
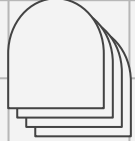
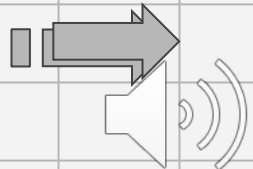


# How Hagwons and the South Korean Education System have Impacted the Identity Development of Young South Korean Adults

*A research summary*



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Faculty Mentor: Dr. Daniel Porter Morgan





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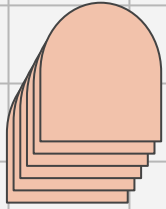
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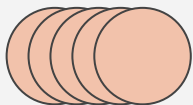


# Introduction

## *Hagwons:*

specialized education-based institutions  
that stand at the helm of private education  
in South Korea





# Literature Review: Dual Image



## The Norm

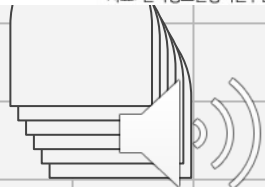
- Hagwons help 9 out of 10 students improve their score (Song, 2013)
- 98% of parents in S.K send their children to hagwons at ages as young as five (Han, 2020)
- Hagwon numbers have been perpetually increasing since the 1970s (Korean Education Statistics Service, 2020)
  - ✓ 1970: 1,421 hagwons
  - ✓ 2020: 81,762 hagwons

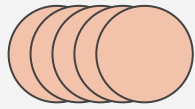
학원 등 사교육이 성적 향상에 도움이 됐는가(단위: %)

\*2012년 5~7월 초·중·고교생 9080명 대상 설문조사 결과



자료: 한국청소년정책연구원

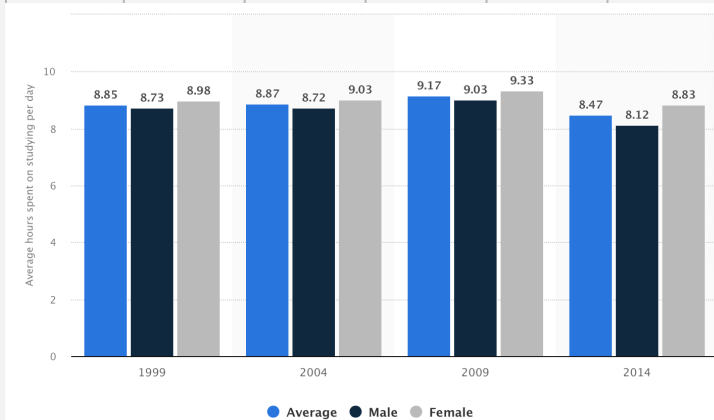




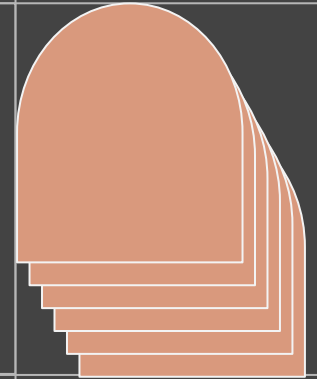
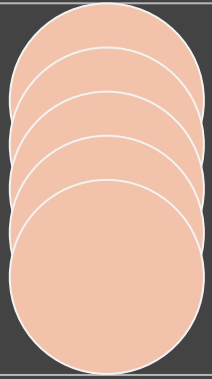
# Literature Review: Dual Image

## The Ignored

- Korean students spend around 8.5 hours studying per day (Statista, 2014)
  - Nearly 60 hours per week
- S.K adolescents suffer from severe sleep deprivation (Rhie et al, 2011)
- Suicide is number one reason of death amongst S.K middle and highschoolers (Kwak & Ickovics, 2019)
- Nearly 34% of adolescents in S.K consider suicide due to academic pressure (Yonhap, 2019)



Missing Angle:  
Research does not  
extend to adulthood



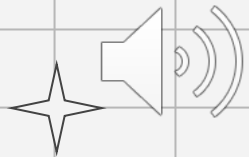
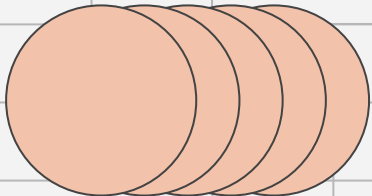
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# Research Question

- How have hagwons in South Korea created a prejudiced education system?
- How has this impacted the values and identity development of young South Korean adults who have graduated out of this system?



# Methodology

01

## Participants

- Convenience Sampling through flyer distribution and ads on and offline to the University of Utah Asia Campus
  - Inclusion Criteria: attended hagwon, attended S.K middle school and high school, older than 20 years
  - Exclusion Criteria: has never attended a hagwon, younger than 20
- **Result of sampling: 20 South Korean individuals enrolled in study (8 men, 12 women)**

### INTERVIEW VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH STUDY

Have you attended a South Korean Hagwon?

Have you attended a South Korean middle school and high school?

Are you 20-30 years old?

Then this is the study for you!

