

〈ARTICLES〉

## **An Analysis of Korean Prejudice Against Southeast Asia Using Big Data: From the Perspective of the Social Studies Education**

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### **Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced measures such as border closures and travel restrictions that have never been experienced before. People around the world have started projecting their anxieties, fears, and feelings of hatred onto specific groups rather than seeking solutions to the problem. This has resulted in acts of hatred and discriminatory behavior towards Asians and others. So, what about South Korean society? Is it effectively fulfilling its role in promoting global citizenship through social and educational means? In this study, big data on Southeast Asia has been collected and analyzed for about two years since January 2020, when the COVID-19 outbreak started spreading across the globe, to find out the perception of Korean society on Southeast Asia. According to the big data analysis results that come from socialization created by the news and the media, which is the leading cause of prejudice against Southeast Asia in Korean society. In particular, the passive attitude of academia, which should present the correct standards and directions, was made worse, as seen in social studies textbooks. As a result, intensive efforts of social studies education to critically view the media are essential in order to correct the prejudice that causes negative emotions toward Southeast Asia in Korean society in the short-term plan. In the long-term plan, it is necessary to reorganize the national-level curriculum and review the textbook contents through verification by regional research experts.

**Keywords:** Big data analysis, Southeast Asia, Prejudice, Social studies education

### **Introduction**

Southeast Asia is an important emerging economic partner for South Korea. According to the 2020 Ministry of the Interior and Safety survey of 1,695,643 foreign residents who have not acquired nationality, excluding Korean-Chinese (541,337) and Chinese (207,764), ordered by Vietnam (199,950) in second place, Thailand (165,511) in third, United States (59,646) in fourth, and Uzbekistan (58,646) in fifth (58,000), the Philippines in sixth (43,455), and Cambodia (40,000) in seventh, occupying overwhelmingly from Southeast Asia among foreign residents who settled in Korea. In addition, the number of Koreans who visited Southeast Asia in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, exceeded 10 million a year, which is more than the summation number of Koreans who visited China and Japan during the same period. Besides, with the New Southern Policy actively promoted by the Korean government since 2017, Southeast Asia's position in the economic and cultural stage,

including Korea's diplomatic location, has increased significantly (Kim, 2017; Choe, 2021).

However, unlike these changes, prejudice and racism against Southeast Asia and other third worlds still remain in Korean society. In particular, discrimination against Southeast Asian countries and races is based on the headline of a newspaper article titled (Lee & Kim, 2021), "White-mixed race shown on entertainment, and Southeast Asian shown on documentary ... Multicultural second generation bruised by discrimination.", as shown, Korean media and broadcasters are never free from the controversy over discrimination against migrants from Southeast Asia and the third world. According to the Citizens' Coalition for Democratic Press, it was found that migrants or foreigners were featured in programs for three months, from June to August 2019, instigating prejudice and racist views against specific countries (Citizens Coalition for Democratic Media, 2019). For example, "Yo! Welcome to Korea!", a TV program that shows foreigners traveling to Korea for the first time and experiencing various cultures, there were no foreigners from Southeast Asia, and 53 European and North American people appeared only.

On the contrary, 11 of the 12 main characters in "Finding My Daddy", which deals with the life of a father away from his family and working in Korea, were from a Southeast Asian region (one from Ugandan). In early 2021, a self-produced poster promoting the documentary program was criticized for being racist causes by showing illustrations of humanity evolving into the order of black, yellow, and white races. In a multicultural program produced by the Education Broadcasting System aimed at a harmonious multicultural society, the issue of prejudice against Southeast Asian women was highlighted again, with Korean performers handing sexual jokes to local women in Southeast Asia.

According to Statistics Korea's population and housing census, the number of foreigners residing in Korea is estimated at 2.2 million as of 2020. The number of foreign residents, 930,000 in 2010, has more than doubled, accounting for 4.1 percent of the total population in Korea. If the foreign resident ratio compares to the entire population exceeds 5 percent, the OECD classifies them as multicultural and multiracial countries. According to the report, Korean society can already be called a country close to multiculturalism, opting out of a single ethnic community, so proper social categorization of foreigners should be achieved. Social categorization uses to recognize and distinguish others, and it stems from beliefs and emotions that humans influence behavior. Among them, race plays a vital role in determining one's identity and experiencing the world and sometimes becomes a factor in forming prejudice (Eberhardt, 2019). According to the results of the "2021 National multicultural acceptability Survey" conducted by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family on a total of 10,000 teenagers and adults, Korea's multicultural acceptance index was remarkably low at 52.27 out of 100 as of 2021, which is even indicated getting more down than before. According to a report by the National Human Rights Commission of Korea conducted on 310 migrants in 2019, the main cause was the migrants were not Koreans (59.7%). In addition, respondents had experienced discrimination by country of origin (56.8%), ethnicity (47.7%), and race (44.7%). In the same year, there was an incident in which famous politicians repeatedly made diplomatic disrespects, such as disparaging workers from Southeast Asia and making blunt remarks containing ignorance and prejudice against them. In 2021, according to the results of the image survey on ASEAN at ASEAN-KOREA CENTRE held a meeting with 1,000 young Koreans, they recalled negative images such as developing countries (122), the heat (99), and poverty (57).

