

## The effects of the intrapersonal intelligence of childcare teachers on respect for children's rights: Mediating effects of positive psychological capital and psychological burnout

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to examine the mediating effects of positive psychological capital and psychological burnout in the relationship between intrapersonal intelligence and respect for children's rights among childcare teachers. This study explores the psychological mechanisms of childcare teachers that help to strengthen children's rights in childcare centers. A survey of childcare teachers was conducted in Gyeonggi-do Province in Korea. Out of 560 copies of the questionnaire that were distributed, 502 were returned, and 465 were used for the analysis after questionnaires with incomplete responses were excluded. The collected data were analyzed using PROCESS macro version 4.0 to examine whether positive psychological capital and psychological burnout mediated the relationship between intrapersonal intelligence and respect for children's rights. The results of this study showed close relationships among all variables. The mediation analysis showed that positive psychological capital and psychological burnout had sequential mediating effects in the relationship between intrapersonal intelligence and respect for children's rights. Childcare teachers first must increase their positive psychological capital to protect and respect children's rights. Also, educational programs tailored for childcare teachers must be developed for better psychological well-being to promote respect for children's rights in the classroom.

**Keywords:** *Intrapersonal intelligence, Positive psychological capital, Psychological burnout, Respect for children's rights.*

### 1. Introduction

Children must be guaranteed the right to freely express their views on all issues affecting them, and their views should be given appropriate weight according to their age and maturity [1]. Despite the growing interest in how children's rights are perceived and legislated on [2], there is relatively little data on how children must think of and respect themselves [3]. Experiencing respect for rights in early childhood has a positive effect on physical and emotional growth and development, and becomes a key factor helping children [4]. Additionally, young children learn the basic concepts of human rights through experiences of having their rights respected by adults, and these experiences lay the foundation for their future social and moral attitudes, affecting them throughout adolescence to adulthood [5]. Children learn the rules and values they must follow in order to live as members of society, and their intellectual, social, and emotional development is significantly affected by the quality of childcare provided [6]. As children's rights cannot be realized through fragmentary and one-time education on rights, childcare facilities must naturally pay attention to children's interests, plans, goals, and abilities, and help them realize their rights [7]. Childcare teachers, the most important human factor that determines the quality of childcare, can be regarded as the key to respect for children's rights in childcare [8][9]. As childcare teachers deal with young children facing difficulties in protecting and

exercising their rights in terms of development [10], they must pay attention to the awareness of and respect for children's rights in childcare [11]. Teachers must properly understand children's rights, how to protect them, and how to help children exercise these rights for their best interests [12].

The competency variables of childcare teachers that affect respect for children's rights in childcare include expertise, character, and intrapersonal intelligence [13][14][15]. Since respect for children's rights in childcare is affected greatly by the psychological or emotional state of the childcare teachers, the teachers must understand their own emotions and know how to control their feelings, and must have a self-reflection process in which they can think rationally in a given situation [16]. Childcare teachers with high intrapersonal intelligence reflect on their actions during the day and modify and enhance them, thereby showing a high level of practice of respect for children's rights in childcare [13]. In other words, higher intrapersonal intelligence among childcare teachers indicates higher levels of respect for children's rights in childcare. Increased intrapersonal intelligence will also improve the quality of the childcare provided.

Another variable affecting respect for children's rights in childcare is positive psychological capital, which refers to an individual's psychological and mental state, and affects the qualifications of childcare teachers and the organizational culture of nursery schools [17]. An individual's positive psychology may serve as a factor that can help not only the individual's physical and mental health but also the development of the group to which he or she belongs [18]. Positive psychological capital has a positive effect on the job engagement of teachers through the partial mediating effects of stress, anxiety, burnout, and job satisfaction [19]. Positive psychological capital has the benefit of helping childcare teachers overcome difficulties and leading them to a happy life, which spreads positive emotions and contributes to respect for children's rights in childcare [20]. In fact, one study found that higher positive psychological capital among childcare teachers also led to an increased practice of respect for children's rights in childcare [21]. Additionally, the subfactors of positive psychological capital such as resiliency and respect for children's rights in childcare showed a positive correlation [22][23], and teachers with high hope, optimism, and self-efficacy have positive views, which affect the way students perceive themselves [24]. These findings show that there is a significant correlation between positive psychological capital and respect for children's rights in childcare. They predict that higher positive psychological capital among childcare teachers may also lead to higher respect for children's rights in childcare, and that the positive psychological capital of childcare teachers may be a key factor that improves the quality of childcare.

