Victims' Characteristics, Coping Strategies, and Problem Resolution in Picture Books for Young Children on Bullying

Wonho Jang **Minjin Kim**[1]

Chung-ang University

Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the internal and external characteristics of victims of bullying, their coping strategies, and how victims' concerns regarding bullying are finally resolved, based on narratives and illustrations in picture books for young children (ages 3–5) published in Korea. The final sample of 55 picture books was selected using a three-step process. The contents were then coded using content analysis. Results are as follows. First, the internal and external characteristics of the victims were found to be "An introverted personality and low self-esteem", "Unique appearance and deficient physical ability" (e.g., odd ears), and "Tastes and behavior distinct from peers" (e.g., an unusual fashion style). Second, the victims' coping strategies involved "Avoiding the situation", "Treating bullies with kindness", "Making new friends other than bullies", "Standing up to the bullies", "Asking others for help", and "Overcoming the causes of bullying by oneself". Third, problem resolution involved "Resolving with the victim's active efforts", "Resolving with the aid of others", and "Resolving through the self-reflection of the bullies". These findings emphasize the use of picture books as an educational medium to prevent early childhood bullying, with the caveat to exercise caution regarding stereotypes that may potentially affect young children.

Keywords*: picture books for young children on bullying, characteristics of bullying victims, coping strategy, problem resolution

Corresponding author, [1] mjkim@cau.ac.kr

Introduction

Bullying is one of the most serious social problems faced by children worldwide (Cheng et al., 2011; Juvonen & Graham, 2014; Wei & Chen, 2012). According to a survey undertaken in 66 countries, an average of 31.2% of teenagers experienced bullying by their peers during a two-month period, with the figure being as high as 60% in some countries (Due & Holstein, 2008). Furthermore, the age at which bullying is first experienced has been getting lower, making bullying among young children (ages 3-5) an increasingly important issue (Ju & Lee, 2019; Kirves & Sajaniemi, 2012; Vlachou et al., 2011).

Bullying has a lasting effect on both parties involved, leading to low self-esteem among bullied young children and social maladjustment among bullies (Rigby, 2003; Sourander et al., 2009). Given the negative influence and persistence of bullying, preventive education is necessary to identify and address the signs of bullying early on. One of the means that can serve to prevent bullying among young children (ages 3-5) is the use of picture books. Picture books are composed of texts and illustrations, and thus, are easily comprehensible by young children who lack literacy. Picture books also include a variety of stories and protagonist that young children can easily identify (Kim, 2020). Young children can sympathize with the difficulties of the victim and understand why bullying is undesirable when they read about it in picture books. In addition, picture books present various coping strategies and resolutions (Entenman et al., 2005; Lee & Ju, 2019; Oppliger & Davis, 2015). However, despite the usefulness of picture books as a medium to assist in the prevention of bullying, teachers should carefully consider their possible negative impact on the awareness and behavior of young children when utilizing bullying-related picture books at educational sites. In most picture books, the main character's internal characteristics (i.e., personality) and external characteristics (i.e., appearance) are described in detail through the text and illustrations. Young children may form strong impressions and feelings about their own internal and external characteristics in the course of reading picture books (Kim, 2018). As this can lead to a perception among young children that victims have certain types of characteristics, it is necessary to consider which texts and illustrations could generate such biases before using picture books as an educational medium. Moreover, since writers use fictional narratives and even outright fantasy to engage young children's interest, it is

necessary to assess whether the main character's coping strategies and problem resolution methods can be effectively utilized by young children in real life.

Researchers have consistently analyzed bullying victims' internal and external characteristics, coping strategies, and problem resolution methods in children's literature about bullying (Entenman et al., 2005; Moulton et al., 2011; Oppliger & Davis, 2015). In a similar vein, researchers in Korea have also recently begun to analyze picture books on bullying (Jeong & Hyeon, 2019). However, such research is still at an incipient stage and only a limited number of studies exist on the topic, therefore offering ample scope for further studies. In view of the above lacuna in Korea-specific research, this study aims at identifying victims' internal and external characteristics, coping strategies, and problem resolution methods in picture books published in Korea for young children aged 3 to 5, using content analysis to examine their contents.

