The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

Curriculum and Instruction

KOREAN TEACHER'S VIEW ON POPULAR CULTURE

IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTING

A Thesis in

Curriculum and Instruction

by

Jeonghye Nah

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science

August 2018

The thesis of Jeonghye Nah was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Allison Henward
Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction
Thesis Advisor

James E. Johnson
Professor of Curriculum and Instruction

Rose Mary Zbiek
Professor of Education
Head of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School

ABSTRACT

This aim of the study is to examine a view colored by beliefs, practices, and experiences with popular culture of early childhood teachers in South Korea. I attempt to discover their beliefs and experiences with popular culture and how they negotiate its role in the early childhood settings depends on their educational backgrounds. As a theoretical framework, I draw on Bourdieu's cultural capital and taste as a distinction proving that teachers' different view on popular culture depends on their educational level. I conduct a semi-structured interview individually with 9 early childhood teachers (4 of 2-3-year college teachers and 5 of 4-year university teachers) via Google Hangout, Skype or any other video phone program depends on what teachers want to use.

Upon close analysis of the data, I find out that 2-3-year college teachers and 4-year university teachers' view is pretty the same way in popular culture among class room but subtle differences are occurred. The two groups of teacher's view on popular culture is widely unlike regarding children's accessibility to adult content, and they also have different reasons to search children's popular culture. Finally, when it comes to the approach on popular culture as a curriculum, the 2-3-year college teachers are not interested in while the 4-year university teachers show the willingness to embrace popular culture as a curriculum only in educational ways. This study implies because that each teacher group has a different view on popular culture depending on their social class, cultural capital, and educational level in which they go through, different strategies should be needed when popular culture are introduced as a pedagogical method.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

Introduction

During my previous study about picture books and social issues, I acknowledged that many early childhood teachers in South Korea expressed fearless and concern regarding popular culture and technology. The teachers revealed lower confidence in dealing with the popular culture knowledge that children sometimes bring into the classroom because they have no experience with that knowledge. Obviously, popular culture is widespread among children. Given its broad dissemination and controversial aspects, I decided to create an open space to glimpse children's lives and openly discuss the considerable influence of popular culture and technology amongst early childhood teachers in South Korea.

It is fundamentally political that popular culture comes into the classroom and the everyday lives of teachers and students. The power of popular culture and digital media in our lives is indisputable in its diffusion (Marshall & Sensoy, 2016). Buckingham and Sefton-Green (2005) admit that the appearance of popular culture as school curriculum has been increasingly grown-up, with some controversial issues. At all levels of the education system, concerns are raised about the possibility that this could threaten the traditional values of education as an absolute form. Should we maintain the shelter of our own values of traditional education, or accept the changing contemporary society by pursuing practical, real-life knowledge in education?

Zevenbergen (2007) says that in contemporary early-childhood settings, new young learners, called the "digital-native generation," have grown up in very different settings from previous generations. This requires an alteration in the early childhood setting to reconceptualize pedagogy and to broaden learning opportunities constructed at home and virtual spaces for the new generation of learners. Buckingham (1998) suggests that "it is possible to regard teaching

about popular culture as an extension of progressivism. From this perspective, popular culture is seen as an authentic part of students' experience, and hence as something which teachers should seek to validate and even to celebrate. This must, it is argued, necessarily entail a change in the dominant power relations of the classroom; the students are now the experts and teacher's knowledge is no longer privileged" (p. 8).

In this movement, many researchers and educators are investigating the teaching of popular culture, which motivates students to acquire real knowledge from their everyday lives. Children create many texts through movies, television programming, cartoons, and video games targeting not only young children but also adults; teachers sometimes have no idea what they are talking about. Many preschool and kindergarten teachers (even in the infant and toddler classrooms) readily observe children using "lingo" from television programs and characters in their classrooms. Children build social relationships and create their own subculture through various popular culture elements and digital media.

In the literacy and language fields especially, researchers consider the incorporation of popular cultural texts and themes as a teaching method and curriculum in schools (Dyson, 1997; Dyson, 2013; Evans, 2005; Marsh, 1999; Marsh 2000; Orellana, 1994; Simmons, 2014; Yoon, 2018). Other researchers try to incorporate children's popular culture as funds of knowledge in the classroom (Dickie & Shuker, 2014; Hedges, 2011).

Despite researchers' ongoing efforts, however, popular culture is never free from its sense of shame and barriers. There is a misunderstanding that popular culture has a lower quality than high culture and that media effects paradigm, leading to boys' violence issues, feminist critique, and innocent children framed in the middle-class parents. Hedges (2001) comments that adults often worry that popular culture reflect a dominant, oppressive discourse in terms of racism, gender stereotypes, and consumerism. Seiter (1999) finds that teachers don't like popular children

television shows because they lead children to forbidden things, like silly jokes and flippant language, rule-breaking and disruption.

There are two significant reasons I conducted this study, looking at the seemingly unbridgeable gap between children's popular culture and teachers. At first, one of the remarkable features of popular culture is rapid change. Much popular culture has changed so often that it is sometimes hard for teachers to keep up. As Marshall and Sensoy (2016) point out, culture seems to change constantly, as well. Popular culture goes through a quick process of demise from when it is first produced. What was once popular is soon outdated, and people constantly replace old cultural elements with newer ones. Thus, no matter how academic researchers try to examine current popular culture, they struggle to deal with new trends. From the teachers' viewpoint, popular culture as pedagogy should be always updated, to have the proper effect on the overall learning process and curriculum.

Second, I believe that early childhood teachers are an important gateway to welcoming popular culture as official knowledge in the classroom. No matter how many forms of popular culture young children bring into the classroom themselves, teachers have a responsibility to choose specific curriculum and activities within the early childhood setting. Hedges (2001) states that if teachers have a negative view of technology or disregards children's interest in popular culture, then they will not view popular culture knowledge as "real" knowledge, which means missing out on the real lives of children that teachers must pursue and engage with throughout their professional careers.

In this study, I examine how nine early childhood teachers' views on popular culture are shaped by different educational backgrounds. Within Bourdieu's fundamental framework, I assume that 2–3-year college teachers and 4-year university teachers will manifest intrinsic differences in popular culture tastes and beliefs, leading to different practices in the classroom. Students from low-income families are more likely to afford 2–3-year colleges (to learn practical

job skills) and students from high-income families are more likely to attend 4-year universities (to pursue academic knowledge).

