAI) in Japan and Korea. Understanding and improving TAI is paramount as social studies teachers play a crucial role in identifying and dismantling barriers to diverse student participation and achievement in classrooms (Ainscow et al., 2006). To this end, it is argued that there is a need to integrate inclusion and citizenship education. While such studies have been found in reference to the U.S. (Urban, 2013), few have focused on East Asian countries, and none have made international comparisons.

The reason for comparing Japan and Korea is that, despite the same educational direction of emphasizing the standards of the education system, the focus and direction of each country's unique social studies education policy is different. They demonstrate how institutional education as a major political tool helps to establish national identity and strengthen social solidarity in many Asian societies (Lall & Vickers, 2009). This encourages and enables citizens to be involved in the development of their countries and regions. In other words, such state-driven education programs have successfully provided a kind of 'official knowledge' (Apple, 2014) in support of constructing nationalism-based citizenship. In response to the challenges brought by globalization and international exchange, nation-states became a crucial policymaker and actor in the field of global education, and research also finds it encourages the inclusion of global citizenship related content in the curriculum (Goren & Yemini, 2015). It is crucial to point out that global citizenship education (GCE) is a contingent notion (Andreotti, 2006), the meaning and implementation of which can only be fully understood and explained in a specific geographic context, and in this case, the nation-states. Therefore, the nation-state demonstrate how institutional education as a major political tool helps to establish national identity and strengthen social solidarity in many Asian societies (Lall & Vickers, 2009). There is no doubt that both Japanese and Korean educational system have long maintained a high level of educational standardization (Ishikida, 2005; Sandefur & Park, 2007), which refers to the degree to which the quality of education meets the same standards nationwide. Variables such as teacher's training, school budgets, curricula, and the uniformity of an educational system on

this dimension (Allmendinger, 1989, p. 233). However, In Korea, international education is entirely regulated by the state, while Japan's current internationalization model is transitive-there is a shift taking place from government regulation to market freedom (Krechetnikov & Pestereva, 2017, p. 78). Despite the wealth of research on inclusive education, there is a notable gap in studies focusing on East Asian contexts, particularly those that make international comparisons.

This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the unique social studies education policies of Japan and Korea. Although these countries share similar educational directions, emphasizing standardized educational systems and national identity construction, their approaches to social studies education diverge significantly in focus and methodology (Apple, 1993; Lall & Vickers, 2009). Understanding how national policies and global trends intersect in social studies classrooms is critical for developing effective inclusive education strategies. The rationale behind choosing a Japan-Korea comparative study stems from the insights of Hayase (2021, 2023) in Japan and You et al. (2019) in Korea, who highlight the significance of teachers' roles and awareness in fostering inclusion. By comparing these two countries, which share similar issues but operate under different conditions, we aim to discern between universal challenges and those unique to each nation. Therefore, our study focused on the intricate relationship between TAI and GCE within the context of social studies. We explored the potential of teaching cross-curricular skills (TCS), such as creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving, within GCE as a method to enhance TAI. This approach is supported by research indicating the flexibility of school curricula and the viability of integrating GCE as a cross-curricular theme (Cates, 1990; Başarr, 2017; Hassan, 2020).

This study focuses on the relationship between TAI and GCE to better understand TAI and to respond to researchers and their demands for how inclusive environments can be developed. D'Aloza et al. (1997) have argued that education and inclusion of children with disabilities is correctly distinguished between the two and suggested that there were few data linking teacher attitudes to inclusion. Subsequent research has progressed and now highlights the importance of linking diversity and inclusion to GCE (Abdi & Shultz, 2008). However, there are regional disparities in teacher attitudes in GCE, and there may not be much room for increasing TAI (Goren & Yemini, 2015). Indeed, a survey of teachers in Korea showed that even teachers who were positive about inclusion were reluctant to implement it (Hwang & Evans, 2011). In Japan, the development of inclusive education systems has been promoted since December 2006, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Japan signed the convention in 2007, it came into effect the following year, and it was ratified in 2014. However, there is little research on how teachers should teach inclusive education to mainstream students. Hayase (2023) also highlights the importance of focusing on teachers in Japan to achieve inclusive social studies that balance children's needs and social justice. This can be attributed to inadequate consideration of teachers' experiences in diverse environments that support teachers and students, which is a prerequisite for TAI. Additionally, the importance of teachers' skills is noted. In other words, to examine TAI for practice, it is necessary to focus on the relationship between GCE and diverse teaching experiences (TEDE), as well as on skills as a factor that influences the relationship between them. Therefore, this study focuses on teaching cross-curriculum skills, which are considered important in GCE, and adopts the method of inter-country comparison, which has not been used in previous studies, and sets the following research questions. Utilizing the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) data, our intercountry comparison examined how TEDE affect TAI in the scope of social studies education. In this study, we aim to contribute empirical data to the existing body of research by linking teachers' attitudes to inclusive educational

