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Local perspectives of Korean shadow education

Abstract

While some scholars view the use of shadow education—supplementary lessons provided by parents outside of school—as a cause for the rapid development of Korea, others raise concerns related to its secondary effects, including educational stress and corruption and reinforced social inequality. In this paper, I analyze interview data with four mothers in order to contribute to the literature on Korean shadow education at the local level. This study illustrates the reasons, particularly social pressures and insecure feelings, behind their choices to pursue shadow education for their children which has not yet surfaced in the discourse development and education.

Key words: shadow education, private tutoring, international education, development, mothers' involvement in education

Introduction

The Republic of Korea (Korea hereafter) is a country that experienced “compressed development,” rapidly transforming from one of the world’s poorest countries to one of the wealthiest over a period of about 35 years (Whittaker et al., 2007). Education is widely believed to have been a central part of this transformation, as the rapid development of the educational sector has been strongly linked to the development of the nation’s economic sector (Chapman, 2000; Chung, 2007; Kim, 2002; Kim, Kim, & Han, 2009) (see Table 1). In assessing the trends that have evolved from and contributed to the rapid development in economy and education, many scholars have increasingly focused on the role of shadow education—supplementary lessons practiced outside of formal school lessons. These scholars have evaluated the impacts of shadow education on student’s academic achievement (Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Byun, 2010); examined shadow education as a form of parental contribution to educational development (Sorenson, 1995); and investigated cross-national policy development of shadow education with an emphasis on the social and financial burdens that shadow education places on families, especially parents, in the quest to ensure educational advantages for their children (Bray, 1995, 2009).

The value of shadow education depends on whether the burdens placed on parents outweigh the benefits for children and the nation. The question is complicated by the fact that shadow education has become so integrated into the education system and social expectations that it is no longer possible to simply compare the success of children who take advantage of it with those who do not. While a few studies on shadow education do investigate its role on students’ achievement, my concern is with the lack of local perspectives around shadow education. These perspectives can reveal the decision-making processes on the part of parents and children, as well as enhance our understanding of the impact that shadow education has on the educational system. This paper presents a case study of four Korean mothers’ experiences with and perspectives of shadow education in an attempt to understand local ways of coping with the social pressures and changes surrounding educational development.

Shadow education and development

The current debate around shadow education hinges on whether it is really improving education and development, and if it is, whether the benefit is greater than the cost to families. Korea has experienced impressive economic success through human capital development. Some scholars argue that it was Koreans’ education fever—a preoccupation with the pursuit of education—that drove this extraordinary development from 1960s to the mid 1990s (Kim, 2002; Seth, 2002). In this narrative, shadow education has very positive aims such as (1) improving student learning, (2) making better use of out-of-school time, and (3) offering teachers and senior students opportunities to earn extra income (Hallak & Poisson, 2007). When students understand subjects and enjoy mainstream classes with the assistance of shadow education, this form of education can be beneficial for individual students’ overall learning (Hallak & Poisson, 2007). Shadow education may even have been necessary for the success of individual students who target competitive elite schools.

On the other side of this debate, however, scholars have raised various social and educational concerns (Bray, 2007, 2009; Lee, 2005). First, the rise of shadow education has been criticized for creating dependency among students on this costly, time-consuming “extra” education that has become a necessary component of an adequate education (Lee, 2005). Although Korean students perform highly in international assessments, students do not “learn

how to learn” academic subjects by themselves—a point attributed to students’ dependency on shadow education. Students even assess their own self-capacity to learn as very low (Lee, 2005). For example, in a survey on self-capacity for learning, only 38% of students perceived that they could learn independently (Kim & Kim, cited in Lee, 2005). Another concern articulated by scholars is the high rates of suicide amongst Korean youngsters (Lee, Hong, & Espelage, 2010; Zeng & LeTendre, 1998). An ecological analysis of factors for youth suicide in Korea, for example, states that the heavy emphasis on academic achievement through competition yields academic stress from an enormous amount of academic work and lack of rest (Lee, Hong, & Espelage, 2008).

