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An Exploratory Study on the Inter-Korean MICE Industry Exchange and Cooperation Model

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examined the MICE Industry as an exchange and cooperation object to break through the inter-Korean relations in the crisis phase.

Design/methodology/approach: This study conducted exploratory research applying grounded theory, a qualitative research method that builds a theoretical model through interviews with experts.

Findings: The MICE industry is a viable alternative to inter-Korean exchange and cooperation and would play an essential role in improving inter-Korean relations. Paradoxically, the sanctions against North Korea reveal the MICE industry's discriminatory characteristics as a new paradigm for exchange and cooperation.

Research limitations/implications: This study tried to build a theoretical exchange and cooperation model. Therefore, it is necessary to present specific strategies based on empirical and policy research in the future.

Originality and Value: This study sought to approach inter-Korean exchange and cooperation, which had not been attempted before, from the perspective of the MICE industry.

Keywords: MICE Industry, Inter-Korean Exchange & Cooperation, Convention & Exhibition, North Korea, Grounded Theory

I. Introduction

With the bombing of the inter-Korean Joint Liaison Office in June 2020, inter-Korean relations are in a state of extreme crunch. Along with the inauguration of the Moon Jae-in administration in South Korea, the results of the inter-Korean and North American summits in 2018 seemed to show positive signs of improving inter-Korean relations. However, due to the subsequent breakdown of the US-North Korea summit in Hanoi and the internal and external situation

with no apparent progress, North Korea's defamation level gradually increased, leading to the detonation of the joint liaison office (Masterson 2020). The standoff between the two Koreas further increases the need for substantial exchange and cooperation (E&C), and the South Korean government is also attempting to seek new relations and dialogue with the North through the replacement of the Minister of Unification and Chief Director of the National Intelligence Service (NIS) (Do 2020). Therefore, the possibility of E&C restoring mutual trust between the two Koreas is growing when inter-Korean relations have deteriorated ironically.

Inter-Korean E&C has made in the form of economic cooperation centered on the manufacturing industry.

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However, as the current closure of the Kaesong Industrial Complex shows, inter-Korean E&C requires a different approach and paradigm (Park and Kim 2019). Therefore, establishing various types of E&C systems between the two Koreas to minimize imbalances and gaps can be a desirable alternative to preparing for unification in a more realistic manner (Kim 2006). As the core of continuous E&C in the process of German unification was social and cultural contact and traffic (Jonsson 2006; Rudolph and Wüstenhagen 2006), the need for meetings between the two Koreas is all the more urgent in the current situation where even dialogue has cut off. The MICE industry is drawing attention as a representative field of cooperation in economy and industry, with mutual encounter as a fundamental attribute in terms of inter-Korean E&C.

The MICE industry is an expression that broadly refers to Meetings, Incentive Tours, Convention, and Exhibition as a comprehensive industry (Schlenrich 2008) and is recognized as a high-value-added industry increases national competitiveness (Kim, Lee, and Shi 2018; Hai-sen 2004). South Korea selected it as a high-value-added service industry and a new growth engine industry in January 2009 (Park and Kim 2016). North Korea is also strategically fostering and organizing various MICEs, including the Pyongyang International Trade Fair. Therefore, inter-Korean MICE industry E&C meets mutual interests and needs and is an area where industrial approaches are possible as a form of economic cooperation because there is little difference in opinion (Park and Kim 2019).

The current inter-Korean relations are more likely to exchange and cooperate in tourism and service fields, including the economy, than in the political and military fields due to the prolonged stalemate. Even in the German case, which achieved unification in the context of division, E&C in the economic and industrial fields centered on human interchange and traffic were the beginning of unification (Levcik and Stankovsky 2017; Hancock 2019). In particular, Germany used the MICE industry as a necessary means of E&C between East and West under the divided situation (Rudolph and Wüstenhagen 2006)

and has become a leading country in the world's MICE industry today (AUMA 2013; Gehrke 2018). Accordingly, the MICE industry is also becoming a new target for inter-Korean E&C, increasing the need and possibilities for its role.

Despite its importance as a new paradigm for inter-Korean E&C, little research has been conducted on inter-Korean E&C through the MICE industry at home and abroad. If MICE extends to tourism in a broader concept, research on inter-Korean E&C has been continually focusing on tourism in Mt. Geumgang and Kaesong Complex (Chai 2015; Cho 2014; Hong and Bae 2019; Lankov 2018; Shin 2009; Shin 2010). However, this is a more authentic expression of 'inter-Korean tourism exchange cooperation' rather than the perspective of MICE industry E&C centered on exhibition and convention. Recently, research on North Korea's MICE industry is being conducted little by little (Lee 2006; Yoon 2008). Some studies that review the current status of the North Korean exhibition industry by the regime and examine ways to exchange and cooperate accordingly (Park and Kim 2019), and studies on promoting inter-Korean exchanges through the exhibition industry (Ahn and Kim 2020). However, these studies have limitations in presenting a simple current status, discussing the premise of realization without reviewing the possibility of specific E&C through the MICE industry, or presenting only abstract directions.

Therefore, this study is an exploratory research to construct a MICE industry E&C model as a concrete strategy, primarily to complement the insufficient research on inter-Korean MICE industry E&C. The purpose of this study is to examine the potential and role of the MICE industry as an object of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation. As the first step for this, we intend to diagnose the current situation and prepare for the future targeting experts related to inter-Korean E&C and MICE industry. In other words, this research explores the possibility of inter-Korean E&C through the MICE industry and seek specific strategies.

Specific research questions for this purpose are as follows. First, is the MICE industry appropriate

as an object of inter-Korean E&C? If appropriate, how likely is E&C through MICE? Second, what are the MICE industry's distinguishing characteristics compared to other industries as an object for E&C? Third, what is the concrete form of inter-Korean E&C that can be realized through such MICE?

This study aims to analyze both aspects of inter-Korean relations and the MICE industry in various ways by describing the phenomenon and scenario expected of MICE E&C through expert interviews. Finally, by conceptualizing these analysis results, we intend to develop a theoretical paradigm process model. This not only improves the academic foundation for inter-Korean exchange and cooperation through MICE, but can also serve as a theoretical foundation for establishing specific strategies for MICE exchange and cooperation in the future.

As a research method, grounded theory, a qualitative research method, is used when there is no well-known research topic or there is no appropriate theory to explain the phenomenon (Kim and Lee 2019). Among the grounded theory research methods, Strauss and Corbin's paradigm model, which is effective in analyzing phenomena in depth through various ways and deriving systematic research results through the coding process, is adopted (Kim 2019).

