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Narrowing Korean Socioeconomic Achievement Gaps Through Parental Support

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Abstract

In Korean society the vast majority of students attend after-school academic programs of some kind. Public schools in Korea are of high quality and have low variance in faculty, curriculum, and facilities in different areas despite the socioeconomic status (SES) of the demographic that resides in a school's area. Therefore, the prospects of SES mobility are generally thought to hinge on the quality of after-school programs that are available to different SES groups. The conventional wisdom in Korea states that students whose parents can afford to send their children to expensive private after-school programs will have better academic achievement than their less affluent counterparts who attend free public after-school programs. This will ultimately lead to college entrance and a successful life. This study sought to affirm or **disprove** this conventional wisdom and pursued strategies for helping lower SES students to achieve academic excellence. 4th grade students in Busan were surveyed to measure parental academic support and that measurement was compared to their benchmark test scores. Teachers and parents were interviewed, and some public after-school classes were observed. The findings were that private after-school participants do have better academic achievement than their counterparts who attend free public programs. However, parental support has significantly greater benefits to students who attend public after-school programs, and can help narrow the achievement gap.

Keywords: Socioeconomic status, after-school programs, educational welfare, parental academic support

Comment [J11]: Cannot prove or disprove – only find evidence to suggest some time of relationship or connection between two or more variables, for example. Social science research is messy & so everything is contextual & limited in terms of definitive conclusions.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study focuses on the socioeconomic educational gaps between Korean elementary students in relation to their access to quality after-school academic programs, and the level of academic support they receive at home. Whereas after-school programs in Western high schools are primarily intended either as an intervention or social affiliation, in Korea they are an extension of most students' school day that often persists into the evening (Park, Byun & Jo, 2012). While both public and private after-school programs are available, parents who can afford the private option generally select it (Park, Byun & Kim, 2011). Korean public schools generally do not have a lot of variation between high income and low-income areas in terms of the quality of teachers and facilities (Woo, 2010). Furthermore, Korean education policy has put a great deal of money and effort into improving educational opportunities for lower income students. However, despite the efforts of society large gaps in performance on The National Standardized Test (directly translated) between socioeconomic groups are a persistent problem (Kim, 2012). High-stakes testing is the primary means by which students gain their college admittance; thus, educational advancements that do not improve test scores yield questionable benefits for improving class mobility (Yang & Shin, 2008).

Given the low amount of variance of faculties and facilities between schools, the main variables we are left with affecting student's achievement are their after-school activities and home environment. In order to better understand the differences between the educational experiences of children of different socioeconomic strata we will examine their supplemental academic programs, differences in educational perspective, and parenting styles. This paper also

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addresses issues pertaining to students' self-beliefs, including: motivation, self-image, and efficacy.

Comment [J12]: Good intro David. Definitely lays out issue for the reader.

Historical Background

In the 1980's and early 1990's Korea was a very meritocratic society, even more so than the United States (Kim, 2012). It was a country where students could be academically successful regardless of their family background, and these achievements could greatly enable their class mobility. However, in 1997 a combination of macroeconomic instability (e.g., corporate mismanagement, currency manipulation) and austerity measures imposed by the IMF brought about an economic crisis that triggered a reorganization of Korean society (Mok, Lawler & Hinsz, 2009). One consequence of the 1997 reforms has been a deepened gap between the rich and poor, and the educational opportunities available to them (Lee, 2009). The "July 30 Educational Reform" (enacted in 1980) which had prohibited all kinds of private after-school education was lifted, opening the door for a massive private after-school academy industry (Park & Ablemann, 2004). In 2008, Korean households spent over \$17 billion United States dollars on private educational services for their children, or a conservative estimate of \$200 per student per month. In Seoul the estimate was closer to \$550 per student (Park et al., 2011). This has created a great deal of concern that educational opportunity and resources have become increasingly dependent on one's social and economic background, leading to a reinforcement and intensification of Korea's socioeconomic stratification (Kim, 2008).

These social ramifications have manifested in various ways. Residential segregation by social class has resulted in schools being divided by differences between socioeconomic groups (Kim, 2012). While there is not a lot of variance between public schools in Korea, there are huge differences between the predominant level of education and income of the students' parents

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(Kim & Woo, 2010). A KEDI (2002) report exposed a plethora of poverty related concerns affecting low-income students' ability to cope with school. Neglect due to intensive work schedules, malnutrition, broken homes, and unstable emotional environments led to 35% of teachers in these low-income areas citing "emotional problems" as their most serious educational obstacle. Even parents who sought to support their children's academic success did not know how to help or how to connect with their schools (Lee, 2008). Growing public concern over these conditions led to a political environment favoring "[Equal] Education For All" and the establishment of Welfare Action Zone Policy (or the "Education Priority Zone Plan"), which came into effect in 2003 (Kim, 2012). These welfare action zones were selected in particularly afflicted areas of Seoul and Busan (Lee, 2008).

Welfare Action Zones: The Model for Korean After-School Programs

The goal of Welfare Action Zone Policy is to help students in low-income areas recover from their educational handicaps by creating a network for cognitive achievement (Lee, 2008). This is a network of school-home-community; which provides educational and cultural opportunities via cooperation of government, private organizations, schools, and local communities. The goals of the EWPZP are to use the network to improve educational achievement for disadvantaged students. The conceptual framework by which it defines achievement is very broad, covering academic, non-academic, intellectual, affective, and physical achievement (Lee). Welfare Action Zone Policy also serves as an ideological and practical blueprint for Korea's more ubiquitous public afterschool programs (Bae, Kim & Lee, 2009).

Schools are able to offer a wide range of programs designed to meet the needs of their students. This can include, for example: carrying out such functions as support for learning

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activities, the provision of cultural activities, support for emotional and psychological development, and other extra-curricular educational services (Lee, 2008). In the supplemental classes teachers are allowed greater flexibility in devising curriculum based on the needs of their students (Kim, 2012). Teachers are encouraged to frame the curricula around viewing the student as a whole person, and not merely on standards based content. Cultural activities are also offered, such as playing musical instruments, drawing, and creating pottery. On the welfare aspect, outreach to students' families has led to identification and provision of things students need to improve their academic and social standing at their schools. For instance contributing to a good study environment at home by furnishing a desk or new school clothes can be provided, with the assistance from a social welfare institution in their community. These kinds of changes in a student's school life have the ability to improve their desire to study and participate in school (Kim).

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A notable feature of the EWPZP is the effect it has had on the teaching styles of participating teachers. In order to design curriculum and programs to best serve their students they took special time to understand them. This research took the form of interviewing and visiting their families, and afterwards teachers emphasized that this new understanding of their students' lives transformed their conceptualization of their duties as teachers and their membership in society (Kim, 2012). Schools where the teachers assumed a greater degree of care pedagogy (and the administration was supportive of this change) during the implementation of the support programs were found to be the most effective (Lee, 2008).

Unfortunately, the results of the effectiveness of the EWPZP in improving academic achievement have been mixed to inconclusive (Kim, 2012). While it was possible to find a few students who showed remarkable academic achievement (confirmed by national standardized

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tests), these cases were not common. There were many students who showed success despite having severe disadvantages, but their achievement was not high enough to be measured by standardized tests. Most of the success stories have been qualitative, and acknowledged by the teachers who taught the students directly (Kim). Changes in the level of general satisfaction and attitudes towards school have been very positive, and increased participation in school activities has been notable. One aspect of this has been a decreased stigmatization of supplemental programs, where more affluent students have come to recognize the quality of public after-school programs and no longer associate them with being disadvantaged (Kim). These positive responses have led to the establishment of more programs, in keeping with the goal of relieving the economic burden of families who are paying for similar private programs (Bae et al., 2009).

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Korea's Public After-School Programs and Their Participants

Korea's more mainstream after-school programs are based on the same model as the EWZPs. Many of the same principles apply: offering flexible teaching methods and curricula not permitted in the regular classroom environment, offering educational opportunities to low-income or rural students, and forming partnerships within local communities. These programs seek to also accommodate middle class students in order to ease the financial burden of attending private academies. For this reason Korean afterschool programs can be seen to be actively competing with private after-school academies known as *hogwan* (Bae et al. 2009). In general, students are generally from lower income and lower educated households, and the programs are vehicles for enhancing education welfare and equality (Bae et al.; Park et al., 2012). In 2008, over half of all Korean public school students participated in at least one public after-school class (Park et al., 2012).

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Korean after-school programs can be grouped into three large categories: child-care programs, enrichment programs, and academic programs (Bae et al., 2009). Child-care is generally only for the K-2 grades, and more academically meaningful activities are provided for older students (Bae et al.). Most prominent academic areas are represented including math, English, and literacy. Computer, art, and music classes are also common. Despite the convention that the programs are for disadvantaged students, students from families from higher incomes are prominently represented. One explanation for this is that students from wealthier families are more likely to participate in all forms of after-school activities, including formal after-school programs. Even so, children from low-income and rural households have a greater tendency to utilize the public programs. An exception to this tendency is highly at-risk students (lowest income and from single parent homes), whom the programs have failed to reach. The level of parent education has been found to have a positive association with participation in academic programs. Exceptions to this are highly Korean-educated mothers, who are not satisfied with the quality of ASPs and prefer hogwan. Another demographic factor is gender, where girls tend to participate in academic activities and boys prefer coached sports (Bae et al.).

Comment [J15]: Like what, for example?

The studies on the effectiveness of Korean after-school academic programs have yielded similar (and equally inconclusive) results as that of the EWZPs (Bae et al., 2009). Essentially, a favorable or unfavorable view can be decided depending on one's definition of "academic success", which groups of students are being measured, and the method of measurement. Standardized test scores have shown little marked improvement as a result of attending ASPs (Park et al., 2012). Results of quantitative studies are generally inconsistent, sometimes showing no changes or even negative trends. Bae et al.'s survey of data from the 2008 Survey on Private Education Expenditure showed positive correlation between ASP participation and academic

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achievement across all age groups, with greater improvement noted among lower socioeconomic groups (Bae et al.). Using Korean English Language Survey data, Woo & Lee (2010) demonstrated that students' participation in ASPs resulted in improving their academic achievement in English at the middle school level (Park et al., 2012). Huang, Leon, La Torre, & Mostatavi (2008) employed a quasi-experimental design using a 10,000 student longitudinal sample and concluded that ASPs improved math achievement but not English-language achievement (Park et al.). However, S.-Y. Byun, Kim, & Hwang (2010) accused the Huang et al. study of selection bias and criticized their quasi-experimental research design. Instead they used the propensity score-matching model, which showed ASP participation had negative effects on middle school students' academic achievement (Park et al.).

Comment [JI6]: Use "and" in text

J. H. Lee, Hong, & Park's study (2005) that used both quantitative and qualitative methods confirmed students' academic achievement via qualitative evidence, but quantitative data in the same study did not support these findings (Kim, 2012). This result trends toward the possibility that ASPs strengthen the influence of public schools on student performance, particularly for socioeconomically disadvantaged students. These low SES students may become more academically orientated, even if this outcome doesn't show up in quantitative tests. Perceived effectiveness and quality of the programs by the students and their families is very positive (Kim). Teachers felt the students participating in ASPs had better classroom and social skills. They also reported better relationships with these students. Qualitative studies by J. I. Byun et al. (2009), S. W. Kim & Han (2008), and H. W. Kim et al. (2008) describe many other benefits that do not necessarily translate into improved standardized test scores (Park et al., 2012). These include improved attendance, attitudes toward school, and other behavioral outcomes.