It means that stereotypes and prejudices against migrants in Korean society are closely related to geographical variables such as the country or reason of origin. In other words, Social studies education, pursuing

to foster global citizenship beyond race, ethnicity, and national boundaries, is not playing a sufficient role in the issue of prejudice against Southeast Asia. Even just before the Korea-ASEAN Special Summit in November 2019, a Cambodian flag error was found in the government-designated textbook of elementary schools in Korea, prompting strong protests from the Cambodian Embassy. As a response, the Ministry of Education ordered to revise textbooks urgently. Although the Ministry of Education immediately responded to the issue of the Cambodian flag error, it is urgent to take countermeasures to prevent such a problem. In general, textbooks are only one of the various teaching materials that implement the curriculum, but the authority of officially certified textbooks in Korean society is quite powerful. When looking at the history of the Korean social studies curriculum, the ruler always revised the social studies curriculum and textbooks as the regime changed, and the Korean social studies textbooks' contents still become 'hot potatoes' that all politicians react sensitively, regardless of the ruling and opposition parties. Korean social studies textbooks, produced under the government-designated and authorized system, have a more particular meaning in that a government-certified 'political, economic, socio-cultural knowledge' beyond merely a function of delivering information about other countries. Therefore, considering the specific importance of social studies textbooks in Korea, prejudice against Southeast Asian-related content is not a minor issue. Suppose students' prejudice against Southeast Asia becomes stronger caused by social studies education. In that case, it does not meet educational goals and can cause severe future international relations problems. In social studies education, which targets various countries and regions around the world for major learning, diversity, dynamism, and development, should be highlighted from a balanced perspective and should pay attention not to take otherizing the people living there.

Then, what is the fundamental cause of prejudice against Southeast Asia in Korean society? Why does discrimination against Southeast Asia persist instead of disappearing despite the Korean government's continued spending budget and implementation policies on multicultural education? What role should social studies education play for us to become multiculturalists and global citizens in a true sense? In this study, to find answers to these questions, online media, such as SNS and internet by selecting as a target, which mainly accesses information and content about Southeast Asian countries, big data related to Southeast Asia was collected for about 2 years from January 2020, when COVID-19 appeared in earnest. Next, by analyzing big data related to Southeast Asia, this study examines the causes of prejudice issues from the perspectives of society and education. Finally, based on the results of the analysis, explored the tasks of social studies education to solve fundamentally.

## **Theoretical Background**

### *Analysis of Social Phenomena Using Big Data*

In the field of big data, information was extracted and analyzed from unstructured data collected through Internet portal sites to investigate people's perceptions of social phenomena, and this process can be divided into three main categories (Song & Song, 2013). First, Text Mining is extracting helpful information using natural language processing technology from unstructured texts written in human languages or finding hidden information in big data by identifying connectivity, clustering, or summarizing. Second, Opinion Mining is to analyze users' opinions by applying natural language processing technology and emotional analysis technology to the big data text as a target. It is also called buzz analysis in marketing. Third, Network Analytics is to analyze the network connection structure and strength, identifying the propagation path of the message and affected target people.

The procedures and methods for big data analysis are shown in Figure 1.

First, the subject and scope of the collection target are set for documents related to the topic using analysis modelling. Then big data is collected using a collection robot such as a web crawler on the target channel (news, blog, cafe, SNS, etc.). In this case, it designates stop words to prevent errors in the collection and appoints keyword groups related to Southeast Asia (cause, type, region, method, etc.).

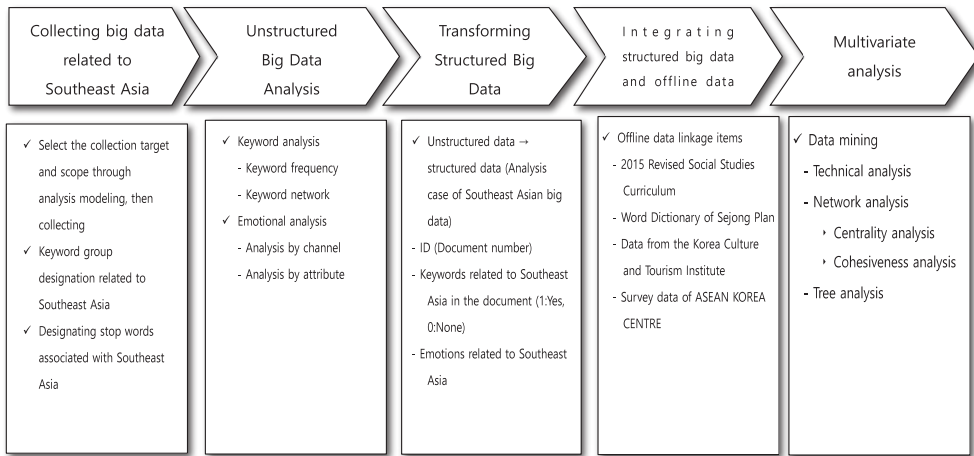


Figure 1. Procedure According to the Big Data Analysis Way (Analysis Case of Southeast Asian Big Data)

Second, the collected unstructured big data is analyzed using keyword and emotional analysis. It is difficult for researchers to analyze unstructured raw data, such as collection cases related to Southeast Asia, without specific processing. Accordingly, the procedure must classify and purify the collected unstructured big data through text mining, opinion mining, and network analysis.

Third, unstructured big data should be converted into structured ones. Looking at the analysis cases of documents when analyzing topics related to Southeast Asia, documents related to Southeast Asia should be coded with ID, and all keywords and methods in the article also should be coded.

Fourth, to bring meaningful results from big data analysis, it is necessary to integrate structured big data with offline data to analyze its merged social phenomena. At this step, Korea's curriculum and the word dictionary of the Sejong Plan, which can analyze and calculate text with a scale of 60 million words, were used as offline data.

Fifth, the analysis of structured big data linked to social studies curriculum data can be performed with various analysis methods that can discover new social phenomena through the causal relationship between keywords or the classification process.

