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# Anti-Japanese Sentiment among Graduates of South Korean Public Schools

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Anti-Japanese Sentiment among Graduates of South Korean Public Schools

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PIM 75

A capstone paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in  
International Education at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA

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Adviser: Karla Giuliano Sarr

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-Jamal E Barbari

### **Abstract**

This capstone paper aims to explore how South Koreans who have graduated public high school within the past seven years (from 2010 to 2017) view Japan and Japanese people, and what (if at all) information concerning Japan and Japanese people was established and received during their presence in the public school system. Through a brief analysis into the history and intricate relationship between Korea and Japan, introduction into hidden curriculum and its significance in this context, as well as ten personal interviews with South Korean graduates who fit the criteria for this research, this capstone paper offers a distinctive insight into how South Koreans think about Japan and Japanese people as well as how the public education system may have contributed to their thinking.

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction and Research Question .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Sub Questions.....	9
<b>Background .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Comfort Women.....	12
Dokdo Islands.....	14
Tensions within the Education System .....	15
Summary .....	18
<b>Conceptual Framework: Overt and Hidden Curriculum.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Literature Review .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Research Methodology .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Limitations .....	26
Data Analysis .....	28
<b>Presentation and Analysis of Data.....</b>	<b>28</b>
Information Learned in School .....	29
A) <i>Annexation Period</i> .....	29
B) <i>Comfort Women</i> .....	30
C) <i>Dokdo Islands</i> .....	31
D) <i>Relation to Hidden Curriculum of Information Learned in School</i> .....	32
Media Influences.....	33
A. <i>Social Media</i> .....	33
B. <i>Mass Media</i> .....	34
C. <i>Accuracy of Media as Compared to School</i> .....	35
D. <i>Relation of Hidden Curriculum to Media Influences</i> .....	37
Transition of Feelings towards Japan and Japanese People.....	37
A) <i>Contact with Japanese People</i> .....	37
B) <i>Separation of Japanese People and Government</i> .....	39
C) <i>Relation to Hidden Curriculum to the Transition of Feelings Towards Japan/Japanese People</i> .....	40
Notable Topics .....	40
A) <i>Dokdo Song</i> .....	40
B) <i>Japanese Economic Contributions</i> .....	41

C) <i>Shadow Education</i> .....	41
D) <i>Nationalist Teachers and a Teachers Union</i> .....	42
E) <i>Sharing Personal Opinions in a Public Atmosphere</i> .....	43
F) <i>Korea and Vietnam</i> .....	43
G) <i>Relation to Hidden Curriculum of Notable Topics</i> .....	44
<b>Discussion</b> .....	45
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	48
Appendix A-Facebook Post for Recruitment.....	51
Appendix B-Map of Korea .....	52
Appendix C-Kono Statement.....	53
Appendix D-Murayama Statement .....	54
Appendix E-Links to the Dokdo Song with Translation and a Website with Historical date relating to Dokdo .....	56

## Introduction and Research Question

Children's ideas about the world around them and relationships between people form at an early age. One of the various factors that shapes their impressions of people and groups are their schooling experiences. Considering the profound effects that educational systems can have on students, there should be no surprise that educational systems can prominently transform an individual's outlooks. This notion certainly exists within South Korea and plays a pivotal role in how South Korean citizens view the country of Japan and its citizens. Certainly, the tensions between Japan and South Korea have deep historical roots. I originally encountered the complex political and historical relationship between Japan and Korea while studying for my degree in political science at my undergraduate institution, Bowie State University. Although my curiosity was piqued, my time was limited and I couldn't explore the relationship further. Five years later, in the latter part of 2016, I arrived in South Korea to be employed as an English teacher with a sense of wonder and amazement. During my third week here, I travelled to Seoul in order to see some fellow SIT classmates and their roommates. During that time, I was introduced to more of the intricacies of the relationship between Japan and the Koreas<sup>1</sup> (before and after the split to North and South). Much of this information was secondhand, as it was coming from foreign teachers, but they told me that their students (who range from kindergarten to college) openly convey their negative feelings towards China and Japan; but with an emphasis on Japan. They told me their students adopted some of these negative feelings from their families, but they mainly received it from the education system. From that point, I was intrigued and wanted to pursue a topic that was not only unique to my field but would also allow me to fill in the voids of knowledge I lacked

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<sup>1</sup> Korea is referring to both present North and South Korea respectively. If North or South are not before Korea, then I am referring to the unified Korea before it became two separate countries. Additionally, when I use "Koreans" throughout this capstone, I am referring to South Korean people unless explicitly stated otherwise

concerning Japan and South Korea. This present Independent Practitioner Inquiry Capstone (IPIC) study attempts to fill that void. In this study, I use qualitative methods to conduct interviews with ten recently graduated students (2010-2017) from South Korean public schools in the Daejeon region of South Korea. The results of the interviews would indicate that students harbor many of their anti-Japanese sentiments during their educational instructional years. However, the educational system is not the only entity which influences students' perceptions.

The countries of Korea and Japan have a long and very complex history with each other. Although the history can be traced back to ancient times, only in the previous 100 years has there been such an immense amount of anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korea. This is primarily due to the Japanese rule of South Korea from 1905-1945. During this period, there were war crimes, sex slaves and policies that resulted in cultural genocide (Powers, 2001). After World War 2, Korea became an independent nation again (albeit separated from North Korea at this point) and today, there continues to be a large amount of tension between South Korea towards Japan. Even though the annexation came to an end more than 50 years ago, there is still a deep-seated resentment against Japan in the South Korean national consciousness. These feelings of contempt have a solid foundation with many of the citizens of South Korea, because Japan's colonial domination of Korea was often brutal and aimed at stamping out the Korean identity (Powers, 2001). Korean citizens were forced to learn Japanese and adopt Japanese names at the risk of being punished and possibly killed. Many were used as slave labor, and some were recruited to fight for the Japanese in World War 2 (Breen, 2010). Perhaps the most appalling case was that of the so-called 'comfort women', who were coerced to act as prostitutes for the Japanese Imperial Army (Breen, 2010). After learning about the horrendous history between the two nations, I was intrigued by the modern relational dynamics which existed within South

Korean society and if there was still scorn for Japan 72 years later. Considering that previous nations have also experienced similar contempt for neighboring countries historically (such as Poland and Russia, Germany and France, India and Britain), my curiosity was immensely piqued and I had a prime opportunity to discover the opinions of South Korean people. The various factors mentioned above, in addition to many more delineated throughout the paper, is what attracted me to explore this subject and will hopefully interest you in South Korea's educational system, politics, identity, etc., and how they are all inter connected with each other.

Given the massive disparity of history, culture and politics between South Koreans from the Japanese ruled era, and present day South Koreans, an investigation of the types of anti-Japanese sentiment is circulated by South Korea's government and its ministries within the public school system, as well as to what extent, is necessary. With this in mind, the following research questions guide this study:

- How do recent South Korean graduates of South Korea's public high schools in the Daejeon region view Japan, Japanese culture, and Japanese people?
- How might educational experiences account for the way in which these young South Koreans conceive of Japan and its people?

### ***Sub Questions***

1. *Which historical topics do schools focus on explicitly? How much of the rhetoric can be considered negative?*
2. *What information concerning Japan is directly conveyed as compared to indirectly? How much of this information is learned in school? How much of it is learned through other means outside of school?*

3. *How do the textbooks and other materials used in school affect the perspectives of the students?*

This capstone paper is structured to address three major components of South Koreans perspectives of Japan. The first is to provide a brief history of the relationship between Japan and Korea and show how this history may contribute to the negative sentiment of Japan by Koreans. The second focuses on the education system, which plays a primary role in disseminating information to the citizens of South Korea. The third concentrates on South Koreans citizens' experiences by exploring how their education has shaped their perspectives on Japan. Although this is a small-scale study, it will attempt to be as comprehensive as possible.