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Jeongwon Kim's qualitative study (2011) purported many holistic benefits of supplemental programs for low SES students that categorically will not translate into higher standardized test scores (Kim, 2012). Thus, while the ASP's have been given generous governmental support based on the assumption that there is a positive correlation between learning opportunities and academic achievement, there is little conclusive evidence to back up this presupposition (Bae et al., 2009). It is generally agreed that there is a need for more research on the benefits and quality of Korean public after-school programs (Bae et al.; Park et al.).

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[Insert concluding paragraph.](#)

Socioeconomic Perspectives Towards Education

Korean parents share various commonalities. Their culture is embedded in Confucianism, which carries very high expectations for children's obedience (Lee, Heekeun & Choi, 2012). Korean families share their sense of accomplishment, thus the academic achievement for the children are shared by the entire family unit. In a culture that does not value individuality in the same way as the west children are seen as an extension of their parents, even as an extension of their bodies. This is especially true of mothers, who do not identify as a separate person from the child but as a dyad. Thus, children do not make many choices for themselves, especially in regards to education. Most Korean parents are overprotective and indulgent, but this can quickly turn to severe sanctions over perceived disobedience or failure (Yang & Shin, 2008). Among all socioeconomic classes English has a unique importance among academic subjects, but the form this role takes varies depending on class (Park & Ablemann, 2004).

Lower income Koreans suffer most of the typical problems associated with poverty (Lee, 2008). Economic failure leads in many cases to single parent households, adding to the "at-risk" factor (Lee). While during the 80's and early 90's success stories of poor people from the

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countryside or low-income urban areas raising themselves to high status were not uncommon, this is no longer the case. The old saying that “a dragon pops out of a small stream”, meaning that an elite or outstanding scholar can come from anywhere, is no longer held in popular belief (Yang & Shin, 2008). Lower classed parents who do strive hard to improve their child’s educational status in order to improve their future prospects are often judged as (roughly translated) “overly ambitious” (Park & Ablemann, 2004). In some cases lower income students are told by their parents not to study hard, because they will not be able to afford advanced education (Lee, 2008). Sometimes the exception to this academic disregard is English, because the prospect of emigration to the United States seems to be the only means of aspiring to a better life (Park & Ablemann, 2004).

Above the poverty line Korea’s Confucianism based philosophy is evident in most households. Historically literate-officials ruled the country, and traditionally their scholarly values are more important than technical or practical knowledge. Knowledge is seen as the key to growth, so as soon as a child gains some sense of the outer world their parents try to make them into a little scholar. Confucianism holds that all people are not equal and traditional values hold that with study comes rank. Parents who do not have university degrees perceive many disadvantages in their lifestyle, even if they have well paying jobs (Yang & Shin, 2008).

In Korea happiness is very intertwined with the perceptions of others. One could be well off financially even to the point of owning their own business, but without certain social markers related to their education (such as a university degree or some amount of English ability) society will place a great deal of doubt in that person’s happiness (Park & Ablemann, 2004). This leads to a life of frustration, dissatisfaction, and unhappiness that people do not want to pass on to their children (Park & Ablemann; Yang & Shin, 2008). It is indeed true that any white-collar job

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requires a university degree, but the necessity of higher education goes beyond that. It is a requirement in order to be treated as a decent human being, and a student who fails to enter a university may be considered a failure, useless, and a nobody who brings shame upon their family. Even the primary level of education is considered to be a vehicle for college entrance. This fosters a level of competition between classmates that discourages cooperation and encourages selfishness as a means to survive (Yang & Shin).

Most students at this socioeconomic level and above have their afternoons and evenings packed with extra-curricular classes, even children as young as 3rd grade. The most emphasized subjects are math and English, but more enrichment-orientated subjects like music, taekwondo, and ballet are also typical (Park & Ablemann, 2004). Middle class mothers often do not work full-time and have time to do research on which academies to use and continually gather information on their child's progress from the teachers at the hokwan. This is in great contrast to their highly minimal interactions with the public schools their children attend. A primary reason for this is Korean schools are highly standardized and transparent, limiting the possibility of intervention in the formal school environment (Park et al., 2011).

At the higher end of the socio-economic spectrum the pressures of competition become even more intense. While most middle class parents feel satisfied if their child is in the top 10% of their class and hope that they have a good reputation in their chosen field later in life, more affluent parents emphasize "being number one" as a primary academic goal (Yang & Shin, 2008). The notable parental concern among middle class parents manifests as a highly controlling manner towards the child's psychological and behavioral academic outlook. In the West a child might consider this a repressive violation of their autonomy, which might have a negative effect on their emotional and academic functioning. However, Confucian sociological

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norms do not have the same perceptions of autonomy, and this level of psychological control does not seem to lead to significant negative outcomes. It is likely to produce academic achievement, and appears to contribute to good habits of self-regulation (Lee et al., 2012).

Individual tutors are often employed, and study abroad is common (Park & Ablemann, 2004). Families often compete for housing in upper-class neighborhoods with high entrance rates into top colleges (Park & Ablemann, [year](#)). Staying at least six months ahead of their school's curriculum is common, and falling behind in school at any grade level can damage a student's long-term prospects. This leads to even further dependence on private after-school academies (Yang & Shin, 2008). The after-school academies are also known as "cram-schools" and are highly focused on standardized test performance (Kim, 2011).

Justification For This Study

There is a combination of factors that are trending to limit the potential of education reform for improving class mobility in Korea. At the root of this problem is the conundrum of high stakes testing as the fundamental vehicle to higher socioeconomic status, which is a situation that is not likely to change. While many reforms have been implemented, such as access to after-school programs and low faculty/facility variance between schools, scores on high stakes tests have not been significantly statistically affected (Kim 2012; Woo 2010). Other methods of measuring have yielded contradictory results, and researchers agree that more information is needed to understand how to improve the prospects for low SES students (Bae et al.; Park et al.). The purpose of this study is to play a small part in providing that information.

Success stories, while statistically uncommon, are not complete outliers (Lee 2008). Some lower SES students have a combination of variables that do lead to success. This study seeks to find correlations between after-school activities, methods, and frequency of parental

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academic support that trend toward academic achievement. We also hope to gain better understanding of the definition and role of academic achievement in households and classrooms. Studies have documented differences in the educational opportunities higher SES parents provide their children, and the state has attempted to replicate these opportunities (Park et al. 2011). Studies have also demonstrated the different kinds of sociological perspectives and levels of importance parents with different SES background have in regards to education (Park & Ablemann, 2004; Yang & Shin, 2008). While these are all important factors in determining academic success, it still leaves the question: what exactly are parents doing at home to help their children succeed? How, when combined with a student's after-school activities, does it affect their performance on standardized tests?

Thus far, effective educational reform in Korea has included a component of community outreach and the establishment of networks between schools, community organizations, and parents (Kim 2012). We hope to demonstrate some ways that parents can work with their child at home to improve their academic performance; leading to wider understanding conveyed through these networks. All parents want their child to succeed, and intuitively many realize that such activities as reading with them or helping with homework are beneficial. However, in some cases calling attention to these points and having them articulated may provide needed motivation to parents to more actively participate in their child's academic achievement.

Comment [JI8]: What about identifying 1-2 study implications – practice &/or additional research.

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QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Methodology

Research question: Can parental academic support help narrow the achievement gap between Korean elementary students who attend public after-school programs and students who attend private programs?

Dependent Variables: Academic achievement as measured by standardized test scores.

Independent Variables: Private and public after-school programs. Parental academic support.

Target Population: Elementary students in Busan. Ideal target of study is 4th grade.

Role as Researcher: The role of the researcher is that of a public school teacher who has a vested interest in quality supplemental programs (such as after-school programs or summer/winter “camps”), and the future prospects of his students. As far as the respect and difference offered to the researcher by the participating parties, his wife is acting as kind of a proxy in that regards. Her contacts and position as a Korean elementary teacher are instrumental in motivating participants. Having an insider into the culture and the school system is an invaluable asset to this study. The fact that everything must be translated, the lack of a certain amount of direct cultural knowledge on the part of the researcher, and lack of translation in certain situations are admittedly weaknesses in conducting this study.

[What about establishment of Rapport?](#)

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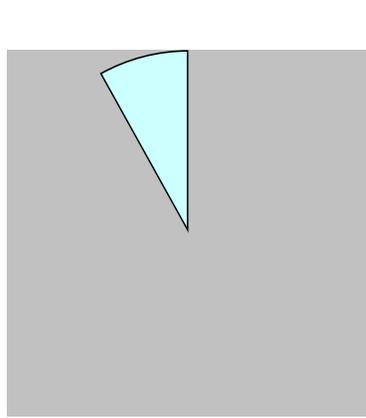
Quantitative Research Participants

Pre-existing data study participants: Participants were two 4th grade classes at an Elementary School in Busan. Each class consisted of 20 students, with three students being either absent for the survey or disqualified. Benchmark scores for the first midterm of the school year were the source of pre-existing data. The classes were racially and culturally homogenous and SES variance is not high (low-mid to high-mid SES). Korean teachers do not consciously differentiate students by SES, and from a Korean teacher's perspective there are not "groups" in the same sense as a teacher in a multicultural society like the US would think of. Students were grouped in terms of aptitude on the benchmark scores, and also based on whether they participate in public or private after-school programs.

Survey study participants: The same two 4th grade classes as mentioned above. The survey documented the students' after-school academic activities, and attempted to measure parental academic support. Students were grouped in terms of their after-school activities: primarily private vs. public. In many cases combinations exist, and for grouping they are either eliminated or grouped according to the one they favor, which will be specified. Originally there was a survey question that attempted to group students in terms of worksheet tutor vs. store bought worksheets, but the question instructions were mistranslated. However, part of the question pertained to parental help with worksheets and that part has been retained for measuring parental support. Two students were removed from the data: one who incorrectly entered their student number and could not be matched to benchmarks, and another who scored extremely poorer on benchmarks than the next lowest student, and whose survey answers were questionable.

Here is a chart representing the after-school demographics of the sample:

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Comment [JJ9]: Nice graph. Can just summarize in text too but each to read.

(Figure 1: After-school programs attended by Korean 4th graders)

The “Public” and “Private” sections represent students who either primarily or exclusively attend after-school programs at their school or at hokwans respectively. “Equal” represents an even distribution of public and private programs in the students’ schedules. “None” refers to students who have no academic after-school classes indicated in their survey, but this doesn’t imply they do not attend after-school programs at all. Students who have sports, taekwon-do, music, or even computer orientated after-school programs could also fall into this category.

Procedures for Quantitative Data Collection

Academic achievement as measured by first mid-term benchmark tests for English (EFL), math, and native Korean (which is essentially basic language arts). Parental support was measured by various means via student survey: frequency of spending time doing academic activities together, provision of an academic environment at home (books to read, etc), and frequency of academically orientated “field trips” (e.g. trips to museums or the global English village). All stakeholders had the opportunity to re-define academic achievement in relevant

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terms to their own understanding during the course of the study. In this case students filled out a two-item questionnaire in class. Whether students attend hokwans (private after-school academies) and/or public after-school programs was noted via student survey.

Homeroom teachers provided pre-existing data consisting of benchmark scores (English, math, Korean). The specific test scores provided were from the first battery of midterms of the school year. Performance on the test is the standard set for academic proficiency, and said proficiency is the definition of academic achievement to be compared with the survey data. The survey was administered in conjunction with homeroom teacher in the computer lab, where the survey was filled out online.

