

## Activating Factors Of The Community Based Education Network By Region Type For Improving Young Children's Character

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to examine the differences of current states and analyze the importance-performance of activating factors in the community based education network (CEN) for improving young children's character by region type. The subjects in this study were 344 teachers of kindergartens and child care centers located at 13 provinces in Korea. The questionnaire was composed of the perception of the purpose of young children's character education through the CEN, current states of community connected & collaborative education activities, and the importance and performance of the activating factors of CEN. The results of examining current states of CEN showed that In terms of 'utilization of human resources in the community' and 'use of institutions and facilities', the rural town found to be lower than big cities and small & medium sized cities. Importance-Performance Analysis results according to region types show that big cities and small and medium-sized cities need intensive improvement efforts in aspects of rich human and material resources of the community and professional education staff in community organizations. In rural towns, it is found that 'leadership' are insufficient. These results can be used as basic data for cultivating the character of young children and the direction to activate the CEN.

**Keywords:** Community based education network, Young children's character education, Activating factors, Region type, Importance-performance analysis

### 1. Introduction

Character refers to the ability of individuals to 'how to be' and 'how to be together' in their society [1] and to a coherent and stable cognitive, affective, and emotional behavior style that interacts with the social environment [2]. Meanwhile a community is a group of people who have a or common linkage [3], and a group of people living in a certain area who share and share common values and interests in economic, social based and cultural solidarity [4]. In other words, communities have organic interactions based on common rules, customs, community consciousness, and common interests on a range of shared areas. Therefore, it is necessary for children to have the ability to respect and live together with others in their communities. They also expected to become democratic citizens by practicing their responsibilities, service and dedication as members of society.

OECD [5] focused on community engagement as a key topic for the quality of early childhood education. The scope of the community includes services that emphasize the development of children, such as neighbors, non-governmental organizations, religious organizations, private foundations, and social and medical services. In Korea, the understanding of institutions, families, and communities as educational resources and their linkage is a major policy tool to help children develop and learn. The '3-5 year-old Nuri Curriculum' suggests that the curriculum should be operated based on cooperation and participation with the family and the community. In Germany and the United States, character education policy is a combination of creativity and civic education. In addition, parents and nonprofit professional organizations in the community participate or volunteer by local citizens to secure human resources, as in [6],[7]. In recent years, various educational approaches have been attempted to enhance the character of infants. However, there has been a lack of discussion on the socialization and character development through the connection of infants and society, and the community connected education activities have also been pointed out as difficulties in sustainability or cohesiveness between early childhood education institutions and local communities. The network is defined as a community network that promotes relationship, connection, cooperation in 'inter-organization' [10]. From an ecological point of view, it provides suggestions that the background and solution of child development or child problems can be accessed contextually through community based education network. As proposed by Bronfenbrenner [11], the various environments of the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem influence the development of the child. The character development of infants should be continued in daily life through the system of cooperating with parents and the community [12].

The community based education network (CEN) for enhancing young children's character in this study will be defined as a cooperative educational system and as providing opportunities for children with abundant character education and environment by utilizing the human, material and environmental resources of the community. The community based education network is not a new concept but rather an action to restore the educational function of family and community as a living community lost due to rapid industrialization. The core concept of the community based education network is transaction, and the area and subject of exchange are composed of human resources, programs, information, and space [13]. In addition, there is a need for vision sharing, leadership, resource sharing, group cohesion (trust) formation, conflict management, loop learning, and change leadership as influential factors for successful implementation [14],[15]. The previous studies are as follows: There is a strong correlation between the effects of educational institutions and local communities on the effects of early childhood education and community linkage the actual state of early childhood education institutions and parents' participation, and

teacher recognition of open day care center and parent involvement [16],[17]. Although there is an approach to establishing connections between education institution and family, it is not yet discussed on the aspect of infant character development and CEN. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to analyze the differences of current states and the importance-performance of activating factors of community based education network for improving young children's character by region type.

Research question 1: Are there differences of current states of the community based education network for improving young children's character according to region type?

Research question 2: What are teachers' perception about the importance-performance of activating factors of community based education network for improving young children's character by region type?

**2. Research Method**

Research subjects, research instruments, research processes, and data analysis methods are as follows.

