

Adolescent culture, socialization practices, and educational achievement in Korea: Indigenous, psychological, and cultural analysis*

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This paper provides a theoretical and conceptual framework for understanding adolescent culture and educational achievement in Korea. In the first part of the paper, the authors outline a research paradigm in cultural psychology and adolescent culture. In the second section, the traditional family structure, the role of parents, and how they have been changed by modernization are outlined. In the third section, socialization practices and parent-child relationship are reviewed. In the fourth section, Western theories that have been developed to explain educational achievement and their limitations are examined. In the fifth section, factors that contribute to educational success of Korean students are presented. In the final section, the impact of centralized, standardized, and rigid educational system that is imposed on adolescents is discussed. The highly regulated and centralized bureaucracy restricts educational and career opportunities for adolescents and it is responsible for the high rate of violence, delinquency, and bullying in Korea. The need for encouraging civil society that allows for diversity of ideas and skills and at the same time maintaining strong relational bonds are discussed.

key words : adolescent culture, educational achievement, socialization practices, indigenous cultural analysis, Korean culture

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Introduction

Adolescence represents a transitional period from childhood to adulthood. During this phase, adolescents need to develop cognitive, relational, and social skills to do well in school, develop personal interests, establish social relationships, and to prepare for their career. Parents provide the basic socialization to ensure that their children are ready to enter school and succeed in society. In school, children receive formal education and opportunities to develop their intellectual skills and expand their social relationships. With the basic socialization in the family, formal education in school, and social network with friends, they enter into the workforce and establish their own family.

Psychologists have been interested to understanding the development trajectories of children and adolescents. Three main approaches to child development can be identified: Empiricist approach, rationalist approach, and cultural approach. Representing the empiricist approach, John Locke proposed that infants are born with a *tabula rasa* (a blank tablet) in which life experiences etch their messages. William James stated that an infant's initial experience is "one great blooming, buzzing confusion" (cited in Zimbardo, 1988, p. 66). Learning theorists, such as B. F. Skinner, affirm the empiricist position and assume that infants are born into this world totally unprepared and they learn by experience how to translate a vast array of physical stimuli into meaningful information.

Empirical studies of child development, however, refute this traditional viewpoint. Researchers are

discovering that infants are born with more than empty slates. They are born with a well-equipped capacity to selectively attend to salient cues, to organize information into a coherent whole, and to synthesize incoming information in a systematic manner (Masters, 1981). Infants learn that the world does not operate in a chaotic fashion, but in a systematic, coherent, and meaningful manner. According to rationalist theorists, infants are "pre-wired" genetically to attend, perceive, and to process a selected set of incoming information, and also to impose structure upon them (Masters, 1981). For example, Piaget points out that children utilize internal schema and by the process of assimilation and accommodation children learn about their world.

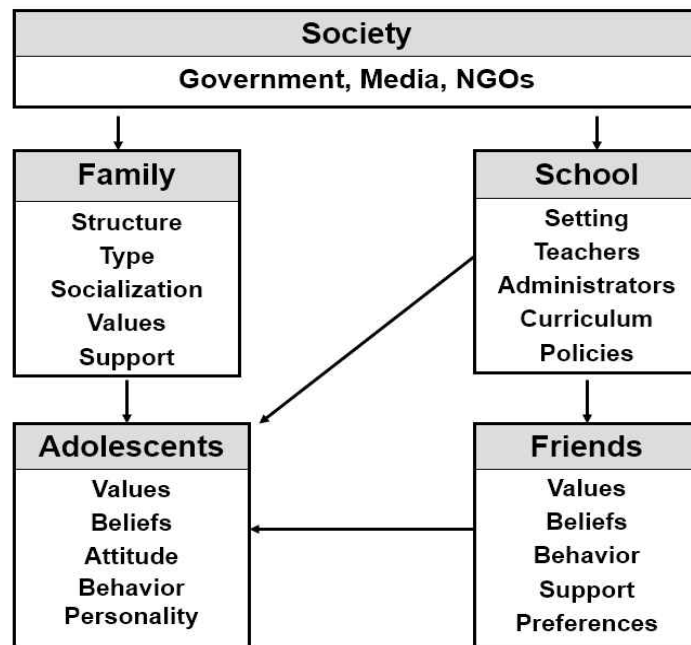
Researchers representing the cultural approach point out limitations of both empiricist and rationalist traditions (Kim, 1999, 2000; Kim & Choi, 1994; Tharp & Gallimore, 1986; Shweder, 1991). They note that children are not born and raised in a vacuum, but born into a particular culture, with a particular set of socializing agents. Traditional psychological theories have largely failed to systematically examine the role of significant others (e.g., parents, teachers, and friends) and cultural context in which children grow up. Theories developed by Sigmund Freud, Eric Erikson, B. F. Skinner, Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Abraham Maslow have not systematically incorporated the role that socializing agents and cultural context in which children are raised. Although these theories are believed to be universal, they have been largely influenced by Euro-American cultural

and scientific *zeitgeist* that helped to define the issues, methods, and content of scientific research (Bandura, 1997; Kim, 1999, 2000; Koch & Leary, 1985; Shweder, 1991). These theories focused on the children's physiological, cognitive, and social development and they have ignored the relational, emotional, and cultural aspects that influence child development.

Cultures provide strategies for individuals and groups to organize, interpret, and manage their world. Although infants have the potential and capacity to learn any language and culture, they end up learning one particular language and culture. They use their language and culture to organize their thoughts, communicate with others, and manage their environment. Within a culture, a

child is born into a particular family, with a particular set of socializing agents. Parents are the most important figures, providing the children with the genetic basis, and they are powerful socializing agents (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992; Kim & Park, 1999). (See Figure 1).

As the child matures, children are expected to go to school and learn from other socializing agents such as teachers. Although teachers do not provide direct vertical influence, they provide an oblique influence through formal educational system. Like parents, teachers provide an important educational learning experience for children. Unlike parents and teachers, who are from an older generation, friends and peers, on the other hand, are from the same generation and they provide horizontal influence.



Adapted from Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992

Figure 1. Factors influencing adolescent development

These significant others influence a child's developmental trajectories. These individuals are, in turn, influenced by the social and cultural context in which they live. Governments establish policies, guidelines, and institutions to socialize children to become a contributing member of society. Media and non-governmental organizations (e.g., civic, religious and voluntary groups) provide a powerful influence in forming and shaping both the children's and socializing agents attitudes, values, and beliefs.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the development trajectories of Korean adolescents using the indigenous and cultural approach. In the first part of the paper, the authors outline a research paradigm in indigenous and cultural psychology. In the second section, the traditional family structure, the role parents, and influences of modernization in Korea are outlined. In the third section, socialization practices and parent-child relationship are reviewed. In the fourth section, Western theories that have been developed to explain educational achievement and their limitations are examined. In the fifth section, factors that contribute to educational success of Korean students are presented. In the final section, the impact of centralized, standardized, and rigid educational system is reviewed. The need for encouraging civil society that allows for diversity of ideas and skills and at the same time maintaining strong relational bonds are discussed.

Analysis of culture

Culture is an *emergent* property of individuals and

groups interacting with their natural and human environment. Culture is defined as *a rubric of patterned variables* (Kim, 2000). For example, the quality of a painting cannot be reduced to its constituent parts, such as wavelengths of light. Similarly, culture is an emergent whole that provides meaning and coherence to its members and it cannot be reduced to its constituent parts. As painters use different colors to create their work of art, people use available natural and human resources to achieve their desired goals. This is the process definition of culture: *Culture is the collective utilization of natural and human resources to achieve desired outcomes* (Kim, 2000).

Differences in cultures exist because we have different goals, different resources that are available to us, and different methods we use to achieve our goals. Cultural similarities exist to the extent we share similar goals, methods, and resources. For example, sound can be considered as noise or music depending on how we organize it. Composers are able to code the wavelength of sound into different notes and they use these notes to create and record music. Different instruments are brought together in an orchestra and harmonized to play beautiful symphonies. What is considered as music in one culture can be considered as noise to outsiders. What teenagers call music, adults can regard them as loud noise. What adults consider as beautiful symphony can be viewed as boring sounds. How we develop music and what we consider beautiful varies across individuals, groups, and cultures.

