A Pedagogical Study on the Conflict Experiences of Middle School Physical Education Teachers

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중학교 체육교사의 갈등경험에 관한 교육학적 연구

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Abstract This study aims to deeply understand and analyze the meaning of the various conflict experiences experienced by middle school physical education teachers in the physical education field through a phenomenological method and to explore the essence of it from an educational perspective. Regarding the research method, the research participants were four current middle school physical education teachers, and this study was conducted using Colaizzi's phenomenological research method, one of the qualitative research methodologies. The research results are as follows. First, general conflicts were categorized into student guidance and human relationships as conflicts between teachers and students. Second, job conflicts were categorized into teacher culture and communication as conflicts between teachers and teachers. Third, relationship conflicts were categorized into role expectations and power exercise as conflicts between teachers and parents. In conclusion, by analyzing in-depth the aspects of conflict experienced by middle school physical education teachers, it is necessary to effectively resolve various conflicts and, in particular, create a more positive educational environment by minimizing conflicts in the educational field.

Key Words : Middle school, Physical education teacher, Conflict, Experience, Phenomenology

요 약 본 연구는 중학교 체육교사들이 체육교육 현장에서 겪는 다양한 갈등경험을 현상학적 방법을 통하여 그 의미를 심층적으로 이해하고 분석하여 그 본질을 교육학적으로 탐구하는 것이다. 연구방법과 관련하여 연구 참여자는 현직 중학교 체육교사 4명이며 질적 연구방법론의 하나인 Colaizzi의 현상학적 연구방법을 통해 본 연구를 수행하였다. 연구 결과는 다음과 같다. 첫째, 일반적 갈등은 교사와 학생의 갈등으로서 학생지도 및 인간관계로 범주화되었다. 둘째, 직무 갈등은 교사와 교사의 갈등으로서 교직 문화 및 의사소통으로 범주화되었다. 셋째, 관계 갈등은 교사와 학부모와의 갈등으로서 역할기대 및 권력 행사로 범주화되었다. 결론적으로 중학교 체육교사가 경험하는 갈등의 양상을 심층적으로 분석함으로써 다양한 갈등을 효과적으로 해결하고, 특히 교육 현장에서의 갈등을 최소화하여 보다 긍정적인 교육 환경을 조성할 수 있도록 해야 할 것이다.

키워드 : 중학교, 체육교사, 갈등, 경험, 현상학

1. Introduction

The most difficult time in the organizational society of school is the period when a new teacher is hired only a few years after being hired. New teachers face many problems and difficulties because they have to adapt to the unfamiliar teaching culture and environment when they first start their teaching career. They learn methods and strategies for adapting to teaching in teacher training courses and in the pre-training course, but most practical knowledge must be acquired through trial and error in the field. In particular, they experience various conflicts as they face the gap between the theoretical knowledge learned at teacher training institutions and the practical knowledge required in the school field, and the reality that is different from their expectations in the school field.

The dictionary definition of conflict is 'a state in which individuals or groups have different goals or interests and are hostile or discordant' and 'a state in which two or more desires occur simultaneously in the mind and one is unable to decide and suffers' [1]. In other words, conflict is a state in which individuals or two or more groups experience unpleasant emotions in the process of interacting with each other with conflicting interests.

Such conflicts can promote personal growth and development, and can contribute to the development of interpersonal relationships as well as organizations. Conflicts can help people recognize problems more clearly, strengthen their motivation to solve them, and make them think more carefully when disagreements arise among participants in the decision-making process[2].

Conflict is like two sides of a coin. If members fail to overcome conflict, it causes dysfunction that leads to inefficiency of individuals and groups, but if efforts to overcome it are made appropriately, it can become an opportunity for change and innovation. In the school environment, teachers ex-perience conflicts within individuals, between individuals, within groups, and between groups in various work areas while performing their duties. If these conflicts are not properly resolved, teachers' work efficiency decreases, dissatisfaction with their jobs arises, and in severe cases, it can become a cause of job change[3].

In addition to the problems of the teaching profession that have been frequently pointed out in the past, such as bureaucratic administration, authoritarianism, low pay, and many miscellaneous tasks, there are new factors that have been added due to recent social changes. Examples include classroom collapse, bullying, conflicts between teacher groups, and conflicts between teachers and parents. Due to these conflicts, the job stress felt by teachers is increasing[4].