## **Background**

As I contemplated all the conversations I had with my students, I realized their contempt for Japan may stem from a multitude of historical and modern factors (such as media, family, society), but I also hypothesized the biggest contributor was the education system. Preliminary investigations into the relationship and history between Japan and South Korea support these assumptions. In fact, according to the National Youth Policy Institute, South Korean youngsters aged between 15 and 24 dedicated 49.43 hours to study each week, 15 hours longer than the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development average of 33.92 hours (Ja-Young, 2009, p. 1). Additionally, per Statistics Korea (as cited in Lee & Shouse, 2011) in 2009, 87.4 percent of primary school students, 74.3 percent of middle school students, and 62.8 percent of general high school students used some form of private tutoring service, and the average monthly private education expenditures per student was 242,000 won (242 U.S. dollars) (p. 212). The additional tutoring services include a range of formal after-school academic activities, such as individual or group tutoring, instruction from for-profit *Hogwon* (the so-called “cram schools”),

self-study or practice exam sheets, internet tutoring, and after-class lessons within regular public schools (Shouse, 2011).

Shadow education (private tutoring offered outside separately from public education) in this sense, can offer various amounts of knowledge and information which can support the material being taught formally, but may also teach the opposite. Since the shadow education system is not centralized (because it is a private industry, not public) and is generally not regulated (except for business purposes), it can use a variety of sources and resources to convey any material to the students who attend. Therefore, it is plausible that South Korean students can be considerably influenced through shadow education. As a teacher within this system, I can personally attest to the impact and inspiration teachers can have on the students. I teach the ability to critically think in a different language (English) which is only one of many subjects in which students can be enrolled. However, science, math and history are more popular subjects as they directly correlate with the curriculum they are studying within the public education system.

Since the students spend much of their time in school, (Chakrabarti, 2013), it became clear to me that both the formal and shadow education structures likely have a profound influence on the students. Thus, I wanted to explore the intricate phenomenon of hidden curriculum (information learned but not intended), as well as how it relates to, and influences the students' perception and beliefs about the country of Japan and its people. While I explore in detail the hidden curriculum in a later section, I dedicate this section to reviewing key historical moments that provide important background information for understanding the relationship between the two countries. Korea and Japan have an elaborate history together which ultimately creates a multifaceted situation to analyze. Although there is a substantial amount of history that should be explored between the two countries, for the purpose of this study, I will focus on

different events within the time period 1905-2017 (present day). This period is concentrated on the annexation of Korea by Japan (from 1910-1945), followed by the aftermath of Japan's colonial rule. Given this time period, below I introduce the topics of comfort women, the Dokdo Islands, tensions within the education system, and the present-day situation as key points which were consistently present during my research and conversations with people throughout my exploration of the resentment against Japan.

### **Comfort Women**

As mentioned previously, one of the most controversial issues between Japan and Korea was Japan's use of "comfort women." In this section, I provide the context that led to this practice, a discussion about the practice itself and the controversy surrounding it that continues to present-day South Korea. In 1905, Japan imposed a protectorate over Korea, but deemed Korea strategically important (from a geographical perspective) and thus formally annexed Korea in 1910 (Kim, 1962). Japanese leaders at the time deemed the Korean Peninsula a potential threat to Japan due to its regional location and the potential threat they could pose, particularly from a naval standpoint ("Japan," 2011). During Japan's imperialist rule from 1910 to 1945, Koreans suffered physically, culturally and psychologically. For the first ten years, Japan ruled directly through the military, and any Korean dissent was ruthlessly crushed ("Asia for Educators," 2009). However, after a nationwide protest, and despite the often oppressive and heavy-handed rule of the Japanese authorities, many recognizably modern aspects of Korean society emerged or grew considerably during the 35-year period of colonial rule. These included rapid urban growth, the expansion of commerce, and forms of mass culture such as radio and cinema, which became widespread for the first time ("Asia for Educators," 2009, p.54).

Although there is an ambivalence surrounding the economic progression of Korea during this time, the most notable discontent with Japan was when the Japanese military coerced (through force, money, threats, etc.) Korean women to become comfort women. This term can also be interpreted as “sex slaves” to some, while some individuals, (such as Professor Park Yu-ha) denounce the term “slave” as some women were sold by their brothers or fathers, recruited, or volunteered due to the substantial amount of money offered. The comfort women were used primarily for sex, although it has also been recorded that some attended picnics, social dinners, sporting events, etc., with low and high ranking soldiers (“Comfort Women,” 2016).

There are two questions that arise concerning the comfort women. First, what is the accurate number of Korean comfort women? Second, were all of them coerced by the Japanese military as Korea claims, or were there women who volunteered, sold (by their families) and/or recruited by separate entities? The number generated today is that 200,000 Korean women (out of the population of Korea at the time) were comfort women. However, there is speculation that there were actually 200,000 comfort women altogether and 150,000 of them were Japanese while 50,000 of them were actually Korean (Institute, 2016). Comfort women who were also taken from Indonesia, Netherlands, Taiwan, Philippines, etc., were taken to other locations where Japan was fighting since they did not need them in Korea at the time. Japanese and Korean historians have continued to debate over the accurate amount and neither side can come together to claim which one is correct. However, both sides do recognize that there were Korean comfort women as indicated in the Kono Statement issued by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministry of Japan, 1993). As stated before, Korea claimed that the Japanese military coerced women to serve the Japanese military men. The Japanese government initially denied this notion but in 1993, the

Japanese Government released the Kono Statement, which simply says the Japanese Imperial Army had indeed coerced some Korean women, albeit not all of them (Ministry of Japan, 1993).

Shortly thereafter in 1994, the Asian Women's Fund (AWF) was established by the Japanese government to pay reparations to all the comfort women in each country, and in 1995 the Murayama Statement was released. This statement, coming from the Japanese Government, once again, apologized to its Asian neighbors for the atrocities it wrought during war (Japan, Statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, 1995). All countries affected by Japan accepted the apology except for Korea. Korea and Japan still haven't resolved the comfort women issue. The South Korean government principally wants a personal, formal apology from Japan, and Japan feels as if it's done enough already with the Murayama and Kono statements (Kelly, 2015). Therefore, this issue has been placed on hold while the focus has shifted towards the tensions about the Dokdo Islands land dispute.

### **Dokdo Islands**

South Korea calls the islands in the East/Japan Sea Dokdo, which means solitary islands. Japan calls it Takeshima, which means bamboo islands. Japan, South Korea and North Korea claim the islands. However, the island ownership dispute mainly lies between Japan and South Korea. ("Dokdo/Takeshima Islands," 2012). Although comfort women still remains to be a major issue discussed in present day South Korea, the Dokdo Islands is considered to be more prevalent and more dangerous. The claim over the Dokdo /Takeshima islands isn't new; however, the rhetoric disseminated amongst South Koreans is that Japan plans to use the islands to invade South Korea again. Considering the island is a short distance east of South Korean land, strategically speaking, it is possible. And historically, Japan has invaded Korea before (albeit not through Dokdo) and generally, South Koreans fear it happening again. Additionally, there are some natural resources

on Dokdo, although, apparently not enough to warrant a major dispute. The major concern here stems from the idea of another Japanese invasion and annexation, not for resources from the island.

There are unresolved historical issues, and the subject of Dokdo has permeated South Korea's society (and public schools) similarly to how the comfort women have. The credulous rhetoric of Japan militarizing to invade Korea again (through Dokdo) has even been publicized through a South Korean Newspaper called the Korea Times, despite there being no evidence that Japan is militarizing anywhere (Min-Uck, 2012).

### **Tensions within the Education System**

South Korean students experience formal education in two primary ways: state-run education and private tutoring services set up as after-school programs. The public school education system is another sphere where anti-Japanese sentiment seems to be present. When Japan annexed Korea in 1910, Japanese officials took over and tried to turn the previously neglected Korean public school system into a model of pro-Japanese modern education (Hall, 2015). This act incorporated forms of cultural suppression, as the Japanese tried to ban the Korean language (as well as other items), and instead substituted Japanese for Korean instead. Details surrounding the above actions by the Japanese government are often left out of Japanese textbooks, which has caused strife between South Korea and Japan, but also China.

For years, the Chinese and South Koreans have accused Japan of whitewashing (or conveniently not discussing) war crimes and injustices the country committed before and during World War 2, particularly and conveniently not including them in textbooks (Brender, 2005). The controversies regarding the textbooks date back to the beginning of the early 1990's and have continued into the present, particularly concerning the Dokdo issue. When a new textbook

edition for Japanese middle schools was released and stated that the Dokdo islands are Japanese territory under international law (whereas the previous edition stated Japan merely had historical claims to the islands), South Koreans protested harshly and, most prominently, politicians and citizens in South Korea and China used legislation, press conferences, and street protests to highlight textbook representations perceived as minimizing Japanese atrocities.