At the cultural level, differences between Korea and the United States exist due to differences in

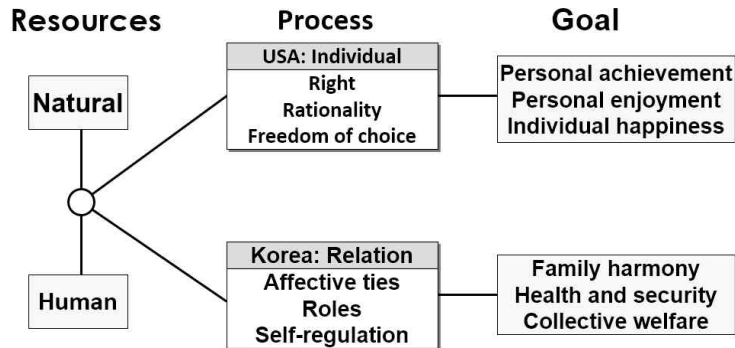


Figure 2. Cultural differences

goals, ways of achieving these goals, and how we use natural and human resources. (See Figure 2). In the United States, many people aspire for personal achievement, enjoyment, and happiness (Hofstede, 1991; Kim, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1994; National Center for Education Statistics Trends, 2000). To achieve these goals, Americans focus on individual rights, rationality, and freedom of choice. In terms resources, individual ability and creativity are emphasized, along with controlling and exploiting nature. In Korea, people aspire for family harmony, collective welfare, and health and security (Kim, 1997; Kim, Kim, & Park, 2000; National Center for Education Statistics Trends, 2000). The method of achieving these goals is through maintenance of strong relational bonds that emphasize affective ties, role, and self-regulation. In terms of human resources, individuals flexibility and malleability, along with their ability to cooperate with group members, are emphasized. Individuals are viewed as part of nature and encouraged to be

in harmony with nature.

Culture should not be viewed as a category (e.g., individualistic or collectivistic) since the boundary of a culture is fluid, cultures undergo change, and significant variations exist within a culture. (See Figure 3). Kashima, Yamaguchi, Kim, Choi, Gelfand, and Yuki (1995) found Korean and Japanese students to be more collective oriented than American and Australian students. However, women in all four cultures are found to be more relationship oriented than men. Within Korea, there are significant variations of values, beliefs, and skills influenced by generational status, socio-economic status, and educational level (Kim, Helgesen, & Ahn, 2002; Kim, Kim, & Park, 2000).

Without culture, human beings would be reduced to basic instincts, and we would not be able to think, feel, or behave the way we do. Culture allows us to define who we are, what is meaningful, communicate with others, and manage our world. It is *through* culture that we think, feel,

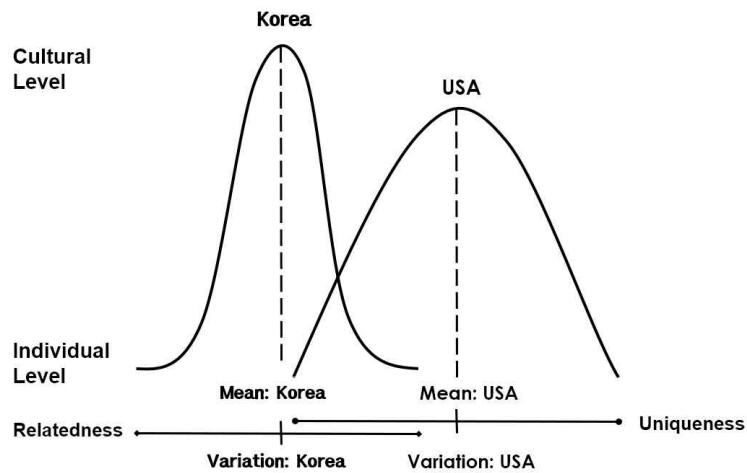


Figure 3. Cultural and individual differences

behave, and interact with our world (Shweder, 1991). Because we think through our culture, it is difficult to recognize our own culture. For a person born and raised in a particular culture, his/her own culture is felt to be supremely natural.

Our body, physiology, and genetics are limited in explaining human behavior and culture. To use an analogy, computers consist of hardware and software. Our physiology is the like the hardware and culture is like the software of a computer (Hofstede, 1991). Depending of what type of software that is downloaded, computers operate very differently. Depending on the socialization experience of a particular child, his or her attitudes, values, and behavior will differ from another child who is brought up in another culture. Koreans who are raised in Korea behave very differently than those

who are born and raised in Brazil, China, Germany, Japan, Malaysia, and United States. Moreover, human beings possess creativity that computers do not possess (Bandura, 1997; Kim, 1999). Computers have to be programmed to run and they operate logically based on the program. Human beings have the capability to program themselves and to change their values depending on their goals, intentions, and beliefs. Also, unlike computers, it is often our emotions rather than our rationality that dictate our behavior (Kim, 2000).

Although we perceive our world using our five senses, we can also understand our world through the use of symbols. (See Figure 4). For example, Helen Keller was born blind, deaf, and mute. She was trapped in her body, unable to relate to the world due to her disabilities. However, when she

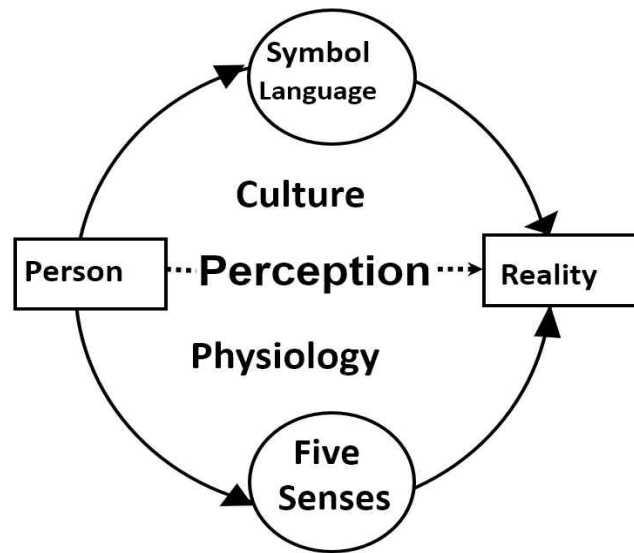


Figure 4. Perception of reality

realized that she could communicate with others by using the sign language, the whole world opened up to her. She was no longer trapped in her body, limited by her disabilities. She could learn about the world, communicate with others, and teach children with disabilities using the cultural and linguistic symbols. Similarly, Stephen Hawking suffers from severe disability limiting his ability to communicate. But with the aid of computer technology, he communicate his ideas to advance theoretical physics. Although our body and senses limit what we can perceive and do, our mind can takes us outside our bodies into realm of possibilities. We can use our imagination and cultural symbols to travel to different places, experience exciting adventures, and learn about

diverse cultures.

In order to understand a person, we need to know his or her past, present and future aspirations. For example, a person with amnesia (i.e., without a past) cannot have a secure understanding of the present or have a clear sense of personal identity. A person without a future (e.g., imprisoned for life) will have difficulties living the present. Similar to a person, in order to understand a culture, we need to understand its history, present, and future aspirations of the people. Although culture is usually associated with the products of the past (e.g., history, philosophy, art, music, literature, food, and language), culture has a past, present, and future. (See Figure 5). With the aid of our memory, we can understand our past achievements

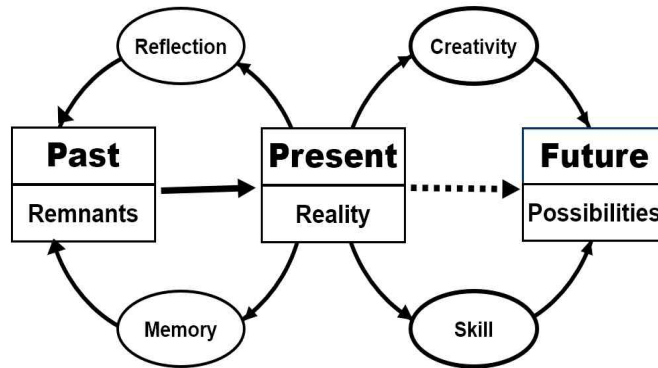


Figure 5. Time and culture

and how our culture evolved into the present form. With the aid of reflective capability, we can understand who we are and explore what is possible, which is not yet real. We can work individually or collectively in realizing various possibilities using available resources and skills. We have created cultural products for a particular purpose. The most important aspect of culture, however, is not the product of culture, but the people who have created these products.