The survey data was compared with pre-existing data to find correlations between after-school academic activities, parental academic support, and academic achievement. Students were only identified via number and the survey was taken in a “test style” seating arrangement to prevent students from seeing each other’s responses to maintain confidentiality. The homeroom teacher never saw the survey results, and the researcher had no means of identifying students by their number. Therefore total anonymity has been maintained in regards to the results of this survey.

Instrumentation

Sampling method: Convenience/random

Relationship to Dependent Variables: Academic achievement as measured by first mid-term benchmark tests of the school year. (English/ Math/ Korean)

Relationship Independent Variables: Private and public after-school programs. Various measures of parental academic support.

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English (EFL), math, and Korean (basic language arts) scores were specifically tied to certain survey items. All three scores were averaged and compared with cumulative data generated from a survey administered to the students. Tests were the same for both 4th grade classes, and all the tests were on a 100 point scale. Each test was made up of 25 questions. To give scale to the graph data presented, the bottom student's score was subtracted from all scores when generating the scattershot graphs, giving the lowest student a value of zero.

The survey consisted of ten questions that measured how much of a student's after-school program participation is private, and how much was provided by the school. These were used to create categorical groupings and compared with benchmark scores. The number of books that are furnished in the household and how much time parents spend directly assisting the student with learning activities was included in the data. The survey items were conceptualized as specifically tied to a specific benchmark subject.

Each subject produced "parent score". For instance, the English score was generated by:

- 1) Number of English books in their home. (0-3pts.)
- 2) Frequency of parental help with English activities. (0-4pts.)
- 3) Helping with worksheets, which are either provided by a tutor or personally by the parent (0-1pt., with 1pt. added in each individual subject area for a cumulative 3pts. added to their overall parental support score)
- 4) Frequency of trips to the English Global Village. (0-2pts.)

Similarly, their Korean score was generated by the number of books at the student's reading level in their home, frequency of reading time together, frequency of trips to historical museums, and frequency of trips to bookstores and libraries. The math score (admittedly the

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conceptually weakest of the three) was generated by frequency of time spent studying together, worksheet help, and frequency of trips to science museums.

“Parental support scores” were used in conjunction with categorical groupings between students who receive their after-school English instruction from a private academy, and those who attend public after-school programs. These scores and groupings were used to find correlational trends in conjunction with English benchmark scores. In a similar way an overall parental support score was tallied and compared with an average of all benchmark scores. For overall scores the scale was 0-24, based on the lowest and highest student score. English, math, and Korean parental support scores were correlated individually on a scale from 0 to 8, 5, and 11 respectively.

Comment [JI10]: Good summary David. Very easy & clear to read.

Data Analysis

Using the survey data and benchmark scores we compared these groups:

Set 1

- 1) Students whose primary sources of afterschool programs are private academies (hokwans).
- 2) Students whose primary sources of after-school programs are free public programs. Most of these students can be assumed to fall into a low SES group.

More than one after-school class in one category (public or private) versus no more than one in another or all after-school programs being in the same category defines “primary source”. If a student attends an “all subject” hokwan, they were disqualified from having public school programs being their primary source. Also in the case of specific correlations to a subject (e.g. English, etc.), if a student has an after-school program at the school that is opposite their primary

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one, they are disqualified. These groups were compared via correlating their parental support scores and their benchmark scores using scattershot graphs.

Set 2

- 1) Students whose only source of academic afterschool activity is private (hokwans), and who have a high level of parental academic support.
- 2) Students whose only source of academic afterschool activity is public (public school programs) and who have a high level of parental academic support.
- 3) Students whose only source of academic afterschool activity is private, and who have a low level of parental academic support.
- 4) Students whose only source of academic afterschool activity is public and who have a low level of parental academic support.

Taking the median of the “parent score” scale, and separating students from above and below that level define “high” and “low” levels of parental support. This resulted in 22 students with a score of 11 or lower in the overall sample, and 16 students with a score of 13 or higher. Because of the specific nature of their after-school schedules the sample sizes of the groups were very small (4-10 students).

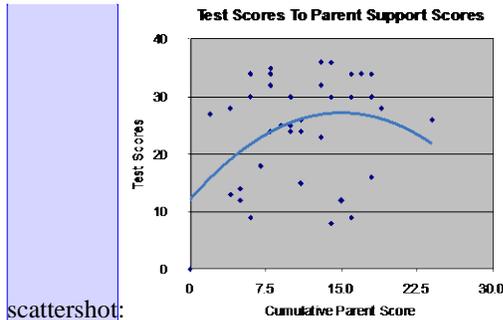
Inference to the larger population

A comparison of the groups in sets 1&2 seeks to demonstrate that a high level of parental support can serve as a predictor to academic achievement, and can supplant the advantages gained by attending private academic programs. This can perhaps serve in a motivational or strategic capacity in aiding to close the achievement gap between lower and higher SES students.

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Quantitative Findings

The small sample size of 37 students makes it easy for a few students to skew the results,

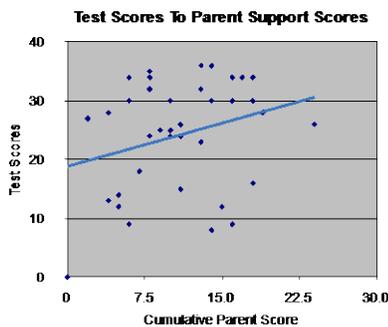


Comment [JI11]: Nice work here David.

(Figure 2: Sample scattershot, polynomial trend line for all students in the sample)

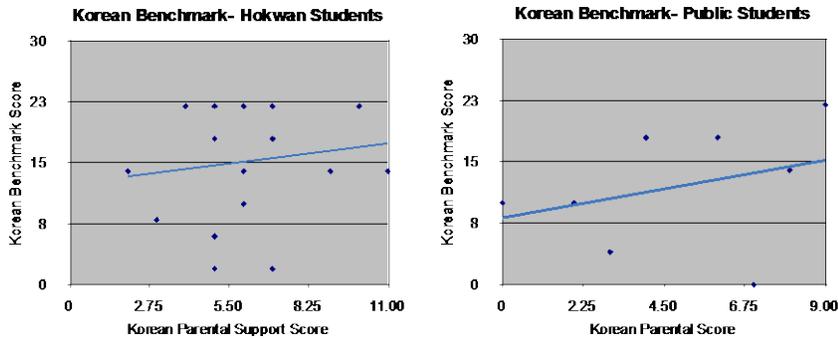
While marking the trend line using a polynomial equation is the most accurate way to show the correlational trend, there are three students at the very top of the parent support scale who had somewhat mediocre test scores. They serve to throw off the correlations demonstrated by the rest of the sample, therefore we will track the scattershot correlations linearly like so:

Comment [JI12]: Ok, good & so what is the plain lang interpretation of these findings?



Korean (Literacy) Correlational Data

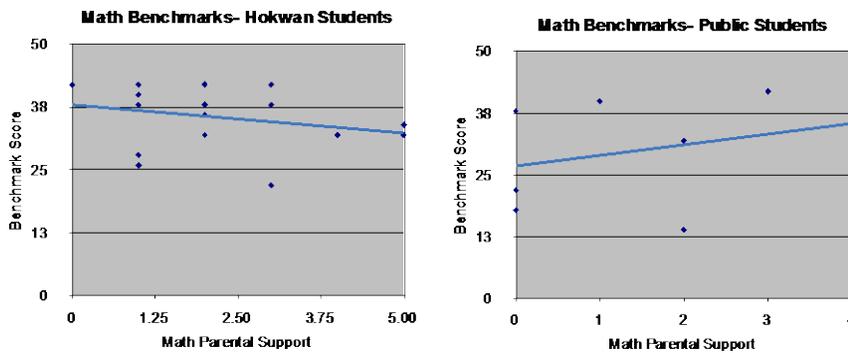
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(Figures 4&5: Correlation of Korean (literacy) test scores to parental support)

Both groups show similar trends toward a positive correlation between parental support and literacy.

Math Correlational Data

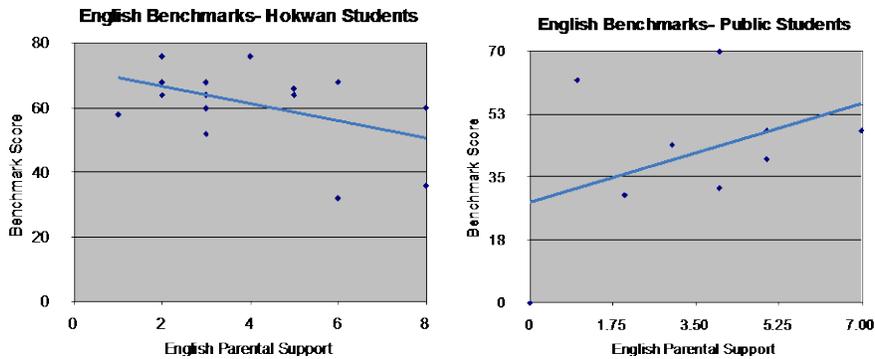


(Figures 6&7: Correlation of math test scores to parental support)

Here the data demonstrates a negative trend for private school students and a positive trend toward academic achievement for the public school participants. The reader should note the cluster of high achieving hokwan students whose parental involvement is low.

English Correlational Data

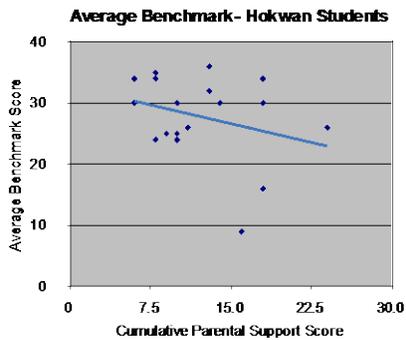
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(Figures 8&9: Correlation of English test scores to parental support)

Once again we have a negative correlation for private after-school students and a positive one for public after-school participants. There is also again a cluster of high achieving students with low parental involvement.

Cumulative Correlational Comparison

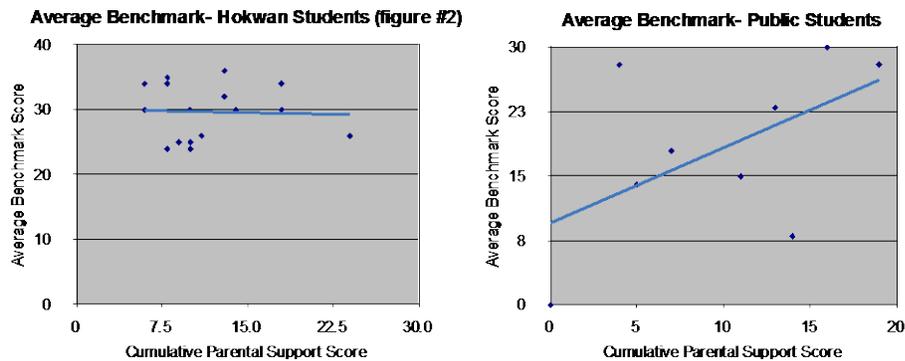


(Figure 10: Average of hokwan students' benchmarks of correlated with parental support)

Here the reader may note a quite pronounced negative trend, and perhaps we should address this in the student sample. Two students are consistently skewing the correlation negatively,

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though to be fair there is one student in the public group who is doing the same thing. Let's eliminate those two students from the hokwan student data for our comparison:



(Figures 11 & 12: Correlation of average test scores to parental support with modified hokwan data)

Even after doctoring the data we see a slightly negative correlation for the private school students versus a very significant positive correlation for the public students. The reader may note one factor contributing to the pronounced trend for public students is the (0,0) student in the sample. However, the fact that the student with the lowest benchmark scores also has the lowest parental support score should not be considered an outlier. One will also note the benchmark scores were generally higher for the hokwan students, and all the highest achieving students (30+ score) are in the private after-school group. This may represent various demographic characteristics of children whose parents can afford to send their children to private after-school programs.