**2.1. Subject**

The subjects of this study were 344 early childhood teachers who were in early childhood education institutions located at 13 provinces in Korea. The educational institutions where the subjects are working were located in 53.5% in big cities, 34.3% in small and medium-sized cities, and 12.2% in rural town area. 27.3% of subjects belonged to kindergarten and 72.7% of them belonged to early child daycare center. In terms of subjects' job position, 13.9% were directors, 6.7% were chief teachers, and 76.5% were teachers, and 2.9% were others (after school or assistant teachers). In terms of career periods, 23.8% for over 10 years, 16.3% for over 7 years ~ 10 years, 35.5% for over 3 years ~ 7 years, and 24.4% for 3 years or less.

Table 1. Participants' Background Information

Participants' Information		N	%	Total
Region type (size)	Big city	184	53.5	344
	Small & Medium-sized cities	118	34.3	
	Rural town	42	12.0	
Institution type	Kindergarten	94	27.3	344
	Early child daycare center	250	72.7	
Job position	Director	48	13.9	344
	Chief teacher	23	6.7	
	Teachers	263	76.5	
	Others (after school or assistant teacher)	10	2.9	
Career period	3 years or less	84	24.4	344
	Over 3 years ~ 7 years or less	12	35.5	
	Over 7 years ~ 10 years or less	56	16.3	
	Over 10 years	82	23.8	

**2.2. Research Instruments**

Questionnaires were made by reference to education network research, activating factors of community connected education, parent participation research, obstacles and activation plan of community network, school community and social capital, etc [14]-[17]. Vision sharing, leadership, interdependence, resource abundance, resource exchange, loop learning, communication, administrative and financial support were derived as the influencing factors of the community based education network (CEN)



Fig. 1 Seven Factors for Activating Community Based Education Network

The questionnaire was composed of the perception of the purpose of young children's character education through the CEN, current state of community connected & collaborative education activities, and the importance and performance of the activating factors of CEN. The reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) of current state of community connected & collaborative education activities was .83. In addition, the reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) of

importance of educational network factors was .94 and the reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) of performance of educational network factors was .93.

Table 2. QuestionnaireComposition&Reliability

QuestionnaireComposition		No. of Questions	Reliability	Remarks
Purpose of young children’s character education through CEN		10		Nominal scale
Current state of community connected & collaborative education activities		15	.83	Likert 5 point scales
Activating factors ofCEN	Importance	16	.94	Likert 5 point scales
	Performance	16	.93	

Table 3.Factors for ActivatingCommunity Based Education Network

Factor	Label	Definition of Factors
Sharing Vision	V1	Educational objective exchange between teachers and institutional educators
	V2	Educational interest in young children in the community
Leadership	L1	Parent's willingness to cooperate
	L2	The will of principal of kindergarten or child care center
	L3	The willingness to cooperate of local personnel and the head of the community institution
Interdependence	I1	Cooperation with universities, professional organizations and human resources
	I2	Participation of local experts in designing character education programs
Resource Richness	R1	Suitable space and facilities for children’s character education in the community
	R2	Excellent educational programs in community organizations
	R3	Rich human and material resources of the community
	R4	Professional education staff in community organizations
Resource Transaction	T1	Provide and share information on community organizations, people, and environments
	T2	Share character education data
Loop Learning	P1	Educate their understanding of early childhood for local institutions and residents
Administrative & Financial Support	A1	Gain operational budgets
	A2	Establish regulations and laws for community connected education

**2.3. Research Processes**

After verifying validity of questionnaire by 7 experts in research and field, the preliminary survey conducted on 10 principals and teachers in early childhood education institutions. 370 questionnaires were distributed by mail or direct delivery to teachers in kindergartens and daycare centers nationwide, and 351 questionnaires were collected. The final analysis was 344 questionnaires.