In fact, little is known or debated when it comes to understanding what Japanese students read about the Korean War (Yonghee Suh, 2008, p.54). A fact which frustrates many South Koreans (as told to me by numerous South Koreans). Thus, when any relevant information pertaining to the Korean War is discovered, it is often scrutinized. An example would be the contentious issue with the lack of reference in textbooks to comfort women and forced laborers from the 35-year occupation of Korea by the Japanese military (Card, 2005). This specific controversy can be traced back to January 11, 1992,

when a scoop in the *Asahi* newspaper forced the Japanese government to retract its previous denials of ‘involvement’ in the running of ‘comfort stations’, and apologize to the ‘comfort women’ (the 200,000 mainly Korean women, most of whom had been tricked or coerced into working as prostitutes in Japan's infamous military brothels). With the official admission of ‘involvement’, mention of the ‘comfort women’ in textbooks could no longer be blocked by the Ministry of Education. (Seaton, 2005, p. 290)

On the other hand, preliminary investigations with public school teachers in South Korea indicate that South Korean public schools may have extensive lessons concerning the annexation and actions against South Korea by Japan. Thus, the lack of clarity with both Dokdo and the

comfort women specifically (although there are many other subjects) in the Japanese textbooks have increased tensions between the Japanese and the South Korean governments.

In South Korean classrooms, all levels of public school are taught in special classes (classes not normally included in the curriculum) focusing on Korea's sovereign rights over Dokdo, comfort women, war crimes, etc., with lesson plans supplied by the Korea Federation of Teachers' Associations, whose job is also to ensure they are providing quality public education and professional teachers (Card, 2005). All other textbooks are produced by South Korea's Ministry of Education. It is also important to note the popularity and growing expenditure of "shadow education," which (again) is private tutoring services (*Hogwons*) for additional academia after public school (Shouse, 2011). Students may also learn more about these issues in these academic institutions that are separate from public school education and may prove to be a vital source in introducing new information, supplementing information already learned in school, increased sharing of existing ideas (through different peers and teachers outside of public school), etc.

Considering the inaccurate history (or lack thereof) in Japanese public school textbooks, it may not be surprising to fathom that South Korean public schools have adopted their own opposition. The most disturbing images of Japan by South Korean public school students, were drawings on exhibit at Gyulhyeon Station on the Incheon subway line. The crayon sketches from the students of Gyeyang Middle School (a public school in Seoul) depicted the Japanese islands either awash in flames or getting bombed, stabbed or stomped (Card, 2005). Additionally, there are numerous protests against Japan every year, most of which are peaceful but a few where violence occurs. Some of the protests which have occurred are against Japan having a permanent

seat on the United Nations Security Council, textbook controversies, comfort women, the use of chemical and biological weapons on Koreans, etc. The protests are essentially reminders to South Koreans of what the Japanese have done to them historically, therefore reinforcing the need for the education system and the educators within to teach the unfortunate events which happened in the past.

### **Summary**

Although the history between Korea and Japan has been put in the past for some people, it isn't easy for others to move on effortlessly. In addition, there is a substantial amount of South Koreans (typically younger) who live, work and study in Japan (Powers, 2001). There is also the phenomenon of welcoming of Japanese culture such as *anime* and manga, for example (Powers, 2001). On the other hand, the structure of trade between Japan and South Korea is characterized by a chronic deficit on the South Korean side. Despite this, the relationship has continued to expand steadily. According to South Korean statistics, South Korea's exports to Japan in 2010 have doubled since 1990, while imports from Japan tripled. The imports/exports continue to grow steadily, thus making both countries dependent on each other when it concerns trade, despite the somewhat volatile political relationship (Mukoyama, 2012).

The brief presentation of Korean and Japanese history above identifies a number of tensions between the two countries and suggests there may be a presence of anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korea. Although Japan and South Korea are currently on neutral terms, a lot of antipathy with the South Korean people seems to still exist. Considering the historical incidents presented thus far, it is possible that the curriculum may incorporate anti-Japanese sentiment. However, the curriculum may not be overt, thus increasing the possibility of a hidden

curriculum. In this next section, I provide an overview of the concept of curriculum, both overt and hidden, and related key theories.

### **Conceptual Framework: Overt and hidden curriculum**

Academics both historically and contemporarily have struggled to provide a concrete definition of what curriculum is. Due to its intricate nature, there are many reasons why it is difficult to provide a sustainable and applicable definition across all fields. However, for the purpose of this paper, curriculum will be defined as the knowledge, principles, values, and skills that are intended to be transferred to students (Tierney, 1993). Although broad, this definition incorporates the necessary components which make up the curriculum: knowledge, principles, principles and skills are all valuable assets which are typically learned in two major settings. The first being socially: the home and society in general. The second being school, both formally and informally. This capstone study functions to examine the second setting in ample detail

Generally, education systems deliver curriculum in two main ways: overtly and covertly. The covert curriculum refers to the hidden curriculum (of which this paper emphasizes) and is also known as the unwritten curriculum. “It is the curriculum that forms part of state and district curriculum guides. It is curriculum intended to ensure that educational goals of the system are fulfilled. It can also be defined as curriculum of control” (Warinda-Ndanga, 2006, p. 2). The overt curriculum transfers to recipients via lectures, tests, presentations, etc., but can also include other methods as well.

For the purpose of this study, I focus on the curriculum in public schools, particularly the curriculum related to Japan. Based on the evidence provided within this paper below, it can be assumed that both overt and covert information may communicate messages to learners about

Japan and the relationship between Japan and South Korea. This segues into the more relevant theory of hidden curriculum.

### **Literature Review**

The hidden curriculum accompanies the overt curriculum and can be defined in a multitude of ways encompassing both positive and negative elements. According to Feinberg and Soltis (2009), the “hidden curriculum refers to the organizational features and routines of school life that provide the structure needed to develop the psychological dispositions appropriate for work and citizenship in industrial society” (p.19). Complementing the previous definition, Giroux (as cited in Clarke, 2002, p. 148) says, the “hidden curriculum is a powerful medium by which unstated norms, values and beliefs are embedded in and transmitted to students through the underlying rules that structure the routines and social relationships in school and classroom life” (p. 43). An even more relevant definition (regarding the South Korean context) is provided by Czajkowski and King (1975) where “the hidden curriculum influences perceptions, attitudes and sensitivities, which in turn impacts what children see of the world and how they deal with it. It involves the fact that the educational environment communicates expectations and view of man, and forms an intrinsic part of the children’s learning” (p. 279). Each of these definitions of hidden curriculum contains the concept of a created construction on how students, and by extension, young people and later adults, may contribute to their society as aware and active citizens. The various factors contributing to the hidden curriculum can vary. However, what is essential is that students learn these elements through the centralized experience of the school system.

By definition, the hidden curriculum is not always explicit, nor is it transparent, however, that doesn’t always necessarily make it negative. In fact, there are both beneficial and harmful

effects of the hidden curriculum on behavior. According to Wren (1999), “the hidden curriculum can work synonymously with the formal curriculum, encourage active involvement in the community, and valuing successful competition in the working world had a positive effect on students’ skills, beliefs and attitudes towards work” (p. 594-595). Conversely, the hidden curriculum can cause discipline problems for students who have difficulty internalizing classroom rules and daily routines, as well as promote student reluctance to challenge teachers on educational issues (Wren, 1999). Considering the positive and negative effects of the hidden curriculum, it is vital to note the hidden curriculum may, or may not have an intended effect. Moreover, the hidden curriculum may cause an adverse effect or alternatively, accentuate an idea, belief, etc., which may not have been originally designed to be received in that specific manner. The effects of hidden curriculum are thus, ambiguous factors in different educational systems and can change them significantly.