However, childcare teachers are working in poor conditions, dealing with the physical and mental labor of having to take care of young children for a long time, difficulties in relationships with fellow teachers or parents, and low social awareness and treatment [25]. Heavy workload and longer working hours gradually lead to higher job stress. Childcare teachers that are exposed to such stress for an extended period may reach the state of burnout in which they are drained of physical, emotional, and mental energy, have lower job performance, and face a decline in personal achievement [26]. Childcare teachers who experience psychological burnout may lose their happiness and zest for life, which ultimately leads to deteriorated quality of childcare and difficulty in providing a suitable environment for children [27]. In other words, it was discovered that higher psychological burnout among childcare teachers in the process of performing their tasks leads to lower respect for children's rights in childcare [28].

Previous studies can be reviewed to assess the relevance between intrapersonal intelligence, positive psychological capital, and psychological burnout. However, it was difficult to find research on the relationship between intrapersonal intelligence and positive psychological capital, and very few studies were on childcare teachers. As studies on college students [29], novice counselors [30], and middle and high school students [31] have proved that intrapersonal intelligence affected positive psychological capital, it can be assumed that similar results will be found on childcare teachers as well.

Positive psychological capital, another variable that can affect respect for children's rights in childcare, is studied as an internal variable that shows a correlation with increased happiness or

decreased burnout [32]. Higher resiliency among childcare teachers leads to lower burnout [33], and positive psychological capital has been proven to be a variable that regulates or lowers the level of burnout [34]. Since subfactors of positive psychological capital such as resiliency, hope, and self-efficacy are in inverse proportion to psychological burnout [35], self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency can contribute to reduced stress, decreased burnout, and work participation [36]. Additionally, many studies on the relationship between positive psychological capital and psychological burnout among childcare teachers [37][38][39] have shown that positive psychological capital had a significant effect on psychological burnout.

Meanwhile, looking at the relationship between intrapersonal intelligence and burnout, self-reflection helps an individual's adaptation and well-being by enabling them to think about their inner self and know themselves [41][42][43]. Jang [44] studied the effect of intrapersonal intelligence and emotional burnout among childcare teachers on their teaching strategies to address problem behaviors of young children, and found that there is a significant negative relationship between intrapersonal intelligence and emotional burnout. A study on secondary school teachers reported that higher job stress among teachers leads to higher psychological burnout in the relationship between job stress, psychological burnout, self-reflection, and social support. However, teachers in the group with high intrapersonal intelligence felt less psychological burnout even when they perceived higher job stress than teachers in the group with low intrapersonal intelligence, proving that intrapersonal intelligence has a significant effect on burnout [45]. These study findings suggest that self-reflection is a critical factor that prevents burnout.

The sections above examined the relationship among respect for children's rights in childcare, intrapersonal intelligence, positive psychological capital, and psychological burnout in childcare teachers, through which it can be predicted that there is a correlation among the variables. However, while there were studies that examined two of these variables [13][31][38][46], none have examined the relationship among all four variables, as was done in this study. Moreover, while there have been studies on counselors, nurses, and mothers addressing intrapersonal intelligence and psychological burnout, there have been very few on childcare teachers. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between respect for children's rights in childcare, intrapersonal intelligence, positive psychological capital, and psychological burnout among childcare teachers, as well as the mediating role played by positive psychological capital and psychological burnout in the relationship between intrapersonal intelligence of childcare teachers and respect for children's rights in childcare. This will provide an empirical basis confirming the effect of intrapersonal intelligence, positive psychological capital, and psychological burnout on childcare teachers' respect for children's rights in childcare, which has a great impact on the growth and development of children. The following research questions are raised by this study. Research Questions are (1) What is the correlation of intrapersonal intelligence, positive psychological capital, and psychological burnout with childcare teachers' respect for children's rights in childcare? (2) Do positive psychological capital and psychological burnout play a sequential mediating role in the relationship between the intrapersonal intelligence of childcare teachers and respect for children's rights in childcare?