Previous studies on conflicts experienced by members of the teaching community during their teaching careers have been conducted in various ways. For example, there are studies on conflicts within school organizations[4,5], studies on school organizational culture[6,7], and studies on adaptation to teaching[8-10]. These previous studies are all general studies on school organizational culture, and they analyze conflicts experienced by teachers.

In addition, previous studies on teachers' conflicts cover various topics such as conflicts related to curriculum implementation[11], teachers' roles and conflicts[12,13], conflicts between teachers and students, parents, and administrators[14,15], and teachers' perceptions of the curriculum[16,17]. In addition, there are other discussions[18]. Most studies on teachers' conflicts are mainly quantitative studies that analyze the factors of teachers' conflicts [1].

Quantitative research methods can reveal and verify the correlation between the various conflicts and conflict factors experienced by teachers, and can be useful basic data for understanding the phenomenon more objectively. However, the conflicts

of homeroom teachers can be understood more comprehensively when approached in the social structural context surrounding them, beyond the personal and psychological realm. Therefore, research through in-depth interviews in qualitative research will be meaningful in deeply analyzing the various conflict aspects experienced by teachers.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the meaning and essence of the various conflict experiences that middle school physical education teachers experience in physical education fields more deeply through a phenomenological method. Accordingly, this study set the following research questions: 'Do physical education teachers have general conflict experiences?', 'Do physical education teachers have job conflict experiences?', and 'Do physical education teachers have relationship conflict experiences?'. The significance of this study lies in deeply understanding and analyzing the meaning and exploring its essence from an educational perspective.

2. Research method

2.1 Research participants

Unlike quantitative research that targets large samples with the goal of generalization, qualitative research aims to deeply explore specific cases, events, or phenomena that the researcher is interested in[19]. Therefore, qualitative research uses purposeful sampling to study specific cases in depth. In particular, this study aims to analyze the conflict experiences of physical education teachers as they are through the phenomenological research method of Colaizzi[20], to grasp their meaning and essence, and to understand them more deeply.

In this study, research participants were selected based on the following criteria. First, four middle school physical education teachers were selected, including those who were in the workforce, from beginners to teachers with more than 10 years of

teaching experience, and who were judged to have no restrictions in talking about various conflict experiences in school physical education settings. All study participants work at middle schools located in the metropolitan area.

In phenomenological research, rapport building between the researcher and the research participants is very important. This is because physical education teachers must be able to talk about their conflict experiences in teaching based on their educational philosophy, beliefs, and expertise. To this end, the researcher approached the rapport building process carefully and tried to create a close relationship and environment in which the research participants could comfortably talk about their personal conflict experiences and sensitive areas during the interview process. The general backgrounds of the four research participants are as follows (Table 1).

Table 1. Research participant characteristics

Name (pseudonym)	Career	Age (gender)	Education
A	2 years	late 20s (male)	Bachelor of Physical Education
B	4 years	early 30s (female)	Master of Physical Education
C	12 years	late 30s (female)	Bachelor of Physical Education
D	15 years	early 40s (male)	Doctorate of Physical Education

2.2 Research procedure

2.2.1 Data collection methods

In this study, in-depth interviews and class observations were used as data collection methods. Participants were asked to choose a convenient time and place, and questions related to the in-depth interviews were provided in advance so that they could reconstruct the interview content and tell it. The researcher should structure the interview so that participants can reconstruct their own stories[21]. Reconstructing a story means that

participants organize and edit impressive parts of past experiences and express them from the present point of view.

The data collection for this study was conducted from March to April 2024, and the vivid conflict experiences of the physical education teachers who participated in the study were collected through in-depth interviews. Therefore, the main method of data collection was interviews with the research participants, and the content of each interview was recorded and then transcribed and recorded. Interviews were conducted a total of three times with each research participant.