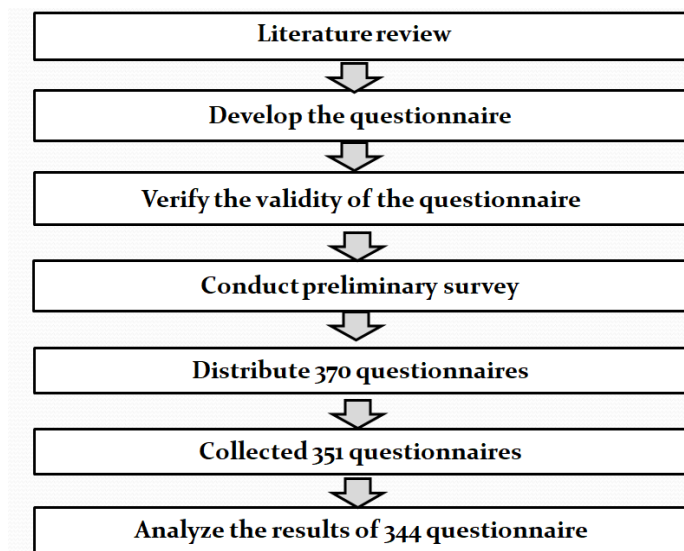


Fig. 2. Research Processes

**2.4. Data Gathering & Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 23.0 program. Mean and standard deviation were calculated for descriptive statistical analysis. One-way ANOVA and post-test (*Scheffé*) were performed for comparative analysis among variables.

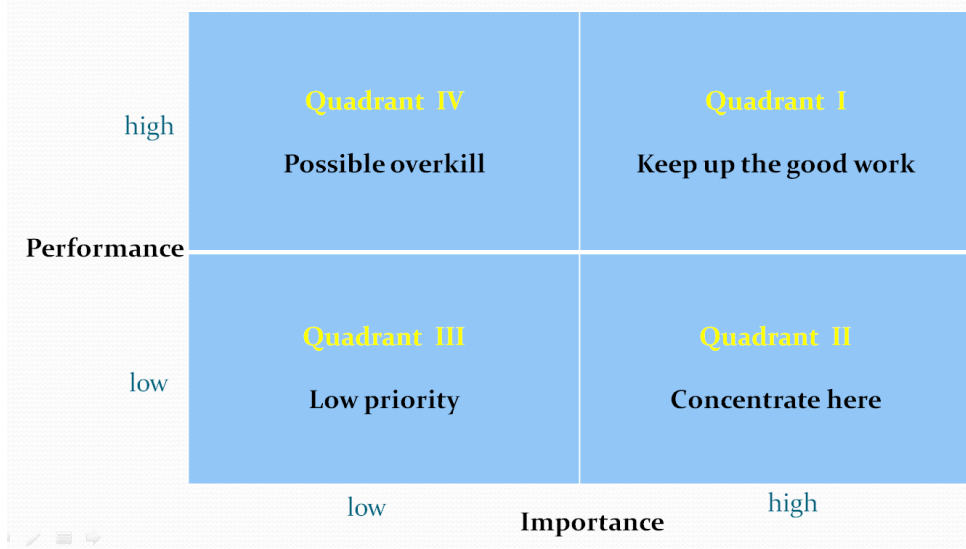


Fig. 3 Attributes of the Quadrant of Importance and PerformanceDegree

Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) is a method of marking a quadrant based on the average value of each item of importance and performance, and giving meaning by making a decision according to the position [18]. As shown in Figure 3, Decision-making guidelines can be provided by deriving priority items or by dividing areas where improvement efforts should be focused and areas that have been over-invested. The <Quadrant I> is the area for maintaining good performance (priority-high, execution-high: keep up the good work), and the <Quadrant II> is the focus area for improvement efforts (priority-high, execution-low: concentrate here), The <Quadrant III> is divided into areas with low priority (priority-low, execution-low), and <Quadrant IV> is divided into areas for avoiding over-effort (priority-low, execution-high: possible overkill).

**3. Research Results**

**3.1 Differences In Current States Of The Community Based Education Network By Region Type**

**3.1.1purpose Of Young Children’s Character Education Through Community Based Education Network:** The results of the responses to the purposes of young children's character education through community based education network (CEN) showedthat the acquisition of social norms (manners, public order, etc.) in the first place.Attitude

without prejudice (disability, poverty, gender role) appeared in second and third place, followed by morality, and respect for natural environment/ecological diversity.

