

**THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB) INFLUENCE ON  
INTERNATIONALIZING THE CURRICULUM IN SOUTH KOREAN SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS: MAPPING CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE DESIGN OF AN  
INTEGRATED K-20 SYSTEM**

by

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As globalization spreads, many people in South Korea have become aware of the importance of educating the next generation with internationalized curricula. This study examines the perspectives of schools, the government in South Korea, and transnational certifiers and curriculum designers to see how they define international curricula, what concepts they are ignoring, and what are the challenges in providing an internationally accredited curriculum such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) in the South Korean educational context. The study uses qualitative research methods, analysing documents written by the government, formal school administrators, and national associations according to criteria suggested by the literature. The study concludes by a map depicting the priorities and stances of the various stakeholders in the South Korea international education field. This figure is used to make recommendations regarding future actions for each stakeholder.

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

As a response to globalization, there have been a lot of changes in secondary level education in South Korea. Many stakeholders in the education field, including students, parents, the government, and educators, have sought a way to get or provide an international education. Students and parents have tried to go abroad or get into an international school in South Korea to get international education. The government and some educators have tried to provide international education by establishing more international schools and adopting internationalized curricula. The many stakeholders who are oriented to different purposes of international education, however, have provided multiple arguments on what international education is and how to provide it.

The overall purpose of this study is to help the South Korean government and educators better understand various perspectives on, and approaches to, international education at the secondary level so that they can practice a more effective and holistic international education.

### **1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

There are two goals to this research. The first is to analyze perspectives on international education at three levels—local, national, and transnational. South Korea is early in the process

of implementing international education, so there is no standardized framework for international curricula, and there are various approaches to international education. Using online data, I will examine the standpoint of stakeholders at the three levels based on criteria from the literature. This will be helpful in understanding their values, and what concepts each stakeholder is lacking in their internationalized curricula. Therefore, the first research question of this study is, (1) What do international schools and the government in South Korea, and the transnational community of certifiers and curriculum designers, think is the priorities of an international education?

The second goal of this study is to examine what will be the impacts of the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs on South Korean education. Although the number of schools that are trying to provide IB programs has increased, there are not enough discussions about its benefits and challenges in South Korea. In particular, I will discuss the challenges of providing IB programs in South Korean educational contexts. Therefore, the second research question is, (2) What will be the impact of International Baccalaureate (IB) programs on South Korean international education and what are the challenges of providing the IB in the South Korean educational context?

## 1.2 SIGNIFICANCE

As the government has been less rigorous in providing international education since 2006 and people have become more interested in international education than ever before, the number of

schools providing international curricula has increased. There have been conflicts between the advocates of international schools and their opponents. There is, however, not enough discussion or research on this issue. Although there has been some research on international education and programs in higher education, research on international education at the K-20 level is rare and narrow in scope; the topic is mostly limited to English language education. This study contributes to the field of K-20 international education by analyzing the perspectives of stakeholders in international education and discussing what concepts they need, other than English language education, and to provide a balanced international education.

The IB is still relatively unknown to South Korean people. Although there have been some criticisms of its high tuition since the government and some schools announced their plans to provide IB programs, scholarly discussions on its content and cultural aspects are rare in South Korea. Moreover, providing the IB in South Korea would not be an easy task because the educational system in South Korea is strongly centralized, and the university screening system is focused on completing the national curricula. These factors have not yet been presented in scholarly literature. Therefore, it is meaningful to examine the IB in the South Korean educational context.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO INTERNATIONALIZE A CURRICULUM?**

#### **2.1.1 Introduction**

As the world is globalizing at a rapid pace, the governments, educators, and parents in many countries acknowledge the need to educate the next generation to live in a global society and to show an interest in international education. One component of international education is an international curriculum. With an increasing number of schools developing their own international curricula or choosing to provide internationally accredited internationalized curricula, such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) or Cambridge Program, it is important to see what it means to internationalize the curriculum. Agreement on the terminology will allow consumers of the programs have a shared understanding on the issue.

#### **2.1.2 Globalist and Internationalist Perspectives**

Largely, there are two perspectives on what ‘internationalization of the curriculum’ means: globalists and that of the internationalists. The reason that these groups think differently about curriculum internationalization is because they define globalization in different ways. Globalists are focused on economic factors in globalization, while internationalists are focused on factors

such as cultural diversity and global peace. Jones (1998) and other scholars distinguish this emphasis on ‘culture’ and ‘diversity’ from globalization by using the term “internationalization/internationalism.” According to Vidovich (2004), the terms “internationalization” and “globalization” are frequently used interchangeably, but they are increasingly being differentiated. Frey & Whitehead (2009) also argue that the terms “global” and “international” have distinct meanings in policy and practices, even though they are sometimes used interchangeably (p.273). The difference between ‘internationalism’ and ‘globalization’ is important because each perspective adopts different approaches to internationalization of the educational curriculum.

#### **2.1.2.1 Globalization vs. Internationalization**

A number of scholars have compared the two terms, globalization and internationalization, in terms of their definitions. Jones (1998), who defines globalization as economic integration, views internationalization as “a promotion of global peace and well-being through the development and application of international structures, primarily but not solely of an intergovernmental kind” (p.143). Paris (2003) says that “globalization occurs when there are impositions of ideas involving a dominant-recessive relationship, while internalization occurs where ideas are shared, utilized, agreed upon, and mutually accepted” (p. 235). Galligan (2008) also claims that globalization and internationalization are importantly different concepts even though they are related with each other. Galligan cites Singh (2004) and Taylor (1997) by defining these two concepts: globalization can be described in terms of “time and space compression” and “global consciousness”, while internationalization describes the relations and transactions between nations and national cultures, rather than those which transcend national boundaries (p.3).

### **2.1.2.2 Globalists' Globalization and their Definition of Internationalization of Curricula**

The Britannica dictionary's (BAE, 2011) definition represents the globalists' view of globalization:

the act or process of globalizing, the state of being globalized; especially the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked especially by free trade, free flow of capital, and the tapping of cheaper foreign labor markets.

Globalists are focused on economic factors in globalization. They see globalization as “economic integration, achieved in particular through the establishment of a global marketplace marked by free trade and minimum of regulation” (Jones, 1998, p.143). The fundamental feature of globalization is the organization and integration of economic activity at levels that transcend national borders and jurisdiction. According to Jones (1998), it is the business world itself that started referring to the term globalization as a means of conducting business more efficiently, more profitable, and more discreetly. Hirst & Thompson (1996) also claim that economics is the most important factor in globalization; according to them, globalization is the attainment of century-old ideals of the free-trade liberals and means “a demilitarized world in which business activity is primary and political power has no other tasks than the protection of the world free trading system” (p.176). Similarly, Wallerstein (1991) sees capitalism as the main force expanding national boundaries, saying that “the capitalist world-economy has seen the need to expand the geographic boundaries of the system as a whole, creating thereby new loci of production to participate in its axial division of labor” (p.36). Rizvi (1998) also describes that the

present surge of globalization features a major shift towards international economic integration of product and capital markets. Thus, scholars have interpreted “globalization” as a unification or integration of countries geared by economic forces or advantages.

OECD’s definition of internationalization of the educational curricula, published in 1994, represents what globalists’ think of the issue (Galligan, 2008):

Curricula with an international orientation in content, aimed at preparing students for performing (professionally / socially) in an international and multicultural context, and designed for domestic students and/or foreign students

The OECD definition emphasizes a curriculum that helps students acquire knowledge and skills that will help them “perform” well in the global market. Their focus in international education is on the economic growth through education, which is based on human capital theory. Human capital theory suggests that in a global economy, “.....performance is increasingly linked to people’s knowledge stock, skills level, learning capabilities and cultural adaptability” (Rizvi 2007, p. 7). In that sense, a globalist approach to international education emphasizes developing students’ global competence, which enables them to become globally mobile and work in a range of different cultural contexts.

### **2.1.2.3 Internationalists’ Globalization/Internationalization and their Definition of Internationalization of Curricula**

Internationalists view cultural diversity and international peace as equally important in globalization/ internationalization as economic factors. They criticize that contemporary discussion about the global scene is not giving enough attention to the issues of global complexity and structural contingency as much as it is to late capitalism or the multinational

corporation (Robertson, 1990). They insist that “both the economics and the culture of the global scene should be analytically connected to the general structural and actional features of the global system” (p.18). Hall (1991) highlights the aspects of multiplicity and diversity of globalization, insisting on a bottom-up view of globalization. Rizvi (1998) confirms Halls discussion of globalization, noting that “globalization pluralizes the world by recognizing the values of cultural niches and local traditions” (p.8).

By definition, internationalists disagree with the almost exclusive economic focus of globalists based on human capital theories of development. Rizvi’s (1998) definition conceptualizes well what many internationalists think of international curricula:

Internationalization of curriculum is more than just a response to emergent global conditions, it is a framework of values and practices oriented towards heightened awareness and appreciation of the politics of difference as the basis for developing the necessary skills and literacies for a changing world (p.11).

Rizvi views diversity as a driving force for students to learn necessary skills in an internationalizing world. He mostly focuses on students’ ability to read and explore the differences between cultures.



### **2.1.3 Internationalized Curricula**

According to Cambridge and Thompson (2010), the pure form of the internationalist and globalist approaches is quite rare. Rather, “schools that offer international education appear to be heterogeneous.....” (p.173). However, in general, many internationalists make a criticism that existing international curricula have “a distinctly capitalist flavor” (Gough, 2004, p. 4). This section discusses two features of current internationalized curricula, drawn from a literature review, and what globalists and internationalist think of them.