Comment [J113]: Don't really want to doctor it & so it is fine to report in raw format for graphical reasons.

Also, any connection between findings based on different demographic groups?

Discussion of Correlational Data

There are a few deductions that can be made from these scattershot graphs. One is that there are a significant number of high achieving private after-school students with low parental

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support scores. This group reflects the parental attitudes represented in the *Parent Interviews* section of this study, where all of the participants felt that the academic achievement of their children was best left to professional help. It is also apparent from the data that these hokwan students' academic achievement isn't suffering greatly due to a lack of direct parental support.

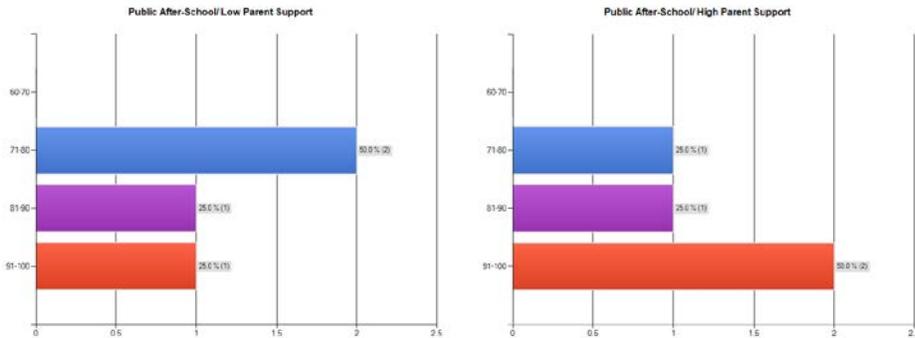
However, the public school student trend correlates strongly toward improved academic achievement with increased parental academic support. The deduction we can make from this finding is that for parents who cannot afford hokwans, the need for direct academic support becomes a crucial element in their children's academic achievement.

Trends Among Refined Groups

At the risk of reducing the sample sizes too much, this section will make a general comparison between groups that are exclusively public (attend public and no private after-school programs) or exclusively private (attend private and no public after-school programs), in relation to either being in the lower or higher parental support group. Each group is analyzed separately and categorically sorted within a range of test scores.

(Note to Dr. Immekus: I know these graphs are rudimentary, the best way I could process this information at this time was using SurveyMonkey, and this is what the site gave me. I will work on fixing this for a final dissertation.)

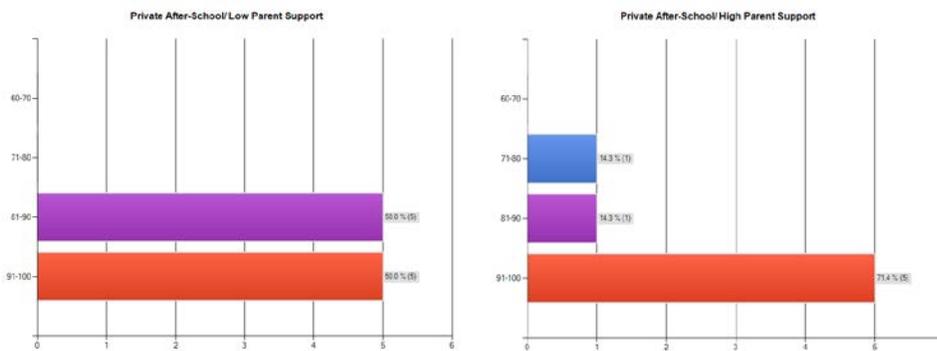
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(Figures 13&14: Public after-school students' test scores grouped by low/high parental support)

Students who are exclusively public show significant benefit from moderate to high parental support, as would be expected from the trends shown in the scattershot graphs. The chances of them scoring in the lowest category are reduced by 50%, and probability of scoring in the highest category increases 50%.

Comment [JI14]: Ok, so good use of graphs, & so what is the plain lang interpretation of the data here?



(Figures 15&16: Private after-school students' test scores grouped by low/high parental support)

The graphs for purely private after-school students show both groups do well, but the

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probability of scoring in the very top category are increased significantly with moderate to high parental support.

Discussion of Refined Group Data

This organization of data reinforces conclusions drawn from the previous section's analysis of scattershot graphs. Students who cannot afford to attend hokwans are more likely to be in the highest achievement bracket and less likely to be "at risk" with moderate to high parental support. Students who only attend private after-school programs also show a greater chance of being in the top category of achievement with moderate to high parental support.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Parent Interviews

Sampling method: contrast sampling

The criteria for selection of parents to be interviewed was based on contrasting levels of SES. The low SES parent should be from a family that would not be able to afford a private afterschool program without government assistance. They should also be a family where neither parent went to college. The mid level SES parents should be able to afford private afterschool programs, but such expenditure would be a sacrifice. It is assumed that at least one parent would have a university degree, but that was not part of the stated criteria. High-level SES parents should have no problem affording private afterschool programs, but still have children in a public school. All parents should have at least one child in elementary school. It was assumed only mothers would be attending interviews because generally mothers are the parent who takes

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responsibility for the child's education, and contacts to recruit participants were all women.

Participants were recruited via a "friend of a friend" connection to the researcher's wife.

Comment [JI15]: Any particular qual sampling method used?

Research sites: Interviews were conducted in restaurants of the participants choosing near their homes. Reasons for this location include: atmosphere conducive to rapport, method of "payment"/incentive being buying the participant dinner, and getting a chance to see the participant's neighborhood. A common social practice for Korean ladies is to find a quiet place to chat, and all the participants seemed to be mindful of the need for such an environment for their interview. The site for the low SES interviewee was a traditional [nato-bean](#) soup restaurant, which was almost empty and very quiet. The restaurant was all vegetarian in keeping with the interviewee's Buddhist faith. The mid-level was held at a [shabu-shabu](#) restaurant, where the interview was held in a small private room. The high level was at a "western-style" steak restaurant, where the group had their own area and privacy.

Procedure: The interviews were primarily conducted by the researcher's wife in Korean, with the exception of the high SES parent who spoke in English. At the beginning of the first interview (with the low SES parent) there was an objection to recording the interview, leading to a breakdown in rapport. As a result all interviews were conducted with the researcher's wife taking notes. The researcher does not consider this a significant impediment, as the purpose here is more to get general information than to find quotable material. While the researcher had a general idea of what was going on during the Korean interviews, most of his understanding was gained in a post interview discussion with his wife.

Comment [JI16]: Did you feel answers impacted in any way?

Parent Interview Participants

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Low SES: [All names are changed] Suk-kyung and her husband “own” (they rent the space) a small non-franchise convenience store. The family lives in a small living space in the back of the store. The area is in a low-income “hilly area” composed of small, low rent houses. They have a boy in the first grade, a girl in the 3rd grade, and another girl in the 6th grade. Their school is composed of all low SES families. Franchise convenience stores and larger “marts” are making the traditional supermarkets less viable and Suk-kyung’s family is very concerned about their future.

Mid SES: Min-yung is a nurse, and her husband works in the equivalent of a city hall records department. Both have a basic university degree. They live in a new two-bedroom apartment that is subsidized housing for government workers. They have two children: a boy in 4th grade and a girl in 6th grade. Their neighborhood has the relatively nice apartments described, but is located in an older slightly industrial part of town. As a result their school has a mix of mid-high to low SES students.

High SES: Hyun-ju does not work, and her husband has his own plastic surgery clinic. She has a university degree and he is a doctor. They live in a very nice apartment building (four elevators!), and the area (and school SES) is very upper-middle to upper class. While their two boys (2nd and 5th grade) go to the neighborhood’s public elementary school, the reason is not economic: they unexpectedly lost a lottery to get into the private school they wanted.

Relationship to variables: Interview questions are directed towards gathering data about afterschool programs, parental definitions of academic achievement, and their definition of parental support. Since the study seeks to facilitate SES mobility, parental opinions about the college admittance system and whether it is biased based on SES is also included.

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Parent Interview Findings

After-school programs

Suk-kyung's (low SES) 1st and 3rd grade children go to the after-school program at their school for writing, and go to the local cultural community center for various other free activities. She claims to be satisfied with these programs' quality. Her 6th grade daughter is a very motivated student and attends an all-subject hokwan via a government voucher. Suk-kyung is not totally happy with the quality of this program because of the hokwan's run down environment, large class size, and lack of a native English teacher. However, attendance at this facility (as opposed to using the school's after-school programs) is as much a social activity as an academic one. 6th graders are somewhat embarrassed about still being in elementary school, which creates a "critical mass" of students at the hokwan. Thus, her daughter goes to the hokwan to be with her friends.

Min-yung (mid SES) pays for her 6th grade daughter's English and all-subject hokwans. For her 4th grade son the main academic after-school activities he has are the English after-school program at the school and a math worksheet tutor who comes to their home once a week. The after-school program is taught by the school's native English teacher, who her son likes. Her primary consideration at his age is that he has a good attitude towards the subject. He also goes to a tae-kwan-do hokwan.

Hyun-ju's children attend expensive math, science, tae-kwon-do, swimming, and golf hokwans. They also have English, violin, and piano tutors who come to their home.

Parental support

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The overall sentiment across all SES lines was that academic support was best achieved by facilitating the best after-school services possible for their children, not though direct involvement. Suk-kyung (low-SES) has researched all of the educational welfare available to her income level (e.g. the voucher for her daughter's hokwan). In regards to helping her children with homework, reading with them, or even asking them about school she and her husband are almost always working (managing the store or handling deliveries). During their free time they have they are too tired and grumpy to bother with school related things. However, their oldest daughter enthusiastically takes this responsibility by helping them with their schoolwork, reading with them, and teaching them a little English. Suk-kyung reminds her children occasionally that without scholarships they will not be able to afford to go to college, hoping it will act as an incentive to academic achievement.

Comment [JI17]: Interesting.

Min-yung [mid-SES] claimed a bit more direct involvement, but her hours as a nurse are often at odds with being able to spend a lot of time with her children during the week. On her day off she helps her 4th grade son with math, and checks his homework. Her 6th grade daughter's homework content is much harder than when she went to school, and she feels intimidated by it. Thus, due to time constraints and curriculum difficulty she believes professional help is the best way to support academic achievement for her children. She does extensive research to find the best hokwans for the price, and keeps an eye out for quality after-school programs at the school for her 4th grader. Min-yung holds frequent conversations with her children to keep informed about their school-life. She also takes both her children to the bookstore and lets them select books.

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Hyun-ju (high-SES) has quite a bit more free time that translates into more direct involvement with her children's school, if not necessarily direct academic activity with the children themselves. She is a member of the PTA and frequently consults with her children's teachers. English is very central to their family life: during dinner, and other times the family is not in public they do their best to speak in English. Vacations are spent in English speaking locations and often for part of the trip the children stay at an English school, while the parents do a more romantic retreat.

A telling method of understanding a society's conceptualization of parenting strategies is what people discuss with their peers, and the advice they give to one another. In regards to academic achievement the response was very similar across all lines of SES. They did not discuss any kind of direct parental support, such as books to read or activities to pursue. Most discussion revolves around after-school programs. Exceptions to this include discussion of school violence or disruptive friendships.