Any educational system can be considered complex in its own regard. Each system is tailored specifically to the environment and generally erected with a common language, culture and set belief system. Additionally, according to Roth (2007), educational systems are a collection of groups and communities that can be described as having defined inputs and outputs accomplished by individuals with designated boundaries, roles, authority and tasks. Although multifaceted, schools (especially public/governmental schools) are commonly directed to transmit centralized information to the citizens of that respective country and/or community. Schools are influential sites which can dictate students’ perspectives significantly. In fact, Kubow and Fossum (2007) posits that schools adopt many structures which seem aimed at the maintenance of predictability and stability (p.36), aligning with a Structural-Functionalist approach. In this regard, schools are considered by some, to be an agent of socialization due to

the potential effect they can have over students, especially South Korean students who are in public and private schools for most of their academic life. Emile Durkheim, a famous French sociologist, psychologist, and philosopher (as cited in Carbanaro, 2005) conjectures that:

the main function of schooling was to teach individuals the norms of the society in which they lived. On the one hand, education must provide children with the ‘ideas, sentiments, and practices’ that are necessary for society have some degree of cohesion. On the other hand, schools must provide children with the ‘particular aptitudes and specialized knowledge’ that are demanded by the particular milieu that they will occupy in life. (p. 2)

Thus, schools have substantial impact on students’ lives and perspectives which many may carry throughout a lifetime. The impacts of an educational system can shape the socialization of a student considerably, and not necessarily for the better. Depending on the volatility of the content transferred from the school to the recipients, the socialization of students can either benefit or harm them on a domestic and international level. Regardless, schools as agents of socialization can have a profound impact on students.

As an example, in South Korea, the rhetoric of anti-Japanese sentiment is prevalent culturally, socially and educationally. Specifically focusing on education, the rhetoric derives from a multitude of topics revolving around Japan’s historical actions against South Korea, such as the subject of comfort women, and the more modern actions; for instance, the alleged imminent invasion of South Korea through the Dokdo islands. Although some of the material covered is in the formal curriculum, therein also exists a portion of content which is considered informal within the existence of shadow education which was mentioned in previous paragraphs.

Regarding the complex relationship between South Korea and Japan, the hidden curriculum may create a sense of nationalism and unity within South Korea against Japan, but it may also create an alternate effect, where South Korea progresses past its history and doesn't fall in with nationalistic beliefs. However, the latter may not appropriately pertain here as the *minjok*, or race-based Korean nationalism, is prevalent in South Korean society, especially against South Korea's historical enemies. In fact, even the national pledge of allegiance was to the *minjok* rather than the democratic state of South Korea (Kelly, 2015). Thus, the hidden curriculum may affect the behavior of students in a multitude of ways. Despite this, the hidden curriculum revolving around the demonization of Japan and Japanese people seems to be ubiquitous as I have experienced through my observations and conversations with South Koreans, US Americans and foreigners from other countries as well. Although it may not be completely visible, a hidden curriculum, seems probable, and is being generated by South Korean public school educators in some way.

The benefits of knowing what is being taught in South Korean public schools combined with what is being taught in Japanese public schools can lead to additional steps which may provide an open discussion of how to properly and accurately educate citizens in both countries. This study aims to fill a small portion of a huge gap in exploring the existing anti-Japanese sentiment further. Considering I am currently in South Korea, the opportunity to thoroughly learn more about this topic is intriguing and enlightening. Now that I have provided an overview of the concept of curriculum and hidden curriculum, I next provide an introduction to the research methodology that will guide the present study.

## Research Methodology

In order to address the research question of how recent South Korean graduates of South Korea's public high schools in the Daejeon region view Japan, Japanese culture, and Japanese people and the influence of educational experiences on those views, this study employs qualitative methods, principally relying on interviews. Qualitative research allows for ample amount of flexibility for participants to share their experiences through the interview process (Trent, 2006). It provides open avenues for exploration which is necessary when traversing a complex topic; such as the one being addressed here. Additionally, it may also be beneficial in either aligning or opposing observed and reported patterns thus far. The next paragraph will delineate how conducting interviews for this research was an appropriate choice for this study.

As Agee (2009) states, "Qualitative inquiries involve asking the kinds of questions that focus on the why and how of human interactions" (p.432). Moreover, these inquiries may reveal the intricate and minor details of cultural, social and regional aspects which can significantly shape individual perspectives in various ways. In the case of this present study, semi-structured interviews allowed me to explore each individual's experience in Korean public schools while also determining other factors which may affect students' perspectives on Japan. For the purposes of this IPIC study, I have completed 10 interviews with participants whose academic backgrounds include vocational and traditional colleges and in fields such as engineering, electronics, English, and Chemistry.

This study focuses on the Daejeon region of South Korea which is generally located in the middle of the country (see appendix B for a map). It is important to note that although all of the participants were interviewed in the Daejeon region of South Korea, a portion of the participants do come from other regions, and either work or attend school in Daejeon. This

however may or may not change the experiences of the participants due to the fact that all of them did attend public schools in South Korea.

Daejeon is an area which concentrates on research and technological advancement; hence the great number of universities and research facilities here. In fact, there is an area called “techno valley” which supposedly emulates Silicon Valley in California. Thus, the sampling for this research was a combination of both convenience and purposeful sampling strategies. Convenience sampling simply for the fact that participants were within easy reach through communication, traveling and the amount of high schools and universities within the Daejeon area. Purposeful sampling was utilized through the criteria in which the participants met regarding their public school affiliation and age group. In addition to the accessibility, it was also a prime location to recruit recent graduates (up to 7 years after graduation) of South Korean public schools because the chances of this group being able to communicate in English is higher; in addition to the number of universities (such as KAIST, Woosong, Chungnam, etc.) in the area which easily provided the population I needed.

I invited students to participate in the study through two of the Facebook groups that I am involved in as a *Hogwon* teacher/general foreigner and graduate student: one focused solely for educational and research purposes; which has about 4,774 members. The other is a simply a regional community group which has about 9,777 members. In order to recruit participants for the study, I posted a description of the study and an invitation to take part (see appendix) and took the first 10 people who private messaged me with interest in addition to 5 people for reserves.

The interviews were semi-structured and I interviewed a total of ten people for about 30 minutes each. The participants needed to have at least conversational English to partake in the interview. I recorded and saved each interview on a password protected device. I informed each

participant that their records would be deleted upon request but none of the participants have requested this action. Otherwise, the recordings and the transcriptions remain in my records under a password. In order to provide confidentiality to participants, each participant chose a pseudonym to which they are referred to throughout the research. Their real names are known to me and again, are in records which are protected by a password. Participation was voluntary; and if the participant was ever uncomfortable with providing answers with the principal investigator in person (orally), then they could have requested the interview questions can be sent to them individually to which they could've returned via hardcopy or email (written) in English. Alternatively, they could've opted out of the question altogether. My approach to the analysis of this topic was to remain as unbiased as possible throughout the research. For this reason, I carefully listened and transcribed interviews accurately; while also finding items that were frequent, omitted and/or emphasized by participants. Additionally, creating relationships and a taxonomy of items for the pre-determined and emergent topics also helped considerably increase the accuracy of the data. This allowed me to identify themes and link patterns easier and provided opportunities to suggest solutions to the problem.

### **Limitations**

Like all studies, this study has a number of limitations. These limitations include the population being sampled and the biases that arise from my own experiences and perspectives that I will bring to the reporting and analysis of data. As I indicated above, I am still relatively new to South Korea (having lived here a year at the time of writing) and am still developing an understanding of the culture, history, language, etc. Also, I equally know very little of Japan. Considering this can be a sensitive topic for South Koreans, and I am a foreigner conducting this research, the possibility of South Koreans being interviewed and surveyed answering with a bias

may increase. Alternatively, my outsider/foreigner identity may result in more candid responses from study participants.

Additionally, I am a beginner of the Korean language, therefore increasing the chances of making certain source materials written in Korean and translated to English less accurate. Yet, it was unnecessary to translate any of the source materials used in this study. Now considering I am not able to do a thorough document analysis due to the language barrier which would further triangulate the data in my study, it is important to take as many components of the topic and bring it into focus in order to compensate. It is also important to mention that since I do not know the Korean language, all of the participants needed to have a sufficient amount of English to participate in the interviews. This narrowed the population significantly and, as a result, may not represent the greater portion of recent South Korean high school graduates. Regarding translation, linguistically speaking, there may be some items provided by the participants which may have been lost in translation or could not be translated appropriately, and since this is a complex topic, these details can be crucial to providing precise research. With that said, I did not conduct any translations, but rather encouraged the participants to find the most accurate terminology/translations for their opinions when the situation did arise.

