

## Abstract

**A Study on the International Comparison of  
Teachers, Principals, and Teaching and Learning  
-Results from TALIS 2018**

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The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) is an international large-scale survey of the teachers, teaching, and learning environments, coordinated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). TALIS collects data through questionnaires for teachers and principals in a format that investigates their perceptions. The major topics range broadly and include teacher education and initial preparation education, teachers' job satisfaction and motivation, teacher feedback and professional development, teacher self-efficacy, teachers' professional practices, teachers' instructional practices, human resource issues and stakeholder relations, the school climate, school leadership, innovation, diversity, and equity. Until now, TALIS 2008 (round one), TALIS 2013 (round two), and TALIS 2018 (round three) have been conducted for the survey, and it will also be continuously implemented in future.

This study aims to present the major analytic results of TALIS 2018 provided

by the OECD, in accordance with the South Korean context. Through this, various policy implications of research results will be shared, and a contribution will be made to open a “window of opportunity” for discussion. If various analytic results of the international comparative study perspective are discussed publicly, it will be possible to come up with innovative policy measures along with new investigations concerning diverse teacher policies. The following are the report’s research questions for achieving the study’s goals.

What are the international comparative analysis results for the major topics of TALIS 2018 (teachers’ human resource background, teachers’ job satisfaction and motivation, teacher education and initial preparation, teacher feedback and professional development, teacher self-efficacy, teachers’ instructional practices, school climate, innovation, diversity, and equity)?

What are the implications derived from the international comparative analysis results for TALIS 2018’s major topics?

What is South Korea’s teacher policy improvement method given the analyses’ results and implications?

To answer these questions, the following literature review was conducted: investigation of concepts used in the OEC reports and TALIS, and analysis of domestic and international research papers. Furthermore, the statistical data provided by the OECD were analyzed and reconstructed according to the South Korean context. In addition, a meeting of experts was held to verify the rationality and validity of policy measures.

## 1. Analysis Results and Implications of TALIS 2018 by Topic

### (1) Human resource background of teachers

The proportion of female principals in South Korea was only 19.6%, which was very low (the OECD average was 47.3%). Compared to TALIS 2013, TALIS 2018 showed that the proportion of teachers aged 30–49 years decreased in South Korea while the proportion of teachers 50 or older increased. Furthermore, the average age of South Korean principals was 58.7 years, which was somewhat high (the OECD average was 52.2 years), and the proportion of principals who were 60 or older was 43.7% (the OECD average was 20%). It appears that the policy should be improved so that people of various age groups having expertise in school management can perform the job of principal. The average number of years worked as current school teachers was 5 years for the South Korean teachers (the OECD average was 10.3 years), and the number of years worked in the current schools for South Korean principals was 1.8 years, which was very short (the OECD average was 6.9 years). This may act as an obstacle with respect to the stable operation of schools and the ability to improve education in each school.

### (2) Teacher education and initial preparation education

The percentage (37.6%) of those South Korean teachers who had completed graduate school education was low (the OECD average was 45.5%). Given the increasing educational level in society and the accelerating trend of social change, deliberation is required to strengthen teachers' professionalism and improve their educational level. The majority of South Korean teachers (87.8%) acquired teacher qualifications through the concurrent teacher education programs. In contrast, the consecutive teacher education programs occupied a larger proportion than the concurrent teacher education programs in many major countries. Furthermore, one problem revealed was that the South Korean

teachers did not receive enough learning opportunities for “teaching methods in multicultural or multilingual settings” and “student behavior guidance and class management” in the teacher education programs. This is highly likely to be related to the problem of lack of theory–practice association in the teacher education curriculums.

### **(3) Teachers’ job satisfaction and motivation**

The job satisfaction of South Korean teachers was not high compared to the OECD average and, in particular, there was the problem that the work environment satisfaction was low. Considering that the work environment satisfaction was clearly lower than that of other countries, more attention should be paid to school factors that undermine teachers’ satisfaction. When choosing the teaching profession, the percentage of South Korean teachers considering “personal utility motivation” was higher than the OECD average. The time spent on classes was small in the number of work hours of South Korean teachers compared to the OECD average, and the time spent on student consulting, administrative work, and professional development was large. The excessively large administrative work of teachers has been continually discussed, but it can be understood that the administrative work load of South Korean teachers is still high compared to that of teachers in other countries.