## 2. Research Method

### 2.1. Participants

This study was conducted on childcare teachers responsible for young children aged 0-5 who work at 57 nursery schools located in Gyeonggi-do. The questionnaire for the survey was distributed to a total of 560 participants, and 502 copies were collected. In the process of reviewing the collected copies of the questionnaire, 37 copies were excluded due to missed responses, redundancies, and unclear responses, with 465 completed questionnaires ultimately being used as the data for this study. To determine the extent to which childcare teachers understood the contents of the survey items as well as the adequacy of the items and how long it takes to fill out the questionnaire, a preliminary survey was conducted on 40 childcare teachers in charge of children aged 0-5 at 7 nursery schools located in

Gyeonggi-do from August 23 to September 2, 2022. The main survey was conducted from October 20 to November 3, 2022.

The general characteristics of the participants are as shown in Table 1. Most of the childcare teachers were between the ages of 40 and 49. Most of them graduated from 2-year or 3-year college programs. Most have working experience of 5 years to less than 10 years. Most were teaching children who were 1 year old.

**Table 1.**  
Socio-demographic characteristics of subjects ( $N=465$ ).

	<b>Classification</b>	<b>No. (%)</b>
Age	20s	26 (8.7)
	30s	62 (20.7)
	40s	151 (50.5)
	> 50s	60 (20.1)
Education	High school	44 (14.7)
	College	140 (46.8)
	University	95 (31.8)
	Graduate school	18 (6.0)
	Others	2 (.7)
Working experience	< 1 years	10 (3.3)
	1–3 years	44 (14.7)
	3–5 years	57 (19.1)
	5–10 years	115 (38.5)
	> 10 years	73 (24.4)

### 2.2. Measures Respect for Children's Rights

To examine childcare teachers' respect for children's rights in childcare, the scale developed by Kim [47] was used. This scale is comprised of 2 subfactors, which are day-to-day respect (19 items) and best interests of the child (21 items). Respondents rated each item on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 to 5 points, with higher scores indicating higher respect for children's rights in childcare. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of each of the subfactors was as follows: day-to-day respect .92 and best interests of the child .93. The total reliability of the tool for measuring respect for children's rights in this study was .96.

### 2.3. Intrapersonal Intelligence

Intrapersonal intelligence was measured using the Intrapersonal Intelligence Assessment Scale for adults by Ahn and Oh [48]. This scale is comprised of 4 subfactors, which are self-understanding (9 items), self-control & utilizing (12 items), self-planning (8 items), and self-reflection (6 items). Respondents rated each item on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 to 5 points, with higher scores indicating higher intrapersonal intelligence. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of each of the subfactors was as follows: self-understanding .92, self-control & utilizing .88, self-planning .90, and self-reflection .80. The total reliability of the tool for measuring intrapersonal intelligence in this study was .95.

### 2.4. Positive Psychological Capital

Positive psychological capital was measured using the scale by Yoo [49] who translated the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) by Luthans et al. [50] and set the sub-variables based on that tool. This scale is comprised of 4 subfactors, which are self-efficacy (6 items), optimism (6 items), hope (6 items), and resiliency (6 items). Respondents rated each item on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 to 5 points, with higher scores indicating higher positive psychological capital. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of each of the subfactors was as follows: self-efficacy .89, optimism .87, hope .89, and resiliency .90. The total

reliability of the tool for measuring positive psychological capital in this study was .94.

### 2.5. Psychological burnout

Psychological burnout was measured using the scale by Lee [51], who revised and supplemented the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) developed by Maslach and Jackson [52] to make it more suitable for childcare teachers. This scale is comprised of 3 subfactors, which are emotional exhaustion (9 items), depersonalization (5 items), and personal accomplishment (8 items). Respondents rated each item on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 to 5 points, and positive items (8 items) were reverse scored. Higher scores indicate higher psychological burnout. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of each of the subfactors was as follows: emotional exhaustion .93, depersonalization .88, and personal accomplishment .89. The total reliability of the tool for measuring psychological burnout in this study was .93.

### 2.6. Data analysis

The copies of the questionnaire collected in this study were analyzed using SPSS 23.0 and SPSS Process Macro 4.0, as follows. First, descriptive statistics were conducted to identify the general characteristics of the participants as well as the level of each variable, and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of each of the items was calculated to test the reliability of the tools. Second, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the correlation between variables. Third, SPSS PROCESS Macro 4.0 was used for analysis to examine whether positive psychological capital and psychological burnout show mediating effects in the impact of childcare teachers' intrapersonal intelligence on respect for children's rights in childcare. Here, bootstrapping was used to calculate the total effect as well as the direct and indirect effects of each variable, and to test the significance of the indirect effect.