Other detrimental effects of shadow education that may be at play are (1) corruption within the educational system and (2) increasing social inequality (Bray, 2003; Byun, 2010; Hallak & Poisson, 2003; Seth, 2002). Hallak and Poisson (2003) cited the high fees of private tutoring services and the monopoly of certain shadow education centers as some of the corrupt practices plaguing shadow education. They asserted that “shadow education has become a source of distortion that adversely affects mainstream education” (p. 258). Because shadow education is meant to equalize opportunity for those who are motivated and have high potential to contribute to Korean society, it is especially distressing how shadow education can be a social mechanism that reproduces and reinforces inequality. Scholars have noted that students from affluent families and children of parents with higher education levels are more likely to receive shadow education in Korea (Kim, 2004; Kim, 2007; Kim & Park, 2010; Lee, 2003). Despite this discrepancy, shadow education in Korea is, at present, considered a social norm (Lee, 2003) that renders psychological and financial burdens for parents, especially for those unable to afford shadow education or those only able to provide shadow education of minimal quality for their children (Lee, 2005).

The use of shadow education raises the question of whether the benefits to individual students’ learning and national economic development outweigh the economic burden on parents, especially when combined with the concerns listed above. This study was designed to address the following questions: What are the motives of parents when they provide shadow education? How do they negotiate their mixed feelings about their decisions given the contemporary state of the Korean education system? What can we learn from examining their decision-making processes and their logics to pursue shadow education? In order to contribute to the literature, I present and examine the perspectives of four Korean mothers in [Daegu](#). The interviews illustrate the local complexities of shadow education, complexities which often do not surface in the global discourse. Significant findings include: (1) shadow education is purchased not only for the purpose of individual progress in academic achievement, but also in response to the social pressure felt within society; and (2) students and parents seek shadow education in order to gain feelings of security within the whirlwind of rapid development.

Context

Rapid economic and educational development in Korea

In the field of economic development, Korea stands out as a remarkable example; its “rise” is referred to as the “miracle of Han River” and has given the country the moniker of the “tiger of East Asia” (Ahn, 2001; Kim, 2010; Kim et al., 2010, Kim & Hong, 2002; Kim, Kim, & Han, 2009; Sorenson, 1994).¹ Scholars have acknowledged that Korea’s development was only possible due to its heavy investment in education. During the period of rapid development, for

example, the number of schools and the number of students enrolled in schools dramatically increased. The public sector in particular played a vital role in the development of elementary and secondary education in the 1950s and 1960s (Lee, 2002)ⁱⁱ. Within just one decade (1970 to 1980), the enrollment rate of middle school students increased from 50% to over 90%, while high school enrollment increased from slightly less than 30% to above 60%. Today, there is nearly a 100% enrollment rate at the elementary level and a significant increase in enrollment rates at the secondary level compared to the 1970s and 1980s (see Figure 2). With the assistance of the private sector, higher education also became more accessible in the 1980s (Lee, 2002).ⁱⁱⁱ By 2007, 83% of high school students in Korea advanced to higher education, a dramatic increase from just 27% in 1980 (KEDI, 2008). Currently, the Korean education system provides compulsory elementary and middle school education; while high school and post secondary education are available at a fee (see Figure 1).

History of the development of Korean shadow education

Parallel with the rapid development of formal education in Korea has been the development of shadow education. The prevalence of shadow education in Korea has been related to the distinct characteristics of Korean educational development—in particular, an “egalitarian ideal and zeal for education” (Kim, 2002, p.30). Scholars such as Seth (2002), Sorenson (1994), and Lee (2003) noted the social atmosphere in Korea emphasizes academic achievement and is a social cause of both the prevalence of shadow education as well as the success of educational development in Korea. The academic competition among students has been fierce due to the limited availability of seats in each successive educational level. This competition still remains, even after successful educational expansion largely because of the preoccupation with education and a hierarchical system of education. Traditionally, Koreans highly regard education and demand better education in order to pursue seats in a few universities of the highest ranks, propelling the shadow education phenomenon further.

Although shadow education is an ever-broadening worldwide phenomenon, its implementation in Korea is widely identified as the most extreme (Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Bray, 2009). Related practices have been found in both developing and developed countries across the East and the West (Bray, 2009; Dang & Rogers, 2008). Bray (2009), however, stated that although “private tutoring is a big business in some parts of the world [...] nowhere is [it] more apparent than in Korea” (p. 30). The most significant increase in the measured expenditure on shadow education is between USD 12.4 billion in 2003 and USD 24 billion in 2006 (Kim & Lee, cited in Bray, 2009). This increase is the highest on record and conveys the high visibility and prevalence of shadow education practices in Korean society^{iv}. In many Korean media stories, the pricy shadow education practices were treated as a measured access problem (*kwasobi*), in which individuals recognize practices of overconsumption as a problem, such as the purchasing of shadow education, and show their contempt toward it (Nelson, 2000, p. 153). Moreover, one of the major educational policies in 2010 was to “curb private tutoring expenditure,” indicating that shadow education practices were recognized as an important issue for the board of education to incorporate into educational policy development (KMOEST, 2010).

