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Equalities in Educational Outcomes in Korea, Sweden and Norway

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This is the result of my own work unless otherwise stated.

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Chapter 1: Research Question

Why does Korea have the least educational inequality in terms of academic attainment as compared to Sweden and Norway? Is this the case with other educational outcomes, namely students' satisfaction?

Introduction

A UNICEF report (2002) *A League Table of Educational Disadvantage in Rich Nations: Innocenti Report Card* has shown that Korea ranked first on the league table with the least educational disadvantage, Sweden ranked ninth and Norway ranked seventeenth amongst the 24 nations which were being studied (see Appendix 1). Educational disadvantage was defined as inequality of educational outcomes in terms of academic achievement in the report. The Innocenti Report Card suggests that children in Korea have a higher chance of being educated to a reasonable standard, and a lower chance of falling a long way behind the average, than a child born in Denmark or Norway. It was also found that the percentage of 15 year-olds judged "*unable to solve basic reading tasks*" varies from under 7 per cent in Korea to more than 20 per cent in Denmark and Norway. The percentage considered "*unable to apply basic mathematical knowledge*" varies from 10 per cent in Korea to 45 per cent or more in Denmark and Norway. *Reading for change* (OECD, 2002) has also shown similar results: in Korea, the range of scores from the 90th to the 10th percentile on the combined reading scale is around 175 points, just under two and a half proficiency levels; in Sweden the range of scores is around 240 points; in Norway the range of scores is around 270 points.

It is puzzling as to why Sweden and Norway have relatively higher educational inequalities in term of academic achievement. Nordic welfare states (with the exception of Finland in this case) are deemed to be social democratic countries where universalism and equality of circumstances are the ethos of these nations. Contrary to one's logical deduction, Sweden and Norway are doing worse in terms of educational disadvantage as

compared to liberal welfare states like Canada, Australia or the United Kingdom and East Asian welfare states like Korea and Japan (See Appendix 1).

The UNICEF (2002) report seeks also to explain the cross-national differences. It analysed the relationship between the level of educational disadvantage in a country and educational spending per pupil, pupil teacher ratios and or degree of income inequality.

Table 1: Resources for Education and Gini Index in Korea, Sweden and Norway

	<i>Korea</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Norway</i>
<i>Pupil / teacher ratio (primary)</i>	30	10	11
<i>Public expenditure on education as % of GDP</i>	4.6	7.0	7.7
<i>Gini Index for income¹</i>	31.6	24.3	26.1

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2004.

From Table 1, it would seem that Korea, as compared to Sweden and Norway, due to having the highest pupil/ teacher ratio, lowest public expenditure on education and highest income inequality would have the highest level of educational disadvantage. However, the contrary was true- Korea has the least educational inequality. The Report Card found that there is no simple relationship between the level of educational disadvantage in a country and educational spending per pupil, pupil teacher ratios and or degree of income inequality.

The Innocenti Report Card proceeded to suggest that in all OECD countries, educational achievement remains strongly related to the occupations, education and economic status of the student's parents, though the strength of that relationship varies from country to country. Indeed, evidence from other studies like Marks' (2005) study *Cross-National*

¹ The Gini coefficient is a measure of inequality of a distribution of income. It is defined as a ratio with values between 0 and 1: 0 corresponds to perfect income equality (i.e. everyone has the same income) and 1 corresponds to perfect income inequality (i.e. one person has all the income, while everyone else has zero income). The Gini index is the Gini coefficient expressed as a percentage, and is equal to the Gini coefficient multiplied by 100. The Gini coefficient is often used as an income inequality metric.

Differences and Accounting for Social Class Inequalities in Education and Shavit & Blossfeld (1993) *Persistent Inequality: Changing Educational Attainment in Thirteen Countries* have shown similar results. Further, from Marks' study, it was evident that the strength of that relationship varies from country to country- that effects of parental class on reading achievement (PISA 2000) has the least effect in Korea as compared to Sweden and Norway. Korean students whose parents are in upper service jobs score 23 points more than students whose parents are in semi-skilled/ unskilled jobs whilst, in Sweden and Norway, the performance gap is much greater- 67.4 points and 65.8 points more respectively. The R^2 values² also suggest that the relationship of parental class to reading achievement is weakest in Korea ($R^2 = .03164$), Sweden ($R^2 = .06641$) and Norway ($R^2 = .04551$). This reflects that there is least effect of social class disparity on academic achievement in Korea as compared to Sweden and Norway. It is an interesting puzzle as to why there is least effect of social class disparity on academic achievement in Korea. This, as has been mentioned before, is the main puzzle that this paper seeks to shed light on.

UNICEF (2002) stated that inequality in learning achievement begins at an early age and attempts to mitigate educational disadvantage need to begin even before a child starts school through good quality early childhood care and education (ECEC). Studies of early intervention programmes have suggested that the early years are crucial for children's development and have important implications for children's future well-being and life chances. Stemming from this, it is hypothesized that Korea may have a more established and comprehensive ECEC as compared to Sweden and Norway, which have mitigated educational inequality. ECEC programmes in these three countries will be described and analyzed in the Chapter 2 of this paper in order to verify if Korea, has indeed a better ECEC.

One other possible explanation as to why Korea has least educational inequality as compared to Sweden and Norway is that Korea has a culture that values education much

² R^2 values provide a good indication of the strength of the relationship- the higher the R^2 value the stronger the relationship.

more than other cultures. Another possibility (which UNICEF did not mention) is that greater social capital could have contributed to less educational inequality in Korea as compared to Sweden and Norway. These hypotheses are further described and evaluated in Chapters 3 and 4 of this paper.

Also, it is argued in this paper that it is too narrow a view to define educational outcomes purely in terms of academic achievement as is the case of the Innocenti Report Card. This paper recognises students' satisfaction as an important aspect of educational outcome and therefore encourages equality of educational outcomes to include the aspect of equality in terms of students' satisfaction too. Chapter 5 will further describe students' satisfaction levels in Korea and Norway.

Focus

This paper is an extension of the Innocenti Report Card 4 which seeks to explain why Korea has the least educational inequality in terms of academic achievement as compared to Sweden and Norway. Chapter 2 will consider UNICEF's hypothesis that early childhood education and care could have contributed to the case; the values and attitudes of different cultures will be examined in Chapter 3; and social capital theory will be presented in Chapter 4. This paper also examines and argues the case for measuring educational outcome in terms of students' satisfaction in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2: Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

ECEC is a global term encompassing all arrangements providing care and education for children under compulsory school age, regardless of setting, funding, opening hours or programme content. ECEC includes also out-of-school provision (OSP) for young children up to their 12th birthday (See Glossary for the definitions of different types of children's services referred to in this chapter). When referring to government policy, ECEC also encompasses parental leave (with a replacement income) and family-friendly policies, as these policies have a major impact on early childhood provision, promote the involvement of parents with their children, and assist towards gender equality. "Education" and "care" are combined in the phrase to underline that services for young children should combine care, developmental and learning opportunities, and that education and care should not exist apart in approaches to young children. An alternative term is *pedagogical service* as used in Nordic and Central Europe, which denotes a service for young children that combines care, upbringing and learning. (The term raises some difficulties in English, as the word "pedagogical" is understood more narrowly as referring to "teaching" or "teaching methods" – see note on "pedagogy" below.) Another term growing in popularity, particularly in the United States, is *early childhood education* (ECE), used in an effort to promote learning in all services and as a claim on universal services.

Table 2: Funding for Early Childhood Education and Care, Female Labour Market Participation and Parental Leaves in Korea, Sweden and Norway.

