

## The Study on Solutions for the Outside-School-Factors Affecting Prior Learning

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The purpose of this study is to identify the factors affecting prior learning and to seek solutions to those factors, thereby setting forth long-term policy direction for the Korean government and phased strategies to carry out such policies. In order to achieve such purpose, we conducted literature reviews, surveys, interviews, focused group interviews and expert consultations.

In this study, the term prior learning is defined as ‘learning the contents of the curriculum by paying certain amount of fee, at least one semester in advance, for at least one month through private tutoring, cram schools, e-learning courses.’ Survey was conducted among the subjects of Korean, English, mathematics and science which are expected to show whether the students are engaged in prior learning or not more clearly.

The findings of this study show that approximately 29% to 61% of students among elementary, middle school and high school students in Korea are engaged in prior learning. More specifically, among high school students who participated in this study, 29% had been engaged in prior learning for English while 36% had been for mathematics. Percentage of students involved in prior learning among middle school students turned out to be 44% for English and 54% for mathematics. However, it turned out to be 54% for English and 61% for mathematics among elementary school students. In terms of the point at which these students started prior learning, it turned out that

not less than 7% of the high school students had started to learn high school English and mathematics from their elementary school years. Also, it was found that, among middle school students, not less than 22% had started to learn middle school English and not less than 19% had started to learn middle school mathematics from their elementary school years.

There are various outside-the-school factors that affect students to choose prior learning, mainly in policy & institutional aspects and in social & cultural aspects. In terms of policy & institutional aspects, significant factors that affect prior learning turned out to be “in order to win in the competition for college entrance” and “to preoccupy an advantageous position for college entrance by getting into autonomous private high schools and special-purpose high schools”. In addition, others such as “high level of difficulty of the curriculum” and “creation of anxiety by private education companies” are identified as major affecting factors. When it comes to social & cultural aspects, not only are “understanding of society and culture as being competitive”, “perceptions putting high emphasis on educational backgrounds” and “perceptions of advertisements of private education” factors that are significantly affecting prior learning but also “vague anxiety” due to the foregoing turned out to be a factor affecting prior learning.

Finally, from the survey on solutions to factors affecting prior learning, solutions to such factors are suggested in the following order: “developing diverse education programs which reflect students’ interest and level of learning”, “relieving students’ stress from studying”, “respecting students’ opinion about learning” and “improving social perception putting too much emphasis on educational backgrounds”. Furthermore, from the interview, “changing social structure and perception”, “improving college entrance policy”, “improving evaluation methods” and “reinforcing career education” are suggested as solutions to factors affecting prior learning, commonly for all school levels.

By conducting focused group interview and expert consultation based on materials which integrate the above research findings, we have set forth the final solutions to the factors affecting prior learning. Such solutions proposed in term of policy & institutional aspects and in social & cultural aspects are as follows.

In terms of policy & institutional aspects, first of all, management and supervision on autonomous private high schools and special-purpose high schools shall be reinforced so that those schools are operated in accordance with their purpose of establishment. Except for general high schools, students shall be selected based on their talent and aptitude by using students' output accumulated during their middle school years (i.e., school records, portfolios). Also, the government shall establish a policy which can lead the colleges to select their freshmen in such a way that students from special-purpose high school go on to the majors that fall under the same field as their majors in high school. In other words, the government shall proceed with policies such as reinforcement of index of ratio of students entering the same field of major when evaluating special-purpose high schools, "Support Project for Colleges Contributing to Normalization of High School Education", etc. so as to give preferential support to colleges which reflect whether the students are entering the same field of major in their admission process.

Second, it is necessary to use the achievement-level-centered academic performance (Naeshin) in the entrance exams for the upper schools. It shall faithfully reflect the purpose of the achievement evaluation system in order to escape from endless competition, relieve burden of students and establish entrance exams centering on public education. These materials shall be used in high school entrance exams so as to supplement insufficient parts of the admission processes of special-purpose high school and autonomous private high school.

Third, high school curriculum shall become less difficult and reduce the quantity of its contents. This is because of the fact that it is not easy to prepare college entrance exams based on high school education if the high school curriculum has high level of difficulty and large quantity of contents. Also, it would be a good idea to prepare questions of exams for each college within the scope and level of high school curriculum. It is anticipated that imposing such sanctions would be possible if the policy "evaluation on the impacts of the admission process" is operated soundly.

Fourth, evaluation on the influence of private education companies' advertisements shall be carried out and the management and supervision on such advertisements shall be reinforced. To this end, supervision on such advertisements could be strengthened

by amending Article 17 of the Act on the Establishment and Operation of Private Teaching Institutes and Extracurricular Lessons.

In terms of social & cultural aspects, first of all, research and publicity shall be reinforced in order to resolve the perceptions putting high emphasis on educational backgrounds. It is necessary to study to what level is the Korean society being obsessed with educational backgrounds and carry out research and publicity activities which identify factors other than educational backgrounds that lead to success.

Second, parents' perception and anxiety which are dependent on the advertisements regarding private education shall be resolved. After conducting a research on to what extent is the parents' anxiety aggravated by the advertisement policy of private education companies and exploring whether such anxiety is based on the reality, results of such research shall be properly notified to the parents. Also, policy measures which aim to restrict the advertisement regarding private education shall be imposed unless they infringe upon one's freedom.

Third, learning based on cognitive and brain development shall be reinforced. It is necessary to actively publicize the importance of adjusting the learning contents with the students' development level in order not to make students feel anxious and stressed out and not to impede development of cognition and brain in the medium to longer term. In addition, studies which can provide grounds for such adjustment are required.

Fourth, in the education field, feedbacks shall be given based on the process, not on the results. In school, teachers shall put efforts to form a good culture by praising or evaluating more highly the students who are faithfully following the school curriculum without prior learning than those who engage in prior learning.

■ keyword : prior learning, prior education, factors affecting prior learning, private education