2.2.2 Interview method

Since interviews are conducted through direct communication, they complement the shortcomings of responses that come from simply using questionnaires, and they are the most effective research method for understanding and discovering situations that are difficult to observe (such as past events and memories) or the inner world of research participants[19]. In this study, a semi-structured interview method was used among various interview methods. A semi-structured interview is conducted based on an interview guide created by the researcher, but does not allow flexibility or adaptability for the interviewer. Through this, a series of structured questions prepared in advance are asked, and then open-ended questions are used to obtain richer information and elicit in-depth responses from the interviewee [19].
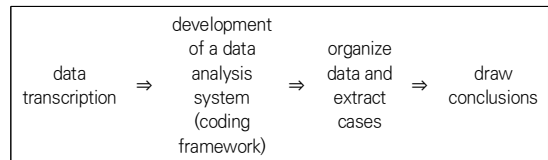
Accordingly, the researcher presented the items to be checked in relation to the purpose of the study as keywords and instructions, etc., so that the parts to be checked during the interview were not missed [22]. Before the interview, the research participants were allowed to talk freely and comfortably about various conflict experiences without being restricted by format or content, and for this purpose, the interview began with a light conversation. Afterwards, rapport was built by talking about various conflict experiences in the process of performing teaching duties.

2.2.3 Data analysis method

This study analyzed data collected from in-depth interviews, participant observation, field journals, and curriculum implementation results. In-depth interview data was transcribed and analyzed by categorizing sentences or words that needed attention through field journals. In the process of analyzing data, the researcher recognized the limitations of having to utilize a framework for interpretation based on a certain way of thinking, and conducted the analysis. The data analysis process is as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Data analysis process

data transcription	⇒	development of a data analysis system (coding framework)	⇒	organize data and extract cases	⇒	draw conclusions

In this study, in order to explore the meaning contained in the conflict experiences of physical education teachers, the data were analyzed according to the phenomenological research methodology procedure based on the analysis method of Colaizzi [20]. According to the analysis method of Colaizzi [20], valuable or meaningful sentences and phrases were extracted from the content described by the research participants, and then everyday statements were made based on these to construct meaning, and then the essential structure of the experience was described by categorizing them by topic.

2.3 Validity of the study

In this study, the following methods were used to increase the validity of the study. First, the opinions of the study participants regarding the research re-

sults and analysis process were collected through the research participant verification method. Second, the triangulation method was used. Third, opinions regarding the data collection and analysis process were received through expert verification. Fourth, qualitative research was continuously studied. In addition, the validity of the study was increased by using the factual value, appropriateness, consistency, and neutrality suggested by Lincoln and Guba [23] as evaluation criteria. In this study, in order to ensure the ethics of the research, the anonymity of research participants was guaranteed, and consent was obtained after explaining the purpose of the research, etc.

3. Results and discussion

The research questions for this study were composed of 'Do physical education teachers have general conflict experiences?', 'Do physical education teachers have job conflict experiences?', and 'Do physical education teachers have relationship conflict experiences?'. The research participants were four middle school physical education teachers located in the metropolitan area. In relation to data collection, interviews were conducted as in-depth interviews using open and unstructured questions, and the analysis utilized the phenomenological analysis method suggested by Colaizzi[20]. The results and categorized contents are as follows (Table

3).

3.1 General conflicts (teacher-student)

3.1.1 Student guidance

Through in-depth interviews, we were able to confirm that middle school physical education teachers experience conflicts due to their sense of responsibility in the process of guiding students and that they are trying to understand and work on their students. Through this, we were able to understand the nature of the conflicts that teachers experience and the educational influences that result from them. First, we were able to discover a gap between expectations for academic achievement and reality. Teachers are making continuous efforts and providing guidance to increase students' academic achievement, but there are frequent cases where they fall short of students' expectations.

I feel a great sense of responsibility for guiding students because students are not interested in physical education classes and their grades do not improve as a result. It is the teacher's role to help students grow, but when conflicts repeat, I sometimes doubt my own abilities. (B)

Teachers recognized that student guidance was an important part of their roles and felt a strong sense of responsibility because of this. However, conflicts that occurred during the guidance process can have a negative impact on teachers' self-efficacy.

Table 3. Categorization

Item	Categorization	Theme cluster
general conflict (teacher-student)	student guidance	conflicts arising from the sense of responsibility for student guidance
		understanding and making efforts for students
	interpersonal relationships	conflicts arising from interactions with students
		listening to students' stories
job conflict (teacher-teacher)	teaching culture	conflicts due to school organizational culture
		conflicts between different educational views
	communication	conflicts in the relationship between administrators and teachers
		conflicts based on the positions of homeroom teachers and subject teachers
relationship conflict (teacher-parent)	role expectations	resolving conflicts and seeking active solutions
		conflicts exist, but passive solutions are approached
	exercise of power	parents' distrust of teachers
		parents as supervisors of educational services

Conflicts with students also frequently occurred during the process of trying to maintain discipline. Although teachers tried to strictly enforce discipline, some students resisted or expressed dissatisfaction. It was confirmed that conflicts that occurred in the sense of responsibility for student guidance affected the trust relationship between teachers and students and appeared as a double dilemma for teachers.