We want to learn how hagwons have influenced the young adults of South Korea. This study will involve a one-on-one 45-60 minute interview session

#### What would I have to do?

Participate in a maximum one-hour long interview session

The interview will ask about the volunteer's experience with Hagwons and the South Korean Education System



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# Methodology

## 02

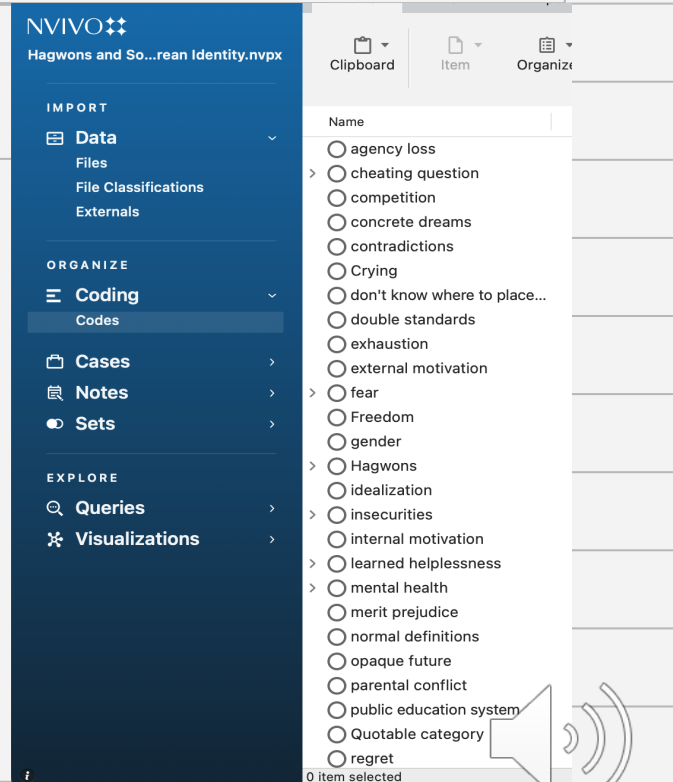
## Materials

- Semi-structured in-depth interviews

### Sample questions

- *What was your everyday schedule like during high school?*
- *What was it about the hagwon curriculum that made you feel more prepared for college?*
- *How do you think hagwon instructors and public school teachers differ?*
- *Do you have any regrets about your school life?*

- **Data analysis: developing and interpreting codes, discovering themes throughout the 20 interviews (software: Nvivo 14)**



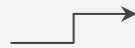
The screenshot shows the NVivo 14 software interface. The top bar displays the project name "Hagwons and So...rean Identity.nvpx". The left sidebar is divided into three main sections: "IMPORT" (Data, Files, File Classifications, Externals), "ORGANIZE" (Coding, Cases, Notes, Sets), and "EXPLORE" (Queries, Visualizations). The "Coding" section is currently selected, and a list of codes is displayed on the right. The codes include: agency loss, cheating question, competition, concrete dreams, contradictions, Crying, don't know where to place..., double standards, exhaustion, external motivation, fear, Freedom, gender, Hagwons, idealization, insecurities, internal motivation, learned helplessness, mental health, merit prejudice, normal definitions, opaque future, parental conflict, public education system, Quotable category, regret, and 0 item selected. A speaker icon is visible in the bottom right corner of the screenshot.

# Methodology

**03**

## *Procedure*

**01**  
Chose personal  
color out of box  
(randomized  
code name)



**02**  
Conduct hour  
long interviews  
according to  
script + follow  
up questions

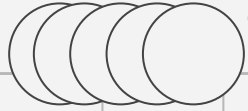


**03**  
Audio to  
transcript



**04**  
Coding  
interviews,  
three rounds  
(data is still  
being analyzed)





# Analysis: First Round of Coding



## Learned Helplessness

“I can’t study alone. I need others help”  
-silver

“There’s this concept. Every student must go to hagwon or else they will be left behind”  
-coral

I think someone needs to force me to work.  
-yellow

Sometimes I felt like, I think I can do it (study) by myself. And they (parents) just say, No, you can’t.  
-mint



## Regret

“I will spend more time getting to know who I am like what I want to be in the high school”  
-violet

“I wish I would have studied more”  
-yellow

“I would have studied harder”  
-periwinkle



## Contradictions

“But we competed to compete with each other. But also we helped each other.”

Like, it’s (S.K education system), it’s, it was so tired. And like, really bad to me.

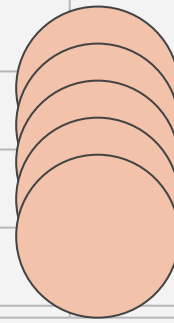
vs

When I go back to that time, I will get more enthusiastic about studying and study hard and go to good universities in Korea

-silver



# Future Objectives/Limitations



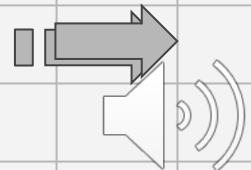
Ongoing research, data yet to be fully comprised:



- Narrow coding themes (complete 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> rounds of coding)>>>around 20 codes
- Delve deeper into connection between hagwons as norms, and negative academic experiences
- Find correlations that connect education experiences to identity development
- Cultivate final research question

## Limitations

- Convenience sampling
- In-depth interviews: possible bias, not quantifiable



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Kwak, C. W., & Ickovics, J. R. (2019). Adolescent suicide in South Korea: Risk factors and proposed multi-dimensional solution. *Asian journal of psychiatry*, 43, 150–153. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajp.2019.05.027>

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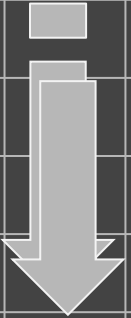
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THANK YOU

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