II. Literature Review and Conceptual Background

A. Why is the MICE Industry Suitable for inter-Korean Exchange & Cooperation?

The MICE industry has not been considered a means of inter-Korean E&C at the academic and practical levels. However, why the MICE industry is regarded as a new paradigm of inter-Korean E&C can be seen from the MICE industry's attribute.

First, the MICE industry is based on meetings on the premise of people's movement (Smagina 2017), so it can be the most primary ways of opening the door for inter-Korean E&C in the deadlock. All

forms of E&C are human interchanges in which the actions themselves are made by people (Tuomela 2013). As the East and West German case shows, one of the most critical factors in the E&C of divided countries is the expansion of human contacts (Hancock, 2019). The MICE is a tool and medium for a meeting of people, and fundamentally, it cannot be established unless essential human factors exist. One of the most significant differences in current inter-Korean relations from East and West Germany is the lack of human traffic and exchanges. Therefore, the MICE industry can serve as priming water for E&C in the current inter-Korean situation and a vital means to promote it.

Second, North Korea is highly likely to accept the MICE industry as there is little conflict of interest between the two Koreas due to E&C in the economic domain, not political and military. North Korea has also been actively fostering MICE industries, including tourism, since the Kim Jong Un regime (Ouellette 2016; Ouellette 2020). Thus, North Korea has a high understanding of MICE and strategically utilizes it to obtain foreign currency (Park and Kim 2019). In particular, North Korea actively organizes MICE for various reasons, such as external economic exchanges and the inflow of advanced technology, information, and industrial products from abroad, and participating in events held overseas (Yoon 2008). The 'Pyongyang International Trade Fair,' a representative international MICE event in North Korea, has been held for more than 20 years since 1998 and has been used to attract foreign capital and revitalize the economy (Global Mice Insight 2019). Also, the MICE is a service industry that does not have a considerable political disagreement (Hai-sen 2004). It approaches the economic industry realm to promote in the form of already experienced economic cooperation, such as the Kaesong Industrial Complex, and both Koreas can take financial results from it (Nam 2001; Wrobel 2014). Therefore, MICE E&C can also be attractive from North Korea's perspective. It is a critical means of E&C between the two Koreas and a subject that can be sufficiently discuss as an industrial field (Park and Kim 2019).

Third, in terms of economic performance, MICE is an industry that has a substantial ripple effect on

related industries (Anas, Maddiah, Noor, Nurin, Sulaiman, and Wee 2020; Hu and Yang 2006; Schlenrich 2008), not just one industry, but a comprehensive industry with a combination of several industries (Smagina 2017). Therefore, it appears that the economic effect of MICE-related participants on the region is greater than that of general tourists (Jin and Yoon 2018). It is recognized as an industry with significant economic impact when comprehensively considering the public relations and cultural ripple effects on the region where MICE is held and the consumption spent in the region (McCatney 2008; Muresan 2020). For this reason, the MICE is being used as a helpful marketing tool and attraction strategy for major cities around the world (Kim 2018; Smagina 2017). The MICE industry is associated with all industry areas depending on what is used as items. Therefore, the MICE industry is a catalyst that promotes and leads E&C and can drive E&C of other industries (Park and Kim, 2017). As such, E&C is one of the functionalist approach strategies used by divided countries and is a crucial way to achieve national prosperity and national reconciliation at the same time. Historically, the patterns of E&C between divided countries have also been made first in the economic and industrial fields centered on traffic (Levcik and Stankovsky 2019).

B. MICE Industry Exchange and Cooperation in East & West Germany

Theoretically, E&C between divided countries can be approached preferentially in terms of economics with relatively few conflicts of interest (Plock 2019), and when economic integration achieves the desired results, it expands to the political aspects (Haas 1958; Mitrany 1975). The approaches of Functionalism and Neo-Functionalism, which can be expanded to political aspects while resolving specific conflicts through E&C of the economic aspect, have been explained in the integration process of many divided countries in history. It can also usefully apply in resolving the current situation on the Korean Peninsula (Lee

2018; Han 2019). In divided countries, E&C is primarily a means of pursuing shared interests and further plays a vital role in restoring homogeneity through reconciliation by alleviating distrust and antagonism resulting from division and building mutual trust.

Germany is a country that can share many things with the Korean peninsula regarding the E&C of these divided countries and should refer to as a good precedent. It is similar to the Korea in that it suffered division due to the war. However, there is also a difference that unification was achieved as a result of continuous E&C (Jonsson 2006). To this end, East and West Germany have maintained steady E&C for decades since the division. In 1951, shortly after the division, trade between East and West Germany was recognized as internal Germany trade and exempted from tariffs (Plock 2019), and exchanges on transport and communications, including human and physical exchanges, were already possible (Hancock 2019). Through Prime Minister Willy Brandt's Eastern Policy (Ostpolitik), West Germany recognized East Germany as the same country and promoted various forms of E&C policies to create realistic conditions for unification (Levcik & Stankovsky 2017).

In terms of the MICE industry, Germany is a representative country that has grown and developed by recognizing MICE as an industry in the early days, leading the world trade fair industry (Feng & Yang 2009). Regarding the convention center's scale, as an infrastructure for hosting MICE, the number of exhibition hall over 100,000 square meters, a symbolic size of the exhibition hall, is also overwhelming, and there are more than 70 specialized exhibition-convention centers throughout Germany (Lee 2016). As such, the MICE industry, especially the trade fair industry, has naturally developed as a means of marketing to export the products made by manufacturing-oriented Germany (Zhi-ling 2009).

Even in the situation of division, the MICE industry played an essential role in enabling continuous E&C between East and West Germany. Leipzig is the representative city of E&C through MICE in Germany. Since the Middle Ages, it has led European trade

(Rodekamp 2005), and trade fairs have been held since 1165 (Wohlfarth 1997). At the heart of this growth was the Leipzig Trade Fair (Leipzig Messe). For the first time globally, the Leipzig Trade Fair presented a new exhibition trend, focusing on displaying products rather than sales on-site (Schoop 2005).

The significance of the Leipzig Fair for E&C between East and West Germany is that even after the division, it has continued to organize the fair to maintain the meeting each other, enabling human and physical contacts. Despite various impediments that prevented the fair from being held, the West German companies participating in the fair achieved desired results. It has also served as an essential place for trade and commodity transactions and East and West German businesspeople and corporate representatives to meet. Besides, various forms of human and physical contact were made, including West German employees hired by the Leipzig Fair Bureau of East Germany, East German booth operators requested by West German companies, and various lodging facilities and guesthouse workers (Rudolph & Wüstenhagen 2006). Through this, a human trust relationship was formed between the East and West German residents, and their understanding of each other was expanded, which became an essential foundation for German reunification in the future.