	Korea	Sweden	Norway
Social expenditure	6.1% of GDP	28.9% of GDP	23.9% GDP
Funding of kindergartens	0.16% of GDP ³	Over 1.9% of GDP in 2004 ⁴ .	1.7% of GDP ⁵ .
Average costs to parents	78% of enrolled children are in the private sector where parents pay 100% of the costs.	Parental fees cover about 9% of costs in pre-school, amounting to about 2% of average income.	For children 0-6 years, parental fees are now capped at no more than 20% of costs.
Female labour force participation⁶:	53.9% of women are employed, 11.9% of whom are in part-time.	76.6% of women are employed, 20.8% of whom are in part-time.	75.7% of women are employed, of whom 33.2% are in part-time.
Labour force participation rate of women with children under 6 years	Low by OECD standards, with national statistics indicating that a sharp drop in female employment until children are reared.	76.6%, of those, 20.8% work part-time.	65.0%, of those, 35.0% work part-time.
Remunerated maternity, paternity and parental leave	A system of limited-allowance and parental leave for birth (3 months of maternity leave) and child-rearing (0-5 years).	480 days of parental leave to be divided between the two parents. 390 days are paid at 80% of earnings, the remaining 90 days at a flat rate.	43 weeks at 100% of earnings or 53 weeks of leave paid at 80% of earnings. 5 weeks leave for fathers are also available.

Source: *STARTING STRONG II: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE*, OECD 2006.

³ (0.05% public and 0.11% private); Expenditure on kindergartens corresponds to 2% of the education budget

⁴ Funding per child in centred-based ECEC is second highest among OECD countries (after Denmark)

⁵ This figure does not include Child Benefit which remunerates parents who care for their child at home.

⁶ Statistics are from OECD, *Employment Outlook*, 2005).

Korea

Access and provision

ECEC provision in Korea is predominantly private. In the child care sector covering children from birth to elementary school entrance (at age 6), private services constitute 93.9% of provision. Approximately 21% of children 0-6 attend child care settings. These private services, both kindergarten and child care, are mainly run by not-for-profit or for-profit entities even if they legally appear as not-for-profit entities. In the kindergarten sector catering for children from 3-6 years, 72% of the classes, 79% of the teachers and 78% of the enrolled children fall within the private kindergarten sector. In rural areas only, public kindergartens form over 50% of the enrolment. Although 59% of 3- to 6-year-olds and 10% of 0- to 2-year-olds in Korea make use of ECEC services, the total percentage of public child care provision and kindergarten is relatively low.

Rates of provision

0-3 years: Approximately 19.6% of infants and toddlers attend child care facilities. Of this group, 13% attend public child care facilities and 86.9% attend private centres. There is high, unmet demand for child care places for children between 0-3 years.

3-5 years: Services are increasingly differentiated by age. Those children of age 3-4 who access services predominately receive child care programmes. Some 44.9% of 3-year-olds are in child care settings with a further 14.6% in kindergartens. Most of these children are in private facilities. At age 4, kindergarten participation increases to 29.7% of this age cohort and 36.7% in child care. A third of 4-year-olds do not obtain any place, although they may attend *hakwon* sports centres and other programmes.

5-6 years: At age 5, 78.9% of children are enrolled either in child care (31.7%), or kindergarten (47.2%).

Children from low-income families

Although priority is given in cost-support structures to low-income families, this type of support does not alleviate the burden on parents who cannot find suitable places for their children. Approximately 18.8 % of low-income families in 2005 received some support

to purchase a place, having met strict criteria based on the number of family members, total income and total assets. Many kindergartens and child care facilities view government funding for a low-income family as insufficient to cover the cost of providing a place, so may give priority to the child of a family who can pay fees and extras.

Quality: Licensing and regulatory regimes

Kindergartens function under the Primary and Secondary Education Act (2002) and the Early Childhood Education Promotion Act (2001) and child care centres function under the Child Care Act (2001). However, since 1997 Korea has been under great pressure to rapidly expand its ECEC services. As a result, the system – with the exception of the public kindergartens – works on reported activity rather than through licensing and accreditation. The licensing of centres has become a simple process of notification whereby new child care services can start up by simply reporting their opening to the local child care office. Many private providers are said to have facilities that supply a smaller amount of space per child although public and private centres operate under the same legal requirements. With more focus being now given to high quality, there is some consideration at present to reverting to a more focused system of licensing. Systematic external evaluation of curriculum and pedagogy is limited in practice to kindergartens, which benefit from a school inspection system. Visits are made by local area superintendents twice per year.

Funding

Expenditure on pre-primary educational institutions (kindergartens only) as a percentage of GDP is 0.16%. 31.8% of this expenditure (OECD, 2006) came from public sources and 68.2% from private sources including 65.1% from parental contributions. 2.2% of total expenditure on education is allocated to pre-primary whereas 4.8% of the children are enrolled at this level of education (OECD, *Education at a Glance*, 2005). The OECD Background Report for Korea (2003) indicated that in 2002, government support for early childhood education and child care amounted to 44.6% (approximately 30% of this allocation derives from central government funds and the remainder from the sixteen

local authorities) of the total costs of ECEC, this allocation being 0.13% of GDP. Local authorities have direct taxation powers, and obtain proportional augmentation of their funding from the national government.

Sweden

Access and provision

By law, all children 1-12 years have a right to pre-school education. Most pre-school provision is provided directly by municipalities in day care centres. Provision through municipal, family day care covers about 12% of children, especially in rural areas. Private daycare provided by parental and personnel co-operatives, churches, corporations and other providers exist also for 13% of children. Except for parental fees, private provision is funded by the municipalities and contractually, is expected to meet the basic standards of public child care, although without the obligation to follow the Pre-school Curriculum. Currently, parental contributions to ECEC are capped at 11% of costs, and are waived for families in economic difficulties.

Rates of provision

0-1 years: Few children under the age of 18 months are in ECEC, due to the parental leave system (480 days of parental leave to be divided between the two parents. 390 days are paid at 80% of earnings, the remaining 90 days at a flat rate. 60 days are reserved exclusively for mothers, 60 days for fathers, and the remaining days divided between them as they choose. 35% of fathers take their 60 days, much the highest proportion in OECD countries). Almost all children are cared for by a parent (generally, the mother) in the home. Children have a right to a place in an ECEC centre from their first birthday. In general, children begin in day care at from about 15-18 months.

1-6 years: 45% of 1- to 2-year-olds and 86% of 2- to 3-year-olds are in ECEC services. For 3- to 4-year-olds participation rises to 91% and for 5- to 6-year-olds about 96%. Family day care caters for about 7% of children 1-6 years. Like centre-based ECEC and accredited out-of-school (leisure time) care services, family day care is in operation full-time for the working year.

6-7 years: 91% of children attend the pre-school class, with another 7% already in compulsory school (age 7 and above). Over 50% of children 3-12 years are enrolled in leisure-time centres, participation peaking to about 75% for children from 6-9 years. In addition, “open preschools” (drop-in centres) offer a service to children and families (often low-income, immigrant) for a few hours every day.

Children from low-income families

The child poverty level, after taxes and transfers, is 4.2%- the lowest in OECD countries. Targeting low-income groups is therefore not a focus at this level, although additional educators are often supplied to centres receiving more low income or immigrant children.

Quality: Regulation and monitoring of services

Regulation and monitoring of ECEC services are the responsibility of one central agency, the National Agency for Education or *Skolverket*. Family day care, centre-based care and out-of-school care services all are required to be registered, undergo annual reviews, follow national curriculum guidelines and incorporate in-service training. Pedagogical management and supervision is a normal part of quality monitoring processes. ECEC services (for children 1-5) have similar regulations to schools, including annual quality reporting. National indicators on ECEC are developed and monitored by the National Agency for Education, but rather than relying solely on regulation, *Skolverket* publishes yearly reports on ECEC services, including analyses of child-staff ratios and other quality indicators.

Funding

The funding of pre-school services in 2004 amounted to 1.9% of GDP. Funding per child in centred-based ECEC is second highest among OECD countries (after Denmark), reaching on average in 2004, USD 12 097 per child.

Norway

Access and provision

The operating hours and annual duration of services vary according to service type. Some 47% of *barnehager* (kindergartens) are public (municipal) and cater for 57% of children using the service. Private *barnehager* are more numerous but smaller, and cater for 43% of children, but provision in private kindergartens is growing, and by 2005 was the majority provider.

Rates of provision

0-1 years: Care is predominantly home care by parents. Only 3% of children are in centre-based care.

1-3 years: Based on Norwegian government survey data, 42% of this group are cared for full-time by parents and 48% are cared for in ECEC regulated services. Given the high participation of mothers in the workforce, it may be presumed that some parents are choosing to use family and informal child-minding. The goal of the Ministry is to have full coverage for pre-school children by the year 2006.