Four-year-universities require much higher admission scores, a more extended period of education, and higher tuition than 2–3-year colleges do. Chang (2002) supports this assumption, showing a correlation between parents' cultural capital and students' educational attainment. The higher the hierarchical rank, the higher the school's required CSAT scores, and parents of those students have greater economic and cultural capital. At a prestigious 4-year university, 50.6 percent of fathers have grown up in the middle class; but among 2–3-year college students, that percentage sharply decreases to 17.6 percent. Thus, a person's background determines type of educational institute, and then the institute shapes their beliefs and values stronger toward its own cultural tendencies through specific experiences in academic environment, curriculum, professors, and colleagues. Eventually, the gap between the two groups becomes remarkable. Their educational and cultural differences shape their tastes in cultural capital, leading to differences in their views on popular culture.

In the next chapter, I introduce the local context, with a brief history of popular culture in South Korea and general views of people. I also provide basic information on the early childhood teacher training system and explain additional hierarchy, for better understanding of the results. For a literature review, I look at the debates surrounding popular culture, elucidating the concept of Bourdieu's culture capital and how cultural taste and the education system work in his theory. Finally, I review previous works about popular culture among children to consider it as a possibility for the curriculum.

Chapter 2

Local Context

Popular culture in South Korea

South Korea is located the southern part of the Korean Peninsula in East Asia and is surrounded by the world powers Russia, China, and Japan. This well-developed country has a prominent position as the most accelerated economic development in the world. In popular culture, South Korea is known for *Hanllyu* (Korean Wave) and phenomena such as K-pop, K-drama, and K-beauty. Korea's distinctive, trendy styles and fashions have recently grown in influence, leading to significant power. Under *Hanllyu,* popular culture from South Korea has come to be regarded as a source of national pride, particularly throughout Asia. These cultural achievements, however, were not built in a day. It may be surprising that historically, and because of its geography, South Korea has been more concerned about warding off invasion and the cultural domination of other nations than about spreading its own culture abroad (Kim & Choe, 2014).

I begin with a simple overview of the country's modern history and the political setting, related to popular culture. Because South Korean society has been conservative, emphasizing Confucianism, people had a closed stance, taking an unfriendly attitude toward other countries' cultures. As Kim & Choe (2014) explain, South Korea went through a harsh history in its colonial occupation by Japan (1910–45), the Korean War (1950–53), and the ensuing division of the country, so that in many places, Korea's postcolonial identity and nationalism still exist. During the next few decades until the 1990s, Lee (2012) explains that South Korea was ruled by a military regime that focused entirely on economic progress, with strong interventionist and

export-oriented policies. The atmosphere was not favorable toward public culture; free expression started from the public, and the mass media were oppressed by the government with extensive censorship, attempting to keep people under strict control.

In the early 1990s, the landscape of Korean popular culture began to change radically. Following the pro-democracy movement of the 1980s, South Korea transformed itself into a democratic society. Kim & Choe (2014) point out that censorship of television, news, and movies was relaxed under the new government. Unlike the older generation that focused on democratic movements in the 1980s, the new young generation, called as *X-generation*, began to focus on cultural aspects and to embrace other countries' popular cultures, leading to the current cultural renaissance. They were the first generation to identify themselves in consumer culture and focus on culture rather than politics or the economy, and this created a unique cultural wave combined with foreign cultures. Connor (2002) adds that the older generation suffered from war and in their livelihood, but the younger generation had only heard their stories of sacrifice, family separations, and hard times. They no longer had to accept their parents' or grandparents' frugal lifestyles. This young generation's main cultural interest is visual media such as animation, advertisements, videos, and films rather than literature. They also enjoy science fiction, magazines about contemporary culture, Japanese graphic novels, film noir, hip-hop, reggae, soft rock, and ballads—though the older generation is upset that the young are indiscriminate in their acceptance of foreign cultures.

The 1990s were also a time of rapid development in information and communication technologies. "After the country had passed through the long dark tunnel of military regime and transitioned to civilian government in the mid-1990s, South Korea's government-led broadband infrastructure plan was quite successful in shifting market conditions into a new economic system" (Lee, 2012). During this period, the government invested a lot of money in guiding the national development of information and communication. Hong (2014) states that "Korea was busy wiring

the entire country for Internet broadband with government funds, just like building a national highway or railway system. They had been setting up the mechanism for popular culture domination since the dawn of the World Wide Web in the 1990s." The representative project is the Korean Information Infrastructure (KII) project from 1995 to 2005 which makes establish a nationwide high-speed network (Lee, 2012).

Today, South Korea is the world leader in Internet connectivity, with the world's fastest average internet connection speed (Mcdonald, 2011). The article "Asia Internet Usage Stats Facebook and Population Statistics" reveals that about 92.4% of the population (around 45 million people) use the internet in their homes or offices. Clearly the nation has a substantial relationship with its digital space. KOSIS (2017) points out that 90.4% of the households in South Korea who are in their twenties own a personal computer; 95.6% of households who are in their thirties own a personal computer; 95.3% of households in their forties, and 84.2% of households in their fifties have personal computers. This means that most households in South Korea can access the internet through their own computers. Media use is also prevalent for all generations and locations.

Kim & Choe (2014) show how the remarkable economic development and democratization of South Korea have enabled the country to produce and disseminate its own cultural output: music, dance, television dramas, and films. This soft power in entertainment—also encompassing games, sports, and animation—generates increasing profits for South Korea as its "cool" image brands the nation's many corporations, tourism industry, food, and cultural commodities. The nation that once banned miniskirts, Japanese graphic novels, and rock music has changed, now mass-producing and exporting boy bands, soap operas, and the world's most important smart phone (Hong, 2014). I argue that those factors—the high-quality, extensive networking, and the open-minded atmosphere toward popular culture—show that Korea is a country of dynamic potential, and a worthy subject for popular culture studies.

As I mentioned above, popular culture in the 1980s was described as the evil of society, causing degeneration with its imperfections and lack of value. Popular culture was viewed as having adverse effects on young children and teenagers, who are assumed to be developmentally immature. A series of educational studies conducted during the 1990s focused on causal relationships between popular culture and negative effects, such as juvenile delinquency or misbehavior (Kim, 1990; Kim, 1988).

