

# ECNU Review of Education Study Uncovers Factors Driving the Rise of Private Tutoring in Korea

*A new study reveals that educational and sociocultural factors are driving the rising popularity of private tutoring in Korea*

SHANGHAI, CHINA, August 20, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Parents in Korea are spending an increasing amount of money on their children's private tuition, despite several government initiatives to discourage it. A new study suggests that the rise of private tutoring can be attributed to various educational and socio-cultural factors, such as parents' desire to ensure admission of their children to prestigious universities. Findings indicated that government policies made without considering these factors may be destined to fail.



The Cause of Institutionalized Private Tutoring in Korea: Defective Public Schooling or a Universal Desire for Family Reproduction?

Private tutoring centers, or “hagwons,” are becoming increasingly popular in Korea. These centers increase the educational and social inequality and hence the Korean government is determined to discourage them through various measures, such as improving the quality of education in schools, introducing “quasi-private tutoring” programs, and suppressing the shadow education market. Although the total expenditure on private tutoring is rising, the reasons for its popularity are not entirely understood.

To fill this gap, Professor Sang Hoon Bae of Sungkyunkwan University and Dr. Kee Ho Choi of Seoul National University examined private tutoring from a socio-ecological perspective and assessed the government policies aimed at curbing its rise. The findings were made available online on 2 July 2023 and published on 1 February 2024 in Volume 7, [Issue 1 of ECNU Review of Education](#).

The researchers found that parents viewed private tutoring equivalent to an educational institute and an avenue for their children to secure admission to prestigious universities. Additionally, this educational achievement mediated by private tutoring has become a method for parents to transfer their wealth and social status to the children.

“Although differences exist in the degree of participation, students from almost all income groups were found to have experienced private tutoring, suggesting that it has become a normal part of education in Korea. For many students, private tutoring is a logical choice, as it often leads to better test scores and higher chances of gaining admission to top universities,” explains Prof. Bae.

The findings of the study suggest that Korean society is increasingly becoming testocratic, where tests determine the educational attainment and social status of children. For parents in such a society, private tuition serves as a reliable method to improve the chances that their children will be admitted to prestigious universities, thereby upholding their social status. Furthermore, the study indicated that government measures seeking to discourage private tutoring may be ineffective, as they do not consider the educational and socio-structural factors underlying its popularity.

“So long as the belief exists that private tutoring leads to higher scores and paves the way toward prestigious colleges, reforming public schooling will not be enough to fix the chronic problem of private tutoring,” states Prof. Bae.

In summary, policymakers need to fully grasp why parents go to great lengths to send their children to hagwons to design a multifaceted approach aimed at reducing the need for private tutoring.

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## Reference

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