Specifically, Suk-kyung (low-SES) discusses the best free services and welfare programs available with her peers. Min-yung (mid-SES) and her friends trade advice about the best hokwans for the money, and outstanding after-school classes that might arise at the school. Incidentally, this was a point in the interview where the interviewer noted to Min-yung that there didn't seem to be a lot of interest expressed toward the school's after-school programs. They're often run by credentialed teachers under the supervision of the school, isn't that better? Min-yung responded that the oversight was not intentional, and that if a program at the school is run by a well-respected teacher word spreads very quickly and garners enthusiasm. High quality and free is great! Hyun-ju (high-SES) and her friends exchange references for the best tutors and

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hokwans available. They also make arrangements to have a few of their children meet with one tutor together for a group lesson.

Comment [JI18]: Really good presentation of the qual findings in narrative format. Great work David.

The reader may note that there is no mention of the men here, but the subject was breached in the course of the interviews. Korean men do not share responsibility equally for their children's academic life, due more to lack of time than lack of interest. If things seem to be going well they trust their wife to handle the education side of the marriage.

College admittance

Academic achievement (measured by test scores) ~~is was the our~~ central variable as a means unto the ends of improved SES mobility via college admittance. As such it was necessary to allow the stakeholders to express their viewpoints about the high-stakes college admittance system: whether it disenfranchises lower levels of SES, and the stakeholder's feelings about these issues. The best way to describe their responses was that the system was fair, but was just "more fair" for the rich than everyone else. They thought that a poor smart person who tries hard enough can pass the tests, and that it's just easier for the wealthy. Nor did they have much of an issue with the high-stakes testing system though Min-yung (mid-SES) had vague hopes it might be changed in the future away from memorization to a "more western" system that incorporated "creativity". She also wished they would stop continually changing the system, which was disruptive and added anxiety as to how her children should be preparing.

However, passing the admittance test was not the primary concern of the low to mid SES interviewees. Most of their concerns centered on high tuitions. Suk-kyung's (low SES) daughter was doing her very best to achieve high enough to be awarded scholarships, but the chances of

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her being unable to attend college were alarming. Min-yung's (mid SES) apprehension was more muted, but more scholarships and lower tuition were central to her educational concerns.

Hyun-ju (high SES) had little interest in this part of the interview because she has no intention of her children going to college in Korea. She expects for them to attend high prestige colleges in the United States, such as MIT or Harvard.

Discussion

Comment [JI19]: Use appropriate headings.

The reader should note that a three person sample is not reliable for making sweeping judgments about the larger population. Also, there are some mitigating circumstances that affect how parental support and after-school programs are employed by these families. Suk-kyung and Min-yung's occupational schedules make it problematic to make time for direct parental support such as reading with them or helping with homework. Also, some of the parents' children in the sample were either below or above the ages that are the prime clients of public after-school programs. This being said, the overall trend was for parents to not express a much inclination toward direct academic support as defined by this study's student survey. The overwhelming majority of energy and thought all the parents put into their children's academic achievement revolved around finding the best after-school programs (or tutors) available at their respective levels of SES.

In regards to the question about the fairness of the college admittance system to all levels of SES, the answers were a little surprising to the interviewer and may require some cultural explanation to add context. America is in many ways defined by its schisms, and animosity between groups. These divisions exist along lines that include class, race, and geopolitical; they are the result of generations of struggles between these groups. Korea historically doesn't have those kinds of schisms. Reasons of racial and cultural homogeneity aside, in the Confucian

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structure of their society there are socioeconomic tiers; and this is perceived as a correct way for things to be. Also there is Korean *jeong*, which is best described as an openhearted and generous expression of love toward strangers. How this comes together is difficult to explain, but one example that is illustrative pertains to school lunches. In Korea there is an elaborate school lunch program where every student in the country gets a made-from-scratch lunch, from fresh ingredients, and designed by an on-site nutritionist. In America a program like this would not be possible, because people would be irate about their tax money going to feed “those other people’s kids” in “that other group”. However, Koreans see all the children as simply Korean, not as members of some separate group. This principle of acceptance works from lower to higher SES as well. Thus the parents in the lower SES groups admitted the system was skewed in favor of the rich, but they didn’t have any problem with that.

The author will take a moment here to make a few points about how the testing system favors high SES. While there is very low public school variance in Korea (as documented in the literature review), wealthy Koreans have access to private schools, better hokwans, tutors, and educational vacations. Additionally, the way the tests are structured target very specific skill sets, which is problematic for students whose education is more generalized. Imagine if it was a physical education test. Instead of it being a general test of endurance, agility, and basic sporting events it is made up of many very specific sports techniques. Instead of a basic timed swimming test there is a test to see if you have mastered ten different types of strokes and dives. If a well-to-do student can’t quite get the hang of the free-style stroke, they can get a tutor to drill them on it for three days and mark that part of the test off their checklist. For students who can’t afford “quick-fix” tutors, getting every detail of the test requirements mastered is problematic.

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The primary concerns of the lower SES participants concerning educational policy did not fall under the parameters of this study. They were more-or-less satisfied with the quality of their children's regular classroom and after-school education. Suk-kyung and Min-yung's main worry was that they would not be able to afford tuition. We will address this issue in the *Policy Recommendations* section.

Teacher Interviews

Sampling Method: Snowballing/ convenience

Research site: The teacher focus group was conducted in the researcher's home. All of the participants (including the interviewers) have small children or a baby, thus having the group over to stay for several hours and conducting the interview at an opportune time made this the most practical setting. If this needs additional clarification: two babies and two small children were present, and there was no way for participants to leave their kids at home. This needed to be at *someone's* house, and thus it should be the interviewer's home (who was hosting and cooking). Two of the expected interviewees had to cancel and rescheduling was not an option, so instead of a standard five-person focus group the interview was conducted with three. The interviewees' husbands were also present, so some extra care for the children was provided to keep the interview uninterrupted for the majority of the time. The interviewers' mother-in-law was at the research site, caring for the babies in a separate room during the interview.

Payment/incentives: Interviewer prepared an authentic Italian meal for the participants. (The reader will note a food gift as a theme in all payment methods in this study.) The interviewees were also there to meet the interviewer's baby.

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Participants: Three elementary teachers in Busan, all in their mid-thirties. They teach in various schools ranging from low-mid to high-mid SES. All names have been changed. Their backgrounds are very similar, as the teaching experience of Koreans is very uniform. They are assigned more or less randomly to different schools every three years, so after several years of teaching they have generally taught at all SES levels. Teachers who are seeking promotion to administration can get “points” for taking assignments at high risk low-SES areas or rural areas, but none of these teachers are seeking promotion.

Eun-Kyung: Hers is the lowest SES school, which couldn't be described as impoverished but it's a very low-income area. She is currently a 3rd grade homeroom teacher.

Kim-Jeong: Teaches at the same mid SES school as the researcher. She is a 4th grade homeroom teacher. During the interview, she was the “ring leader”, with the other participants adding on to her statements.

Shin-Kaju: Is currently assigned to the same high SES area school where this study's high SES parent interviewee is a client, and helped arrange that interview. She is on maternity leave.

Researcher's wife: Kind of a non-official member of the focus group, she was translating and conducting much of the interview. She later gave a detailed explanation of what happened in the interview, which was recorded. She is currently assigned to the same school as Eun-Kyung as an English teacher, but is on maternity leave.

The teacher participants were recruited by the researcher's wife (her friends), and a specific attempt was made to recruit teachers representing a range of SES in regards to the demographics of their schools.

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Relationship of interview data to variables

The first set of questions was essential to academic achievement, but they were actually included to address the assignment criteria that we should identify the specific groups in the target population. This is problematic because Korea doesn't really have racial or ethnic differences (in all the researcher has been a teacher in Korea, he has never had a student who did not have a Korean mother and father), and the participants claimed they do not make any conscious differentiation according to SES. Thus this is the one opportunity in the study to establish how teachers categorize students, and how those classifications affect their teaching methods.

The next part of the interview addressed whether the government's efforts at providing equal educational opportunities (such as after-school programs) are effective at narrowing achievement gaps between lower SES (students who attend free public after-school programs, or a combination of public/private) and higher groups (students who exclusively attend hokwans). This directly addresses the research question and key after-school program related variables.

Next, the opportunity was presented as to all the stakeholders in this study to offer an alternative definition to academic achievement than the one used by the study (standardized test scores). Teachers were assumed to be the only source likely to provide a more idealistic answer than "grades and test scores". It was also an opportunity to get a critical analysis of the instrument used to measure academic achievement (benchmark tests).

The last question addressed parental support. The researcher was interested to see if the teachers' advice in regards to parental strategies would reflect (and thus justify) the study's quantitative survey questions. It would have of course been better to use their input to craft the

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questions, but out of necessity the survey was administered first. However, the researcher's wife had a role in designing the survey and brought her perspective as a Korean elementary teacher to that process.

Procedures: The interview was conducted as a focus group because the teachers come from very similar backgrounds and their responses did not contain a lot of variance. However, putting them in a room together was meant to add depth to responses by allowing them to build on each other's statements. The interview was recorded, and the researcher's wife took notes. All of the participants had some English speaking ability, therefore each question was explained first by the researcher, and then clarified by his wife. Most of the discussion was carried out in Korean. Even as such the interview was about 45minutes long, and extra time and effort added by constant translation would have compromised the results. Not disclosing the names of the participants' schools, and creating a pseudonym for each participant will maintain confidentiality.

Teacher Interview Findings

(Note: Due to the nature of how the interview was conducted then translated individual responses to the questions are not present here, and the focus group responses will be reported collectively.)

The interviewer began by explaining the context and relevance of the first three questions pertaining to groups. Essentially, that the current target audience of the research was an American teaching program and one of the most important issues in America was how to accommodate various groups (e.g. multicultural, etc.). Thus far the research indicated that

Comment [JI20]: No problem. This is all really good & you have interesting findings. You describe your procedures really well too.

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Korean educational culture did not share these issues, so this was where the study would define student groups in a Korean context.

Their responses verified previous indications, and this part of the interview was over fairly quickly. Teachers simply define their groups as “low-ability”, “mid-ability”, and “high-ability”, with test scores and grades as the criteria for groupings. Their main teaching strategy is using the mid group as the “target” for any lesson they plan. If the mid group understands every aspect of the lesson completely it is considered a successful lesson. The high students are often paired with the low students as “body tutors”.

Many extra services are offered to the low-group students. Trained adult teachers come to the classrooms as teaching aids or tutors, either in the form of contract teachers or university students. Special after-school programs are also offered, most notably one known as the “CHAMPS” program. The CHAMPS program uses promotion points as an incentive to recruit teachers. This is significant because the points attract highly experienced teachers, and head teachers (the level below vice principal) who have influence at the school to recruit other highly qualified teachers to participate. This program is also monitored carefully by the area’s Education Office for quality control. For very high level students a free after-school “gifted program” is offered, which is located at the area’s Education Office for students who pass the entrance exam.

On the question of root origins of high and low levels of characteristic that contribute to academic achievement (e.g. motivation, intelligence, and efficacy) the consensus were three tiered. First and foremost, the participants believed individual character was the defining causality, and that a student with a high or low desire to achieve will defy external circumstances. This is to some extent supported by this study’s quantitative data, where the student with the

Comment [JI21]: Ok, very insightful. Perhaps belief behind after-school programs – if student wants to succeed they will find way to use it to help them.