3-6 years: 88% of all children in this age group are cared for in ECEC services.

Out-of-school provision is generally available for children aged 6-12 years. The highest take-up is by children aged 6 years in the first year of school, 68.2% of whom access out-of-school care. The overall percentage take-up for 6-10 year olds is 53%.

Children from low-income families

The child poverty rate in Norway is 3.4% after taxes and transfers, compared to the OECD average of 11.2%. Because of effective redistribution policies, targeting low-income groups is not a focus for ECEC policy although additional educators may be supplied to centres receiving more migrant or low-income children. The *barnehage* is considered to play an important role in terms of preventive child welfare. In cases of children living in at-risk circumstances, places are fully funded by municipalities. Support is also provided to enable *barnehager* to accommodate children with disabilities, children from low-income families and bilingual children.

Quality: Licensing and regulatory regimes

Municipalities are responsible for licensing family day care and ECEC services and must ensure that all services are registered and undergo annual health and safety checks. Ownership, purpose of the institution (*e.g.* the particular pedagogical or religious purpose), criteria for access, fees, opening hours and physical spaces are considered as part of licensing. Municipalities have responsibility for supervision and authorisations.

Funding

Total expenditure on ECEC amounted in 2004 to 1.7% of GDP for children aged 0-6 years old. In 2004 Parliament set a parental fee of NOK 2 750/month (or EUR 326/ USD 397) for an ordinary place in ECEC comprising a full day or 41 hours or more per week. Part-time places are charged in proportion. Since 2005, fees should not exceed 20% of the cost of services – at the moment a maximum of EUR 280 per month. The costs to the State are as follows: the unit cost for a child under 3 amounts to EUR 9 773 per annum; for a child between 3-6 years, EUR 5 355 per year (Moser, personal communication, 2005). These costs, in so far as we can judge, do not include the Cash Benefit home care allowance or the 20% or so of fees that parents contribute. In centres, a separate charge is levied for meals. Municipalities have the duty to provide funding to their own services and to private providers. They also provide subsidies for additional places for families where more than one child is in ECEC, even when the children participate in different ECEC services within the municipality. In addition to family allowances and lone parent (22% of families) allowances, all parents are allowed tax deductions to cover care and kindergarten costs. There is also a Cash Benefit scheme that provides a cash grant to a parent who cares for a child at home (the intention of the policy), or who uses part-time home and part-time regulated ECEC, or who places a child in an ECEC setting that does not receive state grants (*e.g.* with a child minder or relative).

Analysis

The Korean government invests much less (0.16% of GDP) compared to Sweden (1.9% of GDP) and Norway (1.7% of GDP). The Korean government also provides a much lower level of ECEC services and benefits – 78% of enrolled children are in the private sector where parents pay 100% of the costs, whereas in Sweden parental fees cover about 9% of costs in pre-school, and in Norway parental fees are now capped at no more than 20% of costs. Take-up rate of regulated ECEC services in Korea is comparatively lower (children 0-3 years: 19.6% in Korea; 65% in Sweden and 48% in Norway; children 3-6: 68.3% in Korea; 94% in Sweden and 88% in Norway). Sweden and Norway are shown to be more supportive of ECEC with the generous remuneration of parental leaves. These data clearly illustrate that Sweden and Norway have more comprehensive coverage for ECEC for their children as compared to Korea. This does not appear to support the hypothesis that Korea has least educational inequality due to the success of provision of ECEC and casts doubt on one of the conclusions in the UNICEF (2002) report which stated that inequality in learning achievement begins at an early age and attempts to mitigate educational disadvantage need to begin even before a child starts school through good quality early childhood care and education. This suggests that there are other explanations which resulted in Korea faring well in having the lowest levels of educational inequality of the three countries studied.

Chapter 3: Value of Education

3.1 Students' Subjective Well-being and Life Satisfaction Research

The yearning for happiness has been considered one of the primary human drives. The term 'happiness' is commonly operationalized as subjective well-being (Diener et al., 2002). Subjective well-being, also referred to as perceived quality of life, is comprised of three components: positive affect (pleasant feelings and moods), negative affect (bothersome emotions like guilt and anger) and life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is defined as a cognitive, global appraisal that people make when considering their contentment with their life as a whole *or* in regard to specific domains of life such as family, environment, friends and self. Life satisfaction is the more stable component, and thus the indicator most frequently included in studies of youths' perceived quality of life (Park & Huebner, 2005).

The motives for studying and understanding the relationship between school and children's subjective well-being are manifold. First, mental health professionals working in schools recognize that students face increased pressure to succeed academically (Park & Huebner, 2005). Academic success is often measured via objective indicators like standardized assessment scores, with little attention given to subjective indicators that correspond better to global functioning, such as psychological well-being. Thus, the impact of changes in schools which is meant to maximize academic performance has not been evaluated with reference to a more important goal – students' quality of life.

Second, evidence of an established relationship between academic functioning and students' life satisfaction would underscore the impact of school on children's overall development, highlighting the importance of viewing students as more than just learners (for example, it is important for teachers to view the students as valuable individuals and for teachers to develop joyful and supportive relationships with them and ensure that there are harmonious and supportive relationships between the students).

Third, knowledge of which aspects of school functioning are most related to students' life satisfaction might ensure interventions are appropriately targeted. Research has documented many benefits for individuals with high life satisfaction. Such benefits include physical health, mental health, good interpersonal relationships, and educational and vocational success. Support for a relationship between children's life satisfaction and schooling can be surmised from research on the happy-productive worker hypothesis. This premise purports that 'happy' workers demonstrate higher levels of job performance than 'unhappy' workers. In one longitudinal investigation of management professionals, initial levels of psychological well-being were found to significantly predict job performance (work facilitation, goal emphasis and team building) two years later, even after employees' initial levels of job performance and job satisfaction were controlled for statistically (Wright et al., 2002). Cross-sectional research has yielded much larger correlations between general psychological wellbeing and job performance than between job satisfaction and job performance (Wright and Cropanzano, 2000). Since the importance of gainful employment in the adulthood years can be likened to the centrality of schooling during childhood, a probable link between global life satisfaction and academic achievement is a possible extension of the happy-productive worker hypothesis. A recent longitudinal study of adolescents has also found that high life satisfaction functions as a buffer against the impact of stressful life events on developing psychopathology. Given the link between high life satisfaction and important adaptive benefits, research on the perceived levels and correlates of life satisfaction among children and youth should lead to a more comprehensive understanding of their psychological well-being and better intervention efforts to promote their optimal development.

Systematic research on the determinants and outcomes of children's life satisfaction did not begin until the early 1990s, following the development of psychometrically sound self-report scales appropriate for children and youth. Scales include the Students Life

Satisfaction Scale (SLSS: Huebner, 1991)⁷ and the Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS: Huebner, 1994)⁸. The most recent advancement is the Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS: Seligson et al., 2003)⁹.

To date, most studies of children's life satisfaction as assessed by validated self-report instruments have examined the role of family functioning and intrapersonal variables such as temperament and cognitions (Huebner et al., 2004). Well-designed studies of life satisfaction in relation to schooling are less prevalent, despite the immense amount of time children spend at school and the extraordinary focus on education during this developmental period. Given the preliminary state of the literature on the relationship between school and subjective well-being, it is reasonable to also consider those studies with measurement limitations (e.g. one-item indicators, composite scales created post-hoc through existing items in a database) in synthesizing what is known.

3.2 The Case of Korea as compared to U.S.: High Value on School Satisfaction

Oishi *et al.* (1999) provided a framework for understanding the relationship between culture and subjective well-being. According to this model, individual differences in life satisfaction judgments are related to salient value orientations. That is, people evaluate the importance of a domain (family, friends, school, self or living environment) for their life satisfaction higher when that domain is central to their core values. Thus, culture may determine the relative importance of various life domains to global life satisfaction by influencing an individual's values. For example, for people from Western cultures such as the United States, where independence and personal feelings and interests are highly

⁷ A 7-item measure of global life satisfaction. The items were designed to assess life satisfaction without regard to specific domains. It includes items such as "My life is going well." Higher values indicate higher levels of global life satisfaction. Reliability and validity are acceptable (Bender, 1997).