III. Methodology

A. Grounded Theory and its Application

This study intends to conduct exploratory research for inter-Korean MICE industry E&C by applying grounded theory, one of the qualitative research methods. Grounded theory is a research method that complements the discussion on data analysis, pointing out as a limitation of qualitative research through a qualitative coding process (Holton 2007). In other words, as indicated by the expression of ‘ground,’ it is a research method that attempts to derive a general theory by grasping the phenomena of the

research subject based on empirical data (Jensen & Jankowski 1991; Kim and Lee 2013; Strauss and Corbin 1998).

The data analysis method of grounded theory is based on the coding process. The coding process is a research procedure of grounded theory and analysis process that forms a final theory through organizing and conceptualizing the collected data. Furthermore, it sequentially progresses in the steps of ‘open coding,’ ‘axis coding,’ ‘selective coding’ (Kim and Lee 2019; Rossman and Rallis 1998). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), ‘open coding’ is an analysis process that derives concepts from collected data, categorizes similar concepts, and gives names. ‘Axis coding’ is a step that reveals the relationship between categories derived through open coding with a paradigm model and divides into category analysis and process analysis. This paradigm model comprises six types: Causal Conditions, Contextual Conditions, Central Phenomena, Intervening Conditions, Action-Interaction Strategies, and Consequence depending on the relationship between categories, and Table 1 shows the details.

The last step, selective coding, is the process of discovering the core categories covering the entire study and describing the relationship between the categories around the core categories, and theorizing them into one final model.

Grounded theory is mainly used when the conceptual framework for a phenomenon is not clear or when there is not generally known about the research topic. It is also helpful in forming new theories when it is difficult to find an appropriate variable because research is not conducted repeatedly or when an appropriate theory to explain a phenomenon does not exist. Although it is a qualitative research method, it can also derive systematic results through the coding process and paradigm model (Creswell 2007). In such a situation where prior studies or data are insufficient, it is inevitable to adopt qualitative research methods through field observation and interviews with related experts and workers. Among qualitative research methods, the effectiveness of grounded theory, a systematic research method that combines induction

Table 1. Components and Contents of Grounded Theory

Component	Content
Casual Conditions	• Situations or events that affect or cause the phenomenon to occur
Contextual Conditions	• Special conditions that create situations that affect the phenomenon • A specific list of the attributes in which the phenomenon lies
Central Phenomenon	• Central ideas or events that are controlled or related through actions and interactions
Intervening Conditions	• Conditions that act to promote or suppress strategies of action and interaction taken within a specific context • Extensive structural situations in which causal conditions affect phenomena
Action / Interaction Strategies	• How to handle the strategies, situations, and issues necessary to deal with, carry out, and respond to the phenomenon • Continuous and processive characteristics
Consequences	• The result that the central phenomenon appeared through several actions and interactions

*Source: Author rewrites from Goulding(2002), Kim & Lee (2019), and Strauss & Corbin (1998)

and deduction, appears high.

The reason for adopting the grounded theory in this study is the grounded theory's characteristics mentioned above. In the case of research on inter-Korean relations, restrictions on access to information and lack of prior research are the biggest obstacles. In particular, there is virtually no information and research related to the MICE industry of North Korea. Therefore, in terms of exploratory research that seeks directions by grasping the current situation for inter-Korean MICE industry E&C, it was judged that the research method of Strauss and Corbin's grounded theory, which grasps the phenomenon based on expert interviews and organizes them into a paradigm model, is appropriate.

B. Research Method and Data Collection

Based on the grounded theory research method, data collection develops as a theorizing process focusing on interviews with research participants who are experts. In the open coding process, interviews of research participants are described and organized in detail, categorized, and conceptualized. Subsequently, it repeats action and interaction to retry the derived data through axis coding to analyze categories and processes for open coding results and selective coding to derive core categories. The coding process identifies the phenomenon of inter-Korean MICE industry E&C

and develops a model through the phenomenon. The final research results are derived by analyzing the grounded theory and cross-checking the literature and additional data.

The subject of this study is a very specialized field of inter-Korean MICE industry E&C. Therefore, to collect in-depth data, it is important to select research participants who are suitable for the research topic and can guarantee expertise (Lee 2005). Research participants should be highly involved in the subject of the study and must have experience and necessary knowledge about phenomena or events and can comment on the interview (Morse 1998). A snowball sampling and purposive sampling method were combined to select research participants.

This study tried to select participants with high involvement in the two keywords, MICE industry and inter-Korean relations, in line with the research topic. First of all, experts who understand both topics were selected as the primary target. And then, the process of expanding the participants was conducted. However, few participants are familiar with both fields. Therefore, to increase the validity and reliability, relevant experts were selected by dividing into two fields: MICE industry and inter-Korean relations. Experts in the MICE industry and inter-Korean relations tried to organize an equal number for research balance. For the balance of research, experts on the MICE industry and inter-Korean relations were composed of the same number. In inter-Korean relations, four

experts in E&C were formed, and one expert in inter-Korean tourism, considering that MICE is a field of tourism in a broad sense.

A total of 10 participants in this study were selected as those with a master’s or higher degree of education or more than 10 years of experience in inter-Korean relations and MICE, considering that expertise in the field is an essential factor. There are seven masters or higher for the education level, and five of them are doctors, so their expertise is guaranteed. In the case of a bachelor’s degree of education, the participants consisted of more than 15 years of work experience. As for the business type, taking into account the characteristics of the MICE industry, academic circles (2 people), industry (4 people), public institutions (3 people) that subsidize and implement government policies, and civic group (1 person), which has been promoting North Korea projects at the practical level. Unfortunately, this research intended to include the governmental officials in charge of planning and implementing policies as a participant. However, they were burdened by the interview due to the sensitive issues on North Korea. Instead, it was conducted in a form that includes those in charge of relevant public institutions to supplement the government’s opinions. Table 2 shows the information and characteristics of the research participants mentioned above.

According to the grounded theory data collection, this research was conducted individually in-depth interviews by setting the research direction based

on the literature review, expanding the scope to the highly involved experts in the research topic. This data collection was carried out repeatedly until the theoretical saturation was reached, where no new concept was discovered (Aldiabat and Le Navenc 2018; Kim 2019). Data were collected by extracting appropriate samples at each coding stage to reach theoretical saturation. The results were conceptualized for each interview, and the concept was continuously attempted to categorize through comparative analysis with the existing interview contents and secondary data.