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highest test scores has almost no financial or parental support (and apparently attends no after-school programs), and the student with the lowest scores has very high levels of support (but may have a learning disability). After that, parental emotional and academic support was regarded as the greatest contributing factor, and the participants' definitions of parental support mirrored the conceptualization in the student survey (e.g. reading together, doing homework together, and books in the home). A clear distinction was made between financial and emotional support with the example being the difference between the parent and child reading together, or just giving their child money to buy a book. On the third tier below that was the SES level and education of the parents. As is generally anticipated, highly educated parents set high academic expectations for their children and serve as good role models. Access to better hokwans was also cited as a factor, and also an interesting twist regarding free versus paid for services regarding motivation. According to the participants, parents who receive free services ~~are~~ were generally happy with the quality and results because they are grateful to be getting the services. However, when parents are paying for services they tend to be much more involved in the process and demand results from the hokwans and their own children. Paying parents spend more time speaking directly with the hokwan teachers than public afterschool teachers, and put more pressure on their children to get as much out of the private programs as possible.

Comment [J122]: Keep past tense.

The question asking for an assessment of the effectiveness of Korean education welfare to equalize academic achievement between SES groups led to a certain amount of reiteration. They felt that hokwan voucher programs, in class contract teacher and university student support, and quality after school programs significantly improved the prospects for lower SES students. They believed the quality level of public after school program teachers was high, and those teachers generally planned their lessons very well. They also noted that the small class sizes of a

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typical public program allowed teacher to plan better lessons with more individual focus. When the researcher explained that many of Korea's educational welfare practices (e.g. the low variance between schools in poor and rich areas) would be considered fairly revolutionary in the United States, the interviewees were a bit shocked that anyone would want to run an education system any other way.

One thing the participants stressed was the central role of the teacher's motivation toward low SES students. (The researcher notes that this is a slight contradiction to their previous statement that they do not pay attention to SES.) Low SES students have low self esteem that can lead to poor motivation, and a teacher's support can make a big difference their students' lives. This statement is confirmed in this study's literature review, where it was found the success of educational welfare programs was primarily determined by the teacher's faith in their students. If the teacher thought the reforms would work, their students' academic achievement improved. If a teacher did not believe their students could learn, the welfare reforms did little to help (Kim, 2012).

—Asking the focus group to define "academic achievement" initiated a long discussion that led to a very short answer (as related to the researcher by his wife). The teachers defined academic achievement as "50-50" between students' test scores and their attitudes. Many students who have high test scores are also hypercompetitive, arrogant, selfish, and disrespectful to their teachers and classmates. Many students who are "warm hearted", but have lower test scores perform better in the classroom because they work well with other students and their teacher. Teachers prefer to work with the latter group of students.

The question of what advice would the participants give to lower SES parents also led to some reiteration. The responses pointed to the many government services available to help

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poor students (e.g. hokwan vouchers, after-school programs, etc.), and that parents should educate themselves about them. Also, teaching at home and showing concern about school would contribute to their child's academic achievement.

Discussion

This interview added validity to the significance and conceptualization of the variables, as well as the research question itself. The teacher focus group felt that the quality of public after-school programs was high enough, and that parental support was an important enough factor to positively affect academic achievement in low SES students. Their definitions of academic achievement and parental support mirrored the way these variables are defined in the quantitative sections of this study.

One significant finding towards understanding the achievement gap between public and private after-school students was that parents who receive free assistance are generally happy with the services because they are free, but are also reluctant to demand results both from their children and the program. They do not monitor their child's attendance, speak to the teachers or the school about the program, or examine whether the program was effective in increasing academic achievement. This lack of concern may be a primary factor in why public after-school students have lower achievement levels than private students.

In regards to their conceptualization of "academic achievement", they did not differ from the other stakeholders in defining achievement by test scores. Their alternate definition ("warm heartedness") did not reflect achievement by assessing knowledge, ability, or intelligence by any alternate means. It was simply pointing out a group of students more pleasant for the teachers to work with. In Korean culture one is generally not going to get idealized responses to questions

Comment [JI23]: Good – funny that they are free. What about services that they have to pay for?

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like this, in contrast to what teachers will often express in defining academic achievement in western culture. Korean perspectives are usually simple and pragmatic. However, the participants' response does cement this study's definition of academic achievement as the one uniformly held by all stakeholders.

Another main factor mentioned for contributing to low SES academic achievement was teacher motivation and expectation, which has been discussed at length in previous studies.

Classroom Observations

Research sites: Three after-school programs at the elementary school where the researcher is employed were observed. The classes are taught in classrooms on site at the school. Site selection is based on convenience. Because it is the researcher's school of employment and rapport with the principal is high, obtaining permission for observations was not an issue. Getting permission from a principal at any other school would be extremely problematic. Confidentiality is primarily maintained by not sharing any part of the observations with anyone in the Korean school system, and by not disclosing the real names of the teachers.

Sampling method: Convenience

Participants: Three after-school classes were selected to tie in to the three quantitative achievement variables: English, math, and literacy (Korean). They were recruited via a contact (homeroom teacher) at the school. The method of payment was a gift of bean cake. The teachers were all contract (non-credentialed) teachers who come to the school specifically to teach after-school programs and rotate to other schools on other days of the week. Contract teachers are

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generally teachers who have completed the university system's teacher credential program, but have thus far not successfully passed the rigorous teacher credential exam.

Students will trend towards the lower SES demographic of the school, and the higher SES demographic will probably not be represented. Class size will be in the 6-12 student range, and will consist of 4th graders. There are no racial or ethnic groups represented in the sample, nor would there be any such group represented in any other potential school site in Busan. Students in free after-school programs are most often in the lower SES groups.

These participants provide useful information as they represent target population, and considering this study's focus on after-school programs it is useful to provide a first-hand description of programs in key subject areas. Although a comparison between school based after-school programs and hokwans would be very helpful, doing a comparative observation at a hokwan is impossible for this researcher.

Relationship to the variables: After-school programs are represented and some comparison is provided to private afterschool programs. Selection of class subject was linked to the specific benchmark test scores being used to measure academic achievement. Ideal target population (4th grade) is also specifically represented.

Procedures: To prevent the observations from being too intrusive and burdensome to the participating teacher (who lacked any affiliation to the researcher) they were only asked to give a brief two-part written statement prior to the interview. The first part consists of a brief explanation of the goals and teaching method of the lesson that will be observed. The second will be an answer to the single interview question:

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“How would you compare or contrast the teaching methods of your after-school program with a similar program at a hokwan (private after-school program)?”

A single class was unobtrusively observed, and teaching methods were compared to the regular school-day curriculum as well as hypothetically what students could expect at a hokwan. Some criteria for evaluating the observations included:

1. Is the teaching method rote response or are the students thinking?
2. Is the lesson meeting the stated objective?
3. How engaged are the students?
4. How enthusiastic is the teacher?

English After-School Class Observation

(Note: for the narrative style that the researcher feels best serves reporting observations, we will switch to the first person-present tense for this part of the study.)

Before the observation I have already received the teacher’s answers to my small questionnaire, in English. The participant’s explanation of her lesson is, **“Teaching speaking conversation subjects: classroom, animals, colors, etc. for [a] beginner class.”** Her response to the question asking her to make a comparison between herself and a hokwan after-school program is: **“I am not sure. Hokwans use [the] same textbooks or subjects like my class. My methods during class are using Power Points, flashcards, youtube, games, and textbooks etc.”**

This sounds very similar to my own teaching methods last year when I taught a 3rd and 4th grade after-school program, and I feel a bit vindicated that someone coming from a very different

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direction in life would come to the same conclusions about the best way to run a program like this. Essentially we are running the public school program to replicate the results the hokwans presumably provide, except as more highly trained teachers and with more personal conviction. My stereotype of a typical hokwan native teacher is someone much younger than a typical public school teacher, and the hokwan teacher is basically just doing the job so they can come to Korea for a year, party all night, and use the location as a springboard for vacations to other parts of Asia. My assessment of the other foreign native teachers in the public school system is somewhat higher than that. It leads me to wonder why more people don't use the public programs instead of the hokwans.

I meet the teacher ten minutes before class, give her the cake, and we do introductions. She uses the English name "Jill" (name has been changed). Jill tells me she is a contract teacher because the hours are better for her marriage. She has a couple of concerns about my observation. Her main worry is that no-one in the Korean school system should see my report, especially anything about the specific youtube materials she is using. Her position as a contract teacher is always precarious, and there may be licensing issues with some of the materials. I assure her that this is just for a report to be presented to an American university and any publication of the findings would redact any reference to the identity of the school. She also points out that she was told this was only to be a 15-20 minute observation. Korean teachers are generally more sensitive than Americans about being watched while doing their lessons. I've been in a situation where I didn't have anywhere else to go but my classroom for a few minutes while another teacher was teaching there, and she was quite angry even though I was blending into the background as best I could. I assure Jill that I won't overstay my welcome.

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Jill shows me the youtube and other class materials she uses, which I will be non-specific about here due to her obvious concern. They use a hokwan-style write in textbook, which the students have to buy. For my own class I made copy packets from a set of books we procured at my request and keep on site. My solution is less colorful (and probably less copy-write legal), but more sensitive to the students' economic situation.

Students begin entering, and I take a small seat in the back of the room. They are curious about my presence, and I explain it's my homework. Jill tells the class that they were chosen because they are the best group of students in the school. During the lesson students try to look back and get my attention, so I put my notebook up and write with it strategically placed in front of my face. In general I try to appear focused on the notebook, without staring at the teacher directly while she does her lesson. Students filter in over several minutes (and some come late), but the final tally is as follows: six 3rd grade boys, five 3rd grade girls, four 4th grade boys, and five 4th grade girls.

The students are cheerful and well behaved. Jill uses a microphone headpiece and utilizes a calm quiet tone of voice that gets amplified. She puts students into groups, making boys join girl groups despite their mild complaints. So far she is only speaking in Korean. She puts on a cartoon at a low volume while she has students come to the front for her to check their homework. The cartoon is incidentally "Larva", a dialogue-free Korean CG that I personally used every day to motivate the students to arrive on time and settle into their seats at the beginning of class.

Jill gets started, joking with the students and putting some word cards upon the board. She mixes days of the week, weather, and months then asking students to differentiate between them. She is using English phrases and explaining them in Korean, such as the difference

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between “It’s sunny.” and “It’s Sunday.” After this warm up she plays some “talking flashcards” from youtube. These feature animal pictures and text of their names in conjunction with a native English voice, who is chanting the animal names accompanied by jazz music. Students repeat the chants with more gusto than I would assume possible in a response to a non-present disembodied chant leader. She then gives the order (in English) to “stand up” and students stand on their chairs. She begins a TPR session led by music and video from another youtube “Move like a (animal).” Students make their bodies like elephants, birds, snakes etc. Two things I’m thinking is that it looks fun but the students aren’t saying the English, and it seems kind of an unsteady way to do TPR where they might fall and hurt themselves. They finish and Jill gives the English order “Sit down.”

Now the students do some bookwork, with an accompanying CD rom that puts the page on the book large on the TV screen, and she can zoom up closely to specific parts of the page. There is a native English voice that will do the speaking parts for the text, and speak the answers to fill in the blank parts. One thing I note about the textbook is that it is more challenging than the school’s textbooks, which in my opinion are too easy and don’t have enough writing exercises. From the textbook they run through some basic greeting drills (“I’m fine, thank you, and you?”) group by group.