Expenditures on shadow education have been measured as extraordinary both in terms of its rate of increase over time and its range across diverse practices. Seth (2002) stated that some outrageous fees for shadow education services—up to USD 10,000 per subject charged by a few tutors with “big” titles—were likely not reported. Bray (2009) similarly noted that the measured expenditure on private tutoring (*gwa-oe*) is particularly not accurate as it is arranged in the black

market between parents and tutors. In Korea, shadow education practices include private tutoring (*gwa-oe*), for-profit education centers (*hak-won*), study packages (*hak-seup-ji*) delivered to students' homes with the help of coaching teachers, internet lectures (*in-gang*), and after school academic extra-curricular activities for small fees provided in schools (*bang-gwa-hu-su-eop*) (See Figures 3, 4, 5, 6, 7).

[Figure 3, 4, 5, 6, 7: Images of shadow education practices (*gwa-oe*, *hak-won*, *hak-seup-ji*, *in-gang*, *bang-gwa-hu-su-eop*) here]

Interview findings

I interviewed four Korean mothers in [Daegu](#), the third largest city in southeast Korea (see Table 2). Daegu is the hometown of my parents, and its selection as the site for this study grew naturally out of casual conversations with my family. I chose to interview mothers because they are the main agents managing their children's after-school education in Korea (Park, 2006). Regarding the ideologies of motherhood, Park (2006) illustrated how the discourse of educational reforms and politics has produced "the image of educational manager mothers," which has also served as "the measurement of married mothers' worth and citizenship" (p. iii). The image of 'good' mothers is socially constructed, making their active engagement in the management of their children's education critical to this study. I also wanted to focus on women because their voices in newly developed nations like Korea have historically been silent in the discourse of development (Parport, 1995). I selected the mothers for this exploratory study based on the diversity in their children's educational levels from elementary to secondary, as well as on their shadow education practices. All participants were stay-at-home mothers. The interview questions were formed to discover the factors involved in decision making around shadow education choices. The interviews were conducted via Skype in the spring of 2010 as exploratory research, and each interview lasted for approximately one hour. The interview data were organized and analyzed using the qualitative software NVivo.

Social pressure for education on families

The interviews revealed several interesting themes around feelings toward the shadow education system. A strong sentiment that came through was the concern over the level of stress created by competition and the pressure to achieve academic excellence all of which Korean children experience in a new educational sphere in which shadow education is a perceived obligation. Mother 2 said, "If parents do not provide any shadow education, they are considered strange in our society." Mothers sense the social pressure and feel obligated to provide shadow education taking it as a responsibility of parents. Within this pressure of academic success and parental obligation, many would seek shadow education even if its academic value is unclear.

The son of Mother 3, who was ranked in the top 5% at school, was critical about shadow education, stating that he had to stay in tutoring even though he did not enjoy it. Another hidden reason for the prevalence of shadow education is related to people's understanding of the worthiness of human beings and education. Mother 3 explained her son's logic as follows:

In our education system and reality, our children of these days know that people without [a] college degree are not even treated as human beings. In this society, you know, signs [e.g., educational credentials] are important. Our children's minds are stuck this way: "If I do not score well in entrance exams, fail to enter

college, fail to graduate from it, I would not be able to eat. Not even rice!” So they need to have private tutoring to perform well on the test, become a smart child in school, and [be] good at studying. (Interview 3, March 27, 2010)^v

The pressure to continue studies at highly ranked universities was best expressed by Mother 4. She explained the hierarchy of universities constructed by society. Her daughter was repeating preparations for the college entrance exam for the third time in 2010 to improve her score. She wanted to become a PD (program director) for media industries in the future. She needed to focus on getting admission from a few prestigious universities in Seoul because only a degree from one of those universities would help her secure a job. Regarding the social perceptions of the hierarchical system of universities, Mother 4 explained:

Each school, right after *Suneung* (the university entrance exam), hangs [a banner with the number of students accepted in \[prestigious\] universities, like how many to S and Y University \(see Figure 8\)](#). Even *hak-wons* (for-profit educational center), [hang such banners] too. It is the same.... They all hang banners with how many students they send to [certain] universities. So, isn't it in order to show off the fame of the schools and *hak-wons*? In order to parade that [the number of students who go on to prestigious universities], they [the schools] have no choice, but to emphasize making them [the students] study hard. (Interview 4, April 17, 2010)

This testimony reflects the fact that Koreans give high regard to educational degrees from only a few selected universities. It also shows mothers' dissatisfaction with the way educational centers, both schools and *hak-wons* (for profit educational centers) are more concerned with the fame of their institutes rather than the quality of teaching and learning.

[Figure 8 here]

Dissatisfaction with the education system

In assessing the Korean education system, the mothers with older children showed their strong dissatisfactions with the high school level. Mother 3, for instance, did not like how the school required supplementary class (*bo-chung-su-eup*) from 4 to 6pm and self-study time (*ja-yul-hak-seup*) from 7 to 9pm (See Figure 9 and Table 3 for a representative daily schedule of Korean high school students). She said:

Even the self-study that students need to do at school makes me upset! Why do they hold the students until night, so late? They just make the students sit in the class until very late. It is not like the teachers are teaching one thing or more or anything, but they just make them sit and tell them, 'do what you can do'. (Interview 3, March 27, 2010)

[Figure 9 here]

Mother 3's motive for providing private tutoring to her son was that she wanted to make her son's life easy by hiring tutors to explain academic content to her son rather than have him study

alone. The testimony above which shows mother's dissatisfaction of how schools keep the students in class is also related to the other mother's dissatisfaction with school education and the teachers' lack of passion. Mother 4 was critical about the ways in which high schools teachers teach students in comparison to famous shadow education instructors. As her children watched *in-gang* (internet lectures) for shadow education, she compared the ways in which the lecturers taught to the ways in which school teachers taught. She said that those popular online lecturers were clear and funny in their speech. She liked how they made jokes in the middle of their lectures, so that her children did not fall asleep, but instead were encouraged in a positive manner. Mother 1 similarly became satisfied with shadow education after she observed her child enjoying to learn. She started *hak-seup-ji* (study package with visits from a coaching teacher) for her child who has a physical disability. She wished that her quiet child would be able to socialize with and learn from other people. She felt satisfied whenever she witnessed her child finding learning to be easy and enjoyable with the *hak-seup-ji* coach's assistant. Mother 4 reiterated Mother 1's sentiments about the contrast between in- and out-of-school teaching styles. She stated that school teachers are old and boring.

When [my child] comes back home he tells me that the English teacher, who is male and old, said that the words that children learn are different from what the teacher learned. The teacher asked students how they know certain new words, for example! Also, the teachers of Social Science and Ethics are also very old [and old-fashioned] and our children do not even comprehend what they are teaching. I trusted schools and send my children, but do you hear what our children say about their schools? (Interview 4, April 17, 2010)

A way to gain psychological security in a changing system

Three mothers mentioned the differences in education and learning in schools for the new and old generations, including an increase in students' dependence on shadow education and feelings of insecurity without it. Mother 3 said that the new generation feels "behind," "lacking," "missing," or "forgotten" without shadow education. She mentioned that when she was in school, she did not feel like she was missing something in her education without supplementary shadow education. However, these days, she attested that children feel they are lacking something when they only have in-school education. Mother 4 described this new pressure to purchase shadow education as the increased difficulty of school curricula for the young generation, particularly at the secondary education level. She shared her observation of the levels of difficulty in educational curricular between generations:

I am 49 years old. Even when I was attending schools, it was different from how things are for my children now. Looking at the math content of high school, even second year's [school curriculum content] are very difficult. It was not like that for our generation. (Interview 4, April 17, 2010)

The testimony above illustrates the mothers' observations of social changes and their adaptations to them. An individual, like Mother 4, reflects on the changes in her environment, such as the education curriculum taught to her children, and changes her behavior as a way to cope and survive. This kind of reflection represents the interrelation between society and self. Giddens (1991) explains that the self can reflect society because "everyone is in some sense aware of the

reflexive constitution of modern social activity and the implications it has for her or his life” (p. 14). Shadow education can be understood as a means of self-formation in the face of social change. The children and their mothers become engaged in shadow education in order to cope with the higher level of educational demands from schools. .