#### **2.1.3.1 Subjects focused on the needs of the global market**

Rizvi (2007) criticizes the subjects provided by school curricula saying that “the teaching of Science, Mathematics and the English language is encouraged not for its own sake, or for better understanding of the natural world around us but as a way of better engaging with the knowledge economy” (p. 7). International education in many schools today is closer to a globalist approach than an international approach, in that they mainly focus on knowledge and skills that graduates need to enter the global market. An example of this is ‘Singapore High’ school, which is a private school with a good academic reputation. The internationalized curriculum, called ‘enrichment curriculum’, is more focused on the lower secondary years than on the upper ones (Vidovich, 2004). Due to concerns about achievement in the university entrance exam, the upper secondary level curriculum places more weight on the core curriculum, which emphasizes mathematics and science. The enrichment curriculum includes subjects such as Business and Finance, Chinese Language, English Language, Environmental Science, Information Technology, Mathematics, People Development, Photonics and Biological Sciences. While the curriculum is rich in foreign language, Science, and mathematics courses, which are valued by globalists, it

lacks courses on different cultures from around the world, international relations, and peace studies, which are valued by internationalists.

### **2.1.3.2 Curricular Homogenization**

There are two main approaches that schools take to internationalize their curriculum. The first is to develop their own international curriculum, taking their local and national contexts into consideration. The second is to adopt internationally certified curricula such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Cambridge Programs, an approach taken by schools around the world including public and private international schools. The number of schools that have adopted the IB program has significantly increased over the last five decades (Hill, 2006; Tarc, 2009a). The number of schools providing the IBDP has increased around the world from 7 in 1968 to 1,954 in 2009, and the number of schools offering the Primary Years Program (PYP) and the Middle Years Program (MYP) has grown from 156 to 531 and from 381 to 706 respectively from 2004 to 2009 (Tarc, 2009a). This is not just because of the needs of the transnational capital class, but also because of the schools and parents who are more satisfied with accredited curricula developed by experienced educators than with unexamined school systems (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004). In the case of latter approach, the internationalized curricula have been homogenized across cultures and nations, mostly in Western ways (Fox, 1985; Paris, 2003; Cambridge & Thompson, 2004).

The reason that international curricula are Westernized is that globally well-approached curriculum and assessment organizations, such as the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) and Cambridge International Examination (CIE)—are often based in Western countries. Therefore, educational content and perspectives come from the West. More often than not, non-

Western schools adopt these curricula and assessment measures at the expense of their own cultures and value systems. These international curricula are more focused on histories and societies of western countries than on those of the countries where students are born and live. Even when non-Western international schools provide regional studies and geography, "...the overall perspective remains European" (Fox 1985, p. 66).

#### **2.1.4 Internationalizing an Educational Curriculum as Response to Globalization**

There has been limited scholarship regarding how globalization changes curricula. In most of the literature, globalization is described as an independent external force and the discussion is focused on the result of globalization rather than discussion of the process (Monkman & Maird, 2002). For example, those who view globalization as an economic emergence around the world (Waks, 2003) claim that globalization has changed school curricula to meet the need of the global market. According to them, the current global market needs "knowledge workers" who can work in a team and know how to access the information in global networks and use it immediately (p.398). Schools that have provided subject matter in an orderly sequence and where students remained individuated have to change their curricula to produce knowledge workers.

Scholarly work on whether there are forces other than globalization that internationalize educational curricula are equally as limited. This is an immature but important area for further research, considering the probability that education can help solve the current problems in internationalized curricula.

A current feature of the internationalized curriculum of Singapore High is a reasonable response to globalization from the globalists' perspective; it focuses heavily on foreign language, Business, Science, Mathematics courses. To globalists, fluency in foreign languages is important for communication in international trade (Rizvi, 2007). Science and mathematics are also important because scientific and mathematical knowledge potentially contributes to creating new or improving existing products, services, processes and organizations (OECD, 2004).

Neither the focus on subjects that will prepare students for the global economy, nor the homogenization of the international curriculum is a balanced response to a globalizing world from the internationalists' perspective. The enrichment curriculum of Singapore High is a "free market response to a global need" (Pearce, 1994, p.28). It shows that the curriculum does not have any critical alternatives that can teach students the cultural, moral, and religious dimensions of human beings and collective good, but views students only primarily as individual, private, and economic units (Rizvi, 1998; Watson, 1999). It is unbalanced in that it does not have enough courses for promoting peace and understanding between nations (Cambridge and Thompson, 2004). The curriculum should be more culturally diverse to encourage students to explore cultural differences and to give new learning spaces where students can shape their own identity by interrogating the dominant cultural values and other competing values (Rizvi, 1998).

### **2.1.5 Conclusion**

In conclusion, there are largely two perspectives on the internationalization of educational curricula: globalism and internationalism. Globalists place more weight on economic impact in internationalizing curricula, hence they emphasize subjects that today's knowledge economy

needs students to learn: the English language, Science and Technology and Mathematics. Internationalists value international peace and cultural diversity as much as the economic factors in internationalizing curricula. Currently, prevailing internationalized curricula seems to be unbalanced and culturally homogenized. They focus on subjects that are needed in the knowledge-based economy than on subjects that are needed to teach students international peace and the values of diverse cultures. Internationalized curricula today are more close to globalism than to internationalism. In this way, the effects of globalization have heavily influenced the internationalization of curricula around the world. While there is literature that views the internationalization of curriculum as a result of globalization, there is scant literature discussing the process and other possible forces that change educational curricula.

## **2.2 EVALUATION OF INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAMS**

Since its introduction in 1968, more universities have recognized and accepted the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP) as a means of satisfying their admission criteria. And the number of schools providing the IBDP has increased around the world from 7 in 1968 to 1,954 in 2009 (Tarc, 2009a). The number of schools offering the Primary Years Program (PYP) and the Middle Years Program (MYP) has grown from 156 to 531 and from 381 to 706 respectively from 2004 to 2009 (Tarc, 2009a). Case studies on IB schools, however, are rare. Evaluation tends to be purely based on the opinions of scholars and people in the field of education—education policy makers, curriculum coordinators, teachers. The lack of research results on IB schools/programs is a significant criticism of the evaluation literature. I have categorized existing evaluations into three large categories: a) curricula, b) exclusivity of the IB

system, and c) students' opinions of the IB programs. In this paper, I will examine the evaluation literature on the IB programs in terms of these three categories.

### **2.2.1 THE IB**

The IB program originated in post-World War II Europe (Porath, M & Taylor L. M., 2006). Diplomats and others who had to move around from country to country in the European region for reconstruction needed a common high school curriculum for their children to fulfill the entrance requirements of universities worldwide. As a result, the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IBDP) was established in 1968 (IBO, 2011a). With the success of the IBDP, the IB undertook development of the Middle Years Program (MYP) in 1994 and the Primary Years Program (PYP) in 1997 (Hallinger P. & Lee M. & Walker A., 2011).

Among the three IB programs, the IBDP is the most widely used one. The IBDP is a two-year course consisting of six subject areas: language A 1—students' first language and culture—a second language, individuals and societies, experimental sciences, mathematics and computer science, and the arts. Along with the six subject areas, there are three more requirements: Theory of Knowledge, which challenges students to question how and what they know; Extended Essay, which is a 4,000-word essay based on independent research; and Creativity, Action, and Service (CAS), which requires students to devote the equivalent of at least of 3 hours per week during the 2 years of the program to community services (Porath, M & Taylor L. M. , 2006).

The MYP was designed in 1994 for the 11-16 year age range and includes eight disciplines combined with a personal project. The PYP was designed in 1997 for students aged 3

to 12 years. While the PYP acknowledges the importance of traditional disciplines, it focuses more on acquiring skills and knowledge in relevant contexts (Porath, M & Taylor L. M. , 2006).

## **2.2.2 Evaluation of the Literature on the IB: Content and Critiques**

### **2.2.2.1 Curriculum**

Since the term “curriculum” encompasses everything students experience in and outside of the school, a lot of evaluation articles fall into the category of “curriculum”. Those articles can be divided again into four topics: a) tensions between the IB and the national curriculum, b) cultures in the IB curriculum, c) comparison of the IB with the Advanced Placement (AP), and d) transition difficulties among the three IB programs.

#### ***Tensions between the IB and the national curriculum***

Hill (2006), a deputy director general of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), views the IB programs as globalization in terms of education. According to Hill, the IBO is offering “a single system of education” that is validated and used across the world (p.104). This single educational system’s benefit for internationally mobile parents and their children is easily recognizable. Thanks to the common educational program across countries, they would not have to face discrepancies between the curricula of each school or country. However, in the case of schools with domestic students who rarely move from country to country, Hill has oversimplified matters. Hill overlooks the political and social roles of education in nation states and the educational tradition that runs deep in each culture. It is highly possible that the IB curriculum may collide with the curriculum that each country or a local school has developed and

implemented for a long time. Some scholars have expressed concerns about whether or not the IB curriculum goes well with existing curricula (Fox, 1985; Tarc, 2009b).