### 2.7. Ethical considerations

Anonymous survey was conducted and written consent was collected from teachers. Also, data were anonymized to protect participants' privacies.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. General Characteristics of Study Variables

Table 2 shows the results of examining the mean, standard deviation (SD), skewness, and kurtosis to identify the basic data for each subfactor of childcare teachers' respect for children's rights in childcare, intrapersonal intelligence, and positive psychological capital and psychological burnout. The mean and SD of respect for children's rights in childcare were  $M=4.35(SD=.42)$ . The mean and SD of intrapersonal intelligence were  $M=3.89(SD=.46)$ . The mean and SD of positive psychological capital were  $M=3.83(SD=.59)$ . The mean and SD of psychological burnout were  $M=2.20(SD=.58)$ . Moreover, skewness and kurtosis of all variables must not exceed the absolute value of 3 or 7 [53]. As skewness of the variables was between -.25 and .22, and kurtosis was between -.42 and 1.07, the assumption of normal distribution was met.

**Table 2.**  
Descriptive statistics (N=465).

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Respect for children's rights	4.35	0.42	-0.25	-0.42
Intrapersonal intelligence	3.89	0.46	-0.07	1.07
Positive psychological capital	3.83	0.59	0.02	-0.14
Psychological burnout	2.20	0.58	0.22	-0.18

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between childcare teachers' respect for children's rights, intrapersonal intelligence, positive psychological capital,



and psychological burnout, and the results are as shown in [Table 3](#). Intrapersonal intelligence had a significant positive correlation with respect for children's rights ( $r=.43$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and higher intrapersonal intelligence indicated higher respect for children's rights. Moreover, positive psychological capital and respect for children's rights had a significant positive correlation ( $r=.49$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and psychological burnout and respect for children's rights had a significant negative correlation ( $r=-.37$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Finally, intrapersonal intelligence and psychological burnout had a significant negative correlation ( $r=-.56$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and positive psychological capital and psychological burnout had a significant negative correlation ( $r=-.52$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

**Table 3.**  
Correlations among the variables (N=465).

	Variable	1	2	3
1	Respect for children's rights	-		
2	Intrapersonal intelligence	0.43***	-	
3	Positive psychological capital	0.49***	0.63***	-
4	Psychological burnout	-0.37***	-0.56***	-0.52***

Note: \*.  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*.  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*.  $p < 0.001$ .

### 3.2. The Mediating Roles of Positive Psychological Capital and Psychological Burnout in the Relationship Between Intrapersonal Intelligence and Respect for Children's Rights

Data were analyzed using PROCESS, a macro program of SPSS Statistics, to verify the mediating effect of positive psychological capital and psychological burnout in the relationship between intrapersonal intelligence and respect for children's rights. Model 6 was used in mediation analysis [54], and bootstrapping was used to test the significance of the dual mediation effect. [Table 4](#) and [Figure 1](#) show the results of analyzing the sequential mediation effect of positive psychological capital and psychological burnout in the relationship between intrapersonal intelligence and respect for children's rights. Through testing the significance of each path, it was found that intrapersonal intelligence had a significant positive effect on positive psychological capital ( $B=.80$ ,  $\beta=.63$ ,  $p<.001$ ), a negative effect on psychological burnout ( $B=-.48$ ,  $\beta=-.38$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and a positive effect on respect for children's rights ( $B=.14$ ,  $\beta=.16$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Moreover, positive psychological capital had a significant negative effect on psychological burnout ( $B=-.27$ ,  $\beta=-.28$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and a positive effect on respect for children's rights ( $B=.24$ ,  $\beta=.33$ ,  $p<.001$ ), while psychological burnout had a significant negative effect on respect for children's rights ( $B=-.08$ ,  $\beta=-.11$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