Jill switches from the textbook to use some flash cards of animals, and she intentionally shows the cards upside down (I’ll assume to add one cognitive step to the exercise). However, the point of the exercise is no longer animals: it’s the phrase “What’s this?” She goes back to the textbook, which utilizes the phrase. Building from this Jill writes “What’s this?/ What’s that?” and Korean translations to the phrase. She then explains the difference in usage in Korean. Next, she puts some of her animal flashcards around the room, and then goes back to the front. Jill

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alternates between asking about cards in her hand (“What’s this?”) and cards located around the room (“What’s that?”). During all the flashcard exercises she gives points to groups for correct answers.

After a brief interlude using this knowledge to complete the exercises in the textbook, Jill goes back to the flashcard game and scaffolds to “Is this a (animal)?/ Is that a (animal)?” Students answer “Yes it is!/ No it isn’t!”. Finally she asks a student to come up and take the part of the teacher for one round of the “game”. The teacher asks the class to rate that student for points. The student demonstrating is a young 3rd grade boy who is having trouble, and the class’ rating (and commentary) is unfavorable. In my own games I generally use the English as a mechanic for completing whatever task is central for winning the game, but the student’s English ability is not a factor in winning or losing. The game is used more as a vehicle for me to focus on individual students and correct or help them, and I usually don’t put students out for scrutiny from the other students. I sense Jill also feels like this is an awkward moment in the lesson, and I notice that I have gone over my stated time limit. Thus, it seems like a good time to conclude the observation and quietly leave the room.

Comment [JI24]: Great description David. Very detailed & informative.

English Observation Findings

This lesson had a great deal in common with the kind of after-school English program the researcher would run, and was probably also similar to a hokwan program. The lesson met its goals, and the teacher’s enthusiasm generated student response. Jill made use of multimedia materials well to compensate for the lack of a native speaker. The lesson was fast paced and changed direction often enough to keep the students interested.

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A few criticisms could be mentioned. The TPR was not coupled with any direct cognitive link to the English, such as saying the animal while acting it out. Also, the researcher could give Jill some good advice on game design, whose own model for English games centers on games of luck that use English mechanics to move the game forward. Jill's model of making the successful use of English in front of the class the game objective subjects the players to harsh criticism from the other students, and discourages voluntary participation from lower ability clients. It also discourages students from helping and correcting each other in a compassionate manner.

Math After-school Observation

Before the observation I have already received her answers to my small questionnaire, in Korean. Her explanation of her lesson is (translated from Korean then corrected for grammar):

“Students study with their individual textbook. They ask questions about problems they find difficult and solve them. There is an explanation time according to their progress.”

Her response to the question asking her to make a comparison between herself and a hokwan after-school program is: **“Compared to a hokwan, the content has no difference; it is focused on the school curriculum. However, there's some difference in the teaching method. In a hokwan there's a specific starting and stopping time for the class. Students all progress at the same rate through the material regardless of their level. Although this after-school class has a fixed schedule, many students are from different classes and grades, so it is impossible to start and end with all the students at the same time. Thus, the focus is individual learning and not whole class instruction. The progress will be different according to the students' individual level, and I utilize self-directed learning as needed.”**

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This class is being done in one of the two science lab rooms. There are sturdy immobile tables and rather uncomfortable square wooden stools. About half of the students are already there five minutes early with their books open working vigorously. I come in and say hello and give the teacher the bean cake. She seems very uncomfortable to be speaking to me (obviously doesn't know any English), so I just thank her for her help and go blend into the back of the room.

The level and age are indeed all over the spectrum, and she is letting students sit in groups or alone as they wish. There are two low functioning 6th grade girls sitting with a higher level friend who is helping them. They are doing decimal and fraction division. There are three high functioning fifth grade girls sitting together working very intently, doing fraction equations. Long strings of fractions are being added on both sides of the equal sign, with blanks in various places up and down the equation. One fifth grade boy arrives late, and works on three-dimensional geometry. Two fourth grade girls are sitting with a third grade boy (possibly a brother) and occasionally helping him. A high functioning but unmotivated 4th grader arrives late and sits alone. The 4th graders are multiplying five digit numbers. A group of four high functioning 3rd grade boys sit together in the mid-table and keep busy, but occasionally make irreverent jokes at the teacher who ignores the jokes. One unmotivated 3rd grade boy sits alone and plays with his pencil, picks his nose, and stares out the window. The teacher ignores him. Three high functioning 3rd grade girls sit in different places, but talk to each other from their respective positions. One of them eventually takes the seat at the teacher's desk, and the teacher doesn't stop her. The 3rd graders are doing three digit basic arithmetic, word problems utilizing the same skill set, and long division.

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There is no classroom lesson and this appears more of a group tutorial session. Once the bell rings officially beginning the class time the teacher sternly settles the room down and gets the students more focused on their work. She had been correcting students' homework with them at her desk before the start of the period, and she finishes that task now. With students apparently moving forward in their books, she goes around the room checking work and correcting errors. The teacher does this by asking the students questions about the math problems until they figure the answer out for themselves. With the older students she has a wry sense of humor where she seems to be sternly interrogating them, but making them laugh at the same time.

When she finishes going around the room, she allows time for students to come up to her desk and ask her for help. When all the students who are voluntarily coming up have finished working with her, she asks the rest of them to come up individually and checks their understanding of the curriculum they are working on. Once this phase is complete she roams around the room again restarting the cycle, which repeats until the class period ends.

Findings

This was not so much a classroom lesson as a tutorial center/workshop. Students who are motivated can come and get help with their math mastery. As such it performed its function, and the students received the services they came to the class for. There was no particular effort on the part of the teacher to encourage non-motivated students. The age variability prevented an environment where an actual structured lesson can be planned, but the small class size allowed for attention to individual needs. In this case the "high volume" nature of student population at a hokwan where the entire class is at the same age level might provide a more powerful learning experience for the clients.

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Korean (Literacy) After-school Observation

The questionnaire states the lesson is about debating: **“This is a debate class lesson. The debate topic is stationary stores, and if it would be good for all the stationary stores around the school to disappear. Talking about the reasons why the number of stationary stores has been decreasing.”**

In response to differences between her class and a hokwan: **“Different grades (from 3rd to 6th) are in the same class. If I taught at a hokwan I could use different worksheets for each grade. However, I think the teaching methods in after-school programs and hokwans are the same. I think it’s more possible to have lessons focus on individual students in the public after-school class.”**

“Stationary stores” are stores that operate very near a school entrance, either in a proper building space, or a portable “cart”. They sell school supplies, cheap toys, and junk food. With the rise of large “marts” (which kind of cross between a department store and a supermarket), the stationary stores have been going out of business.

This class is being held in a first-grade homeroom. I enter and give the teacher her cake and she gives me a cup of [tteokbokki](#), which is actually one of the only Korean dishes I really can’t stand. I thank her enthusiastically and take my tteokbokki. She is very hospitable and brings me a chair then a desk, and gives me the three handouts for the class. One is a newsletter giving information about the decline of stationary stores. The next appears to be a mostly blank page for the student to take notes and brainstorm. The last one is a worksheet where the student is instructed to take a side in a pro-con stationary store debate and write their own arguments.

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An animation is already playing, and I get the impression the class start time has been changed due to the school sports festival tomorrow. I also get the impression that the class size is a bit smaller than usual. The students are: two 3rd grade boys, three 4th grade boys (one of whom I'm familiar with and who has a behavioral problem), two 4th grade girls, two fifth grade boys (one is also in the math after-school class), two fifth grade girls, and two 6th grade boys.

The animation is an after-school special style program where a boy's friends convince him to steal from a stationary store whose owner is asleep. However, the items in the store are magically animated and do various interactions with the boy. The whole situation turns ugly when the proprietor wakes up and catches the protagonist, and sicks his entire inventory upon the lad who desperately tries to escape. It all turns out to be a dream, except for the part about the annoyed proprietor. The cartoon concludes, and the teacher gives some commentary about the morals of the story (assumedly anti-stealing). The behaviorally problematic student blurts out something, and the teacher rebukes him. She asks a few comprehension questions, such as "How many toy planes were chasing him?"

The impression I have of the teacher (who seemed a little stoic at first) is she is cheerful and earthy. She is stout for a Korean woman, but kind of like a big-grounded square. The discussion she is having now with the students is fast and lively, engaging most of the students. She asks a question directly to a quiet student who is not participating, and he shrugs as a response. The discussion turns to the main subject and she starts talking about the stationary store. The behavior problem student blurts something (likely inane) again and she stops for a moment and just stares at him, and then continues. She points out that stationary stores used to be ubiquitous, and then does that skillful not-obvious leading thing that good teachers can do. Many students suddenly realize and state, "Hey, they're gone now! Why?"

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The energy is contagious, and I find myself smiling widely for the first time at any of these observations. She has the students list all the kinds of things they can find at the marts, and then gets them to compare the prices to the stationary stores (which are more expensive). She singles out a boy (6th grade) and rapid fires several questions at him. He answers back just as quickly, and her body language says to the room “Look at this guy! So clever!” She has them compare the quality of the foods at each kind of store and how healthy they are, and then tells them the foods sold at the stationary stores are made in China. A 4th grade girl points out that the stationary store is open early in the morning and is next to the school. She responds that the nearest mart is only a fifteen minute walk from the school, which to me seems like a weak argument. Another student makes a complaint about that mart (I can’t quite catch the nature of the problem), and the teacher agrees.

The teacher changes the subject to the different marts in Busan, and the differences between them. A lively comparison ensues dealing with the differences in ice cream at the respective venues, and all the students start chiming in at once. She stops them and makes them speak one at a time. The class then discusses cultural implications about how with western style store one cannot bargain the price, versus Korean traditional merchants where bargaining for prices is the norm.

The teacher now wants the students to brainstorm about what they will write for their debate position (for or against stationary stores), and assigns them to write the first sentence in their debate essay. She has them present their opening statements out loud, and corrects them on their grammar. One precious girl shouts “Really?!” when she’s corrected on a mistake. I notice the boy who has been quiet the whole lesson is writing furiously on his essay during the

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presentations. The students then work quietly on their essays, then after finishing them they bring them up to turn them in and leave.

Findings

This was a fully engaging and powerful learning experience for the students. The teacher's energy and rapport with the students facilitated a successful "debate" as outlined in the objective for the class. The students were definitely developing their critical thinking skills, and the teacher did a good job of providing enough direction to keep the discussion moving in the direction that she wanted, while keeping the lesson "student powered". Since it focused around critical thinking and not around any particular skill set, the fact that the ages of the students varied did not significantly hinder the lesson. This is an example of a class that it seems doubtful the quality would could be any better (or even equal) at a private hokwan.

Discussion of Observational Findings

The Korean and English after-school classes were well planned and for the most part well executed. It is the opinion of the researcher that these lessons were of high quality. However, the high age range both in the Korean and math classes highlight what is likely to be a common problem in public after-school programs. Such programs are often avoided because of a poverty stigma attached to them that may result in a low volume of students, which make such age groupings necessary (Kim, 2012). This leads to teachers having to plan their programs using strategies to compensate for variable age range. The Korean teacher did a good job of engaging the class, but one can see where certain key elements of literacy cannot be covered in this format

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(e.g. young adult literature). The math teacher set up an effective tutorial center, but that may be a poor substitute for a supplementary math class.

Qualitative student survey questions

As expected, most of the students' responses to definitions of academic achievement revolved around "tests and grades". One exception to this was a few mentions of how the student wished to learn English so they could visit or live in western countries. Most of the answers about the best way to achieve well in school were answers like "work hard", "study", etc.

