UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

QUALITY OF SCHOOL LIFE OF ADOLESCENTS IN FINLAND AND KOREA

A Cross-cultural and Comparative Study

Junghyun Yoon

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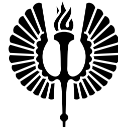

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To adolescents,
to my father,
&
to Dongjun

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the quality of school life of Finnish and Korean adolescents. First, it investigates adolescents' perceptions of their quality of school life by identifying the crucial aspects of quality of school life (*general satisfaction, peer relations, and teacher-student relations*). Thereafter, a more in-depth exploration of these crucial aspects of quality of school life are explored by focusing on students' peer relations as well as tensions and negotiations that occur between student agency and school control. This study also illuminates how student agency is controlled or manifested in students' interactions with teachers and how students reflect their experiences with control and agency in daily school life.

The theoretical approach of this study departs from the concept of quality of school life. I utilise Foucault's ([1975] 2003; 1984) and Butler's thoughts (1988; [1990] 2008) as well as Bernstein's theory of classification and framing (1996) to discuss control and agency. In addition, I employ cross-cultural and comparative studies as methodological approaches and discuss the notions, benefits, and dilemmas associated with as well as the objectives fulfilled by cross-cultural and comparative studies.

Further, this thesis was conducted using a mixed-methods design. The quantitative data was collected from student survey items taken from PISA 2012 studies, targeting 15-year-old Finnish and Korean students (study 1). The qualitative data was produced from fieldwork inspired by an ethnographic approach, in two comprehensive schools in southern Finland and two primary and two lower-secondary schools in Seoul, Korea. The qualitative data consists of field notes generated through observations and interviews with students (grades 6, 8, and 9) and their class teachers (studies 2 and 3).

The findings of the quantitative study revealed that, in all the dimensions of quality of school life (*general satisfaction*, *peer relations, and teacher-student relations*), both Finnish and Korean adolescents' perceptions were less affirmative compared with those of students in other OECD countries on average. Further, the perceptions of Finnish and Korean students, compared to the OECD average, were the least positive for *teacher-student relations*. In the first two dimensions, Finnish adolescents' views appeared to be more positive than that of Korean students. Subsequently, qualitative findings elaborated that young people strived for two demanding tasks of school life: studying and friends. Many students—regardless of

their school grade, gender, and socioeconomic status—perceived the importance of high achievement or at least of accomplishing school work, with regard to their future path and career. Simultaneously, students found meaning in attending school from the relationships with their friends. Their peer relations connoted emotional support as well as hierarchy and conflict for both genders. The students constructed gendered identities through the patterns of their peer relations, and gender roles were constructed in school scenes organised by adults. Students displayed diverse patterns of peer interactions, moving between independence and interdependence, and these patterns appeared somewhat differently in the Finnish and Korean schools. However, an academically competitive spirit among peers did not distinctly appear among either the Finnish or Korean students.

Further, in all the Finnish and Korean schools studied, student agency was tightly controlled by the regulations of time, space, and movement and was extensively limited in teaching-learning practices. Some teachers, who appeared to exercise weak control on student conduct and their use of time and space, exercised strong control over the sequence and contents of lessons, teaching-learning methods, and evaluation criteria. Many students appeared to be accustomed to strong control in teaching-learning practices, and some students did not welcome teachers' weak control in instruction methods that attempted to encourage students' agency and active participation. Moreover, variations of control and agency were observed in student-teacher interactions in daily routines. A less vertical relationship and rather weak teacher control over students' self-expression (e.g., appearance and the use of smartphones in school) were observed in the Finnish schools, whereas a hierarchical relationship and class teachers' intensive control and care work were more noticeable in the Korean schools.

This study interprets that historical, sociocultural, and institutional contexts are linked with the roles of schoolteachers and students and also with students' views and experiences of their quality of school life. I argue that more aspects of a disciplinary school were visible in the Korean schools, whereas the Finnish schools seemed to be shifting slightly ahead towards being schools of self-regulating learners. However, the symptom of self-responsible learner identity was visible in both the Finnish and Korean schools, including students who were considered as intractable and low-achieving. Their attitudes were somewhat different from the studying-diminishing manners that adolescents from disadvantaged social backgrounds revealed in the ethnographic studies conducted in previous years. Lastly, this thesis conveys a message of democratic school culture in terms of the quality of school life.

KEYWORDS: Quality of school life, peer relations, teacher-student relations, control, agency, democratic school culture, cross-cultural study, comparative study, mixed methods, Finland, Korea

TURUN YLIOPISTO
Kasvatustieteiden tiedekunta
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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tutkimuksen kohteena on nuorten kouluelämän laatu Suomessa ja Koreassa. Ensinnäkin tutkimus selvittää nuorten kouluelämän laatua koskevia käsityksiä tunnistamalla siihen liittyviä keskeisiä tekijöitä (*yleinen tyytyväisyys, vertaissuhteet sekä opettaja-oppilas -suhteet*). Tämän jälkeen näitä tutkitaan tarkemmin pureutumalla oppilaiden vertaissuhteisiin sekä niihin jännitteisiin ja neuvottelustrategioihin, joita oppilaiden toimijuuden ja koulun kontrollin välillä ilmenee. Tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan myös, miten oppilaan toimijuutta kontrolloidaan tai miten se ilmenee oppilaiden ja opettajien välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa, ja mitä oppilaat itse ajattelevat päivittäisessä kouluelämässä ilmenevistä kontrolliin ja toimijuuteen liittyvistä kokemuksista.

Teoreettisesti tutkimus lähtee liikkeelle kouluelämän laadun käsitteestä. Työ hyödyntää myös Foucault'n ([1975] 2003; 1984) ja Butlerin ajattelua (1988; [1990] 2008) sekä Bernsteinin luokittelua ja kehystämistä käsittelevää teoriaa (1996) käsitellessään kontrollia ja toimijuutta. Tämän ohella tutkimus hyödyntää kulttuurienvälisiä ja vertailevia tutkimuksia menetelmällisinä lähestymistapoinaan ja ottaa osaa kulttuurienvälisten ja vertailevien tutkimusten käsitteitä, hyötyjä, dilemmoja ja tehtävää käsittelevään keskusteluun.

Työ toteutettiin monimenetelmällisesti. Määrällinen aineisto koottiin PISA 2012 -tutkimuksen oppilastutkimusosiosta, jonka kohteena ovat 15-vuotiaat suomalais- ja korealaisoppilaat (tutkimus 1). Laadullinen aineisto luotiin etnografisen lähestymistavan inspiroimalla kenttätyöllä kahdessa eteläsuomalaisessa peruskoulussa sekä kahdella ala-asteella ja kahdella yläasteella Soulissa, Koreassa. Laadullinen aineisto koostuu kenttämuistiinpanoista, jotka ovat syntyneet havainnoista ja oppilaiden (luokka-asteet 6, 8 ja 9) sekä opettajien haastatteluista (tutkimukset 2 ja 3).

Määrällinen tutkimus paljasti, että kaikissa kouluelämän laadun ulottuvuuksissa (*yleinen tyytyväisyys, vertaissuhteet* sekä *opettaja-oppilas -suhteet*) sekä suomalaisten että korealaisten nuorten käsitykset olivat vähemmän myönteisiä verrattuna muiden OECD-maiden keskiarvoon. Tämän ohella OECD-keskiarvoon verrattuna suomalaisten ja korealaisten oppilaiden käsitys *opettaja-oppilas -suhteista* oli kaikkein vähiten positiivinen. Kahdessa ensimmäisessä ulottuvuudessa suomalaisnuorten käsitykset vaikuttivat olevan positiivisempia kuin korealaisoppilaiden. Laadulliset havainnot täsmensivät, että nuoret tekevät töitä kahden vaativan kouluelämää koskevan asian eteen: opiskelun ja ystävien. Riippumatta luokka-

asteesta, sukupuolesta tai sosioekonomisesta asemasta suurin osa oppilaista koki yhteyden yhtäältä tulevaisuuden polkujensa ja työuriensa sekä toisaalta hyvien koulusuoritusten tai ainakin koulutehtävien läpäisemisen välillä. Samanaikaisesti oppilaat löysivät koulunkäynnin merkityksen ystävyyssuhteistaan. Molemmille sukupuolille vertaissuhteet merkitsivät paitsi henkistä tukea myös hierarkioita ja konflikteja. Sukupuoli-identiteetit rakennettiin vertaissuhteissa. Sukupuolirooleja neuvoteltiin aikuisten järjestämässä päivittäisessä kouluelämässä. Oppilaat osoittivat monimuotoisia itsenäisyyden ja keskinäisriippuvuuden välille asettuvia vertaissuhde-vuorovaikutuskaavoja, jotka näyttäytyivät hieman erilaisina suomalaisissa ja korealaisissa kouluissa. Akateemisesti kilpailuhenkistä ilmapiiriä vertaisten välillä ei noussut esiin sen paremmin suomalaisten kuin korealaistenkaan oppilaiden keskuudessa.

Kaikissa suomalaisissa ja korealaisissa kouluissa oppilaiden toimijuutta kontrolloitiin tiukasti ajan- sekä tilankäytön ja liikkumisen rajoitusten kautta, ja liikkumista rajoitettiin merkittävästi opetus- ja oppimiskäytänteissä. Jotkut oppilaiden käytöstä sekä heidän ajan- ja tilankäyttöään vähäisesti kontrolloivat opettajat kontrolloivat kuitenkin tiukasti oppituntien järjestystä ja sisältöä, opetus- ja oppimismenetelmiä sekä arviointikriteereitä. Monet oppilaat vaikuttivat olevan tottuneita tiukkaan kontrolliin opetus- ja oppimiskäytänteiden kohdalla, ja jotkut oppilaat eivät katsoneet hyvällä opettajien opetusmenetelmiä koskevaa heikkoa kontrollia, jonka tehtävänä oli rohkaista oppilaiden toimijuutta ja aktiivista osallistumista. Tämän ohella kontrollin ja toimijuuden muunnelmia havaittiin oppilaiden ja opettajien välisissä päivittäisissä vuorovaikutustilanteissa. Suomalaisissa kouluissa havaittiin vähemmän hierarkkinen suhde sekä vähemmän oppilaiden itseilmaisuun kohdistuvaa kontrollia (esim. ulkonäkö ja älypuhelinten käyttö) opettajien toimesta, kun taas hierarkkinen suhde, intensiivinen kontrolli sekä luokanopettajien muu kasvatustyö olivat selvemmin näkyvissä korealaisissa kouluissa.

Tässä tutkimuksessa esitetyn tulkinnan mukaan historialliset, sosiokulttuurilliset sekä institutionaaliset kontekstit ovat yhteydessä opettajien ja oppilaiden rooliin sekä oppilaiden näkemyksiin ja kokemuksiin koskien heidän kouluelämänsä laatua. Korealaisissa kouluissa kurinpidollisen koulun piirteitä oli esillä enemmän, kun taasen suomalaiset koulut vaikuttivat olevan hieman lähempänä itse itseään sääntelevien oppijoiden koulua. Itsevastuullisen oppijan identiteetti oli kuitenkin näkyvissä kaikissa kouluissa, myös uppiniskaisina ja huonosti menestyvinä pidettyjen oppilaiden kohdalla. Heidän asenteensa olivat jossain määrin erilaisia niihin koulukielteisiin asenteisiin nähden, joita huono-osaisista sosiaalisista taustoista tulevat nuoret ovat tuoneet esille aiemmin tehdyissä kouluetnografioissa. Lopuksi tutkimus haluaa korostaa kouluelämän laatuun tähtäävän demokraattisen koulukulttuurin tärkeää merkitystä.

AVAINSANAT: kouluelämän laatu, vertaissuhteet, oppilas-opettaja -suhteet, kontrolli, toimijuus, demokraattinen koulukulttuuri, kulttuurienvälisyys, vertaileva tutkimus, monimenetelmätutkimus, Suomi, Korea

Acknowledgements

It has been ten years since I visited Finland for the first time. I have spent the following years coming and going to Finland and Korea. And this thesis came out. I have to admit that this is probably the outcome of coincidence or contingency, while I was on this path in the complex arena comprising academic, financial, and time resources.

Even though my starting line was drawn along my social background as a non-middle-class Korean female in her thirties, sidestepping the social norms of marriage and childbirth, I encountered 'good' luck. I was able to finish this thesis work and maintain an independent life, unlike many other senior and contemporary women who had to give up unfolding alternative life paths and social identities in discord with their time and conditions.

I am also lucky because I met good people along the road. First, I owe huge thanks to my supervisors Tero Järvinen, Johanna Kallo, and Anne Laiho. Their respectable expertise has been infused into my research and their encouragement and empathy at every stage of my doctoral study period became a solid basis for me to continue this work and see it through to the end. Johanna and Anne, thanks to your devoted supervision, I have grown up and finally completed my doctoral studies. Dear Tero, my first supervisor, thank you so much. I imagine that academic supervision would be a demanding but artistic task, because it must strike a balance between strong guidance and a democratic relationship with students. Thanks to you, I was very well cared for and simultaneously learned how to stand up by myself. Thank you Lisbeth Lundahl, a visiting professor in my department. You subconsciously or unconsciously became my unofficial supervisor, providing your valuable comments at every step of my doctoral thesis. You also kindly arranged an opportunity for me to visit your department in Umeå, Sweden. I have pleasant memories from the moments that you picked me up at the airport to the lovely fruit welfare in your department.

I want to express my deep gratitude to the two pre-examiners of my thesis, Per-Åke Rosvall and Sirpa Lappalainen, for accepting a request for pre-examination promptly and providing me with food for thought. Both your precious comments were very helpful for improving the quality of this thesis. I am particularly grateful

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Another important group of people that I would like to thank are my friends who shared my joys and sorrows in the KEVEKO doctoral programme. Kalypso, Olli, Sevcan, Heikki, and already-doctors Sonia and Elizabeth, your contribution to this thesis has been substantial, from commenting and discussing the drafts of my papers to dealing with practical matters on the way to pre-examination and defence. Olli and Heikki, I wrote an opinion letter to *Helsingin Sanomat*, thanks to your suggestions and translations. I hope we are able to embark on another fun and pleasant collaboration such as this one.

My life since my first visit to Finland has been fraught with cross-cultural difficulties. I experienced a culture shock in Finland, particularly in the initial phase of my doctoral studies; I suffered a reverse-cultural shock when I worked in and visited Korea. The moments when I attempted to expand and reconstruct my sociocultural identities in Finland and Korea were painful and embarrassing. Then again, it was a blessed moment of growth through which I was able to relive my childhood and adolescence. Cultivating cultural sensitivity and expanding one's sociocultural identity is a never-ending process. However, I was able to develop my thoughts on sociocultural universalities and uniqueness, beginning from my personal experience up until the completion of this thesis, although it is confined by my narrow thoughts. In particular, I sought to refine my cross-cultural and comparative understanding in Chapter 2. Dear my Finnish colleagues, you were the virtual readers in my mind throughout the process of writing this chapter. I dare to hope that this

chapter contributes to satisfying your sociological curiosity about Korean society to a certain extent. Thank you all for being my academic and social parents and for your friendship.

And with you, my colleagues and friends in the KEVEKO doctoral programme and from Helsinki University, I experienced many episodes through seminars/conference trips in Paris, Budapest, Ireland, Oulu, etc. Thank you for sharing beautiful time and providing me with opportunities for growth. I would also like to express my gratitude to my lunch mates Tero, Markku, and Heikki. The lunch group was significant in my life not only because it helped me avoid loneliness but also to help me do away with my prejudice about 'Suomalaiset miehet' (Finnish men). Their chats were replete with narratives and emotions. Thank you for exposing me to a feast of lively spoken Finnish and for sharing my cross-cultural and comparative questions.

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In my early-stage research plan, I had mentioned that I will explore important 'others'. Looking back now, I feel that I have made a long journey to get to know myself. I came back to myself through the journey from Korea to Finland. I became aware of a small part of my prejudice and misunderstanding. I do not know what my social position will be a few years later, but I believe that my understanding of early teens, colleagues, friends, neighbours, and loved ones has improved based on the insight gained during my doctoral studies and life here in Finland; I feel that I could utilise this as an inspiration for writing and speaking. Which new sociocultural shocks and understanding await me? I am excited and nervous. Thank you all.

Turku, Summer 2019
Jung

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List of Empirical Studies

This thesis is based on the following empirical studies, which are referred to in the text as studies 1, 2, and 3.

Study 1: Yoon, J., and T. Järvinen. 2016. Are Model PISA Pupils Happy at School? Quality of School Life of Adolescents in Finland and Korea. *Comparative Education* 52 (4): 427–448.

Study 2: Yoon, J. 2018. Peer Relations and Tensions in the School Life of Finnish and Korean Students: A Cross-Cultural Perspective. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*. DOI:10.1080/14681366.2018.1538161

Study 3: Yoon, J., and M, Rönnlund. Submitted. Control and Agency in Comprehensive Schools: A Cross-cultural Perspective of Democratic Schooling in Finland and Korea.

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1 Introduction

This dissertation is an academic inquiry that treats Finnish and South Korean schooling as an interesting set of comparisons and an arena for sociological analysis and discussion from a cross-cultural perspective. This study casts light on Finnish and South Korean adolescents' perceptions on their quality of school life. It also illuminates students' experiences of and reflections on the themes of peer relationships and student-teacher interactions as important aspects of school life.

Since the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has implemented and published the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in the 2000s, Finland and South Korea (hereafter Korea) have become reference nations in the education policies and reform discourses of numerous countries (Takayama, Waldow, and Sung 2013; Waldow, Takayama, and Sung 2014; Yoon and Järvinen 2016). First, it would not be wrong to say that Finland, a country that had not attracted attention from the international community of education discourse-makers until its unanticipated success in PISA 2000, has enjoyed worldwide fame as a reference society (Simola et al. 2017; Sung and Lee 2017). Korea, as one of the top-performing Asian societies in PISA, has also been referred to as a model country in terms of student academic performance by external commentators, particularly in the US (Jung and Koh 2011; Sellar and Lingard 2013). An interesting point is that, in the trend of policy referencing accelerated by these international student assessments, Finnish and Korean education systems have often been compared in terms of superior results in PISA and contrasting social ethos surrounding education. The PISA results and associated educational discourses have created or strengthened certain images of the Finnish and Korean education systems and their educational realities. In the process of discourse formation, Finnish education has been depicted as a symbol of educational utopia as well as educational excellence and equality. Meanwhile, despite Korea's superior outcomes in league tables, self-mocking or critical articulation on Korean education—such as competition hell and excessive study burden—dominated the descriptions in Korean domestic as well as western mass media; this formed a striking contrast to the images of Finnish education (Takayama, Waldow, and Sung 2013; Waldow, Takayama, and Sung 2014). Such articulation of the Finnish and Korean education denotes both

cognitive and affective outcomes of schooling. However, despite a stream of attention given to the education systems in both countries, the quality of school life of Finnish and Korean students as an affective outcome of schooling has not been fairly studied as compared to the cognitive outcomes of schooling, such as student performance or competencies (cf. Yoon and Järvinen 2016).

Simultaneously, this dissertation was motivated by my personal effort for growth, which occurred in the process of understanding the self and others while staying in Finland during the period of my postgraduate study. Finnish education, which was not well-known in Korea up until the early 2000s, has been in the spotlight in the Korean society from the late 2000s onwards. Subsequently, numerous enthusiastic people, including me, have visited Finnish schools to witness the educational mecca in person. Ever since then, as I met several Korean educators who visited Finnish schools, I began pondering over their common responses, which was mostly either feeling envious about certain aspects of Finnish education (e.g. Finnish teachers are free from excessive administrative work that is not relevant for teaching students) or being disappointed by mundane school scenes (e.g., often, lessons are implemented by teacher-led lectures rather than small-group activities that facilitate student-oriented cooperation) as compared with educational practices in Korean schools.

In these series of enormous attention devoted to Finnish education, progressive Korean educators, civic activists, and news commentators led Finnish education discourses (e.g. Korean Education Research Network 2010; An 2010). A group of progressive writers described Finnish education using contrasting modifiers such as 'cooperation instead of competition', 'catch both excellence and equality', 'Finnish students study little and happily whereas Korean students are forced to study heavily'; this evoked quite the opposite images of educational realities in the two countries (see, for example, An 2010, 235–242). Similarly, the centre-left press (e.g. *Hankyoreh News*) articulated Finnish education as cooperative, competition-free, egalitarian, and cost-free education by universal social welfare (e.g. Kwon 2009; Kwon 2012). The above-mentioned progressive group's discourse is meaningful in the sense that they tried to analyse the social background behind the success of Finnish education, thereby suggesting implications for Korean education. However, their discourse positively accepted the PISA rankings and results with few critical views on the trend of international comparison formulated by standardised student assessments. Thus, their discourse exposed limits in the absence of criticism on the influence of the standardised testing and its ranking (See for instance The Guardian 2014) and on PISA-led paradigms that emphasise 'knowledge which can be converted into economic values' and 'education for developing human capital' (OECD 2013a, 187; OECD 2013b). Further, their discourse idealised Finnish education by emphasising differences between Korean and Finnish education. The

progressive group's discourse tended to exclude common circumstances that both systems of education have faced. For example, in Korea, it was not actively reported that Finnish education has encountered neoliberal education reform, particularly in higher education (cf. Rinne, Kallo, and Hokka 2004; Ylijoki and Ursin 2013); thus, Finnish education was selectively highlighted based on the progressive group's political beliefs. This dichotomous comparison led the education discourse to be schematized and simplified by locating Finnish and Korean education at both ends of a spectrum (cf. Takayama 2008; Takayama, Waldow, and Sung 2013; You 2019).

Meanwhile, conservative news articles (e.g. *Chosun Daily*) and discussions, similar to the centre-leftists, emphasised specific characteristics of Finnish education (Takayama, Waldow, and Sung 2013). However, conservative journalists usually tended to report Finnish success factors focusing on the competency of Finnish teachers and selection-based policies such as ability-grouping (or non-graded system) in Finnish high schools, rather than revealing equality-based universal education welfare (see, for example, Choi, J. 2010; Choi, H. 2010; Chosunilbo 2010; Kim 2010).

Since 2010, Finnish mass media and educational experts have also paid attention to the Korean education system, although this is not as intensive and substantial as the attention given to Finnish education in Korean discourses. Kirsi Lindroos, a permanent delegation of Finland to the OECD and UNESCO, illustrated the Korean education system and its social ethos. Lindroos (2011) pointed out parental aspiration to the success of their children through private education, the centralised character of the educational administration, and recent changes made to enhance student well-being, along with comparisons and implications of Korean education for Finnish education. In its news article, *Yle*, a representative public media company, reported classroom cultures in Finnish and Korean schools from a cross-cultural perspective (Löyttyniemi 2015). The article introduced certain features of Korean education, like competition, through a story on the College Scholastic Ability test that is a serious national event in Korea. Lastly, immediately after the result announcement of PISA 2015, a major Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*, published an in-depth story entitled 'In South Korea, school continues until night', based on on-the-scene reporting of a Korean teenage student's daily life (Nousiainen 2016). In summary, in the three articles, as the same manner as the Korean case, Finland's and Korea's top rankings in international comparisons formulated by the PISA results triggered such interest towards the Korean education, schooling, and society. They also sought to view Korean education and its social ethos from a comprehensive or in-depth perspective, which was not merely confined to private education and parental aspiration. Nevertheless, the illustrations and arguments of the reports led to oversimplified descriptions to justify contrasting comparisons between Korean and Finnish education.

This peculiar combination between the similarly 'successful' results in PISA and the contrasting discourse formation concerning the education system of the two countries makes it interesting to select Finland and Korea as the backgrounds for this comparative inquiry. It also alludes us that Orientalism (Said [1978] 2014) has been reflected in the contemporary comparative mindset with which another country's education and society is viewed. Orientalism refers to an intellectual authority that western society and culture holds over the Orient (Said [1978] 2014); it also refers to the non-western self's projection of aspiration and hope over the western other, while having a sense of inferiority to the West (cf. Takayama 2008, 20–22). Simultaneously, I became aware of the following idea: when one attempts to learn about an education system that belongs to another country, it would be possible to draw institutional implications (at the policy level) from simplified and contrasting comparisons; however, it would be barely possible to settle policies and improve schooling at the level of school culture from this perspective. Learning from another does not imply receiving systems/policies from the advanced to the less advanced, which usually accompanies a feeling of longing (idealising in extreme cases) or disappointment (loathing in extreme cases); rather, it must be an intellectual interaction of influencing each other while having an in-depth knowledge of the other and also realising the familiar and unnoticeable features of the self by taking the other as a mirror. In particular, this aspect seems to be important when there is a comparison between so-called western and non-western counterparts because Orientalism may still be persistently alive when 'the self' defines 'the other' today, even after the imperialistic and colonial era is long gone (Said [1978] 2014; Masemann 2013; Sung and Lee 2017, 175).

Beginning from the abovementioned research backgrounds, this study endeavours to go beyond the simplistic comparability boosted by PISA results, media reports, and a few comparative inquiries that were highly inspired by comparative trends but lacked thorough academic investigation. This study attempts to examine Finnish and Korean adolescents' perceptions of their quality of school life and to illuminate school life from the perspectives of student participants by using a mixed-methods approach. The study also seeks to understand sociocultural universalities and diversities that indwell in human societies and schooling. Since education research employing a qualitative approach emerged in Korea in the 1980s, students have been participants of numerous education studies. However, in everyday educational realities and education studies, students (and teachers) tend to be continued to be objectified as subjects of educational treatment or policies rather than be considered as agentic participants (Suh 2016; Suh and Lee 2017). In line with this critical reflection, this thesis began with a quantitative study (study 1) which provided solid ground for studying the perceptions of Finnish and Korean adolescents with regard to important aspects of quality of school life. Thereafter, two

qualitative studies (studies 2 and 3) illuminate the important aspects of school life, which were also identified in the quantitative study, from the perspectives of the student participants.

Further, the focus of this thesis is on the ordinary life at school, which does not include eye-catching success stories for benchmarking but those that deserve to become of academic and public interest, particularly if examined through cross-cultural reflection. In fact, massive interest in schooling has mainly focused on the academic achievements and key competencies of students, thereby viewing adolescents as forming the work force of the future in a knowledge- and technology-based society (OECD 2005; 2013b). However, for students, school has been an important social and physical locus in their present lives in which their identities are constructed and they experience hierarchy as well as emotional bonds within peer groups (Tolonen 1998; Lahelma 2002; George 2007; Paechter and Clark 2007). In this vein, many qualitative and ethnographic studies have attempted to uncover the ordinary but unnoticed aspects of schooling (see, for example, Jackson 1968; Willis [1977] 2004; Kim 1997; Paju 2011). As a fruit of the author's academic transformation from testing naturalistic educational settings to understanding and interpreting social realities of school life, Jackson (1968) alludes readers to the significance of trivia or the extraordinariness of ordinary classroom life as well as the complexities and ambivalence that reside in schooling. Similarly, being motivated by the intention to reveal the reality of Korean classroom life that has gained less attention, particularly from a field-oriented qualitative approach, Kim (1997) elaborates on classroom life, classroom management exercised by teacher control, students' critical perceptions of teacher control, and lesson culture in primary school contexts. In particular, Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma (2000a) and Paju (2011) contribute to uncovering and understanding the complexity of school life by utilising an analytical differentiation among the official, informal, and physical layers of schooling.