Background

Prevalence of Bullying in Korean Kindergartens

Bullying is a situation in which one or more people verbally and physically harass those who lack the ability to defend themselves (Olweus & Solberg, 1998). For academic purposes, bullying is divided into physical, verbal, and relational bullying (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007; Levine & Tamburrino, 2014). As the age of those who experience bullying for the first time has gotten younger recently, various types of bullying have become an issue in Korean kindergartens. Most of the bullying in kindergartens is of the relational type, where one child is excluded by others from participating in play; however, there is also significant incidence of physical and verbal bullying (Kim et al., 2013). According to a study conducted by the Korea Institute of Child Care and Education (KICCE, 2014), 52% of the 1,004 kindergarten teacher respondents reported having witnessed bullying. Similarly, Song and Lee (2014) conducted a study among 226 Korean preschool teachers caring for young children (ages 3 to 5), and reported that 53.3% of the teachers had witnessed bullying taking place between young children in the classroom. Indeed, more than 80% of

the teachers caring for 5-year-olds responded that bullying occurred in their classrooms. Such findings indicate that bullying is indeed a serious problem in Korean preschools and kindergartens.

Effects of Bullying on Young Children

It is widely accepted that bullying can have serious negative effects on young children. Young children who have been bullied suffer from low self-esteem and increased anxiety (Søndergaard, 2012). They also experience feelings of loneliness and have trouble adapting to early childhood educational institutions (Kirves & Sajaniemi, 2012). Meanwhile, those young children who bully others are likely to continue to bully and engage in other types of aggressive behavior (Anthony & Lindert, 2010). This has a deleterious effect on their adolescent relationships and may lead to incidences of domestic violence or criminal behavior (Storey & Slaby, 2013). Therefore, bullying can cause serious damage among young children, the effects of which persist throughout their lives, regardless of their role in peer group. Given the above, it is crucial that early-childhood educators pay close attention to bullying prevention education among young children.

Educational Value of Picture Books About Bullying

To prevent bullying in early childhood, educators should guide young children so that they avoid forming the misconception that typically a child with certain characteristics is likely to experience bullying. Further, they need to teach various coping strategies that can be utilized by young children in real-life bullying situations, and provide information on how to resolve bullying-related problems successfully. Freeman (2014) has shown that picture books can lead young children (ages 4-6) to enhance their understanding of the victims' characteristics and strategies coping with bullying. The study also found that picture books were useful in preventing early childhood bullying. Picture books that contain such coping strategies and problem resolution methods can thus be a useful educational medium for preventing early childhood bullying, and therefore, the following considerations should be taken into account to utilize them as an educational medium

(Flanagan et al., 2013).

First, educators should be careful not to let young children develop any biases against the specific internal and external characteristics of victims. Young children vicariously experience the bullying situations described in picture books, and pay attention to the internal and external characteristics of the victims (Zambo, 2006). Picture books highlight the protagonist's characteristics to capture young children's attention, which may lead them to form the misconception that the bullying was caused by particular traits in the victim (Delman-Sparks, 1989). In other words, it is necessary to examine if the picture book perpetuates any stereotypes in relation to the internal and external characteristics of the victims before using it as an educational medium.

Second, young children should be provided with coping strategies that can actually be implemented in a situation involving bullying. Authors may recommend many coping strategies in the picture books, but some of the strategies used by the bullied main characters are not available in real-life bullying situations (Flanagan et al., 2013; Swanson & Sternweis, 2017). For example, "Seeking retaliation" could mislead young children to form the impression that bullying should be avenged, which is not necessarily a desirable outcome. Due to such reasons, if picture books are to be used as an educational medium to curb bullying, it is necessary to ensure that they contain practical and desirable coping strategies.