In more recent research, Kim (2004) compares teachers' and students' attitudes, examining popular culture's acceptance in the classroom and everyday life. The author argued that acceptance of popular culture by students is close to the postmodernism perspective, while the perspective of the school staff is closer to a modernist perspective. Schools and teachers use popular culture selectively to communicate more effectively with students for learning goals. That means that if it undermines the common value of education, it tends to be excluded. The cultural distance between schools and students is not reduced and schools are still trying to understand the culture of their students while sticking to a modernist educational paradigm.

Thus, in South Korea, while people's view on popular culture are changing in entire society, in the educational space (school) considered as a more conservative community than others, popular culture is still represented a leisure activities and outside of real study separated from the official school curriculum.

Early childhood teacher training system in South Korea

In South Korea, "early childhood education" means education and care services for young children between birth and age five. Unlike the United States, which considers children age six as kindergarten level, when Korean children turn six, they begin attending first grade. There is therefore a clear dividing line between the ages of five and six, separating early childhood education from elementary school.

Currently, there are two main branches of early childhood institutions in Korean kindergartens and childcare facilities. As Na, Moon and Yoo (2003) state, "Kindergartens are the schools for educating children from the age of three to five, functioning according to educational laws concerning elementary and secondary schools and according to the Early Childhood Education Promotion Act. Childcare facilities serve children from birth until entrance into elementary schools, providing the basic infant care guaranteed by regulations." The Ministry of Education is responsible for children between ages three and five in kindergarten and The Ministry of Health and Welfare is responsible for children between birth and age five in childcare facilities (for example, daycare centers and nurseries) (OECE, 2015). The Nuri national curriculum provides a common national education program and financial support for overlapping age groups between the two authorities' coverage (age three to five), regardless of where the children are.

Historically, those facilities developed on their own, taking different paths (Kim, Kim, & Lee, 2016) in terms of purpose and approach. They still have two separate administrations and monitoring systems, even though the government has tried to integrate them. These two systems present a striking contrast in teacher training system and certification. I would say that the ways people think about kindergarten and childcare facilities and their staffs may be different, with an invisible expectation. For kindergarten teachers' certification, pre-service teachers must graduate

from a 2–3-year college, a 4-year university, or above, majoring in early childhood education. That's why 99.8% of kindergarten teachers are college graduates (70% of teachers graduated from 2–3-year colleges, and 30% of teachers graduated from 4-year universities). In public kindergartens, 66% of the teachers had graduated from 4-year universities that require passing the national exam to become a public kindergarten teacher as a public official (Na, Moon & Yoo, 2003).

Meanwhile, childcare teacher certification has fewer requirements than becoming a kindergarten teacher does. People may graduate from a 2-3-year or 4-year college, but high school graduates or individuals with a high school–equivalent diploma and have completed certain childcare teacher-training courses (even online) may also qualify as childcare teachers. Childcare teachers who graduated from a 2-3-year or 4-year college make up 75% of the total (59.2% of teachers graduated from 2-3-year colleges, and 16.6% graduated from 4-year universities or above). Some 24.2% of childcare teachers are below the high school graduate level. Childcare teachers in public childcare facilities are comparatively higher in educational background than those at private facilities (Na, Moon & Yoo, 2003). This, of course, makes a big difference in educational level among early childhood teachers, creating a hierarchy.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

Debates around popular culture

A great deal of research has tried to understand the underlying notion of popular culture and show why it has emerged in modern life. I start with Kidd (2014) who seeks the origin of the term "popular culture" and its intrinsic attributes. The word "popular" is from the Latin "populous", meaning "the people". Historically, in many societies, "the people" only included a very specific, large mass of poor and working class people. Ruling elites were excluded from "the people", and they had their own culture, a privileged set of cultural goods such as arts, classical music, literature, and other forms of high culture.

Storey (2012) notes that popular culture had been at the center of attention among ruling classes long time ago. Those who held the majority of power regarded the formation of culture among the subjugated class as a sign of political turbulence, so they constantly controlled the popular culture through interference and regulation. However, from the 19th century, no longer had the ruling class controlled popular culture, and this is due to industrialization and urbanization. In the United States, contemporary popular culture started World War II among the rich, more affluent Baby Boomer generation. Regardless of class or educational background, they shaped trends in fashion, music, and lifestyles through considerable buying power (Danesi, 2015). Kidd (2014) also notes that popular culture has obliterated the distinction between high and low forms, allowing people no matter what class they belong to enjoy products and expressions from other classes.

Popular culture has long been a fascinating topic for many researchers and has caused endless discourse and debate. To understand popular culture, I start with major debates and the discourse surrounding them. These debates are now about 200 years old, and in their contemporary form Gans (1991) suggests four major themes that critiques emphasize:

> 1) The negative character of popular culture creation; popular culture is undesirable because, unlike high culture, it is mass-produced by profit-minded entrepreneurs solely for the gratification of a paying audience.

> 2) The negative effects on high culture; Popular culture borrows from high culture, thus debasing it, and also lures away many potential creators of high culture, thus depleting its reservoir of talent.

> 3) The negative effects on the popular culture audience; The consumption of popular culture content at best produces spurious gratifications, and at worst is emotionally harmful to the audience.

> 4) The negative effects on the society; The wide distribution of popular culture not only reduces the level of cultural quality of the society, but also encourages totalitarianism by creating a passive audience peculiarly responsive to the techniques of mass persuasion used by demagogues bent on dictatorship (Gans, 1991, p. 29).

In traditional mass culture critique, scholars such as Arnold, Leavis, Macdonald, and Bloom focus on Elitism and consider popular culture to be lower than high culture. The criticism of popular culture in Elitism starts with an underestimation of the so-called working class and a disdain for their culture. Arnold (1960-77) argues that only highly educated people have contributed to the knowledge and truth of human nature, and he believes that the human world is operated by a few elites.

Also, Macdonald (1953) criticizes popular culture as a parasitic culture that threatens high culture. He condemns strongly popular culture as something led by huge commercial interests chasing money, with people only as passive consumers or followers regardless of own personal tastes. For the mass production of goods, a company targets the average taste of the masses, and by doing so brings down the quality of culture overall. This view is acceptable today because we often refer to popular culture as less sophisticated and undervalue it as low-quality

culture, for example with television programming like "American Idol" and "Keeping Up with the Kardashians", both of which enjoy widespread popularity among tween and teen audiences (Marshall & Sensoy, 2016).