First, the IB curriculum has a conflict point with national curricula in terms of educational aim. Tarc (2009b) says that there was a tension between the national and the IB curriculum in the founding period of the IB (1962-1973) because of the different educational aims of each curriculum. The IBO's purpose was to promote international understanding, while nation states' aims were to produce loyal national subjects through schooling. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) acknowledged that it was hard to encourage countries to choose a single international curriculum over their national curriculum (Hill, 2006). UNESCO was initially supportive of the IB curriculum. Both of the organizations pursued common educational goals—intercultural understanding, knowledge about global issues and the interdependence of nations, critical thinking skills, and an appreciation of the human condition around the world. In fact, UNESCO partly financed the IBO between 1968 and 1976. However, UNESCO considered that underwriting one educational system across the world was politically and technically difficult to implement and there should be more room for national curriculum content. In 1976, UNESCO finally stopped formal affiliation with the IBO. Additionally, Fox (1985) casts doubt on the feasibility of the ten-year plan that the IBO pronounced in 1974—to make the IB available to a larger number of countries representing a greater diversity of cultures and pedagogical traditions. Fox voices concern that the IBDP and its educational philosophy may not be compatible with those of each country.

Second, there is a tension between the IB and the national curriculum when it comes to postsecondary admission. The IB pursues “the moral, aesthetic, and practical education for the whole person” (Peterson 2003, p.34) but it often does not fit the educational contexts of some



countries such as East Asian nations, where education is oriented to university entrance exams. This is particularly relevant for countries like South Korea and Japan, for example, where a plurality of secondary-level students compete to enter postsecondary education.

The IB curriculum is less responsive to the needs of the national students than the national curriculum is, and that is where the conflicts arise between the IB and national curricula. Paris (2003) points out that while local curricula are flexible in that they can be modified to meet local academic and professional demands, an international curriculum such as the IB is “less sensitive to the local needs because its focus is on global fairness” (p.234). Even Peterson (2003), a former director general of the IBO and a head of the department of educational studies at Oxford University, also mentions that it is a problem of the IB that it has to be similar to the national curriculum, even though the IB’s pedagogical philosophy is quite different from that of national curricula. According to Peterson, the IB needs to change its syllabus for each subject to be close to its counterpart in the national curriculum so that it is recognized by university admission officers. Also, it helps the IB students continue to learn those subjects in universities, because universities provide their courses assuming that students have learned according to the national curriculum. Given these cultural, pedagogical and academic challenges, it is not easy for the IB to align with the national curriculum.

### ***Cultures in the IB curriculum***

The IB curriculum was initially developed in the European region mainly for European students in international schools who had to move transnationally due to their parents’ jobs. Hence, its content and the curriculum were Euro-centric (Paris, 2003; Wylie, 2008), which was natural, considering its origin and customers. The three main instruction and assessment languages of the IB curriculum are English, French and Spanish—all European languages (IBO 2011b). Euro-

centric content and perspective in the educational curriculum does not matter in Western countries, which share western values (Paris, 2003). However, as the IB has evolved from a program for international schools, mostly in Western countries, to an international program for national schools in a number of different countries, including non-Western countries (Hayden & Wong, 1997), the Euro-centrism in its content and perspectives has become problematic among scholars and educators. They argue that the content and perspectives of the IB are Euro-centric, and the Western values and languages in it take over those of non-Western countries.

Paris (2003) highlights issues of the cultural and conceptual homogenization that comes from accepting the IBDP program. According to Paris, the IBDP is “a process of globalization rather than a process of internationalization” (p.235) in that each culture choosing the IBDP faces risks relinquishing its own educational values and traditions. There is also an argument that the IB is a process of Westernization in that its instruction language is mainly English and the IBO hires teachers who are fluent in English and have academic experiences in English-speaking countries. This might not be helpful for students who would do better having a broad international experience through their teachers (Wylie, 2008).

While the scholars mentioned above criticize the Euro-centric content of the IB curriculum, the IB insiders have different opinions on this issue. Peterson (2003), a former director general of the IBO, acknowledges that the content of some areas of the IB curriculum such as the languages and social studies has “European bias” (p.36). Peterson, however, argues that it is unavoidable to be Euro-centric considering that the majority of students on the IB curriculum want to enter universities in Europe or North America. According to Peterson (2003), to be Euro-centric is helpful for students who want to enter universities in Western cultures by exposing them to Western values and languages. However, when the curriculum is only focused

on Western or European content without broadening its scope, it is a ‘Westernization’ curriculum rather than an “international” curriculum. As the goal of IB students and the IB curriculum is international understanding, its educational content should be culturally various and balanced to be truly “international” no matter where the universities that the students want to enter are located. Many teachers of the United Nations International School (UNIS) also highlight this point. They are concerned about the Euro-centric content of the IB and argue that the IB has to include “broader and genuinely international curriculum content” (Fox, 1985, p. 65).

Contrary to Peterson, who acknowledged the Euro-centric content in the IB curriculum, Hill (2006) does not think that the IB curriculum is Euro-centric. Rather, Hill views national curricula as culturally biased because of their emphasis on a particular culture, which is usually the country’s own culture. Even though Hill has a valid point that the national curricula highlight a particular culture, comparing the IB and national curricula in terms of cultural balance does not make sense. National curricula were initially developed to foster national unity through schooling and the IB curriculum has been developed to foster international understanding. Therefore, the IB should be compared with other international curriculum, the Cambridge, for example, to evaluate its cultural roundedness.

### ***Transition difficulties between the three IB programs***

Even though there are schools that provide the three IB programs—the PYP, MYP, and IBDP—together, the three programs have not evolved in a systematic way. Each of the three programs was designed at different times with little assumption that students would progress from one to another, so there are transition challenges among the programs (Hallinger et al. 2011). Millikan (1998) (cited in Hallinger et al. 2011, p.126) mentions that there are “structural differences both within and between programs.” Stobie (2005, 2007) (cited in Hallinger et al. 2011, p.126) states

that schools with more than one IB program are consistent in their vision and educational focus on critical thinking and application of knowledge. However, curriculum design and approaches to assessment are not consistent between programs, and this discrepancy hurts coherence and consistency across the programs.

IBDP teachers also acknowledge the inconsistency across the programs. They say that the PYP and MYP are progressive and better fit the IBO's vision of international understanding than the IBDP does, but academic preparation of the two programs is not good enough for the academically rigorous IBDP (Tarc, 2009, p. 86-87).

#### **2.2.2.2 Exclusivity**

It is not the case that everyone who is interested in international education can get into schools providing the IB curriculum. In most countries, the IBDP is for a small number of students who are distinguished from the rest of the students in terms of socio-economic background and academic abilities. I have divided the articles on the exclusivity of the IB into three categories: finance, career paths, and academic ability.

#### ***Financial Exclusivity***

Tuition levels of schools offering the IB curriculum vary depending on their locations, but they are usually quite expensive. Seoul Foreign School (SFS), which is one of the IB schools in South Korea, charges almost US\$26,534 for 9-12 graders per an academic year (SFS, 2011). Gyeonggi Academy of Foreign Language (GAFL), the first and only private school providing the IB program in South Korea among schools for domestic students (Park, 2011), demands a high tuition from students, too. According to a government report, its tuition per one academic year is

around \$10,000. This is four times as expensive as the average public school tuition in Seoul City, which is about US\$2500 per an academic year (Lee, 2006).

Scholars have pointed out the high cost of the IB. Whitehead (2005) criticizes the reality that the IB is only for wealthy and socially advantaged students in Australia, where the number of schools providing the IB program has significantly increased from the mid- 1980s to 2005. In 2005, only 13 schools out of 72 registered IB schools in Australia were public. The rest of the schools were private and were mostly made up of Australia's most wealthy students. Fox (1985) and Tarc (2009a) also argue that high cost is one of the disadvantages of the IB program. Tarc argues that the conceptions that the IB is "only for the rich kids" hurts the reputation of the IB program, particularly when people believe in the positive effects of national schooling on a large number of people. Similarly to the developing countries, it is the families with greater resources that have more and better access to the IB programs in Western countries. Wylie (2008) points out the case of the IB program in developing countries in particular. In developing countries, only students who are from elite classes, either expatriate or wealthy locals, can afford to the IB because of its relatively high fee structure and private school status compared to that of the local schools.

While there are many articles that criticize the high cost of the IB program, articles that defend against these criticisms are rare, except Tarc (2009a). Tarc views the social exclusiveness of the IB program as just an "unintended side-effect" and one that could be resolved by widening access to the IB programs (p.111).

### *Academic Exclusivity*

Along with social exclusivity of the IB programs, its academic elitism has been argued for a long time (Tarc, 2009a). Whitehead (2005) criticizes of the IB schools' screening system, taking two Australian schools as examples. According to Whitehead, IB schools select students who are academically able and would bring value to the school in terms of test scores. In an interview with Poelzer and Feldhusen (Poelzer & Feldhusen, 1997), some IB science teachers said that the students in the IB programs have several common characteristics, such as high levels of motivation, task commitment, questing, desire to understand, intelligence, management skills, and independence, which are quite similar to the characteristics of gifted children. If the students are gifted in their academic abilities, it would be wrong to attribute their academic success solely to the IB curriculum itself because there is a high possibility that the students are the main reason for the academic success, not the curriculum (Whitehead, 2005).