Third, young children should be provided with effective problem resolution methods. To ultimately resolve the problem of bullying, it is necessary to stop the act of bullying from being repeating (Moulton et al., 2011). However, since picture books are a form of literature based on fictional narratives, they often offer highly dramatized problem resolution methods (Hyeon & Kim, 2007). For example, to highlight an ending or make it more impactful, picture books sometimes depict the end of bullying problems with funny scenes, which could confuse young children into thinking that bullying is something fun. Thus it is necessary to examine if the suggested problem resolution methods send out such mixed messages, which could exacerbate rather than resolve real-life bullying situations.

To sum up, picture books could be a useful educational medium to provide young children with vicarious experiences of bullying; however, because such books can form stereotypes about bullying as well, it is important to critically analyze their contents. The

purpose of this study is to analyze the contents pertaining to victims' characteristics, coping strategies, and problem resolution methods described in picture books, to examine which of them could lead to the formation of stereotypes among young children. Based on the findings, this study expects to provide useful information on developing educational guidelines for using picture books about bullying.

Research Questions

In view of the above, this study posed the following research questions:

1. What are the internal and external characteristics of the victims in the picture books?

2. What coping strategies do the victims employ to tackle bullying in the picture books?

3. How is the problem of bullying finally resolved in the picture books?

Method

Sample

For this study, 55 picture books for young children (ages 3–5), published in Korea, were selected as the final sample using a three-step process. In step one, 83 picture books were identified and included in a preliminary list of books using three methods. First, we conducted an online search in a public library database using search terms such as "bullying", "outcast", and "friend", and selected 23 picture books. We then added a total of 49 picture books listed in a previous study (Jeong & Hyeon, 2019) for selecting books for young children (3-5). Finally, we added 11 books from a guidebook for teachers (the Korean early childhood curriculum).

The second step involved filtering the preliminary list of 83 to only include books that depicted intentional bullying. Intentional bullying means verbal, physical, and relational bullying, which includes the bullies' intention to harm the victim (Olweus, 1993). After filtering out 19 books from the preliminary list, we were left with 64 picture books. Examples of books that were excluded are *Odd Dog Out* and *A Weekend With Wendell*. In

Odd Dog Out, for instance, the loner, a dog, is described as having a unique appearance and behavior that distinguishes him from the other dogs. This dog chooses to leave the other dogs on his own, in the belief that he cannot hang out with them. Given that this picture book did not contain intentional bullying by other dogs, it was excluded from the preliminary list.

In step three, we finalized the picture books for preschoolers based on selection criteria, which are shown in Table 1 (Jalongo, 2003; Kim, 2020; Kim & Park, 2008). Two early childhood educators with ample teaching experience (i.e., over 10 years) independently scored the books on the Likert 5-point scale in line with the inclusion criteria, and also decided whether or not to include picture books with an average score of less than 3 points in the final analysis. Of the 64 books, 9 including *Thank You, Mr. Falker* and *I Am Too Absolutely Small for School* were excluded because they contained lengthy texts deemed too large to adequately hold young children's attention. The 55 selected picture books included titles such as *Chicken Big*. Of these 55, 48 books (e.g., *Willy the Wimp*) were Korean translations of picture books originally published in other languages. The remaining 7 (e.g., *A Starfish Becoming a Real Star*) were picture books first published in Korea.

Table 1. *The Selection Criteria*

Category	Criteria
Text	· Lexical level - Is it composed of vocabulary easy enough for young children to understand? · Story contents - Does it describe specific events that young children can understand?
Illustration	· The harmony between texts and illustration - Are the artistic components of an illustration in harmony with the contents of the text? · Daily experience - Is it an illustration of objects and situations from daily life that can be easily recognized by young children?

Data Analysis

The final 55 picture books were analyzed in three stages. In the first stage, two researchers respectively created a matrix on the internal and external characteristics of the victim, how the victim copes with the bullying, and how the bullying is resolved (Entenman et al., 2005; Moulton et al., 2011). In particular, the victim's characteristics were analyzed around the texts and illustrations, but the victim's coping strategies and problem resolutions were examined around the texts. For example, in *Marius Le Minus*, Marius was coded as "Small Body" for the victim's external characteristics in the matrix, because the texts and illustrations depicted a smaller body for the protagonist than for the other pigs.