Ideally, this research should be done with an impartial person who is fluent in Korean, Japanese and Chinese. This will allow them to accurately identify, translate and analyze the different histories, language intricacies and slang, and academic works not translated into English, while also being able to conduct observations and document/textbook analysis' in public schools. However, and interestingly, some participants conveyed their comfort in sharing their opinions with a foreigner who doesn't share the same history as Japan as China and Korea does. Therefore, the participants' sincerity and freedom of expression were, in my opinion, more frank and open.

## **Data Analysis**

In conducting the analysis, I expected to find polarizing results due to my experiences and preliminary various interactions, observations and discussions with South Koreans in school (as an English teacher) and in society as well. Thus, I did use a few pre-established coded themes which included: Dokdo, comfort women, and general annexation period of Korea. I chose these specific themes as it reflected my experiences and research up until the point of the interviews and was confident they would appear during the interview process. I transcribed my interviews and constructed my analysis through thematic coding using the pre-established themes in addition to identifying new themes which emerged throughout the process. I did not use a database to sort the data, I did however use a bulletin board in order to organize the various information into two major categories. The first category being the overarching/major themes while the second encompassed the classification of the sub themes/sections.

## **Presentation and Analysis of Data**

In this section, I present the findings from the interviews I conducted with the 10 participants regarding anti-Japanese sentiment in Korean public schools. This analysis falls into four major themes followed by sub sections (indicated by letters) which are correlated with each of the major themes. The major themes which I established through the analysis process and are comprised around hidden curriculum are: information learned in school, media influences, transition of individual/participant feelings, and notable discoveries. These major themes developed as a result of the hand coding process I conducted.

## Information Learned in School

### A) *Annexation Period*

As discussed in the Background section, the annexation period of Korea by Japan is not something that won't be forgotten, or forgiven by many Koreans. In fact, according to all of the participants, it is the primary focus of Korean history class and the foundation of what students learn about Japan. As an illustration, one participant, Natalie, remembers learning from her teacher that when "Korea was colonized, it was very brutal...so brutal that you cannot even imagine the brutality" (Interview). The brutality she is referring to conducted by the Japanese was in fact learned by all of the participants. Subway, another participant remembers learning about some of the human experiments he learned in school, stating:

There were some notorious human experiments, like, you know, boiling the pot and put a person there and see what the maximum temperature they can endure...or like, you know, cutting peoples nose and ears for no reason, and be like overly cruel to children on the street, and women. (Interview)

Subway is referring specifically to Unit 731's actions (an infamous Japanese military unit which participated in human experimentation) in this context; but in general, Japanese brutality and cruelty during this period is well documented. Especially because Korea was not the only country to incur these acts. China, specifically, can closely relate to Korea through the Nanjing Massacre and other similar events as noted in Peter Li's (2017) book, *Japanese War Crimes*. What the participants learned in this regard can also be corroborated by *Japanese War Crimes*, where Li (2017) states that Asian victims want justice for:

the forced relocation to Japan of Chinese and Korean slave laborers who toiled under brutal conditions in civil engineering, mining and heavy industry; indiscriminate machine-gunning, incendiary shelling, and bombing of civilian targets in China; the extermination of villages in Manchuria by murder, pillage and burning; the illegal use of biological and chemical weapons in warfare and of human subjects for biological and chemical weapons research; the vivisection and murder of human subject for purposes of medical education and experimentation; ongoing and often fatal environmental degradation caused by poison gas and bombs abandoned by the Japanese military after the defeat; the systematic looting of hundreds of thousands of irreplaceable books from Chinese libraries; and the plundering of Asia's wealth, including gold, cash, and art objects that were removed to Japan (p.8).

Participants reported that all of the above acts in addition to the stealing of resources, suppression of language and culture, conscripting non-Japanese soldiers, etc., have been conveyed to the participants in school via textbooks, lectures, school films, etc. Despite the above atrocities however, the participants also learned about comfort women which can be argued is the most serious act of cruelty conducted by the Japanese. I will turn to this topic in the next section.

### *B) Comfort Women*

The comfort women (along with the other Japanese brutalities) and Dokdo islands (see below) seem to be the most common subjects surrounding anything relating to Japan in South Korea. But comfort women are considered to be among the most serious because a lot of the women who were affected by sexual slavery are still alive today. Referring back to the background section, a large number of Korean women were taken to be sexual slaves for

Japanese military personnel. Although the methods of gaining comfort women are many, the fact remains that Korean women were used primarily for sexual purposes at the behest of the Japanese military. There are even statues commemorating these women in South Korea and there are often tensions between South Korea and Japan concerning this exact subject. Lisa, another participant, remembered learning about comfort women in school and when she had the opportunity, she bought “bracelets to support them”.

Every participant mentioned learning about the comfort women in school and the majority of them indicated their understanding that Japan hasn't truly apologized for taking these women as sex slaves. I say truly because an apology was given (as stated in the literature review) but many South Koreans believe this is not a legitimate and sincere apology due to the language that was used. Apparently, there are a couple ways to say apologize in Japanese. One way being that someone apologizes for something even though it is not their fault. Conversely, the alternative way is for someone to apologize and take responsibility for the action because it was their fault. According to some of the participants, the latter was not the apology received, thus making it, in their eyes, invalid. However, one participant, Bell, stated that she

watched a video with one man who apologized sincerely for the comfort women, and that video affected me because I know it's difficult to speak out about personal things so why can the Japanese government not accept the same attitude about what they did. (Interview)

In this case, some South Koreans (including Bell) may have already accepted the apology and moved on, but in my opinion, it surely isn't the majority.

### *C) Dokdo Islands*

Comfort women and Dokdo islands are probably the most popular present day topics concerning Japan. As mentioned in the Background, many countries lay claim to the Dokdo islands but most South Koreans believe it belongs to them. Participants provided testimonials for these beliefs and all participants mentioned Dokdo as being a critical point in current politics. For example, according to Hyungi, “Japan argues that Dokdo is theirs and the world map says that Dokdo belongs to Japan” (Interview) which is one of the reasons why there is such an upheaval about it.

Leo supports the above statement when he says, “they (Japan) pretend that Dokdo is their islands but officially, there is a document to prove that it is our territory” (Interview). Additionally, students in South Korean public schools are taught a song claiming that Dokdo belongs to them (which is mentioned in detail in a later section). Evidently, there are some major problems concerning the Dokdo islands. On the one hand, the islands apparently belong to Japan and even has a special day for it called “*Takeshima Day*” while Dokdo also belongs to South Korea and even has residents living there. In fact, South Korea also has a holiday called “*Dokdo Day*” (Cockburn, 2013). Even though Dokdo is not an especially important island to South Korea, it does represent a reminder of Japanese domination historically, which is the crux of conversation in public education (as it pertains to Japan) and in general society as well. Thus, Dokdo seems to serve as a reminder of Japanese control and its continuing controversy acts as a reminder of the exerted dominion Japan had over Korea which is a point consistently conveyed in the education system and consequently serves as a component of the hidden curriculum.

#### *D) Relation to Hidden Curriculum of Information Learned in School*

The sections outlined above all associate with the overt curriculum, as it seems to be purposefully included and imbedded into the students’ learning. It is controlled and intended to

send a clear message to its students which is then intensified with the media as will be delineated in the following section.

## **Media Influences**

### *A. Social Media*

The progression and capabilities of social media on a global scale has been astounding. In the US alone, according to a Pew research study, 62 percent of people get their news from social media with 18 percent doing so very often (Crook, 2016). Although these statistics can't be applied directly to South Korea, there is some pertinent information which should be considered as it relates to social media. South Korea is a world leader concerning internet connectivity, in fact, the download speed in Seoul is 47 Mbps-which is five times faster than the average cable modem in the U.S. (Steimle, 2015).