Mixed feelings toward shadow education practices

All mothers conveyed their wishes to live in a society where shadow education was not a necessity. They pointed to a clear burden that shadow education places on families. Mother 1, for example, provides her take on this financial burden and her ambivalent feeling toward shadow education in the following testimony:

For mothers, shadow education is a burden. This shows how having children learn school curriculum in advance (*seon-hang-hak-seup*^{vi}) is the aim rather than teaching what our children need. In my case, too, I came to provide shadow education for nine subjects, which is a big burden to my child. In our case, it is her wish so I want to provide it. The social atmosphere requires shadow education. I hope this situation gets better. I hope our children can learn with less stress and our mothers can raise their children with less economic burden of shadow education. (Interview 1, February 3, 2010)

Regarding the financial costs of shadow education, discrepancies in spending were mentioned as the biggest issue of socio-economic inequality. Mother 4, who referred to herself as a parent with less money, showed her discomfort when describing in her mind the unimaginable amount spent on shadow education by affluent families, which she claimed could reach up to USD 2,000 per subject per month. According to the mothers’ observations, the costs of shadow education differ according to type, the most expensive being *gwa-oe* (private tutoring), and decreasing in price there is *hak-won* (learning centers), *hak-seup-ji* (home visit study package), *bang-gwa-hu-su-eop* (extracurricular classes after school), and *in-gang* (Internet Lectures). Mothers 1 and 3, who provided the more expensive *gwa-oe* and *hak-seup-ji* respectively, expressed their sympathies for some mothers who work as housemaids or salespersons just to earn money for their children’s shadow education. Mothers 2 and 4 pursued relatively cheaper shadow education options (*bang-gwa-hu-su-eop* and *in-gang*) for their children. All mothers said that they were concerned with the well-being of those mothers who cannot provide any shadow education due to economic difficulties.

Reflections

The data show several interesting points that do not surface in the discourse of international development. First, some of the mothers’ decisions to pursue shadow education were, in part, borne out of their wish to make learning easy and enjoyable for their children. According to the mothers’ testimonies above, they wish that the schools would develop ways for students to more effectively learn. In addition, the mothers showed their concerns around children’s insecurity and feelings of constantly lacking something and of being behind. This state of mind is a base rationale for pursuing shadow education because being involved in such practices provides the desirable feeling of security. The mothers’ self-perception of their worth and well-being are tied to the measures of their ability to provide shadow education for their children. Mothers also showed their sympathy for other mothers who they believe are not able to provide shadow education because of financial difficulties. Acknowledging a social atmosphere

in which parents who pursue shadow education pity those parents who do not pursue shadow education steers our understanding of the phenomenon toward a local perspective. This perspective reveals an ironic combination of social contempt toward the academic pressure placed on families on the one hand and their simultaneous desire for high quality education both in and out of schools on the other hand.

The local perspectives on shadow education reveal a more complicated picture than the current debate around shadow education presented by scholars and practitioners within the field of international development and education. The current debate is concerned with whether or not shadow education contributes to national development or to the academic achievement of students at international examinations, such as PISA or TIMSS. This study, however, highlights how mothers in Korea, where shadow education practices are the most prevalent, experience the phenomenon by examining their decision making processes when purchasing shadow education for their children. With the increased importance of educational credentials in Korean society and the increased difficulty of academic studies, students and parents have become obsessed with pursuing shadow education services. Another reason for the educational obsession has been the desire to gain a feeling of security in a highly competitive education system.

A unique contribution of this exploratory study is that it offers novel views on the various ways in which Korean mothers rationalize their decisions. Of particular interest is the rationale that shadow education is considered necessary, even though mothers have mixed feelings about their decisions. Mothers' investment in shadow education is intended to help their children enjoy learning—which is difficult considering the environment of mainstream Korean education system—as well as to cope with social pressure and educational change. The discrepancies in the mothers' thoughts and behaviors are perhaps an indication that the near future holds a more significant decrease in the popularity of shadow education. All mothers expressed their wish to live in a society with less stress on academic excellence and shadow education, although at the same time they were a part of it. Moreover, mothers' choices of shadow education were based primarily on academic desires that did not align with their wishes to have their children grow holistically. This contradiction shows their decisions to pursue shadow education are not totally dependent on their own individual thinking or reasoning, but intricately influenced by what society “requires” them to do as ‘good’ mothers. This educational dilemma requires reflection on the aims of educational development, whether it should bring greater economic gains to the nations or to provide students opportunities to learn and grow. The concerns of mothers for their children's education both at school and after school demand further study in educational development for the well-being of students and parents.