practices (D'Aloza et al., 1997; Abdi & Shultz, 2008). The purpose of our research is to explore how Teaching in Diverse Environments (TEDE) contributes to improving Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusive (TAI), to examine the role of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) as a mediator in the dynamic between TAI and TEDE, and to assess the potential moderating effect of Teaching Cross-Curricular Skills (TCS) on this relationship, specifically within the educational settings of Japan and Korea.

**Research Question 1:** To what extent does Global Citizenship Education (GCE) mediate the relationship between Teaching in Diverse Environments (TEDE) and Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusive (TAI) in Japan and Korea?

**Research Question 2:** Does Teaching Cross-Curricular Skills (TCS) within Global Citizenship Education (GCE) moderate the indirect effect of Teaching in Diverse Environments (TEDE) on Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusive (TAI)?

## **Conceptual Framework**

This section elaborates on the literature pertinent to our study, offering a comprehensive background and analysis of the intertwined relationships among TAI, GCE, TCS, and TEDE. This expansive review serves as the foundation of our conceptual framework, which is critical for understanding the nuances of inclusive education in the context of social studies.

The concept of inclusion, which gained momentum from the landmark Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), has been pivotal in steering educational reforms toward a more equitable model that emphasizes special needs and social justice in the general education system. From this perspective, inclusion should not be limited to addressing special needs but should target individuals in all forms of social exclusion, including disabilities, the elderly, children, foreigners, and others. Despite global strides in this direction, the journey toward full-fledged inclusion is complex and fraught with challenges. These challenges are often rooted in fragmented reforms and inconsistent applications across educational contexts (Vlachou, 2004). A significant factor in these challenges is the role and attitudes of teachers, who are at the forefront of implementing inclusive practices (Butler & Shevlin, 2001). This study also adopts this standpoint, defining inclusion as “efforts towards achieving social justice through respecting the needs of all individuals, including children.”

Empirical studies have highlighted a paradox in TAI. Although inclusive education is theoretically supportive, many teachers encounter practical difficulties in its implementation (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). These difficulties are influenced not only by teachers' perceptions of disabilities but also by their personal teaching experiences and the broader educational environment in which they operate (Leatherman & Niemeier, 2005). Specialized training and courses focusing on inclusive education have shown promise in reducing resistance to inclusive practices, thereby alleviating the stress and challenges teachers face in diverse classrooms (Dickens-Smith, 1995; Forlin, 2001). Furthermore, the presence of supportive resources such as teaching assistants, ICT equipment, and a positive administrative stance toward inclusion are key factors that enhance teachers' attitudes toward inclusive practices, thereby boosting their self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Dickens-Smith (1995) and Forlin (2001) have addressed TAI, highlighting its significance and methods to enhance it within teacher education. However, the likelihood and actuality of teachers themselves

improving TAI through their own practices, independent of formal teacher education, remain unexplored. Advancing TAI through the curriculum and practice can substantially enhance teachers' professional identity and their ability to adapt learning from an inclusivity standpoint. Consequently, this research zeroes in on the transformation of teachers within the curriculum, facilitated by the GCE curriculum. It also explores the potential of TCS as an educational strategy to address cultural diversity among students. A scale was developed to assess the organic development of these competencies by teachers in their practice. Therefore, two factors can be established as influencing TAI: (1) the curriculum as a specialized and specific course, and (2) the classroom environment.