School is a place where students may feel happy, isolated, frustrated, suppressed, liberated, or like they belong or do not through the relationships with their peers and teachers and through the spatiality of their school. In this process, students encounter complicated notions of citizenship, which are manifested differently in terms of their academic abilities, socio-economic background, gender, and ethnicity; students seek to increase their agency within or against control (Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma 2000a; Gordon et al. 2008; Hjelmer, Lappalainen and Rosval 2010; Beach and Öhrn 2011). In this regard, I attempt to expand the boundary of the quality of school life to the discussions on democratic school culture. In this study, democratic school culture denotes active and unconstrained interactions among school members (Dewey [1916] 2010) in teaching-learning practices, informal daily routines, and physical contexts of schooling (time-space-movement regulations). In a democratic

school, students grow up as agentic school members, as they participate in the decision-making process that leads to constructing, maintaining, and transforming control and order inherent in their school lives (cf. Bernstein 1996, 7).

This dissertation is not my independent work; rather, it is a collective intellectual work which owes valuable knowledge and insights to numerous previous studies traversing the following theoretical and methodological genres: quality of school life, peer relations, gender, control and agency, student-teacher relations, democratic schooling, international comparative education research, Orientalism, school ethnography, cross-cultural studies, and a mixed-method approach. Despite its relative shallowness in terms of both theoretical understanding and methodological mastery compared with studies using either quantitative or qualitative methods or ones employing either a comparative or cross-cultural perspective, the progress of this study through this rather wide spectrum of academic interests is its added value, which distinguishes it from previous studies and which can ensure its contribution to education research. In particular, cross-cultural or comparative studies exploring schooling have not been actively conducted between Nordic and East Asian contexts, even though many researchers have actively cooperated and yielded such studies within Nordic or European contexts. This study applies a comparative perspective for situating Finnish and Korean education in their historical, sociocultural, and institutional contexts (Chapter 2) and for analysing students' perceptions with regard to their quality of school lives (study 1). This thesis utilises a cross-cultural approach for analysing and interpreting students' lived experiences in Finnish and Korean schools (studies 2 and 3). In addition, this thesis shows that the complex combination between individualistic and collectivistic sociocultural/institutional traits are discerned in school life; therefore, it provides interesting analyses and discussions regarding peer relations, student-teacher interactions, control and agency, and democratic school culture.

The remainder of this thesis is organized in the following manner. In Chapter 2, I review the historical, sociocultural, and institutional contexts surrounding Finnish and Korean comprehensive schooling as background knowledge for the topic of this study. In Chapter 3, I discuss the theoretical approaches encompassing the concept of quality of school life and the theories that are useful in interpreting the interplay between control and agency. In Chapter 4, I discuss the cross-cultural and comparative studies as the methodological approaches adopted in this thesis. In Chapter 5, I present the research's aim and objectives. In chapter 6, I illustrate the methodology, which includes a description of the research design of this study according to mixed methods, the process of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analyses, and a discussion on trustworthiness and research ethics. Subsequently, in Chapter 7, I present an overview of empirical studies 1, 2, and 3. In Chapter 8, I present a synthesis of the findings and discuss the findings in dialogue

with the contextual and theoretical frameworks that are introduced in Chapters 2 and 3; I also present the limitations of this research and prospects for future study. Finally, in Chapter 9, I present the coda of this dissertation, where indicative discussions on democratic school life are displayed.

2 Historical, Sociocultural, and Institutional Contexts of Finnish and Korean Education

In contemporary life, one may notice that many scenes from local schools in different parts of the world are overlapping:

> During break time, five girls gather and check out a pictorial of BTS (Bangtan Boys, a Korean music band) attached in their record. (Field notes, Korea)

> Yeona and her friends come into the student lounge. […] They sit together and spend time taking selfies with a mobile phone. The six girls take poses together––making a victory sign (V) with their fingers, putting their hands under their chin like a flower cup, and standing and making similar leg postures. […] Students: We can't use mobile phones during school day because of our school rule, but it's a secret phone. (Field notes, Korea)

> One student in a grade six class, school in Kuopio, Finland is making calculation of mathematics while listening to the K-pop (Korean pop music) through her smartphone. A pencil case which has a picture of BTS is placed on her desk. (Extracted from a news article of *Helsingin Sanomat*, Pölkki 2018)

It is not only the youth culture and students' behaviour at school, as described above, but also national educational policies, the roles and identities of teachers and students, and cultural practices in local schools that are increasingly being shaped by global communication patterns, interactions, and supranational organisations (Lindblad and Popkewitz 2003). However, simultaneously with the extensive influence of globalisation and digitalisation, historical, sociocultural, and institutional contexts are inherent in schooling and everyday classroom practices in the form of sociocultural genes. It is worth looking into the historical paths of the development of nation states, as the birth and expansion of Finnish and Korean public schooling has functioned to serve the development and maintenance of the state (cf. Lindblad and Popkewitz 2003). To this end, first, I illustrate the historical

and sociocultural backgrounds of Finland and Korea from the formation of modern nation states up to the period of modernisation and industrialisation; I elaborate on the welfare and politico-economic systems as civilizational and institutional backgrounds which led to the development of Finnish and Korean education in the late twentieth century and are still valid in the present. Following this, I attempt to connect such societal contexts with education, particularly in relation to comprehensive schooling (basic education), which is the locus of the topic of this dissertation. Lastly, I discuss the common features of Finnish and Korean education systems and the juxtaposition of egalitarian spirits and neoliberal mindsets as recent trends that have appeared in both societies. Then, let us start the historical journey.

2.1 Common experience of history in differing paths: delayed but condensed modernisation

Finland was ruled by the Swedish Crown from the mid-thirteenth century until the early nineteenth century and inherited extensive Swedish legacies, ranging from religion (Lutheranism) to language (Swedish) and education. From 1809 onwards, for almost 110 years, Finland was a part of the Russian Empire. During the Russian period, Finland was accorded autonomy and the upper class of the society maintained its Swedish legacies; this became a cornerstone of its western identity as part of emerging modern Finnish culture (Paasi 1997; Seo 2018). Meanwhile, eastern authoritarian ethos, which is distinguishable from other Nordic countries, permeated into the society; moreover, the Finnish language which has its origin in the Ural area seasoned Finnish culture with eastern flavour (Simola et al. 2017; Paasi 1997). Geopolitically and culturally situated between the West and the East, Finland adopted both Finnish and Swedish languages as national languages and cultural identities also varied depending on regions and social classes. The transformation towards a modern nation-state with political, economic, and military autonomy occurred as a form of nation-state within the Russian Empire with the rise of industrial capitalism; therefore, nationalist feelings arose slowly in the late nineteenth century and intensified due to the Russification policy in 1899. The first parliament election was held in the early twentieth century, and Finland became an independent state in 1917, in an atmosphere of political turbulence in Europe caused by World War I (Seo 2018; Paasi 1997).

However, the newly emerging independent nation soon sank into a maelstrom of ideological conflicts, resulting in a civil war in 1918 between the reds (leftists) and the whites (right-wingers), which ended with the victory of the whites, backed-up by German troops. The scars of the civil war still remain, as it is a national trauma that is yet to be sufficiently spoken of and healed from (Simola et al. 2017). In the two decades following the tragedy of fratricidal war, Finland was confronted with a few

other hardships—the Winter War (1939–40) and Continuation War (1941–44) against Soviet Union, and a war with Nazi Germany (1944–45). However, despite the vast damage to life and territory and the payment of reparations, Finland was able to maintain its western identity and status of an independent nation, which differed from the historical paths of other Eastern European and Baltic nations (Seo 2018). In the post-war period, there was a delayed but accelerated modernisation from an agricultural to an industrialised society throughout the whole domains of the society. In formal education as well, the development of the last mover in Scandinavian neighbourhoods took place in a historically accelerated and compressed form; thus, there was a proliferation of primary, secondary, and higher education enrolment during the last six decades since the 1960s (Simola et al. 2017). Simultaneously, Finland strengthened its identity as a Nordic welfare state by adopting and implementing a universal social welfare model. After the international political thaw in the 1980s and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Finland promoted its economic integration and Western European identity by joining the European Union in 1995 (Paasi 1997).

Chosun, the last dynasty of the monarchy nation-state of Korea (1392-1910), adopted Confucian ideas as its ruling ideology (Yim 2002). The Confucian ideas emphasised social order and internalisation of moral norms according to social class, age, and gender within and outside the family system (Jeong et al. 2010). Therefore, a patriarchal family society was established and the state itself was depicted as a family; the king was considered as the father of all the people (Chang 2010). In line with this, scholars who took charge of spiritual life (Confucian theories and arts) ruled the society as officials, whereas technicians, merchants, and farmers/peasants, who undertook material life, generally belonged to the lower social classes (Yim 2002; Jeong et al. 2010). *Chosun* had a strong self-identity as a dynasty of a culturally advanced country, which inherited Confucianism and maintained a distance from the *Qing* dynasty of China and Japan, calling them barbarians (Jeong et al. 2010). In the latter part of the rule of *Chosun*, in the seventeenth century onwards, the leading groups rejected or delayed opening the door to Chinese (*Qing*) and western technologies, whereas the Japanese regime accommodated western civilisation before *Chosun*. In the invasion of western imperialistic powers in the late nineteenth century, the *Chosun* monarchy realised the limit of its closed-door policy and promoted innovation (Jeong et al. 2010). Meanwhile, critical opportunities for a people's revolution were created, represented by the *Donghak Peasant Movement* in 1894; however, the trials failed due to the coalition of royal forces with the Japanese military. Thus, Korean society could not take advantage of a focal opportunity for the voluntary social transition to a citizen's society/republic and was confronted with Japanese colonisation from 1910 onwards (Chang 2010).

During the Japanese occupation (1910–45), the political, economic, and cultural autonomy of Korean people was intensively supressed and the modernisation of society was impeded, which differed from the case of Finland during the Russian period. In 1945, Korea became independent in the course of Japan's defeat in World War II. Soon after the independence, similar to the history of Finland, the Korean society was swept away in the ideological conflict between socialists and supporters of liberal capitalism; with the intervention of Soviet Union and the United States, this led to the Korean War (1950–53). After a truce agreement was signed, Korea was divided into South Korea and North Korea. During the post-independence and post-division era from 1945 onwards, the modernisation of South Korea implied transplanting American systems throughout the society, including in education (e.g. the presidential government system, schooling systems, and educational policies) (Chang 2010; Sung and Lee 2017). Meanwhile, the first modern parliament was constituted, a president was elected, and the first government of the Republic of Korea was established in 1948, however the domestic political situation was unstable before and after the Korean War. Military dictatorship governments had ruled the country from 1962 until 1987. From the 1960s onwards, late but compressed modernisation occurred in South Korea. The speed of the transition was even more radical compared to that in Finland, considering the delay in modernisation in the latter part of the *Chosun* dynasty and colonial period. Compressed modernity (Chang 2010) is a concept that helps to understand the characteristics of the South Korean society and people's mentality that have been shaped by economic, political, and sociocultural changes that occurred in an extremely condensed manner in the second half of the twentieth century (see also Sung and Lee 2017, 175). On the one hand, the modernisation led by authoritarian military regimes brought outstanding economic growth; on the other hand, it was carried out at the expense of opportunities for cultivating a citizen society. The modernisation also implied self-negation (or reverse-orientalism, see p. 52 of this thesis) in several respects, such as westernised urban development, demolition of traditional houses, and longing for American popular culture, etc. (Yim 2002; Chang 2010; Sung and Lee 2017). A relevant and more apparent feature of Korean society as compared to Finnish society, which is related to the topic of this dissertation, would be the juxtaposition of modern-postmodern elements and traditional values. In the delay of settlement of modern citizenship, which is based on the western concept of democracy as a horizontal solidarity of individuals and the respect for the diversity of individuals (cf. Karstedt 2006), values from a Confucian patriarchal order and colonial totalitarian culture have cohabited with westernized institutions, lifestyles, and values of South Korean people (cf. Chang 2010).

From this comparative perspective of the history of both countries, we can put ourselves in others' circumstances and recognise how Finnish and Korean people

were positioned to act in certain ways in their historical contingency as well as given sociocultural/geopolitical contexts, and how they sought to exercise their agency in spite of their peripheral position in the world. We can also imagine what could have been their alternative historical paths if they would have made different choices. In the following chapter, I briefly describe the social/educational welfare systems of Finland and Korea—which are crucial for education and schooling and developed as a result of the modernisation that occurred in the late twentieth century—in relation to their politico-economic systems and the abovementioned historical and sociocultural contexts.

2.2 Social welfare as a public good or an individual investment

Is a security net that ensures minimal living for human dignity and investment for future generations a responsibility of the state or individuals? Is welfare a public good for all citizens in a democratic state or a target of private investment in a marketized society? Esping-Andersen (1990) sought to help establish an understanding to these questions by clarifying different divisions of power and responsibilities between the state, market, and family. The study categorised Anglo-Saxon, European, Scandinavian countries, and Japan into three types of welfare states according to the degree of de-commodification and the degree to which state facilitation reducing social stratification was utilised. The three types of welfare states are liberal welfare regimes (the US, Canada, etc.), corporatist welfare regimes (Germany, Italy, etc.), and social democratic welfare regimes (Sweden, Denmark, etc.). Subsequently, Iversen and Stephens (2008) provided further explanation that combines the three types of welfare models with economic and political systems in the following forms: 1) selective welfare with liberal market economies and majoritarian electoral systems; 2) democratic universal welfare on the basis of a cooperative market economy and proportional representative electoral systems in the absence of a strong Christian democratic party; and 3) contributory welfare grounded in a cooperative market economy, proportional representation, and a strong Christian democratic party. Combining Iversen and Stephens' (2008) typology with the account concerning Korean welfare systems and its features (Jang and Jeong 2011; Kim 2011), Table 1 demonstrates the typology of welfare states and major principles of the Finnish and Korean education welfare systems. Briefly summarised, different economic and political systems are linked with each of the major directions of the welfare systems that exist in Finland and Korea: the Finnish democratic universal welfare with social market economies and proportional representation and the Korean market-based selective welfare and partial contributory welfare with liberal market economies and majoritarian system (Jang and Jeong 2011).

Table 1. Typology of welfare states and major principles of the Finnish and Korean education welfare systems (Source: Iversen and Stephen 2008; Jang and Jeong 2011; Kim 2011; OECD 2018)

	Finland	**Korea**
Main welfare system	**Universal welfare** based on democracy	**Selective welfare** based on market economy and partial contributory welfare
Politico-economic system	Social Democratic Coordinated market economies & proportional representation	Liberal Liberal market economies & majoritarianism
Public spending: Day care and early childhood education	High	Low (substantial private provision)
Public spending: Primary and secondary education	High State-funded tuition and other secondary costs for all, child subsidy, extensive support for learning and school attendance, student support team	Medium State-funded tuition for all for nine years' compulsory period, selective welfare on secondary costs targeting low-income groups
Public spending: higher education	High	Medium (substantial private provision)
Representative countries	Sweden, Norway, Denmark	USA, UK

One of the pillars of the Finnish welfare model is consensus democracy, which is based on proportional representation and a multi-party system with coalition governments. Owing to the proportional representative electoral system that lowers the threshold for minority parties to enter parliament, Finnish parliaments have consisted of several parties (currently nine parties work in the parliament); therefore, the parliaments have represented diverse interests and perspectives within the society (Seo 2018). For example, in 1966, the dominant parliament party (Social Democratic Party) constituted a coalition government with Finnish Peoples' Democratic League, the Agrarian Party, and the Communist Party; this coalition promoted the development of comprehensive schooling. Further, Finnish labour groups were able to participate as a crucial party in the national/municipal policy-making and parliamentary law-making process, which include social welfare agendas, based on the high organization rate of labour unions (Aho, Pitkanen, and Sahlberg 2010; Seo 2018). Secondly, the Finnish welfare system is state-driven, which implies that the public sector plays a major role in administrating welfare institutions (e.g. day care centres and schools) and financing welfare costs through taxes. In addition, the Finnish social welfare is generally provided in the form of universal welfare to all citizens regardless of their income levels; thus universal welfare functions to provide basic rights to citizens and formulate a foundation for democratic citizenship and

solidarity by promoting generational integration and alleviating gender inequality. Even though gender-based occupational segregation has been present and there have been gaps between male and female earnings (Melkas and Anker 1998; Korkeamäki and Kyyrä 2006), women are also considered independent citizens and workers, rather than merely being wives and mothers, in the context of planning and implementation of social welfare policies (Kim 2011). It is also efficient to prevent scepticism towards welfare among the middle class, which may happen in countries where selective welfare is commonly implemented (Kim 2011; Jang and Jeong 2011; Seo 2018).

Influenced by the Nordic spirit of inclusive education after World War II, the Finnish comprehensive school (*peruskoulu*) system has been implemented since the Comprehensive School Act of 1968, which attempts to provide all children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds equal opportunities for education by not sorting them according to their academic capacities within primary and lower-secondary education (Arnersen and Lundahl 2006; Seo 2018). Further, there are no tuition fees from preschool education to higher education; necessities such as learning materials (not in upper-secondary education), school meals, and transportation subsidies are offered as part of educational welfare in primary and secondary education (Kim 2011).

In addition, as emphasised in numerous studies (e.g. Antikainen 2006; Kim 2011; Jahnukainen 2011), the Finnish special education system is a good example of how education becomes part of social welfare. Support for learning and school attendance in comprehensive education (Finnish National Agency for Education n.d.) provides individualised support within the equality-based comprehensive education and it aims at preventing the accumulation of difficulties in learning and school life. It consists of intervention in three categories: general support, intensified support, and special support (Finnish National Agency for Education n.d.). In addition, student welfare (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture n.d.) is provided by multiple experts, such as general teachers; assistant teachers; special education teachers; and a student support team composed of the school principal, school nurse, social worker, and a psychologist (see also Kim 2011). In sum, Finnish education has generally been perceived and operated as part of a social welfare system that has encouraged the development of citizens' collectivistic solidarity and their individual agency not being bound to the socioeconomic circumstances of their families.

In contrast, under the significant influence of the US from the time of independence and Korean War onwards, a presidential system—which empowers the president rather than a parliament as the core of political power—has been implemented in Korea. Moreover, presidents and their governments (cabinets) have been recruited either from the Democratic Party (centre-left, the current ruling party)

or the Liberty Korea Party (the right wing, the current leading opposite party); similarly, the composition of parliamentary power has been steered mainly by the two above-mentioned largest political parties in Korea (cf. Shin, Jeong, and Heo 2016). It was a historic moment for progressive parties when the Democratic Labour Party launched their members in the National Assembly for the first time in 2004 through proportional representation. However, the current parliamentary election system, which is operated by single-member district system with limited representative proportional electoral system, remains unfavourable political terrain for minority parties (Kim 2009). Thus, the power base of Korean labour and progressive groups is more confined than that of Finland. Meanwhile, a patriarchal family culture in Korea boosted national economic growth in the second half of the twentieth century. Male workers assumed the role of the head of the household, providing the main income to their families and a majority of women fulfilled the role of housewife and part-time low-income workers in female labour markets once their children were school-aged (Chang 2010). The focus of economic policies driven by military regimes and the masculine society was 'growth instead of distribution', and the state responsibility of social welfare shifted to families. Korean family members, particularly women playing the roles of wives and daughters-in-law, became the principal axis for providing social welfare—from child-rearing to caring for aged parents—according to the gender norms and concept of filial duty derived from Confucian culture (Chang 2010). Further, state-driven industrialisation policies supporting big companies was accomplished by the sacrifice of individual families, in which the notions of citizens' and labours' rights were sparse but Confucian and totalitarian culture was persistent.

Education was not an exception in this regard. Social members attempted to break through or survive life's adversities through education and considered education, rather than to be social welfare, to be more as an investment into the upward social mobility of their children who were ultimately expected to take care of the family. However, it must also be mentioned that egalitarian educational policies have been implemented on account of the social sentiment that has requested educational justice and through centralised education systems (Jang and Jeong 2011; Takayama and Sung 2014). For example, the expansion of state-funded compulsory education from the former six years to nine years by including three-year-long lower-secondary education was introduced in 1985 and completed in 2004, targeting all school-aged children (Kim 2014). In addition, the general high school equalization

policy[1] aiming at relieving the stress and academic burden of lower-secondary school students was introduced in 1975; thus, lower-secondary school graduates in most municipalities are randomly allocated to general high schools mainly according to their place of residence (Jeong et al. 2010; Takayama and Sung 2014). However, social discrimination represented by distinct income gaps among different diploma holders (e.g. high school graduates vs. university graduates) and among occupational clusters (so-called manual vs. professional) has been prevalent in Korean society. In fact, in the *Chosun* dynasty, one could sustain or achieve a high social status (*Yangban*, nobleman) only by passing state examinations and entering limited government posts (*Sadaebu*, scholar official). The ethos that judges one's moral capability as well as intelligence by passing state examinations permeated the society. This social climate, undergoing the abolition of caste system in the late nineteenth century and widened access to higher levels of educational institutions through accelerated expansion of formal schooling from the 1950s onwards, led to the huge aspiration for individual success that manifested as admission into universities. In such a sociocultural context, Korean people had to plunge themselves into academic competition of all against all, with university admission competition[2] as its climax (Jeong et al. 2010). In summary, Korean education has generally become a target of individual investment and a tool for social success, supported and hosted by collectivistic familial effort and sacrifice. Such a public sentiment for education was reinforced by the 'winner-takes-all' politico-economic systems and historical context. In these societal structures that aggravate inequality, public education systems (especially primary and lower-secondary education) and several educational policies that have advocated egalitarian values was not enough to alleviate the anxious spirit of parents who were eager to win or survive in this game.

2.3 Outlining education systems and recent trends: the juxtaposition of egalitarian and neoliberal mindsets

As briefly implicated in the previous chapters, both in Finland and Korea, modern education has been a cornerstone in transforming the nation-state from a poor

1 Despite the general high school equalization policy, 'equality' has become nominal since the parental right of school choice between general high schools and so-called elite high schools—such as independent private high schools, special high schools (foreign language and science), and international high schools—has created a stratification of high schools (Sung 2011).

2 Competition usually involves a series of strategies and results related to high school records, state-run scholastic aptitude tests for college admissions, university applications, evaluations, and receiving private education to succeed in this competition.

agrarian country swept by traumatic wars to a rapidly changing industrial and post-industrial society. Simultaneously, it has served to boost citizens' self-realisation and upward social mobility. In this vein, the Korean and Finnish education systems have certain similarities. First, the school system is based on a single-track system that follows a 6-3-3-4 pattern, which aims to provide equal opportunities to access primary, secondary, and tertiary education for every citizen (Finnish National Agency for Education n.d.; Korean Ministry of Education n.d.). The main track consists of six years of primary education, three years of lower-secondary education, three years of upper-secondary education (general high school or vocational high school), and higher education. In particular, the nine-year-long comprehensive (primary and lower-secondary) education is compulsory and state-funded in both countries, despite the difference in the scope of education welfare that is universally offered. The comprehensive education system provides all children with equal opportunities of education, regardless of their gender, race, socio-economic status and residential area by not grouping them according to academic ability, thereby enhancing social integration. Thus, tracking occurs when they enter upper-secondary educational institutions, which is relatively late compared to other countries like Germany (Finnish National Agency for Education n.d.; Korean Ministry of Education n.d.; Seo 2018). It could be said that the rapid and equitable supply of comprehensive schooling without selection, on the one hand, became a means of promoting citizenship and realising the democratic rights of all young citizens (cf. Gordon, Lahelma, and Beach 2003). On the other hand, at every turning point of society, such a system fulfilled the role of inculcating national ideologies (e.g. anti-communism education appeared in the Korean national curriculum during the 1960s and 70s; cf. Kang 2007) and a 'desirable' human character that created an awareness of industrial needs in the minds of young citizens.

However, in Finland, the egalitarianism embedded in its educational policies has been challenged since the 1990s, when neoliberal ideas were introduced by actors from within and outside Finland. Nevertheless, contingent events such as the economic recession in the period 1991–93 and PISA success since 2001 prevented Finnish comprehensive schooling from being affected by neoliberal market influences that emphasise education to be customized to fit individual needs, aptitudes, and abilities (Simola et al. 2017). Meanwhile, since the mid-1990s, a series of policies and phenomena signalling educational inequality and competition have appeared at all levels of Finnish education. For example, in several big urban municipalities, school classes with a special emphasis (*painotetun opetuksen ryhmät*) have been actively implemented as a type of parental school choice; these classes have been conducted rather covertly, but with an actual role that is equivalent of ability-grouping within schools (Berisha and Seppänen 2017; Simola et al. 2017). It is a worrying sign in the sense that it might lead to the segregation of students

according to their school performance and social classes in comprehensive schooling, which has been considered as a fortress of educational equality and justice. Another sign of inequality that is discerned at the doorstep of higher education is the significant role of preparatory course markets in the competition for university admission. Even though Finnish higher education is still[3] considered a public good, as reflected by the fact that tuition fees are state-funded, the latent privatisation between upper-secondary and higher education renders the possibilities of winning the game of entrance examinations conducted by competitive disciplines in universities limited for applicants who possess little economic capital (Kosunen 2018).

Meanwhile, despite the 'winner-takes-all' character of politico-economic systems and associated sociocultural recognition, public concern for universal welfare in Korea has increased since the late 2000s, particularly with regard to education. Under the competitive and exhausting daily life driven by neoliberal imperatives and economic crisis, many Korean people began considering the necessities of universal welfare system as a social security net; accordingly, Nordic societies and their social welfare have emerged as big interest in the Korean society (Sung 2009; Lee 2011). As a response, parliaments and governments have designed laws and policies that strengthen social welfare as an urgent issue for the survival of the nation, as many young people give up undertaking the role of social reproduction consisting of marriage and producing children. For example, since 2009 onwards, welfare policies such as tax-funded school meals, low-cost tuition fees for university students, and after-school childcare programs have been selected as major political pledges in local and central (parliamentary and presidential) elections (Jang and Jeong 2011; Cho et al. 2017). As of 2018, most provincial and metropolitan governments (16 out of 17) provide tax-funded school meals for all primary and lower-secondary school students (Pyeon 2018); moreover, the range of beneficiaries of tax-funded school meals continues to expand to include upper-secondary school students (cf. Seoul Metropolitan Government 2018). Further, as numerous progressive superintendents of education (the head of provincial or metropolitan offices of education) have been elected in local elections from 2009 onwards, public innovative schools—as their major pledge—have been operated as part of educational welfare and egalitarian policy. Public innovative schools were initiated

[3] The Finnish government has implemented a policy to collect tuition fees from non-EU students who are in master's degree courses. The amount of tuition fees varies according to each discipline in universities. For example, the tuition fee for an international masters' degree program in the Faculty of Education, University of Turku is 10,000 euros per academic year (see https://masters.utu.fi/programmes/education-and-learning).

as a bottom-up educational movement that aims to promote humane schooling, a democratic school community, publicity of schooling, students' happiness, and providing a holistic education environment in school despite the highly competitive social ethos that focus on competition culminating in university admission and obtaining a 'good' job. As of 2014, 816 public innovative (primary, lower- and upper-secondary) schools operated in Seoul and seven other provinces. The number of innovative schools corresponds to 6.9 % of the total number of schools in Korea (Sung and Lee 2015).