Conclusion

This study shows that shadow education, while easily justifiable for an individual student, may be creating downward pressure on the quality of formal education by creating a veritable arms race in which shadow education drains a families' resources, contributes to excessive stress levels, and may not promote the most desirable forms of learning (e.g., test-centric). However, it is not helpful to merely measure the costs of shadow education against the benefits because as long as it plays its current role in the Korean education system, shadow education will continue to justify itself. By conducting a local analysis, we have heard from the voices of the mothers that the decisions to provide shadow education for one's children is not a “choice”, but a social, financial, and academic obligation that if unmet would only spell failure. Mothers are concerned

with their children's stress, happiness and learning even as society demands that they focus on academic success as measured through test scores. Even in cases where mothers were pleased with the impact of shadow education on happiness or learning, this may have been a way to justify to themselves participation in practices that they strongly associate with negative effects, such as increased stress levels among their children. The multiple complex pressures and negative feelings experienced, even as families rationally "choose" to partake in shadow education, ultimately lead to a general wish that shadow education not exist at all. As such, the Korean educational system, which seems to be increasingly impacted by shadow education, demands serious reform as to the ways in which it responds to and incorporates shadow education. If the shadow education arms race that takes place in almost every classroom is left to continue, the Korean educational system will not reduce stress for its students or create an environment in which success (measured by test-scores or otherwise) is linked to aptitude and effort as the Korean egalitarian mentality purports to seek.

Table 1: Timeline of Korean policy foci for the economy and education

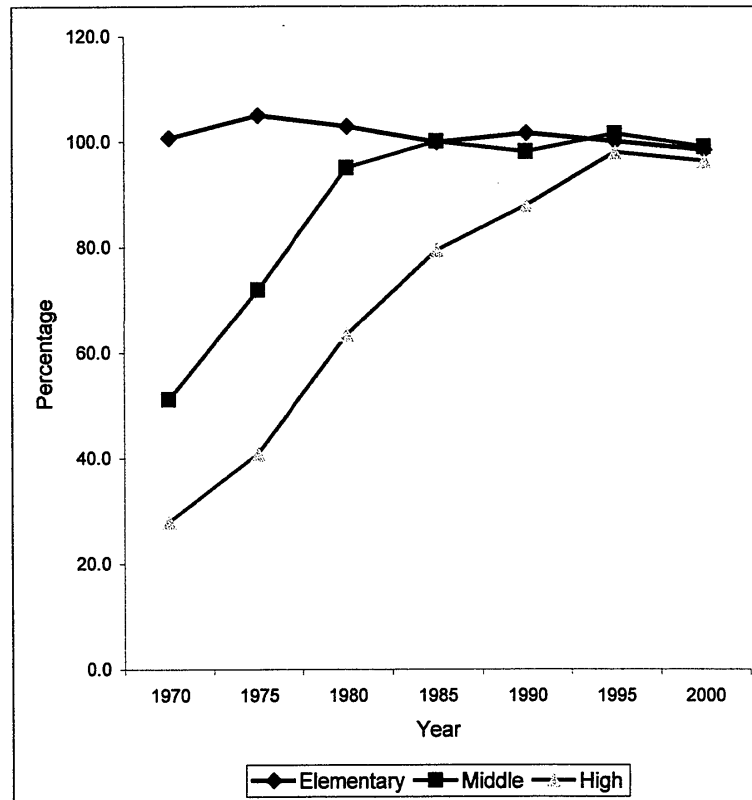
Period	Economy	Education
1960s – mid-1970s	1) Take-off in early 1960s: from import substitution to export-driven, light labor intensive 2) Selective strategic industries in 1970s: export acceleration, heavy and chemical industries	1) Expansion/upgrading of primary & lower secondary education 2) Emphasis on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in late-1960s: Manpower planning
Mid-1970s – 1980s	1) Structural adjustments from late 1970s: steel and ship-building industries 2) From imitation to innovation in 1980s: electronic industry	1) Expansion/upgrading of upper secondary 2) Expansion of tertiary education 3) Strengthening of TVET
1990s – present	1) Enhancing national competitiveness in early 1990s 2) Knowledge-based economy from mid-1990s	1) Quality enhancement for K-12 2) Public investment in higher education (e.g., Brain Korea 21 ¹) 3) Lifelong learning

Source: Kim (2002) p. 31

¹ Brain Korea (BK21) introduced in 1999 is a government competitive/performance funding scheme (1.2 billion USD for seven years) to stimulate R&D (Research and Development) training in IT (Information Technology), BT (BioTechnology), and other cutting-edge technology areas.