Although human beings have not changed much biologically during the past 7,000 years, cultural changes have been rather dramatic. It is our ability to understand the world and to share our knowledge with others that became critical to our survival. We have traditionally used oral methods to transmit our knowledge. With the development of the writing system, paper, and printing press, we were able to store and transmit large amount of information to others and to succeeding

generations. The use of paper and printing press fueled the Renaissance in Europe and the spread of knowledge around the world. The invention of telephone, television, and Internet has increased our ability to share information far beyond the capacity and capability of our brain. Through the computerization and mechanization, information are used to run machines, control our environment, produce food, and communicate with others in a way that was beyond the realm of possibilities one century ago.

The culture that we have built for ourselves and for our children provide the basis for our children to supplement, modify, or transform it. The culture that we hold dear can have a different meaning for our children. If it is created by adults and imposed upon them, then it can be perceived as a prison. They must be allowed to participate in the renewal and rebuilding process. They must be allowed to transform their society that is better able to suit

their needs and goals. A culture that emphasizes the past can stifle progress and it can limit adolescents in participating in the transformation process. Adolescent culture represents the possibilities for the next generation, allowing for progress, development, and cultural change.

Korean culture

Western philosophy focuses on the individualized, rational, and abstract understanding of the self and society. When Socrates taught his students to "know thyself," and to examine cases of things that are beautiful in order to deduce the "essence" of beauty, he was teaching inductive, deductive, and analytical reasoning. His ideas were further refined by his student Plato, then by Aristotle and other Greek philosophers.

During Renaissance, Europeans discovered Greek philosophy and scientific knowledge developed in China, India, and the Middle East. These discoveries paved the way for the scientific and industrial revolution in Europe. A central figure representing the Age of Reason was René Descartes (Kim, 2001). He was also a devout Christian, philosopher, soldier, and mathematician. He was in a state of turmoil since the Christian teachings were in conflict with the new scientific discoveries. He decided to adopt a method of critical doubt in which he rejected all ideas, doctrines, and beliefs, unless the truth was self-evident. He found that he could doubt virtually everything: Traditions, customs, beliefs, and even his own perception.

There was, however, one thing he could not doubt - his own existence. The fundamental question was "How do I know I exist?" He concluded that it is through rationality and reason that he could know his existence with certainty. Descartes concluded, *Cogito, ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am). Descartes' discovery was a purely individualistic enterprise. Only he and he alone could determine the Truth with certainty and others cannot dictate to him what is right or wrong. Western societies affirm individual uniqueness, freedom of choice, and the pursuit of personal identity, goals, and happiness.

What if Descartes had been a Korean, how would he have answered the fundamental question of his existence? I believe he would have answered as follows: "I *feel*, therefore I am." In contrast to the Western emphasis on individuality and rationality, Korean worldview focuses on emotions that bind individuals together. For example, the Korean word for human being is *ingan* (人間, translated literally it means "human between"). In other words, the human essence is basically relational and can be defined in terms of what happens between individuals. For example, Mencius stated that "if you see a child drowning and you don't feel compassion, you are not a human being." It is compassion that helps us to relate to the child and propels us to take the necessary risks to save the child. For this reason, interpersonal emotions and not physiology, biology or rationality is viewed as the basis or essence of human psychology. Human essence is basically relational and it can be defined in terms of emotions that people feel for one another.

Relational emotions that binds and bonds individuals, not the private and individualistic emotions, are emphasized. Maintenance of human relationship is considered basic, moral, and ethical. Unlike Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, Confucianism and Buddhism assume that human beings are basically good. Although Confucian and Buddhist worldview acknowledges the existence of conflict between opposing forces (*um* 陰 and *yang* 陽), unlike the West, they emphasize the balance, moderation, or harmony between the opposing forces. The focus is not on the dichotomous contrast between black and white, right or wrong, good or evil, but in the shades of grey that are between the two extreme poles. In the Korean worldview, extremes should be avoided and the

middle path (中庸) should be taken. Individuals are taught to constantly strive and cultivate oneself to be in harmony with others and the environment.

Family structure

Confucianism has influenced all facets of Korean society: Conception of self, family relationship, education, and organizational life. The basis of self, relationships, and society is considered to be the family. The basic unit is the relationships and not individuals. Figure 6 depicts a prototypical extended family structure in the traditional agricultural communities. Three-generations-in-one-roof was considered as the basic family unit. Although Confucius considered the father-son relationship to

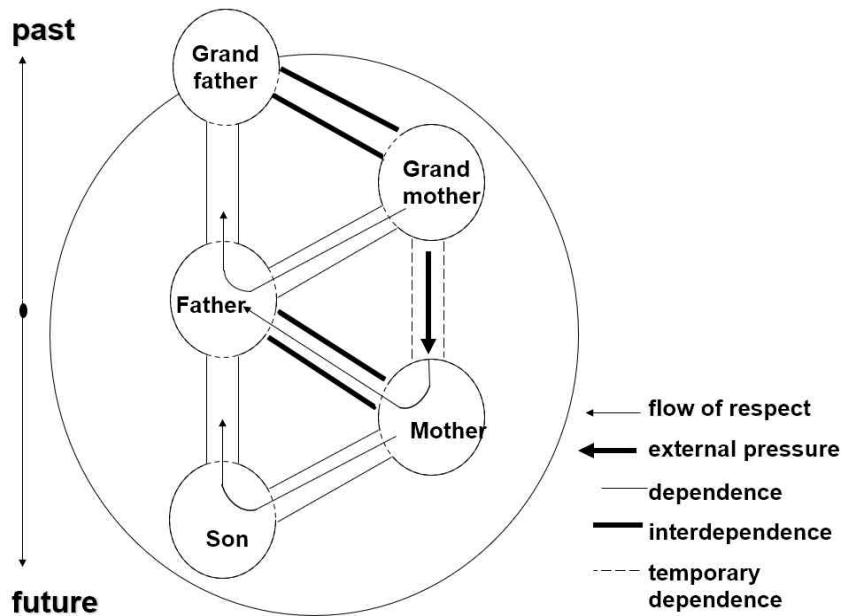


Figure 6. Extended family

be primary, it is the relationship between the husband and wife that is basic. Through the union of a husband and wife, children are born and the family lineage is maintained. In the traditional extended family, the role of each family member is defined and prescribed.

Consistent with the Confucian philosophy, a father and mother had different roles. A mother represents the inner world of the child (symbolizing Human-heartedness, 仁) and the father represents the outside world (symbolizing Righteousness, 義) (Kim, 2000). This contrasting role is summarized by a common saying: "a strict father, a benevolent mother" (嚴父 慈母). Until the age of 60, the father is the head of the household and represents the family. The social status of the family members is defined by his status and achievements. His status is, in turn, defined by the status of his father and his ancestor.

The father represents the family and makes decision concerning the family. One of the prime responsibilities of the father is to give birth to a son, who can continue the family line. The other main responsibility is to educate his son so that he will carry on the family name and to represent the family. A mother, on the other hand, is responsible for raising children, ensuring that children respect and obey their father, taking care of elderly parents and relatives, and managing household affairs and social relationships.

The father's role is the symbolic head of the family and he represents a link between the family and the outside world. Through the father, children are linked across time (i.e., through his lineage)

and across space (i.e., through his position in society). As the symbolic head of the household, he holds the authority to represent the family, to speak and act on behalf of the family, but not against the family. For example, property was the communal possession of a family, and not a personal property of the father. Although the father had the right to dispose of the property, the other family members also had rights to the property. An arbitrary decision by the father was generally considered uncustomary, or an illegitimate act (Kim, 1994). A father had the authority, duty, and responsibility of handling family property on behalf of the family, but not for himself.

As a case in point, the Korean inheritance law guarantees rights of the wife, sons, and daughters as being basic and inalienable. Although the eldest son is allowed to receive a higher inheritance to perform ancestor ceremonies, the Supreme Court of Korea upheld a decision that the wife and other children have a basic right to the inheritance, even if it is denied in the will left by the deceased father. Also, the wife and children are responsible for the debt left by the deceased father. Thus, for a Korean father, wisdom and benevolence are necessary to ensure that his decisions are not short sighted or self-serving. He must consider the long-term implications of his decision on all family members, family's reputation and position, ancestors, and future generation. The role of other family members is to obey and respect his decisions. Thus, rights and obligations in Confucianism are role-attached, unequal, relational, and situational (Kim, 1994).

The mother is responsible for managing the household affairs, including household finance, maintaining social relationships, and ensuring that the children are properly socialized. She is also responsible for ensuring that the daughter-in-law supports and respects her son. She actively participates in the socialization of her grandchildren. While the father represents the outside world, mother represents the inner world of family and she is responsible for maintaining harmony in the family.