The illustration above indicates to us that Finnish and Korean modern education (schooling) systems were founded on the value of equality. Subsequently, educational policies and public sentiments have fluctuated between the spirit of egalitarianism and market values of freedom and choice, having been shaped by the tensions and dialectical dynamics in which many actors have been involved. In this chapter, I sought to present a background to how the central actors (state, citizens, parents) have faced and answered this difficult question: Is education a public good for all citizens to cultivate their democratic citizenship and enjoying humanlike life or a target of private (individual/familial) investment and profit-making in a marketized society? The very routine and ordinary life of students in Finnish and Korean schools (studies 1, 2, and 3) stand on this social ground.

3 Theoretical Approaches

> 'A thing exists if a world without it can't function normally. If we can show that a world without Quality functions abnormally, then we have shown that Quality exists, whether it's defined or not. […] The world can function without it [Quality], but life would be so dull as to be hardly worth living. Life would just be living without any values'. (Pirsig 1987 *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, 210–211)

As shown in the above the citation, we may agree with an idea that quality does exist. However, can quality be defined, measured, and compared? The theoretical backgrounds of each sub-study provide conflicting answers to this question. The theoretical background of study 1 is based on the idea that the quality of school life can be measured and compared by common essential elements that form a part of quality of school life. However, the theoretical backgrounds of studies 2 and 3 stand on the viewpoint that defining, disassembling, and comparing the quality of school life may not be possible or at least it is difficult.

In spite of this contradiction and tension, the theoretical backgrounds of each sub-study also complement each other. The diverse conceptualisations of quality of school life as a theoretical background and literature review of study 1 provide a solid context for subsequent studies 2 and 3 by suggesting that social relations with peers and teachers form the basis of the quality of school life of adolescents. The theoretical perspectives of studies 2 and 3, although not using the term quality of school life, agree with the importance of social relations for the school life of students; they provide insights into understanding the quality of school life by interpreting everyday social interactions at school through control and agency.

This chapter commences with an introduction to the concept of quality of school life, which is the topic of this dissertation, as well as a broad concept which bonds and integrates the subject matter of empirical studies 1 (quality of school life), 2 (peer relations and tensions between student agency and school regulations), and 3 (student-teacher relations). Then, the next sub-chapter presents theories utilised to interpret control and agency, which are manifested in the tensions and relations in school lives.

3.1 Quality of school life

Discussing the quality of school life of different research participants is demanding, as quality is subjectively perceived by each individual. Moreover, arranging a standard for the comparisons of quality may be problematic and even paradoxical, as understanding of the quality of school life varies between different societies and local contexts due to the non-identical characteristics of quality and qualitative uniqueness (Lee 2001). Despite this ambiguity, several researchers have attempted to conceptualise and categorise this qualitative concept.

Several previous studies perceived **quality of school life** as an affective outcome of schooling, which constitutes a major goal of schooling along with cognitive outcomes like academic achievement (e.g. Linnakylä 1996; Williams and Roey 1996). In addition, a few researchers formulated quality of school life as an important component of quality of life, consisting of both positive and negative experiences (e.g. Linnakylä 1996; Verkuyten and Thijs 2002). Williams and Batten (1981, as quoted in Thien and Razak 2013, 685) conceptualised quality of school life as an overall sense of happiness, well-being, or satisfaction with regard to students' present circumstances. Williams and Roey (1996) measured quality of school life based on six dimensions: general affect, negative affect, opportunity, teachers, identity, and status. Similarly, Linnakylä (1996, 70) defined quality of school life as students' general well-being and satisfaction from the viewpoint of their positive and negative experiences in ordinary school activities. The study categorized quality of school life into six domains: general satisfaction, teacher–student relations, status in class, identity in class, achievement and opportunity, and negative affect (Linnakylä 1996). Subsequently, Malin and Linnakylä (2001) examined quality of school life in relation to the four major roles of schooling: 1) providing students with opportunities for learning and achievement, 2) developing students' personal and social identity, 3) strengthening students' social esteem and sense of responsibility, and 4) fostering student-teacher relations for a beneficial education effect (Malin and Linnakylä 2001, 148). The first domain is concerned with the role of school as a learning environment; the other aspects are related to the role of school as a social environment where students experience various relations and develop their identity through them. They indicated the importance of the social aspects of quality of school life that encompass students' relations with teachers and to school culture (Malin and Linnakylä 2001, 147). However, a majority of quantitative studies have explored quality of school life mainly from the perspectives of educational psychology (see also Thien and Razak 2013).

Other research on students' perception of school life have used the terms **school satisfaction and school life satisfaction** (e.g. Huebner and McCullough 2000; Huebner 1994; Hwang 2005; Kim and Kim 2011; Jeon 2015). Huebner and McCullough (2000) perceived school satisfaction as students' overall satisfaction

with school experiences, which encompasses one-time major events as well as everyday hassles, school and non-school events, and positive and negative events. In line with this, Tian and Gilman (2009, 1096–1097) introduced the term ‘school satisfaction’, which was classified into six dimensions: peer relationship, teacher-student relationship, teaching, school management, achievement, and school work. Meanwhile, Kim and Kim (2011) employed a sociological perspective and conceptualised school life satisfaction as the extent of students’ social and emotional adaptation to schooling and as a crucial criterion for understanding the development of students and their quality of school life.

School well-being is another concept that has been utilised to indicate students’ satisfaction with school life. A few studies (e.g. Hofman, Hofman, and Guldemond 1999; Pyhältö, Soini, and Pietarinen 2010; Pietarinen, Soini, and Pyhältö 2014) were conducted from the perspectives of education and educational psychology. Hofman, Hofman, and Guldemond (1999) measured school well-being that included four dimensions: general attitude towards school life, attitude towards teachers, attitude towards peers, and attitude towards the school organisation and building. In addition, Pietarinen, Soini, and Pyhältö (2014, 42) defined subjective well-being in school as dynamic and contextual state of mind that is manifested in students’ perceived capacity to fulfil their needs and succeed in the demands set by the school; their concept of school well-being embraces both positive factors like satisfaction and negative factors like study burnout or exhaustion (Pietarinen, Soini, and Pyhältö 2014, 44). School well-being has also been studied in the area of social health. For example, Konu and Rimpelä (2002) and Konu and Lintonen (2006), based on the well-known conceptual model of Allardt (see Konu and Rimpelä 2002, 82−83), conducted research on school well-being on the basis of Finnish national and WHO data. The concept of school well-being was classified into school conditions, social relationships, means for self-fulfilment, and health status. Further, Kim (2015), in line with the recent trend that investigates subjective well-being separately from objective well-being as a physical condition, introduced the term ‘subjective well-being’, emphasising the necessity of researching the well-being of children and adolescents from their viewpoints.

In addition, the trend of comparing quality of school life and other affective domains of school life, employing data from student assessments and research reports of international organisations, has been visible since the 1990s. Several domestic and international **comparative studies on the quality of school life** analysed survey data from the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)-International Reading Literacy Study 1991 (Linnakylä 1996; Malin and Linnakylä 2001; Williams and Roey 1996), PISA 2003 (Linnakylä and Malin 2008), and PISA 2006 (Park 2008). Park et al. (2010) and Kim

(2015) also investigated the well-being of Korean children and adolescents at and outside school using international comparisons drawn from UNICEF reports.

Despite the diverse definitions and categorisations, there is a common base in understanding quality of school life. First, quality of school life encompasses students' positive and negative perceptions or evaluations concerning their everyday life at school. Second, aspects of quality of school life include social dimensions such as relations with peers and teachers in addition to students' perception of the cognitive dimensions of schooling, such as academic achievement and opportunities for developing oneself; these dimensions are all closely related to the roles of schooling. Moreover, numerous previous studies have identified that students' relations with their teachers and peers/friends are crucial in approaching quality of school life and school well-being. It has been widely discussed that these social relations are important to students' social integration and experiences of schooling. In other words, school life has been shown to be sustained and enhanced by two pivots: interactions with peers and interactions with teachers (Pietarinen, Soini, and Pyhältö 2014; Pyhältö, Soini, and Pietarinen 2010; Van Maele and Van Houtte 2011). Based on the above-mentioned definitions and conceptualisations, study 1 defines the quality of school life as students' general perception of their school well-being and satisfaction with their positive and negative experiences of ordinary school life; study 1 explores 1) general satisfaction, 2) peer relations, and 3) teacher-student relations as crucial aspects of the quality of school life (Yoon and Järvinen 2016).

Peer relations and student-teacher relations have also been the interest of extensive qualitative educational studies. Several ethnographic studies have sought to uncover the complex aspects of peer relationships. Peer groups have been a locus where students band together to protect themselves from any possible difficulties and overwhelming emotions at school; peer groups have also been an essential arena in which they may experience hierarchy, conflicts, and construct identities within or traversing the rigid line between femininity and masculinity (Tolonen 1998; Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma 2000b; Gulbrandsen 2003; George 2007; Paechter and Clark 2007; McCormark and Anderson 2010). In addition, many qualitative studies have elaborated that students experience hierarchy, control, and the exertion or restriction of their agency through interactions with teachers that occur in teaching-learning practices, informal daily routines, and time-space-movement regulations (Kim 1997; Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma 2000a; Park 2002; Gordon 2006; Rosvall 2011; Lanas and Corbett 2011; Hjelmér, Lappalainen, and Rosvall 2014; Klette et al. 2018). Further, they experience collective interactions with other school members along the process of adapting to, sidestepping, or challenging sociocultural norms embedded in school regulations, practices, and ethos (cf. Cho 2000; Rönnlund 2010; 2014; Lee 2018).

In the process of exploring the quality of school life, the quantitative part of this thesis (study 1) provides an overview of the quality of school life as a whole and highlights that the social relationships of students with peers and teachers are central in their perception on school life. Following this, the qualitative part (studies 2 and 3) presents a closer analysis of these relationships by accompanying interpretations related to hierarchy, control, agency, and socialisation (gendered patterns). In line with the findings of the sub-studies, this thesis emphasises the social aspect of quality of school life. The focus on the social aspect can contribute to this field of study in its attempt to expand the breadth of understanding of quality of school life to democratic school culture. The interactions of students with their peers and teachers can be better understood from the perspective of democratic relations, since school can be considered as a society where social members convey and share diverse experiences and interests through a communal lifestyle (Dewey [1916] 2010, 149−156). Further, democracy is a form of everyday life that respects differences and diversities among individuals (cf. Karstedt 2006) and also promotes societal solidarity. In this vein, a combination between individualistic and collectivistic sociocultural/institutional backgrounds presented in this thesis can enrich the discussion on quality of school life from the perspective of democratic school culture as well as cross-cultural and comparative viewpoints.

3.2 Control and agency in school life

Control and agency have been the focus of extensive research in the sociology of education and school ethnography (Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma 2000a; Gordon 2006; Gordon et al. 2008; Steen-Olsen and Eikseth 2010; Hjelmér, Lappalainen, and Rosvall 2010; 2014; see also The London Feminist Salon Collective 2004; Arnesen et al. 2010).

According to Giddens (1984, 283), control refers to the capability that certain actors, groups, or types of actors have of influencing the circumstances of action of others. Hjelmér, Lappalainen, and Rosvall (2010, 246) employ Giddens' conceptualisation of agency which highlights the fact that people's actions are shaped by social structures. Steen-Olsen and Eikseth (2010, 287) state that agency presupposes strategic action that is to utilise available structuring rules and resources in order to overcome structural restrictions and to influence the possibility of acting autonomously. Thus, the agent has power to alter the structures and to act otherwise—that is, to be able to intervene in the world or to refrain from such intervention (Giddens 1984, 14; Steen-Olsen and Eikseth 2010, 287). In this thesis, students' agency refers to their attempts to challenge the systems and authorities that discipline them into being compliant. It also refers to their ability to make and implement their own decisions in their school lives (The London Feminist Salon

Collective 2004; Gordon 2006). Further, the relationship between control and agency is more complex than challenge, resistance, and compliance. In line with Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma (2002), I interpret that students have the capacity to employ various strategies such as negotiating, using humour or cute behaviour, ritualizing, sidestepping, being insincerely obedient, as well as challenging and resisting (cf. Yoon 2018). In addition, acknowledging the conflicting aspects of control and agency that are often depicted in the roles and interactions of teachers and students in mass schooling, I also attempt to perceive realities in which both actors are controlled by social structures like educational policies; it is also important to perceive that they band together to alter structures and to enhance student agency for democratic schooling (cf. Arnesen et al. 2010, 159).

Both studies 2 and 3 elaborate the manifestation of control and agency in school scenes; however, different theories were utilised for analyses. For this, I refer to the thoughts of Michael Foucault and Judith Butler in study 2, as their ideas are suited for the discussion on discipline, control, and student agency that are applicable to and exercised through bodies and genders. Thereafter, I employ the concepts of Basil Bernstein for study 3, since his concepts help us to obtain insightful analysis of control and agency that occurs in the teaching and learning practices and interactions between students and teachers. In study 2, with the help of Foucault, I interpret that technologies of disciplinary power remain part of the rules of Finnish and Korean schools and they are exercised to control student agency in school. Further, along with Butler's discussions, I illuminate how agency (which attempts to perform gender) and control (which inculcates binary gender distinction) are manifested in ordinary school incidents. In study 3, employing the theoretical devices of Basil Bernstein, I analyse power, control, and agency at school where separations and hierarchies are embedded and where teacher control and student agency conflict and compromise with each other in diverse pedagogic practices.

3.2.1 Control and agency: through discipline, body, and gender

According to Foucault ([1975] 2003; 1984), the mechanism of power shifted from the sovereign power that exercises life-or-death authority to disciplinary power which controls the body as important means of production in the seventeenth century and following industrial society. The industrial technology of micro-power does not appear to fade away in the schooling system of the twenty-first century in many countries; space (arrangement of seats, classrooms, corridors, etc.), time (lessons, break times, punctuality, tardiness, absence, a delay in the fulfilment of tasks, etc.), speech (necessary words and idle chatter), and bodily movements and appearance (disturbance/disobedience, active participation, correct or faulty poses, student-like

or deviant appearance, etc.) are regulated by invisible power that is embedded in timetables and school rules (Foucault 1984). In such a context, school spaces are constructed for hierarchical observation and the gaze of supervision is cast to students. For example, the technology of observing spaces—such as rows and columns in the seat arrangement of classrooms, linear corridors and cell-like classrooms, windows placed on the corridor wall of each classrooms, and toilet cubicles installed with half-doors—permeates into the school architecture and enables a single gaze to supervise students efficiently and constantly. Indeed, the mechanism of spatial control functions as a panoptic microscope (Foucault 1984). Here, the brilliance of disciplinary power is that supervision is usually exercised invisibly; however, students remain exposed to be seen (Foucault [1975] 2003; 1984).

In addition, in school, the technology of power partitions the bodies of students into measurable sections and normalises them. In doing so, the power of normalisation imposes homogeneity on students; however, simultaneously it differentiates, excludes, and individualises students as well (Foucault 1984). Trivial, but detailed and meticulous, control is exercised according to school regulations that partitions space, time, movement, or appearance of students. These processes are called 'discipline' in everyday schooling. Discipline formulates docile and useful bodies that can yield productive learning outcomes (cf. Foucault [1975] 2003; Park 2002; Yoon 2018). In fact, the delicate partition and segregation exercised over space, time, and the bodies of students has been one of the major functions of contemporary institutionalised schooling (cf. Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma 2000a; Hjelmér, Lappalainen, and Rosvall 2014).

However, there is always room for agency against or within the boundary of control. Foucault (1984) suggests that even in tightly controlled institutions, such as schools or prisons, possibilities of agency—resistance, disobedience, sidestepping, negotiation, etc.—still exist. As an extension of his thought that space and architecture are fundamental in any form of communal life and exercise of power, Foucault argues that the same architecture can serve other purposes and that intentions and real practices of people for their freedom can produce liberating effects. This could be interpreted to imply that the architectural structure of hierarchical observation can also be utilised as the architecture of liberation. The main building of *Järvenpään lukio* (Järvenpää high school) in Finland is a good example. The structure of this building resembles a Panopticon, circular prison tower, that Foucault illustrates in Discipline and Punish ([1975] 2003). Instead of a surveillance tower in the middle of Panopticon, there is an *Areena* on the ground floor of this school building, which is utilised as a cafeteria and a stage for performances. Students often play gigs during break times and other students can stand in round-shaped corridors and see what happens on the ground floor (cf.

Oksanen 2018). Thus, the same architectural structure enables students to become a crowd of agency instead of an assemblage of isolated individuals (cf. Foucault [1975] 2003).

Even though Foucault provides us brilliant insight that penetrates the mechanism of power and the governmentality of changing society, drawing from his genealogical perspective, his theory is criticised in the sense that he could not reveal the neoliberal feature of power and governmentality. Han (2015, 35–45) argues that even though Foucault paid attention to the technologies of the self in his later works, it appears that he did not fully realise that disciplinary power that is exercised on human body is not appropriate for the analysis of a power mechanism in neoliberal systems; thus, he could not shift to the analysis of psycho-politics. According to Han (2015), disciplinary power is manifested in the form of invisible surveillance and bodily negativity (prohibition), whereas technologies of power in neoliberal systems is expressed in the form of self-exposure and psychological positivity (such as the 'like' button in social media), through which people create an illusion that they have freedom. Thus, the discipline of body is shifted to the optimisation of mind; the neoliberal agents exploit themselves voluntarily and passionately by governing themselves (Han 2015, 41–45). Due to Foucault's untimely death in 1984, it is difficult to assert whether he sharply penetrated into the new governmentality of neoliberal society; however, his concept of governmentality, which encompasses both technologies of governing others and technologies of the self, inspired many researchers to analyse the deception of neoliberal freedom and agency (cf. Lemke 2001).

In this thesis, I also endeavour to understand how control and agency is exercised or limited through gendered peer interactions and socialisation process. According to Butler ([1990] 2008), agency is exercised only through acts. Similarly, agents (who exercise agency) are constituted in acts and through acts. There are no agents that exist transcendentally. In the same vein, gender is not a fixed noun but is a fluid verb as we wear and act our gender everyday (Butler 1988). There is no such 'real' essence of gender, which is hidden by our clothes or acts. Our performance or embodiment itself is a gender. However, sociocultural normative power accords stability and order by establishing and exaggerating binary differences such as man/woman and masculinity/femininity. When we do not agree with this taken-for-granted authority that is given to this gendered binary division, sociocultural sanctions or punishments are imposed. Thus, this gendered distinction is a cultural process that renders individuals to be socialised through gendered regulation and control (Butler 1988; [1990] 2008). Butler also suggests that gender is an identity that is constructed in time through repetitive performances—ordinary and ritualised patterns such as bodily gestures, movements, and different kinds of patterned conduct that construct the illusion of the gendered self (Butler 1988, 519). Lastly, it

is noteworthy that Butler does not see the relationship between agency and sociocultural construction of gender as a conflicting one; she understands that the sociocultural construction is a necessary locus of agency and a perspective through which agency is initiated and culturally recognisable (Butler [1990] 2008, 349). In other words, our body is not passively scripted with cultural codes of gender; the gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporal space and enact interpretations within the confines of already existing norms (Butler 1988, 526). In study 2, in the context of 'performing gender' (agency) and 'real gender' (gendered socialisation), I elaborate on how student agency is manifested and how their gendered identities are constructed through these ordinary repetitive patterns—for example, in students' peer interactions, mixed-gender small-group activities, and events led by adults at school.

3.2.2 Control and agency: through the theoretical lens of Bernstein

Basil Bernstein is a 'curriculum sociologist' who invented useful tools to widen our insights into everyday contexts, in which transmission and acquisition of knowledge occurs and variations on a theme of power, control, and agency are performed. His theory is evaluated to connect everyday contexts of education (in a broad sense) with different levels of regulation, from social class relations and the state power through curriculum and pedagogy, to the level of individuals (Bernstein and Solomon 1999, 266). In study 3, student agency is understood as a condition for democratic schooling and placed as a counter-term to teachers' control. In *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity* (1996), Bernstein mentioned students' own control without explicitly using the term agency; however, he mentioned the term agency (autonomy and creativity as well) in an interview where he explained the relationship between subjects and pedagogic practices consisting of classification and framing (Bernstein and Solomon 1999, 272). Similarly, previous studies that employed Bernstein's theories of pedagogic codes and pedagogic discourses also utilised the terms student influence and autonomy (cf. Rosvall 2011) and students' own control and agency (cf. Arnot and Reay 2004). In study 3, based on Bernstein's (1996) pedagogic rights, it is interpreted that student agency includes an individual's right to achieve critical understanding and new possibilities for the enhancement of his or her school life; it is also understood that student agency encompasses a political right to participate in the decision-making process that involves not only consultation but also actual practice and influence on students' class and school life, thereby taking part in constructing, maintaining, and transforming the control (Arnot and Reay 2004, 140; Bernstein 1996, 6–7).

For the analysis of student-teacher interactions, the locus of knowledge transmission, and schooling as a system with boundaries and hierarchies within it, Bernstein's (1996) pedagogic codes—classification and framing—are used as theoretical lenses. These concepts provide an interesting perspective for a cross-cultural analysis of school practices across fieldwork schools; the concepts also become a useful tool for analysing and identifying common and unique patterns of power, control, and agency that occurred in teaching-learning practices, informal interactions between students and teachers, and physical and virtual space at school. According to Bernstein (1996, 19), power relations establish boundaries, legitimize boundaries, and reproduce boundaries between different categories of social groups, such as students and teachers at school. Power establishes legitimate relations between categories. Bernstein (1996) used the concept of classification to examine the relations between categories; classification is concerned with the degree of separation between categories of subjects, spaces, and actors at school. For example, in a school with strong classifications, strong hierarchies and separations exist among the categories of school members (e.g. students/teachers/principals). Similarly, the boundaries between categories of subject knowledge (e.g. abstract/practical knowledge) are clear and rigid. Moreover, the relationships between the different categories are distant as they are strictly disconnected from one another. In contrast, in a school with weak classifications, there are permeable boundaries among various categories. Therefore, for example, it enables establishing more complex power relations across different groups of school members. Further, school curriculums may be organised in a manner that integrates different subjects and types of knowledge (Bernstein 1996, 20–26). Thus, classification refers to the variations in the distribution of power and it is applicable to analyse, for example, how knowledge is organised through curricular systems and who has access to certain types of knowledge (Bernstein and Solomon 1999; cf. Nylund et al. 2018). Through classification, it is also possible to recognise how integrated or separated the school members are and how this phenomenon is related to democratic school ethos.

Further, Bernstein employed the concept of framing to analyse the form of control which regulates and legitimizes communication in pedagogic relations (Bernstein 1996, 26–28). This concept involves the principles of control over the transmission of knowledge and social control over the conduct and utterance of students; in other words, framing regulates the relation between a teacher and students within a context where students acquire the principle of legitimate communication (Bernstein 1996). Where framing is strong, the relations between a teacher and students are not only socially hierarchical but also pedagogically stratified because a teacher has overt control of the selection, sequence and pacing of lesson content as well as the criteria of knowledge to be evaluated; however, in a

classroom of weak framing, students have greater influence over the lesson content and other communicative features (order, pace, methods, and evaluation) (Bernstein 1996; cf. Beach and Öhrn 2011; Nylund et al. 2018). Bernstein distinguished two types of rules regulated by framing. Regulative discourse denotes the forms that hierarchical human relations take in the pedagogic relationship, including expectations regarding conduct, character, and manners of students. Instructional discourse indicates selection, sequence, pacing, and methods of teaching-learning practices and also the criteria of evaluation (Bernstein 1996; cf. Arnot and Reay 2004). The regulative discourse is the dominant discourse, as it encompasses instructional discourse. This implies that it is not possible for a teacher to exercise strong framing over regulative discourse and weak framing over instructional discourse. However it is possible that a teacher employs weak framing over regulative discourse but strong framing over instructional discourse (Bernstein, 1996: 27–28).

Lastly, the variations of classification and framing constitute different pedagogic forms. Bernstein used the terms visible and invisible pedagogic practice to refer to these different modalities (Bernstein, 1996, 28). Even though I do not explicitly mention these visible and invisible pedagogic models for the analysis in study 3, I considered these concepts relevant in the analysis and interpretation of teaching and learning practices and interactions between students and teachers. These concepts provide comprehensive insights as combinations of classification and framing. The elaboration of Beach and Öhrn (2011, 11) guides us to detailed and comprehensive understanding on the two pedagogic models. The visible pedagogic model, where aspects of classification and framing are strong and explicit, tends to support the idea of homogeneous ability-grouping and lecture-style lessons, in which hierarchical relations of transmitter-acquirer and also strong rules of pacing, sequencing, and the criteria of evaluation are implemented. The communication between teachers and students (e.g. questions, answers, comments), the use of time, space, and physical movement is often categorised and framed by the standard of ‘legitimate (right) or not (wrong)’. The visible pedagogic model emphasises the efficiency of knowledge transmission.

In contrast, the invisible pedagogic model, which is constituted by weak classification and framing, tends to respect differences between students according to mixed-ability grouping. It encourages individual knowledge construction and discussions among people involved in teaching-learning activities in small groups or whole-class contexts. However, due to the contradiction between its nature and the rules of hierarchy and the evaluation mechanism that operates within schools and education systems, there is a paradox of the invisible pedagogic model in practice. The paradox implies that, although this model espouses student agency and influence in teaching-learning practices, many students are not likely to support the invisible

pedagogic model as they expect clear standards of knowledge to be evaluated and the efficiency of knowledge transmission led by strongly-framed teaching methods. The example of this contradiction between weak framing of teaching and strong classification of evaluated knowledge and students' dissatisfaction is well depicted in Rosvall's (2011) lesson scenes. Indeed, Bernstein's theory has inspired many researchers to reveal unnoticed pedagogic practices poignantly, inherent in blind spots of different contexts of education and work (cf. Arnot and Reay 2004; Niemi and Rosvall 2013; Robertson and Sorensen 2018), in relation to the question 'whose interest is promoted or privileged by the (skilful) boundaries?' (Bernstein and Solomon 1999, 273). In study 3, an attempt is made to answer to the question 'how do boundaries (classified and framed pedagogic practices) influence student agency and democratic schooling?'.