In this manner, researchers discussed the area of analysis and methods in advance and coded five books separately as a preliminary study. The areas of analysis utilized in this study (i.e., victim's internal and external characteristics, coping strategies, and problem resolution methods) were set up based on the three corresponding research questions. Researchers then explored the 55 picture books in turn and conducted open coding on the analysis areas (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For example, a researcher coded victim's coping strategy of "Treating bullies with kindness" through the text of the victim's statement suggesting "Let's play together" to bullies. In the second stage, the two researchers shared their classification outcomes and constructed the final categories. The results of the analysis were integrated into one matrix and categorized based on common keywords. For example, "unusually tall, small body, weak body, and red cheeks" were included in the category "Unique appearance and deficient physical ability". In the third stage, the 55 picture books were analyzed again in terms of the frequency of each category.

Results

The main characters being bullied were analyzed in terms of "internal and external characteristics", "coping strategies", and "problem resolution methods". The results of the analysis are as follows.

Victim's Internal and External Characteristics

Victim's Internal Characteristics

An analysis of the internal characteristics of victims intends to identify how these are described in picture books. This is important if we are to reveal the stereotypes related to the internal characteristics of the victims in the picture books. Our analysis revealed that internal characteristics are depicted in 26 of the 55 picture books (47%). On the other hand, no distinctive internal characteristics are described in the other books (53%), which implies that the victim does not have any particular notable internal characteristics. The picture books describe the bullied as being an individual with "An introverted personality and low self-esteem". In *Not My Fault*, for example the victim keeps his head down and cries in front of his classmates without saying anything. The victim's crouching and weeping, which fails to actively cope with the bullying, is used as an excuse by the bullies to justify their aggressive behavior. In *Crow Boy*, the victim is taunted as "ttang-kko-ma" (i.e., very small child) and hides alone on the first day of school. The "ttang-kko-ma" always plays alone and the children make fun of him and ignore him.

Victim's External Characteristics

The external characteristics of victims revealed in this study refer to unique appearance, physical characteristics, physical ability, fashion sense, and behaviors, which are distinct from their peers. Analyzing the external characteristics of the victims helps to explore stereotypes related to such characteristics that can negatively influence young children's thoughts and behavior. Our analysis revealed that external characteristics are depicted in 37 of the 55 picture books (66%). No external characteristics are described in the other books (34%), as the underlying reasons for bullying are not the victims' physical characteristics in those cases. The relevant picture books describe the victims as having a unique appearance and distinctive style. The most common external characteristics were unique physical characteristics such as being unusually tall, or unusually short, red cheeks, odd ears, and deficient physical abilities (N=31, 55%). For example, Ricky the rabbit was teased because of his unique ears in *Flop-Ear*. A striped fish who lacks a shiny scale was rejected by other fish who had each received a shiny scale from the Rainbow Fish in *Rainbow Fish to the*

Rescue. Next, the main character was bullied either due to a distinctive style (an unusual fashion sense) or behavior (feminine behavior) in 6 picture books (11%). In *Chester's Way*, Chester and Wilson consider Lily to be strange and avoid her as she dressed in unusual clothes and made bizarre gestures. In *Oliver Button Is a Sissy*, Oliver preferred making paper dolls and tap dancing rather than playing with a ball, and was teased by other boys for being like a girl.

Table 2. *Victims' Internal and External Characteristics*

	Characteristics	N(%)
External Characteristics	Unique appearance and physical ability (e.g., odd ears, big body)	31(55%)
Internal Characteristics	An introverted personality and low self-esteem	26(47%)
External Characteristics	Distinctive style and unusual behavior (e.g., an unusual fashion style)	6(11%)

Victims' Coping Strategies

The victim's coping strategies refer to a victim's overall reactions and behavioral changes as a response to bullying. This is different from the problem resolution methods that are arrived at as the main, final solution. Analyzing victims' coping strategies is important because young children may be able to learn strategies that they can use effectively in a bullying situation. According to the result of the study, victims' coping strategies can be found in 55 picture books and are divided into six categories.