### ***Southeast Asia in Korean Social Studies Education***

Textbooks have an enormous influence on Korean social studies education. Textbook censorship has been strengthened since 1947, when the government designated and approved textbooks. Especially in the case of elementary schools, it was influenced directly by the state due to a government-designated textbook system exclusively issued by the government until 2022. In the case of middle schools, after the 7th curriculum, the

textbook system was shifted to a way produced by various publishers and approved by the government. However, since it is necessary to write based on detailed achievement standards and textbook writing tips, it isn't easy to find a big difference in the composition and content of textbooks depending on the publishers (Park, 2010). According to Kim's study (2010a), Southeast Asia was continuously ignored in Korean social studies textbooks with strong Western centrism. Even multicultural education has been found many contaminated contents by orientalism. This study analyzed Korean multicultural education, raised the issue of Western-centrism, and proposed a strategy to re-examine Southeast Asia as a so-called 'advanced multicultural region'. Overseas studies have encouraged post-colonialist education, arguing that Western academia and education have continued to imbue and strengthen Western centrism in a way that contrasts it to a civilized and developing West and an uncivilized and underdeveloped East. Merryfield (2001) also suggested the need for work to critically dismantle school education, which had strengthened Western-centrism, and reconstruct it from a postcolonial perspective.

According to a study by Kim (2021), who analyzed the trend of quantitative changes in the proportion of Southeast Asia in social studies textbooks of Korean elementary and middle schools, the weight of Southeast Asia was indicated to be significantly higher than in other periods as 10.3% of elementary schools and 17.2% of middle school in the late 1940s, right after liberation. So, it can be said that the Korean elderly who attended Korean elementary and middle schools in the 1940s and mid of 1950s have learned the most about Southeast Asia.

If looking closely at the contents of each period, first of all, the syllabus period middle school social studies textbook described Southeast Asia's humanities and natural environment elements in a balanced manner and systematically explained each region. Although it also contained an imperialist perspective while the encyclopedic description, it presented Various reading materials that helped the overall understanding of Southeast Asia, such as photographs and maps. It is presumed that the reason was that Japan valued Southeast Asia in textbooks and abundant materials related to it, as it was expanding its power in Southeast Asia by promoting the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere at the time. Since then, a proportion of Southeast Asia in the world geography area of middle school social studies textbooks in the first curriculum period occupied about 5%, even though slightly different weights depending on the textbook's author. However, in the completely revised second curriculum in 1963, shortly after beginning the military regime of Park, while morality and ethics contents increased rapidly and anti-communist education was strengthened, the proportion of Southeast Asia in middle school social studies textbooks plunged to 1.9%. Since then, the proportion of Southeast Asia in middle school social studies textbooks has hovered around 1-3% between the third and fifth curriculum periods. The 2.9% proportion of Southeast Asia in middle school textbooks during the third curriculum period gradually increased to 3.8% in the fourth curriculum period. Still, it fell to 2.5% in the fifth curriculum period again. As economic cooperation with Southeast Asia became more important in social studies textbooks during the sixth curriculum period, the proportion of Southeast Asia increased to 4.1%. Hence, the proportion of Southeast Asia approached the level of the first curriculum period. However, as the general discussion of the 7th curriculum period and the Ministry of Education began to put pressure on the reducing the curriculum and the number of hours, the social studies textbook of entire content was reduced, and the proportion of Southeast Asia in the middle school social studies textbook also decreased to 2.7%. This trend was kept affected, so it declined to 2.0% in the 2007 revised curriculum and fell to 1.2% in the 2009 revised curriculum. In the current 2015 revised

curriculum, the proportion of Southeast Asian countries rose slightly to 2.1% due to the increased content related to multicultural education.

Such a decrease in the proportion of Southeast Asia in textbooks can be easily found in elementary school social studies textbooks. In 2007, 2009, and 2015 revised curricula, when the importance of Southeast Asia was highlighted in earnest, Southeast Asia accounted for only about 1% of elementary school social studies textbooks. In particular, there was nonexistent content related to Southeast Asia in social studies textbooks based on the 2007 revised curriculum. Only Inquiry-based Social Studies, an auxiliary textbook, included some of the contents of Southeast Asia. When the revised curriculum and textbooks were developed in 2007, the number of married immigrant women from Southeast Asia increased rapidly, and multicultural education was emphasized in Korean society. However, there was no Southeast Asian content in elementary school social studies textbooks. This situation clearly shows how far Korea’s social studies education is separated from reality and has turned a blind eye to national and social needs.

## Methodology

### *Research Subjects and Scope*

In this study, to analyze the prejudice that Koreans have against Southeast Asia since the COVID-19 outbreak started spreading across the globe, a comprehensive survey was conducted on online documents such as domestic online news sites, blogs, cafes, bulletin boards, and SNS. Furthermore, this analysis is defined as Big data for text-based web documents that could be collected through a total of 181 online sites of academic information, 171 online news sites, two blogs (Naver, Daum), two cafes (Naver, Daum), one SNS (Facebook), and five bulletin boards (Naver Knowledge-iN, Nate Knowledge, Nate Pan). Text data collection related to Southeast Asia was conducted monthly from January 1, 2020, to May 31, 2022, without considering days, weekends, and holidays in the corresponding channels. Then, this study selected 711,878 (46.5%) discourses directly related to the subject out of 1,531,259 text documents collected, such as ‘Southeast Asia, ASEAN’. Web Crawler of Textom, an online platform, was used for big data collecting, and Text Mining and Factor Analysis were used to classify topics. In addition, the collected big data cannot recognize personal information, which guarantees the anonymity and confidentiality of the subject. This content can be summarized as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. An Overview of Data Collection