The age of 60 represents a full cycle in one's life; it represents a second birth. The father typically passes his property and power to his eldest son and the son becomes responsible for managing the family affairs. He takes on the role of the grandfather. Similarly, the mother passes her role and responsibility to the eldest daughter-in-law and takes on the role of the grandmother. They no longer hold major responsibilities and they are to be taken care of and indulged like children.

The conception of past and future is not an abstract idea, but relationally based. Ancestors represent the past and children represent the future. It is important to pay respect to the ancestors since it is where one comes from. Even in modern Korea, people pay respect to their ancestors by bowing to them in front of their graves and symbolically sharing a meal with them. Grandparents are a living testimony and linkage to the past. Parents must show their respect to grandparents and grandchildren also participate in the bowing rituals. Children, on the other hand, represent the future of the family and as such tremendous

emotional, financial, and social investments are made for them and in them.

Modernization

Confucian and family values have been transformed in the modern era. In traditional agrarian society, families lived in a community for many generations and people knew one another (Kim, 1994). Relationships were based on collective cooperation and trust. Agricultural production meant that family members lived together and worked together. People needed to live in harmony and worked with nature. The cycle of planting, cultivating, and harvesting is repeated every year. Trust, cooperation, conservatism, and formalism were important aspects of their daily lives. The older people were respected for their wisdom that they have accumulated through experience. Parents and ancestors were respected for the land and knowledge that they have handed down to subsequent generations. Sex-role differentiation was high and men were responsible for farming and women were responsible for child-rearing and managing household affairs.

With modernization, urbanization, and industrialization, the traditional extended families have virtually disappeared. Currently, less than 10% of families have three generations living under one roof (Korean National Statistics Bureau, 2001). Figure 7 depicts the average size of household from 1975 to 2000 (Korean National Statistics Bureau, 2001). In 1975, the average size of household was more than five, but this number was reduced to

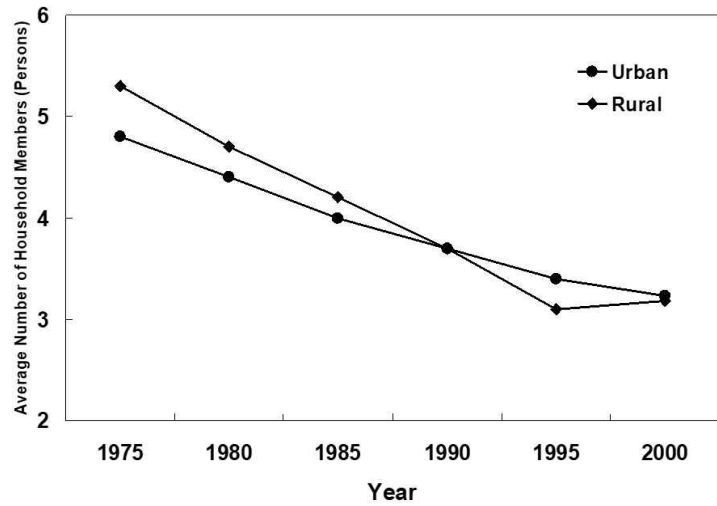


Figure 7. Size of household

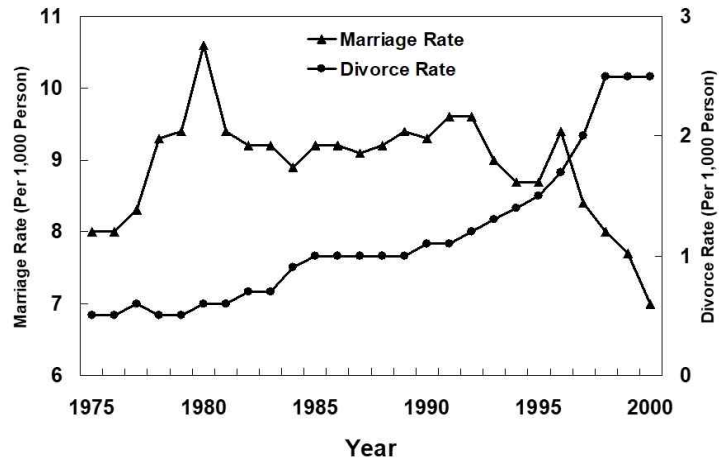


Figure 8. Marriage and divorce rate

three in 2000. Even in rural areas, the family size is relatively small. Many young people have moved to cities and currently rural villages are populated by the aged and it is difficult to find young

people living in rural areas.

Coupled with urbanization, family breakdowns have increased dramatically in recent years. In 2000, although the marriage rate exceeds the divorce rate by three times, the divorce rate has increased fivefold since 1975 (Korean National Statistics Bureau, 2001). (See Figure 8).

With modernization, the focus has changed from status quo, conservatism, and harmony with nature to change, progress, and control of the environment. (See Table 1). Traditionally, learning has been linked to Confucian Classics and literature. Currently, success is defined not in terms of accumulation of wisdom or learning the Confucian classics, but acquiring scientific and technological knowledge obtained through formal education. The primary role of the parents is no longer to take care of their parents but to educate their children

in a highly competitive world. Traditionally, women did not receive a formal education, but currently both men and women have to be educated to succeed and to raise their children. Sex-role discrimination has diminished significantly in the family, in schools, and to a lesser extent in the workplace.

With modernization, urbanization, and industrialization, the nuclear family structure has replaced the traditional extended family. Although grandparents no longer play a significant role in family life, the core family structure has remained the same. (See Figure 9). The father is still the head of the household representing the family and the mother is responsible for raising and educating children.

There is, however, a dramatic change that is confronting Korean society: The fragmentation of family system and breakdown of trust in society. In

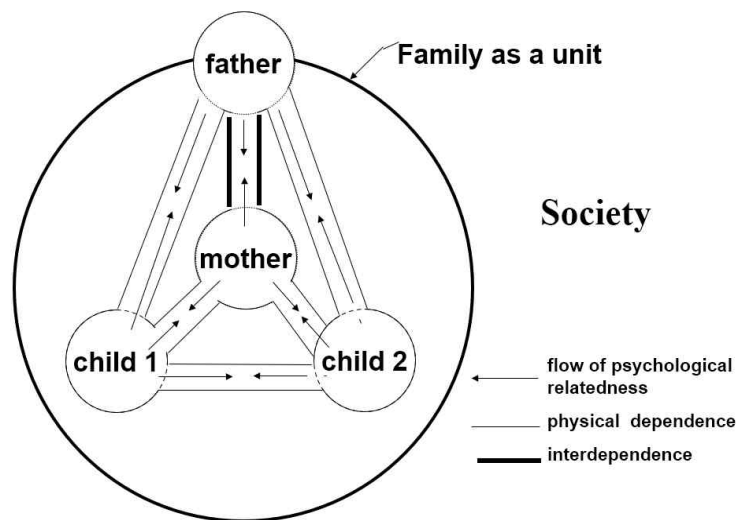


Figure 9. Ideal nuclear family

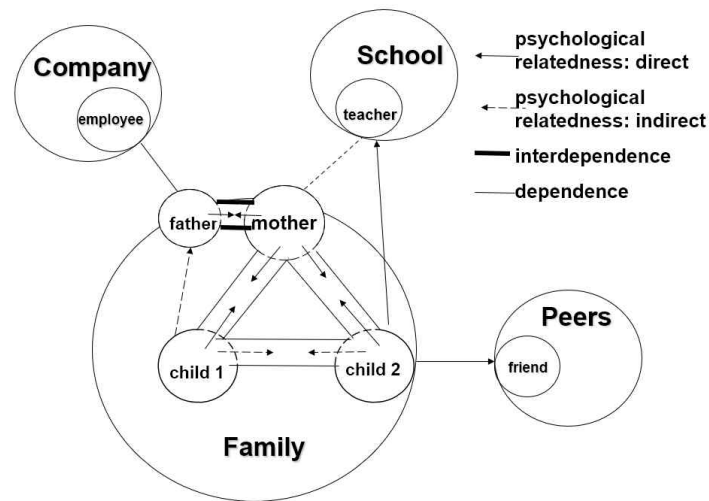


Figure 10. Modern nuclear family

many cases, as depicted in Figure 9 the ideal nuclear family is still being maintained. Currently, some of the families are being fragmented, not individualistically, but relationally and collectively. (See Figure 10). The role of the father has increasingly being limited in the family by his absence. More and more fathers are consumed by their work and forced to spend long hours with their colleagues and superior. With the absence of the father, the role of the father has now been taken over by the mother, such as educating and disciplining the children. Currently, in some families fathers play only a marginal role in socializing the children.