⁸ A 40-item measure that taps youth's satisfaction in five specific domains of life (family, friends, school, self, living environment). It also yields a total life satisfaction score (sum of responses to all items). Respondents were asked to select one of six options (*strongly disagree, moderately disagree, mildly disagree, mildly agree, moderately agree, strongly agree*) for each question. Research has established acceptable psychometric properties for the MSLSS (Huebner, 2004).

⁹ An abbreviated version of the MSLSS that assesses each domain of life satisfaction using one-item indicators.

valued, self-related domains are more important for their judgments of life satisfaction. On the other hand, for individuals from Asian cultures such as Korea, where family and social obligations and education are highly valued (as compared to where independence and personal feelings and interests in Western cultures), meeting these social norms and expectations are the primary sources of life satisfaction (Park & Huebner, 2005).

Although some values are universal, some other values are emphasized to different degrees in different cultures. The importance of perceived family relationships to children's life satisfaction is similar across cultures. The greater contribution of satisfaction with family life (vs. peer relations) to global life satisfaction has been shown among Chinese students as well as U.S. students (Leung & Leung, 1992; Huebner, & Laughlin, 2000). However, cross-cultural studies have found that Western adolescents in individualistic cultures tend to pay more attention to the self than do their Asian counterparts, who are raised in collectivistic cultures that emphasize filial piety, harmony, moderation, and family and social obligations (Domino, 2000). For example, a study with Chinese youth in Hong Kong found a weak relationship between life satisfaction and self-concept.

Although education is valued in most cultures, the extreme emphasis on academic achievement among East Asians seems phenomenal. According to a recent study in an open-ended survey with Koreans (Kim & Park, 2003), most Korean high school and college students reported that doing well in school and acquiring higher education were their most important goals. Students most frequently reported educational achievement as the proudest achievement in their life, even more so than a good relationship with friends and family. Similarly, a study with Chinese students found school grades and future schooling to be their primary concerns (Violato & Kwok, 1995). In contrast, studies with U.S. students find that the school satisfaction domain is the weakest indicator for global life satisfaction reports and is ranked lower in importance than the family, friends, self, or living environment domains (Seligson, Huebner & Valois, 2003).

The educational emphases in East Asian countries can be explained by Confucian values, which have framed the basic foundations of collectivistic societies such as Korea and China. School success serves broad functions in Confucian culture. In Confucianism, education or learning is regarded as the best way to cultivate moral character and to obtain other goals in life. Often, children's educational achievements determine their family's status in the community. Thus, education is not only a way of achieving personal life goals but also a chief means of fulfilling an individual's obligations to family and society (Kim & Park, 2003).

In Park and Huebner's (2005) study where they investigated the similarities and differences in the levels of life satisfaction and the contributions of specific life domains to global life satisfaction reports by Korean and U.S. adolescents, their results show important similarities and differences in the levels and correlates of life satisfaction between samples of adolescents in South Korea and the United States. These findings may be interpreted in terms of value differences in individualistic versus collectivistic cultures. Korean adolescents reported lower life satisfaction than their U.S. counterparts across all domains and global life satisfaction (see Table 3a below). In particular, the groups were differentiated by satisfaction with the self and school domains. These findings are consistent with previous studies with adults and college students (Cha, 2003). In a large, cross-national study, Diener et al. (1995) found that only high levels of individualism (vs. collectivism) consistently predicted differences in life satisfaction among various nations when other variables (income, human rights, and societal equality) were controlled. Given the presumed collectivistic nature of Korean culture (Nisbett, 2003), the lower life satisfaction reports of Korean adolescents should not be surprising. The reasons for differences in mean levels of life satisfaction across cultures remain to be explained.

Table 3a: Descriptive Statistics of Multidimensional Students’ Life Satisfaction Scale (MLSS) Domain and Global Life Satisfaction Scores for Korean and U.S. Young People.

	<i>Korean (n= 472)</i>		<i>United States (n= 543)</i>	
<i>Domain</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Family</i>	4.15	0.95	4.34	1.12
<i>School</i>	3.35	0.95	3.78	1.11
<i>Living Environment</i>	3.56	0.88	3.95	1.10
<i>Self</i>	3.85	0.83	5.17	0.73
<i>Total MSLSS</i>	3.84	0.63	4.45	0.66
<i>Global life satisfaction</i>	3.30	0.82	4.27	1.08

Source: Park & Huebner (2005).

It is interesting that differences in the levels of life satisfaction were greatest for the self domain. U.S. adolescents’ self views were significantly more positive. In this study, only 10% of Korean adolescents, compared to 65% of U.S. adolescents, reported responses of 5 or higher (where 6 is the highest response score). Modest gender differences in life satisfaction were found for Korean adolescents but not for U.S. adolescents. This finding is consistent with previous studies of U.S. students (Huebner, 1997). Male Korean adolescents reported relatively higher satisfaction with self and living environment than did female Korean adolescents. Societies may differ in culture-driven expectations for males and females, and certain cultures may encourage gender differences more than others. In Confucian cultures such as Korea, where the family and society are organized in terms of male dominance, the greater privileges and opportunities for males may produce higher life satisfaction. Further research is needed to investigate the origins of gender differences in life satisfaction across cultures.

What is perhaps most important is that the specific life domains related differently to adolescents’ global life satisfaction across cultures. The self-satisfaction domain was a stronger correlate of global life satisfaction for U.S. adolescents, whereas the school satisfaction domain was a stronger correlate of global life satisfaction for Korean

adolescents (refer to Table 3b below). In contrast to Korean students, the school domain did not contribute unique variance to the global life satisfaction of U.S. adolescents. Taken together, these findings underscore the notion that the crucial domains of life satisfaction may vary from one culture to another.

Table 3b: Correlations among 5 Satisfaction Domains and Global Life Satisfaction Variables for Korean and U.S. Students

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
Korean (n = 472)					
1. Family					
2. Friends	.41 ^{**}				
3. School	.35 ^{**}	.41 ^{**}			
4. Living environment	.45 ^{**}	.36 ^{**}	.42 ^{**}		
5. Self	.40 ^{**}	.52 ^{**}	.30 ^{**}	.27 ^{**}	
6. Global LS	.56 ^{**}	.44 ^{**}	.50 ^{**}	.48 ^{**}	.48 ^{**}
United States (n = 543)					
1. Family					
2. Friends	.26 ^{**}				
3. School	.36 ^{**}	.18 ^{**}			
4. Living environment	.46 ^{**}	.30 ^{**}	.24 ^{**}		
5. Self	.37 ^{**}	.48 ^{**}	.27 ^{**}	.28 ^{**}	
6. Global LS	.60 ^{**}	.42 ^{**}	.32 ^{**}	.47 ^{**}	.52 ^{**}

NOTE: LS = life satisfaction.
^{**}*p* < .0001.

Source: Park & Huebner (2005).

As predicted, this study found that the relationship between the self domain and global life satisfaction was substantially stronger for U.S. adolescents than Korean adolescents. These findings are consistent with accounts of differences in cultural values. That is, individuals from individualistic cultures such as the United States tend to value personal feelings, thoughts, and internal attributes more than individuals from collectivistic cultures, who place less emphasis on the self (Suh et al., 1998).

Analysis

It is worth noting that satisfaction with friends was correlated with global life satisfaction among adolescents in both cultures. Furthermore, the friends domain showed higher

correlations with the school domains among Korean as compared to U.S. adolescents. Given that students in South Korea spend much more time at school compared to U.S. students, school may have different effects on students' life satisfaction by serving as the crucial context in which Korean students have opportunities to build friendships.

The family domain was the strongest contributor to global life satisfaction for both U.S. and Korean adolescents. These results again demonstrate that regardless of culture, positive family experiences are essential to adolescent well-being (Watkins & Dong, 1994). Indeed, although details of family structures, traditions, and rituals may be different across cultures, the importance of family in one's life seems to be universal.

Although the domains of family and friends have similar correlations with global satisfaction (see Table 3b above), it was evident from the data presented above that the self-satisfaction domain was a stronger correlate of global life satisfaction for U.S. adolescents, whereas the school satisfaction domain was a stronger correlate of global life satisfaction for Korean adolescents.