Figure 2: Growth of elementary and secondary school enrollment rates in Korea (1970-2000)

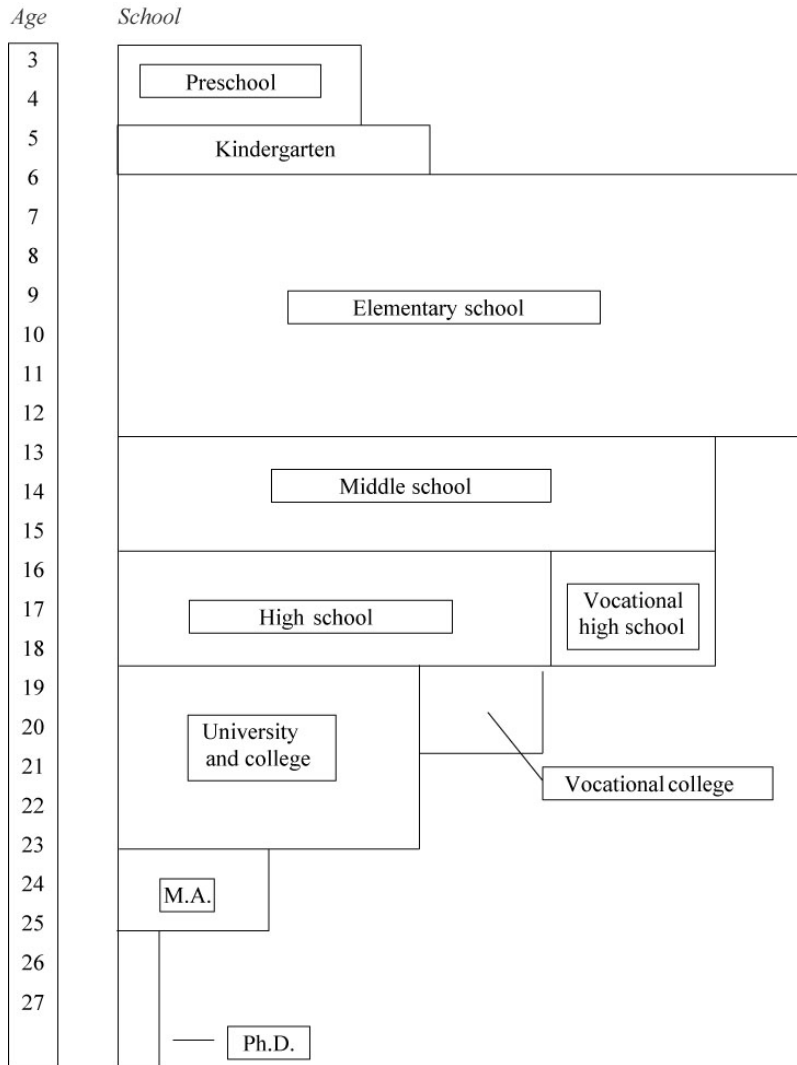
Figure 1.2 Growth of Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment Rates in Korea, 1970 to 2000



Note: Percentage of enrollment = (Total number of students enrolled / Students at the right age) * 100.

Source: Educational Statistics in Korea, Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development in Korea (each year).

Figure 1: Structure of the Korean education system by student age^{vii}



Source: Lee (2002) p. 3

Table 2: Demographic summary of study participants

	Mother 1	Mother 2	Mother 3	Mother 4
Children's educational level	- Preschool - Elementary	- Elementary - Elementary - Middle school	- Middle school - High school	- High school - Repeater (<i>Jea-su-sang</i>)
Shadow education purchased	<i>Hak-seup-ji</i> (Study package)	<i>Hakwon</i> (Education center) <i>Bang-gwa-hu-su-eop</i> (Extra curricula)	<i>Gwa-oe</i> (Private Tutoring)	<i>In-gang</i> (Internet lecture)
Self-identified socio-economic status (SES)	High	Low	High	Low