Meanwhile, the Frankfurt School claims that this maintains social authority, whereas elitists are afraid that popular culture threatens cultural authority. The Frankfurt School is "a group of radical sociologists associated with the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research who developed a critical theory that was critical of both Western capitalism and Soviet-style socialism" (Lawson & Garrod, 2001). According to Strinati (2004), the school's theory argues that "capitalist productive forces can generate vast amounts of wealth through waste production such as false needs that can be created and met. In this way, people can be unconsciously reconciled to capitalism, guaranteeing its stability and continuity" (p. 52). They criticize popular culture from the perspective of educating ideology within cultural industry, which dumbs down the average consumers of cultural products.

However, in the postmodernism era, popular culture had gained new political and social status from various perspectives. Beyond the binary of the period of modernism, "cultural pluralism, which is a sort of dynamic, horizontal structure rather than the current pyramid hierarchy of cultural form" (Brottman, 2005, p. XXVI) leads researchers to focus on the desires and pleasures of individuals' consumption. This concept comes from Fiske (1989), who argues that "popular culture is made in a relationship to structures of dominance. This relationship can take two main forms: resistance or evasion. This can involve the interplay of pleasure and meaning" (p. 2). He also suggests that people actively make meaning by consuming popular culture and feeling pleasure without being controlled by ideology.

Framework – Bourdieu's cultural capital

I draw on Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital because of its relevance to how individuals identify their own cultural tastes about popular culture depending on social class and educational background, either intentionally or not. When we consider the notion of capital we may generally imagine money or assets. However, Bourdieu (1986) theorizes different ways in which capital works to form and maintain social classes and positions, meaning not only economic and social capital but also cultural capital.

Cultural capital is explained as that which is "convertible, on certain condition, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243) and "a term to describe how people define the meaning of culture to obtain and maintain power in society" (Weaver, 2005, p. 1). Cultural capital can be divided into three types: the embodied state, which is a long-lasting disposition in the body and mind; the objectified state, which is a form of cultural goods such as images, books, and music; and the institutionalized state, which a form of objectification that must be set apart, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986).

Apple (2013) gives a full detail of being educational reproduction by cultural capital. Affluent parents are positioning in high social space with high salaries and good benefits from companies. Not only they have higher economic capital, but they are able to devote more time and attention to their children's education as a cultural capital. They can move their house to attend children to a better school or buy a car for long-distance pickup. They are familiar with overall education system and get useful information to cultivate their children's talent. In addition, various cultural experiences and after school activities for children, such as hidden curriculum, can be selected.

In Bourdieu's argument, dominant classes use their superior 'cultural capital' to maintain their position of dominance. They seek to demonstrate and confirm their superiority by legitimizing their own cultural tastes while maintaining an aesthetic distance from other cultural forms (McCoy & Scarborough, 2014). In my view, cultural taste and education systems are important concepts in creating cultural capital and building it stronger. Next, I will explore two concepts and look at how class shapes their tastes and how educational systems make them more sophisticated.

Cultural taste

Wright (2015) says, "the term 'taste' describes a sense which, along with sight, hearing, smell, and touch, operates as the primary tool through which an individual apprehends the material world. It is also sensibility – an orientation towards and away from the things and importantly, people in the world. Finally, taste has become conceptualized as a skill – a capacity that can be cultivated as people learn how to make judgments and choices within and between these things and people" (p. 5). It leans on Bourdieu's argument (1984) that "taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar" (p. 6). The judgments of cultural taste interact with social position, and, by selecting such tastes, specify themselves in social positioning and differentiate them from others.

The concept of taste was reified by Gans (1991) who made a category of five cultural tastes according to class in the modern United States: high culture, upper-middle culture, lower-middle culture, low culture, and quasi-folk low culture. High culture differs from all others and represents the points of view of dominant creators and critics. People who are in highly educated upper and upper-middle class statuses occupy mainly academic and professional occupations.

Their cultural activities are exclusive and occur in places that are typically inaccessible to other

classes, such as museums, concert halls, opera houses, and legitimate theaters. Upper-middle

classes, meanwhile, who work as professionals, executives, and highly positioned managers have

attended better than average colleges and universities. They represent the vast majority of

America's upper middle class, pursuing healthy lives, new sports, and travel. Even though they

watch television, which is often assumed only suitable for lower classes, their preference is tuned

to documentary channels like Bravo and Discovery as well as content such as that provided by the

Independent Film Channel (Gans, 1991).

Lower-middle culture is the dominant taste culture in the United States today. People in

this class are employed in lower-status professions such as accountancy, public education, and

low-level white collar jobs. Although older members in this class have only a high school

diploma, many younger ones have attended and/or graduated from state universities and many

smaller colleges. Their representative activities include going to malls and movie theaters,

watching Hollywood movies and popular sitcoms. Low culture and quasi-folk culture refers to

people who are skilled and semiskilled factory or service workers as well as semi-skilled white

collar workers and unskilled blue collar and service job workers. These people possibly obtained

non-academic high school educations or dropped out at a very early period of schooling. They

often include immigrant families, people of color, and individuals of a rural origin (Gans, 1991).

How the educational system works

Bourdieu (1984) argues that "Cultural needs are the product of upbringing and education"

(p. 1), meaning that all cultural practices and preferences in literature, painting, or music are

linked primarily to one's educational level (measured by qualifications or length of schooling) and

secondarily to social origin. Gans (1999) adds that since both educational achievement and

schools which an individual attends are closely related to their socioeconomic level, so cultural taste directs an individual to a specific place in class hierarchy. Educational achievement will probably predict the index of a person's cultural choices more than anything else.

Bourdieu & Passeron (1990) state that "Every institutionalized educational system (ES) owes the specific characteristics of its structure and functioning to the fact that, by the means proper to the institution, it has to produce and reproduce institutional conditions whose existence and persistence (self-reproduction of the system) are necessary both to the exercise of its essential function of inculcation and to the fulfillment of it function of reproducing a cultural arbitrary which it does not produce (cultural reproduction), the reproduction of which contributes to the reproduction of the relations between the groups or classes (social reproduction)" (p. 54). Also, Bourdieu asserts that "Level of education makes possible a more direct comparison and all throw light upon the existence of an extremely pronounced relationship between the different 'legitimate' activities and the level of education" (Bourdieu, 1973, p. 177).