Table 4. Purpose Ranking of YoungChildren’s Character Education

Questions	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
	No. of response (%)	No. of response (%)	No. of response (%)
Acquisition of social norms	196 (57.0)	63 (18.3)	22 (6.4)
An unbiased attitude	34 (9.9)	74 (21.5)	75 (21.8)
Morality	30 (8.7)	70 (20.3)	43 (12.5)
Respect for natural environment/ ecological diversity	18 (5.2)	44 (12.8)	58 (16.9)
Democratic values and attitudes	16 (4.7)	19 (5.5)	38 (11.0)
Understanding the community	16 (4.7)	11 (3.2)	26 (7.6)
Cultural and artistic experience	12 (3.5)	30 (8.7)	29 (8.4)
Understanding multiculturalism	9 (2.6)	18 (5.2)	32 (9.3)
Intergenerational Understanding	8 (2.3)	15 (4.4)	21 (6.1)
Others	5 (1.5)	-	-
Total	344 (100.0)	344 (100.0)	344 (100.0)

**3.1.2current States In Community Based Education Network By Region Type:**The community connected & collaborative education activities implemented by early childhood education institutions can be divided into three categories: Participation in service activities and events in the community, utilization of human resources in the community, and use of institutions and facilities in the community.

• **Differences inParticipation in Service Activities and Events in the Community by Region Type**

The average scores of ‘participation in service activities and events in the community’ were very high, from 4.21 to 4.80, but there was no difference among the region type ( $p>.05$ ).

Table 5. Degree of Participation in Service Activities and Events in the Community

Questions		N	M	SD	F (by region type)
1-1	Visit to the senior citizens' center	344	4.45	1.698	.165
1-2	Helping the poor	344	4.21	1.505	.061
1-3	Cleaning the community	344	4.85	1.586	1.007
1-4	Participation in local events and festivals	344	4.30	1.387	1.544

\*  $p<.05$ , \*\*  $p<.01$

• **Differences inUtilizingHuman Resources in the Communityby Region Type**

The average scores of ‘utilization of human resources in the community’ were very high, from 4.22 to 4.58, and There were statistically significant differences by region type in the invitation local personnel activities in ‘inviting local personnel’ ( $p<.05$ ) and ‘inviting local elders’ ( $p<.05$ ). In other words, utilizing human resources of the rural town found to be lower than that of big cities and small & medium sized cities.

Table 6. Degree of UtilizingHuman Resources in the Community

Questions		N	M	SD	F (by region type)
2-1	Inviting local personnel	344	4.35	1.505	5.355** (a,b>c)
2-2	Inviting local elders	344	4.58	1.527	8.421** (a,b>c)
2-3	Parent education contribution	344	4.36	1.399	1.037
2-4	Community donations from private organizations or professionals	344	4.22	1.252	.012

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , Big city<sup>a</sup>, Small & Medium-sized cities<sup>b</sup>, Rural town<sup>c</sup>

• **Differences in Use of Institutions and Facilities in the Community by Region Type**

The average scores of ‘use of institutions and facilities in the communities’ were very high, from 4.15 to 4.59, and There were statistically significant differences by region type in ‘physical activity’ ( $p < .05$ ). In other words, use of institutions and facilities of the rural town found to be lower than that of big cities and small & medium sized cities.

Table 7. Degree of Use of Institutions and Facilities in the Communities

Questions		N	M	SD	F (by region type)
3-1	Local public agencies	344	4.15	1.144	.315
3-2	Associate educational institutions	344	4.21	1.072	2.320
3-3	Infants and toddlers support institutions	344	4.25	1.133	.871
3-4	Economy, industry, & healthcare	344	4.18	1.295	.875
3-5	Culture and arts	344	4.15	1.162	.865
3-6	Nature experience	344	4.29	1.034	.322
3-7	Physical activity	344	4.59	1.513	4.796** (a,b>c)

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , Big city<sup>a</sup>, Small & Medium-sized cities<sup>b</sup>, Rural town<sup>c</sup>

**3.2. Importance And Performance Analysis Result**

The results of the analysis of the importance and performance of the influencing factors of the community based education network (CEN) to improve the character of young children by regional type are as follows.

**3.2.1. IPA Result Of Big Cities:** According to the importance and performance score, the matrix composed of quadrants was presented as shown in Figure 4. As a result of analyzing the difference in scores on the importance and performance of teachers in big cities on the factors that affect the CEN, in the case of importance, the distribution of average scores is from the lowest 3.29 to the highest 4.45, and the overall average is 4.10. The distribution of the average of performance score was 2.91 to 3.11, and the overall average was 3.41.