Peterson (2003) defends the IB against the accusations of "intellectual elitism" (Tarc, 2009a, p.110 & Peterson, 2003, p.62) saying that students at Atlantic College and United World Colleges were much more concerned with their characters and commitments than with pure academic potentials when they were selected for scholarships. This might be true in some European countries where the IB programs have developed. Peterson's claim, however, does not fit the situation of some other countries. According to Fox (1985), students at international schools in Geneva or United Nations International School (UNIS) can earn a degree even though they have average academic ability while the IB program in North America has a highly selective system and is mainly for the academically gifted students.

However, Mayer's (2010) study shows that the belief that the IB is only for the gifted students is not necessarily true. Mayer conducted a study to see whether the IB can work well in

urban schools with low academic achievement. According to the study, the IB is a good example of a reform model for urban schools because its systems support solid implementation of the program through systematic management (p. 103). The IBO has a very good staff—teachers—management system, and it improves students’ academic achievement. The majority of students at Jefferson High School—resided in a run-down residential neighborhood a few miles from the downtown area of the moderately sized industrial city of Portville, California—was from low socioeconomic families and had low GPAs. After the school adapted the IB program, the teacher quality was improved and those students could complete the rigorous IB program and entered into 4-year universities directly after graduation. This study shows that the highly organized and effective management system of the IBO can improve teacher quality, which will lead students’ academic achievement, even when the students are not academically gifted.

### ***Exclusivity of Academic Paths***

There are concerns that the IB is not flexible in providing pathways for all student populations. The committee of the Australian Council for Education Research (Doherty, 2009) evaluated the IB programs as an alternative curriculum “only for those students planning to continue to tertiary study” (p.80). Paris (2003) mentions the IB-DP is set up predominantly for university entrance exam compared to the Australian national curriculum. Therefore, Paris concludes that the IBDP does not suit students who pursue non-academic careers.

IB insiders such as Hill and Peterson argue against these evaluations. Peterson (2003) claims that the IB was primarily developed for students whose goal was to enter universities. Hill (2006) says that the IBO is in the process of developing more specialized vocational programs; IBO is currently sponsoring pilot studies in Finland and Quebec.

### **2.2.2.3 Student Opinions on the IB programs**

#### ***Potential IBDP students***

Paris (2003) investigated why some students in South Australian schools choose the IBDP instead of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) in their final two years. 30 students from one public school and 30 from one private school participated in the study. Both schools offer students finishing 10 Year the choice of either studying the IBDP or the SACE program in their final two years of schooling; all students had just completed both the Year 8 to Year 10 Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) and IB Middle Years Program (MYP) curricula, which the schools integrated into a single curriculum. 60 Students—15 potential IBDP students in public school, 15 potential SACE students in public school, 15 potential students in private school, and 15 potential SACE students in private school—answered questionnaire. 20 prospective students had a group discussion for 80 minutes on the reasons for their choice.

In terms of teacher quality, private school IB students rated both the IB and SACE teachers very highly, whereas public schools IB students rated the IB teachers higher than SACE teachers. In terms of curriculum, both of the IB and SACE groups believed that the Physical Education and the Preparation for the Work Force was better dealt with in the SACE curricula, while subjects like cultural understanding, understanding one-self, world tolerance, and peace education were better dealt with in the IBDP curricula. Moreover, public IB students believed that the IB work in Year 11 was the same as doing SCAE Year 12, and that subjects such as English were more analytical in the IBDP program and more creative and practical in the SACE program.



### *IBDP graduates*

Hayden and Wong (1997) investigated the less tangible aspects of the IB program such as international understanding and mobility. They surveyed and interviewed 19 college students at the University of Bath who entered the university with the IBDP, four teachers of the IB program studying for an MA at the University of Bath, and three university staff working at admissions and registration center.

Both the IB teachers and the former IB students gave credit to the IB curriculum for its breadth and language learning. They believed that this helps students have geographical and, cultural mobility. However, when it comes to international understanding, students believed that their international experiences long before the IB programs were more influential than the IB curriculum itself. Moreover, while teachers thought that the IB made positive attempts at preserving students' culture and languages through mother tongue learning in Language A, some students thought that it was also possible to lose one's own culture because there are so many other cultures in the IB school environment.

Porath and Taylor (2006) also conducted a survey on former IB students to investigate whether the IB program had prepared them well for their postsecondary studies. 16 Students from two public schools in a large city in British Columbia, Canada answered multiple choice and open-ended questions.

The results portrayed the IB mostly positively. 87.5% of the 16 students felt that the pace of the instruction was appropriate and the IB program developed their problem-solving strategies. 93.75% answered that the IB courses taught them to think critically and flexibly. 87.5% felt that the first and second year of postsecondary studies were easier as a result of the IB program. They

thought that they were well prepared for postsecondary studies through the IB program in terms of academic knowledge, self-teaching, and time management. There were, however, some negative reflections as well. 37.5% of the 16 students felt that the workload was excessive and unmanageable, so they had felt rushed and did not have enough time to think critically. Moreover, 18.75% students felt that they participated in fewer extracurricular activities than they would have in a non-IB program.

### **2.2.2 The IB literature**

Even though the scholarly opinion on the IB programs is thoughtful and wide in the range of topics, there are some points that need to be reconsidered. These include the extent of the research conducted, the status of the researchers vis-à-vis the IB, and the narrowness of research participants' racial diversity.

First, there is a gap in the literature. Some scholars claim that there is a tension between the IB and national curricula (Fox, 1985; Peterson, 2003; Hill, 2006; Tarc, 2009b). They argue that the IB needs to change its syllabus so that it is recognized by university admission officers, although one might argue that universities need to change their admission policies, too. However, there is evidence to the contrary, too; some schools in Australia provide both the national curriculum and the IBDP. Students choose either one, and those with the IBDP are accepted by the local universities (Paris, 2003). Nevertheless the tension between the IB and national curricula is a major argument in the literature. Within this framework, scholars have discussed how those Australian schools have managed the tension and provided the two very different curricula at the same time, and how they have made the local universities' admissions officers recognize the IB. This appears to be rare globally. As the number of IB schools increases around

the world, including in countries such as South Korea, where the IBDP is not recognized by university admissions officers currently, this is an urgent issue.

Another critique is that while most of the criticisms on the IB programs are made by IB outsiders, the defense is provided by IB insiders such as Peterson, who was a former director general of the IBO, and Hill, who is a deputy director general of the IBO. Because Peterson and Hill are IB insiders, their defense for the IB programs could be considered less trustworthy than the defense made by outsiders might have been. However, it could also be considered more informed.

Moreover, research results of Paris (2003) are a matter of question. Paris (2003) conducted a research on potential IBDP students who have completed the DECS and IB MYP. However, the results showed that there were questions about the quality of teachers in the IBDP and SACE from whom the students had not yet learned. Also, there were some questions about curriculum content and subjects, which were not appropriate for potential students to answer because the students had not experienced either the SACE curriculum or the IBDP. Therefore, the reliability and generalizability of the research results is doubtful.

Lastly, there is a possibility that research results of Porath and Taylor (2006) may be biased due to their sample. According to the research results, the main respondents of the survey of former IB students were predominantly Caucasian and Asian. Considering the arguments on the cultural content in the IB curriculum, students' ethnic background is an important variable. However, there is almost no opinion given by students of other races in this literature.

### **2.2.3 The research methods of the IB**

Most of the IB evaluation research has used surveys and interviews as their methods. Many studies, however, may have been improved by better sampling.

Porath and Taylor's (2006) research design presents some sampling challenges. They chose recent graduates from schools that had provided the IBDP for more than 15 years in the belief that these schools were established for long enough to provide the essence of the IBDP. Therefore, the sample of students from the schools was appropriate to evaluate the IBDP. However, it is probable that the research results were biased because of the sample. The researchers chose schools only in large cities. Considering that some factors, such as more diverse populations in large cities may make a difference in the IB school environments, it is likely that this would affect the success of the program. Therefore, the sampling is not appropriate.

Hayden and Wong's (1997) survey on teachers is also problematic in the number of its sample. They surveyed only 4 teachers and 3 university officers to evaluate the IBDP. The sample size is so small that it is hard to conclude that their opinions represent other IB teachers and university officers.

### **2.2.4 Conclusion**

As the number of schools providing the IB programs has increased not only in Western countries but also in non-Western countries, there are debates regarding the IB content, perspective, and cost of IB programs. Scholars have criticized that the IB curricula content is culturally biased and has several major conflict points when it comes to national curricula, university entrance exams,

and transition issues. Also, it is so expensive that few students have access to the program. Compared to the number of scholars who criticize on these issues, the number of scholars who defended against these criticisms is rare, and most of the people who defend the IB are the IB insiders. While most of the scholars who discuss the IB programs criticize them, students who have experienced the IB programs are positive about them. They think that the programs were helpful both in international understanding and postsecondary education.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

For this research, I used the qualitative research method of document analysis. I analyzed documents of the South Korean government, public statements of school administrators on school websites, and formal statements of representatives of national parents' and teacher's associations. I analyzed the documents based on the criteria I obtained from the literature review on the internationalization of the curriculum and the International Baccalaureate programs. I used mapping as a method after the document analysis to facilitate the presentation of my results. I chose mapping because there are many criteria extracted from the literature review to categorize each type of data, and because all actors might be taking different positions. Mapping is one of the simplest ways of demonstrating all of the criteria and the positions of many stakeholders clearly.