Sullivan (2002) abridges Bourdieu's idea that the education system functions to legitimate and reproduce class inequalities in an industrialization society. So-called "success" as an educational attainment is designed by the possession of cultural capital and high class habitus (a set of attitudes and values by class). Success and failure in an education system seems to depend on an individual's effort, but most appropriate knowledge and practice in the school is already set by high- or middle-class standard. Because low- and working class students leave behind comparatively high- and middle-class students without these traits, their failure in educational systems is evitable.

Thus, educational institutions and their levels have a profound strength on the composition of cultural capital and compel each teacher to have their own approach based on their own socialization or habitus. In this framework, I assume there are inherent differences between teachers from two- or three-year colleges and those from four-year universities in terms

of cultural capital. Also, when teachers go through training programs, they adopt values of their educational programs whether doing so is appropriate or not. Early childhood teachers typically adopt beliefs and preferences for materials such as those utilizing popular culture based on teacher training programs depending on social backgrounds, ideologies and classes governing the choices they make.

Popular culture as a class distinction

In the Bourdieu (1984)'s arguments, cultural capital is shaped by a difference of cultural tastes and habits from their own social classes. The taste roughly corresponds to educational levels and social classes specified as legitimate taste, middle-brow, and popular taste. This cultural distinction makes clear expectations about any forms of culture at different levels of the social hierarchy.

For example, those at the top will choose probably enjoy to visit galleries and exhibitions for fine arts and visit Michelin restaurant for savoring cuisine. They will also prefer healthy, fresh food in Whole Foods which has organic line meat and vegetables rather than Wal-Mart. For them, crowded traditional market and a shabby pub located in a back alley of the town is an unusual event. On the other hands, those groups at the bottom will shun the fine arts and costly, inefficient fair trade products or environmentally friendly products. They will arbitrarily choose exciting and mass-mediated entertainments.

Historically, popular culture has been leisure activities for low-class people despite many television and Hollywood movies have blurred the boundaries. Schools, which have been dominated by the middle-class culture and knowledge, tend to look at popular culture as valueless. According to Seiter (1999), television is the powerful main sources to disseminate popular culture. Taste is clear when analyzing television in terms of popular culture as a class distinction. For

example, specific informative television genres are enjoyed by middle-class audience. Otherwise, such as soap operas and sitcom are associated with working-class viewers, who may have less cash available to purchase other kinds of cultural good or less freedom to leave the home, may enjoy discussing such popular programs with other at work (Seiter, 1999).

Buckingham and Sefton-Green (2005) discuss popular music to make a distinction between one's identity and social class. Choosing specific popular music taste is locating them in a social, historical and political place. By making a set, they are identifying and identified. Sometimes these choices can be criticized or undervalued by the mainstream and people can be excluded if the taste is unfit proposed by social groups where they in.

In the middle-class perspective, Cross (2004) says that middle -class parents are longing for their kids' innocent and happiness from secular realities. They protect their children's innocence from working-class and minority culture and the parents might be presumed them as crude, violent and dangerous. Some conservative parents seek to isolate their kids from things that do not follow religious, moral, or political values. Also, Seiter (1991) adds that middle-class members mainly dominating the world often criticizes of commercialism on television because it promotes aggressive behavior and unhealthy eating habits, and makes children crave trashy toys and junk food.

For subordinate classes such working-class, also they make a distinction between popular culture from other social class. The working-class members realize that culture is dominated by the culture of the ruling class and they need to find the ways of expressing in their own specific cultures and experiences as a subordinate class. For example, punk rock started from thousands of white lower-class male youth in Britain. They use not only music but also their clothing, language and outlook to reveal their distinguished identity toward society (Eriksen, 1980). In this case, I would say the working-class use popular culture as distinction and create a different type of popular culture which is now still a powerful genre in contemporary music history.

Recently, Grazian (2010) argues that the blurring of class distinction line on popular culture is arising in American culture. Especially, elite and high culture absorbs more popular influences such as professional men's sports (football, basketball, and baseball). This sports culture attracts fans from all around social classes. The popular television shows such as American Idol or Late night TV show are pulling in many more viewers.

Teaching popular culture to young children

Buckingham and Sefton-Green (2005) argue the competencies and understanding of children can be counted not only official knowledge in schools but also media texts, largely outside of schools. Now learning can be conveyed not just through books and textbooks, but through some new media such as computers and television. For this reason, they argue that teachers should get awareness from digital media and new technology that children read, watch and enjoy.

Placing popular culture in the classroom for young children often exist as forms of funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 1992). Dickie and Shuker (2014) examine children' popular culture as funds of knowledge with primary teachers of children aged 5 to 7-year-old children about. In the study, they reveal teachers are able to position popular culture as children's expertise knowledge in the official curriculum. Also, Hedges (2011) argues the potential of children's popular culture as funds of knowledge for an educational tool, helping teachers to get more understanding. In the study, teacher's view and interest in them may make more profound understanding and practices of popular culture curriculum.

As critical pedagogy, Esposito and Banks (2008) introduce that popular culture which is explained regarding knowledge and power. In the early 1990s, they researcher insisted that critical pedagogy must include popular culture for inquiry of students in schools and one of the

ways students constructed knowledge was through learning from popular culture for empowering them. By critical pedagogues, teachers can learn to embrace and utilized popular culture without judgment. Students are really experts and knowledge holders unlike the teachers are learners who can never be the experts.

There are many studies of attempts to bring popular culture into the literacy curriculum. Dyson (1997; 2013) outline of the potential of popular culture related literacy in the early years. She argues popular cultural text can be absorbed into children's daily lives and play for intriguing children's motivation, making the cultural vision, and increasing involvement. Yoon (2018) explores children's engagement with popular culture play for early literacy in kindergarten settings with Star Wars which is one of the great movie series in 21st. In her work, children use popular culture as a literacy tool by drawing, writing, and speaking, in the same time, popular culture can be an actor showing children's cultural knowledge and resources.