Table 3: The daily schedule of a typical Korean high school student

Interval	Activities
5:30 – 6:30	Gets up and studies for an hour or so.
6:30 – 7:30	Has a quick bite and goes to school. (Commuting usually takes more than 30-minutes on a crammed public transportation system.)
7:30 – 17:30	Attends school (Takes 7 different subjects every day; 18 different subjects in a year.)
17:30-19:00	Comes home and has dinner. Or, stays at school and has dinner there.
19:00-22:00	Studies alone or with visiting private tutors at home. Or, participates in study programs held at school. Or, attends private preparatory schools to take extra lessons in at least two subjects. Or, goes to tutor's place to get private lessons.
22:00- 1:00	Those who come home directly after school continue with home study. Those who remain at school return home and study more. Those who go to preparatory schools or private tutors come home and continue with their home study. All go to bed around 1a.m.

Source: Lee (2002) p. 7

Figure 3: Image of *gwa-oe* (private tutoring)

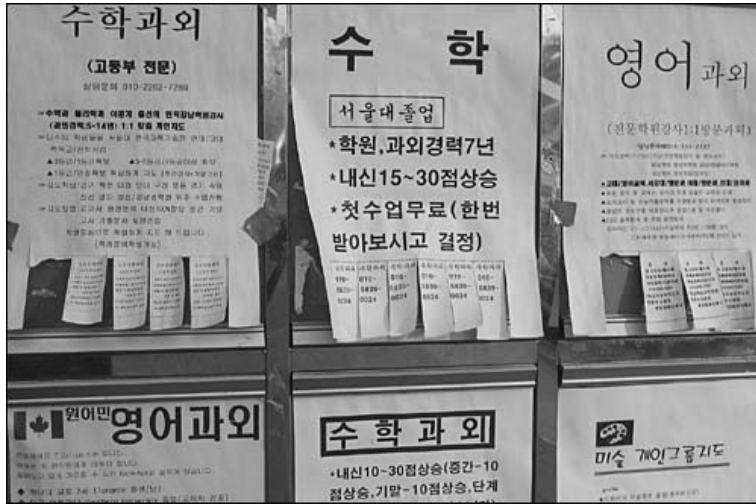


Figure 4: Images of *hak-wons* (private educational centers)

A picture of buildings of *hak-wons*





Figure 5: Image of *hak-seup-ji* (study package)



Figure 6: Image of *in-gang* (internet lectures)



Figure 7: Image of *bang-gwa-hu-su-eop* (extracurricular classes in class after school)



Figure 8: High school banners



Figure 9: Image of *ja-yul-hak-seup* (self-study time)



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Notes

ⁱ Since its independence from Japan, the Korean economy was among the fastest growing economies in the world, especially from 1960 to 1995. For example, the average Gross National Product per capita was measured as USD 87 in 1961 and rose to USD 10,000 by 1995 (Kim & Hong, 2000). In 1996, Korea joined the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), conveying its image as a country with a stable economic foundation. Until the stunning fall of the value of the Korean *won* in 1997, Korean development was consistently strong in economic terms.

ⁱⁱ For example, the Lee Syngman administration (1958-1960) was committed to the rapid expansion of mass education and aimed to create 5,000 classrooms per year (Kim, 2004).

ⁱⁱⁱ For example, families spent almost an equivalent amount as the public sector on building schools to provide supplementary tutoring for their children and on sending them to preparatory schools for higher education programs (Kim & Lee, 2001; Lee, 2002).

^{iv} Since the beginning of Korean educational development, the measured expenditure on shadow education had been increasing annually. In 1998, expenditures on shadow education by individual families approached the same amount as expenditures on public education development by the government (Lee, 2003). So far in 2011, however, it has been reported that the total expenditure on shadow education has decreased by 3.5%, although the financial burden of families has not necessarily decreased because the value of education has not changed (Chosun, 2011).

^v All interview excerpts appear in their original translated form. Authors' additions are included in brackets.

^{vi} *Seon-hang-hak-seup* is the most commonly practiced shadow education which literally means 'walking ahead'. In this kind of practice, students learn school curriculum one or two years in advance in order to rank higher in academic achievement during the year in which the curriculum is regularly offered.

^{vii} This figure shows the enrollment rate in educational levels according to age and the educational system (6 year elementary, 3 year middle school, 3 year academic or vocational high school, and 4 year university or 2 year college education in Korea).