The vast cultural differences between Korea and the U.S. are observed from the data presented above. It is to be noted that data for comparison between Korea, Norway and Sweden- which is one of the central tenet of this paper- is not available for secondary analysis. Yet, the comparison between Korea and the U.S. has highlighted the difference between East Asians' and Westerners' attitude towards education, and in this case, could be generalized to the case between Korea and Norway or Sweden.

The finding of the importance of school domain for Korean adolescents' life satisfaction may be related to Korean cultural values, which highly emphasize education and academic achievement. As stated earlier, for East Asian students, educational experiences also function as a means to connect to members of important social groups such as family and friends (Kim & Park, 2003). Korean adolescents who are successful in school may receive more positive feedback and respect from parents, teachers, and friends, which may lead to higher life satisfaction. However, U.S. adolescents may have more ways to

experience high life satisfaction, besides high academic achievement, because American cultural values are not only individualistic but also multidimensional (Chiu, 1992). Thus, experiences at school might not be especially crucial for life satisfaction among U.S. adolescents. It is the attitude of Korean adolescents- regardless of social background- which consider education to be of great importance in their life that drives Korean students to achieve academically, and thus, resulting in Korea having least educational disadvantage in terms of educational attainment as compared to Western cultures like the U.S., Norway or Sweden. The need for further research on which specific school experiences (e.g., teacher behavior, parent involvement, curricula, and classmates) contribute to Korean students' satisfaction with school is implied.

Chapter 4: Social Capital

Coleman (1988) defined social capital functionally as “a variety of entities with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of actors...within the structure”—that is, social capital is anything that facilitates individual or collective action. A functional definition of social capital does, however, make it impossible to separate what it is from what it does. Indeed, Coleman included under the term the mechanisms that generated it, the consequences of possessing it and the “appropriable social organisation that provided the context for both sources and effects to materialise”. The mechanisms that generated social capital were: networks of relationships; reciprocity; trust; and social norms. In Coleman’s conception, social capital is a neutral resource that facilitates any manner of action, but whether society is better off as a result depends entirely on the individual uses to which it is put (Foley & Edwards, 1997). Coleman conceptualized three forms of social capital—obligations and expectations, information channels, and social norms. He describes also how closure in the social structure facilitates the first and third of these forms of social capital. By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital—tools and training that enhance individual productivity—“social capital” refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.

From Putnam’s (1995) study, evidence from the 1991 World Values Survey demonstrates that across the 35 countries in this survey, social trust and civic engagement are strongly correlated; and the greater the density of associational membership in a society, the more trusting its citizens. Trust and engagement are two facets of the same underlying factor—social capital.

4.1 Benefits of Social Capital

For a variety of reasons, life is easier in a community blessed with a substantial stock of social capital. In the first place, networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of

generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust. Such networks facilitate coordination and communication, amplify reputations, and thus allow dilemmas of collective action to be resolved. When economic and political negotiation is embedded in dense networks of social interaction, incentives for opportunism are reduced. At the same time, networks of civic engagement embody past success at collaboration, which can serve as a cultural template for future collaboration. Finally, dense networks of interaction probably broaden the participants' sense of self, developing the "I" into the "we," or (in the language of rational-choice theorists) enhancing the participants' "taste" for collective benefits.

Better Performance of Social Institutions & Economies

Similarly, social scientists had unearthed a wide range of empirical evidence that quality of public life and the performance of social institutions are indeed powerfully influenced by norms and networks of civic engagement. Researchers in such fields as education, urban poverty, unemployment, the control of crime and drug abuse, and even health have discovered that successful outcomes are more likely in civically engaged communities.

The norms and networks of civic engagement also powerfully affect the performance of representative government. That, at least, was the central conclusion of Putnam's 20-year, quasi-experimental study of subnational governments in different regions of Italy. Although all these regional governments seemed identical on paper, their levels of effectiveness varied dramatically. Systematic inquiry showed that the quality of governance was determined by longstanding traditions of civic engagement (or its absence). Voter turnout, newspaper readership, membership in choral societies and football clubs--these were the hallmarks of a successful region. In fact, historical analysis suggested that these networks of organized reciprocity and civic solidarity, far from being an epiphenomenon of socioeconomic modernization, were a precondition for it. No doubt the mechanisms through which civic engagement and social connectedness produce such results-- better schools, faster economic development, lower crime, and more effective government-- are multiple and complex (Putnam, 1995).

Also, research on the varying economic attainments of different ethnic groups in the United States has also demonstrated the importance of social bonds within each group. These results are consistent with research in a wide range of settings that demonstrates the vital importance of social networks for job placement and many other economic outcomes (Putnam, 1995).

Meanwhile, the sociology of economic development has also focused attention on the role of social networks. Some of this work is situated in the developing countries, and some of it elucidates the peculiarly successful "network capitalism" of East Asia.

Even in less exotic Western economies, however, researchers have discovered highly efficient, highly flexible "industrial districts" based on networks of collaboration among workers and small entrepreneurs. Far from being paleo-industrial anachronisms, these dense interpersonal and inter-organizational networks under gird ultramodern industries, from the high tech of Silicon Valley to the high fashion of Benetton.

Both La Porta *et al.* (1997) and Knack and Keefer (1997) also report evidence on other interesting associations between trust and a number of measures of government performance, including the effectiveness of the judiciary and the quality of the bureaucracy. They also provided some evidence that the effect of trust works through raising the share of investment in GDP. These results are intriguing; however, one should be careful to avoid jumping to strong conclusions about the importance of trust, or other aspects of social capital. A fundamental problem is that the extent of trust may well be determined by, or correlated with, other aspects of societies that are omitted from the growth regressions. For instance, it may be that corruption or weak legal enforcement lowers trust and, for quite independent reasons, the growth rate. As Knack and Keefer note, one could even tell a story in which trust is a product of optimism in societies that are performing well in economic terms.

Better educational attainment

One obvious variable that might be correlated with social capital is educational attainment, and this is particularly interesting from the point of view of the present paper. Coleman's (1988) research has shown that there is an effect of the lack of social capital available to high school sophomores on dropping out of school before graduation. He has argued that social capital within the family and in the community outside the family play important roles in children's education.

La Porta *et al.* (1997) also argued that trust has a positive effect on educational achievement, but it should be clear that causality may run in the opposite direction. Knack and Keefer report a strong correlation ($r = 0.83$) between trust and an estimate of average years of schooling for 1980, and note that "education may strengthen trust and civic norms, for example, if ignorance breeds distrust, or if learning reduces uncertainty about the behaviour of others, or if students are taught to behave co-operatively" (p. 1270). If we see trust as endogenous to the extent and quality of education, we have the beginnings of a story about externalities to education.

4.2 Higher Social Capital in Korea

From the theory and evidence from research provided above, it is hypothesized that higher social capital in Korea- as reflected by a more active civic engagement and deeper sense of obligation towards expectations of social structures- has led to greater equality of educational attainment as compared to Sweden and Norway. Social capital is measured in terms of obligation to expectations and norms; and engagement with society- participation rates in religious organizations, unpaid work with social welfare services, political action groups and other humanitarian organizations. Obligation to expectations and norms and engagement with society are deemed to be facets of social capital (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995). The social capital of Korea, Sweden and Norway is observed and analyzed from the World Values Survey of years 1990 and 1996. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Level of Highest Education, Obligation and Social Engagement in percentages in Korea, Sweden and Norway in Percentages.