Sort	Content
Keyword	Southeast Asia, South East Asia, South-East Asia, ASEAN, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand. Brunei Darussalam, Viet Nam, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Cambodia
Period	January 1, 2020 - May 31, 2022
Channel	Naver (Blogs, Cafes, News), Daum (Blogs, Cafes, Tips, News), RISS, Facebook
Extraction Method	Textom
Analytical method	Netminer 4.0, SPSS 22.0

### ***Data Analysis Method***

In this study, the decision-making tree analysis method was used to construct the most efficient predictive model for the causes of prejudice in Southeast Asia. This method automatically calculates a model that most effectively explains the dependent variable in a vast amount of data. Thereby quickly identify the causes of different prejudices about Southeast Asia. Analytical algorithms for the decision-making tree formation used CHAID with the highest prediction rate among Classification and Regression Tree (CART), Chi-squared Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID), and Quick Unbiased Efficient Statistical Tree (QUEST) models. (Lin & Fan, 2019). CHAID automatically searches for all possible interaction effects and uses the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test as a separate criterion for discrete dependent variables (Kass, 1980). In this analysis, the stopping rule was set to 100 in the minimum number of the upper node cases, 50 in the minimum number of the lower node cases, and three levels in the tree depth. The training and test data ratio was set to 70:30 for validity evaluation by data division. Furthermore, SPSS 22.0 was used for technical analysis, multiple response analysis, and decision tree analysis, and NetMiner 4.0 was used for network analysis.

## **Research Result**

### ***Status of Documents Related to Southeast Asia***

Looking at the current status of all documents referring to topics related to Southeast Asia, the description on SNS indicated the highest. In addition, the current status of cafes, blogs, bulletin boards, and news were similar, excluding SNS that as previously mentioned, and academic information. What should be noted is that communication increased rapidly when issues related to Southeast Asia occurred. In particular, the proportion of negative cases was high, including the controversy over the celebrities' prejudice against Southeast Asia.

Looking at Table 2, buzz (74.9%) shows negative emotions related to Southeast Asia, indicated remarkably high compared to buzz (15.5%), which shows positive emotions. The subjects of interest in Southeast Asia were travel (58.6%), food (12.3%), culture (11.2%), economy (10.7%), and education (7.2%). Moreover, the types of prejudice in Southeast Asia were ordered economic level (32.8%), Climate (30.5%), Environment (14.7%), Appearance (13.9%), and Attitude (8.0%). Interest in Southeast Asian countries was shown in order Viet Nam (26.0%), Singapore (13.5%), Thailand (12.2%), Philippines (11.4%), Indonesia (10.7%), Malaysia (6.8%), Myanmar (6.2%), Cambodia (5.0%), Lao PDR (4.2%), and Brunei Darussalam (4.0%).

Subsequently, according to the results of the cross-analysis of multiple responses to topics of interest in each Southeast Asian country, each issue has differences among countries as in Table 3. In particular, it was confirmed that most Southeast Asian countries have relatively high interest in food in Viet Name (42.9%) and Cambodia (51.7%), and in travel for Singapore (46.9%), Thailand (48.9%), Philippines (41.8%), Indonesia (90.2%), and Lao PDR (46.9%), whereas a relatively shown lack of interest in culture, economy, and education.

### ***Network Analysis Related to Southeast Asia***

Network Analysis is a method that quantitatively analyzes the topological structure and diffusion/evolution process by modelling the relationship between individuals and groups as nodes and links. In this study, the main attributes (emotions, types) arising from the buzz that refer to keywords related to Southeast Asia on SNS, Internet portal sites (blogs, cafes, bulletin boards), news, and academic information sites were made nodes, and the link structure between nodes was analyzed.

Table 2. Current Status of Buzz Related to Prejudice in Southeast Asia

Categories	Items	N (%)	Categories	Items	N(%)
Emotion	Negative	154,807(74.9)	Prejudice Type	Economic level	90,587(32.8)
	Positive	32,089(15.5)		Climate	84,147(30.5)
	Neutral	19,773(9.6)		Environment	40,652(14.7)
	Sub. Total	206,669		Appearance	38,467(13.9)
Channel	SNS	421,453(59.2)		Attitude	21,955(8.0)
	Blog	59,683(8.4)		Sub. Total	275,808
	Café	93,910(13.2)		Viet Nam	98,861(26.0)
	Bulletin board	43,086(6.1)		Singapore	51,232(13.5)
	News	82,889(11.6)		Thailand	46,502(12.2)
	Academic information	10,857(1.5)		Philippines	43,311(11.4)
	Sub. Total	711,878	Indonesia	40,486(10.7)	
Topics of interest	Travel	61,753(58.6)	Nation	Malaysia	25,814(6.8)
	Food	12,912(12.3)		Myanmar	23,638(6.2)
	Culture	11,792(11.2)		Cambodia	19,068(5.0)
	Economy	11,294(10.7)		Lao PDR	15,853(4.2)
	Education	7,595(7.2)		Brunei Darussalam	15,345(4.0)
	Sub. Total	105,346		Sub. Total	380,110

Figure 2 shows the analysis results on characterizing the cohesion structure of emotions toward Southeast Asia mentioned in the collected big data. As a result of grouping the distributed Southeast Asian emotions into closely related nodes group, it can be seen that they are concentrated in three nodes: ‘understanding, poverty, and help.’