Further, in study 3, the intertwined aspects of student agency are briefly discussed. On the one hand, agency is interpreted as learner's freedom to choose learning options, self-directed learning capability and self-responsibility for learning outcomes. This individualistic and neoliberal interpretation of agency is well-reflected in the policy documents of supranational institutions that emphasise flexible, entrepreneurial, and responsible learners (e.g. OECD 2005, 8) as well as national curriculums that expect young people to become self-regulating learners (Finnish National Agency for Education n.d.; Korean National Curriculum Information Center n.d.). On the other hand, the communal and collectivistic interpretation of agency that aims to foster democratic schooling and citizenship of students is also manifested in the two national curriculums; however, students' agency for their influence in various decision-making process is extensively limited in practice (see, for example, Rönnlund 2014 and Rosvall 2011). I continue the interpretation and discussion on issues of control and agency in a school of self-regulating learners and disciplinary schooling as well as the betterment of student agency for democratic school culture in Chapters 8 and 9.

4 Methodological Approaches

This thesis employs cross-cultural and comparative studies as its methodological approaches. This chapter describes how this study assumes a position of a cross-cultural and comparative study through the discussion of previous studies, methodological approaches, and Orientalism. In this chapter, I discuss the notions, benefits, and dilemmas of cross-cultural and comparative research as well as the general lack of and task given to comparative education research.

4.1 Cross-cultural and comparative research: benefits and dilemmas

If there is agreement on the relevance of culture for education studies in terms of the aspects of culture (such as knowledge, skills, values, or attitudes) which are transmitted or transferred among different groups of people across various contexts (Masemann 2013), numerous education studies could be termed as being cross-cultural studies to a certain extent. Moreover, all research incorporates a few comparative elements. Researchers yield comparisons such as those among contexts that participants live in, institutional and sociocultural elements, local practices, nation states, and different time periods (cf. Lahelma and Gordon 2010; Gómez and Kuronen 2011). The notions of cross-cultural and comparative research are intertwined and overlapping; however, some researchers such as Keränen (2001) and Lahelma and Gordon (2010) have suggested a distinction and dialogue between comparative and cross-cultural approaches. Leaning on the conceptualisations and discussions provided by Gómez and Kuronen (2011) and Lahelma and Gordon (2010), I perceive the distinction between the two approaches in terms of data and methods, the aims of comparison, and the unit and focus of analysis. Cross-cultural studies mainly employ ethnographic and other qualitative data and methods and often pay attention to cross-cultural comparisons at the level of local practices; moreover, the unit of analysis in such studies is more wavering than that in comparative studies. The aim is to explore analogical incidents across groups, systems, societies, and nation states (Gordon and Lahelma 2004 as cited in Gómez and Kuronen 2011, 685−686). The main focus is on identifying universal or similar patterns by combining and relating data from various contexts, rather than

emphasising differences in the comparisons among nation states. Meanwhile, comparative studies utilise both quantitative and qualitative data and methods. Comparisons are made in a large and macro-sociological scale, often at the level of the nation state. The same instruments are used to measure analogical patterns or institutions in different contexts, and the aim is to explore and measure differences and similarities (Lahelma and Gordon 2010). Based on the discussions above, I regard this thesis as a cross-cultural and comparative study, in which studies 2 and 3 are closer to a cross-cultural approach and study 1 and Chapter 2 provide a comparative perspective.

Numerous comparative cultural studies have produced interesting findings regarding cultural traits and values of social groups from socio-psychological perspectives. A well-known study entitled *Cultures and Organisations: Software of the Mind* (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010) focuses on cultural differences among different parts of the world and analyses several dimensions of cultural traits based on survey data collected from 74 nations. The study provides ground for understanding another culture and society based on several dimensions (power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term/short-term orientation, and indulgence/restraint). Such cultural dimensions are useful for interpreting the results regarding the quality of school life of Finnish and Korean students and their relations with peers and teachers (see study 1, Yoon and Järvinen 2016). In particular, cultural traits that manifest in individualism and collectivism are closely related to the findings of each sub-study and the discussion of this dissertation. For example, in an individualist culture, idiocentric attitudes that prioritise independence and individuality tend to be encouraged. In contrast, in a collectivist culture, an allocentric tendency that prioritises interdependence and the internalising of the norms of in-groups can be better developed (Triandis 2001). Moreover, Grief (1994) and Karstedt (2006) pay attention to the cultural traits of collectivist and individualist societies and the organisation of society mainly by comparing differences. Such socio-psychological and culturally comparative research has contributed to offering a powerful explanation for understanding other societies/countries by utilising large-scale data and/or establishing systemised standards for comparative analysis, thereby yielding generalisation. However, its schematised generalisation that often overemphasises differences between societies/countries and relatively neglects individual and generational diversity in any social/cultural group can be criticized.

Meanwhile, in cross-cultural studies, the main focus is on identifying similar patterns or processes and enriching theoretical understanding by exploring analogical incidents in various cultural contexts (Lahelma and Gordon 2010). In particular, despite the difficulties faced in the implementation of data collection and analysis, many cross-cultural or cross-national studies have been conducted from an

ethnographic perspective. Jørgensen (2015, 2) suggests that through such studies, researchers can contextualise themes identified by the research participants themselves and explore whether these are particular to a given context or may have more universal relevance to research participants in different contexts. She also argues that such an approach is particularly suitable to identify issues, which young people themselves find important to their schooling, and explore how these interlink with local practices (Jørgensen 2015, 13). Further, Gordon, Lahelma, and Beach (2003) argue that ethnographic research can provide a powerful critique for challenging the common rhetoric of New Right and neoliberal hegemony and for exploring the effects of educational restructuring on the quality of life of people in educational settings. In line with this argument, Lindblad and Popkewitz (2003) emphasise the relevance of comparative ethnographic inquiry in this globalised world. In the current education systems, many aspects of local phenomena and cultures are not solely performed by actors in specific observable contexts; the political voices of supranational institutions, like the OECD, permeate into the reality of schoolteachers and students and their daily conversations. When phenomena is observed in various schools located in different parts of the world, the relationship between global and local appears more lucidly in the overlap between the two (Lindblad and Popkewitz 2003).

However, cross-cultural studies encounter various dilemmas. A dilemma in cross-cultural qualitative/ethnographic studies conducted in familiar contexts is viewing the familiar from an unfamiliar perspective, as done in this study which observed ordinary school scenes. In order to avoid researchers taking familiarity as for granted, Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma (2002) utilised metaphors in their analysis and writing. They analysed school metaphors created by students, which implied condensed, vivid, and resonant meanings of school. They also created metaphors of ‘dance’ to convey to readers the various characteristics of official, informal, and physical schools. Another strategy to challenge the familiarity that has permeated in cross-cultural studies is joint analysis/interpretation, as employed in numerous previous studies (see Lahelma et al. 2014; see also Troman and Jeffrey 2007; Hjelmér, Lappalainen, and Rosvall 2010). Lahelma et al. (2014) introduce three examples of multi-sited cross-cultural studies in which researchers skimmed the self-evidence of their own data, opened up a new ethnographic perspective, and found unexpected cultural patterns through the reading of each other’s data and joint discussion/interpretation.

Since this study was not part of a research project in which I could sharpen cross-cultural perspectives through joint discussion and interpretation with other members, I decided to challenge this taken-for-granted familiarity by letting my multi-sited data interact. I first conducted qualitative data collection in Finnish schools, which were less familiar to me. During the fieldwork, my cross-cultural gaze motivated me

to relate the Finnish school scenes to analogical scenes that could occur in a Korean context. I then proceeded to conduct fieldwork in Korean schools; the school scenes from the Finnish schools vividly lingered in my mind, thereby keeping my cross-cultural perspective alive. Before the fieldwork, I also practiced observing people's behaviours and interactions from an unfamiliar and descriptive gaze in an ordinary Korean café and restaurant.

Another difficult task faced in cross-cultural and comparative studies is the establishment and development of a relationship between the researcher and the research context (cf. Phillips and Schweisfurth 2014, 66−70). In other words, the position of researchers and their relationship with the research context—familiarity, similarity or difference between sociocultural contexts/systems and researchers' 'home' contexts, and researchers' intercultural sensitivity and ability—may affect data collection, analysis, and interpretation in cross-cultural and comparative studies.

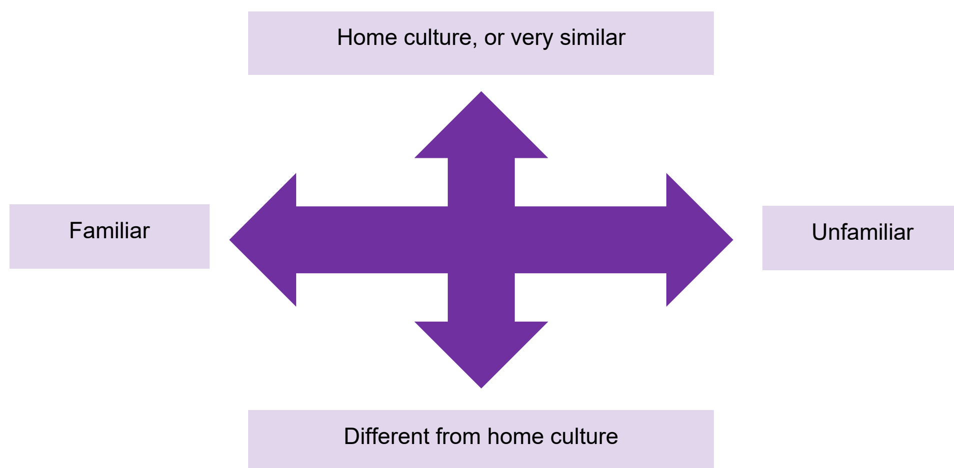

Figure 1. The relationship between the researcher and the research context (Source: Phillips and Schweisfurth 2014, 67).

Everyday school scenes in another sociocultural context can be considered different and unfamiliar to the eyes of researchers or visitors. I read a few comparative studies and articles that emphasised the differences between Finnish and Korean education; in addition, I witnessed several cases in which Korean teachers and educators who visited Finnish schools tended to be overwhelmed by differences that they perceived as unusual (unfamiliar). Schooling in different countries may reveal similar features to the people who work in the field of schooling; thus, their observations appeared to be attracted by unusual differences (e.g. the hairstyles and clothes of Finnish secondary school students) rather than commonalities.

Ethnocentricity can also be manifested if researchers, who are not interculturally sensitive and capable, attempt to maintain their single-solution and ethnocentric perspectives (Phillips and Schweisfurth 2014). These dangers may diminish when researchers seek to gain in-depth understanding through their informants, first-hand experience, and literature on and related to the research context. However, their experience and knowledge does not guarantee intercultural sensitivity. This intercultural capability can be cultivated when researchers reflect their familiar culture from critical perspectives, maintain curiosity (particularly after the initial honeymoon period) for knowing more about other cultures, empathise with peoples' behaviours and social phenomena from their perspectives (，put yourself in the other party's shoes), and acquire analytical knowledge and skills that helps to create an understanding beyond superficial phenomena (Phillips and Schweisfurth 2014).

Prior to and while conducting this study, I attempted to minimize the ethnocentricity which would have been unconsciously accumulated in my cross-cultural and comparative perspectives; I also attempted to strengthen intercultural sensitivity. I sought to know and understand Finnish culture and society, which is the context of studies 1, 2, and 3. I attended social and cultural events and observed people's behaviours, learned the Finnish language through several courses, and read news articles written in plain Finnish. I also visited several Finnish schools before conducting this thesis research; therefore, my researcher gaze was not entirely directed to exotic unfamiliarity. Despite these efforts, I was cautious and occasionally less confident in interpreting certain results and findings drawn from the sub-studies; I discussed such matters with my Finnish co-author, supervisors, and colleagues.

Language might be the most challenging barrier to cross-cultural and comparative researchers. A majority of Finnish schoolteachers, officials in the municipal departments of education, and scholars that I communicated with had a good command of English. I was able to find numerous English-language scientific articles written by Finnish researchers and major documents of Finnish education authorities that were translated into English. Nevertheless, there were clear limitations in terms of the amount and types of knowledge contained in such English-language publications. Thus, I sought to develop my Finnish skills to access practical information that is relevant to Finnish schooling through news articles reported by Finnish mass media. My supervisors and colleagues also provided me with relevant Finnish news articles.

The role of language was more significant in the qualitative data collection. Finnish students who participated in interviews could choose their preferred language for the interview; I conducted interviews in Finnish with nine students and in English with the remaining seven. In the Finnish-language interviews, questions

were directly asked in Finnish by an accompanying research assistant. In the English-language interviews, conversation took place between me and each student participant, without the presence of a research assistant. I also communicated in basic Finnish with all the Finnish student participants to establish a rapport with them. All the interviews were semi-structured; they followed the flow of conversation, and I asked improvised questions based on the interviewee's comments, which made it more like a conversation. With the Finnish interviews, it was difficult to conduct semi-structured interviews due to my language limitations. However, such a research design was useful to interview those Finnish students who were not yet sufficiently fluent in English. In addition, a linguistic-sociocultural issue arose while preparing and conducting the interviews. I prepared a student interview guide first in English, let it translated into Finnish, and translated it into Korean; there were a few words that had the potential of being misunderstood or were difficult to be translated. Before conducting the Finnish-language interviews, I discussed this issue with the research assistant and explained the words/phrases more precisely during the interviews. One example is the translation of the word 'friend' and 'classmate/peer'. 'Friend' was translated as *(hyvä) kaveri* and 'classmate/peer' as *luokkakaveri* in Finnish. Even though *ystävä* is the most common and formal translation of 'friend', I agreed with the research assistant's choice of the word *kaveri*, which is a spoken term for 'friend'. For the Korean interviews, 'friend' was literally translated as *Chingu*, which is commonly used in both formal and informal contexts. 'Classmate/peer' was translated as *Banchingu*; its literal English translation is class friend. Another example is 'private education'[4]. It was translated as *yksityisopetus* (private teaching/instruction) in Finnish; however, many of the Finnish student interviewees did not understand what the term means because it seemed quite unfamiliar to Finnish students who were 12–14 years of age; some of them misunderstood this as remedial instruction, which is a part of the public education system in Finland. Thus, the research assistant and I provided a more detailed explanation during the interviews with Finnish students.

In sum, the benefits and difficulties of cross-cultural and comparative studies are linked with the relationship between the researcher and the research context. It was a demanding task for me to change my researcher identity back and forth between being a cultural insider and outsider. However, I attempted not to be overwhelmed by the unfamiliarity of the educational contexts and to challenge the familiarity of the educational contexts from a cross-cultural and comparative perspective.

[4] Private education refers to supplementary education that students receive other than what is taught in regular school curriculum after school hours. Lessons provided by private educational institutions (for-profit cram schools), private tutoring, home-study materials, and internet-based lectures are typical types of private education in Korea.

Meanwhile, it was important to be aware of my own perspective related to the Finnish and Korean society and research sites and to recognise my position as a researcher who conducts cross-cultural and comparative analyses. This awareness is closely linked to the next sub-chapter, which deals with comparative education research beyond Orientalism and in which I discuss the relationship between the self and others.

4.2 Comparative education research beyond Orientalism

In comparative education research, actions and phenomena that take place in a specific space and time are compared. In particular, in international comparative research, space is often perceived according to the dichotomous composition of 'the West' and 'the non-West'. Along with this perception of a partition of world space, a nation state as a unit of comparison and Orientalist thinking remain powerful frames that may affect the researcher's perspective on the research topic and social phenomena in this globalised world. Orientalism (Said [1978] 2014) refers to an intellectual authority that western culture holds over the Orient, which appears in discourses at appropriate times, thereby holding power and authority. Orientalism is an intellectual and cultural style that is governed by certain prejudice against the Orient (Said [1978] 2014). It also constructs the epistemological identity of the Orient as being inferior to and dependent on the West, thereby justifying the subjugations of the Orient in the name of the western civilising mission (Takayama 2008, 20). According to Said ([1978] 2014), the Orient indicates middle-East regions; however, currently the Orient refers to a non-western society/culture which is positioned in a subordinate/peripheral/objectified location in relation with a western/central/dominant counterpart in most discussions. Orientalism, in a reversed manner, also connotes non-western self's projection of aspiration and hope over the western other. In addition, as a criticism of Said's concept of Orientalism that tends to postulate the non-western party as 'passive others', affirmative Orientalism (Takayama 2008, 21) that indicates an anti-colonial nationalist reaction of the non-west which insists on their cultural and social uniqueness and superiority is also employed.

In the era of standardised international education assessments, this 'West-Rest' binary frame created in the age of imperialism remains valid and continues to evolve through the comparative discourses in which external policy referencing for internal education reform is proliferated (Sung and Lee 2017). Orientalism can be a good sociological and psychoanalytic tool for understanding the contradictory and ambivalent projection of idealisation and loathing that appear in comparative

education discourses (cf. Takayama 2008; Takayanam, Waldow, and Sung 2013; You 2019).

According to Takayama (2008, 20), comparative discussions on education often draw on the legacy of Orientalist discourse by locating western and non-western education systems side-by-side. Takayama (2008; 2011) indicates that the dichotomous framework which originated from Orientalism has been commonly utilised in comparative studies conducted by both western and non-western researchers. The Orientalist structure of the self and the other is reflected in the binary comparative framework and it has been exploited to justify superiority or inferiority of a particular educational system. In doing so, it contributes to legitimise the ideologies of different political groups through the process of highlighting internal crisis and external solution. Takayama (2008) also suggests that this oppositional structure of comparison leads to a simplistic analysis of comparative education research; consequently, the differences or characteristics that emerge from the comparison are considered as the nature of one nation's education, rather than being considered as relative characteristics.

Dale (2005) also problematizes the taken-for-granted concept of methodological nationalism in the field of comparative education. Methodological nationalism refers to the assumption that nation states and their territories are the 'natural' containers of societies; therefore, a nation is considered as the appropriate unit of analysis; methodological nationalism is also regarded as a methodological perspective, as shown most notably in the concept of Orientalism that views the world through a particular national conception of it and imposes the conception on it (Dale 2005, 124–125). The naturally accepted methodological nationalism can be criticised in two ways. First, in a globalised era where economic and social changes are increasingly influenced by supranational networks, many societal phenomena occur in a separate, distinct, and non-reducible level than at the national scale. Secondly, methodological nationalism leads to homogenizing social phenomena within the scope of nation-states or flattening the distinctions that are internal to nation-states; therefore, labelling them as, for example, 'American' or 'German' educational systems (Dale, 2005, 128).

In order to overcome the above-mentioned impoverished analysis of comparative education research resulting from Orientalist binary discourses, the trend of 'measuring the other' (Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal 2003), and methodological nationalism, the task of enriching the meaning of space and time beyond the boundary of the nation state is assigned to comparative education researchers. Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal (2003) call for reconceptualising space and time and of the space-time relationship. Their methodological approach attempts to define concepts of space and time in a non-linear manner; it allows comparative research to emancipate itself from conventional geographical notions of space (usually nation-state) and to

imagine a space of virtual flows through which communities are created—that is, social space that is constructed through discourses and identities. In line with this argument, Dale (2005) suggests an alternative approach focusing on governance rather than the state. The concept of governance assumes that the work of governing does not need to be performed solely by the state but can be implemented by the market, the community, and the household as well (Dale 2005, 129). His discussion provides the meaningful implication that social, cultural, economic, and global perspectives must be significantly taken into account, even though states remain the basic units of comparative education research and the role of the state as 'coordinator in chief' is influential. Takayama (2008; 2011) also insists that comparative education research must investigate articulations of common neoliberal and neoconservative structural changes related to each nation's historical, institutional, and political context, the effect of such marketization policies on egalitarianism and democracy of public education, and strategies to protect and strengthen them (2008, 30; 2011, 176–180).

The linear concept of time can be renewed by inviting history to reside in the present of several modes, thereby understanding time with its fluidity (Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal 2003, 432-435). Masemann (2013) also indicates that in preindustrial society, human actions were understood based on a non-linear concept of time, which was associated with the cyclicity of seasons and nature; however, as industrial and institutionalised notions of time were introduced to the field of comparative education, evolutionists and positivists have sought to perceive human actions in a linear sequence that is conceived of as having a purpose and a goal. The linear concept of time that is associated with evolutionism and colonialism persists in contemporary comparative education research by allocating diverse educational and cultural patterns in a stratified comparative composition. The concept of time must be reconceptualised by divorcing comparative education research from an evolutionary perception of education systems: advanced and all the rest (Masemann 2013).

In this thesis, a nation state (Finland and Korea) is an important unit for the comparisons in study 1 and Chapter 2; the influence of a nation-state is evident in organising comprehensive schooling systems, as described in studies 2 and 3. However, I sought to reduce the underlying narrowness or impoverishment of between-country comparisons by paying attention to similarities (universality) as well as differences (uniqueness) revealed in Finnish and Korean adolescents' perceptions and school life in Finnish and Korean fieldwork schools. In addition, I attempted to understand the moments of the school life discussed in studies 1, 2, and 3, in relation to historical, sociocultural, and institutional contexts that have been shaped over the vast reaches of time.

5 Research aim and objectives

This study seeks to contribute to the scientific discussion on the quality of school life of Finnish and Korean adolescents. The aim of the thesis is to examine adolescents' perceptions on the quality of school life by identifying the crucial aspects of quality of school life. It also seeks to understand the meaning of school life of adolescents from the perspectives of students, with a focus on students' relations with their peers and teachers. This study also utilises sociological perspectives regarding control and agency to analyse and interpret these relationships and interactions among school members in daily school life.

The following are the research objectives of this study. Firstly, it investigates Finnish and Korean adolescents' views on their quality of school life based on relevant survey items from PISA 2012 studies (study 1) as well as students' experiences and reflections on their school lives by analysing qualitative data collected from fieldwork (observations and interviews) (studies 2 and 3). Secondly, it identifies and illuminates aspects and events that are significantly related to the quality of school life of students (studies 1, 2, and 3). Study 1 identifies crucial aspects of quality of school life (general satisfaction, peer relations, and teacher-student relations) and investigates students' views on these aspects. Study 2 aims to explore students' peer relations as well as tensions and negotiations that occur between student agency and school control. The study focuses on the interactions among students as shown in peer groups and classes as well as the exertion and limitation of student agency along with control exercised through school rules. Study 3 aims to deepen the understanding of how student agency is controlled or manifested and how students reflect their experiences with agency and teacher control. The focus is to analyse teaching-learning practices, student-teacher interactions in daily routines, and students' movements in physical and virtual spaces using Bernstein's (1996) concepts of classification and framing.

By exploring these issues, this dissertation discusses how specific institutional, sociocultural and historical contexts are linked to the quality of school life of Finnish and Korean students. This study seeks to contribute to the understanding of school life from a cross-cultural and comparative perspective by paying attention to the sociocultural universality and uniqueness in the school life of students (peer and

student-teacher relationships), beyond simplified comparability derived from several comparative articles and media reports on Finnish and Korean education. Finally, by intertwining sociocultural contexts and theories with findings related to discipline, body, gender, control, and agency, this dissertation attempts to provide discussions on the enhancement of everyday school culture in which students grow as democratic citizens.

6 Methods

This thesis study was conducted using a mixed-methods design, in which researchers collect and analyse data, synthesise findings, and draw inferences and interpretations employing both quantitative and qualitative methods (Tashakkori and Creswell 2007). There have been intense paradigmatic disputes between the choice of a positivistic quantitative paradigm and a qualitative paradigm that appreciates the role of research participants as active beings and the uniqueness of research contexts. However, nowadays, numerous pragmatic researchers consider that it is more important to ask which research method is the most appropriate to specific research questions and select the mixed-methods research to combine the advantages of quantitative and qualitative approaches (Lee, Kim, and Kim 2013). Diverse types of research designs exist in mixed-methods research, depending on the priority and sequence between quantitative and qualitative parts (Boeije 2010). In this thesis, the qualitative part is prioritised, although the two approaches are complementary. In addition, the quantitative part was conducted first and the qualitative part was implemented subsequently (quan → QUAL).

The quality or validity of mixed-methods research can be defined by several elements; one of these elements is justification for employing both quantitative and qualitative research methods and perspectives (Lee, Kim, and Kim 2013). The benefits of the mixed-methods research design employed in this study lies in the complementary relationship between quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative part (study 1) aimed to identify generalised findings by means of large-scale data drawn from PISA student survey items, to compare findings, and to draw inferences regarding the responses of Finnish and Korean students on their quality of school lives. The quantitative part also yielded generalised comparisons of the perceptions of students in Nordic and East Asian countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Japan, and Korea) with OECD averages. Thus, it enabled an analysis of the findings regarding Finnish and Korean adolescents within a broader context (Yoon and Järvinen 2016). In addition, the quantitative results were discussed from a qualitative perspective with institutional, sociocultural, and historical contexts that are assumed to be linked to the quality of school life of Finnish and Korean

adolescents. In this sense, study 1 is a fusion of quantitative methods and results combined with qualitative discussions.

The qualitative studies (studies 2 and 3), which were inspired by an ethnographic approach, yielded cross-cultural insights into the school life of Finnish and Korean students; these studies provided grounded theoretical perspectives from which the quantitative study (study 1) drawn from a large-scale PISA survey can be complemented (cf. Masemann 2013). In addition, the qualitative studies enabled the illumination of a few important issues which were not fully identified by the quantitative study and provided insights into students' experience of school life (cf. Boeije 2010) by utilising qualitative data collected from fieldwork in Finnish and Korean schools. For example, I discovered communal and sociological (rather than inter-individual and psychological) perspectives of peer relations and teacher-student relations, power relations between (school/teacher) control and student agency, and gendered interactions and roles through qualitative data collection and analysis.

In addition, the complementariness between quantitative and qualitative parts of this thesis appears in the coherence between the main aspects of analysis in study 1 and the topics of studies 2 and 3. In study 1, *general satisfaction*, *peer relation*s, and *teacher-student relations* were identified as three important aspects of quality of school life for the comparison between the perceptions of Finnish and Korean students. The identification was helpful in conducting the following qualitative studies that viewed schooling as comprehensive (learning, social, and physical), particularly when analysed from social aspects. Then, during qualitative data analysis, I discovered *peer relation*s and *teacher-student relations* as prominent categories that were considered crucial from the perspectives of student participants; meanwhile, it can be said that the qualitative data was also coded in a deductive manner because the two categories were the main aspects presented in the analysis and results of study 1. According to this entire process of qualitative data analysis, *peer relations* was selected as the topic for study 2 (peer relations and tensions between school control and student agency) and *teacher-student relations* as the topic of study 3 (teacher-student interactions manifested by control and agency). The mixed-methods design of this study, presented below (Figure 1), indicates the structure of and relationship between each sub-study and methodological triangulation as a means to identify important aspects of the quality of school life and to understand and interpret students' relationships with peers and teachers.