	<i>Korea</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Norway</i>
<i>Highest educational level attained</i>			
<i>Inadequately completed elementary education</i>	2,6	0,3	1,8
<i>Completed (compulsory) elementary education</i>	9,4	25,9	19,3
<i>Incomplete secondary school: technical/vocational type/(Compulsory) elementary education and basic vocational qualification</i>	0,0	0,0	9,2
<i>Complete secondary school: technical/vocational type/Secondary, intermediate vocational qualification</i>	11,6	7,0	21,1
<i>Incomplete secondary: university-preparatory type/Secondary, intermediate general qualification</i>	0,0	21,2	3,8
<i>Complete secondary: university-preparatory type/Full secondary, maturity level certificate</i>	39,8	16,1	13,2
<i>Some university without degree/Higher education - lower-level tertiary certificate</i>	11,0	7,4	13,9
<i>University with degree/Higher education - upper-level tertiary certificate</i>	25,6	22,1	17,7
<i>One of main goals in life has been to make my parents proud</i>			
<i>Agree strongly</i>	13,9	14,1	15,5
<i>Agree</i>	46,4	36,5	38,9
<i>In agreement</i>	60,3	50,6	54,4
<i>Disagree</i>	34,2	30,0	25,9
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	5,6	19,5	19,7
<i>Belong to religious organization</i>			
<i>Do unpaid work social welfare service for elderly, handicapped or deprived people</i>	7,4	3,5	4,4
<i>Do unpaid work for local political action groups</i>	3,4	0,9	1,1
<i>Active/Inactive membership of charitable/humanitarian organization</i>			
<i>Active member</i>	6,2	6,7	9,1
<i>Inactive member</i>	26,1	15,8	19,2
<i>membership</i>	32,3	22,5	28,2
<i>Not a member</i>	67,7	77,5	71,8

Source: World Value Survey (1990, 1996).

From Table 4 above, we can see that Korea has the most respondents with a university degree or higher education - upper-level tertiary certificate, i.e. 25.6% of the respondents, as compared to 22.1% in Sweden and 17.7% in Norway. This reflects that it is more of a

norm for a person in Korea to have at least a university degree as compared to Sweden and Norway - 1 in 4 people has at least a university degree. This also suggests that Korea values education more than the other two social democratic nations which possibly lead to greater motivation to achieve academically and results in greater equality of educational attainment in Korea as compared to Sweden and Norway.

When asked if one of their main goals in life has been to make their parents proud, 60.3% of South Koreans agreed as compared to 50.6% in Sweden and 54.4% in Norway. This reflects that Korea has a deeper sense of obligation towards meeting the expectations of social structures as compared to Sweden and Norway in terms of obligations to do their duty or main goals in life of making their parents proud, as reflected by the evidence presented above. As described in the previous chapter, in Asian communities where Confucian values are strong (in Confucianism, education or learning is regarded as the best way to cultivate moral character and to obtain other goals in life), children's educational achievements determine their family's status in the community. Thus, education is not only a way of achieving personal life goals but also a chief means of fulfilling an individual's obligations to family and society.

We could also observe that South Koreans are indeed more actively involved in their communities as reflected by their greater participation rates in religious organizations (38.6% as compared to 10.0% in Sweden and 11.2% in Norway), unpaid work with social welfare services (7.4% as compared to 3.5% in Sweden and 4.4% in Norway) and political action groups (3.4% as compared to 0.9% in Sweden and 1.1% in Norway) and other humanitarian organizations (32.3% as compared to 22.5% in Sweden and 28.2% in Norway).

In these respects, it could be seen from the World Values Survey that, indeed, Korea has higher social capital as compared to Sweden and Norway. This lends further support to La Porta *et al.*'s (1997) research that argues that trust has a positive effect on educational achievement, and Knack and Keefer's research that provides evidence of a strong correlation ($r = 0.83$) between trust and an estimate of average years of schooling for

1980. Indeed, on this evidence higher social capital could be deemed to be a factor in explaining the greater equality of educational attainment in South Korea as compared to Sweden and Norway.

Chapter 5: Wider Scope of Educational Outcomes- Life Satisfaction of Children

Literature often considers the effects of education on educational attainment or labour market productivity, yet it is clear that the benefits of education are likely to be more far-reaching. The traditional case for education is that it makes a fundamental contribution to personal development, and probably to the health of societies more generally. In thinking about public provision, it is crucial to remember that education may have significant welfare benefits that are not captured in the models and data typically analyzed by economists and governments. These include even the benefits of education that accrue directly to individuals. It is plausible that education has both an immediate consumption benefit and a long-term effect on life satisfaction, other things being equal. The difficulty here is that it is much harder to measure well-being in a meaningful way than it is to measure output of goods and services, and economists are only just starting to investigate well-being and its determinants. Studies have also found that students' satisfaction with school and their feelings about school have importance to their academic performance (Goodenow, 1993).

However, it is not possible to determine causality. It is likely that these two factors have a strong influence on each other. Educators would call this 'the good circle' (Mortimore, 1991). Good academic achievement instigates high satisfaction with school which in turn contributes to the students' motivation and continuing good performance. This suggests that satisfaction with school may be an important predictor of the students' academic achievement, particularly for low achievers. This is supported by evidence from an innovative paper by Blanchflower and Oswald (2000). They reported estimates of "happiness equations", regressions that relate survey measures of well-being to individual characteristics. They find that educational attainment is associated with greater happiness, even when controlling for family income. Results from research on adult work environments have also shown that job satisfaction is found to be important for job performance. This suggests that when trying to enhance achievement among students who are not performing very well, a successful means may be to raise their satisfaction with school in addition to presenting adequate expectations. Accordingly, a higher level

of satisfaction with school is likely to induce greater motivation for learning. Consequently, promoting the students' satisfaction with school could be a common vehicle for both educators and health promoters. Such findings could have important implications for education policy. Therefore, it is argued in this paper (with the basis of arguments and evidence presented in chapter 3 and this chapter) that it is important and worthwhile to measure educational outcomes in terms of students' satisfaction, and not merely educational attainment as measured in the UNICEF report (2002).

5.1 The Case of Korea: Less School Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction

From Table 3 in Chapter 3, it is evident that Korean students have less school satisfaction (with mean school satisfaction score of 3.35) as compared to U.S. students (with mean school satisfaction score of 3.78)¹⁰, although the school satisfaction domain was a stronger correlate of global life satisfaction for Korean adolescents whereas the self-satisfaction domain was a stronger correlate of global life satisfaction for U.S. adolescents (see Table 3b in Chapter 3).

According to Diener and Lucas (2000), in cultures where life satisfaction is highly valued (such as the U.S.), a person's *most* satisfying domain of life determines global life satisfaction; in cultures where life satisfaction is not so highly valued (such as Korea), a person's *least* satisfying domain of life determines global life satisfaction. In other words, the contrast is one between emphasizing the domain in which things are going well versus emphasizing the domain in which things are going more poorly. The present results support this hypothesis inasmuch as the Korean students on average were not especially satisfied with the school domain although it proved a significant predictor of their global life satisfaction. For U.S. students, self was on average the most satisfying domain and was also a significant predictor of global life satisfaction.