The most common coping strategy used by the victim is "Avoiding the situation" (N=26, 47%), which is a passive means of coping with bullying. As a prime example, Flix, born as a dog-cat hybrid, is commonly perceived to be an eyesore in *Flix*. His coping strategy is to choose to leave the other cats in response to their bullying. In addition, "Treating bullies with kindness" (N=10, 20%) is frequently depicted as a coping strategy more than "Standing up to the bullies" (N=4, 7%), which indicates that the victim uses pro-social behaviors rather than taking aggressive action against the bullies to cope. "Treating bullies with kindness" can be found in *Palko*. Palko voluntarily helps one of the bullies find a lost

dog. "Standing up to the bullies" can be identified in *Give Me My Hat Back*, where the victim is teased by his peers because he always wears a hat to hide a scar on his head. One day, the bullies take the victim's hat and throw it up a tree. The main character fights back to recover the hat during the process.

"Making new friends other than the bullies" is described as the coping strategy in 8 picture books (15%). In *Leonardo's Great Dream*, Leonardo, when rejected by another penguin, begins a close relationship with a gull called Otto. In 4 picture books (7%), the victim used "Asking others for help" as the coping strategy. This is different from when helpers around victims voluntarily help out against the bullying (N=14, 27%). A typical example of "Asking others for help" can be identified in *The Bat Looking In The Mirror*. A bat, teased for its appearance, visits an owl for advice and regains courage and confidence. Moreover, "Overcoming the causes of bullying by oneself" is depicted in 3 books (6%). In *Flop-Ear*, Ricky puts a carrot in his floppy ear, which is his distinctive external characteristic, and hangs himself upside down from a tree in a bid to straighten his floppy ear.

Table 3. *Victims' Coping Strategies*

	Coping Strategies	N(%)
1	Avoiding the situation	26(47%)
2	Treating bullies with kindness	10(18%)
3	Making new friends other than bullies	8(15%)
4	Standing up to the bullies	4(7%)
5	Asking others for help	4(7%)
6	Overcoming the causes of bullying by oneself	3(6%)

Problem Resolution

Problem resolution refers to the way that, when finally arrived at, solves the bullying problem in the picture books. Whereas the coping strategies only focus on the victim's various actions in the bullying situation, problem resolution methods explicitly include helpers and bullies who play a crucial role in resolving the bullying, in addition to the

victims themselves. Examining problem resolution methods is important to identify the most effective ways to resolve bullying among young children. According to the results, problem resolution methods are found in all 55 picture books and are divided into three categories.

The most common problem resolution presented in picture books involves "Resolving the problem through the victim's active efforts" (N = 37, 67%), which is subdivided into "Gaining friends by proving their abilities" and "Acknowledging their own unique characteristics and regaining self-confidence". In particular, "Gaining friends by proving their abilities" (N=29, 53%) emphasizes the main character's personal ability and heroic behavior. However, this type of problem resolution is unrealistic in that victims solve common problems through special abilities and courage all by themselves, in a dramatic manner which may not always be possible in real life. For example, in *Marius Le Minus*, Marius, who had been teased and bullied by other big, strong piglets, tells his friends a funny story to placate them. Unlike the other piglets who are frightened by the lightning and thunder in the storm, Marius overcomes bullying by displaying his courage and telling an interesting story in the middle of the storm. Further, there are 8 books which contain "Acknowledging their own unique characteristics and regaining self-confidence" (N=8, 15%) as a form of problem resolution. This emphasizes the process of the victim accepting their unique characteristics, which caused the bullying in the first place, and the restoration of self-confidence needed to improve peer relationships. In *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*, Morris, who wears an orange-colored dress, is teased as "unusual", but he expresses his tastes frankly and openly. During the process, the children, who had previously alienated Morris, began to show interest in Morris and became more connected with him.

Next, there are 16 (29%) picture books that include "Resolving the problem with the help of an aid." The victims resolved the bullying with the help of adults (i.e., parents, teachers) in 9 books, and overcame the problem through the courage of bystanders (i.e., friends) in 7 books. For example, in *Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns About Bullies*, Howard resolves his troubles with the help of a teacher. Meanwhile, in *Red, Or Why Bullying Isn't Funny*, the bullying is resolved with the help of friends who have been bystanders during the bullying.