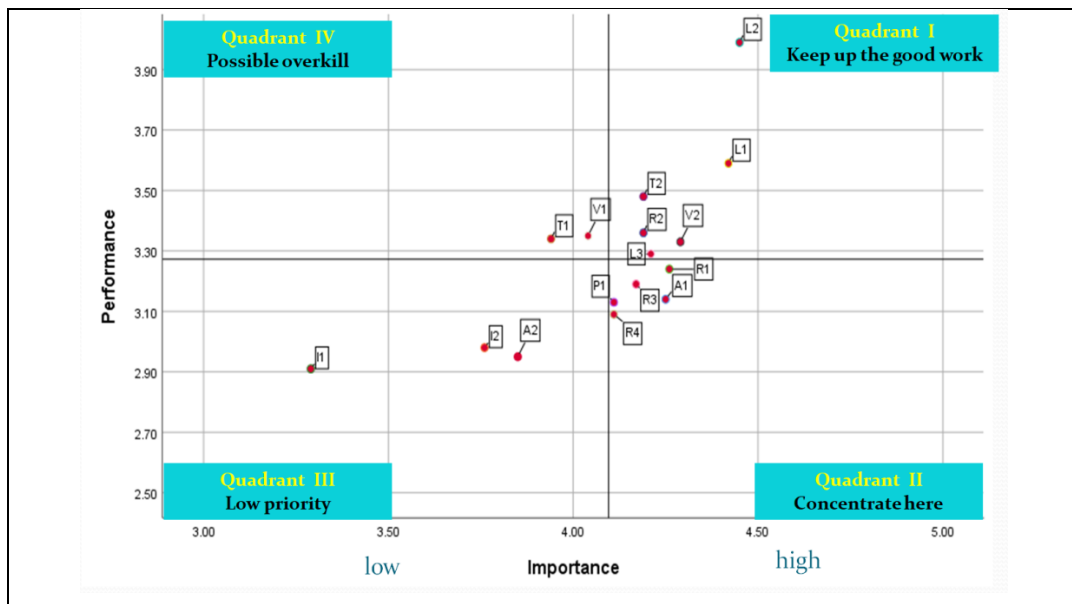


Fig.4IPA Matrix of Big Cities

According to Figure 4, there are six items in <Quadrant I>, which is a strength item that shows high importance and execution degree, and requires continuous maintenance of good performance. <Quadrant II> is five items. It was found that the <Quadrant III>, which has a low priority, had three items, and the <Quadrant IV>, which should avoid excessive effort, was found to have two items.

The items of 'keep up good work' are the understanding and educational interest in young children of the community (V2) among the factors of 'sharing vision', parent's willingness to cooperate among the 'leadership' factors (L1), the will of the principal of kindergarten or child care center (L2), and the factors of human resources and institutional heads' willingness to cooperate (L3), local community organizations and organizations have excellent character education programs (R2) among the factors of 'resource richness', and sharing of personality education materials (T2) among the factors of 'resource transaction'.

On the other hand, the item 'requiring concentration of improvement efforts' are found to be securing character education spaces and facilities suitable for children in the local community, rich human and material resources, and professional staff (R1,R3,R4) among the factors of 'resource richness'. Also, it includes educate their understanding of early childhood for local institutions and residents(P1) and gain operational budgets (A1).

**3.2.2. Ipa Result Of Small And Medium-Sized Cities:** As a result of analyzing the difference in scores on the importance and performance of small and medium-sized city teachers on the factors affecting the community based educational network, in the case of importance, the distribution of the average score is from the lowest 3.84 to the highest 4.56, and the overall average is 4.3. The distribution of the average of performance score was from the lowest 3.02 to the highest 4.22, and the overall average was 3.6.

