Teachers’ knowledge, perceived teaching efficacy, and attitudes regarding students with ADHD: a cross-cultural comparison of teachers in South Korea and Germany

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Background
The purpose of this study was to investigate cross-cultural similarities and differences between Korean and German teachers in terms of knowledge, perceived teaching efficacy (PTE), and attitudes regarding students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), as well as to evaluate how teachers’ experiences influence their attitudes through knowledge and perceived teaching efficacy, based on three components of attitudes within a culture as well as across cultures.

Participants and procedure
Participants were teachers from Korea (n = 639) and Germany (n = 317). Through disproportional stratified sampling, matched samples of 264 Korean and 264 German teachers were obtained. The Kos questionnaire was slightly modified for the two countries due to different cultural backgrounds, by conducting translation/ back-translation, item review, and a pilot study. The survey instrument was distributed from September 2012 to December 2013. SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 22.0 were used to analyze the data.

Results
Korean teachers showed higher knowledge than German teachers. German teachers were found to have a greater PTE as well as more favorable attitudes compared to Korean teachers. Both Korean and German teachers’ experience led to their attitudes through knowledge and PTE. Also, the ways in which these variables have an influence on teachers’ attitudes differ between Korea and Germany.

Conclusions
This investigation proved the cross-cultural differences of all research variables (experience, knowledge, PTE, attitudes) as well as the research model (knowledge and PTE as mediators) based on attitude theory. This study can be a preliminary resource to develop an ADHD management manual based on theoretical and cultural perspectives in both countries, so that both Korean and German teachers can be prepared for students with ADHD in their daily classroom practice.