In the modern nuclear family, the role of educating children has been transferred to the

mother. It is the responsibility of the mother to educate the children and to ensure they succeed academically. She serves as a mediator between her children and the school and it is her primary role to ensure that the children succeed academically. In addition, mothers are financial managers at home, responsible for handling and investing household income. In some case, mothers are also required to work outside the home to increase family's income. In this situation, her workload has doubled, being responsible for the family and her career.

For adolescents, peer relationships have become increasingly important. Traditionally, children interacted mainly with their siblings, cousins and neighbors. With the dramatic decrease in birthrate (currently 1.41 in Korea) and with urbanization,

interactions with siblings and cousins have been limited. They have been replaced by interaction with peers, especially in daycare and kindergarten. The extended family has traditionally helped children to succeed in society but in modern times, relationships with peers are considered as a key to success. Entering a prestigious university or company provides the social network that enhances one's career opportunities, social mobility, and wealth. The company, school, and peers now replace the role of the extended family. With the peer relationship becoming more important, many adolescents rebel against excessive parental pressure and control and spend more time with their friends.

Socialization practices

Although the traditional family structure and values have changed with modernization, two important features of the socialization practice still remain: Parental devotion and indulgence. In Korea, parents view unselfish devotion and sacrifice to their children as their basic role and duty. Socialization begins at the prenatal stage (*taekyo* 胎教), with the umbilical cord symbolizing the union between the mother and the child. A mother is taught to think, feel, and act on behalf of the baby in the womb. When the child is born, the physical bond is transformed into psychological and relational bonds. To maintain and cultivate the close mother-child relationship, a mother remains close to the child to make the child feel secure, to make the boundary between herself and the child

minimal, and to meet all of the needs of the child. Children's strong dependency needs, both emotional and physical, are satisfied by their mother's indulgent devotion, even if it means a tremendous sacrifice on her own part.

A child's psychological and physical well-being is considered the prime responsibility of the mother. It is the role of the mother to indulge the child and gratify children's wishes as much as possible. In weaning, toilet training, and bedtime, a tremendous degree of flexibility is exercised. Children are not forced to eat by themselves until the age of three. Even at this age, if children do not show any intention to do so, they are not pressured. Bedtime is not strictly enforced and is usually determined by the child. Emotional relatedness, not rationality, is emphasized during infancy.

As children mature, they sense that it is through the mother that they obtain gratification, security, and love. As such, children become motivated to maintain the close relationship. They do so by gradually playing a more active role by attempting to please their mother and behaving according to their mother's wishes. Thus, the feeling of relational dependence helps children to incorporate their mother's values and beliefs as their own. This strong emotional bond is later transferred and extended to others, such as father, siblings, friends, and teachers. The emotional security and assurance provided by the mother become the basis upon which a child can venture into the outer world of the school and the larger society. With a secure sense of self, children are encouraged to develop

and exercise their rationality, especially in the school setting.

Adolescent culture and academic achievement

As children grow up, they are expected to extend and transfer their interdependent identification and loyalty from their mothers to teachers. A mother's job is to use her interdependent relationship with her child to prepare her child for school life. She becomes a mediator between the home environment and the school environment and she gradually implants appropriate social values to her children.

In Korea, the relationship between teachers and their students is seen not only as a professional relationship, but as an extension of the mother-child or father-child relationship. A typical climate of Korean schools affirms maternalism or paternalism, pressures students to strive for personal excellence, and encourages students to cooperate in a group. Children are motivated to please the teacher and their attention is focused on the teacher. Even in a class size that is as large as 40, Korean students are more attentive, less disruptive, and more devoted to doing their schoolwork and homework than students in the West.

Within the family and school context, children need to develop academic and social skills and positive peer network. Those students who are able to discipline themselves, to develop necessary cognitive and academic skills, and to maintain

positive relationship with parents, teachers, and friends, perform well in school (Bandura, 1997; Kim & Park, 1999, 2000; Park & Kim, 2003a, 2003b). Success in performance increases self-efficacy beliefs, which in turn can increase their academic performance. Successful performance in school provides adolescents with positive outcomes and brings psychological, material, and social rewards. Success in academic work is the most important predictor of life-satisfaction and future success for adolescents (Bandura, 1997; Kim & Park, 1999). The cycle of social support leads to increase in self-efficacy, leading to successful performance, which in turn provides positive rewards to adolescents. (See Figure 11).

For those students who do not do well in school, failure experiences lower their sense of

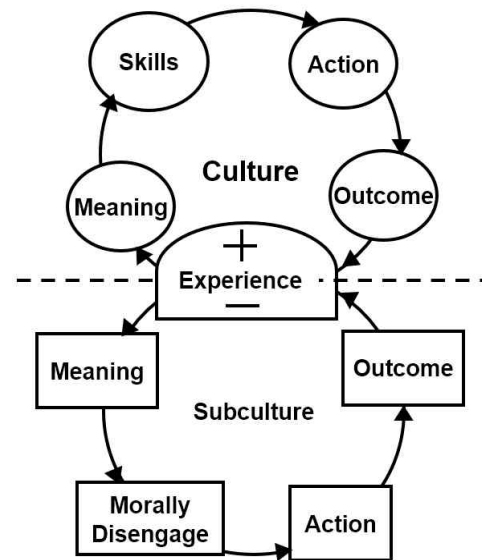


Figure 11. Adolescent culture and subculture

academic efficacy, which in turns lowers their academic performance. They are more likely to be punished for their failures, and some avoid going to school and engage in delinquent behavior. They tend to morally disengage from their parents and teachers and are less likely to take responsibility for their behavior (Bandura, 1997; Park & Kim, 2003c). They are more likely to develop social efficacy in socializing with other friends who experience similar negative outcomes. This negative experiences marginalize these adolescents from society. They create their own subculture, rewarding each other and engage in anti-social and delinquent behavior. They are more likely to bully other students, drop out of school, and often engage in criminal behavior (Park & Kim, in this issue; Park & Kim, 1998, 2001, 2003c; Yang, Chung, Kim, 2003). Park and Kim (in this issue) provide a detailed account of delinquent behavior among Korean adolescents, the cycle of negativity, and the creation of a disengaged subculture.

International comparison of academic achievement

Korean students are the top achievers in mathematics and sciences in international comparison of academic achievement of middle school students (Grade 9 students). In the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS, National Center for Education Statistics Trends, 2000)¹⁾ Korean students are ranked second in mathematics,

just behind Singapore and fifth in science, behind Taiwan, Singapore, Hungary, and Japan. In contrast, American students are ranked 19th in mathematics and 18th in science. Similar results are also obtained in a comparative study of economically developed nations conducted by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Programme for International Student Assessment, PISA, 2000).²⁾ In PISA, Korean students are ranked first in science literacy, second in mathematics literacy, just behind Japan and sixth in reading literacy, behind Finland, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and Ireland. American students in contrast are ranked 14th in scientific literacy, 19th in mathematical literacy, and 15th in reading literacy.

These results baffle many educators, administrators, and psychologists in the United States since they contradict existing theories. For example, although the United States government spends much more money per students, Americans schools have smaller classes, and the vast majority of psychological and educational theories have been developed and applied in the American school system, American students are one of the lowest achievers. Existing psychological theories argue that innate born intelligence (e.g., IQ), belief in ones ability, high self-esteem, and intrinsic motivation are important predictors of educational achievement. Although American students have high IQ, self-esteem, intrinsic motivation, and believe in their own ability, they are one of the worst performing

1) www.nces.ed.gov/timss

2) www.pisa.oecd.org

groups among the developed countries.

In the TIMSS study, American students have the highest self-concept in science and fourth highest in mathematics. In contrast, Korean students had very low scores, ranked 21st in science and 32nd in mathematics. In other words, high self-esteem in mathematics and sciences did not translate into high performance. Actually, it was those students with low self-esteem and from East Asia (i.e., Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan) who were the best performers.