The secondary data was based on North Korean statistics, major reports issued by the government and researchers, and major press releases from domestic and foreign media. In particular, statistics were based on data released by an official organization other than North Korea to ensure reliability. Representatively, the ‘North Korean Statistics Portal’ (<http://kosis.kr/bukhan>) operated by the National Statistical Office of the Republic of Korea was very useful. In North Korea-related data, the media reported by North Korea was utilized. References were made to the ‘Rodong Shinmun’ and ‘Korean Central News Agency (KCNA)’, which are the de facto official media of North Korea, as well as the ‘Tho Choson Sinbo’, which is a magazine for the pro-Pyongyang federation of Korean residents in Japan. Also, books by people who have experienced or lived in North Korea were referred to grasp the reality of the North better.

Table 2. Information and Characteristics of the Research Participants

Participants	Education	Business Type	Expertise	Sex	Age	Experience
P1	Doctor	Industry	MICE	M	the 60s	over 30
P2	Doctor	Industry	MICE	M	the 50s	over 20
P3	Master	Public Institution	Inter-Korean (relations)	M	the 30s	6
P4	Bachelor	Public Institution	Inter-Korean (relations)	W	the 40s	15
P5	Bachelor	Industry	MICE	M	the 50s	over 20
P6	Bachelor	Industry	MICE	M	the 50s	over 20
P7	Doctor	Academia	MICE	M	the 40s	over 20
P8	Doctor	Academia	Inter-Korean (relations)	M	the 60s	over 30
P9	Master	Civic Group	Inter-Korean (relations)	M	the 50s	over 20
P10	Doctor	Public Institution	Inter-Korean (tourism)	M	the 40s	17

The interview outline was prepared in advance to meet the subject and the purpose of this study and conducted the interview consistently. Due to the nature of the grounded theory research method, the questions' contents slightly differed depending on the participants' specialized fields, such as inter-Korean relations and the MICE industry. The questionnaire is not a structured survey of quantitative research. However, it is an unstructured retrospective form that the participants of this research talk in a natural and comfortable atmosphere regardless of the questions' content and format. The researcher conducted all interviews in person and used open-ended questions as a rule but added supplementary questions if necessary. The researcher noted all contents and processes and analyzed them after the interview. The interview lasted about 100 minutes at a time, and the interview was recorded if the participants agreed.

IV. Results

A. Open Coding: Conceptualization and Categorization of DATA

The analysis proceeded through cross-checking of the in-depth interview contents and secondary data and open coding to conceptualize and categorize the analysis results. Conceptualization included all cases in which contents could convey regardless of units such as words, phrases, and clauses, and categorization was conducted to group similar concepts together. 49 concepts derived from this process were classified

into 12 subcategories and finally integrated into 6 upper categories. The categories were named with expressions that could well represent each characteristic.

1. Causal Conditions: The Need for Paradigm Shift of Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation

Causal condition refers to situations or events that affect or cause a phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin 1998). The causal condition was the need for a new E&C paradigm different from the previous and recognition of the current situation and the cause of poor E&C on the Korean peninsula.

Limitations of existing inter-Korean exchange & cooperation

...North Korea is a foreign country from South Korea's perspective, and practical communication is virtually impossible. Currently, South Korea is mistaken for communicating with North Korea, and the two Koreas lack understanding of the mutual system of the capitalist market economy system and the socialist planned economy system...

...Currently, it is a reality that there is no channel to contact if it is not through the National Economic Cooperation Federation (NECF), North Korea's foreign economic organization supervising South Korean companies' investment and trade to North Korea. However, the NECF members say that they cannot trust South Korea as its policies change whenever the president or government changes. On the other hand, from a business point of view, predictability and sustainability are critical issues, but in this respect, North Korea has too much uncertainty (unpredictability)...

...We do not know where North Korea will bounce.

Table 3. Categorization with 「The Need for Paradigm Shift of inter-Korean Exchange & Cooperation」

Upper Category	Sub Category	Concept
The Need for Paradigm Shift of inter-Korean E&C	Limitations of existing inter-Korean E&C	Mutual distrust and lack of understanding, Uncertainty, Disconnection of communication and lack of communication channels, Failure of inter-Korean economic cooperation, Political Impact, Lack of information, and limited access to information
	External factors depending on the international and political situation	North Korea's nuclear issue, Sanctions against North Korea, US-North Korea relations
	New inter-Korean E&C of mutual interests	Identifying mutual needs, Economic approach, Win-win relationship formation

It is because economic cooperation can be suspended at any time if it does not suit their taste. Thus, it is not easy for Korean companies to invest, and it may be closed due to political circumstances such as the Kaesong Industrial Complex...

...The inter-Korean relations have deteriorated significantly as the 5 · 24 measures were implemented due to the sinking of the South Korean warship Cheonan in 2010, and not only trade with North Korea but also humanitarian aid halted. In 2016, due to North Korea's nuclear test and missile provocation, the South Korean government withdrew the tenant companies while deciding to shut down the Kaesong Industrial Complex...

...North Korea is a closed society, we do not know much about North Korea, and it is also hard to know...

External factors depending on the international and political situation

...As sanctions against North Korea have been imposed due to the nuclear issue, the number of goods brought into the North is very limited...

...North Korea cannot help but walk on eggshells in the US. North Korea's attitude in recent years has a strong tendency to reject South Korea's humanitarian aid, instead rely almost exclusively on negotiations with the United States...

New inter-Korean exchange & cooperation of mutual interests

...For effective exchange and cooperation with North Korea, it is necessary to figure out North Korea's wants. Every time I meet North Korean officials, North Korea also wants South Korean companies with the best technology to visit North Korea...

...The mindset that the two Koreas should promote exchanges and cooperation as necessary and who should help who is inevitably bound to fail...

...Unification is the political domain and the final result of exchange and cooperation. However, exchange and cooperation must approach the economic domain, which leads to unification...

...Inter-Korean relations should no longer be a concept of the main enemy or an object to be helped, but a relationship of partners that can coexist...

2. Contextual Conditions: Positive Recognition and Growth of the MICE Industry

Contextual condition refers to various attributes in which phenomena lie and situations that affect them (Strauss and Corbin 1998). As a result of the analysis, it needs a new form of E&C mentioned in the causal condition, and South and North Korea are fostering a new industry. Therefore, a positive recognition of the MICE industry was drawn.