### **(4) Professional development of teachers**

The percentage of those who answered they had mentors among novice teachers with “experience of five years of less” in South Korea was 16.3%, which was relatively low (the OECD average was 21.9%). It seems that more attention should be paid to adaptation and professional development of novice teachers. The percentage of South Korean teachers participating in online courses/seminars was 90.6%, which was the highest, and was much higher than the OECD average (35.7%). The professional development activities that the South

Korean teachers participated in dealt with a broad range of diverse topics. On the other hand, those feeling the need for professional development was higher than the OECD average in the majority of topics. In the TALIS 2018 compared to the TALIS 2013, South Korean teachers showed a large increase in participating in professional development activities for student assessment practices, teaching cross-curricular skills, and student behavior and class management. At the same time, South Korean teachers were very highly aware of barriers to participation in professional development activities.

### **(5) Teacher self-efficacy**

The positive perception percentages of South Korean teachers concerning the self-efficacy of teaching-learning, student participation, and class management all showed statistically significant increases in TALIS 2018 compared to TALIS 2013, but they were still lower than the OECD averages. To support teachers' efficacy, conditions should be primarily developed for the autonomous and flexible design and operation of various activities, including teaching-learning in each school. Furthermore, in the process, professional development activities or programs in the areas that the teachers felt were needed should be provided to support the teachers in expanding their identity as professionals.

### **(6) Teachers' teaching practices**

A worsening trend was shown in the TALIS 2018 compared to the TALIS 2013 for negative perceptions regarding the learning atmosphere of class such as the waste of time caused by noisy classrooms and class-disrupting students. Furthermore, Korean teachers' use of clarity of instruction and use of cognitive activation showed an improved trend in the TALIS 2018. On the other hand, the assessment-related activities showed a lower result than the OECD average. However, this result also showed a statistically significant improvement in the TALIS 2018. Despite improved trends, it was ascertained that autonomy for assessment was still relatively low for South Korean middle-school teachers.

### **(7) School climate**

The frequency of weekly or daily incidents threatening school safety was 0%–1.8%, which was noticeably lower than the OECD average, and the relationship between teachers and students in South Korea showed continuous improvement. However, the shortage of support personnel and the shortage of time with students were perceived as problems. An important task would be to identify a policy-based support method for creating a positive school climate to improve the school effectiveness.

### **(8) Innovation**

South Korean teachers' perception of the need for innovative teaching practices and professional development was on the high side, but the percentage of innovative teaching practices (providing projects requiring critical thinking, letting students use ICT for projects or class work) was low. This implies that more attention and support are needed for training related to professional development for innovative teaching practices.

### **(9) Diversity and equity**

South Korean teachers acquired the expertise related to multiculturally friendly teaching practices through professional development activities rather than formal education. This contrasted with other countries where opportunities for acquiring relevant expertise were provided mainly through formal education. There was a need for gradually strengthening and substantiating the education of multicultural topics from the teacher-fostering stage. Meanwhile, South Koreans' efficacy for multiculturally friendly teaching practices was low. To improve this low efficacy, multi-level comprehensive improvement methods should be prepared. The principals showed a clear trend to overestimate the multicultural friendliness of their schools compared to the teachers.

## 2. Teacher Policy Improvement Plans

### (1) Teacher induction and retention

**■ National level establishment of mid- to long-term teacher supply and demand forecast system**

As an analysis result of TALIS 2018, it can be seen that decrease in new teachers and the aging of teachers are progressing together. If preparations are not made for this phenomenon through appropriate teacher supply and demand forecasts, the effectiveness of various policies for school education innovations may decrease in future.

**■ Retention of competent teachers by providing a work environment that can improve job satisfaction**

In the results of TALIS 2018, the job satisfaction of South Korean teachers was not high. A work environment that can increase job satisfaction should be provided to retain competent teacher candidates and current teachers. In particular, policy efforts should be continuously made to improve the school environment by focusing on the following factors affecting satisfaction: leadership of the principal, cooperative culture with colleagues, professional development, teachers' rights protection, appropriate rewards, etc.