Marsh (1999) finds to be highly stimulating among 6-7-year old children who did a sociodramatic role-play with a Batman and Batwomen. Also, Marsh (2000) explores that the potential of popular culture makes young children motivated in literacy activities in a preschool setting. She uses Teletubby tales for educational materials and seeks how we incorporate popular cultural text into the curriculum. Simmons (2014)'s work discovers how popular culture appeared in a shared form of knowledge and how children organize their subcultures during sociodramatic play in the classroom of the elementary school.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Why interview

From Kvale and Brinkmann (2015), "The research interview is based on the conversations of daily life and is a professional conversation; it is an inter-view, where knowledge is constructed in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee" (p. 4). The research interview must be structurally and purposefully designed with careful questioning and listening beyond a spontaneous everyday conversation. The interviewer is required to propose the main topic of the interview and communicate critically back and forth with the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Through qualitative interviews we can understand experiences and reconstruct events in which we neither participated nor witnessed. We can also extend our intellectual and emotional reach across age, occupation, class, race, sex and geographical boundaries (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). A semi-structured interview is a qualitative approach most generally used among interview methods. It is more open, allowing new ideas to be raised during the interview by the interviewee. The interviewer plans broad topics to be covered and some indicative questions for each topic. The interviewing process is flexible and provides opportunities to adapt questions, change the order of questions, or ask unanticipated questions to explore and clarify the interviewee's responses. (Elliot, Fairweather, Olsen, & Pampaka, 2016).

With my limited time as a master's student, I plan to conduct my interviews online due to my distance from South Korea. I intend to use the semi-structured interview method, allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview and giving the interviewee more freedom to

express thoughts and experiences concerning the research topic. My study concerns the teachers' beliefs and practices so this method is ideal for obtaining data flexibly and efficiently.

Participants

Recruitment

I lived in Daegu, South Korea for 26 years and graduated from the College of Education majoring in early childhood education in the same city. I have a strong relationship with many early childhood teachers from 4 years at my own school and working as a preschool teacher for 2 years. I keep in touch with few teachers and asked that they introduce me to other teachers from different social and educational backgrounds. The participants are purposefully recruited by word of mouth.

For this research, I recruit two groups from different educational backgrounds. Group A is early childhood teachers who attended a 2-3-year college or less and Group B is early childhood teachers who attended to a 4-year university or more. Those early childhood teachers whom I find, I then contact via phone and email. It is also possible to be introduced to candidates by others. Second, the researcher sends an email containing general information about the researcher and the overall research process and consent forms in Korean. Third, when the researcher receives the signed consent forms, the researcher makes an appointment and a series of decisions with participants.

Following Rubin and Rubin (2011)'s recommendation, interviewees must have rich experience and profound knowledge in the area about which they are being interviewed. This first-hand relevant experience is required for them and their researcher to recruit sufficient people

with knowledge about a research problem. For this reason, I ask eligibility questions of candidates before obtaining consent by email. The questions are as follows:

1) Are you currently working in early childhood education in South Korea?

2) Do you have more than 2 years of experience in early childhood education?

3) Do you pay attention to your pupils' interests and are you willing to discuss popular culture in the classroom?

4) Are you able to operate an online video communication program?

Group A: 2-3-year college teachers (the names of teachers is all pseudonym)

[A-1]: Ms. Yoon is a 25-year-old who is working as a public childcare center teacher in Daegu for three years. She is in charge of 4-year-old children now. She graduated from 2-3-year college majored in social welfare and in same time she achieved childcare teacher certification.

[A-2]: Ms. Bae is a 28-year-old who is working as a private kindergarten teacher in Daegue for five years. She graduated 2-3-year college majored in early childhood. She currently leads 5-year-old children.

[A-3]: Ms. Jang is a 26-year-old teacher who is working in nursery teacher and currently works at Montessori private kindergarten in Daegu. She graduated from 2-3-year college majored in early childhood education and after graduation she went through a one-year internship.

[A-4]: Ms. Kim is a 24-year-old teacher who is working at a public childcare center in Daegu. She graduated from 2-3-year-college in Daegu holding bachelor degree of early childhood education. She is currently in charge of 3-year-old kids.

Group B: 4-year university teachers (the name of teachers is all pseudonym)

[B-1]: Ms. Young graduated from a private 4-year-university in Daegu. She is a 27-year-old who is currently working in public kindergarten. She prepared a national qualification test for 2 years because it is required to pass teacher employment exam to be a public kindergarten teachers.

[B-2]: Ms. Jin is a 29-year-old teacher at a private childcare center in, Daegu for five years. She majored in psychology and early childhood education in 4-year-university and also completed her master's degree. She finished all of PhD program coursework and now she is preparing her dissertation. She is currently in charge of 3-years children.

[B-3] Ms. Hwa graduated from a private 4-year-university in Daegu majored in early childhood education. She and I worked in the same classroom for about six months of childcare center sponsored by major company. She is currently pursuing a master's degree at the same university.

[B-4]: Ms. Eun is a 28-year-old homeroom teacher of public kindergarten for two years. She graduated from 4-year-private University in Daegu majored in early childhood education and after graduation she passed a public teacher test with honors.

[B-5]: Ms. Min is now 26 years old and has been a kindergarten teacher for two. She graduated from 4-year-private university majored in early childhood education. She is currently working at a private kindergarten focusing on English and Montessori program.

Interview protocol

PART 1: The preschool teacher's view about popular culture as an adult in everyday lives

Experiences on popular culture in everyday lives

1) What image/concept comes to mind first when you think of popular culture?

2) Do you know any the latest trendy popular culture in your community/society?

3) What kinds of media you mostly use? Why do you like it?

Thoughts on popular culture in everyday lives

1) How do you think about current popular culture trend?

2) What do people get benefit from popular culture? If you have, tell me more.

3) Do you have any concern? If you have, tell me more.

4) How do you think about the meaning (role) of popular culture for the people?

PART 2: The preschool teacher's view about popular culture as a teacher in the classroom

Experiences on popular culture in the classroom

1) Have you seen materials of popular cartoon characters your children bring into your classroom?

2) What kinds of cartoon, toy, program etc is the most popular among current children?

3) Have you ever talk about popular culture with your children? When? (circle time, free play time, outside play time, reading time) How? (informal way, formal way) How do you think about that?

4) Are there any difficulties when you handle with popular culture? If you have, tell me more.

Thoughts on popular culture in the classroom

1) How do you think about current popular culture among children? If it is prevalent, why children enjoy/are enthusiastic on popular culture?