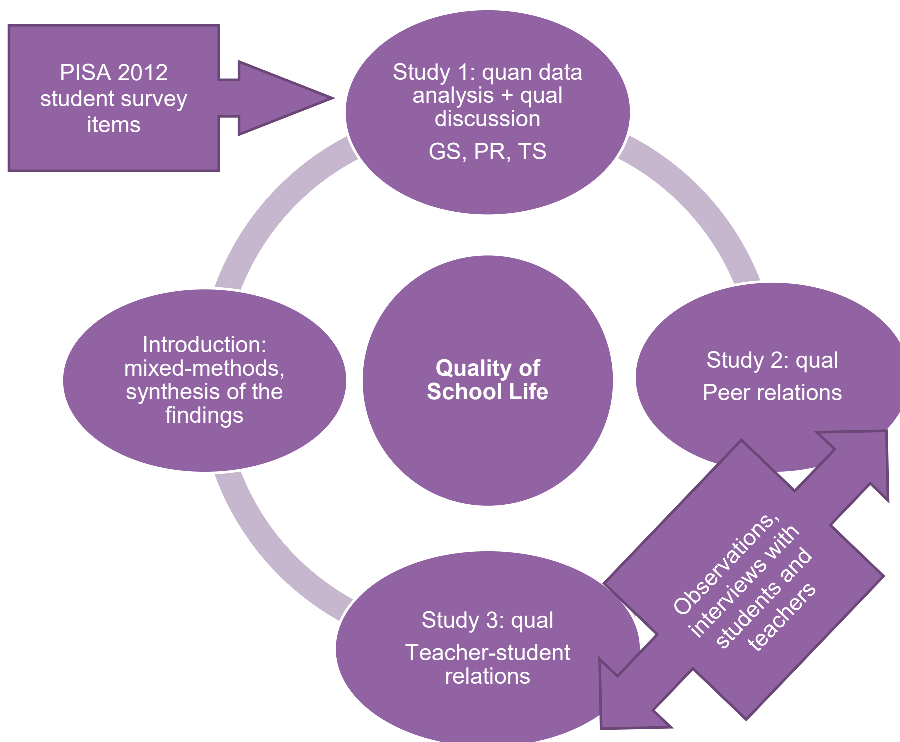

Figure 2. Mixed-methods design and methodological triangulation of this study (quan: quantitative, qual: qualitative, GS: general satisfaction, PR: peer relations, TS: Teacher-student relations)

Difficulties and tensions are also found in mixed-methods research. It is questionable whether both methods identify the same phenomenon (Boeije 2010). In this study, students' views on the three aspects of quality of school life, drawn from PISA 2012 survey items, and the meanings and manifestations of peer and teacher-student relationships in students' school lives, which were drawn from my school observation and interviews with participants in 2016, are not identical. However, the sub-studies sought to identify general views on the quality of school life or to understand meanings and patterns concerning peer and teacher-student relationships of Finnish and Korean adolescents aged between 12 to 15, who attempted to extend their agency against or within the control of school, teachers, and sociocultural norms in the process of their growth at school.

Moreover, the qualitative need for respecting the richness and complexity of empirical data and the quantitative desire of comparability and generalisation can conflict with each other (Troman and Jeffrey 2007, 515). Creating a balance between these two desires is an important but demanding task for a mixed-methods study. Moreover, a mixed-methods design for a single research project like a doctoral thesis

is challenging and time-consuming, as it necessitates being proficient not only with quantitative and qualitative methods but also with the mixed methods itself (Lee, Kim, and Kim 2013). This study is also an example of the difficulties and tensions mentioned above. It took time to persuade myself to utilise the mixed-methods design, which consists of conflicting paradigms of epistemology regarding human activities and social phenomena. It was also demanding to study and conduct both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Luckily, in studies 1 and 3, I had co-authors who helped me deal with the methodological challenges. There are various ways to approach the understanding of quality of school life of Finnish and Korean students. This thesis presents one of the possible ways to do this and the mixed-methods design was useful in exploring the topic from macro (comparative analyses between Finland and Korea) and micro (cross-cultural analyses based on behaviours and perspectives of participants or phenomena observed in fieldwork schools) perspectives.

6.1 Data collection and analysis: quantitative part (study 1, Yoon and Järvinen 2016)

The research participants were 15-year-old Finnish (N = 5613) and Korean (N = 3350) students, who participated in the student survey of the PISA 2012 studies. The Finnish participants were mostly grade nine students, and 7% of the Korean participants were grade nine students and 93% of them were newly enrolled grade ten students (Cho et al. 2012) at the time of assessment.

The data was drawn from student questionnaire items in PISA 2012. The PISA 2012 studies evaluated mathematics, reading, science, and problem-solving skills of students who were nearing completion of their compulsory education; approximately 510,000 students who represented 28 million 15-year-olds in schools in 65 countries participated in the assessment (OECD 2013a). OECD-PISA also implemented contextual surveys to collect background information on students and school factors that could affect students' academic achievement. In particular, in PISA 2012, student participants were asked to evaluate their happiness at school as well as their satisfaction with school, as students' subjective evaluations of their school life can imply the extent to which schools and educational systems foster overall student well-being (OECD 2013a, 51). Among all the student questionnaire items, authors selected those questionnaire items that were relevant to the quality of school life (QSL) via the PISA 2012 international database (OECD, n.d. 'The PISA International Database'). The items ask the extent to which students agree with each statement on a four-point scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree). Consequently, 14 items were collected. The items were categorised into 'Sense of belonging' and 'Student-teacher relations' according to the PISA scale;

these categories fall under *General satisfaction*, *Peer relations*, and *Teacher-student relations* according to the aspects of QSL in this study (see also Table 1). *General satisfaction* is a crucial aspect in the sense that it encompasses comprehensive satisfaction with school not only in terms of learning but also as a social and physical environment; several previous studies have mentioned *Peer relations* and *Teacher-student relations* as key factors influencing QSL (Williams and Roey 1996; Linnakylä 1996; Pyhältö, Soini, and Pietarinen 2010; Van Maele and Van Houtte 2011; Pietarinen, Soini, and Pyhältö 2014).

Quantitative analyses were conducted to analyse data collected from the selected 14 questionnaire items. First, authors formulated the rates of positive answers (strongly agree, agree) for Korea, Finland, two Nordic countries (Sweden and Denmark), one East-Asian country (Japan), and the OECD average targeting the six key items (in bold) which represent the three aspects of QSL (*General satisfaction, Peer relations, Teacher-student relations*). The aim was to determine the similarities and differences between Finland and Korea with regard to an overview of QSL and to compare them with other Nordic and East Asian countries and the OECD average. A cross-tabulation and a Pearson's chi-square test were also performed. Next, for each pair of countries, z-tests with Bonferroni correction were used to determine whether the differences in the percentages were statistically significant (Yoon and Järvinen 2016).

Table 2. The list of PISA 2012 questionnaire items used in study 1 (Source: Yoon and Järvinen 2016).

PISA scale	Aspects of quality of school life in this study	The list of selected questionnaire items
Sense of belonging	General satisfaction (4)	•**I feel happy at school** •**I am satisfied with my school** • I feel like I belong at school • Things are ideal in my school
	Peer relations (5)	•**I make friends easily at school** •**Other students seem to like me** • I feel like an outsider (or left out of things) at school • I feel awkward and out of place in my school • I feel lonely at school
Student–teacher relations	Teacher–student relations (5)	• Students get along well with most teachers •**Most teachers are interested in students' well-being** •**Most of my teachers really listen to what I have to say** • Most of my teachers treat me fairly • If I need extra help, I will receive it from my teachers

Subsequently, after the descriptive analysis, a principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted on the 14 items related to QSL. Based on the results of PCA, three component-based sum-scores (*General satisfaction, Peer relations, Teacher-student relations*) were constructed by accumulating the items that loaded strongly on the respective component. The aim was to compare Finnish and Korean adolescents' views on the three relevant aspects of QSL. After constructing sum-score variables and checking their reliability (Cronbach's alpha), a comparison of the means corresponding to the three aspects of QSL was conducted. The OECD average value was used as background information for placing the findings concerning Finnish and Korean students into a broader context. The statistical significance in the difference of the means (views of Finnish and Korean adolescents) was examined with a t-test, and the practical significance and magnitude of the reported effect was measured by calculating effect sizes (Cohen's *d*) (Yoon and Järvinen 2016).

6.2 Data collection and analysis: qualitative part (study 2, Yoon 2018; study 3, Yoon and Rönnlund submitted)

6.2.1 Schools

For qualitative data collection, two comprehensive schools in southern Finland and two primary schools and two lower-secondary schools in Seoul, Korea were chosen. The two Finnish schools are situated in southern Finland, which is characterized by dense population in the Finnish context, urban infrastructures, and a steady inflow of immigrants in recent decades. The southern part of Finland consists of the *Uusimaa* and *Varsinais-Suomi* regions, which are two major provinces representing 38.6% of the total population of Finland (Statistics Finland 2017). Seoul is an international metropolitan city with approximately 10 million inhabitants; however, a homogeneous ethnic composition of students was clearly shown in all the fieldwork schools located in Seoul. All the six schools are public schools located in urban districts, which are characterised by a middle or middle-low socioeconomic status (SES).

The two Finnish schools are Accordion and Bassoon.[5] They are public comprehensive schools (*yhtenäiskoulu*) which include both primary and lower-secondary schools. At the time of the study, school lessons in both schools were implemented and guided by the national core curriculum 2004. In Finland, it is rather common for students to spend two to three years with the same class teacher and

[5] All the school names are pseudonyms.

classmates and this was true for my observation classes as well. The student participants had known their peers and teachers for over one year at the time of the fieldwork. In the two schools, a majority of the students were white Finnish; however, there were also a number of students who had an immigrant background and come from different ethnic groups.

Accordion is situated in an inner-city area which is identified as a residence of middle-low or working class people, filled with rental housing. At the time of the fieldwork, there were approximately 300 students in grades four to nine. I observed that many of the primary school teachers recognised the names and faces of primary school students, and the teachers supervised students in school yards during break times, across divisions of class and grade. A similar practice was found in the lower-secondary school as well. The use of school space was strongly classified and framed according to the classification of time (lessons and break times); thus, students were supposed to remain outside the school buildings during breaks; the spatial praxis of primary and lower-secondary school students were separated during breaks. The primary school students used a main school yard, whereas the lower-secondary school students remained in a small backyard and came together in spots under the entrance roof on rainy days.

Bassoon is located in an inner-city area and its residents belong to a range of socioeconomic classes; it can be identified as an area of middle SES when considering the average income and education level of residents according to municipal statistics available on their official website. The school includes grades one to nine and also has a high school as a part of it. The number of students amounted to approximately 900 at the time of the fieldwork. In addition, Bassoon is a teacher-training school, which implies that it employs up-to-date pedagogies and teaching-learning methods through teaching practice for teacher trainees. This teacher training is organised by the education faculties of universities; there are currently 11 teacher training schools among a total of 2561 schools in Finland (Education Statistics Finland n.d.; FTTS n.d.). Due to the innovative characteristics of Bassoon as a teacher-training school, one of the teacher participants informed me that his colleagues had high self-esteem as teaching experts. Student participants also mentioned their teachers' teaching ability when they described a 'good teacher'. Further, the number of students and school buildings in this school were much bigger than those of Accordion; therefore, it was impossible for teachers to supervise lower-secondary school students to remain outside school buildings during breaks. The lower-secondary school students often remained in corridors chatting with their friends or using their smartphones. The primary school students were instructed to remain in the school yard during break times; however, one of the teacher participants allowed his/her pupils to remain inside their home classroom and surrounding areas under the condition that they participate in meaningful activities

in groups (e.g. animation, dancing, and programming groups); thus, students seemed to have more leeway with regard to their spatial praxis during break times.

The four Korean schools are Clarinet, Double Bass, Oboe, and Flute. All of them are public schools which implemented school curriculums according to the revisions of the national core curriculum 2009 and 2015 at the time of the fieldwork. Unlike the Finnish context, in Korean schools, classes and class teachers are reallocated annually; thus, it is a usual case that Korean students have a new class teacher and new peers as classmates every year. Clarinet and Double Bass are so-called innovative schools[6]. A Korean innovative school indicates a school which is designated as a public innovative school by the metropolitan or provincial office of education. Public innovative schools (*hyeoksin hakgyo*) aim to promote creative and flexible curriculum and learning, a democratic school community, publicity of schooling, pupils' overall happiness, and a whole-person education environment in school despite competition and a result-oriented social ethos surrounding education (Sung and Lee 2015).

Clarinet is a primary school located in a middle SES area, characterised by apartment housing complexes. Its reputation as a successful innovative school has made this school popular among school parents and some parents specifically moved to this area only to enrol their children to this school. The school had a 30-minute break in the morning and a 50-minute lunch time; students often spent their break times either in their home classrooms playing indoor games or outside the school building doing ball games. Double Bass is a lower-secondary school located in a predominantly working-class area, surrounded by a large number of rental flat buildings, including semi-basement flats. Even though students in Double Bass were reallocated every year, the students tended to become acquainted with and accustomed to their peers and classmates because most of them graduated from the same primary school. Even though these two schools were innovative schools, the structure of the school buildings included typical linear corridors along with identical classrooms, since the buildings were built a long time before the schools were designated as innovative schools.

Oboe is a primary school surrounded by many old rental apartment blocks and the status of residents in its local catchment area is mostly working class. Despite the economic status of a majority of school parents, more than half of the grade six

[6] My intention for selecting innovative schools was not to conduct fieldwork in a large number different schools, since I did not compare different types of schools in this study, but to obtain a range of perspectives regarding the ordinary school life of students. In addition, the innovative schools were more open-minded in terms of permitting research; thus, I was able to finally conduct qualitative data collection after the long process of being rejected by numerous Finnish and Korean schools.

students in my observation class attended private education after school; several yellow-coloured minibuses were parked near the school which conveyed school children to private educational institutes. The school did not have a big cafeteria; thus, the students of the observation class had school meals in their home classroom. Their class teacher organised a system of division of roles, in which all pupils took turns in groups and assumed the responsibility of carrying a meal serving cart and distributing main and side dishes to their classmates. Flute is a lower-secondary school, where most students come from middle-class families. As the students of my observation class were grade nine students from middle-class families, many of them attended private education after school, commuting to an area where numerous private institutes are populated; one of the student participants introduced a slang term to me—'ten-ten'—which means that some of the adolescents receive private lessons from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm during summer and winter vacations. Despite students' exhausting routines represented by private education outside school, I observed students' playful movements and lively laughter during break times. The school installed ping-pong tables in uncrowded corridors, and some students played table tennis during ten-minute breaks and escaped the hot humid summer weather.

6.2.2 Qualitative data collection

I conducted a compressed ethnographic time mode of fieldwork (Jeffrey and Troman 2004) for qualitative data collection, in which rather short but intense (from five to twelve school days) fieldwork was implemented in each fieldwork school. The qualitative data collection process was implemented from a cross-cultural perspective inspired by an ethnographic approach. I attempted to understand the meaning of research participants' actions and the cultural phenomena they revealed from their viewpoints as well as the contexts in which they were positioned (Suh 2008). I also aimed to challenge the familiarity ingrained in everyday schooling scenes by employing a cross-cultural perspective. School life is essentially complex; however, this can be taken for granted by those who are acquainted with school institutions and the power of normalisation that imposes homogeneity on schooling (cf. Lahelma and Gordon 2010; Foucault 1984). In studies 2 and 3, a cross-cultural perspective (Lahelma and Gordon 2010) implies that analogical incidents in school life are explored in various cultural contexts of the fieldwork schools; the main focus is on identifying similar patterns and enhancing the theoretical understanding of the patterns of school life through the analysis of cultural variation by combining and relating data from all fieldwork schools in Finland and Korea. In line with the idea that a cross-cultural perspective pursues compatibility (Strathern 2004 as cited in Lahelma et al. 2014, 53), I sought to treat research participants in a culturally and intellectually compatible manner; I attempted to find common patterns of

participants' behaviours and their underlying meaning while recognising differences beyond dichotomous hierarchical comparisons such as right/wrong, superior/ inferior, and developed/less developed.

Ethnographic research conducted in a rigorous manner aims to yield profound insights into the cultural meaning of participants' behaviours and social phenomena in their community, based on long-term observation and other research materials yielded in a fieldwork site. In this study, despite the limited research period which is insufficient to gain in-depth insights into the meaning of life in each research site, I conducted observations in ordinary and relevant places at school and combined the observation data with interviews and other documents. In doing so, I attempted to reach a qualitative understanding of the school life inspired by an ethnographic approach.

In Finland, I followed one grade six class and one grade eight class in each of the two comprehensive schools and visited each school for 12 days between February and May 2016. Thereafter, I conducted fieldwork in Korean schools; I followed one grade six class in each of the two primary schools and one grade nine class in each of the two lower-secondary schools. I spent between five and eight days in each school from May to July 2016. By doing so, I was able to 'challenge familiarities' (Lahelma and Gordon, 2010, 124) seen in the Korean fieldwork sites. The detailed schedules for the fieldwork are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. The implementation of fieldwork.

Fieldwork sites	Region/Socio-economic status	Period	Participants of observations and interviews
Accordion Comprehensive school	Southern Finland/middle-low	February−May 2016 (12 days)	Observations: a grade six class, a grade eight class, and their teachers Interviews: four grade six students and four grade eight students (four girls and four boys) and their two class teachers
Bassoon Comprehensive school	Southern Finland/ middle	March−April 2016 (12 days)	Observations: a grade six class, a grade eight class, and their teachers Interviews: four grade six students and four grade eight students (four girls and four boys) and their two class teachers
Clarinet Primary school	Seoul, Korea/middle	June 2016 (six days)	Observations: a grade six class and their teachers Interviews: four grade six students (two girls and two boys) and their class teacher
Double Bass lower-secondary school	Seoul, Korea/middle-low	June−July 2016 (eight days)	Observations: a grade nine class and their teachers Interviews: four grade nine students (two girls and two boys) and their class teacher
Oboe Primary school	Seoul, Korea/middle-low	June–July 2016 (six days)	Observations: a grade six class and their teachers Interviews: four grade six students (two girls and two boys) and their class teacher
Flute lower-secondary school	Seoul, Korea/middle	June–July 2016 (five days)	Observations: a grade nine class and their teachers Interviews: four grade nine students (two girls and two boys) and their class teacher

In each school, observations were conducted in the major areas of the school—such as classrooms, corridors, a playground, and a cafeteria—where the ordinary school life of students takes place (cf. Hjelmér, Lappalainen, and Rosvall 2010; Hjelmér, Lappalainen, and Rosvall 2014); the observations usually began when students arrived at school and continued until they left school. In all the schools, I continued

to take field notes, in which all my observations and research reflections and emotions were recorded. I reviewed the field notes to identify focal points of observation in new fields or to search for additional interview questions to be asked. In addition, I gave one lesson regarding the school life of Finnish and Korean students in the beginning of fieldwork periods in all the observed classes of the fieldwork schools, except in Flute. I showed Finnish participants a movie clip presenting the ordinary school life of Korean students and vice versa in the Korean classes; thereafter, the students answered my questions and discussed the Korean school life from their viewpoints, and I also answered students' questions. It became a good opportunity to informally listen to their cross-cultural and comparative thoughts on the school life of students and to resolve some of their curiosity concerning my research topic, the Korean/Finnish society, and myself. In particular, the grade six students from the Korean schools Clarinet and Oboe were rather curious and highly attentive with regard to the Finnish school life and schooling system.

Further, 16 Finnish and 16 Korean students belonging to grades six, eight, or nine (between 12 and 14 years of age) participated in student interviews. I also conducted teacher interviews to understand teachers' perspectives and gain insights into the school lives of their students. Eight teachers (four Finnish and four Korean teachers), with over five years of work experience, who were the class teachers of the student participants participated as teacher interviewees. The interviews were conducted in the schools during the school day. They were conducted in Finnish, English, or Korean, and the duration of the interviews varied from 35 to 117 minutes.

The observations were conducted in a broad sense, without limiting the focus within a specific topic; however, the following were the main aspects of these observations: students' behaviour and interactions with friends and peers; students' emotions related to their peer relationships and studying; teaching-learning practices and interactions between students and teachers; school rules and decision-making process of the school and the observed classes; the structure of school spaces; and the use of the school spaces for activities that were part of daily routines and characteristic events, etc. Similarly, the interviews concentrated on further explanations, perceptions, and wishes of the students on the above-mentioned aspects.

In addition to the above-mentioned data, I took photographs only for the purpose of assisting my records of the field notes and documents, such as time tables and lesson worksheets. I also obtained diaries of student interview participants in Clarinet, Double Bass, and Oboe, which had been written from March to June 2016. I obtained permission from the students for using them for my research. Many teachers in the Korean schools, particularly in the two primary schools, gave pupils tasks of writing diaries on their daily life to build up a rapport with them by becoming familiar with their students' life at school and home. Even though I did not analyse

student diaries as main data, by reading them, I was able to understand these students' school lives more comprehensively, tracing connections between their lives within and outside school.

In total, the fieldwork conducted in six schools for 48 schooldays produced a total of 184 A4 pages of field notes as well as 32 transcribed student interviews (16 Korean and 16 Finnish students, a total of 776 A4 pages) and eight class teacher interviews (four Korean and four Finnish teachers, a total of 217 A4 pages). All types of data—observation, interviews, and documents such as students' diaries—not only confirmed analyses drawn from each other but also revealed diverse aspects and opinions on the school life of adolescents. By combining and relating data from all the sources, I attempted to reach a qualitative understanding of school life (cf. Jørgensen 2015).

6.2.3 The fieldwork process in Finland

After receiving research permission at the municipal level, I contacted many school principals to gain research permissions, sending emails and making phone calls. However, it was very difficult to gain permissions for conducting research; when I called principals, I was told that their school is rather busy during the entire semester or that they already accepted other research requests. They also seemed to be reluctant to load any potential burden of extra work on to class teachers, who would actually help arrange research implementation and participate in a teacher interview. After the long process of no responses or being rejected, I finally gained agreement on research participation from class teachers of grade six and grade eight in both Accordion and Bassoon.

I began the fieldwork by conducting observations, mainly following the school lives of students from the observation classes, from morning until they would leave school for the day; the only time that I did not spend on observation was when I was arranging interview schedules, administrating research implementation, and taking field notes. During the observation periods, the school days were mostly ordinary, except for one sports day that was conducted outside school, a national-level maths exam for grade six students, an English final-term test for grade eight students (in Accordion), and one art day at an art centre (in Bassoon). I observed these special school days as well. I equally distributed time observing the school life of both grade six and grade eight students. In the second half of the fieldwork periods, the focus of fieldwork moved from observation to interviews with students and teachers.

Further, I observed the Finnish students' school lives mainly by watching and listening, even though my observation could not capture numerous verbatim conversations due to my limited Finnish language skills. In Finland, student participants were offered a choice of language for the interview; interviews were

conducted in Finnish with nine (eight grade six and one grade eight) students and in English with the remaining seven (grade eight) students. However, I communicated in basic Finnish with all student participants to create an amicable atmosphere before the interviews. In the Finnish-language interviews, questions were directly asked in Finnish by an accompanying research assistant. During the flow of the interview, I asked additional questions in the middle and at the end of the interviews. In general, I conducted semi-structured interviews following the interviewee's flow of conversation and responding to the interviewee's comments by adding improvised questions, thereby making it more like a conversation. In the Finnish interviews, it was difficult to conduct semi-structured interviews because I was accompanied by a research assistant who led interviews in Finnish. However, such a research design was helpful to understand the thoughts of the Finnish students in their early teens, whose English skills were not sufficiently fluent. The duration of the student interviews in Finnish varied between 35 and 50 minutes and that of the student interviews in English varied between 50 and 95 minutes.

6.2.4 The fieldwork process in Korea

In the Korean context, similar to the Finnish case, the most difficult process in obtaining research permission was to obtain agreement from class teachers on research participation and cooperation. However, unlike the Finnish case, I did not need to gain research permission at the level of the local office of education (corresponding to the department of education in Finnish municipalities). I asked a head researcher working at the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education for advice regarding school selection based on the socioeconomic status of school districts and access to candidate schools. Thereafter, I proceeded to contact school principals or experienced teachers who could introduce me to appropriate class teachers. However, I faced a lot of difficulties in obtaining research permission from Korean schools, particularly from lower-secondary schools.

Lessons were taught by subject teachers in lower-secondary schools, and many of the lower-secondary school teachers were reluctant or unwilling to reveal the school life of their students, including their own lesson hours, particularly in general lower-secondary schools. I assume that numerous Korean school teachers probably perceived such sharing as external evaluation on account of their impression of authoritative school inspection conducted by local education offices. Moreover, I speculate that Korean teachers receive less support and trust from the members of their society and, therefore, their self-respect as teachers seemed to be low (field notes, Korea) compared with that of Finnish teachers. The Korean public education system, schooling, and teachers have been the target of criticism for their inadequacy in rescuing students from the highly competitive social ethos that places a huge

burden on students and hampers their well-balanced growth. Thus, it could be interpreted that the lower-secondary school teachers did not want to reveal details of their school life or those of their students, which could potentially be considered as being somewhat far from an ideal ethic of whole-person education. As school-aged Korean adolescents become lower-secondary school students, they tend to experience less satisfaction with their lives due to increased academic stress in and out of school (Save the Children Korea and Social Welfare Institute of Seoul National University 2016). This is due to the social ethos which is gradually geared up to university entrance examination as Korean adolescents become upper-grade students.

As a result of several failures related to obtaining research permission in general lower-secondary schools, I changed the research design to adjust to such a Korean circumstance. I extended the grade range of the student participants from only those in grade eight to grades seven, eight, and nine in order to increase the possibility of obtaining permission from class teachers. Finally, I was able to obtain consent from two class teachers in charge of grade nine. Perhaps due to this reluctant atmosphere among schoolteachers, I was allowed to observe the school life of students in Flute, a general lower-secondary school, only for the first three days; during the remainder of the research period, I was allowed to remain inside the school building only during interview times. Even though such circumstances in Korea brought many difficulties in conducting fieldwork, these stories became a trigger for me to adopt a cross-cultural perspective and to initiate an informal analysis in my head by relating and combining the episodes from all national-school contexts. In this regard, I present a few examples in the following sub-chapter 6.2.5.

I implemented observations and interviews in a similar manner as done in the Finnish schools. Apart from general school days, I also observed special scenes such as final-term exams and term-end school activities (e.g. student talent show) in Double Bass. Compared with the Finnish case, it was not easy to set interview appointments with students after school because many of them attended private education institutes or received private tutoring for major subjects, such as Maths or English. However, the duration of student interviews conducted in Korean was longer than the Finnish- and English-language interviews and varied from 62 to 117 minutes.

