Secondary Science Teachers’ Views about Purposes of Practical Works in School Science

Kew-Cheol Shim, Sung-Hwan Moon, Ji-Hyon Kil, Kyoungho Kim

I. INTRODUCTION

The main aims of school science instruction are to help students acquire scientific concepts, improve scientific inquiry process skills and science-related attitudes, and actively engage in the process of acquiring scientific knowledge [1]-[5]. The practical work has been very emphasized in teaching and learning of science at the school level, because it would be effective to develop students’ scientific knowledge that should be seen, and a role as means of communication and opportunities of inquiry [5]-[11]. In addition, curiosity and interest in science, science-related attitude, and nature of science could be improved through practical works [10]-[13].

A practical work is useful to teach science, because of helping students use ideas associated with the phenomena they have produced [7]-[9]. Secondary school science teachers have difficulties to teach science using practical works, because they should devote a greater proportion of time and labor for the science lesson effectively to perform a practical work [14]. They should be aware of the ranges and types of practical work, and be clear about the purpose of practical activities carried out in school science [14]-[16]. They need to know how to assess learning outcomes through practical works, and to be trained of practical exercises for professional development [14], [15], [17], [18].

The aim of this research was to survey views of middle school and high school science teachers about using practical works on what purposes they have to teach school science. Through surveying their perceptions, their willingness of using practical works would be examined with domains of science objectives in school.

II. METHODS

A. Participants

Participants consisted of 152 secondary school science teachers (physics 27, chemistry 37, biology 65 and earth science 23) from eight provinces containing three metropolitan city, South Korea (see the Table I). They were collected from forty two secondary schools of eight provinces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School level</th>
<th>male</th>
<th>female</th>
<th>sum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle school</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>152</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

B. Instrument

The views of secondary school science teachers about using practical works on purposes in school science were examined. Eighteen question items were selected considering educational objectives for science education on the basis of Science National Curriculum of Korea. They consisted of four domains, which were ‘Scientific inquiry’, ‘Scientific knowledge’, ‘Science-related attitude’, and ‘STS (science-technology-society)’, which were shown in the Table II.

‘Scientific Inquiry’ was made up of eight items that secondary school science teachers want to improve, which were ‘Basic inquiry skill I: observing, measuring, and classifying’, ‘Basic inquiry skill II: predicting, and inferring’, ‘Perceiving a problem’, ‘Hypothesizing’, ‘Controlling variables’, ‘Transforming data’, ‘Interpreting data’, and ‘Drawing conclusions’. ‘Scientific Knowledge’ was made up of two items that they want to facilitate, which were ‘Scientific concept comprehension’, and ‘Scientific concept confirmation’. ‘Science-related Attitude’ was made up of six items that they want to improve, which were ‘Scientific curiosity’, ‘Career interest in science’, ‘Interest in science’, ‘Critical reasoning’, ‘Self-directed engagement’, and ‘Persevering performance’.

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STS (Science-Technology-Society) was made up of two items that they want to help students perceive, which were ‘Science in society’, and ‘Relationship among science, technology, and society’.

Secondary school science teachers were asked to answer on how they thought of using practical works on purposes with domains of science objectives in school science with 5-point Likert scales (1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: common, 4: agree, and 5: strongly agree) following an example of question items: “I am using practical works for secondary school students to improve curiosity and interest in science”.

III. RESULT

Table III shows views of middle school and high school teachers about using practical works on ‘Scientific Inquiry’ domain of purposes they have for teaching science in school. They had a positive view about using practical works to improve scientific inquiry process skills. Especially, they had a tendency to use ‘Basic inquiry skill I (observing, measuring, and classifying)’ and ‘Drawing conclusions’ of integrated inquiry process skills. However, they would useless practical works for improving ‘Hypothesizing’ and ‘Perceiving a problem’ than on other integrated process skills. Considering school level of participants, high school science teachers had more positive views about using practical works to improve scientific inquiry process skills than middle school science teachers. On the question item of ‘Controlling variables’, there was a little bit of difference between them.

Views of middle school and high school science teachers about using practical works on ‘Scientific Knowledge’ domain are shown in the Table IV. They had a purpose to use practical works for more concept confirmation than concept comprehension. Middle school science teachers had more willingness to use practical works for both concept confirmation and concept comprehension of students than high school ones.