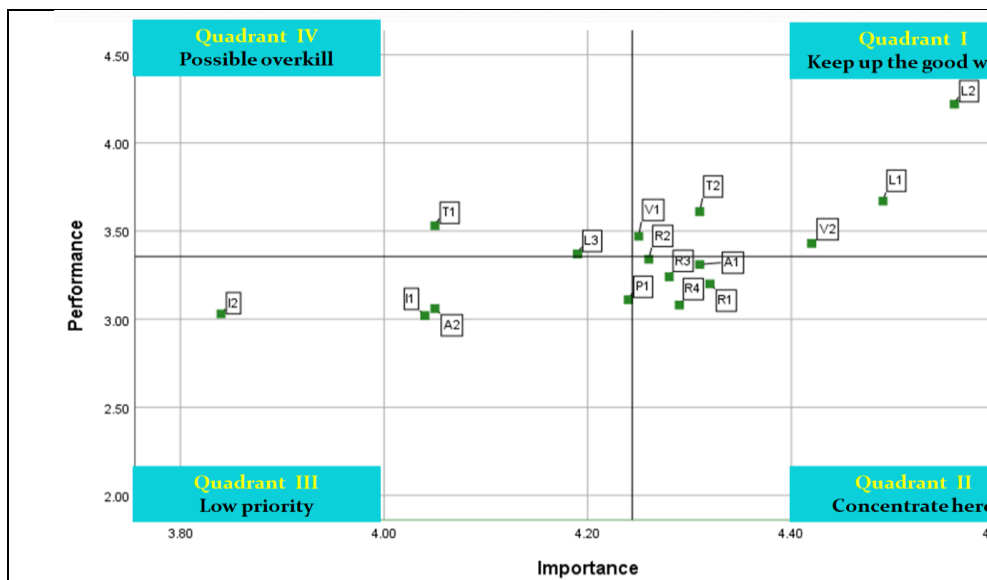


Fig.5IPA Matrix of Small and Medium-Sized Cities

The items of 'keep up good work' are as follows: educational objective exchange between teachers and institutional educators(V1) and the understanding and educational interest in young children of the community (V2) among the factors of 'Sharing vision', parent's willingness to cooperate (L1) and the will of the principal of kindergarten or child care center (L2) among the 'leadership' factors, and sharing of personality education materials (T2) among the factors of 'resource transaction'. On the other hand, the item 'requiring concentration of improvement efforts' are found to be securing character education spaces and facilities suitable for children in the local community, educational program, rich human and material resources, and professional staff (R1~R4) among the factors of 'resource richness'. Also, it includes gain operational budgets (A1).

**3.2.3. IPA Result Of Rural Town:** As a result of analyzing the difference in scores on the importance and performance of rural teachers on the factors affecting the community based educational network, in the case of importance, the distribution of the average of performance score is from the lowest 3.95 to the highest 4.86, and the overall average is 4.44. The distribution of the average of performance score was from 2.9 to 4.31 and the overall average was 3.48.

The items of 'keep up good work' are the understanding and educational interests of the local community for infants (V2), the will of the director for implementation (L2), Rich human and material resources of the community (R3), Share character education data(T2), and Educate their understanding of early childhood for local institutions and residents (P2).On the other hand, items 'requiring concentration of improvement efforts' are parent's willingness to cooperate (L1), the willingness to cooperate of local personnel and the head of the community institution (L3), suitable space and facilities for children’s character education in the community (R1), and gain operational budgets (A1).