**■ Systematization of new teacher recruitment and training**

According to the results of TALIS 2018, the percentage of South Korean novice teachers with fewer than five years of experience who had mentors was lower than the OECD average. Furthermore, the school satisfaction of South Korean teachers was lower than the OECD average, and this was even more so in the

case of novice teachers with fewer than five years of experience. The experiences of novice teachers provide an important foundation for teaching life. Moreover, systematic and comprehensive recruitment and training processes are extremely important because they provide opportunities for checking and supplementing deficiencies in the process.

## (2) Teachers' professional development

### ▣ Strengthening the theory-practice association of teacher education and training

It is a reality that sufficient clinical experience opportunities are not given to South Korean teachers during teacher education. The results of TALIS 2018 reflect this as well. In particular, the percentage of South Koreans who answered that the contents were closely related with the complex dynamics of schools, such as “teaching methods for multicultural or multilingual settings” and “student behavior and classroom management” included in the teacher education program, was below the OECD average. The practical training period of teacher candidates should be extended to the level of major overseas countries, and administrative and financial support should be backed up so that the teacher education institutes and the schools for practical training can have an organic collaboration structure.

### ▣ Strengthening multicultural tolerance in teacher education and training

According to the results of TALIS 2018, the efficacy of South Korean teachers in multiculturally friendly teaching practices is far below the OECD average. Furthermore, the South Korean teachers had a tendency to acquire the expertise related to multiculturally friendly teaching practices later through professional development after recruitment instead of formal teacher education. Education for multicultural topics should be reinforced from the teacher education stage to

support teachers' competency to teach effectively in multicultural/multilingual classrooms.

**■ Building a professional development environment through solving the factors that hinder professional development**

In the results of TALIS 2018, the South Korean teachers' awareness of hindrances to professional development activities was higher than the OECD average across the whole domain. Time for professionalism development activities should be secured primarily to promote teachers' professional development activities. Furthermore, when intrinsic/extrinsic rewards for professional development activities are provided systematically, the individual or collective professional development activities of teachers will not only be promoted but also continued.

**■ Designing and operating professional development activities using teachers' experiences and practices**

In the results of TALIS 2018, the teacher efficacy of South Korean teachers was far below the OECD average. In other words, although the teachers had participated in various professional development activities and programs, they did not feel efficacy in actual classrooms' teaching-learning and classroom management activities. This result implies that systematic review and self-reflection are needed regarding how professional development activities are conducted and how effective or what kind of effect they have. The expertise of teachers is developed by going beyond an understanding of technical contents and practicing/experimenting with strategies based on an understanding of actual classroom situations.

**■ Improving remote training**

In the results of TALIS 2018, the percentage of South Korean teachers participating

in online courses/seminars (90.6%) was exceptionally high compared to the OECD average (35.7%). It is a clear fact that at present the online trainings have problems such as limited practical exercise, in the knowledge-delivery-oriented lecture, and in the limited interaction between instructor and learner. However, they can be sufficiently improved through ICT development in future. If South Korea, which already has outstanding ICT, puts initial efforts into research and investment for improving remote training quality, it will be possible to provide high quality remote training in the near future.

### **(3) School effectiveness**

#### **▣ Improving the multicultural friendliness of schools**

According to the results of TALIS 2018, South Korea needs improvement in multicultural friendliness in schools. Policy conditions should be supplemented to strengthen the school's autonomy and association with the local community to explore multicultural friendliness improvement methods from various angles. Furthermore, the national level of multicultural (global citizen) education and training support should be continued; benchmarking with Australia and Canada, where multicultural education has been well-established, will be required.

#### **▣ Vitalizing professional learning communities for problem-solving at unit schools**

South Korea has been making a variety of policy efforts to support the professional learning communities of teachers. In the results of TALIS 2018, "teacher networks," "official peer coaching," etc. were very high compared to the OECD averages. It can be seen that the past policy efforts have expanded opportunities for contact and cooperation between teachers. To deliver the cooperation and networks between teachers that lead to the actual professional growth of individual teachers, it will be necessary to form professional learning

communities centering on courses that involve solving common problems in schools on the basis of the local context and situation of individual schools.

**▣ Continuously implementing preventive policies of school violence to build safe learning environments**

Among the countries that participated in the TALIS 2018, South Korea had a very safe school environment. This can be seen as a result of actively implementing policies for eradicating and preventing school violence. For continuous and stable operation of future school violence prevention policies, support measures should be prepared for teachers in charge of school violence activities. Healthy school communities should be built based on the expansion of restorative behavior education, adoption of restorative courses in the punishment-oriented “Law for School Violence Prevention and Measures,” etc.