Therefore, this study focuses on these factors: First, GCE and TCS, which are related to point (1), and second, TEDE, which is related to point (2). The reasons for this are as follows: First, GCE emphasizes the role of education in developing values, soft skills, and attitudes for social change, and aims to foster the following characteristics in learners (UNESCO, 2015): (a) attitudes that transcend personal differences and connect with collective identity, (b) in-depth knowledge of global issues and universal values such as justice and equality, (c) critical, systematic, and cognitive skills to think imaginatively, (d) social skills, such as empathy and conflict resolution, and non-cognitive skills to network and interact with others, and (e) behavioral skills to find solutions for global challenges. In fostering these five characteristics in learners, the curriculum must incorporate the elements of TCS, which are: (A) critical and creative thinking, (B) empathy, (C) self-awareness and reflection, (D) communication, (E) cooperation and conflict resolution, (F) ability to manage complexity and uncertainty, and (G) informed and reflective action (Oxfam, 2015). Thus, to cultivate GCE, specialized and specific courses that introduce TCS are required. Hence, such courses are more likely to have an impact on TAI.

Next, the classroom environment is a concept that is related to the role of the teacher in GCE. Specifically, in creating a participatory classroom environment that effectively cultivates GCE, changes in the role of the teacher and the classroom environment are essential from the following five perspectives: (i) from a teacher-centered to learner-centered classroom, (ii) from outcome-centered to process-centered learning, (iii) from teachers as knowledge transmitters to teachers as knowledge organizers, (iv) from teachers being “doers” to making learners “doers”; and (v) an emphasis on comprehensive learning rather than subject-specific learning (Oxfam, 2015). The TEDE produced by awareness of these perspectives can be assumed to be a factor that influences TAI because it affects the development of GCE and is also related to teachers' attitudes toward learners. Based on the above review, we set up a hypothetical conceptual framework for the impact of GCE and

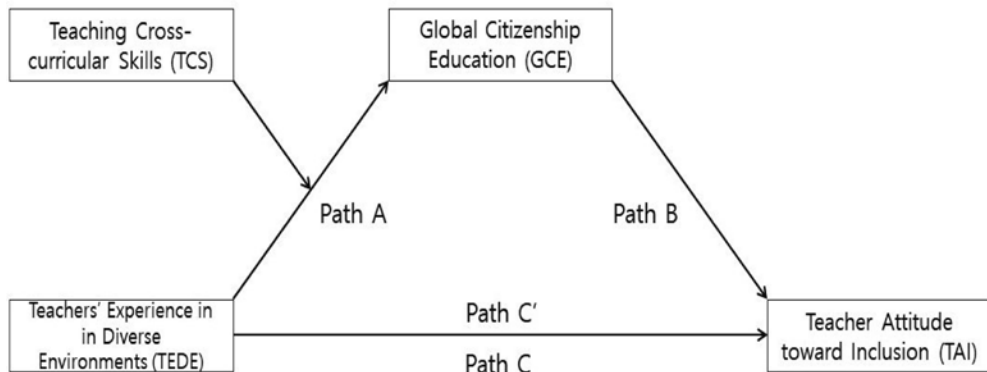


Figure 1. A Framework for contextual analysis in relation to TEDE, TCS, GCE, and TAI

TEDE with the introduction of TCS on TAI (Figure 1).

Our conceptual framework hypothesized a dynamic interplay between GCE, enhanced by TCS, and informed by TEDE, which has a significant influence on TAI. This comprehensive framework is particularly pertinent to teaching controversial and complex topics in social studies. This provides a structured and nuanced approach for social studies educators to navigate the challenges of inclusivity and diversity in classrooms (Divéki, 2018).

## Method

To compare teachers' perceptions and educational practices on an international scale, we employed a moderated mediation analysis using data from the TALIS 2018 coordinated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). TALIS is a large-scale international dataset that shows the perspectives and experiences of teachers regarding the learning and working environments in lower secondary schools (OECD, 2019).

### Measures

The Teacher Questionnaire from TALIS 2018 was utilized for measurements, and internal validity was confirmed by conducting factor analysis based on the latent variables (OECD, 2018). Reliability was expressed as Cronbach's alpha (hereinafter referred to as  $\alpha$ ), with the source of the TALIS items indicated at the end of the variable description. According to George and Mallery (2003),  $\alpha \geq 0.9$  is excellent,  $0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$  is good,  $0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$  is acceptable,  $0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$  is questionable,  $0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$  is poor, and  $\alpha < 0.5$  is unacceptable (p. 231). In this study, the  $\alpha$  for TCS was 0.66, and for TEDE was 0.69, both slightly below the acceptable threshold of 0.7. However, some argue that a  $\alpha$  value between 0.6 and 0.7 is deemed acceptable (Griethuijsen et al., 2014, p. 588; Taber, 2018, p. 1278).