#### **3.1 DATA COLLECTION AND ITS PURPOSES**

To examine how they approach international education, I choose three stakeholders: the South Korean government, local schools providing international curricula, and transnational certifiers and curriculum designers mentioned in literature review on the IB. I choose the government because it makes the policy and is a main director of international education. I choose schools providing international curricula because they enact the government's policies. I choose the

transnational community to compare and contrast perspectives on international education in and outside of South Korea.

For the data of government policy and opinions, I used government documents available online. Most of the data were collected from the websites of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), and the Korean Educational Development Institution (KEDI). For the school data, I used two international schools: Busan International School, which is the oldest public international school for domestic students, and Chungsim International School, which is one of the most well-known and oldest aged private international schools in South Korea. I will be mostly focused on the statements by the school administrators on the schools' websites; the subjects they provide, the activities in which they encourage or require students to participate, and the reasons. For opinions of the transnational community, I will surmise them from the literature review.

### 3.2 DATA ANALYSIS

I analyzed the data based on the criteria—for example, economic value, cultural value—suggested by the literature on the internationalization of the curriculum and the International Baccalaureate (IB) to see how they approach international education. I analyzed the IB program in the context of South Korean educational traditions and systems to see where they conflicted, and where they supplemented one another.

After the data analysis, I placed each stakeholder—the government, schools, educators and people discussing this issue—and the IB on a map ( Figure 1 ) to see (1) where they overlap, and (2) how close they are to each other. This helped me to explain where the gaps are, and

where the challenges come from. It also allowed me to suggest an appropriate direction in which the government, schools, and educators should move.



## **4.0 THE PRIORITY OF AN INTERNATIONAL CURRICULUM**

In this section, I examine the priority of an international curriculum at local, national, and transnational levels. The three levels of stakeholders play an important role in international education by affecting each other as policy makers, curricula designers and practitioners. Therefore, to examine what each stakeholder views as the priority is crucial in helping them understand one another better and have fruitful communications.

### **4.1 LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS**

Local stakeholders are IB advocates, and IB opponents, and international schools in South Korea. IB advocates are composed of students and parents who want to obtain internationally accredited international education without leaving the country. IB opponents are composed of teachers and parents who think that offering the IB brings unfairness to overall educational quality. These stakeholders are categorized as local because their decisions have limited influence in scale. The consequences of Parents' decisions are not national, but local: their decisions have an influence only on their children. Decisions of each local school and universities are not national in its scale either. Their educational decisions and practices are limited to local.

Local Schools are important in that they implement at the local level the government's policies. There are several kinds of schools in South Korea that provide international education.

For example, there are foreigners' schools, which only accept students with foreign citizenship, and franchise international schools, which their headquarters in other countries. These schools are managed by foreign institutions and use curricula developed in other countries. Since one of the goals of this paper is to analyze the perspectives of South Korean educators on international education and how they practice it, I included only international schools that accept both domestic and foreign students and are run by either the South Korean government or South Korean institutions. So far, there are four international middle schools—three private and one public—and six international high schools—one private and five public.

Among them, Busan International High and Middle School and CheongShim International Academy are picked as sample schools. Busan International High and Middle School (BIHMS) was built by the government in 1998, and it was first and the only international school for both domestic and foreign students until CheongShim International Academy (CSIA) was opened in 2006. CSIA is the first private and religious-based international secondary school. Descriptions of the goals and curricula on each school's website are used as resources for analyzing the priorities of the international schools regarding international education. It is important to note that reality may be misrepresented on websites. Fieldwork observations and interactions with the educators working at the schools would reduce this likelihood. Here I analyze what educators at the local level perceive as a priority of international education.

The two schools overlap on some educational objectives such as fluency in foreign languages. Both BIHMS (2012) and CSIA (2012) are similar to each other in that they strongly emphasize foreign language competence in their educational aims, and they teach a large portion of subject areas in English. They both value students' communicative ability in international contexts. In this way, the underlying structure of the two schools is **globalism**, in that they are

focused on language skills that are needed in the global market and they produce human resources that are globally competitive.

They are, however, based on **internationalism** at the same time. According to their educational missions and aims, the two schools value holistic education. Along with international knowledge, developing global citizenship is an important part of their curricula. They emphasize that students should be able to contribute to a global society and its peace, based on their global citizenship. This analysis supports the claim of Cambridge and Thompson (2010), that, in practice, there is not a pure form of globalism or internationalism. Both schools are heterogeneous in their approach to international education.

One thing to note from in CSIA's description is that it asserts that, "we are providing education that is the same as America, by using American textbooks and teaching almost every subject area in English" (CSIA, 2012). It seems that they view internationalization as Americanization. This is quite the opposite to the international curricula that transnational curriculum designers think ideal. Focusing only on American education, CSIA rarely mentions words on educating about and preserving South Korean culture. It is trying to provide an education of the dominant culture at the expense of the local culture and value system. On the other hand, BIHMS perceives South Korean culture as a critical basis for cultural understanding at the international level, and promotes balanced cultural perspectives among the students.

## 4.2 NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

The second stakeholder is the South Korean government. The government is categorized as national stakeholder because its policy affects schools in national scale. Local schools' practices are based on the educational policies of the government. Higher education was once a national stakeholder. It is, however, in the process of transforming its status now. It can be categorized as local stakeholder in that it has become more powerful in decision making process due to the slowly decentralizing higher education system in South Korea. It can also be categorized as transnational stakeholder in that it has more international influence than before due to its connections with universities around the world.

I analyzed government documents published by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) and saved in the National Archive of Korea (NAK). Since South Korea has highly centralized educational systems and MEST represents the government in its policies, the documents of MEST are representative of the government's values in international education. The documents were published in 2002 and 2005, to pronounce the goals for opening international schools in South Korea. Although these documents are rather old, they are important because they are one of the few documents on international education that the government published. It is hard to find any recent governmental documents or publications discussing international schools or curricula, despite the increased number of international schools over the last six years.

The highest priority of the government is to educate students to be globally competent workers. The main prominent theme for the government in international education is national economic return. Throughout the first document, the government repeatedly emphasizes three

things in international education: foreign language education, cultural understanding and regional studies, and global citizenship (Kim, 2002). First, the government supports fluency in foreign languages, saying that it will help students to access information around the world more quickly and efficiently. This is directly related to the globalists' knowledge economy, which values knowledge stock as a means to perform well in the global economy (Rizvi, 2007). Second, although the government says that cultural understanding and regional studies are important, these are based on **nationalism and globalism**. The government makes this clear by stressing the benefit of human resources with cultural and regional knowledge: their ability to help the government in international negotiations and bring "...economic returns to the country." (Kim, 2002, p.17) Given that the commonest phrase in the document is "human resources," the underlying structure of South Korean government's international curriculum appears to be human capital theory. Third, the government mentions global citizenship as a goal to achieve through international curricula. However, unlike the other two values, it does not say why global citizenship is important. This lack of explanation makes interpretation difficult; it could mean either a citizen who values international peace and cultural diversity based on internationalism, or a citizen who values transnational free trade and global mobility based on globalism.

#### 4.3 TRANSNATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

The third stakeholder is the transnational community of certifiers and curriculum designers. As the IB is one of the most widely used internationally accredited programs (Tarc, 2009a), its curricula and educational pedagogy is not limited to local or national. Therefore, the IB certifiers

and curriculum designers who evaluate the IB are categorized as transnational stakeholders, and it is valuable to access what they view as a priority of the international curriculum, based on the literature.

First, both the IB certifiers and IB outsiders, who are transnational curriculum designers, assert the importance of cultural diversity in international curricula. Although they do not agree on the degree that the IB programs are diverse in terms of cultural content and perspectives, they both acknowledge that being culturally balanced in curricula is crucial for the success of international education.

Second, some of the IB outsiders claim that to be in harmony with the national system is important for domestic students, who usually attend local universities that value national curricula. IB outsiders think that the international curricula should be able to go well with the national curricula and should have the fewest conflicts with local universities in the entrance system. Putting emphasis on local systems and cultures, IB outsiders firmly support **internationalism**. On the other hand, IB insiders value a single system of education that is validated and used across the world. This aspect of the IB can be interpreted both as globalism and as internationalism. It is based on **globalism** in that it pursues an educational system integrated under a transnational organization with less concern on diverse local educational systems and values. It is, however, based on **internationalism** at the same time in that it encourages students to learn local culture and languages through Language A courses, and promotes international peace by teaching students appreciation of the human conditions around the world and interdependence of nations.

Finally, IB outsiders mention access as another priority of international curricula. They claim that the international curricula should be available not only to students from a high socio-

economic background but also to students who are from middle or low socio-economic backgrounds. IB insiders rarely comment publicly on the access issue. Therefore, the emphasis on **social equality** is one of the important characteristics of the IB outsiders.

## **5.0 DRIVERS, DEMANDS, AND IMPEDIMENTS TO THE IB IN SOUTH KOREA**

### **5.1 DRIVERS AND DEMANDS**

#### **5.1.1 Demand for English language education**

One of the biggest drivers of the IB in South Korea is the demand for English immersion education. And since English is one of the main instruction and assessment languages of the IB, students and parents believe that the IB is an effective means to secure an English immersion education. In analyzing what government, local educators, and parents say about international education, it is important to understand the history of English education in South Korea and its consequences. Many South Koreans perceive the English language to be not just an instrument for international education, but international education itself. Consequently, the demand for English immersion education has played an important role in opening more international schools in South Korea.