Moreover, "Resolving the problem through the self-reflection of the bullies" can be found in 2 picture books (4%). In *Veronica on Petunia's Farm*, animals that had previously ignored Veronica became concerned about her because of her absence, which in turn caused them to reflect on their bad behavior. This indicates that it is possible for bullying to be resolved through the efforts and reflection of the bullies as well.

Table 4. *Problem Resolution Methods*

	Problem Resolution Methods	N(%)
1	Resolving the problem through the victim's active efforts	37(67%)
2	Resolving the problem with the aid of others	16(29%)
3	Resolving the problem through the self-reflection of the bullies	2(4%)

Discussion

The 55 picture books selected in this study were analyzed for the victims' internal and external characteristics, coping strategies, and problem resolution methods used to deal with bullying. The discussion on the results are as follows.

First, this study examined the internal and external characteristics of the main character being bullied. The results identified "An introverted personality and low self-esteem" as the victim's chief internal characteristics, while "Unique appearance and deficient physical ability" and "Tastes and behavior distinct from peers" were identified as the main external characteristics. This is partly consistent with Moulton et al. (2011), who analyzed the characteristics of the victims in picture books on bullying. Most of the findings on the characteristics are similar regarding internal characteristics (unique personality, poor social skills) and external characteristics (physical characteristics distinct from peers, unique taste in clothes). However, the male victim's feminine tastes are newly confirmed by this study as an external characteristic that invites bullying. Furthermore, most picture books(67%) emphasize the external characteristics of the victim, because picture books consist of many illustrations, which are obviously better suited to describe external characteristics.

A few picture books selected in this study fail to reflect some real bullying situations. In

fact, bullying sometimes occurs for no reason or sometimes happens with young children from single-parent or multicultural families. These realities of bullying should be reflected by the creators of picture books. According to Park (2003)'s study on bullying in Korea, bullying takes place due to personal, social, and cultural factors, as well as family factors. This means that the factors that give rise to bullying behavior are not confined to the internal and external characteristics of young children, but can also be ascribed to various other factors such as parenting style and cultural differences. An inordinate emphasis on specific internal and external characteristics (e.g., introverted personality, low self-esteem, great or little height, red cheeks) of the victim can lead young children readers to attribute bullying solely to such characteristics. For example, if a 4-year-old, who begins to form a bias against a particular target, reads the highlighted picture books on the victim's small height repeatedly, the child can acquire the said stereotype about the victim's external characteristics and use it to alienate other peers (Delman-Sparks, 1989). As stereotypes can be formed against people with these, or similar, characteristics, teachers should be cautious when using a picture book as an educational medium.

Second, this study analyzed the victims' coping strategies for bullying as presented in the picture books and found several strategies that can be utilized in real-life situations involving bullying. The coping strategies include the following: "Asking others for help," "Avoiding the situation", "Treating bullies with kindness", " Standing up to the bullies", "Making new friends other than bullies", and "Overcoming the causes of bullying by oneself." This is partly consistent with previous studies (Elledge et al., 2010; Hampel et al., 2009) that analyzed victims' coping strategies in real-life bullying situations, although "Seeking retaliation" and "Using humor" were not identified in this study. These indicate that picture books in general do offer various coping strategies that can be implemented in bullying situations in the real world as well.

In fact, effective coping strategies depend on the type of bullying (Kanetsuna & Smith, 2002). An effective coping strategy for physical bullying (e.g., kicking, punching) could be "Facing up to the bullies" and "Asking adults and friends for help." For verbal bullying, it could be "Avoiding the bullying" (e.g., swearing). For relational bullying (e.g., ignoring) it could be "Making new friends". Thus, picture books include specific coping strategies that can be recommended for victims to tackle various types of bullying. However, there is a

need to further reflect on more effective coping strategies for victims in picture books. According to an investigation of the ratios of the coping strategy by category in this study, "Asking for help", which was previously recommended by experts (Kanetsuna et al., 2006), was not found in many picture books. On the contrary, there were more cases in which an adult or a friend voluntarily offers help to the victim, than cases in which a victim asked for help directly. This may raise misconception among young children of the fact that people must actively help the victim to resolve the bullying. Therefore, early childhood educators need to select picture books in consideration of the various coping strategies they present, and which can be used by young children.

