

Promoting Global Citizenship among Youth in Asia: An Investigation of the Social Studies Curriculum in South Korea and Taiwan

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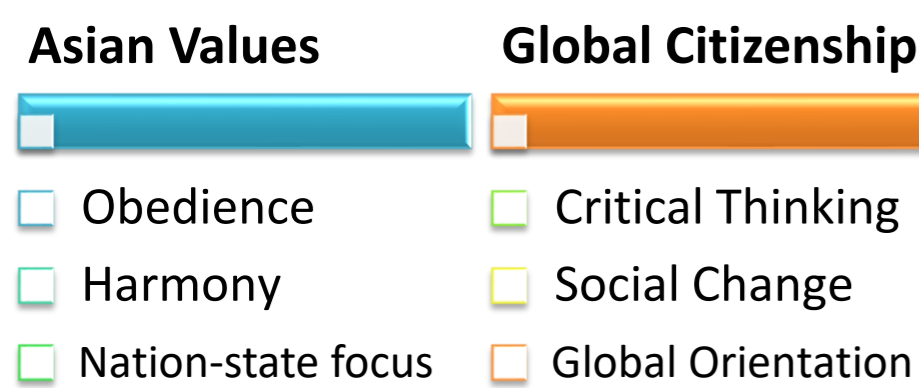
INTRODUCTION & AIM

Introduction

Global citizenship education has become a central goal in contemporary liberal democratic societies, particularly in preparing young people to actively engage in global issues.

However, in the Asian context, existing discourse suggests a potential tension between global citizenship and so-called **Asian Values**.

These values often emphasize **obedience, harmony and the primacy of the nation-state**, which may contrast with key elements of global citizenship such as **critical thinking, social change and global orientation**.



This study

Comparison:
South Korea (KR)
vs
Taiwan (TW)

Aim

This study examines how global citizenship is promoted in Social Studies curricula in **South Korea (2022)** and **Taiwan (2019)**

Why South Korea (KR) and Taiwan (TW)? :

Two Asian-Confucian democracies that were formerly Japanese colonies and democratized in the late 1980s and 1990s.

Specifically, it addresses the following questions:

- ❖ **To what extent are global values such as human rights, peace, and sustainability emphasized?**
- ❖ **Do the curricula prioritize obligations over rights?**
- ❖ **How are these values shaped by geopolitical contexts?**

DATA and METHOD

This study employs a **discourse analysis** of national **Social Studies curricula** in KR and TW.

The dataset consists of over 320,000 words in total from:

- Korea Social Studies Curriculum (2022)
- Taiwan Social Studies Curriculum (2019)

A **mixed-method approach** was used:

Quantitative analysis: measuring keyword frequency

Qualitative analysis: examining how these terms are framed within context

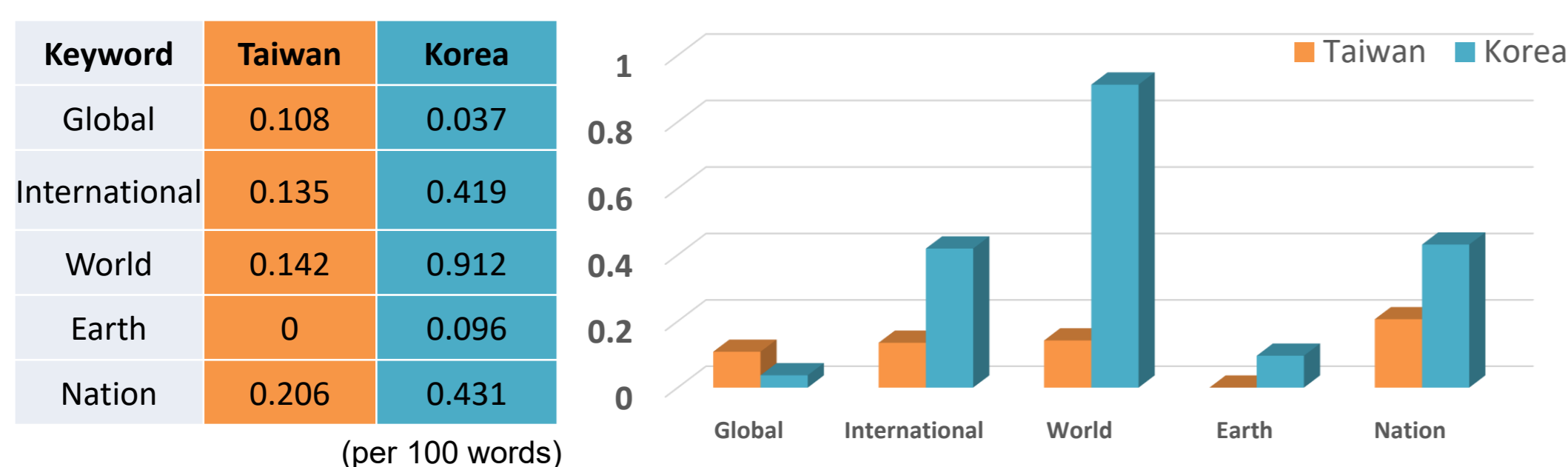
Social Studies was selected due to its central role in shaping civic values and citizenship education in both countries.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