Degree refers to the number of neighboring nodes connected to a particular node. In-degree refers to the degree of the external node from the internal node, and out-degree refers to the degree of the internal node from the external node. Closeness centrality refers to the high centrality of nodes with short distances from other nodes on average. Nodes with high closeness centrality most stochastically can be affected by other nodes mutually. Figure 3 is a schematic diagram of the external proximity centrality between collection channels on topics of interest or types of bias in Southeast Asia. According to this diagram, SNS, blogs, cafes, and bulletin boards are closely linked to ‘appearance’, ‘attitude’, ‘climate’, ‘environment’, and ‘economic level’ link to the News. In addition, academic information was found to be closely linked to the ‘economic level’. On the other hand, it was found that the influence of each factor on different types of prejudice was relatively weak.



Table 3. Status of Interest Topics by Southeast Asian Countries

Categories	Travel	Food	Culture	Economics	Education	Sum
Viet Nam	3,343(27.8)	5,166(42.9)	2,730(22.7)	421(3.5)	382(3.2)	12,042(32.6)
Singapore	2,614(46.9)	1,156(20.8)	203(3.6)	1,003(18.0)	592(10.6)	5,568(15.1)
Thailand	1,906(48.9)	607(15.6)	617(15.8)	675(17.3)	90(2.3)	3,895((10.5)
Philippines	1,555(41.8)	1,038(27.9)	195(5.2)	787(21.1)	148(4.0)	3,723(10.1)
Indonesia	3,153(90.2)	200(5.7)	62(1.8)	17(0.5)	63(1.8)	3,495(9.5)
Malaysia	95(4.6)	414(20.2)	137(6.7)	215(10.5)	1,191(58.0)	2,052(5.6)
Myanmar	183(9.1)	151(7.5)	197(9.7)	1,460(72.2)	30(1.5)	2,021(5.5)
Cambodia	320(17.7)	933(51.7)	434(24.0)	66(3.7)	53(2.9)	1,806(4.9)
Lao PDR	815(46.9)	629(36.2)	113(6.5)	162(9.3)	19(1.1)	1,738(4.7)
Brunei Darussalam	163(27.3)	124(20.7)	246(41.1)	41(6.9)	24(4.0)	598(1.6)
Sum	14,147	10,418	4,934	4,847	2,592	36,938

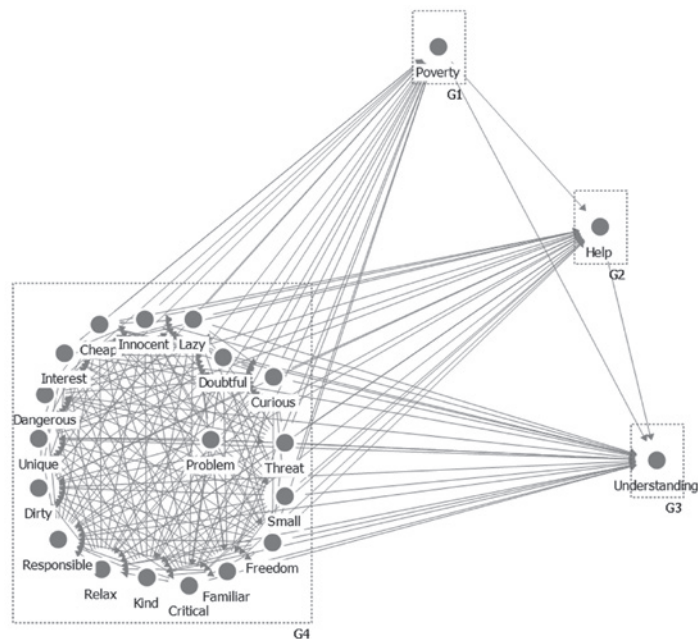


Figure 2. Analysis of Southeast Asian emotion cohesion

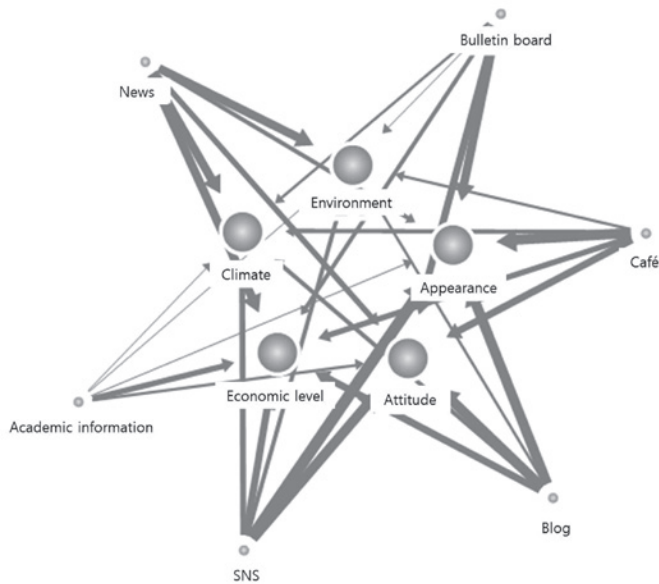


Figure 3. External proximity centrality between types of Southeast Asian bias and collection channels

***Southeast Asia-related Emotion Prediction Model***

This study conducted data mining analysis on bias types and collection channels to predict negative emotional factors that cause prejudice in Southeast Asia. The effect of bias types on Southeast Asia-related emotion prediction models is shown in Figure 4. The square at the top of the tree structure as the root node indicates the frequency of the dependent variables with no applied predictors (negative, positive, or neutral). In the root node, negative emotions related to Southeast Asia were 74.9% (154,807 cases), positive were 15.5% (32,089 cases), and neutral were 9.6% (19,773 cases). The highest-ranking factor at the bottom of the root node was the bias type, with the strongest influence on predicting negative emotions related to Southeast Asia, and the ‘economic level’ had the greatest influence. When the ‘economic level’ was high, negative emotions related to Southeast Asia decreased from 74.9% to 52.6%, positive emotions decreased from 15.5% to 3.0%, whereas neutral emotions about Southeast Asia increased significantly from 9.6% to 44.4%. When the ‘economic level’ and ‘attitude’ were high, negative emotions related to Southeast Asia significantly increased from 52.6% to 98.7%, whereas neutral emotions decreased substantially from 44.4% to 1.3%.