The dependent variable was TAI ( $\alpha = .71$ ). The questions employed 4-point Likert-type scales (1 = not at all, 2 = to some extent, 3 = quite a bit, and 4 = a lot). The latent variable comprised four items: (a) supporting students from disadvantaged or migrant backgrounds (Q.45-c); (b) supporting students with special needs (Q.27-i); (c) raising awareness of cultural differences among students (Q.45-d); and (d) reducing ethnic stereotyping among students (Q.45-e). Furthermore, the moderating variable was TCS ( $\alpha = .66$ ), with questions also using 4-point Likert-type scales. This variable indicated whether a teacher was teaching cross-curricular skills in global citizenship education, including: (a) teaching cross-curricular skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving (Q.6-g); (b) helping students think critically (Q.34-g); (c) giving tasks that require students to think critically (Q.42-f); and (d) asking students to decide on their own procedures for solving complex tasks (Q.42-h). The mediating variable was GCE, with a latent variable implying four items to mirror teaching in GCE ( $\alpha = .70$ ). It is a dichotomous variable indicating employment (Yes=1, No=0), covering: (a) supporting activities or organizations that encourage students' expressions of diverse ethnic and cultural identities (Q.47-a); (b) organizing multicultural events (Q.47-b); (c) teaching students how to deal with ethnic and cultural discrimination (Q.47-c); and (d) adopting teaching and learning practices that integrate global issues throughout the curriculum (Q.47-d). The primary independent variable is TEDE ( $\alpha = .69$ ), with the latent variable using three items on a Likert Scale (from "not at all" to "a lot") to reflect the extent to which teachers can employ the following in schools: (a) teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting (Q.6-f); (b) coping

with the challenges of a multicultural classroom (Q.45-a); and (c) adapting teaching to the cultural diversity of students (Q.45-b).

**Statistical Analysis**

Data analyses were performed with Statistical Package For The Social Sciences including the PROCESS macros developed by Hayes (2013). PROCESS gives an ordinary least squares regression-based path analysis similar to structural equation modeling, but also provides additional useful statistics and safeguards against irregular sampling distributions (Hayes et al., 2017). First, we analyzed the descriptive statistics for all variables and tested them using Pearson’s correlations. Second, we estimated a simple mediation model to assess the potential influence of TEDE on TAI and the role of GCE as a mediator in the relationship between Japanese and Korean students (Hypothesis 1). Subsequently, we computed the moderator variable, TCS, in the model and tested it for a moderated (or conditioned) mediation effect (Hypothesis 2).

**Research Result**

This analysis utilized data from the TALIS 2018, which focused on elementary and middle school social studies teachers in Japan and Korea. Data with missing information were excluded from the initial dataset, which comprised 6,138 Korean and 6,863 Japanese teachers. Research Question 1 focuses on examining the mediating effect of GCE among social studies teachers. Consequently, the analysis was limited to teachers who instruct in subjects related to social studies—including social studies, history, geography, legal studies, and similar disciplines—as identified from the responses to Teacher Questionnaire (OECD, 2018). This resulted in a refined dataset of 2,020 Korean and 2,068 Japanese social studies teachers who met all the criteria relevant to our study.

Table 1 presents the calculated means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlation coefficients for all the variables under consideration. Notably, TAI demonstrated a significant positive correlation with TEDE in both Japan (.571,  $p < .001$ ) and Korea (.618,  $p < .001$ ). Similarly, TAI positively correlated with TCS in Japan (.263,  $p < .001$ ) and Korea (.403,  $p < .001$ ). However, the correlation between the TAI and GCE was lower, registering .227 ( $p < .001$ ) for Japan and .203 ( $p < .001$ ) for Korea.

Table 1. Correlations among the main study variables.

	<i>M(SD)</i>		TEDE		TCS		GCE		TAI	
	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR
TEDE	1.98(0.47)	2.34(0.64)	1.0	1.0						
TCS	2.10(0.43)	2.72(0.57)	.351***	.544***	1.0	1.0				
GCE	0.42(0.33)	0.62(0.31)	.239***	.297***	.258***	.293***	1.0	1.0		
TAI	2.55(0.50)	2.66(0.58)	.571***	.618***	.263***	.403***	.227***	.203***	1.0	1.0

N (Japan = 2068, Korea = 2020)  
 \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

On average, all the variables scored higher in the Korean sample than in the Japanese sample. Additionally, the correlations among the variables were consistently positive and significant in both countries. However, except for the relationship between TAI and GCE, the strength of these correlations was generally higher in the Korean context than in the Japanese context.