The South Korean government views foreign language education as one of the most critical parts of international education because it believes that learning foreign languages facilitates understanding the culture, society, and history of other countries (NAK, 2012). Since the early 1990s, when the government announced its aim to make South Korea more globalized in areas such as finance and education, it has become more supportive of teaching foreign



languages such as English, German, French, Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese at schools. In particular, it has invested significantly in improving K-12 English language education, since it believes that English is one of the most important and widely used languages in this globalizing world (NAK, 2012).

In South Korea, increasing interest in English education is a response to the economically globalizing world. The government and parents believe that being able to communicate effectively in English and gaining better access to global information and knowledge is important to function well in this globalizing world (Chang, 2009; Tseng, 2008). Specifically after the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, there has been a belief among the South Koreans that English is a critical resource for them to thrive within the context of globalization (Song, 2011). To be fluent in English is important not only for the development of the whole nation but also for individuals' competitiveness.

The South Korean government has played a critical role in creating an "English boom" by implementing a lot of policies related to English language education (Park, 2009). Its enthusiasm for English language education is evident in its educational policy. The South Korean government included an English listening test in the national college entrance exam in January 1991, which has caused schools to allocate more time to improving students' listening skills. In 1994, it revised the English portion of the university entrance examination away from emphasizing grammar towards a more communicative approach, and this has increased an "intense desire to speak native-like English" (Park, 2009, p.52). In addition, a new law was introduced in 1994 that made English language mandatory from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Previously, it had been introduced in middle school (Kam & Wong, 2004).

These efforts to facilitate English language education have brought a policy proposal for “English immersion” education in public schools. In 2008, President Lee Myung Bak and his government planned to teach non-English subjects in English starting in 2010, to improve K-12 students’ English proficiency (Lee, 2010). Even though the plan was withdrawn because of severe criticisms of its significant budget and its feasibility, it has brought other forms of English immersion education outside of school, such as “English Villages” and “English-education cities”. Local governments in South Korea have tried to open “English Villages” since 2004, where students can improve their English (Park, 2009). A number of English villages have been built and more are planned to be built soon.

### **5.1.2 Increasing number of K-12 students studying abroad**

Although the South Korean government is trying to improve English language education in South Korea by opening English villages and hiring more native-English speakers at public and private schools, many parents are dissatisfied with the English teaching available (Park, 2009). They believe that the best way for their children to become fluent in English is to send them to English-speaking countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. Also, as more students obtain higher education in the United States, parents find it increasingly necessary to prepare children with high quality English language education (Hong, 2011).

Therefore, the number of South Korean students studying abroad at the K-12 level has skyrocketed over the last ten years. In 2000, 1.8 of every 10,000 elementary students studied abroad; by 2010, 26.7 of every 10,000. For middle school students the number increased from

9.7 in 2000 to 29.7 in 2010, and for high school students from 9.1 to 20.8 (Korean Educational Development Institute [KEDI], 2011). This trend has produced the term, “wild geese families,” families living separately, sometimes for years, to educate their children in English-speaking countries. The mothers and children stay abroad for schooling while the fathers live and work in South Korea (Onishi, 2008). Also, it has caused economic issues because too much money is sent to other countries, which negatively affects the domestic economy. According to the statistics of the Bank of Korea, the deficit caused by sending tuitions and living costs abroad from 1993 to 2009 is about US\$34.9 billion. In other words, this is the amount that South Korean students spent abroad above the amount foreign students spent in South Korea. The deficit is approximately 23% of the Current Account Surplus earned through international trade in the same period (Song, 2010).

The social and economic problems caused by students who are eager to get an international education have pushed the government to invest in international education more than ever before. There was only one public high and one public middle international school for domestic students until the end of the 1990s. However, with the increase of students studying abroad in the 2000s and the economic and social issues caused by this, the South Korean government has opened five international high schools between 2006 and 2011. Private international schools were also established to meet the needs of parents and students who want an international education without leaving their country. In 2006, one middle and high school were opened, and two more private international middle schools were established in 2009.

### **5.1.3 Ineffectiveness of existing international schools**

Although the number of international schools has increased, the effects of international education are not satisfying to parents and students. One of the biggest reasons for its failure is its curricula. Public international middle schools' curricula have to follow the national curriculum in most subject areas because middle school education is compulsory. There are restrictions on changing curricular content because the government believes it should be taught to every public school student. Therefore, teachers try to make it international by teaching in English instead of changing the content itself. Even though most subjects, except for Korean language, Korean history, and Civic Education are taught in English, the textbooks are all Korean, made for the national curriculum and authorized by the government. They try to provide international education by using English in the classroom. It is, however, hard to view this as meaningful international education because content is as important as language in international education. Considering the fact that national curricula often emphasize a particular culture (Hill, 2006), it is possible that the curricular content and perspectives are not culturally well-rounded.

International high schools have more freedom in constructing curricula because high school education is not compulsory. However, it still has its challenges. Although they try to be international by including more content regarding cultural understanding and international relations, and by teaching almost every subject in English, local universities do not have any system to evaluate the students who learn this international curriculum. Therefore, students in international high schools study the requirements of the national curriculum by themselves or in private institutions during the weekends in case they have to attend local universities and take the national entrance examination. Parents say that it is burdensome both to students who have to

cover both international and national curricula and to parents who have to support students' weekend study financially (Seo, 2012).

Teacher quality is also an important issue. According to interviews with teachers who worked before resignation and work now at one of the private international middle schools in South Korea, teachers have difficulty in communicating in English with their students (Lee, 2008). They say that most of the teachers working at international schools are Koreans who graduated from college in South Korea, and their English is not good enough to translate Korean textbooks into English and teach it in English. Eventually, the quality of teaching falls because of teachers' lack of linguistic competence.

## **5.2 IMPEDIMENTS TO OFFERING THE IB IN BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN SOUTH KOREA**

### **5.2.1 High Cost**

Despite the positive impacts that the IB will have on secondary education in South Korea, there are some challenges to deal with to provide it in both private and public sectors. First challenge is it costs a lot to provide it in public sectors.

Tuition levels of schools offering the IB vary by location, but they are usually considered expensive. Seoul Foreign School (SFS), one of the IB schools, charges almost US\$26,534 for 9-12 graders per year (SFS, 2011). Tuition at Gyeonggi Academy of Foreign Language (GAFL), the first and only private school offering the IB program, is around US\$10,000 per annum (Park,

2011). This is four times the price of the average public school tuition in Seoul City, which is about US\$2,500 per annum (Lee, 2006).

The government is trying to provide the IBDP in Seoul International School, which is public, so that students can get internationally approved quality education without having to pay for it. There is, however, opposition to this plan because of the high cost. The estimated expense of one student per year at Seoul International School would be \$20,000, if it obtained approval from the IBO to provide the IB. This is three times what the government spends on one student in other public schools per year. The opponents—teachers, parents, and others who value equality—say it is unfair to spend more money on a certain public school than on other public schools with public money (Lee, 2007).

### **5.2.2 Concerns about providing the IB through franchised schools**

The second challenge is that even in the private sector, there is opposition to opening schools providing the IB because of the access issue. Some people think that only economically privileged students can attend the private IB schools.

Due to the demands for more effective international education and the difficulties providing it in the public sector, the South Korean government passed a law in 2009 that allows foreign corporations to open international schools in Jeju Economic Free Zone. This is an attempt to improve the quality of international education through the private sector. As a test case, the government made a contract with North London Collegiate School (NLCS), whose headquarters is in London. NLCS Jeju opened in 2011, and it will provide the IB curricula as

soon it receives IBO accreditation. NLCS Jeju is distinct from other foreign schools in South Korea in that it is open to domestic South Korean students as well as foreign students. The government is planning to increase the number of NLCS Jeju-like international schools in Jeju if it is successful. Accordingly, the number of international schools providing the IB will increase in South Korea. The driving force behind this project is the government's belief that international education in South Korea should be more **globally competent**. The government values the model of franchising with schools abroad and providing internationally accredited programs such as the IB. It believes that this will play an important role in improving the quality of international education in South Korea and decreasing the number of students going abroad (PAE, 2012 & Na, 2009).

The Korean Teachers and Education Workers' Union (KTEWU) and parents' association for education, however, are opposed to allowing corporations to open schools. They point out that only students from high socio-economic backgrounds would have access to international schools like NLCS Jeju because of its high tuition—about US\$27,000 per year (PAE, 2012). They believe that education is a public service and every student has a right to get an equal quality of education (Na, 2009). In this sense, they share a stance with IB outsiders who emphasize equal access to the IB.

It is apparent that providing quality international curricula is important to be successful in international education. Nevertheless, among people who are opposed to providing the IB both in the public and private sectors, it is hard to find any concerns about the quality of current international education and its competitiveness at global level. It seems that the underlying value of these opponents is **social inequality**. They keep stressing equal distribution of public money

in education and equal access to quality international education, and confront the government. Yet they do not suggest any alternatives to improve the quality of international education.

### **5.2.3 The university admission system**

The third and biggest challenge in providing the IB, in particular the IBDP, is that there are no universities in South Korea that recognize the IB as satisfying their admissions criteria. Therefore, domestic students with the IBDP must go to university abroad or study the requirements of the national curriculum along with completing the IBDP, which is burdensome to students.

This is largely because of the highly centralized educational assessment system of South Korea. Every domestic student should complete the requirements of the national curriculum to take the national entrance exam. This exam plays the most important role in the university screening system; there is no substitute for the scores from this exam.