Korea's MICE industry is at a considerable level in the world. The Korean government has been fostering the MICE industry for a long time, and it has been a driving force for export-oriented Korean economic development (Park and Kim 2016). North Korea is also actively pushing for constructing a complex linking MICE to acquire foreign currency through tourism, which is an exception to sanctions against North Korea. Also, various MICE events, including the Pyongyang International Trade Fair, are held for various purposes and concentrate on building MICE-related infrastructure. Thus, both Koreas positively recognize the MICE industry, and the possibility of economic growth through an industrial approach is high, so the possibility of E&C is also high.

World-class Korean MICE industry

...Korea's MICE industry is a complex industry with

Table 4. Categorization with 「Positive Recognition and Growth of the MICE Industry」

Upper Category	Sub Category	Concept
Positive Recognition and Growth of MICE Industry	World-class Korean MICE industry	Trade and economic growth engines, New growth engine industry, Number of international conferences and exhibitions held
	Tourism awareness of the Kim Jong Un regime and fostering the North Korean MICE industry	Exceptions to sanctions against N.K., Comprehensive platform for foreign relations, Multipurpose MICE facility construction, Wonsan-Kalma Coastal Tourism Area

a huge economic ripple effect, and the government has already recognized its growth potential and is nurturing it as one of the 17 new growth engine industries.

...Based on the Union of International Association (UIA), Korea held 890 international conferences in 2018, ranking second in the world after Singapore (Korea Tourism Organization 2019)...

...Korea has 15 specialized exhibition and convention centers nationwide, and more than 600 exhibitions are held annually, and the number of foreigners visiting these MICE events is increasing every year...

Tourism awareness of the Kim Jong Un regime and fostering the North Korean MICE industry

...The Kim Jong Un regime began to pay full attention to the tourism industry, which has a large output compared to the investment, as exports and imports have been restricted due to sanctions against North Korea. North Korea is also developing tourism into an industry for profit-making and acquiring foreign currency through tourism for foreigners...

...Kim Jong Un is expressing special interests in the tourism industry by conducting on-site guidance on the Wonsan-Kalma coastal tourism construction site several times...

...Tourism is not subject to U.N. sanctions against North Korea, and it is an exception to U.S. sanctions. The MICE industry is also a part of tourism and can promote under the sanctions...

...North Korea uses MICE to acquire foreign currency and a place for cooperation in introducing foreign high-tech technologies in a situation where external economic exchanges cut off due to sanctions against North Korea...

...Pyongyang International Trade Fair, held twice a year in Pyongyang, has been regularly held since 1998 until now, with various countries such as China, Vietnam, and Mongolia. Besides, to host such MICE events, the Science and Technology Center was newly built in

Pyongyang, and the construction of exhibition and convention center in multiple complex districts within a special tourism zone is also promoting...

3. Central Phenomenon: Inter-Korean Contacts and Expansion of Exchange and Cooperation through MICE Industry

Central phenomena refer to central thoughts or events controlled or related through action and interaction process (Strauss and Corbin 1998). The ultimate purpose of the inter-Korean MICE industry E&C is to establish inter-Korean contacts and expand E&C through MICE, which naturally becomes a central phenomenon. The MICE industry is a critical means of enabling such human and physical contacts and expansion. As seen in the case of East and West Germany, MICE is an important medium that enables E&C between divided countries and serves as a starting point for dialogue. Also, discussions for MICE E&C have already attempted between the two Koreas. There have been cases in which the South dispatched a delegation to the North's MICE event.

Human and physical contact and its expansion

...As with all exchanges and cooperation, the first start begins with meetings. The most crucial exchange and cooperation are having mutual contact opportunities, which shows the importance of human and physical exchanges. In particular, human traffic is the beginning and end of exchange and cooperation, and it is also people who engage in exchange and cooperation...

...East and West Germany wanted to hold the Leipzig Fair despite political unrest somehow. Through this, human and physical exchanges, the cornerstone of German unification, could continue. In the Leipzig Fair case, a natural meeting between the West German exhibitors and the residents of East Germany took place, and as the fair continued for a long time, they formed a trust

Table 5. Categorization with 「Inter-Korean Contacts and Expansion of Exchange and Cooperation Through MICE Industry」

Upper Category	Sub Category	Concept
Inter-Korean Contacts and Expansion of E&C Through MICE Industry	Human and physical contact and its expansion	The premise of human movement, Meetings and gathering, German E&C precedent, Discussions on joint hosting of South-North MICE, Dispatch of observers to North Korea

relationship...

...Attempts to exchange and cooperate with both Korea's MICE industry have existed in the past. In 2004, KINTEX, the operator of South Korea's leading exhibition center, met with the Korea International Exhibition Cooperation (KIEC) to hold an exhibition jointly with North Korea. From 2005 to 2007, a South Korean economic delegation visited the Pyongyang International Trade Fair in North Korea...

4. Intervening Conditions: Internal and External Efforts for inter-Korean MICE Exchange and Cooperation

The intervening condition acts to promote or inhibit the Action-Interaction Strategies that appear in the next step of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998). This study refers to the necessary conditions for the central phenomenon, 「Inter-Korean Contacts and Expansion of E&C Through MICE Industry」. Therefore, the subcategories for inter-Korean contacts and expansion were found to be “Cooperation between MICE subjects of two Koreas” and “improving U.S.-N.K. relations and easing sanctions against the North.” In other words, issues that can be promoted through inter-Korean internal efforts and can affect the scope and speed of E&C depending on the changes of external circumstances comprised intervening conditions.

Internally, it is crucial to recognize that the two Koreas are equal partners for E&C in the MICE industry. Under this recognition, the first step in E&C is to discuss the formation of a standard consultative body through continuous and regular meetings. At the same time, E&C can intensify as the two Koreas carry out MICE projects that meet each other's needs and economic interests.

Another critical point is the current state of sanctions

against North Korea, which restricts physical exchanges. Sanctions are currently a significant obstacle to MICE E&C in terms of intervening conditions that facilitate or curb strategies. Conversely, if sanctions are eased or resolved, E&C can move forward rapidly. These are political variables that could quickly remove with a positive outcome, such as the North Korean nuclear issue resolution or the U.S.-North Korea summit.

Cooperation between MICE subjects of two Koreas

...MICE industry exchange and cooperation require a joint consultative body that includes the existing organizations and authorities of the two Koreas. In North Korea, the Party and the NECF, the KIEC, Korea International Travel Company (KITC) may be the primary agents. In South Korea, centering on the Ministry of Unification, Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Energy, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Korea Tourism Organization and Korea International Trade Association, Etc. may be the principal players...