Table 2 presents the regression results, specifically testing the mediation effects. The total effects model (Path X-Y, labeled as ‘C’) indicates a positive relationship between TEDE and TAI. This relationship is statistically significant, as evidenced by the unstandardized regression coefficients for both Japan ( $B = .607, t = 17.660, p < .001$ ) and Korea ( $B = .546, t = 21.194, p < .001$ ). At the core of our mediation hypothesis, we observed that the effect of TEDE on GCE (Path A) was significant in both countries. For Japan, this effect was quantified as  $B = .165 (t = 6.056, p < .001)$ , and for Korea, it was  $B = .139 (t = 8.688, p < .001)$ . Conversely, the impact of GCE on TAI (Path B) was significant only in Japan ( $B = .130, t = 2.575, p = .010$ ) and not in Korea ( $B = .050, t = .954, p = .340$ ).

Table 2. Ordinary least squares regression results for simple mediation.

Variable	B		SE		t		p<		LLCI		ULCI	
	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR
Direct and Total Effects												
Path A, TEDE→GCE	.165	.139	.027	.016	6.056	8.688	.000	.000	.111	.108	.218	.171
Path B, GCE→TAI	.130	.054	.050	.057	2.575	.954	.010	.340	.031	-.057	.229	.166
Path C', TEDE→TAI: Controlling for TCS (Direct Effect)	.586	.538	.035	.027	16.633	19.982	.000	.000	.517	.485	.655	.591
Path C, TEDE→TAI (Total Effect)	.607	.546	.034	.026	17.660	21.194	.000	.000	.540	.495	.675	.596
Bootstrap Results for Indirect Effect of TEDE (X) on TAI (Y)												
Effect	Effect		SE		LLCI		ULCI					
Unstandardized	.021	.008	.010	.008	.004	-.009	.043	.024				
Standardized	.020	.008	.009	.009	.004	-.009	.040	.026				

**Note:** N = 625 (Japan) and 805 (Korea).

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported unless otherwise noted. Bootstrap size = 5,000, LLCI = lower limit confidence interval 95%, ULCI = upper limit confidence interval 95% (bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval).

Further analysis through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples revealed an interesting pattern in the indirect effects. For Japan, the unstandardized indirect effect was .021, with a 95% confidence interval that did not include zero ([.004, .043]), indicating statistical significance. However, for Korea, the effect was notably smaller (.008), and the confidence interval included zero ([-.009, .024]), suggesting a lack of statistical significance.

These findings corroborate the indirect effect of TEDE on TAI via the GCE in Japan, but not in Korea. This result is consistent with the trend noted in Table 1, in which the correlation between TEDE and TAI is more pronounced in Japan. Despite the higher average level of GCE in Korea compared to Japan, its implementation in educational practices led by social studies teachers (representing TAI) does not significantly alter teacher perceptions in Korea, as it does in Japan. The moderation analysis in our study explored the conditional effects of TCS on the mediation process between TEDE and TAI. These findings are presented in Table 3.

A critical aspect of our analysis, presented in the lower section of Table 3, is the conditional indirect effect of TEDE (X) on TAI (Y) at various TCS levels (W). This analysis utilized bootstrap methods (Preacher



& Hayes, 2004) to assess the mediating role of GCE across different TCS intensities. The results indicated that the bootstrap indirect effects of GCE were significant at all three assessed levels of TCS in Japan, specifically at TCS levels of 1.677 [.003, .041], 2.124 [.003, .035], and 2.571 [.001, .034]. These findings confirm the presence of a moderating effect of TCS in Japan, wherein the mediating influence of GCE in the TEDE-TAI relationship is pronounced at higher levels of TCS engagement.

Table 3. Ordinary least squares regression results for conditional indirect effect.