It is very important to keep discipline, but I am also afraid that my relationship with my students will deteriorate. In particular, I am worried that trust with my students will be broken, but at the same time, I cannot give up discipline and academic achievement. (A)

There is a growing awareness that individual students need guidance tailored to their situations and abilities, but it is difficult to satisfy all students in reality. Teachers use various strategies to resolve these conflicts, but they feel that support at the school level is urgently needed. This is because guidance tailored to one student can lead to dissatisfaction for other students, so it must always be handled carefully, and this is a significant psychological burden for teachers.

Psychological counseling and collaborative programs with fellow teachers provided by the school can be very helpful. That's why I feel that something like a systematic system at the school level is needed. (C)

Teachers' efforts to understand and guide students may lead to conflicts, but these conflicts can be important opportunities to strengthen the relationship between students and teachers and improve the quality of education. Teachers try to recognize the differences between each student, manage emotional support and academic achievement in a balanced manner, and provide individualized instruction despite time constraints. Through this process, teachers improve their understanding and empathy skills, develop effective communication strategies, and strengthen cooperation between school and home.

I try hard to understand each student's personality and ability. However, it is never easy to satisfy all students. And although I want to devote enough time to all students, it is very difficult to solve everything within class time. So I try to understand students better through cooperation with parents, and I think that when consistent guidance is provided at home and at school, conflicts are reduced. (D)

3.1.2 Interpersonal relationships

Through in-depth interviews, we were able to confirm that middle school physical education teachers experience conflicts that arise from their interactions with students and conflicts that they experience while listening to students' stories. We were able to find out that these conflicts affect both teachers and students, and that they are seeking ways to resolve them. Conflicts that arise from interactions with students can be resolved by building relationships of mutual respect and trust. Teachers are using active communication strategies to resolve conflicts.

I feel that when students respect and trust me, conflicts decrease. So when conflicts arise with students, I think it is very important to have an open conversation and try to solve the problem together. (A)

It was found that listening skills were necessary to effectively listen to students' stories. Teachers also felt that a school-level system was needed to reduce the burden they felt when listening to students' stories.

It is important to listen to students until the end without interrupting them when they tell their stories. (B)

The conflicts that arise in the process of interacting with students and listening to their stories pose a great challenge to middle school PE teachers. These conflicts can be resolved through mutual re-

spect and trust, effective communication strategies, listening skills, and school-wide support systems.

3.2 Job conflict (teacher–teacher)

3.2.1 Teaching culture

Through in-depth interviews, we were able to confirm the conflicts experienced by middle school physical education teachers in interactions between teachers. In particular, we were able to confirm that the job conflicts experienced within the teaching culture include conflicts caused by the school organizational culture and conflicts that arise when different educational views among teachers clash.

Teachers stated that the power structure within the school and the rules that follow are the main causes of conflicts. Accordingly, they emphasized that it is important for teachers to actively participate in the decision-making process in order to resolve conflicts.

When certain teachers exercise too much authority within a school, conflicts and disagreements arise. So I think conflicts will be reduced when all teachers can participate in the decision-making process and share their opinions. (C)

Differences in educational goals and methods also appear to trigger conflicts. In order to resolve conflicts between teachers with different educational views, there must be sharing and harmony in educational philosophy. Therefore, a flexible approach is thought to be necessary to resolve conflicts.

There are conflicts between teachers who pursue student-centered education and those who emphasize performance-centered education. I think conflicts will be reduced when teachers with different educational views can flexibly cooperate toward a common goal. (D)

Conflicts among teachers often arise from clashes between school organizational cultures and different educational views. Conflicts between teachers who adhere to traditional educational views and those

who pursue innovative educational methods may be a natural result. Such conflicts can be resolved through participatory decision-making, improvement of organizational culture, sharing of educational philosophy, and flexible approaches.