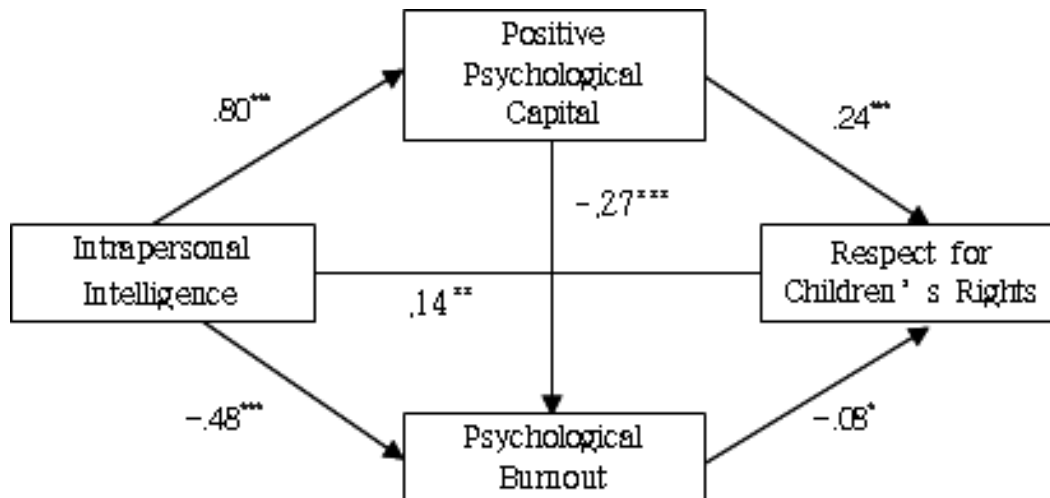
**Table 4.**

The effect of intrapersonal intelligence on childcare respect rights of infants and preschoolers: the serial mediation effect of positive psychological capital and psychological burnout (N=465).

	Positive psychological capital			Psychological burnout			Respect for children's rights		
	$B(\beta)$	SE	p	$B(\beta)$	SE	p	$B(\beta)$	SE	p
Intrapersonal intelligence	0.80*** (0.63)	0.05	<0.001	-0.48*** (-0.38)	0.06	<0.001	0.14** (0.16)	0.05	<0.01
Positive psychological capital				-0.27***(-.28)	0.05	<0.001	0.24*** (0.33)	0.04	<0.001

Psychological burnout							-0.08* (-0.11)	0.04	<0.05
Constant	0.71***	0.18	<0.001	5.10***	0.19	<0.001	3.05***	0.23	<0.001
Model summary	$R^2=0.40$			$R^2=0.35$			$R^2=0.27$		
	$F(1, 463)=304.69, p<.001$			$F(2, 462)=126.51, p<0.001$			$F(3, 461)=56.45, p<0.001$		

Note: \*.  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*.  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*.  $p < 0.001$ .



**Figure 1.**

The effect of intrapersonal intelligence on respect for children's rights: the serial mediation effect of positive psychological capital and psychological burnout.

Next, bootstrapping was used to verify the mediating effect of positive psychological capital and psychological burnout, and the results are shown in [Table 5](#). In the first path, the indirect effect through which intrapersonal intelligence reaches respect for children's rights through positive psychological capital did not include 0 at the 95% confidence level, and thus the mediating effect was significant (Lower Limit CI=.11, Upper Limit CI=.27). In the second path, the indirect effect through which intrapersonal intelligence reaches respect for children's rights through psychological burnout did not include 0 at the 95% confidence level, and thus the mediating effect was significant (Lower Limit CI=.002, Upper Limit CI=.08). In the third path, the indirect effect through which intrapersonal intelligence reaches respect for children's rights through positive psychological capital and psychological burnout did not include 0 at the 95% confidence level, and thus the mediating effect was significant (Lower Limit CI=.001, Upper Limit CI=.04). None of the three paths included 0 in the confidence interval of indirect effect, which indicates that these three indirect effects are statistically significant. In other words, the mediating effect of positive psychological capital and psychological burnout in the relationship between intrapersonal intelligence and respect for children's rights, and the sequential mediation effect of positive psychological capital and psychological burnout all turned out to be significant.