2) Are there any benefits to children playing with popular culture? If you have, tell me more. Do you have any concern? If you have, tell me more.

3) Would you mind to include popular culture within curriculum? If you want, how do you approach it? If you don't want, why do you think like that?

Data collection and analysis

The voices of teachers are digitally recorded with researcher's voice recorder and transcribed. For analyzing the data, I carefully read all the transcribed interview scripts and highlight meaningful words and sentences. Data are coded according to topics that emerge in the teacher's responses. The coded data are grouped into categories and themes are developed, based on the interrelationship of the categories.

Chapter 5

Findings and Discussion

Korean teachers' view on popular culture

The teachers who participated in this study were mostly born in the early and mid-1990s. They were able to have rich cultural experiences with progressive technology development and witness the advent of new forms of popular culture. Interestingly, they mostly spent their early childhoods running around the playground with friends, while television was only popular at home. However, when they were in elementary school, the first home computers began to appear in average homes and even schools began to use computers for educational purposes. When they were middle school students and high school students, cellphone use began to spread among the teenagers, and when they went to college, having a smartphone and a presence on one or more social networking platforms were taken for granted.

Even though teachers had different economic, social, or educational backgrounds, their cultural experiences as described in the interviews looked strikingly similar. Gans (1991) appeared to be correct when he asserted that "young people are the main carriers of innovation, at least in every changing society; and if they do not invent new cultural items, they flock to them, partly to express their separation from other age groups and their cohesion as an age group" (p. 94). The type of popular culture the teachers generally enjoyed and the way they accessed it had much in common. They said they especially enjoyed watching soap dramas and entertainment shows via television and smartphone. They also love going to trendy restaurants and coffee shops with their friends for taking pictures and chatting. Most of the respondents shared their experiences via social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. A few teachers said

they enjoy going to art galleries and exhibitions, but rather than analyzing the artworks or discussing them as a high culture, they seem to like to hang out with friends who have the same interests and consume art as a light hobby. From well-packaged television dramas to movies, from popular music to online games, these young 20-somethings acknowledge that popular culture is part and parcel of everyday life, and they don't believe they have been negatively affected by this, or have negative views of popular culture.

As I mentioned, most young teachers are used to using digital media and technology and are exposed to various popular cultures. Interestingly, when they talk about popular culture as adults and in their roles as teachers, the content of the interview and tone of voice used by the participants are completely different.

"Turning Mecard, Scret Jouju, Kinderjoy, Mindcraft blaze, Marvel, Dinocore, Spiderman, Pinkfong, Frozen, Beyblade Burst, Minions, Kongsuni, Robocar POLI, The Little Bus Tayo, Pororo, Tobot...." All of those words are commercial products from popular culture that I heard from teachers during the interview process. Even though I worked in a preschool setting three years ago, I have never heard some of those words before, which means that popular culture trends among children have rapidly changed. All teachers agreed that children are exposed to a huge amount of popular culture in their everyday lives. Popular culture figures can be found in materials such as clothes, shoes, toys and key chains on bags that children bring to school. It can also be observed frequently in conversations between children, between teachers and children, children and parents, and teachers and parents. Apparently, children create their own cultures and share in their own worlds, which adults are very often not able to catch.

Although they don't have strict rules against bringing popular culture into the classroom, all the teachers interviewed have a set of rules. For example, "When children bring toys related to popular culture, children are able to share them with friends for a moment, but when circle time starts, they need to put it in their cubby or bags." Another teacher said, "It's okay to pretend with

popular culture characters during play time, but when it becomes overwhelming teachers decide to mediate the play and interrupt them to find another play things." The biggest negative issue teachers experience with popular culture is the possibility that some children will get hurt. Some teachers have trouble with boys who play to pretend to be Spiderman or a zombie because it makes their behavior too rough and loud in the classroom. Teachers also expressed concerns about violence and aggressive behavior in terms of imitating the actions of heroes and bad guys, mostly enjoyed by boys. Interestingly, in the next script, we can see how feminine figures and beauty in girl's princess play are tacitly accepted as good influences by women teachers.

> [B-3]: My girls in the classroom still love Elsa in Frozen. They wear an Elsa dress. Elsa is a role-model character for girls because she has shinny eyes and long hair. Sometime, I tell them when they don't want to eat vegetables, "You should eat vegetables evenly and they can be taller and get white skin like Elsa." It works.

Seiter (1999) points out that girl's preference is usually towards the beautiful, like a Disney princess or frilly dresses. The boys tend to move in too close each other, be too loud, and to violate the rules of the classroom. The girls experience little intervention by teachers, but boys' play is often directly interrupted by teachers to bring the male students under control. Interestingly, teachers did not have a critical view on the "beauty is good" ideology pursued by young girls. A possible explanation is that Korean society still has a male-oriented social structure and feminist movements have only just started showing influence in several areas.

I figured out that Youtube has risen as a new platform for young children to source popular culture content. As Jones and Cuthrell (2011) mention, Youtube can be an innovative teaching resources for 21st century learners. They argue that teachers can use this tool in classrooms, but should be alert and verify the credibility of each video, evaluating them each in turn in order to achieve the full advantages of the YouTube experience for students.

During the interviews, teachers were shocked that children look for videos of creators reviewing children's toys and cartoons as well as mobile games. Children often watch video clips by personal creators who produce content for young children, as well as follow the channels published by large companies (Most of the major toy companies have YouTube channels for advertising brand new products and uploading related videos). Teachers used to use short video clips on YouTube as teaching materials, of course, but now children spontaneously talk about the names of new Youtube creators and their channels, well beyond the knowledge led by teachers.

> [B-1]: The kids watch YouTube a lot. I didn't know well because I am not YouTube generation. At first, I heard of the YouTube creator's name and didn't even get it. At the beginning of the semester, when children decided to name of small group, they use "ddotty" who is a reviewer of mine craft and mobile game. Kids knew YouTube creator's names and videos they posted. I don't know anything about it.

Even while searching YouTube channels, we often see very young children in the videos. They look comfortable taking a video and uploading details of their daily lives via cameras. In the article "Is it OK for my kid to start her own YouTube channel?" by the commonsense media, they let us know some advice for parents when their kids desire to have their own YouTube channel. The article suggests that kids may see it as a way of expressing themselves, learning digital video skills, sharing with friends, and experimenting creatively.