6.2.5 Cross-cultural issues emerging from the fieldwork

On the first day of fieldwork, all the teacher participants (class teachers) arranged time for me to introduce my position (researcher) and the topic of my study to the students in the observation classes. Thereafter, I was re-introduced by the class teachers and called by my first name in the Finnish schools. On the contrary, the

Koran class teachers reintroduced and called me ‘teacher’, the most common appellation to indicate someone who is older than the other parties (students in this case). However, I attempted to establish my identity, which distinguishes from other adults (mainly teachers) in the fieldwork schools. I also attempted to get to know more about students’ interests (e.g. music trends) and dressed as informally as possible to obtain an identity as a non-authoritative adult (cf. Jørgensen 2015). While seeking to build amicable relationships with student participants, I also needed to maintain cooperative relationships with their class teachers, who gave their valuable permission to conduct fieldwork and helped arrange observations and student interviews. Therefore, in all the Finnish and Korean fieldwork schools, the vulnerability of the researcher’s position as an ‘ambivalent borderliner’ (Gordon et al. 2005) appeared. This was emotionally a rather demanding task for a doctoral student-researcher who conducted fieldwork alone. An interesting aspect was that this ambivalent position stood out more from the Korean context due to the somewhat different attitudes of class teachers. As a researcher, I needed to follow students to observe them during break times and lunch times, and it was easier to do so in the Finnish schools where the teachers did not care about practical matters such as my stay at school (e.g. lunch) during the fieldwork. However, the Korean class teachers seemed to consider me as a guest and themselves as hosts and all of them took care of my lunch at school and some of them invited me to have school meals with them in staff cafeterias that were separate from student cafeterias. In the Korean schools, I occasionally was unable to reject such hospitality of the teachers.

Another cross-cultural feature discerned in the Finnish and Korean fieldwork schools is the allocation of seats in teaching staff rooms and the location of principal’s rooms. In the Korean schools, nameplates indicating the position of vice principals and head teachers were placed on their working desks in the teaching staff rooms. The vice principals of these schools were allocated working desks situated in the centre-front of teaching staff rooms; principal’s rooms were located in the centre of the first floor of main buildings, close to the main entrance. The teachers also called each other by their positions as appellation (e.g. Hello, teacher/head teacher/principal). Thus, the hierarchical structures among teaching staff was pretty evident. Meanwhile, in the Finnish schools, the atmosphere and allocation of office furniture in the rooms of teaching staff were somewhat different. There were sofas, tea tables, and chairs, and teachers sat back and discussed things in these rooms. The principal’s rooms were located in the centre of the building; however, the size of these rooms were smaller than those in the Korean schools. Further, the Finnish teachers called their colleagues, including the principal, by their first names. The hierarchical differentiation among teaching staffs was not apparent in the two Finnish schools.

Further, the thickness of the boundaries between insiders and outsiders appeared differently in the Korean and Finnish schools. Although the degree of openness to outsiders varied depending on the climate among teachers and between teachers and students in each school, in the Finnish schools, it was easier to observe lessons taught by subject teachers (schoolteachers other than the teacher participants) after I obtained the official research permission from school principals. Most teachers did not appear to care about the presence of an unknown researcher in their classrooms and they usually permitted my observation, even if it was requested on the spot. However, in the Korean schools, as an outsider, I could barely gain permission for observing lessons taught by other subject teachers by asking them directly, unless I first requested the teacher participants or principals who were kind of my hosts in the fieldwork situation. Thus, it was easier for me to cope with the Finnish fieldwork environment.

These cross-cultural episodes—in particular, differing hierarchy between teachers (adults) and students (adolescents), the caring attitudes of Korean teachers as hosts and Finnish teachers' tendency to treat me as an independent adult—are intertwined with the analyses and discussions in study 3 and Chapter 8 in which I discuss teacher control and student agency and its implication for democratic schooling using Bernstein's (1996) concepts of framing and classification.

6.2.6 Qualitative data analysis

In order to understand and analyse the complexity of everyday school life, an analytical differentiation between the 'official', 'informal' and 'physical' layers of school life was employed (Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma 2000a; Lahelma 2002; Paju 2011). The official school involves teaching and learning, curriculum, pedagogy, formal disciplines such as rules and tests and official hierarchies among school members. The informal school encompasses the informal interactions and hierarchies among students; among teachers; and among teachers, students and other staff members; the informal school also includes the youth culture at school. The official school assigns order to school life, whereas the informal school is more spontaneous and changes constantly (Paju 2011). Finally, the physical school includes and controls time, the access to and use of school space, and the voice and movement of school members; however, this control can also be negotiated, challenged, ignored, and reconstructed by the agency of school members (Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma 2000a, 137). Therefore, data was coded initially in a theory-driven way (Angrosino 2007), using the three layers of school life. Although these three layers were intertwined with one another, the distinction was helpful to analyse the complex data obtained from field notes and interviews. In this stage of coding,

data for the official, informal, and physical school layers were encoded separately, keeping the data from each fieldwork school discrete.

In the second stage of data coding, I discovered crucial categories of 'friends and peers' and 'teacher-student relationships' from the data containing viewpoints of the student participants. Moreover, I identified the emergent category 'democratic ethos' while coding the data (Angrosino 2007). 'Peer relationships' and 'teacher-student relationships' were also mentioned as meaningful and vital aspects of school life of students in previous studies (George 2007; Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma 2000a); they were also identified as important findings in study 1 (quantitative part).

Study 2 (Yoon 2018)

I selected 'peer relationships' as the topic of study 2. Subsequently, I mainly analysed the data which belong to the 'informal school' layer and the partially intertwined data from the other two layers to focus on the peer relationships of students. At this stage, I also identified emergent themes: the meaning of friendship; how girls and boys interact in their peer groups; the different roles played by girls and boys; and how students seek agency in school spaces and time. In the third stage, I examined the coded data more closely to identify patterns in relation to gender perspectives and Finnish and Korean sociocultural contexts. I then synthesised the analyses by combining and relating the data from all the Finnish and Korean schools. To find out meaningful cultural patterns, I employed emic and etic perspectives (Angrosino 2007), which are commonly used by ethnographic researchers. An emic perspective implies that a researcher looks for patterns or regularities as they are perceived by the people who live in the community; an etic perspective connotes that a researcher attempts to create analytical insights by viewing the local phenomena comparing to other phenomena happening elsewhere—fieldwork sites in other communities or in other relevant literature—and grasping the similarities between them (Angrosino 2007; Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma 2002). The emic perspective pursues cultural uniqueness and relativism, and the etic perspective seeks cultural universality. In this process, it was helpful to review my research diary in which I had recorded my intuitive ideas related to data interpretation and emotions during fieldwork.

Using this cross-cultural approach, two themes were created: Finnish and Korean students interact with their peers in individualistic and collectivistic cultures, however a competitive atmosphere is not apparent among students; student agency in appearance is manifested, however it is regulated differently by school rules in each sociocultural context.

Study 3 (Yoon and Rönnlund submitted)

After writing study 2, I returned to the data analysis for study 3 and selected 'teacher-student relationships' as the subject. I focused on teaching-learning practices, students' interactions with teachers in daily routines, and students' movements in physical and virtual spaces. 'Democratic ethos' appeared to be closely related to 'teacher-student relationships' and was included in the process of data analysis and writing; however, it was excluded due to the lack of space in the final version of the manuscript. In this process, which was mainly data-driven, prominent patterns related to the manifestation of teacher control and student agency and also students' perspectives and reflections on them were identified and coded. These codes were organized into categories and sub-categories and then into themes. The following questions were relevant for the analysis in this stage: What kind of teacher control and student agency is manifested or exercised? How is student agency controlled or manifested? How do students think about the constraint of their agency?

In the third phase, I conducted a synthesised analysis of findings by combining and relating the data from the three layers and the two national-sociocultural contexts (Angrosino 2007) through Bernstein's (1996) theoretical lenses of framing and classification. The following were the crucial guiding questions for the synthesised analysis: In which of the layers of school life was student agency controlled the most evidently and why? In the Finnish and Korean school contexts, what are the commonalities and differences in terms of the manifestation of classification and framing? (e.g. strongly-framed teaching-learning practices, hierarchical relationships among school members, caring and controlling role of class teachers, and controlling students' use of school spaces and smartphones)

Based on the process of the analysis, the most relevant or distinct findings about the aspects of hierarchy/separation, control, and agency shown in the three layers of schooling were discussed in the findings: Student agency was intensively restricted in teaching-learning practices; teacher control in daily routines manifested differently in relation with the roles of teachers in the Finnish and Korean school contexts; and student agency was limited both in real and virtual spaces. Subsequently, the findings were synthesised across the three layers of schooling and the national sociocultural contexts.

In summary, data analysis was not a linear process but rather a simultaneous or circular process (cf. Angrosino 2007; Troman and Jeffrey 2007). It consisted of circulation of data analysis, reading literature, writing, and going back to data analysis; the intuitive data analysis had already happened while collecting the data, and the analysis continued throughout the entire writing process of drafts and revisions. As the quality of qualitative analysis is always expressed in the form of writing, I struggled with conveying the complexity of everyday school practices

through nuanced description and analytic narratives (Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma 2002; Gordon, Lahelma, and Beach 2003).

6.2.7 Trustworthiness and research ethics

Trustworthiness or validity in quantitative terms is a measure of the degree to which an instrument actually demonstrates what it intends to demonstrate; it is a scientific effort to acquire fairness of study and avoid bias and subjective interpretation of data (Angrosino 2007). However, in qualitative studies that pay attention to not only overt expressions but also the covert status of human activities and social phenomena, there has to be a reliance on the subjective judgements and interpretation of researchers at every stage of research (Hatch 2002). Trustworthiness in qualitative studies can be achieved by attaining inter-subjectivity (mutual subjectivity) (Choi 1998) among researcher(s), academic communities, and readers. In contrast with positivism, in qualitative studies, trustworthiness of knowledge can be achieved by researcher(s)' careful consideration, understanding, decisions, interpretations, and mutual understanding through open and critical discussion with others. In this process, conversation with self and others occurs and it triggers the reflexivity of researchers, which enables them to be aware of prejudice that might appear in the analysis and interpretation of data (cf. Choi 1998; Kauko et al. 2018). Throughout all the phases of decision-making—from developing research plans, conducting fieldwork, meeting participants, observing and listening to their lives to analysing and interpreting data—developing the trustworthiness of this study not only relied on self-reflexivity but was also enhanced by reflexivity in the process of mutual conversation. Peer reading and discussions with supervisors and colleagues, presentations and discussions in national and international seminars and conferences, and anonymous peer reviews of each sub-study enabled me to realise new possibilities for viewing, understanding and interpreting data and knowledge.

In addition, trustworthiness can be improved by methodological triangulation. It refers to the examination of social phenomena from different perspectives by using more than one method or source of data for research (Boeije 2010, 176). For example, findings from observations, interviews, and other sources of data can confirm each other and this process of triangulation is common in ethnographic studies (Angrosino 2007). In the qualitative data collection process of this study, I began from the observation of school life of students and then gradually shifted to interviews with students and teachers in the latter part of the fieldwork. By doing so, observations formed the basis of qualitative data collection and provided important further questions for subsequent interviews and vice versa—interviews complemented gaps of information and enabled me to listen to participants' perspectives, which could not be fully identified merely through observations.

In qualitative studies, thick description is also considered as a crucial device that enhances the trustworthiness of research; it refers to rich descriptions that support claims of findings related to certain emotions or judgement of research participants, thereby convincing readers (Boeije 2010). While analysing qualitative data and writing studies 2 and 3, I realised the importance of well-written thick descriptions; at this point, I found myself wishing to go back to the fieldwork and write more detailed notes. Despite my unfulfilled desire concerning the fieldwork data, I was able to select a few examples from field notes and include them in studies 2 and 3. Last but not least, it is important for researchers to pay attention to counterevidence during qualitative data analysis and the reporting of findings. All qualitative research requires a process of reading data to identify data that is contradictory to the findings; researchers should not misunderstand that all the data should yield the same result and should be aware of the importance of including counterevidence in findings; if they decide to omit counterevidence, they should be able to explain why they did so (Hatch 2002; Boeije 2010). Bearing this in mind, during the writing and revision processes, I occasionally returned to reading data and modified texts in some of the findings presented in studies 2 and 3.

In this thesis, I considered ethical issues as crucial and conducted entire phases of qualitative studies based on the ethical principles provided by the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics (2009). The main ethical issues are 1) respecting autonomy of research participants, 2) avoiding harm, and 3) protecting participants' privacy and data. First, before conducting fieldwork, informed consent for the study was gained from municipal authorities, schools, parents/guardians, and student/teacher participants. Unlike the Finnish context, for the participation of students in the Korean schools, I obtained the consent of class teachers, who provided their students with intensive care and played the role of guardian in their students' school lives. In all the fieldwork schools, I asked every student interview participant personally if they were willing to participate in interviews. I explained the purpose and process of the study, the necessity and importance of their participation, the management of fieldwork data, and the use of data in the stage of reporting the research findings to all the research participants. (e.g. I told them that field note/interview extracts are used in research articles after anonymization, pictures will not be published but used only to assist my memory and to help record the physical structure of school buildings.) The participants were also informed about the voluntariness of their participation in the fieldwork and their right to withdraw their participation in any phase of the study. Thus, three student participants withdrew their participation in interviews during the fieldwork periods. In particular, for the sake of student participants, before beginning each interview, I pledged that the contents of the conversation during the interviews will not be revealed to anybody, including the students' teachers and parents. In addition, the

student interviews were implemented in separate spaces (e.g. empty closed classrooms for most of the interviews and places such as a remote school bench in a few cases) to maintain interviewees' sense of privacy while they discussed their school lives during the interviews. All the personal information, including participants' names and their school names, was kept unpublicised during the entire phase of the research and was anonymized before publishing findings; all the data has been and will be stored safely, in accordance with the guideline of National Advisory Board on Research Ethics (2009).

Research ethics are requested in all education studies; however, qualitative studies inspired by ethnographic approaches particularly demand researchers' sensitivity and reflexivity. In such studies, researchers themselves are crucial tools, as they observe, learn, and understand educational realities through immersion into the everyday life of research participants (Gordon, Lahelma, and Beach 2003). In the qualitative part of this study, I sought to be sensitive and reflexive with regard to my responsibility, which is not harming the rights and anonymity of research participants, their groups, and the schools that they belonged to. I mentioned the region where the Finnish fieldwork schools are located (Southern Finland) and did not reveal the names of the cities/towns, as schools in Finland may be recognizable if I reveal a few characteristics of the schools along with the name of the municipality. However, for the Korean fieldwork schools, I revealed the name of the municipality—Seoul, Korea—because there are so many schools and the anonymity of the Korean fieldwork schools in this metropolitan city is maintained.

Further, in the process of extracting, citing, and interpreting my field notes on the research participants' everyday life at school, if I felt that the exposure of particular stories may harm the privacy or position of the research participants, I discussed with my supervisors how I could rearticulate descriptions or analytic narratives in a manner that would be more protective of the participant.

Lastly, it is ethically crucial to treat research participants not as informants but as agentic participants and respect their right to be informed and communicate about the research before, during, and after the fieldwork. In December 2016 and May 2017, I visited fieldwork schools before the student participants graduated from their schools. At that time, qualitative data analysis was underway, and I briefly introduced the topic of study 2. I also asked a few extra questions to some of the student participants and heard about their news and feelings regarding an upcoming entrance to lower-secondary and upper-secondary schools. I also exchanged greetings with the teacher participants and offered quantitative study 1 as an expression of gratitude. Subsequently, in October 2018, study 2, the first publication based on the fieldwork was published. I sent it to all the teacher participants by email. Then, I visited a few of them and discussed the findings of study 2 and the outline of study 3. The visits were not merely to fulfil my ethical responsibility, but visiting

the same research spots vivified my memories, which was helpful to continue qualitative data analysis and writing this thesis. The discussion with teacher participants with regard to studies 2 and 3 inspired my thoughts concerning chapters 8 and 9.

7 Overview of empirical studies

This thesis includes three sub-studies concerning the quality of school life of Finnish and Korean adolescents. Study 1 investigates Korean and Finnish adolescents' views on their quality of school life (*general satisfaction, peer relations, and teacher-student relations*). The results of study 1 that identify the three dimensions of quality of school life as well as its discussion on institutional, sociocultural, and historical backgrounds, which are assumed to be linked to the quality of school life of Finnish and Korean adolescents, fulfil the function of contextualisation for studies 2 and 3. Studies 2 and 3 illuminate students' experiences on their school lives, with emphases on peer relations as well as tensions and negotiations between student agency and school control (study 2); the focus is also on student-teacher relations and interaction between teacher control and student agency (study 3). This chapter provides an overview of each empirical study.

Study 1: Junghyun Yoon and Tero Järvinen. 2016. Are model PISA pupils happy at school? Quality of school life of adolescents in Finland and Korea. *Comparative Education* 52 (4): 427–448.

This paper explores the quality of school life (QSL) of two 'model pupils' in PISA tests, in Finland and Korea, and investigates students' views on the central aspects of QSL (*general satisfaction, peer relations and teacher–student relations*) using PISA 2012 data. Finland and Korea have become reference nations in international education reform discourses since they achieved superior academic performance in the PISA tests. However, despite the superior rankings of both nations, the images of Finnish and Korean education in relation to their associated social ethos have often been depicted by contrasting modifiers such as 'educational utopia' and 'competition hell' (Takayama, Waldow, and Sung 2013; Waldow, Takayama, and Sung 2014). This study views Finnish and Korean education as an interesting set of comparisons; however, it attempts to overcome the binary comparisons derived by the legacy of Orientalism (Said [1978] 2014; Dale 2005; Takayama 2008). In this vein, this study seeks to interpret how specific institutional, sociocultural, and historical aspects are linked to QSL. QSL in this study is defined as students' general perception of their

well-being in school and satisfaction with their positive and negative experiences of ordinary school life.

Among the whole-student survey items of the PISA 2012 tests, authors selected 14 questionnaire items that were relevant to QSL. First, the authors formulated the rates of positive answers (strongly agree, agree) for Finland and Korea as well as Denmark, Sweden, Japan, and the OECD average, targeting six key items. The aim was to compare Finnish and Korean adolescents' views on QSL with results from other Nordic and East Asian peers as well as the OECD averages. After the descriptive analysis, a principal component analysis (PCA) was performed on the 14 items. Based on the results of the PCA, three component-based sum-scores (*general satisfaction, peer relations, teacher-student relations*) were constructed to compare Finnish and Korean students' views on QSL.

The analyses show that Finnish and Korean adolescents' views on QSL are less positive as compared with the OECD average, particularly concerning *teacher–student relations*. Finnish adolescents' views on QSL are more positive than those of Korean adolescents regarding *general satisfaction* and *peer relations*, but not clearly related to *teacher-student relations*. Since Finnish and Korean adolescents' views on QSL partially differ from those of their Nordic and East Asian counterparts, the distinct Nordic or East Asian image of QSL could not be revealed in the study. This study proposes that each dimension of QSL is linked with diverse institutional, sociocultural, and historical backgrounds. Finally, the authors interpret that school culture in both countries has been influenced by a societal emphasis on schooling, which may be one reason for superior PISA results; meanwhile, the social appreciation of education seem to hold both positive and negative aspects with regard to QSL.

Study 2: Junghyun Yoon. 2018. Peer relations and tensions in the school life of Finnish and Korean students: A cross-cultural perspective. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*. DOI:10.1080/14681366.2018.1538161

Drawing on cross-cultural qualitative research in comprehensive schools in Finland and Korea, this study explores students' peer relationships as well as the tensions and negotiations between student agency and school control. The study elaborates on the meaning and patterns of students' friendships and peer interactions. It also reveals how student agency manifests within or against school control in terms of space, time, and appearance. Special attention is paid to gender and sociocultural contexts observed in the fieldwork schools.

For data collection, two comprehensive schools in southern Finland and two primary and two lower-secondary schools in Seoul, Korea were selected. The author conducted a compressed ethnographic time mode of fieldwork (Jeffrey and Troman

2004). The data consists of observation notes and interviews. The author conducted observations in school spaces where ordinary school life unfolds; in addition, 16 Finnish and 16 Korean students, aged between 12 and 14 years (grades six, eight, and nine), and their class teachers participated as interviewees. During the fieldwork and data analysis, the author employed a cross-cultural qualitative approach to challenge the familiarity ingrained in ordinary school life (Lahelma and Gordon 2010). Moreover, an analytical differentiation among the official, informal, and physical layers of schooling (Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma 2000a; Paju 2011) was employed to understand and analyse the complexity of school life.

The findings reveal that the meaning of friendship and peer relations was ambivalent for both genders: an arena of emotional support and bonding as well as a locus of hierarchy and conflict. Moreover, the article suggests that the students developed, to a certain extent, gendered identities and roles. The author argues that femininity and masculinity were constructed and strengthened through patterns of peer relations and gender roles were expected in the mixed-gender group activities and other events organised by adults. This article also interprets the independent and interdependent patterns of Finnish and Korean students' peer relations based on sociocultural traits and educational welfare systems. Finally, the article illustrates that, in general, the students' school lives were tightly controlled by the regulations of time and space in all the schools, while control over the appearance of students seemed to be exercised differently. The author interprets that, in the Korean schools, more aspects of a disciplined society were visible, whereas the Finnish schools appeared to be shifting towards a self-governing society where the freedom and responsibility of students are emphasised more (cf. Foucault (1975] 2003; Han 2015). Finally, the author suggests a school life where diverse ways of performing gender (Butler [1990] 2008) or finding oneself are acceptable and where students' desire to increase their agency is encouraged by a democratic school culture.

Study 3: Junghyun Yoon and Maria Rönnlund. Submitted. Control and agency in comprehensive schools: A cross-cultural perspective of democratic schooling in Finland and Korea.

Drawing on a cross-cultural qualitative study in Finnish and Korean comprehensive schools, this article explores how student agency is controlled or manifested in ordinary school scenes and how students reflect their experiences with regard to control and agency. Focusing on teaching-learning practices, student-teacher interactions in daily routines, and students' movements in physical and virtual spaces, it seeks to understand how power relations, control, and agency in everyday school practices are connected to the issue of the school life of students as democratic citizens.

The authors utilised an analytical differentiation of the 'official', 'informal', and 'physical' schools (Gordon, Holland, and Lahelma 2000a; Paju 2011) to analyse the inherent complexity in everyday school life. They also employed Bernstein's (1996) concepts of classification and framing as the theoretical lens with which to analyse relationships between students and teachers, and to examine the school system as an institution which has boundaries and hierarchies within it.

The analysis draws on qualitative data produced through fieldwork in two comprehensive schools in southern Finland, and in two primary schools and two lower-secondary schools in Seoul, Korea. The data consists of field notes generated through observations and interviews with students and their class teachers. The process of analysis was inspired by a cross-cultural qualitative approach (Lahelma and Gordon 2010) that combines and relates data from all the schools and from both countries. The aim is to enhance a theoretical understanding of analogical incidents through the analysis of various cultural contexts and challenge the taken-for-granted familiarity inherent in schooling.

The findings indicate that student agency was controlled and encouraged by varying pedagogic practices that were embedded in a differing understanding of the roles of teachers and students. Students sought to increase their agency and hoped to find the balance between their agency and control, also revealing paradoxical preferences on the limitation of their agency. However, to sum up, student agency was extensively limited, and strong classification and framing appeared throughout school life: in the roles of students (acquirer, receiver, and the disciplined) and teachers (transmitter, organizer, and discipliner), subject knowledge (academic vs. practical, mental vs. manual), school spaces, time (spaces and time slots for lessons and for break activities), and the physical movement of students (desirable vs. undesirable manners or conduct during lessons and at break times). Student agency was restricted the most in teaching-learning practices; teacher control in daily routines appeared differently in relation with the roles of teachers in the Finnish and Korean schools; moreover, student agency was limited in both real and virtual spaces.

The discussions on the Finnish and Korean school contexts provide interesting implications by connecting the interpretation of student agency and teacher control with individualistic/collectivistic sociocultural contexts and the educational welfare system. Lastly, the analyses of control, agency, classification and framing among school members and school systems lead to the discussion on democratic schooling from a cross-cultural perspective.

8 Findings and Discussions

This chapter aims to guide readers to the comprehensive findings derived from each empirical study and to illustrate how the distinct findings are interconnected with each other under the theme of quality of school life. First, I discuss the synthesised findings according to the three dimensions of quality of school life (*general satisfaction, peer relations, and teacher-student relations*). Following this, I move on to the discussion of two issues that were only touched upon briefly in empirical studies but deserve richer discussions. I expand the discussion of the two issues in collaboration with the theories of control and agency as well as a cross-cultural and comparative viewpoint supported by historical, sociocultural, and institutional contexts of Finnish and Korean schooling. Lastly, I present the limitations of this study and the prospects for future study.

8.1 Synthesised findings: quality of school life

I began the inquiry on quality of school life from a quantitative perspective. In study 1, being benefited from systemised previous studies conducted from the traditions of educational psychology, school life satisfaction, school well-being and social health, as well as from international comparative perspectives, the authors sought to contribute to the research field by interpreting the quantitative findings mainly from a sociological and comparative perspective. Subsequently, along the process of qualitative studies 2 and 3, the authors' attention shifted toward a sociological and cross-cultural interpretation. Quality of school life is a broad and subjective term that can be defined in diverse ways, depending on each person, school community, and sociocultural circumstance. Nevertheless, leaning on the findings of this thesis, I suggest that quality of school life encompassed students' perceptions of school as a learning, social, and physical environment and that social relations among school members settled in the centre of what constitutes the quality of school life. In particular, student participants' relationships with peers and teachers formed the basis of students' experience of daily life at school.

According to the quantitative findings of this study, both Finnish and Korean adolescents' perceptions of their ***general satisfaction*** appeared to be less positive compared with the OECD average. In addition, Finnish adolescents' views on their

general satisfaction at school were more positive than that of Korean peers. The authors assumed that an excessive amount of study done in private education, that takes place after school hours, is one of the social contexts that is linked with the less positive perceptions towards school life of Korean adolescents. Meanwhile, according to the qualitative part of this thesis, for some Finnish and Korean students, school was a place that 'I'm supposed to go' or 'It's okay to go' 'as it's as natural as I wake up and have breakfast everyday' and 'because days go faster at school' (interviews, Finland and Korea). Findings from observations also showed that students found the meaning of attending school from the relationships with their friends and indulging in favourite activities in certain subjects that they liked. In particular, for the student participants in Korean schools, school was a shelter where they could spend time with friends, escaping from excessive study labour that was usually driven by parents' anxious aspiration and private education. Nevertheless, most of the Finnish and Korean student participants, regardless of their school achievement level and gender, and the socioeconomic status of their school district, perceived the importance of succeeding at school or at least accomplishing school work for graduation, in connection with their future path and a choice of career. In general, it seemed that the young people felt pressurised from this future imperative and strived for fulfilling two demanding tasks of the official and informal schools: studying and friends.