Third, this study explored problem resolution methods to investigate how bullying is finally resolved. This study identified insufficient examples where bullies reflect on their actions and also found unrealistic problem resolution methods, which are hard to find in real-life bullying situations. The most commonly used problem resolutions in picture books is "Acknowledging their own unique characteristics and regaining self-confidence", in which the victims exhibit their own ability, such as through heroic actions (e.g., saving peers from danger). For example, in *Chicken Big*, the humongous chick who is teased and cast out by his peers, uses his big body to save the eggs, and thus gains the positive recognition of other chickens. This is consistent with Moulton et al. (2011), which points out that picture books contain some unrealistic problem resolution methods. The victim's heroic actions are not a realistic way for young children to resolve most situations. Furthermore, it is not a useful resolution for the bullying problem, as the victims must demonstrate their value through their superior abilities, which they may not possess. In other words, when choosing picture books, adults should carefully examine whether the problem resolution method recommended is feasible for young children to resolve real-life bullying situations.

To overcome bullying, the roles of victim, bullies, bystanders, and adults are important. In this study, we found "picture books with problems solved by victims themselves", "picture books highlighting the help of adult helpers", "picture books with problems solved with the help of peer bystanders", and "picture books reflecting the voluntary reflections and efforts of the bullies". This indicates that picture books emphasize the participation and efforts of various class members and adults in problem resolution. However, many picture

books focus on victims' efforts rather than those of other members as a final resolution to the problem. Therefore, teachers need to carefully examine what constitutes useful problem resolution involving bullies, peer bystanders, and adults, when using picture books as an educational medium. In particular, given that the efforts and reflections of the bullies are essential to prevent the recurrence of bullying, attention should be given to how their psychological state and behavior change in the process of resolving the bullying. There was a shortage of picture books reflecting the spontaneous efforts and reflections of the bullies as a problem resolution in this study. This is inconsistent with Entenman et al. (2005) and Moulton et al. (2011), who reported that changes in the bullies' efforts and behavior are highly reflected in books for children as a problem resolution. Most picture books are written from the victim's point of view, making it impossible to identify the change in the bullies' thinking and psychological state (Oppliger & Davis, 2015). Therefore, young children should be encouraged to understand the bullies' point of view and what the right action is during the problem-resolving process.

This study had some limitations. First, only a limited number of picture books were analyzed. This study focused on picture books for preschoolers published in Korea. The final 55 picture books are more than those analyzed by Entenman et al. (2005) and Moulton et al. (2011), but less than of Oppliger and Davis (2016). Second, because this study conducted the contents analysis based on texts and illustrations, and speculated on the potential impact, it was not possible to directly identify the potential impact on young children when reading picture books on bullying. In future studies, it is necessary to directly investigate how preschoolers perceive the victim depicted in picture books on bullying. This helps to identify the stereotypes related to bullying that young children can form while reading the picture books. In addition, it is essential to empirically verify the educational effects of a bullying prevention program using picture books. In other words, by comparing experimental groups using picture books with control groups using other pro-social programs, we can examine the changes in young children's attitudes toward bullying and the effectiveness of the picture books as an educational medium.

Conclusion

This study examined picture books based on the victims' internal and external characteristics, coping strategies, and problem resolution methods. The results of this study have two implications for the educational field and the creative field of children's literature. First, in the field of education, it is important for early childhood educators to incorporate picture books dealing with bullying as a medium to prevent and stop bullying in their daily guidance with young children. In doing so, they need to use the books with discretion, taking note of how certain aspects of the content can generate stereotypes among young children. Second, in the creative field of children's literature, it is important for writers and illustrators to develop characters and situations that better reflect the realities of young children and bullying. Picture books for young children that reflect various bullying situations, coping strategies, and realistic problem resolution methods should then undoubtedly contribute to preventing bullying in early childhood.

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