CONCLUSIONS

It was the finding of this study that Korean students who primarily attend public after-school programs have lower academic achievement than students who primarily attend private programs. However, this achievement gap narrows significantly the higher the level of parental academic support for the child. For students who either get their after-school programs exclusively public or private, the prospects for outstanding academic achievement increases significantly with moderate to high levels of parental support. However, common conventional wisdom in Korea states that parental academic support is not important compared to students' after-school programs. This may be true to some extent for high SES students who can afford expensive programs, but lower SES parents should take more responsibility for personally mentoring their children's academic success if they want to close the achievement gap with their more affluent counterparts. Effective strategies include reading together, doing math homework, studying English, and providing plenty of books (both English and Korean) in the home.

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One area where parental involvement may be especially important is in regards to parents' relationship to their children's after-school programs and teachers. While the programs are generally considered to be of high quality (and the researcher's own observations affirmed this to some extent), because the programs are free parents are less inclined to demand results. They do not monitor their children's attendance or performance in the programs, and do not communicate with the teachers or the schools. In order to close the achievement gap between low and high SES students, low SES parents need to not only provide more direct support for their children; they need to be more proactive in regards to their involvement with their after-school programs and schools.

The researcher would like to note that most evidence points to affirm the general attitude among Koreans (both teachers and parents) that the Korean education system is fairly administered to all SES levels of students. In the sample there were two outlier students whose academic achievement was so substandard as to be considered "at risk". The competitive nature of Korean academic society sets the bar for achievement very high, but it seems reasonable to say that all students have an opportunity to get a quality education.

Policy Recommendations

In regards to parental academic support, there should be public relations campaign to encourage more direct participation on the part of parents in their children's academic lives. This can be in the form of sending flyers home, which is a standard practice in the Korean school system for disseminating information. Using the schools' websites for this kind of purpose is also common practice and could be effective. After-school programs should seek more contact with parents. One common method Korean schools use to encourage parent involvement with

Comment [JJ25]: Great to see policy recommendations. Are there any existing policies on this?

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the school is to have “open classes” where the parents are invited to view a specially prepared lesson.

One problem noted in the observation is the grouping of disparate grade levels, which makes planning lessons for the classes problematic. One way to negate this could be for separate schools in the same area to group their after-school programs so as to be able to make large enough class sizes of the same age. This would not be possible in rural areas.

An important point to note is that the lower SES parents who were interviewed weren't displeased with the quality of education for their children so much as the affordability of college. If one is to address the primary concern of the stakeholders in policy it should be in the form of lower tuitions and more scholarships for not only lower SES students, but middle class as well. The educational system is functional and addresses academic achievement for lower SES students, but this isn't an effective means of improving class mobility if the stakeholders cannot afford higher education.

Recommendations for Further Research

The small sample size and narrow (mid SES) demographic in this study limits the value of the information we have provided. Another useful element to add would be to survey parents to provide a wider sample than this study was able to provide. Such research would need to be done by someone with more authority than this study's researcher, such as a principal or education office employee. More information on the private after-school students (especially the high achieving group with low parental support) and observations of hokwon classes to contrast with the public school observations would provide a useful contrast missing from this study.

Comment [JI26]: Seems like this could be expanded a bit more. Any connection of this topic/your findings to social justice issues around this topic?

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Park, S. J. & Ablemann, N. (2004). Class and cosmopolitan striving: Mother's management of English education in South Korea. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 77, 645-672

Woo, Myung Suk (2010). Equity in educational resources at the school level in Korea. *Asia Pacific Educational Review*, 11, 553-564

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Appendix A: Student Survey Questions

(These are screenshots taken from the SurveyMonkey page the survey was administered from, both the original Korean and an English translation)

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<p>*1. Write your personal number in your class, please.</p> <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<p>Q1 Edit Question Move Delete</p> <p>*1. 자신의 반 번호를 써주세요.</p> <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
<p>+ Add Question Split Page Here</p>	<p>Upgrade to Add More Questions Split Page Here</p>
<p>Q2 Edit Question Add Question Logic Move Copy Delete</p> <p>2. What kind of after school program do you go to? (You can choose more than one).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> English</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Math</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Korean</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Nothing</p> <p>Another(Write down in detail please)</p> <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<p>Q2 Edit Question Add Question Logic Move Delete</p> <p>2. 자신이 참여하고 있는 우리학교 방과후 수업을 모두 고르세요.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 영어</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 수학</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 국어</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 외국어 수업에 참여하지 않음</p> <p>보기에 없는 것을 수업(가제정 해주세요)</p> <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
<p>+ Add Question Split Page Here</p>	<p>Upgrade to Add More Questions Split Page Here</p>
<p>Q3 Edit Question Add Question Logic Move Copy Delete</p> <p>3. What subjects do you study in hakwon? (You can choose more than one)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> English</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Math</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Korean</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> All subjects(Math, English, Korean, Science, etc)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't study at hakwon.</p>	<p>Q3 Edit Question Add Question Logic Move Delete</p> <p>3. 학원에서 배우고 있는 과목들을 모두 고르세요.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 영어</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 수학</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 국어</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 전 과목(수학, 영어, 국어, 과학, 사생활)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 학원이 다니지 않음</p>
<p>4. Worksheet tutor</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A worksheet teacher comes to home.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No worksheet teacher, but parents teach me.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Parents help me when I do worksheets or workbooks.</p>	<p>4. 아래 보기 중 자신이 해당하는 것을 모두 고르세요.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 학습지 선생님이 집으로 온다.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 학습지 선생님이 집으로 온다고 부모님이 문장들을 사주신다.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 학습지나 문장집을 빌려 부모님이 도와주신다.</p>
<p>+ Add Question Split Page Here</p>	<p>Upgrade to Add More Questions Split Page Here</p>
<p>Q5 Edit Question Add Question Logic Move Copy Delete</p> <p>5. How many Korean story books do you have at home?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (0) <input type="radio"/> (1-10) <input type="radio"/> (11-30) <input type="radio"/> (31-50) <input type="radio"/> (more than 50)</p>	<p>Q5 Edit Question Add Question Logic Move Delete</p> <p>5. 집에 동화책이 몇 권 정도 있나요?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (0) <input type="radio"/> (1-10) <input type="radio"/> (11-30) <input type="radio"/> (31-50) <input type="radio"/> (50권 이상)</p>
<p>+ Add Question Split Page Here</p>	<p>Upgrade to Add More Questions Split Page Here</p>
<p>Q6 Edit Question Add Question Logic Move Copy Delete</p> <p>6. How many English books do you have at home?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (0) <input type="radio"/> (1-4) <input type="radio"/> (5-8) <input type="radio"/> (8-12) <input type="radio"/> (more than 12)</p>	<p>Q6 Edit Question Add Question Logic Move Delete</p> <p>6. 집에 영어책은 몇 권 정도 있나요?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (0) <input type="radio"/> (1-4) <input type="radio"/> (5-8) <input type="radio"/> (8-12) <input type="radio"/> (12권 이상)</p>
<p>+ Add Question Split Page Here</p>	<p>Upgrade to Add More Questions Split Page Here</p>
<p>Q7 Edit Question Add Question Logic Move Copy Delete</p> <p>7. Do you read with your parents?(Choose one please)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (Never) <input type="radio"/> (Sometimes) <input type="radio"/> (Often) <input type="radio"/> (Usually)</p>	<p>Q7 Edit Question Add Question Logic Move Delete</p> <p>7. 부모님과 독서를 같이 하나요?(해당하는 것을 고르세요)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (전혀 하지 않는다) <input type="radio"/> (때때로) <input type="radio"/> (가끔) <input type="radio"/> (자주 같이 한다)</p>

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<p>Q8 Edit Question Add Question Logic Move Copy Delete</p> <p>8. Do you study math with your parents?(Choose one please)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (Never) <input type="radio"/> (Sometimes) <input type="radio"/> (Often) <input type="radio"/> (Usually)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+ Add Question Split Page Here</p>	<p>Q8 Edit Question Add Question Logic Move Delete</p> <p>8. 부모님과 함께 수학공부나 숙제를 하니까 부담하는 것을 고르세요</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (관심 가지 않음) <input type="radio"/> (과당부) <input type="radio"/> (과중) <input type="radio"/> (거의 알아 함)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Upgrade to Add More Questions Split Page Here</p>																																																
<p>Q9 Edit Question Add Question Logic Move Copy Delete</p> <p>9. Do you study English with your parents?(Choose one)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (Never) <input type="radio"/> (Sometimes) <input type="radio"/> (Often) <input type="radio"/> (Usually)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+ Add Question Split Page Here</p>	<p>Q9 Edit Question Add Question Logic Move Delete</p> <p>9. 부모님과 같이 영어 공부를 하니까 부담하는 것을 고르세요</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (관심 가지 않음) <input type="radio"/> (과당부) <input type="radio"/> (중부) <input type="radio"/> (거의 알아 함)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Upgrade to Add More Questions Split Page Here</p>																																																
<p>Q10 Edit Question Move Copy Delete</p> <p>10. I visit this place with my parents</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">(Never)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">(Sometimes)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">(Often)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>History museum</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>science Museum</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Busan English Global Village</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Public Library</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Book store</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>		(Never)	(Sometimes)	(Often)	History museum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	science Museum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Busan English Global Village	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Public Library	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Book store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<p>Q10 Edit Question Move Delete</p> <p>10. 부모님과 함께 가는 장소와 얼마나 자주 가는지 해당하는 곳에 모두 표시하세요.</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">(관심 가지 않음)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">(과당부)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">(과중)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>역사 박물관</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>과학 박물관</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>부산 영문빌리지</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>도서관</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>서점</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>		(관심 가지 않음)	(과당부)	(과중)	역사 박물관	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	과학 박물관	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	부산 영문빌리지	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	도서관	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	서점	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Two open ended items were submitted to students on a pencil/paper questionnaire:

- 1) How do you define success in school?
- 2) What is the best way to succeed in school?

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Parent Interview Questions:

- 1) How do you define academic achievement for your child?
- 2) What after-school academic programs does your child participate in?
- 3) How do you personally facilitate your child's academic achievement?
- 4) What would be your advice to your friends on strategies to improve their children's performance at school? What kinds of incentives, activities, and parental attitude do you recommend?

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- 5) Do you think the system by which students are accepted to college is fair to all Koreans, or does it unfairly favor any particular group?
- 6) The college entrance system is currently being reformed away from being solely based on high stakes testing. What would your advice be as to the best way to change the system to ensure fairness, and better reflect authentic academic achievement?

Teacher Interview Questions:

- 1) Could you describe your methods of grouping students? How do you conceptualize groups within the classroom?
- 2) What are the roles of motivation, efficacy, and intelligence in your conceptualization? What do you think are the root causes of high or low levels of these student characteristics?
- 3) How do your teaching strategies differ between these groups?
- 4) How effective are the Korean government's academic welfare programs in providing equal educational opportunities across different levels of socio-economic status? Does providing these services result in equalization in academic achievement across different levels of SES?
- 5) How do you personally define academic achievement? Is your definition reflected in the standardized testing and benchmark testing required by the state?
- 6) What would be your advice to low-SES parents on the best strategies to improve their children's academic achievement?

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Appendix C: Observational Questionnaire

- 1) Please give a brief explanation of the lesson that will be observed. What are your goals for the lesson?
- 2) What is the difference between your lesson and a lesson that might be taught for a similar subject at a hokwan? It's okay to make a guess.