Outcome Variable: TAI												
Predictor	B		SE		t		p<		LLCI		ULCI	
	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR
Constant	1.360	1.405	.077	.069	17.67	20.31	.000	.000	1.209	1.269	1.511	1.541
TEDE	.590	.538	.038	.028	15.34	19.09	.000	.000	.514	.483	.665	.594
GCE	.140	.008	.056	.059	2.51	.140	.012	.888	.031	-.888	.250	.124
Japan: [Model R = .592, R-sq = .350; MSE = .165 F (137.265) = 2.00; P = .000]												
Korea: [Model R = .538, R-sq = .352; MSE = .213 F (197.892) = 2.00; P = .000]												
Outcome Variable: GCE												
Predictor	B		SE		t		p<		LLCI		ULCI	
	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR
Constant	-.226	-.273	.271	.188	-.835	-1.45	.404	.148	-.760	-.643	.307	.097
TEDE	.188	.282	.135	.082	1.38	3.458	.166	.001	-.078	.122	.454	.442
TCS	.212	.270	.127	.067	1.66	4.038	.097	.000	-.038	.139	.462	.402
TEDE*TCS Interaction	-.034	-.069	.061	.027	-.561	-2.57	.575	.010	-.154	-.122	.086	-.016
Japan: [Model R = .295, R-sq = .087; MSE = .101 F (16.134) = 3.00; P = .000]												
Korea: [Model R = .335, R-sq = .112; MSE = .080 F (30.757) = 3.00; P = .000]												
Conditional Indirect Effect of TEDE (X) on TAI (Y) at Different Values of TCS (W)												
	TCS		Boot Indirect Effect		Boot SE		Boot LLCI		Boot ULCI			
	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR
-1SD	1.677	2.165	.018	.001	.010	.008	.003	-.016	.041	.018		
Mean	2.124	2.733	.016	.001	.008	.006	.003	-.011	.035	.012		
+1SD	2.571	3.301	.014	.000	.009	.004	.001	-.007	.034	.008		

**Note:** N = 512 (Japan), 732 (Korea).

Unstandardized regression coefficients are also reported. Bootstrap size = 5,000, LLCI = lower limit confidence interval 95%, ULCI = upper limit confidence interval 95% (bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval).

In contrast, the Korean data presented a different scenario. Although Korean teachers exhibited a higher average TCS than their Japanese counterparts, this difference did not significantly influence the relationship between TEDE and GCE. This outcome underscores the importance of context-specific educational approaches, as discussed by Misco (2012), who emphasized the need for educational strategies that are adaptable to the unique circumstances of each classroom and educational setting. Studies on these differences in educational systems are also discussed in Park (2010). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) administered the international survey, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), among 15-year-old students. Japan exhibits much larger variation in students' problem-solving skills, such as TCS, than Korea, primarily due to greater variation between schools in Japan than in Korea. Japanese students at the top 10th percentile score even higher than Korean students at the 10th percentile. Reflecting the selection process, Japanese schools are more stratified than Korean schools (Park, 2010, p. 272). The Korean educational system fundamentally differs from the Japanese system in the extent to which schools are stratified. Compared

to the highly stratified academic schools in Japan, differentiation among academic high schools in Korea is much less apparent. This is because of the “Equalization Policy” (P’younghunhwa Chungch’ek), which is probably the most significant and thus the most controversial policy in Korean education (Kim, 2003; Lee, 2004). The two educational systems differ not only in the overall degree of differentiation but also in the ways they affect not only students’ performance but also teachers’ perception of TCS.

Figure 2, created using the PROCESS program’s “Plot” function (Hayes, 2013), visually represents this interaction effect. The illustration distinctly shows that in Japan, the mediating effect of TEDE on TAI through GCE is most robust when TCS levels are high. This positive effect is exclusive to Japan, as the Korean data demonstrates a convergence in the slope with increasing levels of TCS, in contrast to the consistent slope observed across all TCS levels in Japan. To summarize, both the direct and indirect effects, as well as the total effects, were more substantial in the Japanese context compared to the Korean context.