Second, Korean students believe that they need to work hard and expend a lot of effort in order to succeed, while American students believed that a moderate amount of effort was necessary (TIMSS, National Center for Education Statistics Trends, 2000). Since Americans believe in innate ability, expending a lot of effort implies a lack of ability (Bandura, 1997). In USA, Canada, and Australia, those students who emphasized effort attribution had lower mathematics scores than those who did not. In contrast, Koreans students believe in acquired ability and effort is viewed as essential in developing in ones ability (Park & Kim, 1998). Korean students who emphasized effort attribution performed significantly better in mathematics than those who did not.

Third, the vast majority of American, Australian, and Canadian students emphasize intrinsic motivation for doing well in mathematics (e.g., in order to obtain a desired job). Korean students, in contrast, are more likely to report extrinsic motivations: 85% agreed that it is to enter a desired university, 62% agreed that it is to please

their parents, and only 44% agreed that it is to obtain a desired job (TIMSS, National Center for Education Statistics Trends, 2000). In other words, reasons for studying mathematics were more likely to be extrinsic than intrinsic motivation. Nevertheless, they performed much better than American, Australian, and Canadian students.

These results indicate that current psychological and educational theories are limited and in some cases wrong in explaining a high level of achievement of East Asian students. A series of studies conducted by Bandura (1997), Stevenson and colleagues (Stevenson & Lee, 1999; Steven, Azuma & Hakuta, 1986) and Kim and colleagues (Kim & Park, 1998, 1999, 2003a; Park & Kim, 2000, 2003a, 2003b) challenge existing Western assumptions. In 1960, Korea had one of the lowest literacy and educational achievement levels in the world. Currently, Korean students receive one of the highest scores in mathematics, science, and reading literacy. These dramatic reversals in national differences cannot be attributed to genetic basis or IQ, but they can be attributed to psychological, social, economic, and cultural factors.

Cultural basis of Western psychological and educational theories

In the late 19th century, Francis Galton initiated psychological testing and assessment to measure innate ability. Leading psychologists (e.g., Lewis Terman at Stanford University, Robert Yerkes at Harvard University, and Henry Garrett at Columbia University) continued the tradition in the

United States. Terman developed the Stanford-Binet IQ Test to measure inborn intelligence. Although there was no independent conceptualization or validation to support such a claim, it *mysteriously* acquired the "scientific status" when it was transported to the United States (Kamin, 1977).

Terman and his colleagues used the IQ test to document individual, sex, ethnic, and racial differences. During World War I, Robert Yerkes (president of the American Psychological Association, 1917) and his colleagues were commissioned by the Army's Sanitary Corps to provide mental assessment for use in job classification. The goal of the test is to identify intelligent individuals who would be promoted as officers. Less intelligent soldiers would become foot soldiers and stationed in the front lines of battles. It was believed that the intelligent individuals were the national asset of the United States, while less intelligent individuals were expendable (Chorover, 1980). Nearly two million men were given the standardized IQ test.

The results of the IQ test were used to shape national and educational policies in the United States. Terman urged racial purification and greater social control for the betterment of society: "In the near future intelligence tests will bring tens of thousands of these high-grade defectives under the surveillance and protection of society" and "this will ultimately result in curtailing the reproduction of feeble-mindedness and in the elimination of an enormous amount of crime, pauperism, and industrial inefficiency" (Chorover, 1908, p. 6-7). By 1928, 21 states enacted laws to forcefully sterilize individuals who are considered deviants (Chorover,

1980). Henry E. Garrett forcefully argued for maintenance of racial segregation based on the claim that African Americans are some 200,000 years behind the White Americans.

The United States did not have immigration law prior to 1875. Henry Goddard argued for eugenics and for greater control over the immigrant selection process (Chorover, 1980). He was commissioned by the United States Public Health Service to Ellis Island and conducted the first IQ testing in 1912. He administered the translated Stanford-Binet test to new immigrants arriving at the Ellis island, which confirmed his expectations: 83% of the Jews, 80% of the Hungarians, and 87% of the Italians were classified as feeble-minded (Chorover, 1980). Asian Americans were regarded as a "kind of inferior species, who could be used for unskilled labor and menial jobs, but could never be accepted as equals into the white community" (Vernon, 1982). The National Origins Act, passed in 1924, barred all immigrations from Asia, with the exception of Filipinos who were barred in 1934 (Hsia, 1988; Kim, 1992). These laws were passed due to fears that this "genetically inferior" Asian race would pollute the genetic pool of the United States and lead to nation degeneracy (Chorover, 1980).

According to Kamin (1974), when the first version of Stanford-Binet test was administered and published in 1916, one set of results contradicted their expectation: Girls of all ages outscored boys by an average of 2-4%. Terman unilaterally deleted, revised, or added new items so that this difference disappeared and subsequently boys on

average did better than girls. Thus, the IQ test was developed and revised not on scientific basis but to fit their preconceptions of individual, sex, and racial differences.

During World War II, the United States and Western Europe had to fight against fascist Germany and Japan. This situation created a need for individuals of diverse cultural background to unite together and fight against a common enemy, which killed more than six millions Jews, Slavs, gypsies, prostitutes, and disabled based on eugenics ideals. On a broader scale, people realized justifying inequalities and injustices in the name of racial purification created irrevocable harm to victims and to society. Nazi Germany and Japan identified individuals or groups as being genetically inferior and it perpetrated hatred, torture, and mass murder. Once these definitions were accepted and reified using social Darwinism, immigration restriction, forced sterilization, and genocide became justifiable in the name of science, progress, and greater good (Chorover, 1980).

After WW II, people realized accepting social Darwinism, in which inequality and injustices as being natural and viewing competition and conflict as being inevitable resulted in destruction of human life and dignity. On December 10, 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that supports the universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. At the international level, the conclusion of WW II signaled a move away from

confrontation between races to cooperation and nation building. In the United States, the Supreme Court ruled that the segregation policy was unconstitutional and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1968 banned discrimination based on race, sex, color, national origin, or religion and guaranteed fundamental rights to all citizens. The Immigration Act of 1965 lifted restrictive racial quotas and immigration from Asia was allowed.

Providing civil rights, liberal education, and equal opportunity in the United States did not remove educational and economic disparity among various ethnic groups. To explain the low educational attainment and achievement of African Americans and ethnic minorities, psychologists argued that intelligence is not innate but environmentally determined. Economically disadvantaged children were growing up in environments that are *culturally deprived*, the same way sensory deprivation retards development of laboratory animals. The poor performance of African Americans and some ethnic members was explained in term of being brought up in an inferior environment resulting in *cultural deficits* (Tharp & Gallimore, 1976).

President Lyndon Johnson established the Project Head Start to provide “disadvantaged” children “enriched environments” promoting stimulation for cognitive, linguistic, and motivational development. The main goal of the program was to develop children's self-esteem, confidence, and self-acceptance. Extensive analyses and evaluations revealed that positive gains of the Head Start Program were not stable, but gradually eroded with time (Westinghouse Learning Corporation, 1969). The early enrichment

experience these children experienced had no overall impact in the cognitive, linguistic, and motivational development of children. The failure of this program can be attributed to a lack of understanding of the role of socializing agents and of culture.

The cultural deficit hypothesis is an ethnocentric interpretation, which is not based on systematic investigation of cultural context or values of various ethnic groups. Moreover, this hypothesis did not examine institutional or cultural barriers that may have caused the low attainment of ethnic children. Tharp and Gallimore (1976) found that low achieving Native Hawaiian children and their delinquent behavior could not be attributed to lack of ability, motivation, or cultural deficits. Rather, their poor performance was linked to the incompatibility of their natural abilities with the demands of the larger society. In a series of studies, spanning over two decades, Tharp and Gallimore (1976) empirically refute the cultural deficit hypothesis and support the cultural incompatibility hypothesis.

Tharp and Gallimore (1976) contend that the Native Hawaiian children do not succeed in school because the values emphasized in their home environment differ from those emphasized in school. The differences in performance can be attributed to cultural incompatibility rather than any deficit. This discrepancy is viewed as the cause of low attendance, poor academic performance, and disruptive classroom behavior. When the classroom environment and instruction were made compatible with the their culture, Native Hawaiians performed as well as

their White American counterparts. Similarly, researchers attribute the phenomenal educational success of East Asian students to the cultural compatibility between the home environment and the school environment (Kim & Park, 1998, 2000; Stevenson & Lee, 1990; Stevenson, Azuma & Hakuta, 1986). The compatibility of values, support, and skills that are emphasized at home and school are important factors influencing children's academic achievement.