...The MICE industry's exchange and cooperation will be possible only when the South and the North move forward to the economic counterpart's relationship that excludes political colors. Inter-Korean exchange and cooperation can only achieve when the boss and subordinate relations, which are the power dynamic between two people or groups, are liquidated and move toward mutual benefits from an equal standpoint...

...For the development of inter-Korean MICE exchange and cooperation, regular meetings with North Korea are necessary. As a result of contacting the NECF of North Korea, the North also believes that meaningful and rapid progress can be made only by frequent negotiations and wants such a meeting...

...Tourism meets North Korea's needs as a bypass on sanctions against the North, and from the perspective of the MICE industry, the establishment of infrastructures

Table 6. Categorization with 「Internal and External Efforts for inter-Korean MICE Exchange and Cooperation」

Upper Category	Sub Category	Concept
Internal and External Efforts for inter-Korean MICE E&C	Cooperation between MICE subjects of two Koreas	Formation of a joint inter-Korean consultative body, equivalent cooperative partnerships, Continuous & regular meetings, Recognition of E&C based on mutual need
	Improving U.S.-N.K. relations and easing sanctions against the North	U.S.-N.K. Talks, Mitigation of sanctions against North Korea, Carry-in and out of supplies

such as the Exhibition and Convention Center is more desirable by the North...

...It is also necessary to agree with the authorities of the two Koreas to ensure that certain MICE events can be held annually or regularly no matter what situation occurs in inter-Korean relations...

Improving U.S.-N.K. relations and easing sanctions against the North

...Sanctions against North Korea could be easily lifted if a dramatic settlement is reached by holding the U.S.-North Korea summit or Trump makes an unpredictable decision. In this case, exchange and cooperation between the two Koreas may also move forward at a rapid pace...

...In the presence of sanctions against North Korea, the Ministry of Unification's approval is required to bring goods into the North, but it is not easy to bring in direct or indirect products to hold MICE events. Therefore, the EAR, which is the export management regulation of the United States, and the import and export of strategic materials in Korea must be eased to enable the movement of material to host MICE...

5. Action-Interaction Strategies: Creating a Foundation for Exchange and Cooperation through MICE

Action-Interaction Strategies are strategies necessary to carry out central phenomena, which means dealing with situations or issues (Strauss and Corbin 1998). These action-interaction strategies have a continuous and process characteristic (Kim and Lee 2019). The purpose of this study was to examine how the MICE industry, as a new object of inter-Korean E&C, can play a role. Most of the research participants agreed that the MICE industry enables human and physical exchanges between the two Koreas and suggested

the MICE industry's detailed roles as a means of human and physical exchange.

Specifically, due to the nature of meetings, people's movement is the key to E&C in the MICE industry, leading to expanding human contacts between the two Koreas. Such human interchanges are possible even under sanctions against North Korea, and the mutual dispatches of observers to MICE events and meetings for E&C in the MICE industry are highly realistic strategies. In the same vein, discussions on individual tourism from South Korea to North Korea began in early 2020.

On the other hand, material exchanges cannot but consider the current sanctions against North Korea. However, the method of barter exchanges proposed by the Ministry of Unification to bypass sanctions in the recent COVID-19 situation also leaves open the possibility of material exchanges in the MICE industry. Nevertheless, even though the construction of MICE facilities and infrastructure is a very efficient E&C strategy, it is unlikely that it will be realized immediately due to sanctions. However, as the leaders of the two Koreas agreed at the 2018 Pyongyang Summit, if the joint hosting of the 2032 inter-Korean Olympic Games is confirmed, sanctions against North Korea for the establishment of the MICE infrastructure are likely to be substantially eased, and the inter-Korean MICE industry E&C will mark a breakthrough.

Human traffic through MICE exchange and cooperation

...Meetings and dialogues are the most necessary for current inter-Korean relations, expanding the area of mutual contacts through human interchanges such as reunions of separated families. In a broad sense, reunions

Table 7. Categorization with 「Creating a Foundation for Exchange and Cooperation through MICE」

Upper Category	Sub Category	Concept
Creating a Foundation for E&C through MICE	Human traffic through MICE exchange and cooperation	Expansion of human contacts, Human interchange, and traffic, E&C fields under sanctions against North Korea, Mutual dispatch of observers in MICE events, Individual tourism to North Korea
	Establishment of MICE cooperation infrastructure through physical exchanges	Consideration of sanctions, Co-hosting the Olympic Games, Mutual exhibition of Inter-Korean products, Joint construction and operation of MICE facilities, Creation of North Korean MICE infrastructure

of separated families and talks between the South and North Korean authorities are also one of MICE, which can be said to be the core of such human interchange and cooperation...

...Inter-Korean MICE exchange and cooperation focus on human interchanges that are possible even under sanctions against North Korea. In particular, dispatching personnel to each other's MICE events is the easiest, quickest, and most immediate possible form from the early stages of MICE exchange and cooperation.

...From the standpoint of organizing trade shows, in the short term, human traffic can gradually expand in the order of mutual visit of observers, mutual participation of exhibitors, and co-organizing of trade shows...

...The discussions on individual tourism to North Korea, announced by the South Korean government earlier this year, can be considered a possibility of inter-Korean human interchanges through tourism...

Establishment of MICE cooperation infrastructure through physical exchanges

...Currently, sanctions against North Korea may make it challenging to bring materials necessary for infrastructure construction into North Korea, but if sanctions are partially eased or lifted, MICE exchange and cooperation can make rapid progress...

6. Consequences: Expansion of Mutual Growth and Understanding through the Promotion of inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation

The result refers to how the central phenomenon finally appears through action and interaction (Strauss and Corbin 1998). The E&C in the MICE industry is an essential window for continuing dialogue and communication and has important significance in that

it enables human and physical exchanges without much disagreement between the two Koreas. As was the case with Leipzig, continuous human and physical contact broadens understanding of the other and plays a positive role in forming mutual trust relationships. Therefore, MICE industry E&C can ultimately contribute to the settlement of peace on the Korean Peninsula.

From an economic point of view, the MICE industry can also drive E&C of other various industries as the object of MICE, which generates inter-Korean transactions and leads to the creation of mutual economic benefits. These economic achievements can ultimately contribute to establishing peace on the Korean Peninsula by narrowing the gap between the two Koreas and strengthening economic interdependence.

The starting point for inter-Korean exchange and cooperation and establishment of peace on the Korean peninsula

...The MICE industry is a channel and a starting point for continuing dialogue between the two Koreas, and MICE itself can generate human and physical contact even under the current disconnected situation...