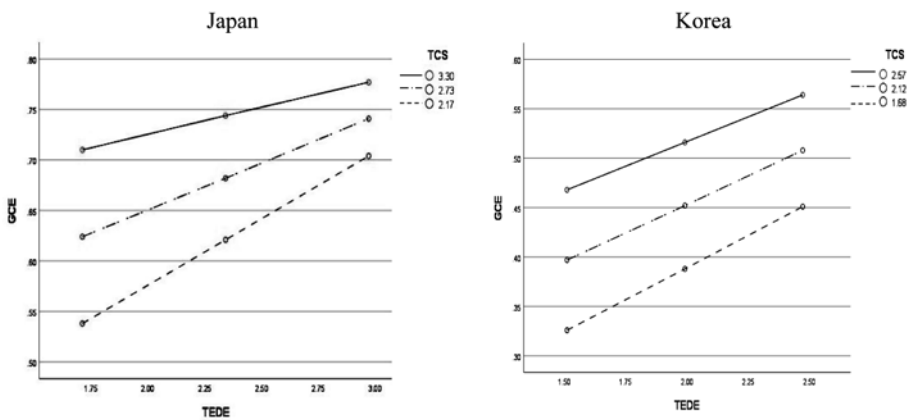


Figure 2. TEDE and GCE at different levels (quantiles) of TCS

Our conceptual model, illustrated in Figure 3, provides a nuanced understanding of the interplay between these elements. This suggests that the influence of TEDE on TAI is significantly mediated by GCE. This mediation indicates that integrating global citizenship concepts into the curriculum can profoundly affect teachers’ approaches to inclusion. Additionally, this effect was further moderated by TCS, implying that the integration of skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and empathy into teaching practices can condition and amplify the positive impact of GCE on TAI.

## Discussion and Implications

Our study, conducted in the dynamic and diverse educational landscapes of East Asia, focused on how teachers in Japan and Korea navigate and overcome the challenges of teaching difficult topics in social studies classrooms. Increasing racial and religious diversity as well as immigration trends have significantly enriched the multicultural composition of classrooms, presenting both challenges and opportunities for social studies educators.

A key finding of our research is the impactful role of TEDE in reducing stereotypes and enhancing awareness of diversity among both teachers and students. This experience is crucial for empowering teachers to handle difficult topics effectively. When teachers were exposed to diverse classroom settings, their ability to

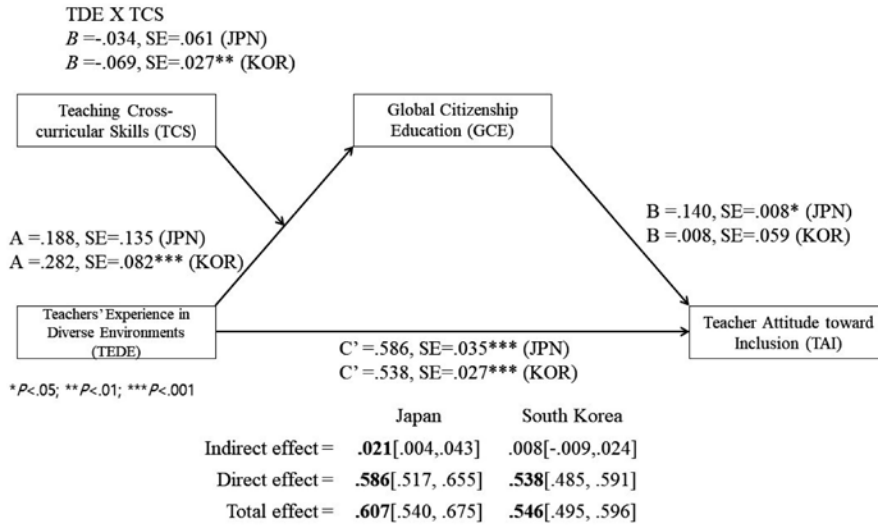


Figure 3. Final model showing moderated mediation; TEDE effect on TAI is mediated by GCE, and this effect is conditioned (moderated) by TCS

understand and empathize with various perspectives increased, thereby enhancing their competence in handling sensitive and challenging topics.

The study further reveals that the integration of GCE and the emphasis on TCS play pivotal roles in empowering teachers. These elements were found to be especially effective in mediating the relationship between TEDE and TAI. The enhancement of TCS, including critical thinking, empathy, and problem-solving, equips teachers with the necessary tools and confidence to approach and teach controversial topics such as human rights violations, prejudice against marginalized groups, and other sensitive issues.