1) Overall Promotion of Global Citizenship

Both curricula strongly emphasize **global citizenship values**, especially in terms of global awareness and international engagement.

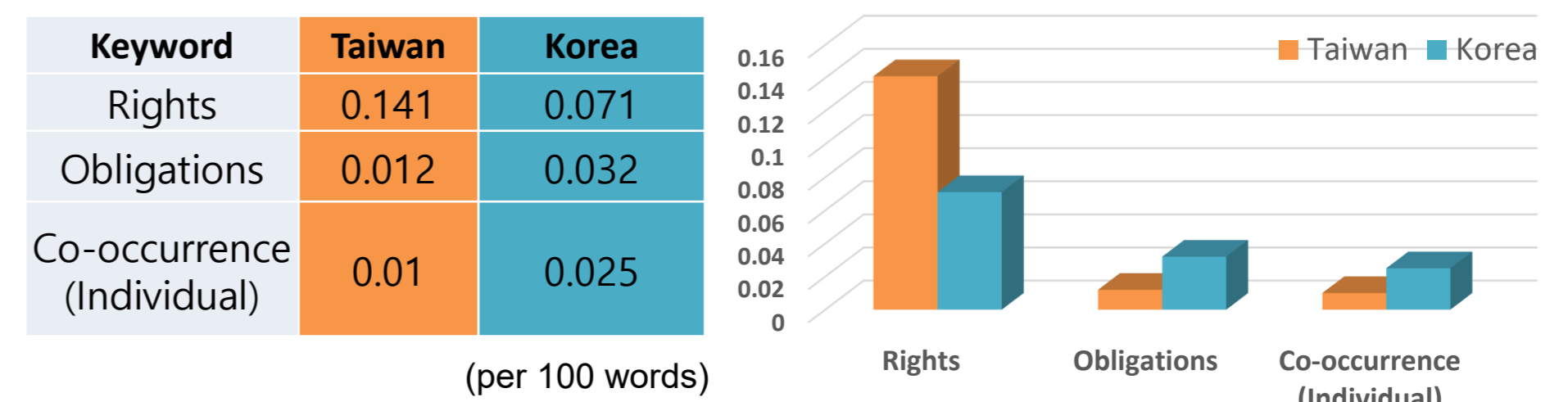
As shown in the frequency patterns, both countries consistently highlight global and international themes. This suggests that there is **no clear evidence that "Asian Values" dominate or undermine global citizenship education in either context.**



2) Rights vs Obligations

A key difference emerges in how citizenship is framed in each curriculum.