...All forms of exchange and cooperation contribute to the settlement of peace while partially resolving some of the conflicts in the division situation, and as economic interdependence increases, it becomes stronger...

...Through the attribute of meeting, MICE increases the chances of contact and increases the possibility of mutual understanding. It also shows the justification that MICE industry exchange and cooperation should prioritize...

...Not only contact through direct participation in MICE but also through indirect contact that occurs incidentally through MICE also plays a critical role in dispelling

Table 8. Categorized with 「Expansion of Mutual Growth and Understanding through the Promotion of inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation」

Upper Category	Sub Category	Concept
Expansion of Mutual Growth and Understanding through the Promotion of inter-Korean E&C	The starting point for inter-Korean E&C and establishment of peace on the Korean Peninsula	The beginning of human and physical contact, A place of dialogue and communication, Increased direct and indirect contact, Mitigating the inter-Korean gap. Peaceful coexistence
	Mutual growth between the two Koreas through E&C in other industries	Inter-Korean economic cooperation, Promoting inter-Korean business, mutual benefit from a transaction

the prejudices that North and South Koreans had against each other...

...One way to reach peace on the Korean Peninsula is to alleviate the gap between the two Koreas and eventually eliminate it. The most important thing is the economic gap between the two Koreas. Increasing the income of North Koreans is to foster North Korea's self-sustainability, which leads to narrowing the gap...

Mutual growth between the two Koreas through Exchange & Cooperation in other industries

...The MICE industry has a complex relationship with several industries. Therefore, if exchange and cooperation in the MICE field become possible first, MICE will be held as an industry and specialized field, which naturally promotes exchange and cooperation in such fields...

...If inter-Korean companies meet more frequently through MICE industry exchange and cooperation, the possibility of transactions and exchanges will increase. As a transaction is made when it meets both parties' interests, the increase in such transactions and contracts has a positive effect, leading to increased mutual benefits.

...If the two Koreas jointly hold the 2032 Olympics, one of the representative MICE events, much of the sanctions against North Korea will be resolved, making physical exchanges easier, and the MICE industry can highlight as the center of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation...

...It is possible that the two Koreas jointly discuss holding a comprehensive product exhibition focusing on daily necessities and consumer goods, which are the main items of the Pyongyang International Trade Fair currently held by North Korea. If it is difficult for the personnel to visit each other, it would be meaningful for the two Koreas to hold MICE events with each other's products through bartering...

...If a MICE event is held in South Korea with North Korean products, it would be good as a MICE item as favorite foods such as food and alcohol of the North can satisfy the curiosity and needs of Koreans...

...As the Chinese capital also wants to build an exhibition-convention center in Pyongyang, joint construction of the center between two Koreas can be a much easier and more effective way than holding a joint MICE event...

...An ideal direction for MICE exchange and coopera-

tion is to support the construction of facilities in a specific region of North Korea with South Korean capital, operate jointly in the form of a cooperative organization such as a joint venture, and deliver the operational know-how of the South...

B. Axis Coding: Categorization Analysis and Process Analysis

Axis coding is a process which is systematically linking categorized data through open coding to attributes and dimensions and consists of a paradigm-based categorization analysis and time-based process analysis (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Categorization analysis shows how each category connects to the axis, the central phenomenon, in terms of the attributes and dimensions from causal conditions to consequences in the open coding process. Thus, Figure 1 illustrates the categorization analysis coding paradigm.

Process analysis over time analyzes the development process depending on the passage of time and the changes in context. It aims at grasping the interaction between the creation and transformation of the central phenomenon (Kim and Lee 2019). The central phenomenon in this study is 「inter-Korean contacts and Expansion of Exchange and Cooperation through MICE Industry」. This central phenomenon was caused by the limitations of the existing exchange and cooperation methods as inter-Korean relations continued to remain deadlocked. Therefore, a new form of exchange and cooperation paradigm is required that benefits both Koreas and the MICE industry has been highlighted as a new field that meets these demands.

Korea has already occupied its position as a world-class MICE venue, and the economic ripple effect is also very significant. North Korea has also actively fostered tourism and MICE industries under sanctions against North Korea since Kim Jong-un's regime took power, recognizing them as new means of acquiring foreign currency and exchanging foreign countries. As such, the MICE industry is an area of interest to both South and North Korea and is a promising field of inter-Korean E&C that can be

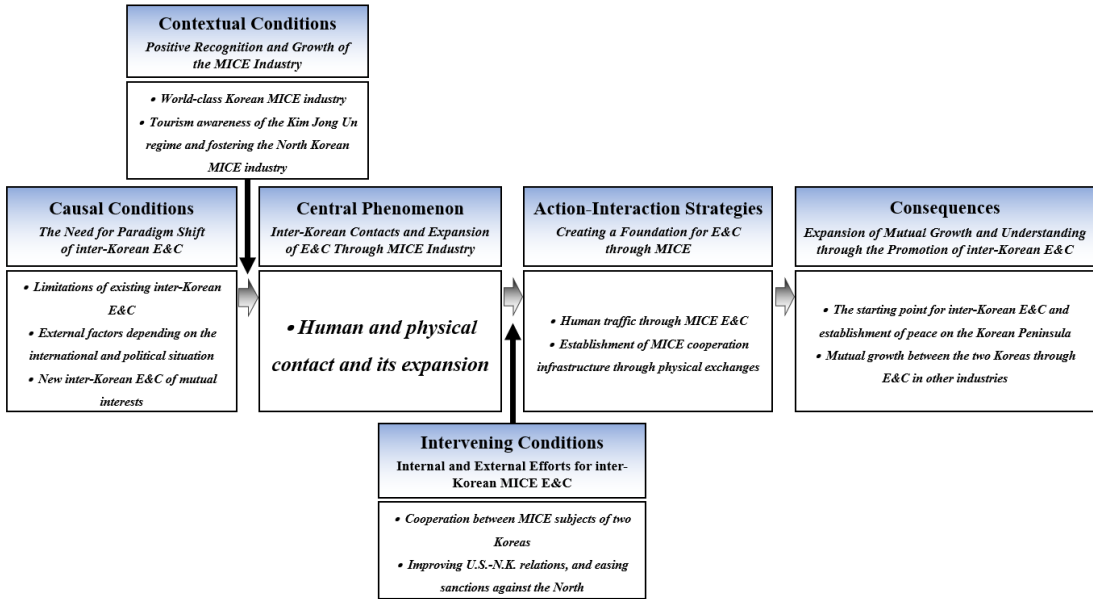


Figure 1. Coding Paradigm of MICE Exchange and Cooperation

mutually beneficial by allowing access from an economic perspective.