Although this is an important issue that should be discussed at length before implementing the IB, there are hardly any documented discussions on this. If the number of IB schools increases in South Korea, there would be plenty of students who plan to go to local universities with the IBDP. Yang (2007) examined what parents and teachers in Jeju—where there would be more international schools with the IB programs due to the law the government passed in 2009—think about the international schools that were to be established in Jeju. 355 parents participated in the survey, and 34.7% of them answered that they would send their children to local universities even if their children get into an IB school. Therefore, policies should be devised to allow students with the IBDP to attend local universities without an undue burdensome set of examination requirements.



## **6.0 MAPPING**

In this section, agents at the local, national, and transnational levels and higher education are located on a map, based on the analysis above. Visualization is helpful to compare and contrast each agent. Since there are largely three dimensions that represent what each stakeholder values the most, the most appropriate format for mapping is a Venn diagram. By positioning each agent, it becomes easier to see where they overlap and diverge, their distance from one another, where the gaps are and where the challenges originate.

The South Korean International Education Filed

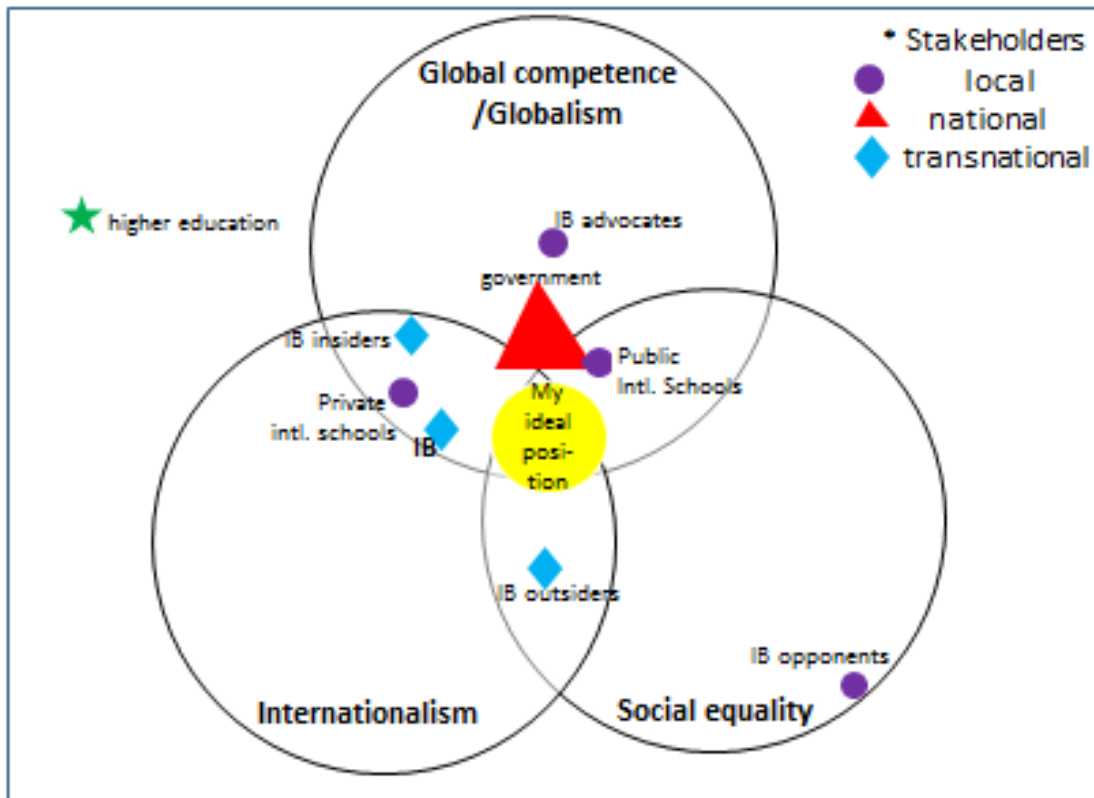


Figure 1. Stakeholders' Priorities Among the Different Components of International Education

## 6.1 THE GOVERNMENT AND STRONG ADVOCATES OF THE IB

The government concurs with parents and students who advocate for the establishment of international schools that offer the IB by foreign corporations. Both parties agree that students need to be equipped with foreign language skills, especially with the English language, and

international knowledge that will make them competitive globally. Parents are the main supporters of globalism in education.

However, parents and the government diverge on their fundamental reasons for supporting the IB. The government is interested in national economic return; they expect students with a quality international education to contribute to the national economy by helping the government in multinational negotiations and international organizations. On the other hand, parents and students expect individual returns from their investment in international programs. Their first priority is that the students function well and thrive within the context of globalization (Chang, 2009; Tseng, 2008).

Moreover, although both parties are supportive of globalism, their positions differ. While parents do not mention global peace or with regard to international education field, the government is concerned with both of these.

As a representative of the whole nation, the government has an interest in multiple area, and the focus of it support changes depending on the situations and audience. Although the government's globalism is different from the globalism mentioned in section 2.1 in that it is national globalism, it strongly supports globalism, and has a weaker, ambiguous stance on global citizenship. The government aims for social equality by establishing public international schools and trying to provide the IB with public money. Supporting the three positions together, the government cannot stay at one place as other agents do as a dot on the map; it is therefore represented by a triangle in figure 1, adopting the three positions fluidly.

## 6.2 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

From the document analysis, public and private schools appear to be similar—both categorized as local agents. However, they are not close to each other in figure 1 due to their different orientation. Although both schools aim to produce internationally competitive workers, they differ in terms of access and curricula.

Public international schools are socially equitable in their tuition. Many students have access to the public schools as long as they have an excellent academic record (The argument surrounding social economic status and academic achievement are beyond the scope of this thesis). In contrast, the tuition of private international schools is a barrier to entry for students from low socio economic backgrounds.

The public school curricula are more oriented to the national curriculum and focused mostly on international skills such as fluency in foreign languages. In contrast, the ideology of private international schools includes not only globalism but also internationalism. They make students aware of international issues and how they affect people around the world and global peace. Although they articulate this curricula aim, it is difficult to assess if it is really implemented and achieved in practice.

## 6.3 THE IB

The IB and private international schools share a position in figure 1 because both of their curricula pursue the same goal: educating students to have both global competence and citizenship. They differ, however, in terms of their effectiveness. Comparing the evaluation by

teachers and parents of the IB schools and the private international schools run by South Korean institutions, the IB is much more effective at teaching language competence and global issues in depth and more highly regarded by teachers and university admission officers.

The IB is ideal in that it equips students well with foreign language skills through its immersion programs, and lets students experience various cultures and perspectives rather than using a curriculum developed by a certain country. However, it still cannot be at the center of the three circles in figure 1 because of the access issue. Its high tuition is a huge obstacle to providing a high quality international education to a large number of students.

#### 6.4 HIGHER EDUCATION

In figure 1, higher education in South Korea sits outside any of the three circles. This lack of affiliation represents higher education's lack of involvement in the IBDP issue. Despite its uninvolved status currently, it is important to place higher education on the map due to the critical role it plays in promoting the acceptance and implementation of the IB in South Korea, and hence the spread of international education.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 INTERNATIONALIZE THE CURRICULUM IN SOUTH KOREA USING THE IB**

Considering the unmet needs for English language and the current ineffective international curricula, the IB presents a solution to the internationalization of curricula in South Korea. First, it satisfies the needs of students desiring an immersion in English. Moreover, since the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) has a good reputation for its staff management system (Mayer, 2010), there would likely be fewer concerns about teacher quality in international schools that offer the IB. High teacher quality would bring higher quality education and better academic success for students.

Second, schools providing the IB attract students in addition to those from South Korea, specifically from the Asian region. South Korean universities have demonstrated this point. Thanks to the effort of universities in the 2000s to internationalize their curricula and be globally competitive, the number of foreign students in higher education in South Korea has significantly increased from fewer than 20,000 in 2003 to more than 80,000 in 2010 (KEDI, 2010). Given that 85.68% of higher education foreign students are from Asia, there is a high possibility that Asian K-12 students who are interested in an international education but do not want to go far from their home country would choose an IB school in South Korea. Attracting foreign students has

two advantages. Primarily, the diverse student body makes international education more effective, because it exposes students to diverse cultures and perspectives. It also can bring an economic return to the national economy. In the U.S. for example, international students and their dependents contributed approximately US\$20.2 billion to the U.S. economy during the 2010-2011 academic year (IIE, 2011). Although the magnitude of the economic return in South Korea would be smaller than that of the U.S. due to fewer schools and other factors, attracting foreign students would be still profitable to some extent.

## **7.2 INVEST GOVERNMENT RESOURCES TO PROVIDE THE IB IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

One of the biggest challenges for international education is social equality. This is demonstrated in figure 1 by the IB's position being other than at the convergence of the three circles, the ideal position. I believe that my position in the international education is ideal, i.e. in the middle, because it integrates the three major constituents of international education. This position emphasizes a more holistic or balanced international education because it involves global competence, internationalism, and social equality.