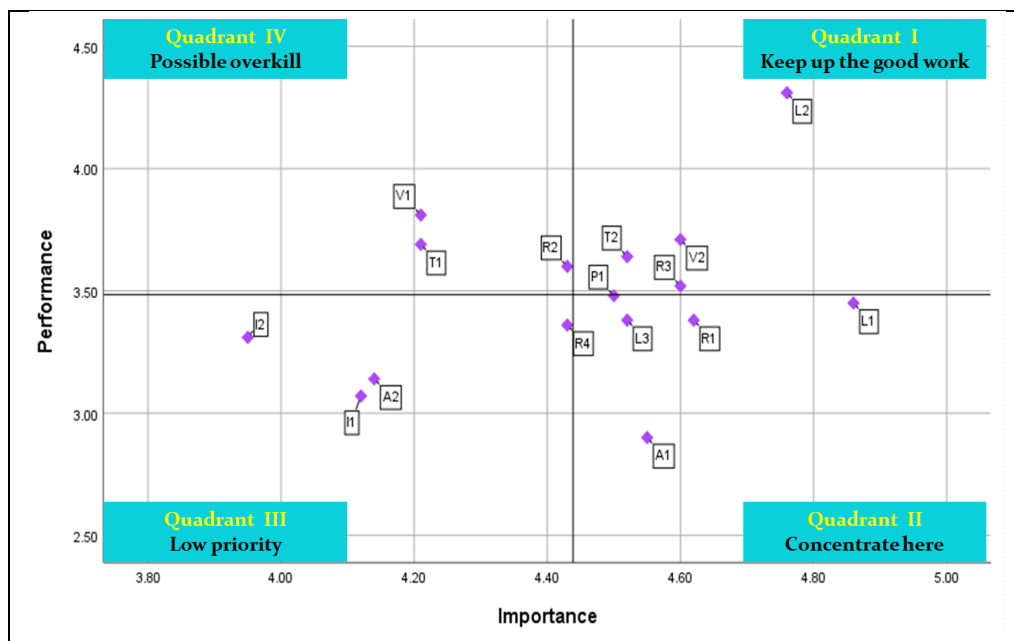


Fig. 6IPA Matrix of Rural Town

**4. Conclusion**

**4.1.Differences In Current States Of The Community Based Education Network By Region Type**

The results of purpose and current states of thecommunity based education network (CEN) by region type were summarized as follows. First, the results of the purposes of young children's character education through the CEN showedthat the acquisition of social norms (manners, public order, etc.) in the first place.Attitude without prejudice (disability, poverty, gender role) appeared in the second and third places, followed by morality, and respect for natural environment/ecological diversity. Second, according to current states of the community connected & collaborative education activities implemented by early childhood education institutions, ‘participation in service activities and events in the community’ had no difference among the region types. In terms of 'utilization of human resources in the community’ such as inviting local personnel and inviting local elders, the rural towns were lower than that of big cities and small & medium sized cities. Also, the 'use of institutions and facilities' of the rural townswas found to be lower than that of big cities and small & medium sized cities.

**4.2.IPA Result Of Activating Factors In The Community Based Education Network**



According to research IPA results, the strength factors that promote the community based education communities in common in big cities, small and medium cities, and rural towns were educational interest in young children in the community (V2), the will of principals of kindergartens or child care centers (L2), and share character education data (T2). This result is consistent with the research results [16],[19] of obtaining the leadership necessary for unity and continuous participation among members through shared vision of core values. Also, 'resource transaction' appeared as a strong factor because it is difficult for educational institutions to operate with limited resources owned by their own organizations in order to continuously operate high-quality education and programs. This can be seen as a result that is consistent with the research [15],[21] that solves problems through exchange of resources. Common factors that require 'intensive improvement efforts' are suitable space and facilities for children's character education in the community (R1) and gain operational budgets (A1). Administrative and financial support factors such as facilities and budget require systematic financial support efforts from administrative agencies such as the Ministry of Education, municipalities and provinces, and the Office of Education, rather than being resolved by individual educational institutions.

The differences by region type are as follows: Big cities and small and medium-sized cities need intensive improvement efforts in aspects of rich human and material resources of the community (R3) and professional education staff in community organizations (R4). It is needed to make a method to establish an information sharing system and a case management system in order to revitalize the sharing of educational resources in the local community and solve the problems of big cities and small and medium-sized cities. In rural towns, it is found that 'leadership' such as parent's willingness to cooperate (L1) and the willingness to cooperate with local personnel and heads of the community institutions (L3) are insufficient. To solve the problems of the rural towns, it is necessary to strengthen local capacity through projects and workshops in which community education network leaders participate [17],[19]. Teacher perception of interdependence (I1, I2) showed low priority in all regions. The importance of trust and cooperation between principals, parents, and other local experts is insignificant compared to interdependence among teachers. Since teachers are highly aware of the teacher's own authority for educational planning and evaluation, it can be seen that they have negative perceptions in the active participation of parents and community experts [17],[20].

This study has a limitation in that the survey on the perception of community members or parents about the factors of education network has not been conducted. So it is necessary to have future in-depth studies including community and family members. Also, it is necessary to follow-up studies of developing an educational program to improve the awareness of early childhood teachers, parents, and local experts on the CEN for character development, and to verify the effectiveness [21],[22]. These results can be used in confirming the role of the local community for cultivating the character of young children, the linkage of educational institutions, homes, and local community resources as educational resources within the community, and the direction for the formation and activation of CEN. Moreover, considering the factors of the CEN, it can develop high-tech education services in connection with smart technology, AI technology, and IoT technology, such as community resource management and individual and group learning history.

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