The quantitative results also suggested that Finnish students have more positive views regarding their ***peer relations*** compared to Korean students, although both Finnish and Korean students' views were less positive than that of the OECD average. The authors interpreted this finding based on the contrasting cultural traits in individualistic and collectivistic societies. In the subsequent qualitative part of this study, I continued the analysis and interpretation of the peer relationships of students in Finnish and Korean schools and the analysis revealed universal and unique patterns of peer relations. In addition, the study sought to deepen the understanding of peer relations based on gender issues. Friendship or peer relations connoted emotional support and bond as well as hierarchy and conflict for both genders. Moreover, the divided gender roles and identities were not apparent but covertly remained in the patterns of students' interactions within and between genders. Although Finland and other Nordic countries are considered to be 'feminine' cultural areas, in which the emotional roles of men and women overlap (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010), the Finnish students were not free from the gendered patterns and identities reflected in their peer interactions. It appeared that, to a certain extent, the young people in the Finnish and Korean schools constructed gendered identities and they played somewhat different roles according to their gender in their peer groups and school scenes led by adults. Moreover, the students acquired social skills to become interdependent and also independent through their peer relationships at

school. Despite diverse patterns of peer interactions observed in all fieldwork schools, the Finnish students, whose social circumstance is less competitive, showed more independent and self-reliant attitudes. Meanwhile, the Korean students, who lived in a highly competitive society, revealed more interdependent and cooperative interactions with their peers. I infer that the Finnish and Korean educational welfare systems are related to these self-reliant or cooperative patterns shown in peer relations. Moreover, an academically competitive atmosphere was not evident in peer relationships among either the Korean or Finnish students in this study, as they shared their homework with friends and peers and studied together for exams.

Lastly, the quantitative results revealed that Finnish and Korean students' perceptions on their ***teacher-student relations*** were less affirmative than that of the OECD average. The results also indicated that, among the three dimensions of quality of school life, the gaps between their perceptions and the OECD average were the largest in teacher-student relations. The authors discussed this finding in relation to the historical and sociocultural contexts of education and schooling in the Finnish and Korean societies. In other words, as discussed in study 1, the sociocultural and historical traits such as appreciation of schooling for individual's upward social mobility and social growth as well as somewhat submissive roles of students towards schooling and teachers' authority (although these tendencies have been changing rapidly) could be linked with Finnish and Korean students' negative perspectives of their teacher-student relations. Subsequently, the findings from fieldwork data elaborated that students' interactions with their teachers consisted of complex power relationships in which students' agency was not only controlled but also encouraged by varying pedagogic practices. However, students experienced extensive limitation in the exercise of their agency in teaching-learning practices, their interactions with teachers in daily routines, and in physical and virtual spaces at school where students' movements were regulated. Further, the authors suggested that student agency was constrained the most in teaching-learning practices; even some teachers who implemented weak control over students' conduct, manners, use of time and space still preferred to strongly control the sequence and contents of lessons, teaching-learning methods, and evaluation criteria. It was also noteworthy that many students seemed to be accustomed to the strong control in teaching-learning practices and some students did not welcome teachers' weak control in instruction methods employed in student-oriented lessons, which attempted to encourage their agency and active participation. To sum up, the quantitative and qualitative findings regarding teacher-student relations appeared to confirm and supplement each other. With these commonalities, variations in terms of control and agency were found in students' informal interaction with teachers in daily routines. A less vertical relationship among school members and rather weak teacher control over their pupils' daily routines (e.g. the conduct of students during lessons and break

times) were found in the Finnish schools, whereas a hierarchical relationship among school members and intensive care and control by class teachers were more prominent in the Korean schools.

8.2 Discussions

8.2.1 Peer interactions and teacher-student relations as the complex combination between institutional and sociocultural contexts

Students' peer interactions occurred in diverse ways and across independent and interdependent patterns in all the fieldwork schools. However, this thesis depicted that students in the Finnish schools, whose social ethos related to education is considered to be less competitive, showed more independent and self-reliant patterns; meanwhile, the Korean students, who lived in a highly competitive and success-oriented social ethos revealed more interdependent and cooperative interactions with their peers (cf. Yoon 2018).

In line with the discussions in studies 1 and 2 as well as the contextual illustration in Chapter 2, I interpret that the educational welfare system is linked with these rather differing patterns displayed in peer interactions. In the Finnish comprehensive schools, students did not need to bring learning materials from home or rely on their peers, as the materials were provided to them as part of educational welfare. Moreover, the Finnish educational welfare system enabled students to receive their teachers' individual guidance more frequently, as Finnish classes were, in certain cases, divided into two groups and the students attended specific lessons (e.g. language subjects, home economics) in these groups according to different timetables. In addition, assistant teachers or special education teachers occasionally participated in co-teaching and shared the main teachers' duty of providing individual guidance. Meanwhile, even though the Korean primary and lower-secondary schools provided most learning materials, some materials used in music, physical education, and home economics lessons (e.g. melodica, badminton racket, food) were required to be brought from home individually; thus, students borrowed such materials from their friends when they did not bring them from home. Further, Korean teacher participants often implemented small-group or cooperative learning activities. In these circumstances, students, particularly ones who were high-achieving, were encouraged to help their classmates—for example, in maths lessons where teachers' individual guidance within limited lesson hours was not sufficient to help all the students in need of individual guidance.

I assume that the extensive Finnish educational welfare system originated from the collectivistic value of social democracy, which in turn is related to Finnish

students' rather independent and self-reliant attitudes displayed in their peer interactions at school. Similarly, I interpret that the rather limited Korean educational welfare grounded in individualistic value of liberal market economy is connected with the Korean students' cooperative social skills based on their interdependency.

This study also depicted that teachers in the Finnish and Korean schools exerted a range of control according to their pedagogical beliefs, and students exercised their agency within or against varying control. School observations revealed this universal feature of schooling; however, differences in terms of teacher control was also found between the Finnish and Korean school contexts. I interpret that the roles of students and teachers have been shaped by somewhat different sociocultural understanding and consent to the classification and framing at school (cf. Bernstein 1996).

In the Korean schools, strong classification was observed in the hierarchy among school members holding different positions. For example, the Korean principals did not assume teaching duties and other duties requiring direct interactions with students in daily routines. In addition, the control-care work of Korean class teachers were both rather extensive and intensive. The class teachers, despite their individual differences, exerted strong framing (regulative discourse, cf. Bernstein 1996) throughout the extensive range of students' conduct (e.g. indicating students' postures during lessons, controlling the use of smartphones during the entire school day, supervising students' appearance and clothing in the lower-secondary schools) and other forms of care (e.g. supervising whether students consume a variety of lunch foods without leaving in the primary schools). The class teachers also organised their class life according to strong framing and collectivistic spirit; they utilised the system of role division, in which their students were allocated to different tasks, such as cleaning classrooms and distributing school lunch to their classmates. Moreover, some class teachers encouraged their pupils to write a communal diary in which pupils' lives within and out of school were written and shared. Due to these manifestations of rather strong classification and framing, the role of a class teacher were characterized as a discipliner and caregiver, whereas the roles of students were set as being the disciplined minors who were not yet entitled the full agency that adults have.

In the Finnish schools, the classification among school members was less visible. The principals assumed a few teaching and student counselling duties, and the class teachers and other subject teachers assumed the duty of supervising students by turn during break times. Moreover, tasks regarding caring of students' diverse needs and difficulties were not solely limited to class teachers; the care work was implemented together with and distributed among the special education teacher, school psychologist, and social worker. In addition, rather weak framing (regulative discourse, cf. Bernstein 1996) was reflected in the roles of the class teacher as a discipliner and caregiver. Unlike the Korean case, the Finnish teachers neither

regulated students' appearance and clothing nor controlled the use of smartphones during break times. Moreover, the teachers did not need to allocate students to cleaning duties, since classrooms were cleaned by professional cleaners. In these circumstances, the Finnish students had more room for exercising their agency related to human rights and privacy in their school lives.

Further, I interpret that the educational welfare system is one crucial background for understanding the rather differing roles of schoolteachers and students in Korea and Finland. As briefly implied in studies 1 and 3 and illustrated in Chapter 2, the considerable responsibility of social welfare (student care in this study) was shifted from the state to individual class teachers in the Korean schools. Hence, each class in the Korean schools became an important collectivistic unit where educational welfare was offered and a sense of bonding was cultivated at the least cost, utilising the intensive control and care work of class teachers but at the expense of students' agency. Ironically, these collectivistic characters embedded in the roles of teachers and students were linked with insufficient public educational welfare grounded in the individualistic value of a liberal market economy.

Simultaneously, the excessively activated private education market in Korea appears to induce parents to expect that private education will assume the teaching of subjects and that schools and teachers will care for other aspects of a child's development (Kim, Kim, and Min 2007; Kim 2016). Moreover, traditional values stemming from a hierarchical Confucian society (e.g. strong control of nurturer) persist in the politico-economically neoliberal society of today; thus, the values also remain in the roles of schoolteachers and students. For example, teacher as *Seuseung*, who holds authority and serves as a moral (strong regulative discourse) as well as academic model (strong instructional discourse) for students, still remains a part of teacher identity in Korean society. Therefore, the role of a teacher performing strong framing with regard to the conduct of students has been maintained. Moreover, the higher degree of control that emphasises student-like conduct and order compared with the Finnish school context can be interpreted according to the body and mind monism in Eastern philosophy that emphasizes mind control through bodily control (Kim 1997). The authoritative social ethos that were prevalent during the period of Japanese colonisation in the early twentieth century and the Korean military regimes in the 1960s and 70s also provides a social background of strong control (e.g. supervision of appearance and clothing) embedded in the roles of teachers (Kang 2007). However, as the Korean society has been gradually changing toward a more individualistic culture and a teacher is not expected to be an authoritative transmitter of knowledge and moral values in the postmodern technology-based society, the traditional teacher control and adolescents' agency that emphasises their individuality and self-expression has faced significant conflict (cf. Cho 2000; Park 2002).

In the Finnish schools, the responsibility of student care was distributed among several teaching staff and health and social work experts due to the relatively well-established educational welfare system that aims at preventing the accumulation of learning and other difficulties through multiple care provision (cf. Kim 2011; Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture n.d.). I assume that the universal educational welfare system rooted in collectivistic solidarity contributed to weakening the control and care work of class teachers and rendered the boundaries of class less rigid; it also seems that the education welfare provided teenage students more room to grow as independent individuals in their school lives, not being tightly chained to learning or other difficulties caused by the socio-economic reality of their families. Meanwhile, in societies such as Finland, which are characterised by relatively individualistic cultural traits with narrower power distance among social members, child-rearing places more emphasis on the independence and self-reliance of growing children (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010; Triandis 2001). Further, public sentiment in the Finnish society, along with the sociocultural changes that occurred in Western society after World War II, shifted to place greater emphasis on individuals' freedom and human rights rather than the order and unity within community (Anttila et al. 2017). It appears that this ethos is associated with less control and increased agency in terms of students' self-expression in appearance and clothing and the use of smartphones. Meanwhile, Finnish teachers have also believed in their traditional role, supported by social recognition of their pedagogical expertise and students' acceptance of their authoritative way of teaching; Finnish teachers are also known for their preference to teacher-centred pedagogy compared with other Nordic teachers (Simola 2005; Simola et al. 2017). Moreover, the contingent Finnish success in PISA also reconfirmed the position of pedagogic conservativism in Finnish comprehensive schools (Carlgren et al. 2006). In summary, balancing teacher control and student agency in Finnish schools has become a dilemma between teachers' pedagogic rights and students' rights as agentic citizens (cf. Gordon et al. 2008; Anttila et al. 2017).

In line with the criticism and findings presented in each sub-study, the discussion above indicates that the quality of school life is much more than the binary images inscribed in the Finnish and Korean education that positioned Finnish education on the axis of utopia and cooperation and Korean education on the counter-axis of hell and competition (cf. Takayama, Waldow, and Sung 2013; Waldow, Takayama, and Sung 2014). I interpret that dialectic and complex dynamics exist between the collectivistic/individualistic interactions of school members (peer relations and teacher-student relations) and the institutional and sociocultural backdrops. Through this discussion, I argue that one's education or school life deserves to receive comprehensive and balanced media and academic attention as a complex social

phenomenon based on the universality and uniqueness indwelling in historical, sociocultural, and institutional contexts.

8.2.2 Transition from disciplinary school to a school of self-regulating learners

As a mass institution that provides compulsory education to young people, both the Finnish and Korean schools incorporated distinct classification and framing in their curriculums organised by subjects, hierarchy among school members, and the structured use of time and space; moreover, the school authority and teachers exercised strong framing throughout the official, informal, and physical schools. In everyday school life, students exercised their agency within or against given control and also experienced adversities in the process. However, the range and aspects of control somewhat differed between the Finnish and Korean schools. As discussed in 8.2.1, the manifestation of disciplinary school was more apparent in the Korean schools, whereas the Finnish schools appeared to have been shifting toward schools of self-regulating learners a little ahead of the Korean schools. It was ironic that, although the neoliberal governmentality of self-managing entrepreneurship and self-responsibility have swept the Korean society, the schools have stuck to the old-fashioned governmentality of disciplinary society in many respects (cf. Foucault ([1975] 2003; 1984). As depicted in study 2, student bodies were partitioned into several parts and were meticulously elaborated as industrious bodies that can produce optimal learning outcomes (cf. Foucault [1975] 2003). Further, control was also gendered in the Korean lower-secondary schools' regulations related to appearance and school uniforms. Female students' agency, which attempted to perform gender (Butler 1988; [1990] 2008) as they felt comfortable, were in a dilemma due to conflicting social messages between conservative school rules and K-pop (Korean pop music) girl groups' fashion that sexually objectified girls' bodies by holding them to certain standards of beauty. Meanwhile, the features of self-regulating learners appeared in the use of smartphones in the Finnish schools. As described in study 3, the use of smartphones was usually constrained during lesson hours; students kept their phones with them during the entire school day. This differed from the case of the Korean lower-secondary schools, where students' phones were collected and put into a class bag which was kept in teaching staffs' rooms throughout the entire school day. In addition, some Finnish teachers allowed students to listen to music on their phones while they worked on individual activities such as maths problem-solving or painting. These scenes could be interpreted as a sign of changing governmentality in Finnish schools: from the industrial discipline employing surveillance and bodily negativity (prohibition) towards post-industrial self-regulation through the optimisation of emotion/mind (cf. Han 2015). It can also

be viewed as an ethos that respects individual freedom and human rights related to mobile communication and privacy.

However, a symptom of the self-responsible learner identity was observed in all the Finnish and Korean schools. The qualitative findings of this study denoted that the Finnish and Korean students did not seem to be exempted from the powerful ideology in the name of future, uncertainty, and responsibility. Many student participants—regardless of their achievement levels, gender, and the socioeconomic status of their school district—perceived that achieving good grades or at least managing their school work was important (cf. Yoon 2018). It was unexpected to hear from several adolescents that they would like to change their own attitudes towards teachers' teaching methods or their relationships with teachers to improve their school grades.

> JY: If you could make your school life better, what would you like to change?
>
> Anna: Umm, my attitude to the PE (physical education) teacher, because I think my grades are dropping because of the arguments with the teacher. (Interview, Finland)

Simultaneously, such answers could also be naturally expected when considering that national curriculums stipulate capabilities for self-directed learning and for evaluating and taking responsibilities for ones' own learning (cf. Finnish National Agency for Education n.d.; Korean National Curriculum Information Center n.d.). The discerned emphasis of self-responsible learners in the curriculums are in line with choice-based consumeristic educational policies (cf. Sung 2011; Varjo, Lundström, and Kalalahti 2018). The self-regulating identity of students also correspond to some studies that reveal that student identity as a self-regulating and active learner-customer intensifies as a new normal in lower- and upper-secondary schools (Beach and Dovemark 2009; 2011; Lundahl and Olson 2013).

It was particularly poignant to discern compliant attitudes from several students who were considered as intractable and low-achieving. Sumi, the 'unruliest' student in her class and her best friend, Yuri, revealed rather submissive attitudes toward schooling rather than requesting changes based on their dissatisfaction and frustration with lessons and school life.

> Sumi lies face down on the desk crossly and playing with her pencil moving her fingers. […] She raises her waist and sit up and draw floral leaves with the pencil on the exam sheet. […] She lies face down entirely on the desk again. […] Time is up and the supervising teacher collects students' answer sheets. After the exam, Sumi gets out of the classroom. Dohun brings a paper where correct

> answers are written and he calls out the answers to his classmates. Students mark their exam sheets. Sumi comes back to the classroom and writes down the answers to her exam sheet standing by Dohun. […]
>
> After school, Sumi is leaving school passing by the school gate. She is walking carrying her phone, wallet, and the math exam sheet.
>
> JY: Why do you take the exam sheet with you?
>
> Sumi: To check how many correct answers I got. (Field notes on a final exam day, Korea)

> JY: If you want to make your school life better, then what would you like to change?
>
> Yuri: (Smiling) My attitude. […] Listening to teachers carefully and not sleeping (during history lessons). (Interview, Korea)

In addition to these girls, many boys, as depicted in study 2, were conscious of their own and their peers' school achievements and deemed that showing academic aspiration did not harm their masculinity. The young people's attitudes somewhat differed from the anti-schooling and studying-diminishing manners that intractable adolescents from disadvantaged social backgrounds revealed in the ethnographic studies of previous years (cf. Willis [1977] 2004; MacLeod 1987). Has the resistant spirit of Willis' 'lads' disappeared? This is a difficult question to answer. However, it appears that the days of the lads' generation, who chose anti-schooling attitudes and manual occupations in the growing secondary industry, have ended. In addition, it appears that the anxiety emanating from the fact that fairly good efforts do not guarantee a stable job in the era of the fourth industrial revolution and artificial intelligence might have permeated the minds of the adolescents in the Finnish and Korean schools.

This study revealed that Finnish and Korean adolescents held less positive perceptions of their school life, particularly of teacher-student relationships, as compared to the views of students in other OECD countries on average. It appears that their latent frustration over school life is, considerably, kept beneath the surface, as indicated by the low levels of deviant behaviours at school (cf. OECD 2013a, 188; Järvinen and Tikkanen 2019). Their frustration might explode if schooling driven by neoliberal social ethos and educational policies keeps shifting to the school of self-

responsible learners, without ensuring them minimal meaning and prospects in their present and future lives.

8.3 Limitations of this study

In Nordic countries, local discretion was enhanced in the 1990s, as education restructuring brought about a shift from government to governance (Lindblad, Johannesson, and Simola 2002). For example, in Finland, school choice and other varying policies have been directed and implemented differently by municipalities (Simola et al. 2017; Berisha and Seppänen 2017; Lempinen 2018; Varjo, Lundström, and Kalalahti 2018). In Korea, the degree of decentralisation of educational authority is lower than in Finland, as the ministry of education plays a key role in establishing major education policies and implementing policies like education budgets; however, decentralisation of educational authority has increased since the 1990s and the autonomy of local education authorities has increased in terms of legislation and administration (Ha 2018). In sum, as the state-driven educational authority has been decentralized, the discretion of the local authority of education has become more powerful in both Finland and Korea; within the scope of a nation state, local variations do exist. Thus, a limitation of this study is that varying education policies of municipalities in each national context, which would have influenced the quality of school life, were not fully considered. Moreover, this study did not discuss the between-school variations of students' perceptions of their quality of school life nor did it sufficiently elaborate the unique sociocultural ethos and pedagogic practices in each fieldwork school.

Another limitation of this study is the sample selection criteria used in PISA 2012, which provided student survey data for the quantitative part of this thesis, and the selection of fieldwork schools for the qualitative studies. Due to the age-based (15-year-olds) sampling methods of PISA 2012 and the differing academic year systems between Finland and Korea, the analysis and comparisons regarding students' perceptions of school life in study 1 were made between mostly grade nine students in Finland and mostly grade ten students in Korea (Cho et al. 2012). Thus, there is a possibility that the Korean students' perception might have been less positive because most of the Korean participants had to face a new school environment, having just entered high school at the time that data was collected for PISA 2012.

In addition, half of the Finnish and Korean fieldwork schools are so-called innovative schools. I noticed that many student participants who attended these schools perceived and experienced their school lives positively. The Finnish innovative school attempted novel and student-oriented teaching-learning methods

through a teacher-training system that included professional teachers' guidance and the practice of teacher trainees studying at the department of teacher education of a university. Similarly, the Korean innovative schools sough to provide innovative teaching-learning methods and to facilitate active student participation in deciding and organising school events, etc. These characteristics of the innovative schools would have influenced the findings of qualitative studies. Further, all the fieldwork schools were located in residential districts which were identified as middle-low or middle socioeconomic status. Students' perceptions and experiences of schooling might have been somewhat different if I would have chosen fieldwork schools that were located in areas with affluent upper socioeconomic status or marginalised low socioeconomic status in Finland and Korea. However, I believe that such limitations revealed in the selection of schools could still be justified since I focused on common issues such as gendered patterns displayed in peer relationships and control and agency inherent in school rules and teacher-student interactions at the fieldwork schools.

Lastly, the composition of this thesis would have been more comprehensive if it would have included a sub-study focusing on students' participation in school life through official and informal decision-making as an important social aspect of the quality of school life.

8.4 Prospects for future research

Following the limitations of this study, I suggest a subsequent study that illuminates the issue of student participation through official and informal decision-making that occurs in class and school life. This topic is worthy of being highlighted in the sense that student participation and agency is seemingly enhanced as they are treated as active educational customers who are entitled to neoliberal choice, freedom, and self-responsibility (cf. Lundahl and Olson 2013); however, they are not still fully treated as democratic citizens who are entitled to participation in the official and informal decision-making process encompassing teaching-learning practices and the use of time, space, and movement (cf. Rönnlund 2014; Hjelmér, Lappalainen, and Rosvall 2014). Moreover, although it was not discussed in this thesis, I observed that the teacher and student participants strived to create a democratic culture as an agreed-upon balance between control and agency in everyday life in classrooms and schools. Their meaningful educational practices brought me a few questions: How do students experience democracy as a system and a school culture? How does the combination of representative system and direct democracy promote students' democratic citizenship? How are majority votes that omit considerable discussion and minority voices connected to active freedom of learner choice but passive rights of democratic citizens? How can the transfer of school/teacher control to students promote

students' democratic participation while not being misled by the deception of neoliberal freedom and associated social ethos? Thus, future research could elaborate on such topics while maintaining the critical viewpoint regarding consumeristic and democratic citizenship.

Further, this thesis highlighted a few scenes from Finnish and Korean schools, which fluctuated between disciplinary school and the school of self-regulating learners, by depicting individualistic and collectivistic patterns reflected in the interactions among school members and regulations in each fieldwork school. The thesis also contained discussions on individualistic and collectivistic tendencies reflected in institutional, historical, and sociocultural contexts regarding the three aspects of quality of school life. Following this, an in-depth cross-cultural and comparative analysis across individualistic and collectivistic school practices could also be a direction for future study. As Carlgren et al. (2006) argued, what matters is what kinds of individualism and collectivism are fostered and should be fostered through the school culture of late-modern societies such as Finland and Korea—individualism that supports students' freedom and diverse individuality, market-oriented individualism that emphasises individual learners' choice and responsibility, collectivism that supports solidarity and collective agency, or authoritative collectivism that consists of control and compliance (cf. Karstedt 2006). These ideas lead us to the coda of this dissertation, a democratic school culture to contribute to the enhancement of school life.

9 Coda: democratic school culture for the quality of school life

In the context of quality of school life, I think of democracy as a form of life and a way of interaction among social members. The quality of school life and the themes discussed in this thesis—such as peer relations, teacher-student relations, hierarchy, control and agency, gendered socialisation, and individualistic and collectivistic traits of sociocultural/institutional contexts shown in school life—can be synthetically understood from the perspective of democracy. For example, this study depicted how students' bodily agency was constrained by disciplinary school rules and how they constructed gendered identity through the interactions with their peers and socialisation process at school. In order to fulfil democracy as a way of life, a school culture that values students' agency and diverse identities must be fostered. Democratic school could be conceivable if students can increase their agency by performing gender in diverse ways in their everyday interactions at school and not being controlled by stereotypical gendered patterns (cf. Butler 1988; [1990] 2008).

Moreover, to fulfil democracy through education, boundaries that aggravate segregation and isolation among school members and among subjects (e.g. theoretical and practical subjects) must be permeable (Bernstein 1996, 24−25). When the social, emotional, and intellectual interactions among school members can be rich and go beyond power relations embedded in strong classification and framing, it will contribute to creating democratic relations and ethos at school.

Lastly, for the democratic school culture and the betterment of quality of school life, students must be able to participate in the actual decision-making related to constructing, maintaining, and transforming control and order (Bernstein 1996, 7) inherent in everyday school life. When students' influence does not fall into the narrow concept of democracy that enables individual learners to choose one from among readymade options, but when they could live democratic values by actively participating in conflicts, discussions, and consent between control and agency, students could grow as democratic citizens in their current school lives.

To borrow the words of Takeshi Fujii (Lee 2019), democracy is the art of being together while being different. It could be interpreted as the art of human civilisation that fosters solidarity while being tolerant to differences and diversity. In this respect,

I find the strength of the individualistic culture that respects human rights and diversities among individuals, such as consideration of minorities shown in the everyday life of the Finnish fieldwork schools (e.g. remedial teaching, school-meal menus). Meanwhile, I believe that the communal way of life—for example, the class life of students and their interactions with class teachers in the Korean schools—is the noteworthy part of collectivistic culture. How can we restore or strengthen the advantages of individualism and collectivism and pursue democratic school culture, which appears to be weakening in the era of neoliberal politics that induce a spirit of choice and competition among students and parents and shift the responsibility for the outcomes of schooling to teachers and students (cf. Lundahl and Olson 2013)? I hope this study on the universalities and uniqueness of Finnish and Korean school life could be a small but meaningful step in thinking of alternative roles of the school, teachers, and students in late-modern societies (cf. Simola el al. 2017).

As this thesis sought to illuminate, school is inseparable from the society. Thus, I tie up the end of this study by asking questions directed at myself and at readers who recognise the responsibility of social members for a democratic school culture and the quality of school life. What kind of social members do we become to establish a democratic school culture and society? Do we become teachers who promote students to grow as democratic citizens and cultivate individual and collective agency through various social interactions and participation at school? Do we become manager parents who project our own desires and anxiety related to the increase or maintenance of our socioeconomic status to children's success in the competition against all? Or, do we become citizens who recognise the responsibility of society in schooling and participate in democratic ways of life, including in decision-making process regarding education policies? Do we become policy makers who carefully implement education policies and encourage students' agency and democratic rights that are not distorted as neoliberal learner identities of choice and self-responsibility? Or do we become researchers who laboriously pay attention to less-known democratic practices or blind spots of democracy in everyday school life and connect them to the broader horizon of insight?

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide for students (in English)

General background information

- Can you briefly explain your school life?
- What time do you usually go to school and get home? Where do you live? Near school?
- What do you usually do after school? With whom?
- How many hours do you study a day in and out of school? How many hours do you sleep? What time do you go to sleep? What time do you get up?

General satisfaction with school life

- Can you write down some words which came into your mind related to 'my school'?
- Can you fill the blank in the sentence 'My school is ___'?
- Do you feel like going to school? What makes you to feel like going to school?
- What are your favourite things at school?
- What are the most important things in your school life?
- Which are your favourite subjects and why?
- How do you feel when you are at school?