The effect of the collection channel on the negative emotion prediction model related to Southeast Asia is shown in Figure 5. The collection channel that has the most significant influence on the formation of negative emotions associated with Southeast Asia was indicating ‘academic information.’ When ‘academic information’ was high, negative and positive emotions related to Southeast Asia significantly decreased from 74.9% to 9.3% and 15.5% to 0.4%, respectively. In contrast, neutral emotions increased dramatically from the previous 9.6% to 90.4%. When ‘academic information’ and ‘café’ were high, negative feelings related to Southeast Asia increased from the last 9.3% to 13.4%, whereas neutral feelings decreased from the previous 90.4% to 85.6%.

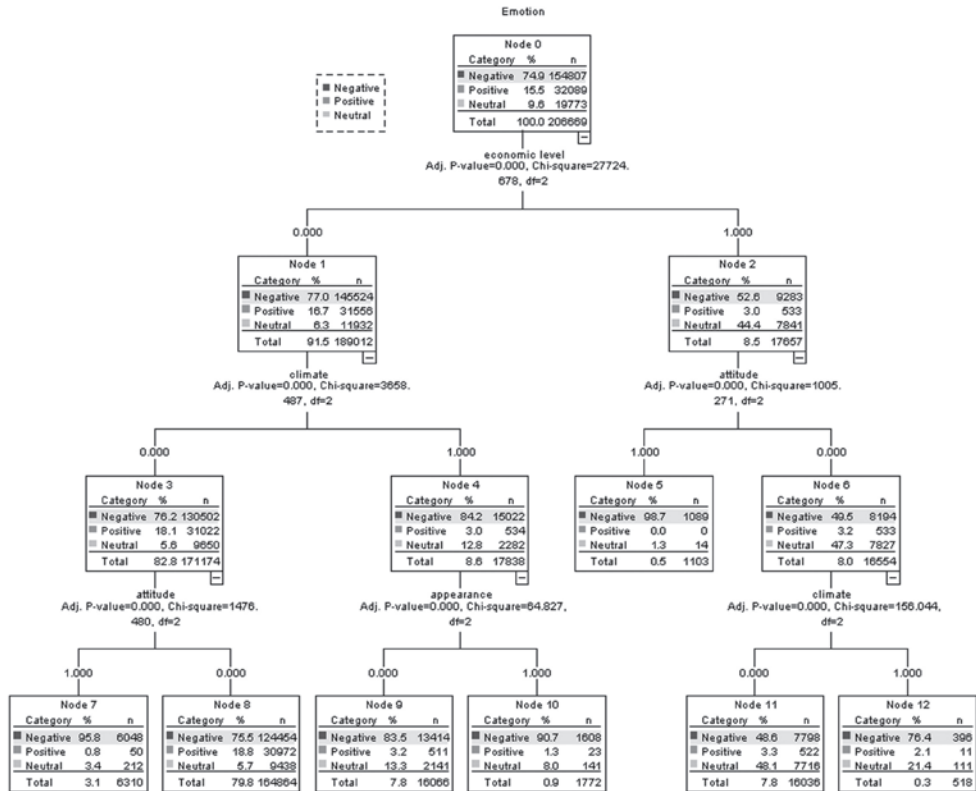


Figure 4. A predictive model of negative emotions according to the types of prejudice related to Southeast Asia

## Problems of Korean Social Studies Education Shown in the Big Data Analysis

### *Social Studies Textbooks That Deepen Racism Prejudice*

According to the results of big data analysis, the types of prejudice Koreans have against Southeast Asia are mainly about the appearance and attitude of racism factors. According to the ASEAN-KOREA CENTRE's image survey of 1,000 young Koreans in 2021, resulting the study on 'ASEAN' recalled the kinds of appearance, such as 'black skin', 'dark skin', 'yellow skin', and 'small skin', as well as attitudes like 'kind', 'poor', 'friendly', and 'good-natured'. Racism is constructed within a specific discourse system that combines various images and information provided by the press and media. In other words, it produces concepts of race or ethnicity in the media that influence people's perceptions; fundamentally, it stems from prejudice against the economic level, climate, and environment. In particular, Korean academia, which should hold in check the press and media, as well as present the right direction, has a strong Western-centrism (Kang, 2004), and Southeast Asia in social studies textbooks based on the current curriculum reproduces the images by the media and presented as an example tropical climate region from a deterministic environmental perspective. Accordingly, Southeast Asia in the textbook is introduced mainly to underdeveloped remote areas and travel destinations along with residents' lives, traditional culture, festivals, and religious events, and does not describe people, which intensifies racism