3.2.2 Communication

Through in-depth interviews, we were able to discover that middle school physical education teachers experience conflicts due to communication problems in their relationships with other teachers. We analyzed the conflicts that arise in their relationships with administrators and the conflicts that arise from differences in opinion between homeroom teachers and subject teachers, and examined the impact of these conflicts on teachers' job performance. When administrators communicate in an authoritarian manner, conflicts with teachers arise. In particular, when teachers are excluded from some decision-making processes, the nature of the conflicts becomes more profound.

Conflicts arise when managers unilaterally give orders and do not listen to teachers' opinions. Teachers' opinions are often not reflected when important decisions are made. In such cases, they are bound to feel alienated or their job satisfaction will be greatly reduced. (B)

In order to resolve conflicts, participatory leadership from administrators is necessary. And establishing a transparent communication system is also considered an important factor. In other words, when administrators listen to teachers' opinions and actively involve them in the decision-making process, conflicts will decrease. And if all communication is transparent and information is shared, conflicts will be greatly reduced. The role overlap and ambiguity between homeroom teachers and subject teachers were also found to be factors causing conflicts. This is because they lead to differences in perspectives on how to guide students. In order to

reduce conflicts, clear role definitions and cooperation between homeroom teachers and subject teachers are necessary. In other words, this shows the need for an integrated approach to student guidance.

I think that conflicts are reduced when each person's role is clearly defined and they cooperate with each other. That's why an integrated approach is needed where the homeroom teacher and subject teacher work together to guide the student's overall life and studies. (A)

Conflicts between teachers and administrators, and between homeroom teachers and subject teachers, often stem from communication problems. These conflicts can be resolved through participatory leadership, transparent communication systems, clear role definitions, collaboration, and an integrated approach to student instruction.

3.3 Relationship conflict (teacher-parent)

3.3.1 Role expectations

Through in-depth interviews, we were able to confirm that middle school physical education teachers categorized conflicts that occurred in their relationships with parents into the category of 'role expectations' and that there were active and passive approaches to resolving conflicts. Through this, we explored various conflict situations experienced by physical education teachers and their solutions. First, we were able to confirm that physical education teachers were making efforts to resolve conflicts in their relationships with parents and to seek active solutions. One teacher mentioned that open communication and building trust were important in resolving conflicts with parents.

When conflicts with parents arise, I first listen to their stories and try to understand their situations. Through this, I build trust and try to solve the problem together. (C)

Another PE teacher emphasized that providing clear information and maintaining transparency helped resolve conflicts. In other words, it was found that teachers and parents should set common goals and work together to resolve conflicts. This process can be effective in building trust with parents and preventing conflicts. In addition, it was found that continuous communication and providing feedback played an important role in resolving conflicts.

There were many cases where conflicts occurred when parents did not have clear information about the school's policies or the student's academic performance. Therefore, by providing transparent information to parents and answering their questions sincerely, we were able to prevent and resolve conflicts in advance. (B)

When we set common goals for the student's development with parents and worked together to achieve them, conflicts were resolved to some extent. We were able to reduce conflicts by communicating with parents regularly and providing feedback on the student's progress. (A)

On the other hand, some teachers found that they avoided the problem because they tried to passively resolve conflicts with parents, which resulted in prolonging the conflict. In other words, the approach of avoiding conflicts may maintain peace in the short term, but in the long term, it was confirmed that it actually worsened the problem.

In conflict situations with parents, I tend to avoid the problem rather than actively trying to solve it. This actually ends up making the parents more dissatisfied and continuing the conflict. In the end, I saw that trying to avoid the conflict only made the parents more dissatisfied and later on, it turned into a bigger problem. (D)

Another teacher said that a defensive attitude damaged trust with parents and worsened conflict. In other words, a defensive attitude can damage

trust relationships with parents. Therefore, it was found that it was important to listen to parents' opinions with an open mind rather than a defensive attitude.

I think the conflict actually got worse when parents responded defensively to their criticism. This made the parents feel like their opinions were being ignored, and this ended up damaging their trust. (A)

Conflicts between teachers and parents arise from differences in role expectations, and active communication and cooperation will be necessary to resolve them. Open communication, building trust, providing clear information, and maintaining transparency are effective in resolving conflicts. On the other hand, passive approaches that avoid conflicts or respond defensively can actually worsen the problem. Through in-depth interviews, we were able to confirm that there are themes of parents' distrust of teachers and parents as supervisors of educational services.