Internet connectivity is quite prominent in South Korea, thus allowing people to access it easier and faster. Additionally, social media in South Korea is also a major proponent in the daily life of its citizens with 48 million people using Kakaotalk on a monthly basis, 14 million using Line and a large portion of people who left Cyworld (a social media website) for Facebook in 2011, social media is no stranger to the South Korean population (Steimle, 2015). How does this relate to the topic at hand? Well, it relates significantly as many of the participants claimed reading articles, receiving news and other information regarding Japan through social media. Natalie says that information about Japan comes from many sources but “especially these days, social media” is the biggest source. In fact, Natalie says,

I read many articles by Facebook, and sometimes I am curious about how other people from other countries think about that (comfort women and Dokdo) issue. So, I was in a

group and I read some articles and comments where people are talking, and I was sometimes very surprised because some foreigners are very cynical towards the relationship between Korea and Japan and some people said like ‘oh, look at all the negative sentiment towards Japan by Korean people’ and sometimes I feel that sentiment too. (Interview)

In this example, social media has not only been able to spread information amongst people domestically, but also internationally. Natalie was able to understand her negative feelings towards Japan more after learning how people from other countries viewed and analyzed the situation. Natalie’s realization of her feelings allowed her to process and compare the information she learned in school to the experiences she was having in actuality. This transformation epitomizes the effectiveness of the education system regardless of the material being circulated within it.

### *B. Mass Media*

The education system is a prime location to receive a plethora of information and can have profound influences on an individual. Like social media, it isn’t uncommon for many people to also receive their information/news through mass media outlets such as newspapers, news stations, comedy shows, etc. This remains true for the participants of this study as well since all of the participants claimed to have received various amounts of information about Japan through these sources. Surprisingly, one participant, Yolo, shares that she learned about comfort women from the news first, before school.

Additionally, Leo claims that he learned about “the comfort women through articles...about 99 percent articles in Naver (most popular search engine in Korea). “That is

where all my information comes from. All mass media...I also learned and read about the current situation with Dokdo” (Interview, Leo).

Furthermore, Bruce says he “definitely learned a lot by the media because it has news and many information about Japan but I can’t remember everything” (Interview). However, later in the interview, Bruce remembered learning from the media that Japan “did something violent...violent ways to treat some Koreans, to deal with Koreans. Like, they torture Koreans” (Interview).

Taking these experiences into consideration, it seems as if the media is also a prominent force and source of information to the citizens. In this case, South Korean media is a stark opponent of Japan and has in some cases, successfully permeated the perspectives of some people to be more nationalistic against Japan. According to Subway, “education in the initial stages are crucial and is very influential because children just absorb what they learn...because of that, the media is making it worse” (Interview). Essentially, a combination of factors can be at play here. One factor being the education system of South Korean citizens teaches its students information about Japan and the media exacerbates the information learned. The second factor would be the opposite of the first. And the third factor is that both the education system and media are working together simultaneously and harmoniously. This idea refers to a structural functionalist perspective from Kubow and Fossum (2007) as it conveys and reinforces values that nurture students' societal participation in line with mainstream social values rather than in opposition to those values (p.37). Since South Korea is considered to be a “nationalistic country” according to Natalie (Interview), the systems of education and media working synonymously may not be farfetched.

### *C. Accuracy of Media as Compared to School*

At the time of writing this, in the US it isn't completely uncommon to hear the expression "fake news" hurled around on a regular basis. Many people doubt the information they receive and the integrity of media outlets are constantly treading a thin line. How does this apply to South Korea? Do the people feel the same about their media outlets? When I asked participants if the information they received from school and the media was accurate, half of the participants believed school was accurate and the media isn't, whereas half believed the opposite. Hyungi said everything she learned was accurate "because the government said that, textbooks said that, teachers said that, and it is official information" (Interview). Hyungi's statement attests to the various sources of information which can freely mold individuals' perceptions on a multitude of levels. This not only includes school systems, media, family, etc., but can also exist within personal relationships, experiences abroad, employment, etc.

Bell mentioned that "the information in school is 100% accurate because many people know; even the news, and you can search the internet so you can find it easily" (Interview). Conversely, when asked about the media, Hyungi says "it's not 100% accurate...but, most of it is accurate I think. But, the media includes their personal thinking so...it has bias" (Interview). Alternatively, Subway says,

I could feel that the content I received (in school) was a bit biased, even when I was a young kid, so, I already knew I was kind of brainwashed and like, so that's the reason why I didn't really think what I learned in school might be 100% right. So, I think I more trusted what I learned by myself...from the media or from the web. (Interview)

Leo similarly feels the same as Subway. Leo says, "Most people say the media is corrupt and not accurate. But in my opinion, the media is accurate because there is proof and objective content" (Interview).

Subway and Leo believes the content in school was biased rather than the media that Bell feels as biased. Hyungi however, believes everything because all of these sources of information generally share the same information. With the government, textbooks, teachers and media outlets dispersing information synonymously together, it isn't surprising to comprehend the high level of trust people of South Korea have in the information they receive via education and media even though some people think certain sources of information is biased, other sources are considered to be accurate and therefore can be trusted.

#### *D. Relation of Hidden Curriculum to Media Influences*

Although the media may not play a substantial role in the public education system directly, it is however, a crux of learning for students and plays a substantial role in the learning process. For these reasons, I believe the media is a momentous element in the overt/hidden curriculum in South Korea's public schools. It conveys information on how students and people in general should feel towards Japan, while also influencing these perceptions through various channels.

### **Transition of Feelings towards Japan and Japanese People**

#### *A) Contact with Japanese People*

People's minds are often docile and malleable, making it rather easy to influence and manipulate. However, through experience, individuals are generally able to develop their own perspectives. A lot of the participants discussed not liking Japan or its people. But when the participants traveled to and/or met Japanese people, their perceptions shifted considerably. For example, Lisa says,

when I was in school, I thought Japan was bad people because I heard that from many adults, and media and friends. But when I went to San Diego, I met a lot of Japanese friends and I have a Japanese uncle as well and they made me change the view of Japan because they're so amazing and they are just normal people, same as Korean. So, thanks to them, I changed my view. (Interview)

Elizabeth also had similar experiences to Lisa, but Elizabeth traveled to Japan. She says, "before, I felt that Japan was bad people so I don't eat sushi or eat Japanese food...but now I have a different thinking of Japan. I met Japanese people, they are very kind, and the street, they don't throw out the trash and they speak very quietly and politely" (Interview, Elizabeth). Likewise, Bell had parallel experiences. She says, "now, I met a lot of Japanese people. I also have Japanese friends, but before I met them I still view Japanese people with negative eyes and prejudice" (Interview, Bell).

Subway studied abroad in Japan and has spent a substantial amount of time there. His views on Japanese people are especially interesting because they do not sway more towards positivity or negativity, rather, more of a neutral outlook:

Japanese people are humans, so they can be angry, and they can be upset, and they can be irrational and rational, but you know like, current people somewhat have stereotypes that Japanese people are more patient and overly nice to others but like, you know, when it comes to real life, it's not that fantasy or theory. People are people; they also have the same problems, like corruption in their politics. Japan is not perfect. (Interview, Subway)

Through interactions with Japan and/or Japanese people, many participants' original perspectives of Japan were challenged and ultimately, changed. The effects of the hidden curriculum

however, did remain present until these experiences took place, which shows the power of hidden curriculum integrated into people's lives. Furthermore, these experiences also represent various spaces where individuals can exchange ideas which could alter and/or enforce beliefs. As seen with the experiences of the participants above, their perceptions had shifted through their involvements with Japanese people through a school/educational setting; mainly through study abroad experiences in Japan, Canada and the US. Thus their educational system also became an avenue of exploration and understanding of Japanese culture rather than one of antipathy.

*B) Separation of Japanese People and Government*

During the interview process, I noticed the participants had often considered Japan and Japanese people in the same context. Although this was true in many circumstances, there were seven participants who believed that Japanese people and the government should be held accountable separately. For example, Thomas, another participant who has traveled to Japan, says, "I don't hate Japanese people but I don't like the Japanese government" (Interview). This statement closely correlates with a lot of the major issues between South Korea and Japan. South Koreans believe that the Japanese government has the responsibility to atone for their past aggressions and hasn't properly done so which has only increased tensions between two countries and have prevented hopes of reconciliation. Lisa correspondingly says, "I think Korea and Japan have a good relationship between the citizens; the normal people. I think the bad relationship only happens between the governments" (Interview, Lisa). This statement also makes sense as there are a large number of people from both countries who travel, work and study on a normal basis. Also, remember the strong modern economic partnership between the two countries as well.

Elizabeth, another one of the participants whose views changed after traveling to Japan, says, “if Japan admits past history faults, they will be the best country. They have to admit their faults and publicly...like Abe [Prime Minister of Japan], and with Dokdo problem and history problem and other things” (Interview, Elizabeth). While some participants are able to distinguish between the Japanese government and Japanese people as a result of their experiences, the average South Korean may be unable too. This effect may be accidentally or purposefully caused by the hidden curriculum and may possibly continue if not addressed.