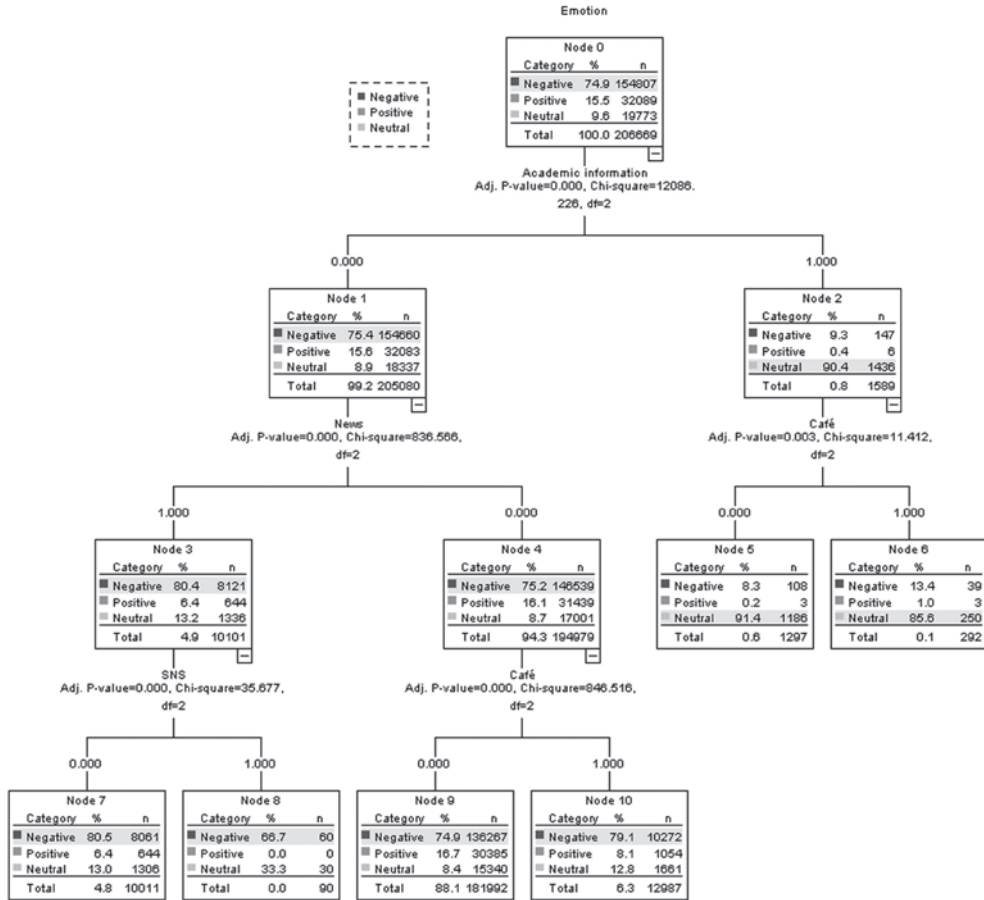


Figure 5. A prediction model of negative emotions according to collection channels related to Southeast Asia

by the press and media. Since even in the world geography of high schools, which divides the world into South-Saharan Africa and Central-Southern America, Southeast Asia with Southern Asia is confined to Monsoon Asia's framework, it only describes the humanities and natural environments with standardized as a run-down low developed area.

**Lack of Expertise of Social Studies Teachers on World Geography**

According to the results of big data analysis, the main mechanism of prejudice against Southeast Asia in the media, and it is transmitted indirectly through economic level, climate, and environment. In addition, it was found that the media have a great influence on the formation of negative feelings toward Southeast Asia, and are mainly related to economic levels, environment, and climate factors. The position of the media in the cultural experience is high, and its influence has increased even more since the COVID-19 outbreak. Teachers and students become interested in places or regions they have not been to directly through media including TV, and they often refer to TV travel programs in the process of actually planning travel. The current national-level social studies curriculum also encourages learners to select their interesting topics freely, and explore and investigate

various countries or regions through the media. Kim (2018) sought a way to introduce TV travel programs based in Laos, a Southeast Asian country that has not been well covered in social studies textbooks, to overcome the limitations of existing textbooks and facilitate world geography learning. The study insisted that TV travel programs made in Laos, a rainforest climate region belonging to Monsoon Asia, help learn global geography. However, Laos is a country that has more alpine climates than rainforest climates. In addition, when students learn about Laos based on TV travel programs focus on shown that high-altitude houses, minority lives, traditional culture, and tourism products, it may lead to stereotypes and prejudices against Southeast Asia. Eventually, if teachers introduce a TV program circus that shows Southeast Asia from an orientalism perspective to world geography classes and teaches them lightly due to their low expertise in world geography education or lack of ability to practice geographical reflection, prejudice against Southeast Asia may rather worsen (Kim, 2005; Kim, 2007).

### ***Lack of Regional Research Experts***

Korean academia does not reflect the rapidly changing reality of Southeast Asia. Big data analysis shows that the formation of neutral feelings toward Southeast Asia has the most significant influence by academia, whereas the negative emotion formation was enormous influence by the media compared to the academia. Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand and the Philippines in the 1940s and 1950s were perceived as economically developed and abundant for Koreans. However, the rapid growth of the Korean economy in the 1970s and 80s led to a change in perception. Especially in the 1990s, as overseas travel became free, tourists from Southeast Asia became increased dramatically. However, prejudice against Southeast Asia has been strengthened through outdated social studies textbooks amid poor regional research on Southeast Asia (Kim, 2021). Overall, Southeast Asia is recognized as an underdeveloped region with stagnant development in Korean social studies curriculum and textbooks. Compared to Europe, which studies regions centered on pure studies such as anthropology, geography, and linguistics, the U.S, heavily influenced by politics, rises as the interdisciplinary wall, and the position of regional experts in Southeast Asia has been reduced (Lewis & Wigen, 1997). Moreover, the tradition of regional research in the U.S., divided into macro-political science and micro-anthropology, has also affected South Korea's Southeast Asian research academia. Unlike traditional regional studies that integrated humanities and natural phenomena through field surveys, scholars in the United States and Korea use overseas regions as examples to prove theoretical hypotheses. To make matters worse, the social studies education community, which adheres to the traditional content composition based on the Environmental Expansion Act and is trapped in the teaching and learning model, has neglected textbooks full of outdated knowledge and prejudice, rather than reflecting the dynamic changes in the third world (Kim, 2005). As a result, social and multicultural textbooks lacking educational content and reflection on the region continue making side effects that exacerbate prejudice against Southeast Asia in Korean society (Kim, 2007; 2010a; 2010b; 2010c).

