Teacher Policies in Korea

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OUTLINE

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I. Introduction

Korea at a Glance

- Area: 99.6 Sq. km (107th)
- Population: 49 million (26th)
- Economy: World 13th Economy
  - GNI per Capita: US$ 21,530 (FY08) ← US$ 100 in 1950s
  - OECD member economy in 1996 / OECD DAC member in 2009 (1st DAC member which was recipient country)
  - Broadband access per capita (1st), Home PC diffusion (3rd)
  - Car manufacturing (5th), ship-building (2nd), semiconductor production (1st), mobile phone, LCD TV, etc.
Korea's Education System (2008)

- Formal education: 6-3-3-4 ladder system
  - Primary(6) – Middle(3) – High school(3) – Universities/Colleges(4) / 9 years of compulsory education
  - Primary & Secondary: 11 K schools, 7.6 M students, 404 K teachers
  - Univ/College: 405 HEIs, 3.5 M Students, 73 K teachers
- Non-formal education & training
  - public/private job institution; private tutoring institution; adult education centers; in-plant training institution, etc.

Overview of Korea's Educational Development

- Sequential expansion of access to education from primary, secondary and higher education corresponding well to the workforce needs for economic development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1960s</th>
<th>Labor Intensive Light Manufacturing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>primary &amp; Secondary Edu.</td>
<td>1970s~1980s</td>
<td>Capital Intensive Heavy-Chemical Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational-Technical high schools</td>
<td>1980s~present</td>
<td>Electronics, High-tech Knowledge Industry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Expansion of higher Edu. | 1980s~present | Electronics, High-tech Knowledge Industry |
Quantitative expansion of education

- School Enrolment Rate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary School</th>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>97.0</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>100.5</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quality of K-12 Education

- PISA 2006 Korean Student’s Results
  - 1ST in Reading, 4th in Math, 11th in Science
  - subjects of study: 400k eighth graders(age 15) from 57 countries including 30 OECD countries.

- TIMMS 2007 Korean Student’s Results
  - 2ND in Math, 4th in Science
  - subjects of study: 230k eighth graders and tenth graders from 50 countries including 12 OECD countries.
II. Current Status of Teachers in Korea

Number of Teachers (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Ratio of students to teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>5,814</td>
<td>3,672,267</td>
<td>172,193</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>3,089</td>
<td>2,043,204</td>
<td>108,918</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>2,250</td>
<td>1,925,986</td>
<td>123,252</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>11,153</td>
<td>7,641,457</td>
<td>404,363</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Certification System

Principal
↑
Principal Certificate
↑
Vice Principal
↑
Vice Principal Certificate
↑
1st Grade Teacher
↑
1st Grade Teacher Certificate
↑
2nd Grade Teacher
↑
2nd Grade Teacher Certificate

Teacher’s Working Conditions (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. Student per class</th>
<th>Teaching hours per week</th>
<th>No. of computers per teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle school</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic High school</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voc./Tech. High school</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Legal Status and Position

- Public school teachers are civil servant. Their rights and status are protected by education laws.
  - Private school teachers are also treated similar to Public teachers
- Teachers have guaranteed tenure until they reach the mandatory retirement age of 62.
- An adequate amount of vacation is provided and due to fixed work hours, chances for overtime work are small.
- Teachers at public schools are required to move to a different school every 5 years in general.

III. Main Teacher Policies in Korea
1. Initial Education (2008)

- Primary: 6k teachers educated per year
  - National Univ. of Education(G1-6): 11
  - Korea National Univ. of Education(K-12): 1
  - Ehwa Women’s Univ.(private): 1
- Secondary: 30k teachers educated per year
  - Teacher’s colleges: 43
  - Dept. of Education &Teacher Education Courses in Comprehensive Universities: 55 & 160
  - Graduate schools of education: 136

1. Initial Education (cont.)

- Primary school teachers are exclusively educated at 12 national universities across the country (except 1 private university). They had been 2-year colleges until 1981 when they were upgraded to 4-year universities.
- Secondary school teachers have to take at least 42 credit hours of major subjects and 20 credit hours of pedagogy subjects in order to get teacher certificate.
2. Recruitment and Employment

- Pubic schools: City/provincial superintendents select teachers from those who hold teacher's certificates, through Teacher employment examination.
- The exam tests 1) subject matter knowledge and pedagogy, 2) teaching demonstration, and 3) an in-depth interview.
- Private schools: Individual schools employ teachers through autonomously chosen methods such as open competition and/or interview.