*C) Relation to Hidden Curriculum to the Transition of Feelings Towards Japan/Japanese People*

Though the participants’ experiences outlined above are not directly linked to hidden curriculum, it does show how both, the positive and negative outcomes of incorporating and implementing such a curriculum can have on the students and their future involvements in their society.

**Notable Topics**

*A) Dokdo Song*

In South Korean elementary schools, there is a song concerning the Dokdo islands that is circulated, and when translated to English, means “Dokdo is Ours”<sup>2</sup>. Two participants distinctly remember learning this song. Subway says, “this song is used to brainwash elementary kids” (Interview, Subway). Natalie also says she learned this song and it contributed to her belief (along with other evidence which came from teachers) that Dokdo belonged to Korea.

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<sup>2</sup> The song link and translation can be found in Appendix E

This song, alongside short films watched by students in school relating to comfort women and wartime atrocities are all included in the overt curriculum and has shown to have significant effects on students throughout their lives.

### *B) Japanese Economic Contributions*

Even though Japan's colonization is overwhelmingly believed to be horrendous, there are certain aspects of the annexation which can be considered a positive outcome of Japan's influences. Subway says his teacher told him that:

Japan built highways, influential railroads from Seoul to Busan, you know like, a bus system; mainly transportation. Also, they were more organized I think, because at that time, I was taught Korea society was poor and unorganized, because like, we had a dynasty system...so they were killing us and helping us at the same time. (Interview, Subway)

Granted, the transportation system was not intentionally supposed to help Korea directly (as it was supposed to help Japan's movement of soldiers and resources), it did help inadvertently and provided a foundation for when Korea gained its independence.

Thomas also shares similar information that he learned in school, stating "Japan constructed architecture, railroads and cow [sic] roads, so we can have economic growth. Like what the British did with India" (Interview, Thomas). Although Thomas does remember learning this information, he contributes it to the pro-Japanese movements and writings, which according to him, are included into some textbooks and curriculums because of Japanese sympathizers.

### *C) Shadow Education*

Earlier in this paper, I introduced the fact that most students in South Korea attend Hogwons (after school academies) in order to continue their studies after public school. I alluded to the possibility of students learning more about Japan while attending Hogwons but none of the participants remembered learning anything relating to Japan. In fact, and unsurprisingly, most of the participants went to Hogwons to study math, science, and English; which happen to be some of the most important subjects to study in South Korea. Therefore, the public education system remains the most prominent source of where students learn about Japan according to the responses of the participants and thus, Hogwons don't play a primary role in this study.

#### *D) Nationalist Teachers and a Teachers Union*

Throughout the interviews I conducted, half of the participants claimed having teachers who seemed to be more nationalistic as compared to others. Subway had an experience he distinctly remembers having in middle school with a “crazy teacher.” Subway even recalls talking to his friends and recognizing that “there are quite a lot of crazy teachers who are overly nationalistic and offensive to Japan” (Interview). Subway continues by saying, “at first I was shocked because I felt he [the teacher] was too much, and afterwards, I figured out, they are everywhere” (Interview).

Everywhere is of course a broad term, but Subway wasn't necessarily wrong either. The union he mentioned in his interview is known as the Korean teachers and Education Workers Union (KTU) and is known as an “outcast group sympathetic to North Korea and anti-American. The union represents 20 percent of total teachers with membership reaching 80,000” (Shin-who, 2009, p. 1). With such a high number of members and possibly even more sympathizers, I wasn't astonished when the participants mentioned having teachers who utilized, supported and retorted rhetoric against Japan and other entities. This in fact, can be related to the hidden

curriculum as the KTU teachers are directly or indirectly influencing the perceptions of the students.

*E) Sharing Personal Opinions in a Public Atmosphere*

Sometimes, sharing our personal opinions publically can warrant unwanted attention, optimism, pessimism, support, threats, etc., and can ultimately alter an individual's civilian standing depending on the political and cultural structure of their country. South Korea is no exception, and half of the participants mentioned they would be smeared if they were to ever share their positive thoughts or experiences with South Korean people while the other half didn't mention anything regarding this topic. Elizabeth gives her opinion by saying, "almost everywhere and every newspaper says bad things about Japan, so to be honest, I cannot say very properly in front of other Koreans that, oh, Japan is not wrong or something...yea...it's a very complicated problem" (Interview). The fear in which some South Koreans have (like Natalie) about sharing their experiences and thoughts about Japan is an interesting concept. On one hand, these individuals have exclusive experiences with Japanese people which could shift South Koreans perceptions positively (or negatively of course). On the other, they are not given the opportunity or even the space to share such experiences, therefore creating a barrier which would be either very difficult to traverse or impossible to surpass. This notion may eventually need to be addressed if there is to be any type of progressive thinking within South Korea society.

*F) Korea and Vietnam*

South Korea may seem like an innocent victim throughout this paper, but like most, if not all nations around the world, South Korea has participated in its own appalling behaviors as well. The difference is however, is that a lot of this history is conveniently left out of the education

system (which may seem ironic as Japan occasionally does the same thing as was mentioned earlier), as three of the participants stated and seven didn't mention and possibly may be unaware of. I am referring to the Vietnam war and South Korea's active role in it. Natalie remembers being surprised when she learned about South Korea's actions in the Vietnam war. She says,

The main thing that was very shocking to me is, we were mainly taught that we were victims by the history, and by the war and by the colonization, but I didn't know that during the Vietnam war, Korea was in that war also and Korean people did many very bad things to Vietnamese people. So we were taught nothing about that in school. So, after that, we are not that different from Japanese people. (Interview, Natalie)

This is a powerful statement and to an extent, reflects the calculated and purposeful information being circulated within the education system. Although this doesn't relate to Japan directly, it does indirectly, as South Korea has essentially adopted a tactic that they themselves slander Japan for. This hypocrisy is known by a few participants, making them the minority and the outliers. Taking into consideration the fear that some South Koreans have about voicing their opinions, it seems rather improbable that this hypocrisy will be discussed internally. As Subway mentioned near the end of his interview which resonates significantly, "nobody is innocent" (Interview).

#### *G) Relation to Hidden Curriculum of Notable Topics*

The Dokdo song and the Japanese economic contributions are a part of the overt curriculum and thus are not included in the hidden curriculum. However, the shadow education system can be included in the covert curriculum, in this research, it does not have a vital role concerning Japan. But, the KTU surely does have a crucial role in the hidden curriculum as the

teacher's act as reagents to disseminate charged information to students. As a result, this can have an extensive role in students' education and has been iterated in previous sections. Furthermore, sharing controversial opinions and the lack of sharing of questionable and grotesque history between South Korea and Vietnam also fall within the hidden curriculum as it has formed a mindset in which anyone who shares differing opinions about the Japanese will automatically be ousted or treated differently in their society. I wouldn't necessarily call it brainwashing but it seems to be on the borderline. Additionally, the absence of South Koreans role in Vietnam can represent a greater bureaucratic and political influence which could be considered to be a part of the hidden curriculum as well as it seems to be made deliberately nonexistent.

## **Discussion**

In conclusion, the findings presented above have shown that students do receive an overabundance of information regarding Japan and its people in their public education. In most cases, the information received is negative; however, this doesn't necessarily mean it's inaccurate, especially considering the violent past between Korea and Japan (specifically, referring back to human experiments, forced conscription, extraction of resources, etc.). Regardless of the history, South Korean students' perspectives are tremendously shaped in viewing Japan and Japanese people as an enemy/adversary and has been consistently conveying this information through public education and general media sources. The shift in thinking towards a more positive approach in the participants' experiences in this research occurred mainly through personal interaction with Japanese people or the country itself. Without these interactions and experiences, the possibility of the participants' original perceptions shaped in school would likely still be the same.

I am unsure of which entities would benefit the most from the findings from this study. However, I hope that it serves as a guide to further understand how students' education can vastly formulate individuals' thinking from a foundational level, which may dictate their viewpoints for their whole life. The different types of curriculum combined with external forces/influences can have an intense inspiration on an individual. Schools not only propagate information (and in some cases, intensify it) but can also serve as a catalyst for an exchange and a birthplace of ideas which may be intentional or unintentional. It is crucial to understand the complexity and delicate nature of human beings' thinking and to tread carefully when choosing to bestow upon it certain critical, and in this case, deliberate information. It may be a benefit, yes. But it ultimately may be a downfall as well.