### **Conclusion**

This study used big data analysis to find out the problem of prejudice against Southeast Asia, which was superficially revealed in Korean society following the COVID-19 pandemic. The interpretation of the cause of the prejudice problem in Korean society was approached from the perspective of social studies education, and tasks to solve it were explored.

Accordingly, the results of analyzing prejudice in Korea by collecting related documents mentioned in the online channel for about two years from January 2020, when the COVID-19 outbreak started spreading across the globe, to May 2022, are summarized as follows. First, the types of prejudice against Southeast Asia that Koreans have are mainly about racist factors, such as appearance and attitude. It was confirmed that discrimination against attitudes appears in connection to economic levels, such as 'laziness', 'poverty'. It was analyzed to be a primary reason due to the Korean academia, which is passive about regional research and education in Southeast Asia, and the press and media circus that deliver information about Southeast Asia. Second, the critical mechanism of prejudice against Southeast Asia that occurs in Korea is most significantly influenced by the press and media and fixed the distorted identity of Southeast Asia through the economic level, climate, and environment. The press and media are the mechanisms that highly influence Koreans' perception of Southeast Asia, which is responsible for the formation of prejudice. Since these press and media value people's interests, it has been shown to deliver biased images and information about Southeast Asia from an orientalist perspective on travel. Third, Korean academia is not passive or properly reflecting the rapidly changing reality of Southeast Asia. Today, Southeast Asia is rapidly growing in various fields, such as culture and education, as well as the economy. Moreover, opportunities for exchange between countries are increasing. However, unlike this reality, Korean academia is relatively passive in its research on Southeast Asia. Accordingly, it has shown that prejudice against the economic level remained and did not reflect the rapidly changing reality.

In order to solve this problem fundamentally, it is necessary to pay attention to academia, especially in social studies education that emphasizes global citizenship. Since social studies is a subject that overcomes prejudice against a country or region different from society, looking at it from various scales and understanding it in three dimensions, the following tasks should be performed. First, it is necessary to re-examine Southeast Asia as a connecting center between the East and the West, away from Western-centrism. Southeast Asia's dynamic cultural characteristics come from its position connecting the West and the East. If re-examining it through the locational advantages of Southeast Asia, It will be possible to effectively explain the contents that were difficult to properly deal with in the existing social studies subject of Western-centrism. Second, writing textbooks and cultivating human resources for regional research and multicultural education in Southeast Asia should be necessary. The role of social studies education is critical to have a neutral perspective on the image and information of Korean people's prejudice against Southeast Asia and the interest produced by the press and media. In particular, Considering the authority of textbooks in Korean society, social studies textbooks should have a three-dimensional view of Southeast Asia and be able to explain various characteristics in an integrated manner. In addition, sufficient research data and human resources to obtain multiple perspectives should be supported. Third, education content should be reformed through the participation of overseas regional research experts. It is necessary to break away from the existing perspective for developing novel and interesting educational materials on Southeast Asia that have been neglected by social studies. Accordingly, various opinions should be collected from all regional research experts domestically and abroad. Such an attempt will be an opportunity to reflect the latest trends and research results in actual Southeast Asia, not in the press and media.

Recently, the tourist approach and superficial multicultural education prevalent in the Korean education field are, unfortunately, putting a burden on multicultural families and students, contrary to their original purpose (Woo et al., 2018; Kim, 2010). In addition, the educational method of introducing Southeast Asian culture

superficially by uncritically accepting content contaminated with orientalism may hinder the progress toward a genuinely multicultural society (Kim, 2010b). In particular, social studies textbooks that do not adequately reflect the rapidly changing realities of Southeast Asian countries are at risk of reinforcing prejudice and distorted images of Southeast Asia. So far, the Korean government has spent considerable money on multicultural education and policies. However, in contrast, there is still a discriminatory view of migrants from Southeast Asia and multicultural students in actual school life. Recently, the so-called ‘multicultural stigma’ has emerged. In order to overcome the deep-rooted prejudice against Southeast Asia that prevails in Korean society and to recognize the rapidly changing reality properly, it is urgent to innovate the social studies curriculum at the national level drastically.

This study has a limitation: it did not closely examine specific descriptions related to this caused by collecting and analyzing big data in Southeast Asia through online channels and quantitatively analyzed them only for elementary and middle school social studies textbooks. Therefore, it needs to be conducted additional researches, such as a study that analyzes prejudice against countries or regions other than Southeast Asia, research that comprehensively reflects on the contents of other textbooks beyond social studies education, and a study that finds errors in the contents and terms of social studies textbooks, including suggesting concrete improvement measures. Furthermore, after analyzing distorted images and information about Southeast Asia reproduced through the press and media, the synergy effect will be able to enhance by preparing detailed countermeasures for mitigating or overcoming them and strengthening public relations.

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