2. Recruitment and Employment (cont.)

- Since the balance between supply and demand of primary school teachers is tightly controlled, most of the prospective primary teachers are hired and the top 5% of high school graduates are admitted to the universities.
- However, the prevailing over supply of pre-service secondary teachers makes it difficult to attract young talents to the teaching profession. only 20% of the secondary pre-service teachers can be a school teachers.
3. In-Service Training

- In-service training programs: 1) new teacher training 2) qualification training for attaining higher (1st grade teacher, vice principal, etc) or specific qualifications (counselors, etc.) and 3) general training for professional development (knowledge and skills).
- Training institutions: 1) 14 central government institute 2) 72 university-affiliated institute 3) 16 provincial government institute and 4) 61 institutes operated through distance education, 5) around 1,200 private training institutes.

4. Compensation

- Single salary system: teachers with identical qualification and career background are entitled to the same amount of pay, irrespective of other parameters such as educational background, working hours, etc.
- In 2003, salary payable to new teachers in Korea, in terms of PPP (Purchasing Power Parity), was $27,214, the 13th highest among 30 OECD member nations. Salary of teachers who had served for 15 years was $46,640, the 3rd highest.
5. Promotion

- Ranks of teachers break down into teachers, vice principals, and principals. Competition among teachers for promotion is very intense (financial compensation + social status).

- Teacher promotion is decided based on 1) length of service (45%), 2) teacher evaluation by principal and vice-principal (40%), 3) results of in-service training (15%), and 4) extra credits. Extra credits are given if the teacher has an experience in special school, research school, and school in remote areas.

6. Evaluation

- Current teacher evaluation was criticized by “promotion-purpose teacher evaluation”. Recently, new system of teacher evaluation system has been launched

  1) the assessment program aims to focus on and develop teacher's ability by providing feedback on the professional activities of the teacher.

  2) it assesses not only teachers but also vice principals and principals to improve both teacher's teaching ability and school manager’s managerial ability.
6. Evaluation (cont.)

3) It employs multi-dimensional assessment and involves principals, vice principals and peer teachers as assessors, parents and students as satisfaction feedback sources, using checklists and subjective assessment questionnaires.

4) The results of the evaluation is provided to the individual teachers for identifying weak points of their professional activities. Teachers who have a severe problem in his/her capacity to teaching can be subjects of disciplinary punishment, and eventually ruled out from school.

IV. Analysis of Features and Implications
1. Strengths & Weaknesses

1-1 Strengths
- Positive image of teaching profession and teachers according to tradition
- Abundant pool of young talents wishing to become teachers
- Stable job security due to mandatory retirement age
- Relatively more favorable compensation and treatment
- Consistent commuting hours relative to other jobs and autonomous work atmosphere
- Adequate vacation and leave system (paid vacation)
- Advanced ICT infrastructure and school fixtures to help teachers prepare for class
- Low turnover rate of teachers (2~3%)

1-2 Weaknesses
- Compensation and promotion structure driven by seniority rather than ability and performance fails to provide adequate incentives for teaching effectiveness
- Excessive number of students per class and insufficient administrative staff adding to teacher’s workload
- Too many initial teacher education institutions leading to oversupply of secondary school teachers
- Individual school’s needs not fully incorporated into teacher employment process
- It takes too long to be promoted to managerial positions such as vice principal and principal and competition is too intense
2. Implications for developing countries

2-1 Strong Drive of the Government in Teacher Policy
   - Teacher policies are developed and enforced at the initiative of a central education administration authority, namely the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST).
   - Such features are deemed to be effective in building framework to ensure a flexible supply of teachers in consideration of prevailing needs and national demands.
   - It also enhances equality across the nation in relation to recruitment and deployment of high quality teachers.

2-2 Gradual Shift of Policy Priority from Supply Increase to Quality Assurance
   - At first, the teacher recruitment policy of Korea simply focused on meeting the growing demands for teachers to improve public access to learning opportunities.
   - It was only in the mid 1980s that serious discussion began on policies to improve the quality of teachers and enhance their professional development.
   - Korean government attempts to achieve two different objectives-increasing the supply of teachers and improving their quality-in phases rather than concurrently.
2. Implications for developing countries (cont.)

2-3 Policy Initiatives for Effective Education Finance

- To have achieved universal secondary education, Korea was extremely strategic and decided to both allow and encourage the private sector to play a major role in providing secondary education.
- This sharing of the financial costs of education enabled the Korean government to have more funds to pay school teachers well, to build the infrastructure for public schools.
- Another strategic decision was to limit the quantitative increase in the number of teachers which also contributed to Korea being able to pay its teachers well.

Want to know more about the Korean educational policy?

- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (www.mest.go.kr)
- Korean Educational Development Institute (www.kedi.re.kr)
- Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (www.krivet.re.kr)
- Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (www.kice.re.kr)
- Korea Education and Research Information Service (www.keris.or.kr)