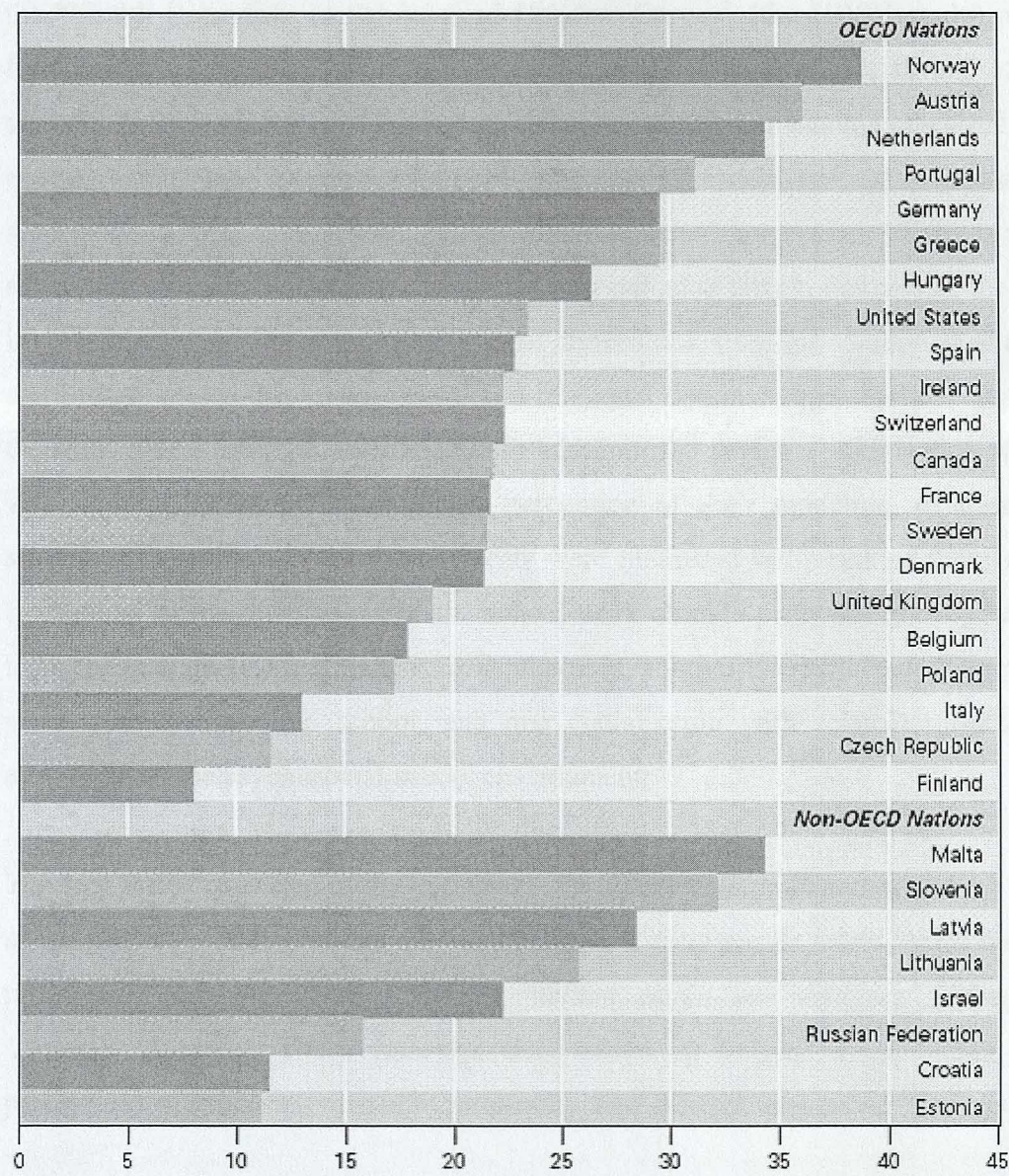
¹⁰ Respondents were asked to select one of six options (1 being *strongly disagree*, 2- *moderately disagree*, 3- *mildly disagree*, 4- *mildly agree*, 5- *moderately agree*, 6- *strongly agree*) for each question.

This seems to suggest that although Korea values education and school much more than other cultures, Korean students have lesser school satisfaction compared to other cultures. This maybe due to the over-emphasis on the value of educational attainment which may lead to Korean students' self-concept and self-value being more tightly linked to their academic performance. Lower achievers are less esteemed and this causes much pressure to perform well academically. Learning might become mere rote learning of facts which one has no personal valuation of and a competition among peers rather than learning for the sake of appreciation of knowledge, enjoyment and self-actualization.

5.2: The Case of Norway: High School Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction

Satisfaction with School

Table 5: Percentage of Young People- Age 11, 13 and 15- ‘liking school a lot’



Source: Innocenti Report Card 7, UNICEF (2007).

Table 5 above shows that Norway has the highest percentage of young people- age 11, 13 and 15- ‘liking school a lot’- 38.9% while Sweden has 21.6% and the United States has

23.6% of young people liking school a lot. We now turn to a study that examines what aspects of school makes schooling such an enjoyment for young people in Norway.

In Samdal's et al. (1999) study, where the analyses are based on self-reported data from the "Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey" (the HBSC study), using data from countries in both Eastern and Western Europe. Data from 11, 13 and 15 year old students in Finland, Latvia, Norway and Slovakia are used. It was hypothesized that some aspects of students' perceptions of the psychosocial school environment contribute to students' satisfaction at school. In this study, students' perceptions of the psychosocial school environment are indicated by how they perceive certain features of the processes involved in connection with organisational dimensions, from the standpoint of autonomy/control and classroom management, and relational dimensions comprising support from the teacher and from fellow students. In addition, the students' satisfaction with school was examined as a predictor of the perception of their academic achievement. The students' perceptions of all these aspects were measured by means of five factors- one correspond to the dimensions of the school/work climate proposed above; two of them reflected features of the organisational processes, another two reflected characteristics of relationships within the school, and one (satisfaction with school) reflected a total evaluation of the psychosocial school environment:

The first factor consisted of the variables: *'Pupils participate in setting rules'*; *'The rules are too strict'*; *'The rules are fair'* and *'Teachers treat pupils fairly'*; with five possible responses; *'Strongly agree'*, *'agree'*, *'neither agree nor disagree'*, *'disagree'* and *'strongly disagree'*. These variables were added up to produce an index indicating perceptions of processes related to **autonomy and control**, and called "Justice in school".

The second factor indicating **aspects of management** consisted of the variables: *'Noise and disturbance in class'*; *'Teachers frequently ask pupils to be quiet'*; *'Pupils are in general quiet'*. These variables were added up to give an index named "Disturbances in class".

The two factors reflecting **social relationships** can be labelled “Teacher support” and “Student support” respectively. The first consisted of two variables which were then added up: *‘Teachers give pupils help when needed’* and *‘Teachers show interest in the pupils’*. The second support factor, ‘Student support’, consisted of the variables: *‘Students enjoy being together’*, *‘Students are kind and helpful’* and *‘Students accept each other’*.

The students’ **satisfaction with school** indicates the personal outcome dimension of the proposed model of psychosocial school environment, and was measured by an index of three variables focusing on the students’ evaluation of how they like school (*‘I like school’*, *‘School is a nice place to be’* and *‘Going to school is boring’*). These variables were added up to give an index called “Satisfaction with school”.

Besides these five factors, there are other four single-item factors to evaluate students’ psychosocial school environment: the student’s perceptions of **unreasonable job demands** were measured by: *‘My teachers expect too much of me at school’*. In addition, **feeling safe and secure** in the school environment, **bullying** and **loneliness** during breaks were each surveyed through: *‘Feel safe at school’*; *‘Have been bullied’* and *‘Feel alone at school’*. The four single items were included in the subsequent analysis as independent measures.

The five indices and four single items presented above were then used as predictors to explain the variance of the students’ perception of their academic achievement through stepwise multiple linear regression.

Results show that the general pattern for all the countries is that the perception of justice seems to be most strongly related to the students’ satisfaction with school, followed by feeling safe at school and support from the teachers.

These findings suggest that organizational processes within the school, e.g. the ways in which rules and regulations are made and interpreted, are important in developing a sense

of well-being among the students at school. The students' perception of justice is based on whether the students feel that they can influence rules and regulations in school, and whether they experience that the teachers treat them fairly. It is important for each student to experience that nobody else is treated in a different way, especially if this is a better way. The students' contribution to the development of rules and regulations is also an important means of accepting and perceiving ownership of the regulations which are needed in a school society. This is further supported by researches in the field of adult work environment have also found that the more autonomy and control workers have, the better job they perform (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Such results can be explained by the motivational factor of being allowed to influence one's job with one's own ideas, and feeling that the manager (teacher) considers these ideas to be important.

Social interaction with the teachers seems to make a significant contribution to the students' satisfaction with school as indicated by the findings concerning perceived social support from the teachers. Teacher support is measured both in terms of practical and emotional support, and both seem important influences on the students' satisfaction with school. The teachers as persons and their way of caring for the individual students (as well as the total class) all appear to be important in determining a high satisfaction with school.

In addition, students' perceived academic achievement was also measured in this study. The results indicate a correlation between unreasonably high demands from the teachers and poor perceived academic achievement among the students. On the surface, this seems to contradict the findings from research on school effectiveness, which show that teachers' expectations of the students, that they perform well, have a positive influence on their achievement (Good & Brophy, 1986). In this study, the students were asked to report unreasonably high expectations. Unreasonably high job demands seem to reduce motivation and capability to perform, while adequate expectations regarding performance are positive for achievement (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Thus, the challenge in school is to find a balance; to get students exploit their potential without pushing them so hard that they feel that they are bound to fail. By setting the standards for good performance as the

best the student can achieve according to his/her own abilities, all students can experience some success and acknowledgement of their performance. In such a context students are more likely to be reinforced to do their best, to develop an interest in the topics addressed in school, and also feel satisfied with school.