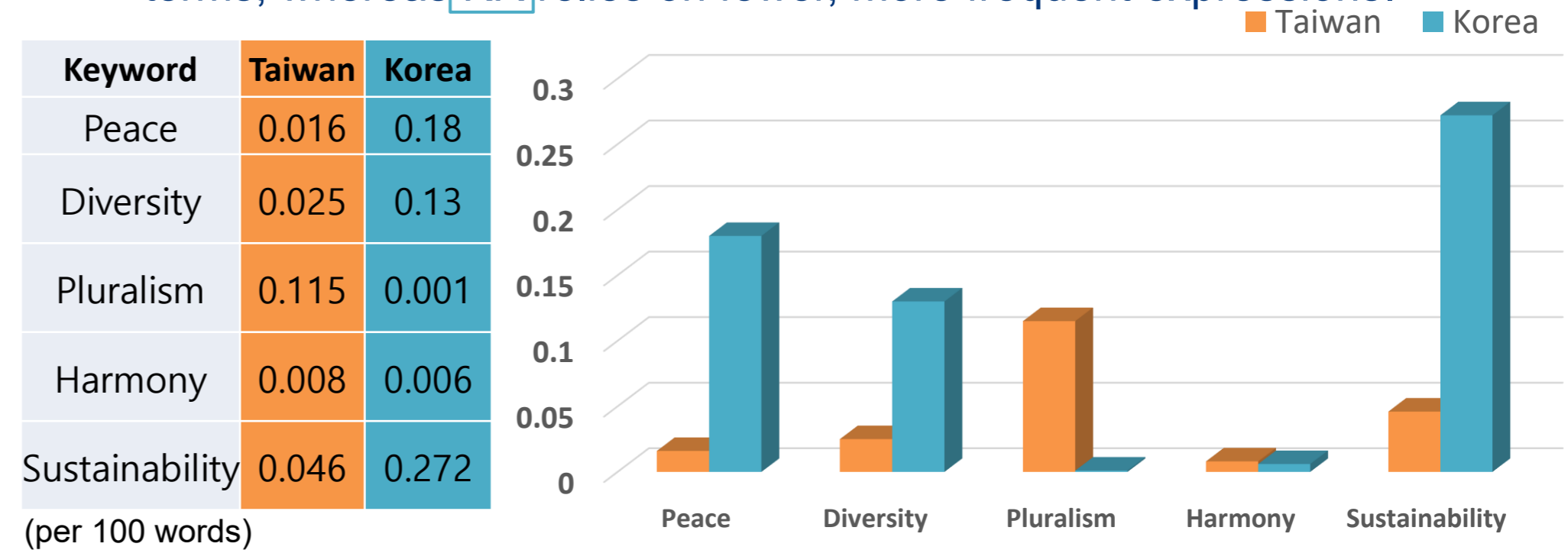
- **The Taiwanese curriculum** places a stronger emphasis on **rights**, particularly **individual and human rights**.
- **The Korean curriculum** presents a more balanced perspective, with relatively greater attention to **obligations**.



- Moreover, co-occurrence analysis shows that KR more frequently presents rights and obligations together within the same context, suggesting a more integrated understanding of citizenship as a balance between entitlements and responsibilities.

3) Differences in Core Values

While both curricula address similar value domains, **KR** places greater emphasis on **peace, diversity, and sustainability**. **TW**, in contrast, emphasizes **pluralism**, and uses more varied and formalized terms, whereas **KR** relies on fewer, more frequent expressions.



Note: Harmony and sustainability include multiple related terms (e.g., 和諧, 協調, 調和; 永續發展, 지속가능발전, 지속가능), which are aggregated here.

4) Role of Geopolitical Context

These differences appear to reflect broader **geopolitical contexts**.

- **TW's** stronger emphasis on the nation may relate to its unique international status and ongoing concerns about sovereignty and global recognition.
- **KR's** focus on peace and sustainability may reflect its historical experiences and regional geopolitical dynamics.

This suggests that citizenship education is shaped not only by pedagogical goals, but also by political and geopolitical factors.

CONCLUSION

Both **KR** and **TW** actively promote global citizenship through their Social Studies curricula. The findings challenge the assumption that Asian Values inherently conflict with global citizenship education. However, meaningful differences remain:

- **TW** emphasizes rights and national identity
- **KR** emphasizes peace and sustainability

Practically, this suggests that global citizenship education can be adapted to reflect local priorities while still aligning with global frameworks. For future research, further studies could examine how these curricular differences influence students' actual attitudes and behaviors as global citizens.

FUTURE WORK / REFERENCES

Future Work

Future research should expand this analysis to other Asian contexts and examine how curricula are implemented in classrooms.

References

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