In order for inter-Korean E&C through the MICE industry to work appropriately, discussions between the current operating entities, including the South-North authorities related to MICE, should begin. Besides, human traffic, such as dispatching observers, is required, and such discussions are being attempted through various channels. Besides, for effective MICE E&C, physical exchanges such as establishing MICE facilities and infrastructure in North Korea must be accompanied. However, in a situation where it is practically impossible to bring goods into North Korea due to sanctions against North Korea, improving U.S.-North Korea relations and easing sanctions could be an important factor in accelerating E&C in the MICE industry.

As MICE presupposes a meeting between people, it is a groundbreaking way to transform the current disconnected inter-Korean relations, and it can play a sufficient role as a starting point for E&C through dialogue and communication. Also, the MICE industry serves as a platform that drives the industry's growth with content due to its characteristics. Therefore, it is possible to promote the advancement of industries

that want inter-Korean exchanges into North Korea and establish the foundation for forming a complementary industrial structure between the two Koreas by achieving business. These economic benefits can strengthen interdependence between the two Koreas and reduce distrust in each other, ultimately contributing to peace.

C. Selective Coding: Derivation of Core Category

1. Core Category: Expanding Mutual Understanding and Creation Economic Result

Selective coding, the last step in the analysis of grounded theory, is a process of deriving the core category, which is the central theme of the research, and integrating and elaborating the categories that presented through the open coding and axis coding process around the core category (Strauss and Corbin 1998). The core category is a condensed expression of what the research is about, a subject that is the core of the research, and an inductive outcome that penetrates all categories.

As a result of the analysis, it was derived focusing on the possibility and importance of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation through the MICE industry. Specifically, MICE becomes the driving force to sustain human and physical contact between the two Koreas, which in the long term expands mutual understanding and brings economic benefits. Therefore, this study's core category was proposed as 「Expanding mutual understanding and creating economic results」.

V. Discussion

As a result of the study, most of the research participants were very optimistic about the possibility and potential of E&C in the MICE industry. In particular, it was determined that the MICE industry would play a key role in improving inter-Korean relations where human and physical contacts have cut off. However, they pointed out that sanctions against North Korea must be considered, as is the case with all current E&C between the two Koreas.

However, it is also the situation of sanctions against North Korea that the MICE industry makes it different from E&C in other fields. The main reason why inter-Korean E&C has not been sustained so far is more often affected by external and political situations than internal factors between them. However, as a result of the analysis, the MICE industry is a field where E&C is possible even under sanctions against North Korea, and North Korea also actively fosters and wants E&C of MICE. Therefore, MICE could be a relatively free area from political situations. It is a distinctive characteristic compared to other existing industries as an object of inter-Korean E&C.

Among the various forms of inter-Korean E&C, South Korea is trying to find ways to promote without violating sanctions. For this reason, the MICE industry E&C has discussed as the starting point for inter-Korean E&C. First of all, human interchanges, such as dispatching mutual observers to inter-Korean MICE events, are possible even under sanctions against

North Korea and have already been carried out several times. It can understand in the same context as the possibility of individual tourism to North Korea announced by the South Korean government in early 2020. The more practical problem is that importing foreign goods into North Korea is complex due to the sanctions, making material exchange impossible between the two Koreas. However, it also believes that partial material E&C through MICE is possible without violating sanctions against North Korea. The solution is a barter system, exchange of goods between the two Koreas, recently proposed by the Ministry of Unification in South Korea. The early days of MICE E&C begin with showing products produced by the two Koreas through MICE events. Although there will be various situations to consider, it expects that the opportunity for North Korean products to be shown through South Korea's MICE event will significantly help improve inter-Korean relations and the interest of the South Korean people. Therefore, even in part, the MICE industry E&C has significance in terms of enabling human and physical exchanges even under sanctions against North Korea.

VI. Conclusion

This study examined the MICE industry as an object of E&C as a new paradigm to break through the inter-Korean relations in the crisis phase. The MICE industry is a high-value-added service industry and a field that South and North Korea pay attention to and actively foster economic growth.

Why the MICE industry is considered as a new means of E&C is due to the attribute of MICE. First of all, MICE is based on meetings based on the premise of people's movement, which can be a new signal for inter-Korean E&C in a deadlock. The economic ripple effect is so significant that it can also serve as a platform that drives other industries' growth. Also, there is a little confrontation of interests between the two Koreas in the economic field. The

MICE industry is expected to be highly acceptable to North Korea to attract foreign currency and revitalize the economy in the context of sanctions against North Korea.

This study sought to approach inter-Korean E&C, which had not been attempted before, from the perspective of the MICE industry. Also, this study tried to find alternatives by grasping the current situation and proceeded in the form of exploratory research through ground theory. Research data were collected through interviews with relevant experts. This study focused on theoretically verifying the possibility of inter-Korean E&C through the MICE industry, and it has been verified to some extent.

In the absence of existing inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation, a new form of mutually beneficial exchange and cooperation is required (causal conditions). The current situation in which both South and North Korea are fostering the MICE industry for economic and industrial purposes (contextual condition) is linked to creating mutual economic results in the core category. As confirmed in East and West Germany, human and physical contact plays a leading role in broadening mutual understanding. Therefore, as specific strategies for inter-Korean E&C, which is a central phenomenon, human traffic, and infrastructure establishment through MICE become an essential prerequisite for expanding mutual understanding and creating economic results between the two Koreas. This core category coincides with the coding paradigm results and has immediate relevance to all categories.

The implications of this study are as follows.

First, this study has implications in that it has approached inter-Korean MICE exchange cooperation academically, which has not been adequately researched. Primarily, the phenomena derived through interviews with experts and literature reviews were described and analyzed in various ways, and a final theoretical paradigm model was presented through the conceptualization and categorization process.

Second, it is a timely study in that it has approached with a new perspective of the MICE industry as a clue to resolving the current inter-Korean relations

in the crisis phase. The practical implications are also significant by approaching the MICE industry, based on human and physical exchange as a fundamental attribute, from the economic cooperation perspective in the service industry. Academically, this study will lay the foundation for inter-Korean MICE exchange and cooperation, and in practice, it will be the theoretical foundation for establishing the direction and specific strategies for exchange and cooperation.

In the future, based on this study, it is necessary to proceed with a particular study on specific strategies and roadmaps for MICE industry E&C. Also, this study utilized interviews with experts, a qualitative methodology. However, in the future, if quantitative research on the priorities of various strategies with structured questionnaires is conducted, the diversity and completion of research on MICE industry E&C will increase.

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