**▣ Expanding support for teachers’ education activity protection**

According to the results of TALIS 2018, the percentage of teachers who answered that they received threats every week or every day increased slightly in 2018. Incidents of students or guardians violating teachers’ education activities in schools has occurred continually every year. The well-being of students can be promoted through the co-agency of school members, including teachers (OECD, 2018). Every student’s learning rights can be ensured by preventing students from threatening their teachers and by protecting teachers’ education activities.

**▣ Building an innovation-friendly school climate**

In the results of TALIS 2018, low values were shown regarding South Korean teachers’ innovative teaching practices (e.g., letting students perform projects using ICT, providing projects that require critical thinking). A school principal can perform a very important role for eliminating the factors that hinder

innovation while encouraging teachers to attempt new teaching methods so as to build an innovation-friendly school climate.

▣ Expanding teachers' professional autonomy

According to the results of TALIS 2018, the efficacy of South Korean teachers is very low in the context of OECD countries. This can be improved by expanding the school's autonomy. When a high level of school autonomy is given, the professional autonomy of teachers can also be expanded. This will act as an important variable that promotes teachers' performing jobs with high efficacy.

(4) Effective teaching

▣ Supporting teachers' teaching competency strengthening to improve the class atmosphere

According to the results of TALIS 2018, South Korean teachers perceived that the learning atmosphere of the classroom was changing gradually in a negative way. As the teaching-learning activities have changed to involve student participation in contrast to the conventional lecture, there is room for forming a somewhat distracted class atmosphere in the process of applying the new teaching methods while respecting and reflecting student opinions. Therefore, support should be provided that includes policies to change the teachers' perception of various learning environments, and improve the class atmosphere through strengthening teaching competencies.

▣ Preparing administrative work support measures to let teachers focus on classes

In the results of TALIS 2018, the class hours of South Korean teachers were relatively short while administrative work was burdensome. Compared to the

past, the domain in which the professional autonomy of teachers can be exercised has expanded, but in reality, there is a lack of conditions for displaying expertise while exercising autonomy. Therefore, administrative support plans should be prepared to check the conditions for administrative work in schools and provide practical aid along with performance evaluations of teachers' administrative work reduction policies that have been implemented to date.

#### ■ Enhancing teaching methods to improve the core competencies of students

Present day education aims to increase the core competencies of students, such as critical thinking and creativity, through innovations in teaching and learning. In the TALIS results, the awareness of South Korean teachers regarding the need of professional development in innovative teaching activities was high, but the use of innovative teaching practices was low. To improve this situation, the classroom environment should be built for the use of ICT, and tailored training courses that can change the teaching methods to more innovative ones should be provided.

#### ■ Granting assessment autonomy to teachers

Through the TALIS 2018 results, it was confirmed that Korean teachers had low autonomy with regard to student assessment. Although a large increase was shown in assessment activities compared to TALIS 2013, it was still at a very low level compared to the OECD average. In the 2015 Revised Curriculums that have been applied step-by-step since 2017, emphasis is placed on the improvement of teaching-learning, and assessment methods, student participation-oriented classes, and process-oriented assessment. To accomplish effective process-oriented assessment, the autonomy and rights of teachers regarding assessment should be expanded.

### 3. Conclusion

TALIS 2018 provides the basis for deriving various implications and policy measures that are significant from the perspective of international comparisons. Although the comparisons between countries having different cultural and social contexts do not provide perfect information for rational decision-making, it is certain that they provide valuable reference data for decision-making. This empirical evidence will become a valuable foundation for developing improvement plans for teacher policies such as teacher induction and retention, teachers' professional development, school effectiveness, and effective teaching.

In the future, TALIS 2024 is planned . Accordingly, the next research studies will be actively discussed through various international conferences in future. To make rational proposals in the process, South Korea should accumulate various research outcomes using the TALIS. Therefore, diverse TALIS dissemination strategies (hosting forums and symposiums, publishing policy reports and issue papers, operating websites, etc.) should be explored to facilitate the use of TALIS among the many researchers in South Korea.

■ **Key word:** TALIS 2018, Teacher education and initial Preparation, Teacher job satisfaction and Motivation, Teacher development, Teacher self-efficacy, Teachers' instructional practices, School climate, Innovation, Diversity and Equity