There is a multitude of recommendations for further research which should be explored in the future. The main idea I would suggest is to study what information is being disseminated amongst all media sources. It is clear in this research that the media plays an integral role in people's perspectives, thus, understanding the information being dispersed through media avenues will surely provide a more comprehensive understanding of the power and influence it has. Additionally, I think it would be astounding to see on a larger scale how South Koreans view the Japanese after completing their public school education and coming into contact with Japanese people and/or visiting the country itself to see how their standpoints have changed. If anything, the majority of the participants in this research had overwhelmingly opposite views of Japan and Japanese people after spending some time with them. I can only imagine the same results would be prevalent if a larger scaled study were to be conducted. On that note, I think it would be enlightening and intriguing to do a similar study (but reversed in its content) in Japan...meaning, how do Japanese people feel about South Koreans (or Koreans in general) and

what do they learn in public school which contribute to their thinking and feelings? If this data were to be effectively and sufficiently gathered, it could possibly create a new path in addressing historical scars and could eventually transform the current political disputes into solutions; where both nations and people can positively transcend and progress together. Furthermore, I think it would be interesting to implement similar research into what content teachers use (and where it came from exactly) as well as which information is being circulated on each level. Although this idea would probably warrant a separate study altogether, I think combining and comparing the data would surely be illuminating. Finally, conducting this research in the native language should be considered immensely. The amount of information deficient in this study could possibly be properly addressed with the appropriate material and evidence available in the Korean language. Moreover, it would also be beneficial for a person to understand Japanese as well, for the reasons previously stated, and because the research has shown that a lot of South Koreans do not believe the apology from Japan isn't sincere enough (despite multiple apologies on different subjects) simply due to the language that is being used. Ideally, a native speaker who would be able to ask similar questions to the ones I've posed in this study in Korean would most likely provide more viable and sufficient details necessary for completely grasping such a massive and unique subject.

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## **Appendix A-Facebook Post for Recruitment**

Hello Korean People!

Who wants free coffee and an interesting conversation that will help me complete my Master's Degree?

My name is Jamal Barbari and I am conducting research in partial fulfillment of my Masters Degree at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA. My research focuses on how South Koreans feel about Japan, and what was learned (if anything) in South Korean public schools which may have contributed to that perspective.

This research has been approved by my institution and I will be happy to provide documentation if you would like to confirm it.

I am looking to conduct 30-60 minute interviews with people who have graduated high school within the past 7 years. The interviews will be conducted in English. I wish I can do it in Korean but unfortunately my Korean is not that good! Please forgive me.

Additionally, we can have the interview wherever you would feel the most comfortable having this discussion. We can schedule a time and location which benefits you the most.

I want to keep this post brief but I will happily provide you with more information if you would like.

If you are interested, please contact me via Facebook, my email: [jamal.barbari@mail.sit.edu](mailto:jamal.barbari@mail.sit.edu) or my phone number: 010-4009-7405

Thank you for your time and I hope I am able to interview you about this fascinating topic!

Appendix B-Map of Korea



## Appendix C-Kono Statement

### **Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono on the result of the study on the issue of "comfort women"**

August 4, 1993

The Government of Japan has been conducting a study on the issue of wartime "comfort women" since December 1991. I wish to announce the findings as a result of that study.

As a result of the study which indicates that comfort stations were operated in extensive areas for long periods, it is apparent that there existed a great number of comfort women. Comfort stations were operated in response to the request of the military authorities of the day. The then Japanese military was, directly or indirectly, involved in the establishment and management of the comfort stations and the transfer of comfort women. The recruitment of the comfort women was conducted mainly by private recruiters who acted in response to the request of the military. The Government study has revealed that in many cases they were recruited against their own will, through coaxing, coercion, etc., and that, at times, administrative/military personnel directly took part in the recruitments. They lived in misery at comfort stations under a coercive atmosphere.

As to the origin of those comfort women who were transferred to the war areas, excluding those from Japan, those from the Korean Peninsula accounted for a large part. The Korean Peninsula was under Japanese rule in those days, and their recruitment, transfer, control, etc., were conducted generally against their will, through coaxing, coercion, etc.

Undeniably, this was an act, with the involvement of the military authorities of the day, that severely injured the honor and dignity of many women. The Government of Japan would like to take this opportunity once again to extend its sincere apologies and remorse to all those, irrespective of place of origin, who suffered immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women.

It is incumbent upon us, the Government of Japan, to continue to consider seriously, while listening to the views of learned circles, how best we can express this sentiment.

We shall face squarely the historical facts as described above instead of evading them, and take them to heart as lessons of history. We hereby reiterate our firm determination never to repeat the same mistake by forever engraving such issues in our memories through the study and teaching of history.

As actions have been brought to court in Japan and interests have been shown in this issue outside Japan, the Government of Japan shall continue to pay full attention to this matter, including private researched related thereto.

## Appendix D-Murayama Statement

### **Statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama "On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the war's end" (15 August 1995)**

The world has seen fifty years elapse since the war came to an end. Now, when I remember the many people both at home and abroad who fell victim to war, my heart is overwhelmed by a flood of emotions.

The peace and prosperity of today were built as Japan overcame great difficulty to arise from a devastated land after defeat in the war. That achievement is something of which we are proud, and let me herein express my heartfelt admiration for the wisdom and untiring effort of each and every one of our citizens. Let me also express once again my profound gratitude for the indispensable support and assistance extended to Japan by the countries of the world, beginning with the United States of America. I am also delighted that we have been able to build the friendly relations which we enjoy today with the neighboring countries of the Asia-Pacific region, the United States and the countries of Europe.

Now that Japan has come to enjoy peace and abundance, we tend to overlook the pricelessness and blessings of peace. Our task is to convey to younger generations the horrors of war, so that we never repeat the errors in our history. I believe that, as we join hands, especially with the peoples of neighboring countries, to ensure true peace in the Asia-Pacific region -indeed, in the entire world- it is necessary, more than anything else, that we foster relations with all countries based on deep understanding and trust. Guided by this conviction, the Government has launched the Peace, Friendship and Exchange Initiative, which consists of two parts promoting: support for historical research into relations in the modern era between Japan and the neighboring countries of Asia and elsewhere; and rapid expansion of exchanges with those countries. Furthermore, I will continue in all sincerity to do my utmost in efforts being made on the issues arisen from the war, in order to further strengthen the relations of trust between Japan and those countries.

Now, upon this historic occasion of the 50th anniversary of the war's end, we should bear in mind that we must look into the past to learn from the lessons of history, and ensure that we do not stray from the path to the peace and prosperity of human society in the future.

During a certain period in the not too distant past, Japan, following a mistaken national policy, advanced along the road to war, only to ensnare the Japanese people in a fateful crisis, and, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations. In the hope that no such mistake be made in the future, I regard, in a spirit of humility, these irrefutable facts of history, and express here once again my feelings of deep remorse and state my heartfelt apology. Allow me also to express my feelings of profound mourning for all victims, both at home and abroad, of that history.

Building from our deep remorse on this occasion of the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, Japan must eliminate self-righteous nationalism, promote international coordination as a responsible member of the international community and, thereby, advance the principles of peace and democracy. At the same time, as the only country to have experienced the devastation of atomic bombing, Japan, with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons, must actively strive to further global disarmament in areas such as the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is my conviction that in this way alone can Japan atone for its past and lay to rest the spirits of those who perished.

It is said that one can rely on good faith. And so, at this time of remembrance, I declare to the people of Japan and abroad my intention to make good faith the foundation of our Government policy, and this is my vow.

**Appendix E-Links to the Dokdo Song with Translation and a Website with Historical date relating to Dokdo**

Dokdo song used in Schools:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jq-sy\\_ACVsM&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jq-sy_ACVsM&feature=youtu.be)

Dokdo Translation (with song made for adults):

<http://coreaversusjapan.blogspot.kr/2010/03/dokdo-is-our-land-song.html>

Access to Historical Data relating to Dokdo:

<http://www.dokdo-takeshima.com/dokdo-takeshima-related-historical-data>