Furthermore, perception of poor relations with fellow students, including an unsafe social school environment and bullying and social exclusion during breaks, seems to be negatively related to the students' perceived academic achievement. This can possibly be explained by using Steptoe's (1991) model of stressor and resource factors, suggesting that high levels of stress reduce the general ability to cope, and may lead to stress-related illness and poor functioning. Stressful experiences in the social setting probably decrease the students' performance since they have to spend energy and resources on handling their stress. If the stressors in the work place are reduced, students can apply their resources on the work tasks instead of trying to reduce the negative effects of the stress.

Results also show that in Norway the students' reported satisfaction with school is very high for both genders. This might reflect the fact that the school system in Norway has teaching approaches which do not favour any gender which is in contrast to Korea (see Chapter 3) where male students show more school satisfaction than female students.

5.3: Analysis and Conclusion

From Chapter 3, the evidence shows that Korean adolescents reported lower life satisfaction than their U.S. counterparts across all domains and global life satisfaction; and from the evidence presented in this chapter, it could be observed that Korean students have the least global life satisfaction and school satisfaction as compared to students in Norway and Sweden. This suggests that although Korea has least educational disadvantage in terms of academic achievement amongst the three countries, Korean students are generally less satisfied with their lives as compared to students from Sweden and Norway. This suggests that there could be a lack in South Korean culture that leads to lesser satisfaction and this merits further attention and research. This paper argues that

it is possibly more meaningful to measure equality in educational outcomes in terms of students' satisfaction as compared to merely looking at academic achievement and overlooking the quality aspect of students' life. Ultimately, contentment with one's life circumstances is what makes life meaningful and worthwhile. Autonomy in school and teacher support in the Norwegian school system has been found to be highly correlated with school satisfaction of students. Also, lesser incidence of unreasonable expectations and poor peer relations correlates highly with school satisfaction in Norway. Korea could emulate the Norwegian approach to education to raise students' satisfaction at school.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This paper sets out as an extension of the UNICEF Innocenti Report Card 4 (2002)- a report that shows that Korea has least educational disadvantage in terms of having the most equality between the highest and the lowest academic achievers as compared to Sweden and Norway. This paper seeks to shed more light on the reasons of why Korea has the least educational inequality in terms of academic achievement as compared to Sweden and Norway, which are social democratic countries where universalism and equality are central to their ethos. Evidence presented in chapter 2 on early childhood education and care (ECEC) does not support the Report Card's suggestion that ECEC could have influenced Korea to have the least educational disadvantage. It was evident that Sweden and Norway are definitely more comprehensive and encompassing in their approaches to ECEC. More public funds are used to fund ECEC, and the child benefit and parental leave provision are more generous in these Nordic countries, which reflects that they have better ECEC provision compared to Korea. Evidence presented in Chapter 3 shows that Korean adolescents value school very much as it correlates most highly (after family domain) with their global life satisfaction as compared with U.S. adolescents whose school domain correlates least with their global life satisfaction (as compared to family, friends and self domains). Schools are valued a lot more in eastern cultures as compared to western cultures. This suggests that students in the eastern cultures, regardless of their social class, would endeavour to do well in academic life as education or learning is regarded as the best way to cultivate moral character and to obtain other goals in life in Confucianism and education is deemed as not only a way of achieving personal life goals but also a chief means of fulfilling an individual's obligations to family and society. Thus, the great value of education in Korea for all social classes in society is a strong possible explanation for Korea having the least educational disadvantage in terms of academic attainment. Furthermore, analysis of evidence from the World Values Survey in Chapter 4 suggests that indeed, Korea has higher social capital- referring to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. In Chapter 4, social capital is measured in terms of obligations to expectations (by parents and

society in general to perform academically) and social engagement as compared to Sweden and Norway. This higher level of social capital is presented as a possible explanation for low educational disadvantage in terms of academic attainment, which lends further support to previous evidence from research by Coleman (1988), La Porta *et al.* (1997) and Knack and Keefer (1997).

However, it is argued in this paper that it is not sufficient to measure educational outcomes just in terms of academic attainment as the UNICEF report (2002) did. It is argued in Chapter 5 that it is more meaningful and worthwhile to measure educational outcomes also in terms of students' life and school satisfaction. Contradictory evidence appears when measurement of life and school satisfaction were taken: Korea was shown to do worst on this indicator as compared to Sweden and Norway. Students in Norway were found to be the most satisfied with schools due to the autonomy in school and teacher support that they receive in school. The Korean education system may have over-emphasized the value of educational attainment which led to the case of least school satisfaction with Korean students. Learning has become mere rote learning of facts and a competition among peers rather than learning for the appreciation and enjoyment of knowledge.

In conclusion, this paper suggests that raising the social capital environment surrounding students could be one effective tool for raising academic standards for lower achievers. This paper also suggests that there should be continual emphasis on children's satisfaction with schools as a meaningful indicator of educational outcome (not just academic attainment as most international educational bodies like UNICEF and PISA emphasize). And when this is given more emphasis, it is realized that the picture is not the same. Eastern educational policies like Korea have some lessons to learn from western cultures like Norway in terms of raising students' schools' satisfaction and likewise, Norway and Sweden have some lessons to learn from eastern cultures like Korea in terms of raising the social capital environment surrounding the students.

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Glossary

There are different types of *Children's services*. The main children's services referred to in this paper are (definitions taken primarily from Starting Strong II (2006):

□ *Family day care (FDC)*: Family day care exists when a child is looked after in the private home of a carer on a sessional, half-day (less than 20 hours per week) or full-day basis. The carer may be self- or municipally employed. Family day care is regulated and licensed, according to the country, to varying degrees. The term also may include a licensed *child minder*, who looks after a child in the child's own home. In many countries, child-minding in the child's home is considered a private agreement and is not subject to any regulation.

□ *Centre-based ECEC*: Centre-based ECEC is collective (more than 5 children) early education and care for young children from 6-12 months to 6 years, distinguished from services provided in households or family settings. The centres may be public or private, and normally cater to toddlers and/or older children until entry into kindergarten or perhaps up to school age. Many countries still operate a split between services for children 0-3 years and those for children 3-6 years, but current trends favour *age-integrated centres*. Programmes are typically full-day or part-day (less than 20 hours per week), and are in all cases conducted by a minimum number of qualified professionals. Centres open either for the academic year only (with scheduled school holidays), or for the longer work year, that is for about 11 months.

□ *Crèche*: A crèche is a professional centre-based service primarily for infants and toddlers.

□ *Kindergarten or pre-school programmes* are professional centre-based ECEC programmes, primarily for children from 3-6 years, with a predominantly educational aim. Kindertartens attempt to nurture holistic development, learning dispositions and in some countries specific competences in pre-defined learning areas. Kindertartens may also have a "readiness for school" objective and may focus on pre-literacy and numeracy activities. Kindergarten and pre-school programmes are distinguished from playgroups in being daily, more focussed on education, and with more highly qualified staff.

□ *Out-of-school provision, after-school care or free-time services for children*. "Freetime" is a professionally organised care service for children aged 3-12 years before and/or after early education/primary school hours. The service can take place either on the school premises or outside.

□ *Playgroup*: A playgroup is a service offering toddlers (and perhaps, older children) the opportunity – generally on a sessional basis, once or twice a week – to play with each other, supervised by a qualified playgroup supervisor or parent. Large differences exist between countries with regard to regulation, programme, staff qualifications, pedagogical supervision, etc., in this type of programme.

Appendix 1:

A League Table of Educational Disadvantage in Rich Nations (UNICEF, 02)

The educational disadvantage league

Figure 1

The table shows the average rank in five measures of absolute educational disadvantage. These measures are the percentage of children scoring below a fixed international benchmark in surveys of: reading literacy of 15 year-olds (lower threshold for PISA literacy level 2), maths and science literacy of 15 year-olds (lower quartile of all children in OECD countries in PISA 2000), maths and science 8th-grade achievement (median of all children in all countries in TIMSS 1999). Details of benchmarks and surveys are given on page 31.