3.3.2 Exercise of power

Through in-depth interviews, we were able to identify the conflicts that middle school physical education teachers experience in their relationships with parents as a category of 'exercise of power' and the theme of parents' distrust of teachers and parents as supervisors of educational services. Through this, we explored the conflict situations that physical education teachers experience in their interactions with parents and their solutions. First, regarding parents' distrust of teachers, some teachers said that parents often doubt teachers' professionalism, while others said that they experienced situations where parents continuously evaluated and criticized teachers.

Some parents constantly question the content or methods of physical education classes and often do not trust the teachers' professionalism. This not only dam-

ages the teachers' pride, but also causes conflicts with parents. (B)

Parents constantly criticize the teachers' educational policies or class methods. These evaluations and criticisms make the teachers feel insecure about their own teaching methods. This also deepens the conflict.

In order to eliminate parents' distrust, teachers should strengthen communication with parents. Such communication contributes to eliminating parents' distrust and building trust. In addition, teachers should make efforts to eliminate parents' distrust by transparently disclosing their educational activities.

Parents may doubt the professionalism of teachers. I think it is important for teachers to explain their educational policies and methods in detail and show an attitude of accepting parents' opinions. (C)

I think it is also necessary to share lesson plans and achievements with parents. It helps parents recognize the professionalism of teachers and restore trust. (D)

Regarding parents as supervisors of educational services, some teachers mentioned that parents think of themselves as supervisors of educational services and try to over-supervise. And in other cases, they said that conflicts arise due to excessive intervention by parents. This role of parents as supervisors is a factor that restricts teachers' educational activities and inevitably leads to conflicts with parents.

Some parents act like school supervisors. They monitor every action of teachers. This not only puts psychological pressure on teachers, but it also naturally causes conflict. (A)

Parents often intervene excessively in their students' educational process and interfere with teachers' educational policies. Then, conflicts between teachers and parents naturally occur. The problem is that these conflicts also have a negative impact on students'

education.

In order to prevent excessive supervision by parents, physical education teachers need to clearly establish roles and boundaries with parents. This approach can limit the supervision role of parents and contribute to guaranteeing the autonomy of teachers. In addition, teachers can resolve conflicts by establishing cooperative relationships with parents. This will help parents and teachers maintain mutual respect and cooperation.

We need to clearly explain the roles of teachers and parents to parents. We need to clearly define boundaries between each other, and we can resolve conflicts by showing an attitude of respect for those boundaries. (B)

We set common goals for the students' education through cooperation with parents. We were able to resolve conflicts by working together. (D)

Conflicts between teachers and parents arise from the exercise of power, and active communication and cooperation are necessary to resolve them. To eliminate parents' distrust and prevent excessive supervision, teachers should maintain transparency and clearly define roles and boundaries.

4. Conclusion and suggestions

This study deeply analyzed the various conflicts experienced by middle school physical education teachers, and explored the types of conflicts between teachers and students, teachers and teachers, and teachers and parents, as well as their causes and solutions. The conclusions based on the research results are as follows. The conflicts experienced by middle school physical education teachers were analyzed by type, and the causes and solutions for each conflict were presented. It was confirmed that conflicts between teachers and students mainly occurred in the process of student guidance, con-

flicts between teachers occurred in school organizational culture and communication issues, and conflicts between teachers and parents occurred in role expectations and the exercise of power. It was emphasized that building trust, transparent communication, mutual understanding, and respect are essential to resolve them. This study will make an important contribution to seeking solutions to resolve conflicts in educational settings based on an in-depth understanding of the conflict experiences of physical education teachers.

Based on the above, I would like to make the following suggestions. First, provide training programs to improve professionalism. It is necessary to provide training programs to teachers to improve conflict management and communication skills, so that they can improve their professionalism and effectively deal with conflict situations. Second, create a cooperative school culture. It is necessary to create a cooperative and mutually supportive culture within the school to prevent conflicts among teachers and build a cooperative educational environment. Third, establish a regular parent participation program. It is thought that regular parent participation programs can be established to strengthen communication with parents, strengthen trust relationships with parents, and prevent conflicts.

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