Table V shows middle school and high school science teachers’ views about what purposes to use practical works on ‘Science-related Attitude’ domain. They had a lack of willingness to use practical works for improving science-related attitude except ‘Scientific curiosity’, and ‘Interest in science’ among question items of ‘Science-related Attitude’ domain. Middle school science teachers had more positive views about using practical works to improve ‘Scientific curiosity’, and ‘Career interest in science’, whereas high school science teachers had more positive views in ‘Critical reasoning’, and ‘Self-directed engagement’. There was a little bit of difference between their views about using practical works on ‘Interest in science’, and ‘Persevering performance’.
Table VI shows views of middle school and high school science teachers about what purposes to use practical works on ‘STS (Science-Technology-Society)’ domain. They had a purpose to use practical works for helping students perceive ‘Science in society’, but less ‘Relationship among science, technology, and society’. High school science teachers had more willingness to use practical works for improving students’ perceptions about both ‘Science in society’ and ‘Relationship among science, technology, and society’ than middle school ones.

| TABLE VI |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| **VIEWS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL SCIENCE TEACHERS ABOUT USING PRACTICAL WORKS IN SCHOOL SCIENCE ON ‘STS (SCIENCE-TECHNOLOGY-SOCIETY)’** |
| **item** | **Middle school** | **High school** | **total** |
| **Science in a society** | 3.38±.95 | 3.48±.89 | 3.45±.90 |
| **Relationship among science, technology and society** | 2.92±1.05 | 3.04±.94 | 3.00±.98 |

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: common, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree

| **TABLE VII** |
|------------------|------------------|
| **VIEWS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL SCIENCE TEACHERS ABOUT USING PRACTICAL WORKS IN SCHOOL SCIENCE ON DOMAINS OF SCIENCE OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS OF T-TEST WITH SCHOOL LEVEL** |
| **domain** | **Middle school** | **High school** | **total** | **t value** |
| **Scientific Inquiry** | 3.42±.64 | 3.58±.61 | 3.52±.62 | -1.45** |
| **Scientific Knowledge** | 3.37±.92 | 3.20±.87 | 3.25±.89 | 1.13 * |
| **Science -related Attitude** | 3.15±.70 | 3.38±.67 | 3.36±.67 | -59 ** |
| **STS** | 3.15±.89 | 3.26±.83 | 3.22±.85 | -75 ** |

1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: common, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree

The t value is the score obtained when performing the independent t-test between means of middle school and high school teachers’ views about using practical works.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results of this research showed that Korean secondary school science teachers had positive views about using practical works for improving scientific inquiry process skills, science-related attitudes, and perception about STS literacy, and acquiring scientific knowledge. Especially, they had a view to need to use practical works for improving scientific inquiry ability. That is because they thought of that the most important thing in school science would be improving scientific inquiry ability through performing practical works [1], [3]-[5].

Considering big difference between views according to school level even though there was not significant, high school science teachers had more willingness to use practical works for improving scientific inquiry skills, and middle school science teachers had more willingness to use them for acquiring scientific knowledge. That is because high school students should use various inquiry skills in the process of teaching and learning according to science curriculum than middle school ones [2]-[4], [8]-[9]. In addition, middle school students should learn much more scientific concepts than what they should do in elementary school science [2], [8], [19].

The results of this study suggested that there is a demand on teaching secondary students science to improve science-related attitude, and perception about STS in school. To do this, it is necessary to contain more scientific learning content concerned about science and technology in the society in school science [20]-[24]. It will be effective to enhance scientific reasoning as well as to learn scientific knowledge [20]-[21], [24].

Science teachers are a group that has a primary role on science-related attitudes, perception about science, and science learning behavior of students [1], [13]-[14], [25]. Their views could be a major influence what and how to learn school science, and their teaching [1], [25]. It is necessary to make training program for secondary science teachers get more positive views about using practical works in school science teaching, and to facilitate their students engaging in science learning.

REFERENCES

[14] S. Y. Bae, and Y. Park, ‘Teachers’ perceptions about priority and