**Table 5.**  
Verification of the mediating effect of positive psychological capital and psychological burnout (N=465)

Path	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Intrapersonal Intelligence → Positive psychological capital → Respect for children's rights	0.19	0.04	0.11	0.27
Intrapersonal intelligence → Psychological burnout → Respect for children's rights	0.04	0.02	0.002	0.08
Intrapersonal intelligence → Positive psychological Capital → Psychological burnout → Respect for children's rights	0.02	0.01	0.001	0.04
Total indirect effects	0.24	0.04	0.17	0.32

Note: \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001

#### 4. Conclusions and Discussion

According to the results of this study, positive psychological capital and psychological burnout played mediating roles in the relationship between intrapersonal intelligence of childcare teachers and respect for children's rights. Intrapersonal intelligence had a significant positive effect on positive psychological capital, the first mediating variable, while positive psychological capital had a significant negative effect on psychological burnout, the second mediating variable. Moreover, psychological burnout had a significant positive effect on respect for children's rights, which is the dependent variable, proving that dual serial mediation paths were all significant. In other words, the total effect, direct effect, and indirect effect of intrapersonal intelligence on respect for children's rights in the relationship between intrapersonal intelligence and respect for children's rights were all significant. The direct effect decreased after the mediating variables were included, and the total indirect effect was significant, but the direct effect was still greater than the indirect effect. Specifically, the indirect effect through positive psychological capital was significant in the relationship between intrapersonal intelligence and respect for children's rights, and the indirect effect through psychological burnout was also significant. The indirect effect that sequentially goes through positive psychological capital and psychological burnout was also significant, and positive psychological capital and psychological burnout had a dual mediation effect in the relationship between intrapersonal intelligence and respect for children's rights.

This study showed that higher intrapersonal intelligence among childcare teachers led to higher positive psychological capital, which then led to lower psychological burnout, thereby successfully showing respect for children's rights in childcare. This is consistent with studies by Yoon [30] and Kang [31] which revealed that intrapersonal intelligence has a significant effect on positive psychological capital. Moreover, it is also consistent with the studies by Kim [37], Kim [38], and Park [39] which reported that higher positive psychological capital may lead to less burnout caused by heavy workload and emotional labor of teachers.

It was found that, when positive psychological capital and psychological burnout were also considered, intrapersonal intelligence had a direct effect on respect for children's rights, as well as an indirect effect through positive psychological capital and psychological burnout. In sum, both positive psychological capital and psychological burnout played partial mediating roles in the relationship between intrapersonal intelligence and respect for children's rights in childcare. This implies that intrapersonal intelligence affects respect for children's rights through positive psychological capital and psychological burnout; and intrapersonal intelligence affects interaction with children as well as motivation, thereby improving the competencies of childcare teachers. Moreover, there is a need for high-quality education for childcare teachers that can promote the development of positive



psychological capital in areas such as individual psychological state, self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency so that they can well respect children's rights [55]. To increase the positive psychological capital of childcare teachers, preventive measures must be taken such as various workshops and peer coaching programs, through which their psychological burnout must be reduced. In addition, it is important to help teachers build teaching competencies and efficacy and handle stressors in the work environment to reduce their psychological burden [56]. In the end, for childcare teachers to properly respect children's rights in childcare, social and policy measures must be adopted that will increase their intrapersonal intelligence and positive psychological capital and reduce their psychological burnout. The limitations and significance of this study are as follows.

#### 4.1. Limitations of the Study

The survey on childcare teachers' respect for children's rights in childcare was conducted in the form of a self-reporting questionnaire, which may reflect the subjectivity of childcare teachers in evaluating themselves, and the respondents may also have felt pressure to give socially desirable answers. Nonetheless, it seems valid to assume that no one can better judge one's own self-efficacy or intelligence than themselves. Therefore, further research must also adopt methods such as observation, interview, and reporting from others along with the self-report questionnaire to come up with more objective and in-depth results.

#### 4.2. Implications For Practice and Future Research

This study revealed that intrapersonal intelligence is a critical factor in respect for children's rights in childcare. Accordingly, this study highlights the need to include education related to intrapersonal intelligence in programs for childcare teachers or training for pre-service childcare teachers. This study also has significance in revealing the effect of childcare teachers' intrapersonal intelligence on respect for children's rights through positive psychological capital and psychological burnout. It was found that positive psychological capital and psychological burnout played an important role in the relationship between intrapersonal intelligence and respect for children's rights. Thus, it is necessary to establish childcare policies to improve the working environment, so that childcare teachers can increase their positive psychological capital and reduce psychological burnout.

Second, this study examined only personal variables related to respect for children's rights, such as childcare teachers' intrapersonal intelligence, positive psychological capital, and psychological burnout. However, many variables are believed to have complex impacts on respect for children's rights. Thus, it is absolutely necessary to examine various personal, social, policy, and environmental variables, especially today, when there are expectations regarding the qualitative growth of respect for children's rights.

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