



Media Analysis of PISA 2015 Results: South Korea

Eunjee Choi

Teachers College, Columbia University

The background features a dark grey, chalkboard-like texture with faint, light grey sketches of various educational items: a globe, a stack of books, a microscope, a pair of glasses, and a ruler. A large white rectangular area covers the top right portion of the image, and a solid yellow rectangular area is positioned at the bottom. The word "Background" is written in a bold, dark grey sans-serif font, centered horizontally within the white area.

Background

Background

South Korea's PISA Results (2000 – 2015)

		2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015
Reading	Avg. Score	525	534	556	539	536	517
	Rank	7	2	1	2 – 4	3 – 5	4 – 9
Math	Avg. Score	547	542	547	546	554	524
	Rank	3	3	1 – 4	3 – 6	3 – 5	6 – 9
Science	Avg. Score	552	538	522	538	538	516
	Rank	1	4	7 – 13	4 – 7	5 – 8	9 – 14

Source: MEST



Data & Methods



Dataset

- Sources: 8 national daily newspapers
- Total of 15 articles
- Published between 12/06/2016 and 12/12/2016

	Newspaper	Number of Articles
1	Chosun Ilbo	3
2	Joongang Ilbo	3
3	Donga Ilbo	2
4	Kyunghyang Shinmun	2
5	Asia Today	2
6	Hankook Ilbo	1
7	The Hankyoreh	1
8	Kukmin Ilbo	1



Findings



Negative reaction to PISA 2015

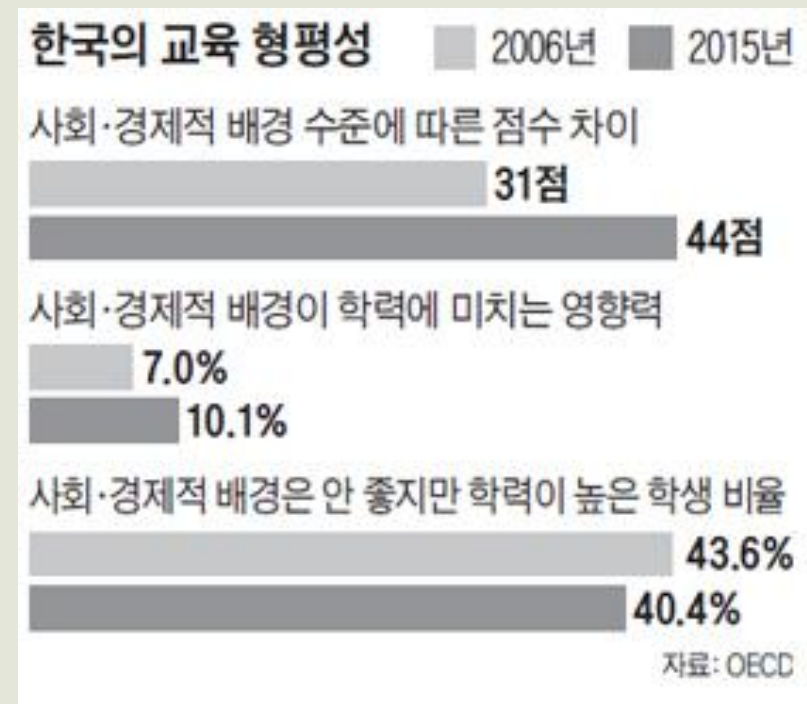
- 12 out of 15 articles presented results in negative tone or focused on negative aspects of the results
- Drop in ranking and average raw scores
 - Difference over time
 - Difference between other countries
 - Difference within South Korea

Explanations for South Korea's results

“Low-achievers”

- Comparison to 2016 NAEA results
- Changes in local education practices
- Education inequality

“South Korea's Education Equality”



Source: Chosun Ilbo (2016a)

Explanations for South Korea's results

Gender gap

- Boys performed worse than girls in all subjects
- Problematization of gender gap

PISA 2015 Average Scores of Korean Male and Female Students
(2012 scores in parentheses)

PISA 2015 한국의 남녀 학생별 평균 점수		
괄호 안은 2012년 평균 점수		
	남학생	여학생
읽기	498(525)	539(548)
수학	521(562)	528(544)
과학	511(539)	521(536)

자료: OECD

Source: Chosun Ilbo (2016c)

Reference societies

Reference	Number of articles	Percent of articles
OECD	15	100%
Japan	9	60%
Canada, Finland, Singapore	5	33%
Estonia	4	27%
Hong Kong, Taiwan, U.S.	3	20%
China, Macao, Kazakhstan, Vietnam	2	13%
Australia, Denmark, Ireland, Malaysia, Switzerland, U.K.	1	7%
No international reference	4	27%

Reference Societies

OECD

- Participants distinguished as OECD member and non-member countries
- OECD rankings vs. total rankings
- Comparisons to OECD averages, OECD trends

<PISA 영역별 순위와 평균 점수 변화 추이>

영역		연구 주기 (참여국 수)	PISA 2000	PISA 2003	PISA 2006	PISA 2009	PISA 2012	PISA 2015
			(43개국)	(41개국)	(57개국)	(75개국)	(65개국)	(70개국)
읽기	평균		525	534	556	539	536	517
	순위	OECD	6	2	1	1~2	1~2	3~8
		전체	7	2	1	2~4	3~5	4~9
수학	평균		547	542	547	546	554	524
	순위	OECD	2	2	1~2	1~2	1	1~4
		전체	3	3	1~4	3~6	3~5	6~9
과학	평균		552	538	522	538	538	516
	순위	OECD	1	3	5~9	2~4	2~4	5~8
		전체	1	4	7~13	4~7	5~8	9~14

Source: Asia Today (2016b)

Reference societies

Japan

- 9 articles mentioned Japan
- 3 articles discussed explanation for Japan's results
 - Reversal of "Yutori" education policy

Calls for education policy reforms

- 11 out of 15 articles call for reforms
- Only 2 out of 15 articles suggest policy borrowing
 - Japan
 - International assessments – ICT testing format