Our results align with those of Hassan (2020), confirming the effectiveness of TCS in achieving a comprehensive GCE. This study underscores the importance of diverse classroom experiences, involvement in GCE, and the introduction of TCS as key factors that empower teachers to effectively address difficult topics in social studies. However, this study also highlights the need for the careful implementation of GCE, particularly in diverse classrooms, as well as the importance of contextually adapting teaching methods (EL Karfa, 2007). The varying effects of TCS in Japan and Korea suggest that cultural and educational contexts play crucial roles in determining the effectiveness of these strategies. Misco (2012) argued that South Korea contains a deeply embedded Confucian culture and tradition that-through textbooks, curriculum, and teacher decisions-ultimately creates a singularity of normativity that confounds reflective thinking about controversial issues and instead gives saliency to customary and prevailing beliefs (Misco, 2012, p. 75). This study highlights the significance of understanding Korea's educational phenomena within the context of Confucian culture and the national education system. However, it reveals that despite Japan and Korea both being East Asian countries with standardized education systems influenced by Confucian culture (including a national curriculum, certified textbooks, social studies and moral subjects, teacher training systems, and compulsory education, etc.), there are notable differences in teachers' perceptions, as evidenced by the average scores for various items. Notably, the impact of GCE on TAI (Path B) was significant only in Japan ( $B = .130, t = 2.575, p = .010$ ) and not in Korea

( $B = .050, t = .954, p = .340$ ). The impact of TCS also was significant only in Japan (Table 2). Therefore, it is necessary to focus on examining the classroom dynamics, particularly in Teaching in Diverse Environments, and the professional development of teachers. This approach should take precedence over analyzing the cultural and historical background or the macro context of the educational system. We will delve deeper into the cultural and historical similarities and differences between Japan and South Korea, providing a backdrop that underscores how these factors influence their respective education systems. This context will help to illuminate why lessons learned from each country's approach to education can be particularly instructive when considered side by side.

This study contributes to the theme of special issues by identifying strategies that empower teachers in Japan and Korea to overcome the challenges of teaching difficult topics. This study emphasizes the importance of experiential learning, curriculum design, and professional development tailored to the unique needs of diverse classrooms. This provides actionable insights into how teachers can be better equipped and supported to navigate the complexities of social studies education in multicultural and rapidly changing environments. In this context, Kim et al. (2018) propose specific alternatives as a form of gatekeeping in the social studies education on controversial issues. Firstly, teachers aiming to design a unit around controversial issues need to identify the spatial scales, as indicated on the framework's horizontal axis. Secondly, it's crucial for teachers to differentiate between merely discussing a topic in the classroom and teaching it as a controversial issue. Some topics, while widely accepted and openly discussed in society or communities, can still be taught as controversial due to the teacher's role in promoting democratic citizenship through gatekeeping. Lastly, teachers should develop clear rationales to explain and justify their decision-making processes (Kim et al., 2018, pp. 73-74). It is therefore essential to advocate for a thoughtful and deliberate approach in teaching controversial issues. This emphasizes the significant role of teachers in guiding discussions and framing topics, ensuring they are contextualized within a broader democratic and educational framework.

In summary, our study not only examines the challenges faced by teachers in addressing difficult topics in social studies but also highlights the strategies and factors that enable and empower them in this endeavor. It underscores the significance of adapting teaching methods to diverse classroom contexts and the role of TEDE, GCE, and TCS in fostering inclusive and effective teaching practices.

## **Conclusion**

This study comprehensively explored the factors influencing TAI, focusing on the pivotal role of TEDE, GCE, and TCS in the context of social studies education. This investigation examined how these factors collectively shape teachers' attitudes and practices when addressing the complexities of inclusive education.

A crucial finding of our study is the significant contribution of TEDE in preparing and guiding social studies teachers for inclusive education. As highlighted by UNESCO (2017) and supported by Aydin and Cinkaya (2018), TEDE not only equips educators with the necessary tools and understanding for handling diverse classrooms but also fosters an environment conducive to the inclusion of a wide range of student experiences and backgrounds. This exposure positively shapes TAI, thereby enhancing the overall quality and effectiveness of educational practices in diverse settings.

In conclusion, this study contributes to a broader understanding of how various factors come together to shape teachers' attitudes and approaches to inclusion in social studies classrooms. By highlighting the

interconnections between TEDE, GCE, and TCS, this study offers valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers striving to enhance inclusive education in diverse educational settings. These findings underscore the importance of comprehensive teacher preparation, curriculum design, and pedagogical strategies that respond to the multifaceted nature of modern classrooms, and ultimately paves the way for more inclusive, equitable, and effective teaching practices in social studies education.

This study acknowledges potential limitations stemming from its reliance on questionnaires for intentional data extraction in quantitative research. Effect estimates are based on interventional and observational studies. Future research should use different instruments for the same variables to confirm findings or extend study durations for deeper analysis.

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