Both the psychometric approach as represented by intelligence tests (e.g., Stanford-Binet, and Wechsler) and the cultural deficit approach ignore the mediating roles of generative individual capabilities, role of significant others, and influence of culture. These approaches assume that differences in performance could be explained by the degree to which an individual possesses the innate intellectual ability or grew up in an enriched environment. In other words, individuals who possess the necessary cognitive skill or who grew up in enriched cognitive environment would perform better than individuals who did not in a simple, direct, and linear fashion. In reality, academic performance is mediated by generative capabilities of individuals, social support received from significant others, and socio-cultural resources that are available to the students and parents.

In order to understand academic performance of adolescents, Bandura (1997) stresses the importance of generative capability known as self-efficacy. He defines self-efficacy as "beliefs in ones capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). He points

outs that “efficacy is a generative capability in which cognitive, emotional, and behavioral subskills must be organized and effectively orchestrated” (p. 37). For example, Collins (1982) found that when children are equated for ability in mathematics (low, medium, or high), those children who had higher efficacy beliefs performed significantly better than those who had lower efficacy beliefs at all three ability levels (cited in Bandura, 1997). Zimmerman, Bandura and Matinez-Pons (1992) found that efficacy for the motivational self-regulated learning increases academic self-efficacy and academic aspiration, which in turn leads students to obtain better academic performance. They also found that the goal and expectation that their parents set for their children raises their children's self-efficacy, which in turn increase their academic performance. Various subscales of efficacy beliefs (i.e., academic efficacy, self-regulation, meet other's expectation and self-assertive) were predictive of academic achievement.

The Korean situation

In order to understand the success of Korean students, we need to examine the psychological and behavioral characteristics of adolescents, influence of their parents, teachers, and friends, and the influence from the larger society. (See Figure 1). The high achievement of Korean students can be traced to the strong sense of relatedness, the belief in effort, hard work and self-discipline, the social support provided by parent, and the coordinated efforts of parents, teachers and governments. At

the cultural level, students, parents, teachers, administrators, government officials, and society as a whole view educational success as the most important goal for adolescents (Park & Kim, 1999a). Second, Koreans believe in effort, discipline, and persistence as the means of achieving the goals (Kim & Park, 1998; Kim, Park, & Park, 1999; Park & Kim, 1999b; Park, Kim, & Tak, 2002). Koreans believe that if they work hard and discipline themselves, they could accomplish their desired objectives. Third, parental sacrifice, support and achievement pressure are essential ingredients in their children's educational success (Park & Kim, 2000). Emotional support in the form of encouragement, praise, and understanding is an important factor. Fourth, Koreans believe that ability can be acquired and personality can be polished through persistent effort, rather than believing that they are innate (Kim & Park, 1998).

In Korea, there is a greater congruence between the values emphasized in the family, school and society than there is in the West. In the West, individualistic values are often in conflict with relatively hierarchical classroom structure, curriculum, and the teacher-student relationship. In addition, students, parents, teachers, and administrators often hold different views about the meaning of success and how to achieve it. The development of one's talent, whether it is in sports, music, and arts, is often emphasized over academic achievement. The diversity of viewpoints among individuals is considered as a strength, but it can lead to conflicts among the students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

In Korea, students, parents, teachers, and administrators unanimously agree that academic success is the primary goal for adolescents. There is a greater level of agreement among all parties about the goals of education and the belief in effort as the means of achieving this goal. This collective agreement among family, school, and society is a key factor in motivating students to attain a high level of achievement. Most importantly, the existing institutional structure forces the adolescents to pass through the narrow gates of the university system in order for them to succeed in their career, whether it is in the academia, applied sciences, art, music, entertainment, or sports.

A series of national, cross-sectional, and longitudinal studies conducted with Korean adolescents reveal the importance of self-efficacy belief, relationship with parents, teachers, and friends, and socio-cultural environment (Kim & Park, 1999; Park, Kim, Chung, Lee, Kwon, & Yang, 2000) confirming the theoretical structure outlined in Figure 1. (See Figure 1). (See Park & Kim, 2003a, 200b, for a review). Self-efficacy played a direct and mediating role on academic achievement. In the structural equation modeling, self-efficacy belief had a direct influence on academic achievement and indirect influence through achievement motivation and number of hours studied. Self-efficacy played a mediating role between positive parent-child relationship and social support received from parents, teacher and friends on the one hand and with academic achievement on the other.

At the relational level, parental achievement

pressure, control, and positive parent-child relationship were correlated with adolescents' self-efficacy and academic achievement. Feeling of respect or indebted to parents increases adolescents' self-efficacy. Positive relations with teachers and friends increase adolescents' self-efficacy. Social support received from parents, teachers, and friends also increase self-efficacy for adolescents.

At the societal level, parental socio-economic status and positive school environment are positively correlated with adolescents self-efficacy and academic achievement. Those students who live in urban areas had higher self-efficacy and academic grade than those who live in rural areas.

Finally, using the indigenous psychology approach, a six-year longitudinal study was conducted to examine the factors that influence academic achievement of Korean students (Park & Kim, 2003b). The role of the parents emerged as the most important factor, followed by the role of teachers and friends. We have found, in a structural equation model, the influence from parents (i.e., social support, achievement pressure, and expectation) had direct effect on students achievement motivation, efficacy beliefs, studying time, which in turn they had direct and indirect effect on academic achievement. A feeling of indebtedness and respect towards their parents increased their achievement motivation and efficacy beliefs, which in turn increased the amount of time they studied. The socio-economic status of the parents affected how much support they provided to their children. These results point to the role of external factors (e.g., socio-economic status of

parents, and the role of significant others, especially parents) and the belief in effort that are responsible for the phenomenal academic achievement of Korean students. Individual factors (e.g., self-esteem, intelligence, personality, intrinsic motivation, ability attribution and internal locus of control) had very little impact on academic achievement.

Discussion

With the adoption of Confucianism in Korea during the fourth century, economic, social, military, and political power became centralized. Success in the national examination became the only viable access to power. Successful applicants were respected for their knowledge, wisdom and self-cultivation, but at the same time, they had access to enormous social, economic, and political power. It also ensured economic security for their parents and subsequent generations. Passing the national examination was also considered to be one of the most important filial duties of a son. Since education was the most viable means for social recognition, mobility, and success, the desire to succeed educationally became deeply ingrained in the minds of Korean people.

Traditionally, learning has been linked to Confucian Classics and literature. Currently, success is defined not in terms of accumulation of wisdom or learning the Confucian classics, but acquiring scientific and technological knowledge obtained through formal education. The primary role of the parents is to educate their children in a highly

competitive world. Traditionally, women did not receive a formal education, but currently both men and women have to be educated to succeed and to raise their children.

Although Korean society has undergone dramatic social, economic, and political changes, the desire to obtain higher education remains as one of the most important priorities in life. Students, parents, teachers, and administrators agree that this is the most important goal. Once an individual has achieved a high level of academic achievement, it brings psychological, relational, social, and economic rewards. The coordinated effort of all the parties involved is one of the reasons for the phenomenal educational success.

In order to succeed in Korea, whether it is academic, artistic, or occupational, people believe that self-regulation is the most effective strategy. In a series of studies examining the nature of achievement in Korea, respondents believed that if they work hard and try their best, they could accomplish their desired goals (Kim & Park, 1998; Kim et al., 1999; Park & Kim, 1999, 2003a, 2003b). This belief in effort has contributed to a phenomenal level of educational and economic achievement. The second most frequent response was social support received from parents. Even adults considered social support from their parents as being very important.

In contrast to the importance in self-regulation and social support, ability, creativity, and environmental factors were mentioned infrequently. Personality was mentioned, but it was for maintaining good social relationship. Overall,

consistent with Confucian philosophy, Korean respondents believe that success is contingent on self-regulation and support received from significant others, and they play down the role of innate ability, creativity, and environmental factors.

At the international level, Korean students are one of the highest achievers. At the national level, not all students do well and obtain the desired benefits. Only a very small minority of students can enter a prestigious university of their choice. The next group can enter a university with lower status, or a university outside a major city, or a junior college. For the majority of adolescents who do not do well in school, due to limited ability, lack of effort, or lack of money to obtain the necessary tutorial education, they flounder within the school system. They have a choice of entering a vocational high school that could provide them with a low salary job, working-class lifestyle, and a social stigma of not having a university degree. They could obtain their education outside Korea if their parents have the financial means to support them. They could drop out of the school system and live in the fringes of society.