Physical dimension of school life

- How are your classrooms, corridors, school buildings, and school yards to stay in and to study in?
- What do you think of your school meals?
- What do you think about the length of lesson hours and break times?
- What do you usually do during break times?

Learning dimension of school life

- What do you think of school lessons? (What makes school learning interesting and fun?)
- Then, which things are you good at among these?
- What kinds of teaching-learning styles are used in the lessons?
- Which teaching-learning styles do you think work best for you? And which ones do you think are not suitable for you? Why do you think so? (e.g. individual learning, teacher-led lecture style, small-group learning, making something using your hands or moving your body, reading, writing, etc.)
- How important is it for you to succeed at school? Why?

- How much effort do you put into school work?
- How likely are to reach satisfactory achievement if you try?
- Have you ever received private tutoring for learning? What for? What kind of tutoring?
- What are you going to do after graduating from your school? Why?
- How important is it for you to be well-educated (e.g. to have a higher education degree)? Why?
- What would you like to do in the future?

Social dimension of school life

Your relationship with peers

- How many friends do you have who care about you in school?
- How do you communicate with peers? By smartphone or social media? Which topics do you chat about?
- In which situations do your classmates come to you to ask for help or to discuss something?

Relationship among peers

- How do your classmates cooperate with each other during lessons?
- What do you guys do together during breaks? How do you spend time with your schoolmates after school days?
- Has there been any bullying or peer rejection in your classroom/in your school? What kind of bullying, and what kind of peer rejection?

Your relationship with teachers and other staff

- How would you describe your teachers?
- What makes a good teacher? What kind of teacher is not a good teacher for you?
- How many teachers or adults, like the school nurse, care about you in school?
- Do your teachers listen carefully to what you say? Do they respect your opinion? Please give an example.
- Do the teachers treat students equally? If not, please give me an example of unfair treatment.
- Have you got into trouble with your teachers? What kind of trouble?

Democratic atmosphere (rules and decision-making process)

- What kind of rules do you have at your classroom and school (bullying and violence, appearance, safety, going out during school hours, use of smartphones etc.)? What do you think of these rules?
- Have you ever broken the rules? What rules and why? (being absent for a day without permission, skipped a class, received detention, etc.)
- When some decisions are made in your classroom and in your school, how does it go? Who decides?
- What kind of possibilities are there for students to participate in your school?
- How can the possibilities for students to participate in school be improved?

Problems and wishes

- What is the biggest problem in your school from a student's perspective?
- If you could make your school (life) better, what would you change?

Appendix 2: Interview guide for students (in Finnish)

Yleiset taustatiedot

- Mihin aikaan yleensä menet kouluun? Entä mihin aikaan tulet yleensä kotiin koulusta? Missä asut? Asutko lähellä koulua?
- Mitä teet yleensä koulun jälkeen ja siihen asti, että menet nukkumaan?
- Kuinka monta tuntia suurinpiirtein opiskelet yhteensä koulupäivän aikana ja sen jälkeen? Kuinka monta tuntia nukut yleensä? Mihin aikaan yleensä menet nukkumaan? Entä mihin aikaan heräät?

Yleinen tyytyväisyys koulunkäyntiin

- Voitko kirjoittaa muutaman sanan, jotka sinulle tulee mieleen sanoista 'minun kouluni'?
- Voitko täydentää lauseen 'Minun kouluni on ___'?
- Pidätkö koulunkäynnistä?
- Mikä on parasta koulussa?
- Mitkä ovat tärkeitä asioita koulussa?
- Mitkä ovat lempiaineita ja miksi?
- Miltä Koulunkäynti tuntuu sinusta?

Koulu fyysisenä paikkana/ koulun fyysinen ulottuvuus

- Miten kuvailisit koulunne tiloja opiskelun ja muun ajankäytön näkökulmasta: koululuokat (tuolit? pöydät? seinät?), käytävät, koulun piha, ja muut koulutilat?
- Mitä mieltä olet teidän kouluruoasta?
- Mitä mieltä olet oppituntien ja välituntien pituudesta?
- Mitä yleensä teet välitunneilla?

Koulu oppimisympäristönä

- Mitä mieltä olet oppitunneista? (Mikä tekee oppitunneista kiinnostavia ja hauskoja?)
- Minkälaisissa asioissa olet hyvä?
- (Miten helposti omat vahvuutesi ja asiat, joissa olet hyvä tulevat oppitunneilla esiin?)
- Millaisia oppimis/opetustyylejä tunneilla käytetään? Millä tavalla opettaja saa teidät oppimaan?(itsenäinen oppiminen/työskentely, opettajajohtoinen, pienryhmät, ryhmätyöt, käsillä tekeminen tai liikkuminen, lukeminen, kirjoittaminen)
- Mitkä ovat sinulle sopivimpia oppimis/opetustyylejä? Miten opit parhaiten? Entä mitkä opetus/oppimistyylit eivät sovi sinulle? Mistä luulet sen johtuvan? Miksi?
- Kuinka tärkeää koulussa pärjääminen/onnistuminen on sinulle? Miksi?
- Kuinka paljon panostat koulunkäyntiin?
- Kuinka todennäköisesti onnistut saavuttamaan hyviä tuloksia, jos yrität?
- Oletko saanut yksityisopetusta? Millaista opetusta?
- Mitä sä aiot tehdä yläkoulun jälkeen? (Lukio? Ammattikoulu? Jotain muuta?) Miksi?
- Kuinka tärkeää sinulle on kouluttautua hyvin? Esimerkiksi saada korkeakoulututkinto? Miksi?
- Mitä haluaisit tehdä tulevaisuudessa?

Koulu sosiaalisena ympäristönä/ koulun sosiaalinen ulottuvuus
Oppilaan suhde ikätovereihin

- Kuinka monta hyvää kaveria sinulla on koulussa?

- Miten pidät yhteyttä ikätovereihin/koulukavereihin? Älypuhelimella/sosiaalisen median avulla? Mistä asioista te puhutte?
- Minkälaisissa tilanteissa luokkakaverisi kysyvät sinulta apua tai juttelevat sinulle?

Suhde ikätovereiden keskuudessa

- Miten luokkanne oppilaat tekevät yhteistyötä oppitunneilla? Miten yhteistyö sujuu ryhmässä, jossa on oppilaita, joiden kanssa ei ole niin paljon tekemisissä?
- Mitä teette yleensä välitunneilla? Miten vietätte aikaa/ mitä teette koulun jälkeen?
- Onko luokallanne kiusaamista tai ulkopuolelle jättämistä? Miten tytöt ja pojat tulevat toimeen keskenään? Entä esim. maahanmuuttajataustaiset oppilaat? Entä koulussanne yleensä? Onko kiusaamista tai ulkopuolelle jättämistä, minkälaista?

Suhde opettajiin ja muuhun henkilökuntaan

- Miten kuvailisit opettajiasi?
- Millainen on mielestäsi hyvä opettaja? Millainen on ei-hyvä opettaja?
- Kuinka moni opettaja tai aikuinen, esim. terveydenhoitaja, on kiinnostunut tekemisistäsi koulussa/välittää sinusta?
- Kuuntelevatko opettajasi sinua? Arvostavatko he mielipiteitäsi? Voitko antaa jonkun esimerkin?
- Kohtelevatko opettajat oppilaita tasapuolisesti? Jos ei, voitko antaa esimerkin epäreilusta kohtelusta?
- Onko sinulla ollut ongelmia opettajien kanssa? Millaisia ongelmia?

Demokratia koulussa (säännöt ja päätösvalta)

- Minkälaisia sääntöjä teillä on käytössä luokassa ja koulussa (kiusaaminen ja väkivalta, ulkonäkö, turvallisuus, ulkona liikkuminen, älypuhelimen käyttö jne.)? Mitä mieltä olet näistä säännöistä?
- Oletko koskaan rikkonut luokan tai koulun sääntöjä? Mitä sääntöjä ja miksi? (luvaton poissaolo, lintsaaminen tunnilta, jälki-istunto)
- Kun teette päätöksiä luokassanne ja koulussanne, miten se tapahtuu? Ketkä päättävät?
- Miten oppilaat voivat vaikuttaa koulunne asioihin?
- Miten oppilaiden vaikutusmadhollisuuksia voitaisiin mielestäsi parantaa?

Ongelmat ja toiveet

- Mitkä ovat suurimpia ongelmia koulussanne?
- Miten koulunkäyntiä ja kouluelämää voisi mielestäsi parantaa?

Appendix 3: Interview guide for students (in Korean)

학교생활 전반에 관한 배경질문

- 학교생활에 대해 간단하게 설명해 줄 수 있나요?
- 보통 몇 시에 학교에 가고 몇 시에 집에 오나요? 어디에 사나요? 학교 근처에 사나요?
- 학교 마친 후에 주로 무엇을 하나요? 누구랑?
- 하루에 보통 학교에서 몇 시간, 그리고 학교 마치고 난 다음 (숙제, 학원 등)몇 시간 정도 공부하나요? 하루에 보통 몇 시간 정도 자나요? 몇 시에 자고 몇 시에 일어나나요?

전반적인 학교 생활 만족도

- '우리 학교' 라는 단어와 관련해서 마음 속에 떠오르는 단어를 적어주시겠어요?
- '우리 학교는 _____이다'의 빈 칸에 들어갈 단어를 적어주시겠어요?
- 평소 학교에 가고 싶은 마음이 드나요? 그렇다면 주로 무엇 때문에 학교에 가고 싶어지나요?
- 학교 생활 중 어떤 것들을 좋아하나요?
- 학교 생활 중에서 무엇이 가장 중요하다고 생각하나요?
- 학교에 있을 때 주로 어떤 느낌이 드나요?

학교생활의 물리적 측면

- 본인이 속한 학급 교실, 복도, 학교 건물, 운동장, 학교식당은 공부하고 생활하기에 어떤가요? 학교급식에 대해서는 어떻게 생각하나요?
- 수업시간과 쉬는 시간의 길이에 대해서 어떻게 생각하나요?
- 쉬는 시간에는 주로 어디에서 무엇을 하나요?

학교생활의 수업적 측면

- 학교 수업에 대해서 어떻게 생각하나요? (학교수업의 어떤 점이 흥미 있고 재미있나요?)
- 좋아하는 과목들과 그 이유는 무엇인가요?
- 그 중에서 본인이 잘하는 것은 무엇이라고 생각하나요?
- (학교 수업과 공부가 본인이 무엇을 잘하는지 알아가는 데 도움이 된다고 생각하나요?)
- 수업시간에 어떤 교수-학습 방법들이 사용되나요(국, 수, 영, 과학, 사회, 체육, 음악 등)?
- 본인에게 가장 잘 맞는 교수-학습 방법은 무엇인가요? 어떤 교수-학습 방법이 본인에게 맞지 않나요? (예: 개별학습, 교사중심 강의식 수업, 모둠별 협동학습, 손으로 만드는 활동, 몸을 움직이는 활동, 읽기, 쓰기, 시각자료 활용, 교사의 말로 하는 설명 등) 왜 그렇게 생각하나요?
- 학교에서 좋은 성적을 거두는 것이 본인에게 얼마만큼 중요한가요? 왜 그런가요?

- 학교 과제나 시험 준비 등에 얼마만큼 노력을 기울이나요?
- 본인이 열심히 공부하면 만족스러운 성적(결과)을 얻을 수 있는 가능성이 얼마만큼이라고 생각하나요?
- 과외나 학원 같은 사교육을 받아본 적이 있나요? 어떤 목적? 어떤 종류?
- 중학교를 졸업한 다음에 어떤 진로를 선택할 생각인가요? (일반계 고교, 실업계 고교, 기타) 왜?
- 잘 교육받는 것(예: 대학 학위 취득)이 본인에게 얼마만큼 중요한가요?
- 장래에 어떤 일을 하고 싶은가요?

학교생활의 사회적 측면

친구관계

- 학교에서 친하게 지내고 서로 챙겨주는 친구들이 몇 명이나 있나요?
- 반 친구들과는 어떤 방법으로 소통하나요? 면대면, 스마트폰 채팅앱 혹은 소셜미디어? 하루에 몇 시간 정도 채팅? 주로 무슨 얘기를 나누나요?
- 어떤 경우에 반 친구들이 본인에게 도움을 부탁하거나 의논하러 오나요?

반 친구들 사이의 관계

- 같은 반 친구들끼리 수업시간에 서로 어떻게 협력하나요? (예: 모둠 활동할 때 어떻게 하나요?)
- 쉬는 시간에 같은 반 친구들끼리 무엇을 하나요? 방과 후에는 반 친구 혹은 학교 친구들과 어떻게 시간을 함께 보내나요?
- 학급이나 학교에서 집단 괴롭힘이나 따돌림이 일어난 적이 있나요? 어떤 종류의 괴롭힘 혹은 따돌림이었나요? 어떻게 해결되었나요?

선생님들 및 다른 어른들과의 관계

- 담임 선생님 및 과목 선생님들에 대해 묘사를 한다면? 어떻게 생각하나요?
- 어떤 선생님이 좋은 선생님인가요? 어떤 유형의 선생님이 좋지 않은 선생님인가요?
- 본인에게 관심을 기울이고 챙겨주시는 선생님이나 다른 직원 분들이 있나요?
- 선생님들께서는 본인이 하는 말을 귀 기울여 들어주시는 편인가요? 선생님들이 본인의 의견을 존중해 주시나요? 예를 한가지 들어주세요.
- 선생님들이 학생들을 공평하게 대해주시나요? 그렇지 않다면 불공평한 대우를 받았던 예를 한 가지 들어주세요.
- 학교생활에서 선생님들과 문제가 생겼던 적이 있나요? 어떤 문제였나요?

민주적 분위기 (규칙, 의사결정 과정)

- 학급이나 학교에 어떤 규칙이 있나요? (예: 집단 괴롭힘 및 학교폭력, 외모나 복장, 안전, 일과 시간 중 교외로 외출, 스마트폰 사용 등) 그 규칙들에 대해 어떻게 생각하나요?
- 규칙들을 어겨본 적이 있나요? 어떤 규칙, 무슨 이유로? 어떤 벌칙을 받았나요?
- 학급이나 학교에서 중요한 사안을 결정할 때 어떤 식으로 진행이 되나요? 누가 결정하나요? 학생들이 학교 의사결정에 참여할 수 있는 방법에는 어떤 것들이 있나요? (학생회 활동에 대해서는 어떻게 생각하나요?)
- 학생들이 학교의 주인으로서 적극적으로 의사 결정에 참여하기 위해 어떤 점들이 개선되면 좋을까요?

문제점과 희망사항

- 현재 우리 학생들이 생각하기에 학교생활에서 가장 큰 문제가 무엇인가요?
- 만약 학교 생활을 더 좋게 바꿀 수 있다면 무엇을 바꾸고 싶은가요?

Appendix 4: Interview guide for teachers (in English)

General background information

- Could you tell me your teaching experience (total duration and subjects, and grades during the previous three years)?
- Which subject and grade are you in charge of this year? How many students do you teach?
- How many lesson hours do students have per week?
- How much time do you spend per week for teaching and lesson preparation?
- How much time do you spend per week on your pupils other than on teaching and lesson preparation (taking care of their school life, contacting parents, guidance, conversation etc.)?
- What is the family background (level of income and education of parents etc.) of students?
- In your opinion, what are the most important aspects of students' well-being at school (kouluviihtyvyys ja kouluhyvinvointi)? Why?
- How do you evaluate students' well-being at your school in general?

Learning dimension of school life

- How's the atmosphere and attitude of students that you teach?
- What do you think of students' motivation or morale to learn?
- What kinds of problems do students have related to learning?
- What kind of barriers or difficulties are there regarding students' learning and learning environment?
- What could be changed to promote students' learning and learning environment?

Social dimension of school life

- How are peer relationships in the classrooms, as witnessed by you? (cooperation, competition, segregation, or integration among students during lessons and other aspects of school life)
- What kind of relations do you try to keep with your pupils? And what kind of teacher-student relationships do your pupils want?
- Do pupils have autonomy to choose or change (some part of) their school life as they want to?
- How are the students relationships with other school staff?

Negative emotions and physical symptoms

- Are there any noticeable emotions that pupils show in ordinary school life?
- Are there any noticeable physical symptoms among students (insufficient sleep, etc.)?
- How common is loneliness and bullying among students? How does bullying appear in everyday life at school? As a teacher, how do you deal with such issues?

Out-of-school dimensions related to school life

- Can you compare students' quality of school life between current students and students 10 years ago? Are there significant differences? What could be the reasons for these differences?

- What could be a few out-of-school issues (educational policies and system and sociocultural factors such as Finnish culture) that may be related to students' quality of school life? How do they influence quality of school life?
- How is information technology (internet, social media etc.) related to the students' everyday life at school (learning, social relations, negative emotions, and physical symptoms)?
- What could be changed to improve students' school well-being and quality of school life?
- Do you have any other comments on aspects that have not come up in our conversation?

Appendix 5: Interview guide for teachers (in Korean)

기초배경 정보

- 총 교육 경력 및 최근 3 년간 담당 학년 및 과목
- 올해 담당 학년 및 과목
- 담임 반 학생 수, 학생들의 주당 수업 시수
- 선생님의 주당 수업 시수 및 수업 준비에 드는 시간
- 수업과 수업 준비 외에 학생들과 관련하여 (학교생활 지도, 학부모 연락, 상담이나 대화 등) 일주일에 몇 시간 정도 쓰십니까?
- 담임을 맡고 있는 학급 학생들의 가정 배경(부모의 최종학력 및 임금 수준)
- 선생님께서는 학생들의 학교 생활의 질 (학교생활만족도 혹은 복지) 에 가장 중요한 것이 무엇이라고 생각하십니까?
- 본교 혹은 담임학급 학생들의 학교생활의 질을 어떻게 평가하고 계십니까?

학교 생활의 학습적 측면

- 담임학급 학생들의 학습 태도 및 학급 분위기는 어떻습니까?
- 학생들의 공부에 대한 의욕에 대해 어떻게 생각하십니까?
- 학습과 관련하여 학생들이 갖게 되는 문제점에 어떤 것이 있습니까?
- 학생들의 학습 및 학습 환경과 관련하여 장애나 어려움이 있다면 어떤 것입니까?
- 이와 관련하여 어떤 점이 개선되면 좋겠습니까?

학교생활의 사회적 측면

- 담임 학급 학생들의 교우관계는 어떻습니까? (수업 시간 및 학교 생활 전반에서 나타나는 학생들 사이의 관계: 협력, 경쟁, 통합, 분리-성별, 인종별, 성적별 등)
- 학생들과 어떤 관계를 유지하기를 원하십니까? 학생들은 어떤 교사-학생 관계를 원한다고 생각하십니까?
- 담임학급 혹은 본교의 학생들은 학교 생활 (중 일부)을 자신들이 원하는 방향으로 바꾸거나 선택할 의사결정권을 가지고 있습니까? 예를 들어주신다면?
- 학급에서 혹은 수업시간에 아이들이 앉는 자리는 어떻게 정합니까? 아이들이 스스로 어디에 누구와 앉을지 고르나요, 아니면 선생님께서 정해주시나요?

- 수업 중에 학생들이 보이는 여러 행동 중에 어떤 것을 지적하시고 어떤 것을 그냥 지켜보시거나 허용해주시는지요? 그 이유는 무엇입니까?
- 학생들과 학교 직원들과의 관계는 어떻습니까?
-

부정적 감정 및 신체적 증상

- 학생들 사이에 흔하게 나타나는 감정 상태가 있었다면 어떤 것이었는지 말씀해주시겠어요?
- 학생들에게서 나타나는 뚜렷한 신체적 증상이 있습니까 (부족한 수면 등)?
- 어울리지 못해 외로움, 따돌림이나 집단 괴롭힘이 학생들 사이에서 일어난 적이 있나요? 언제, 어떤 상황에서 그런 일들이 일어났는지 말씀해 주실 수 있나요? 선생님께서는 이런 일이 생기면 어떻게 대처를 하십니까?

학교생활과 관련된 학교 밖 (제도적, 사회문화적) 측면들

- 지금 학생들의 학교 생활의 질을 일반중학교 학생들의 그것과 비교해서 말씀해 주시겠습니까? 차이가 있다면 어떤 차이가 있습니까? 그 이유는 뭐라고 생각하세요?
- 학생들의 학교생활의 질과 관련이 있을 법한 학교 바깥 요소들(교육 정책 및 교육 제도, 사회 문화적 배경)에 어떤 것이 있다고 생각하십니까? 그런 요소들이 아이들의 학교 생활에 어떻게 영향을 준다고 생각하십니까?
- 인터넷이나 소셜미디어, 스마트 폰 사용 등이 아이들의 일상적인 학교생활 (수업, 친구 및 선생님들과의 관계, 부정적 감정이나 신체적 증상) 과 어떤 관련이 있습니까?
- 지금까지 대화에 포함되지 않은 내용 중에 덧붙이고 싶은 내용이 있으면 말씀해 주시겠습니까?

Appendix 6: Request for research permission (in Finnish)

Tiedote vanhemmille/huoltajille

Hyvä vanhempi/huoltaja

Tämä tiedote koskee Turun yliopiston tutkimusta *Quality of School Life*, jonka aiheena on *nuorten kouluviihtyvyys ja - hyvinvointi Suomessa ja Koreassa.* Tutkimuksessa vertailemme suomalaisten ja korealaisten nuorten suhtautumista koulunkäyntiin ja sen eri puoliin. Suomea koskeva tutkimus toteutetaan Helsingissä ja Turussa **haastattelemalla** kuudes- ja kahdeksasluokkalaisia oppilaita. Tämän lisäksi **havainnoidaan** koulutyöskentelyä ja koulunkäynnin arkea kymmenen päivän ajan. Kuudesluokkalaisten haastattelut toteutetaan suomeksi ja kahdeksannen luokan oppilaiden kielitaidosta riippuen joko englanniksi tai suomeksi.

Toivomme, että lapsenne voisi osallistua tutkimukseen (haastatteluun ja havainnointiin). Noin tunnin kestävät oppilashaastattelut tehdään koulupäivän aikana maaliskuu-huhtikuussa 2016. Haastatteluissa kysytään oppilaiden mielipiteitä kouluelämän eri puolista, kuten opiskelusta, opettajista, toisista oppilaista, koulurakennuksesta jne. Lapsenne osallistuminen tutkimukseen on vapaaehtoista ja hän voi halutessaan myös keskeyttää osallistumisensa missä tahansa tutkimuksen vaiheessa. Tutkimus on luottamuksellinen eikä yksittäisten oppilaiden tai koulujen tietoja tuoda julki missään vaiheessa. Tutkimuksessa noudatetaan Tutkimuseettisen neuvottelukunnan määrittämiä humanistisen, yhteiskuntatieteellisen ja käyttäytymistieteellisen tutkimuksen tutkimuseettisiä periaatteita (http://www.tenk.fi/sites/tenk.fi/files/eettisetperiaatteet.pdf).

Jos annatte lapsellenne luvan osallistua tutkimukseen, olkaa hyvä ja täyttäkää alla oleva osa ja palauttakaa lomake luokanopettajalle viikon kuluessa. Palauttakaa lomake siinäkin tapauksessa mikäli ette halua lapsenne osallistuvan tutkimukseen.

Ystävällisin terveisin
Junghyun Yoon, tohtorikoulutettava Tero Järvinen, apulaisprofessori

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Lapseni saa osallistua Quality of School Life -tutkimukseen. ☐

Lapseni ei saa osallistua Quality of School Life –tutkimukseen. ☐

Lapsen

nimi…………………………………………………………………..……………………..

Vanhemman tai huoltajan nimi ……………………………………………………………

Allekirjoitus…………………………… Päiväys: ……………………

Appendix 7: Request for research permission (in Korean)

연구허가신청서

연구 주제: 청소년들의 학교생활의 질(Quality of school life) – 한국과 핀란드 비교교육연구

학교생활의 질: 학생들이 일상적인 학교생활에서 겪게 되는 다양한 경험에 대한 학생들의 인식으로, 예를 들어 학습 환경(수업), 사회적 환경(교사 및 동료 학생들과의 교류 등), 물리적 환경(학교 건물, 쉬는 시간 등)으로서의 학교 생활에 대한 학생들의 견해를 의미합니다.

연구목적: 첫째, 본 논문은 한국과 핀란드의 청소년들이 학교생활을 어떻게 인식하고 경험하는지에 대해 연구합니다. 또한 학생들의 학교생활의 질과 관련되어 있는 다양한 사태를 조명하고 그 요인을 규명하고자 합니다. 마지막으로, 한국과 핀란드의 교육제도 및 사회문화적 맥락이 어떻게 학교생활의 질과 연관되어 있는지 해석하고 이해하고자 합니다.

자료수집방법:

1. 학생 면담(초등학교 6 학년 학생 4 명 혹은 중학교 2-3 학년 학생 4 명, 학생 한 명당 1 시간 소요 예정)
2. 교사 면담(초등 6 학년 담임교사 1-2 분 혹은 중 2-3 학년 담임교사 1-2 분, 한 분당 1 시간 20 분 소요 예정)
3. 교실 수업을 비롯한 학교주요 환경 (쉬는 시간, 점심 시간, 운동장 등) 관찰

연구시기: 2016 년 5 월 하순에서 6 월 말 사이에 5 일 정도 관찰과 면담 진행

본 연구는 해당학교의 교육과정 활동 및 학생, 선생님들께 부담을 드리지 않는 범위 내에서 이루어집니다. 참여자들의 자발적인 동의 및 협조에 의해 연구를 진행하게 되고 참여자들이 원할 경우 연구 기간 중 언제든지 참여를 철회하실 수 있습니다. 해당 학교, 학생, 교사 참여자들의 모든 정보(참여자 개인정보, 학교명 등)는 연구 시작부터 끝까지 익명 처리됩니다. 현장 연구 이후 연구자료를 분석하여 집필한 논문을 보내드릴 예정입니다. 본 연구는 핀란드 연구윤리 국가자문기구의 연구윤리원칙(http://www.tenk.fi/en/ethical-review-human-sciences)을 준수합니다. 귀교에서 현장연구를 진행함으로써 본 연구가 한국-서울과 핀란드 남부 지역의 교육에 조금이나마 기여할 수 있게 되기를 바라며 연구 허가, 참여 및 협조를 부탁드립니다.

핀란드 뚜르꾸 대학 교육학과 박사과정 윤정현, 지도교수 떼로 야르비넨(Tero Järvinen) 드림

학생연구참여동의서

담임학급 학생들의 학교생활 관찰 참여 및 아래 학생들의 면담 참여에 동의합니다. ☐

담임학급 학생들의 학교생활 관찰 참여 및 아래 학생들의 면담 참여에 동의하지 않습니다. ☐

면담 참여 학생 성명 ....

담임교사 성명 및 서명 .... 날짜: ....

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