Efforts to expand the IB in South Korea therefore need to focus on social equality. Since IB insiders remain silent on this issue, the government must take up this cause by investing in the IB so that economically disadvantaged students to have access to IB programs. There have been objections to the idea, and the position of IB opponents on the social equality dimension in figure 1 demonstrates this. However, international education is unavoidable in this globalizing world

and qualified and approved curricula, which seem to be the IB for now, are critical to its success. It costs approximately US\$40 million to establish an international school that provides a curriculum developed by local educators (PIHS, 2012). However, attempts to do this have had turned out to be limited success (Lee, 2008 & Seo, 2012), and it may take a long time to develop a successful international curriculum at the local level. The IB presents a good alternative to existing and unsuccessful international curricula, and is worth the government's investment in socially and economically marginalized areas.

### **7.3 EXPAND COMMUNICATION AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION, THE GOVERNMENT, AND LOCAL SCHOOLS**

Currently, higher education cares about the national policy only and does not meet the need of specific students including students with the IBDP. There are matters caused because South Korean universities do not view the IB as equivalent to national exam system. First, students with the IBDP have to attend universities abroad instead of South Korean local universities. This brings the efforts that the government has made to keep the money in the country by building international schools for domestic students and offering the ineffective. Students are spending large amount of money outside of the country instead of contributing to the national income. Second, this could bring a serious “brain drain” issue in South Korea. According to the report of the IIE (2011), large number of international students in higher education in the U.S.A., where most of the South Korean students go for their higher education, do not return to their homeland



after finishing their education but instead they pursue career abroad where they obtained their higher education. If South Korean students with the IBDP have to go abroad for their higher education because of the inflexible university admission system, it would be such a loss of good human resources. Third, universities are missing their opportunities to accept academically qualified students. And consequently, it will hinder their ability to improve the overall quality of their education.

To make the IB function within the South Korean educational content, higher education should be involved in the debate on providing it. Along with the access issue, transition from secondary schools with the IB to tertiary education in South Korea presents an unsolved problem. Even though Gyeonggi Academy of Foreign Languages (GAFL)—the first and only private school providing the IB in South Korea for domestic students—started providing the IB in 2011, it is only intended for students who are planning to attend university abroad.

It would be hard for the higher education to recognize of the IBDP for admission to universities because the South Korean ministry of education does not recognize the IB as having the equivalent status to the national exam system. There might be some conflicts between the local universities that want to bring some changes to the existing system by accepting domestic students with IBDP and the government that wants to keep the existing system stable. Considering the loss that would be caused by not accepting the students with the IBDP, however, it is urgent for those stakeholders to have discussions and find a common ground. Higher education should work with the government and local schools to integrate the IB into the concurrent core national curriculum and attract students with the IBDP to local universities. This would lead to a decrease of “brain drain” in tertiary education. Moreover, given the students and university officers evaluate the IB highly, as discussed in chapter 2, attracting students with the

IBDP, who tend to be academically ready and high achievers would improve the quality of higher education in a positive way.

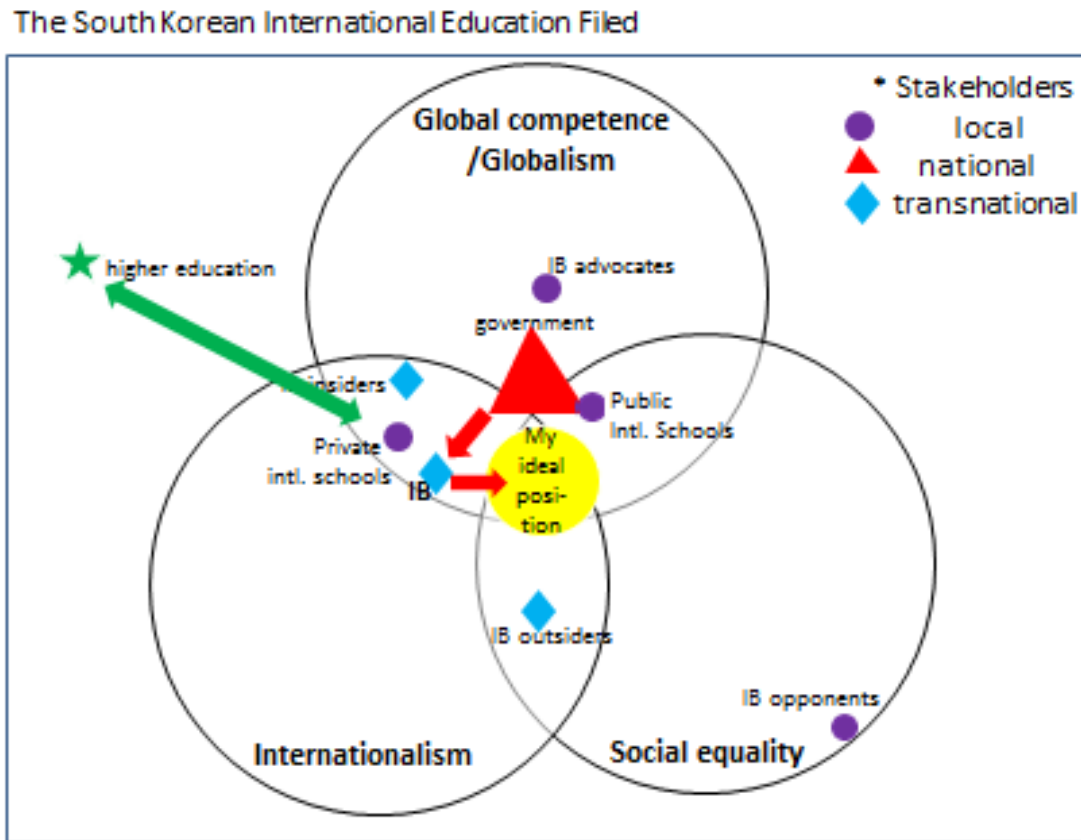


Figure 2. Recommendations for Stakeholders to do for South Korean International Education

#### 7.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

One future research project that appears important argument the findings of this thesis is field work at IB schools for domestic students, such as GAFL. Although this paper mentions

anticipated challenges to providing the IB in the South Korean educational context, there could be different and additional challenges. GAFL was approved by the IBO to provide the IBDP in 2011, making it an appropriate field site to study the reality of offering the IBDP to domestic students. Interviews with the local staff who run the program and with students and parents who are in the program would provide valuable data not only for the government and international schools preparing for providing the IBDP, but also for students and parents who are interested in the IBDP.

## **Conclusion**

International education is becoming increasingly important in South Korea. The search for the best model has attracted many arguments and discussions among its various agents. This study aimed to answer two main research questions: (1) What do international schools and the government in South Korea, and the transnational community of certifiers and curriculum designers, think is the priority of an international education?; (2) What will be the impact of International Baccalaureate (IB) programs on South Korean international education and what are the challenges of providing the IB in the South Korean educational context? It has shown that there are, largely, three dimensions that can categorize each stakeholder's stance on international education: global competence/globalism, internationalism, and social equality. Each stakeholder is located in a different place on the map (figure 1), according to its priorities regarding international education; no stakeholder is yet in the ideal place, having characteristics of each dimension.

The positions of the various stakeholders are as follows. Local stakeholders, both public and private international schools for domestic South Korean students, want their students to have

global competence through international education. However, they diverge in their curricula and access. Public international schools value harmony with national curricula while private schools are more focused on international issues. Moreover, public international schools value social equality more than private ones by providing quality international education with public money. The national stakeholder, the South Korean government, values global competence the most because it prioritizes national economic return. However, it also respects the ideas of internationalism and social equality by reflecting them in the public international schools' curricula and establishing public international schools. The transnational community of certifiers and curriculum designers value internationalism. They are, however, different from each other in that transnational certifiers emphasize global competence in international education while the curriculum designers value access (social equality) issues.

The IB presents a credible method of providing an international curriculum, but it also has some challenges: its high cost and difficulties in transition to South Korean tertiary education. Tuition of IB schools is so expensive that most of the beneficiaries of offering the IB would be economically privileged students. Furthermore, it is difficult for students with the IB to attend local universities as current university admission systems do not recognize it as satisfying their admission criteria. Due to the highly centralized educational system, the university entrance exam is focused on completing the national curriculum.

Despite the challenges, it is worth making the effort to implement the IB because of the positive impact it would bring to the national economy and the quality of international education in South Korea. If the IB were provided, a good number of K-12 students would choose to attend an IB school in South Korea rather than spending money in other countries to get an international education or to learn English. It would attract not only domestic students but also foreign

students from Asia. Asian students who want a quality international education but do not want to go far from their countries would plausibly choose to attend an IB school in South Korea, which would bring economic benefits to the South Korean economy. Moreover, the IBO's internationally approved staff management system would help improve teacher quality, which has been one of the problems in international schools for domestic students in South Korea. Higher quality teaching will accordingly improve the quality of international education in South Korea.

To make the IB works successfully in the South Korean educational context, there are a couple of tasks that should be completed by the government, higher education, local schools and researchers. Although the IB is a recognized internationally as a strong educational program that values both internationalism and globalism, it is not easily accessible for students from low-economic social status. The South Korean government needs to focus on social equality issues and provide the IB at public international schools. Moreover, most importantly, there should be studies and discussions on how to make the IB work in harmony with the core national curriculum and get it recognized by local universities. Although this is a crucial issue to be dealt with, there is scant literature on this issue. Researchers should study cases of other countries where they have had similar situations with South Korea, and examine how they have overcome these difficulties. Higher education should start communicating with both the government and local schools to discuss this issue to attract students with the IB. Doing so would not only make the IB work successfully in the South Korean educational and social context, but also would improve the quality of education at the tertiary level by providing local universities with students who are academically ready for college.

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