Overall, the current educational system provides a very narrow gate to success and alienates the vast majority of students. It does not prepare adolescents to become contributing members of society. They are more likely to create failures, misery, and alienation. Even aspiring artists, musicians, and athletes must also pass through the narrow gates of university. They are forced to take the standardized courses and exams that can stifle their creativity, motivation, and ability.

Although everyone recognizes the problems and limitations of the current educational system, the solutions that are implemented by the government only exacerbate the problem. The solution is usually implemented from top-down, ignoring the wishes and aspiration of the adolescents, parents, and teachers. The solution cannot be discovered by importing Western theories, but it needs to be created through a dialogue among the various parties, through trust building, and by developing collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Although Koreans have high self-regulatory and relational efficacy, collective efficacy among parents, teachers, and administrators in transforming the educational system is very low (Park, 1997).

In contrast to the tight-knit families and close ingroups, there is a lack of generalized trust in Korean society (Kim, 2002; Kim, Helgesen, & Ahn, 2002). In a national survey of Korean respondents, there was a virtual distrust of the National Assembly, political parties, and a very low trust of institutions, including the educational system (Kim, 2002; Kim, et al., 2002). Korean respondents distrust their government and feel that it is not working well. A majority of Koreans feel politically alienated and feel powerless to change the system.

About one hundred years ago, many Koreans believed that the external challenges they faced could be resolved internally, through regulating themselves and supporting family members. They were not prepared for the social changes looming at the 20th century and they were forced to experience the humiliating colonialization imposed by

the Japanese government. Such a pattern of belief still persists in Korea. The current economic, educational, and social crises arose due to a fundamental bias in Korean mentality: The overemphasis on self-regulation, coupled with an emphasis of being in harmony with, or fitting into a given environment. Furthermore, Korean coping style focuses on affective domain, utilizing emotion-focused coping styles rather than problem-focused coping styles (Kim & Park, 1997). Moreover, for most respondents the coping style tends to internal, such as self-regulating negative emotions and avoiding the situation even during the IMF economic crisis (Kim & Park, 2001). These factors are currently limiting Koreans' ability to change and shape the oppressive educational system.

The major weakness that Korean people feel is their inability to control the external environment, especially the educational system. They are more adept in adjusting to a given environment rather than changing it. This may be due to the existing coping strategy that focuses on emotions, self-regulation, and social support among family and ingroup members not in understanding and controlling the societal conditions.

A collective in Korea is an exclusive ingroup and not an inclusive entity (Kim, 1998). In Korea, people maintain harmony with ingroup members and a separate orientation, that of apathy, exploitation, and neglect exists for outgroup members. Such discrimination has historically become the basis of factionalism, regionalism, nepotism, and blocked the creation of a well functioning civil and democratic society. Korean

people invest their energy and hopes in people that they know well (i.e., family members and ingroup members) and they have excluded outgroup members. Specifically, Korean parents, teachers, and administrators have difficulties working with each other in developing an educational system that would benefit everyone and not only their children or students.

The current educational system in Korea is more than a hundreds years old and it is based on the German *Volk* school system. The Japanese colonialists instituted the *Volk* school system (國民學校) in Korea. Although this archaic system has been abandoned in Germany, the system still persists in Korea. Although the name of the primary school has been changed, the centralized, bureaucratic, and authoritarian system continues even today with only minor modifications - all the way from primary schools to universities and even to graduate schools. Like its predecessor in Germany and Japan, the educational system in Korea, is centralized, bureaucratic, and extremely authoritarian. It is virtually impossible for students, parents, teachers, and administrators to expect any degree of transparency, integrity and accountability. The transformation of the Korean educational system remains of the most important project facing Korea in this millennium.

The challenge that the Korean society faces is to create a system in which everyone could participate on an equal footing and in which people have equal access to various opportunities. In Korea, interpersonal connections through regional network, familial ties, and school ties, and even gender,

have excluded competent individuals from full participation. This exclusive membership and emphasis on harmony create homogeneity of thought and actions. This system limits the diversity of ideas that could have been utilized in creatively transforming Korean society.

Korean students are the top achievers in international studies, but at what cost? The intense competition elevates the overall academic achievements for Korean students in the international arena. For those who succeed, they are allowed enter prestigious universities. Once they enter a prestigious university, their educational training, investment, and skills flounder in a noncompetitive, degenerative, and pleasure-seeking environments (Kim, 2004). When they enter a university, Korean students are the highest performing achievers in the world. By the time they graduate, their performance and skills are near at the bottom among economically developed countries. Many students who are frustrated with a lack of stimulating and creative academic environment travel abroad to obtain tertiary education.

In modern society, democracy provides the means of building collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Kim et al., 2002). The greatest strength of democracy is that it allows greatest number of people to participate in the decision-making process. It is the role of the leaders to allow diverse opinions to emerge and integrate this information into concrete policies and programs. Democracy is a collective process in which citizens participate in the creative process. It provides us with a sense of ownership

and accomplishment. Political discussion and participants are essential ingredients. The process of developing, maintaining, and creating a peaceful, democratic state in which human rights, dignity, and ideas are respected must be an ongoing process. The basic ideals of democracy are not like natural laws and they are not self-evidently true. Every time a child is born into a community, it is our responsibility to articulate, communicate, and teach the basic ideas and skills.

We must also allow adolescents to participate in the building and renewal process. However, Korean society does not allow our adolescents to participate in the key democratic process of voting until the age of 19. Moreover, democratic ideals are often not practiced in family, school, and companies. In Korea, paternalistic, relational and emotional bonds often supersede the development of rational and democratic decision-making. Although strong emotional and relational bond are necessary in family and close ingroup relationships, a separate, rational, and democratic decision-making and skills need to be used in public situations.

In Korea, role-based paternalism has been extended to the public settings and it had led to dysfunctional outcomes (e.g., corruption, nepotism and factionalism). Koreans need to adopt a dual system to deal with the complexity of modern life: a role-based system for families and tight ingroups (親屬) and a principle-based merit system for public settings (公). In order for a fully functioning civil society to develop in Korea, Koreans need to learn to build and support viable institutions that would allow people with equal access and to be treated

equally based on accepted principles and standards.

This idea is inherent in Korean philosophy of separating the private (私) from public (公) and having two separate rules for inside and outside. A dual system exists in Scandinavia, respecting individual rights and diversity and at the same time providing social security and welfare to all people. As such, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden boast the highest quality of life in the world. Koreans have succeeded in developing a dynamic and high achieving ingroups (私), but we have failed to developing viable public institutions (公). It is necessary to develop a functional civil society to balance the strong ingroups: A society in which diversity is celebrated and in which everyone, including adolescents, are allowed to participate and contribute to the building process.

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한국의 청소년 문화, 사회화 과정과 교육적 성취: 토착적, 심리적, 문화적 맥락에서의 분석

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이 연구에서는 한국의 청소년 문화와 교육적 성취를 이해하기 위한 이론적이고 개념적인 틀을 모색하고자 하였다. 이를 위해 선행연구의 개관을 통해, 다음과 같은 여섯 가지 측면에서의 논의를 시도하였다. 첫째, 문화심리학과 청소년 문화를 접근하기 위한 연구의 모형을 제시하였다. 둘째, 전통적 가족 구조와 부모의 역할에 대해 살펴보고, 이것이 한국 사회의 현대화 과정에서 어떻게 변화하였는가를 검토하였다. 셋째, 한국에서의 사회화 과정과 부모자녀 관계를 살펴보았다. 넷째, 교육적인 성취와 한계를 설명하기 위해 발전되어 온 서양의 이론들을 검토하였다. 다섯째, 한국 학생들의 교육적 성취에 영향을 미치는 요인들을 제시하였다. 마지막으로 청소년들에게 부과된 중앙집권적이고 표준화된 엄격한 교육 제도의 영향을 논의하였다. 매우 통제된 중앙집권적 관료주의는 청소년의 교육적 기회와 직업에서의 기회를 제한하고 있으며, 한국 청소년의 증가하는 폭력, 비행, 및 집단 따돌림 현상에도 영향을 미치고 있다. 건전한 청소년 문화의 육성과 미래 한국 사회의 발전을 위해, 다양한 생각과 태도 및 행동을 수용하는 시민 사회를 고무하고, 동시에 인간관계에서 건강하고 강한 유대를 형성하며 유지해야 할 필요가 있음이 시사되었다.

주요어 : 청소년 문화, 교육적 성취, 사회화 과정, 토착 문화적 분석, 한국 문화