In the findings, similarities and differences between 2-3-year college teachers and 4-year university teachers emerged. The first part of the findings demonstrates the two groups of teachers' views when young children consume and enjoy adult popular culture in the classroom (It is not my intention to divide adult popular culture and children's popular culture, but most of the teachers describe content as either for children or for adults.) The second part of the findings show why two groups of teachers begin to pay attention to popular culture, respectively. The third

part of the findings illustrates how differently two groups of teachers explore popular culture as a potential tool in the curriculum.

THEME 1: Adult contents to children?

Cross (2004) argues that in the perspective of the middle-class, adults insulate children from the lives of grown-ups and only gradually introduce them to more adult material. Because they believe that children are physically and mentally vulnerable and they are in the developing stage of their early years, regulating young children's exposure to tobacco, alcohol, pornography, and advertising is quite natural, and adults try to mold kids into self-disciplined decision makers. This view was popular in the Victorian age, when adults saw childhood as extremely precious and sought to protect their innocent offspring from the challenges of adult life.

Among 4-year-university teachers, most say that children's exposure to adult content is inevitable, but they don't feel it is right for them. They say that children are immature, experiencing periods in life where they are both developmentally and emotionally incomplete. Therefore, if children are exposed to adult content indiscriminately without parental guidance, it causes a serious propensity to imitate and learn bad things. They expressed negative opinions about the silly words in adult songs, and about children singing along with songs that are mostly filled with mature love stories. Their concept of 'childhood' is similar to that of the middle-class. I assume that teachers' views on children are somewhat similar to their views of children's popular culture.

> [Interviewer]: Why do you think children should not have access to adult contents?
>
> [B-1]: I would not say it's bad, but I'm worried about not being under parental supervision. In the early childhood, young children couldn't build up their own

value and they probably copy the adult content because it is silly. I assume there is a negative effect on them.

[B-4]: Although it is good for children to learn pronunciation and rhythm when they sing a K-pop star, I don't think it fits their level. Look at the lyrics. I wonder this love song is for child's emotion.

[B-5]: I don't like kids watch movies which is not right for their age. Few years ago, when the Zombie movie, "Train to Busan" came out, one of my kids said "I am a zombie." You know, zombies are real scary figure if it really exists around us. They kill people. I feel like it is a sort of violence. We have a trouble with him because he pretended to bite other friends and got rough.

However, 2-3-year college teachers have a different view compared to 4-year-university teachers. They say that it is natural for children to have access to adult content. They can access music for adults very easily when they walk down the street, ride in cars, or watch television programs. The children can repeatedly listen to adult music and remember the songs. The lyrics of the songs are naturally shared with friends and teachers in the school environment.

[A-1]: Well, I think it is okay (to listen adult's popular song) I don't think it bothers me. The parents love the popular songs even it is for adults and they just want to share with their kids. I think children look so cute. I said "How did you know that song?" they sang an adult song and "What's the next? Please one more time."

[A-2]: One of my classroom children who love to dance knew to dance all the popular K-pop songs. It was so much fun. Children song is limited. My friend attended to private academies to learn how to dance professionally. It was amazing how she expressed her talents while learning to dance. I think that's the positive way with popular songs.

The 2-3-year college teachers thought it was funny and cute when children sing along to K-pop songs and know all the lyrics. It gives a chance for teachers and children to talk to each other and develop stronger relationships through common interests. Also, children who are talented in singing and/or dance will be helped to develop their gifts. These teachers saw children

as members of society who live together with adults in everyday life, not in a special protected

period where they cannot enjoy adult content. However, some teachers did say they felt

something lacking in children who knew many 'adult' things at an early age.

THEME 2: The "different" reason why they are interested in popular culture

Lareau's (2011) work, where she conducted a study of two different classes with different

views on parenting and children's play, suggested the idea of "concerted cultivation" that middle-

class parents look to their parenting and their children's play for cultivating talents, while this is

uncommon among their poor and working-class counterparts who seem to have the idea of

"natural growth".

In this aspect, two groups of teachers from different training systems expressed different

reasons when asked why they are interested in children's popular culture. Most teachers replied

that they search the names and content of various children's programs that children mention in

the classroom. But a different point of view also came out between them. The 2-3-year college

teachers' purpose in investigating popular culture was related to being close and feeling a sense

of community with their students. They wanted to be able to have a conversation with children on

normal topics related to their daily lives. In order to show affection and love, it is reasonable to

find out what children like and enjoy. Of course, when the teacher comes up with related topics of

popular culture, children often get really excited that their teacher knows exclusively children's

television programs and characters well.

> [A-1]: The kids asked "Do you know this program (Carbot) and song (main
> theme song)?" Actually, I wanted to sing with them. The lyrics and sound is fun
> to follow. I wanted to build closeness and a sense of community with children.
> The children's reaction was that they were super excited and they look to keep
> talking to me what they know about Carbot.

[A-2]: If I didn't get the names of toys and television program children were talking about, I would search it. Every kid knows expect me but as a teacher I need to interact with them, right? By talking and showing interests of children, they are able to feel my affection and care to them.

[A-3]: Because I've been looking for popular culture mostly kid programs, I want to have a conversation with them. If I don't know about them very well, the conversation with me and children didn't last long. That's why I am searching the program and watching the clip of those kinds of programs.

However, among 4-year-university teachers, a different reason for learning about children's popular culture was often mentioned. They look at popular culture for children for educational purposes, and perhaps to check the age appropriateness of the content for young children. Of course, they also have pure curiosity about them, but they tend to judge the content by its educational value, rather than its potential purpose of developing closeness and intimacy.

[Interviewer]: Have you every searched for popular culture that children bring to class?

[B-1]: Yes, there are many. I've been looking for *mysterious apartments*, and I've looked for the name of the YouTube Creator.

[Interviewer]: Why were you curious?

[B-1]: I need to know if it's a good thing or a bad thing. I thought I could judge by right standard for children's standards and accept it as a matter of interest if it was okay, but if it was bad, I should impose some restrictions.

[B-3]: I think I'll be able to provide educational support only if I know what popular culture they like. Indirectly, children bring a lot of popular culture into free play situations, but if the teacher was too ignorant about it, I would have difficulty providing learning support. So I would rather look for some of the current trendy cartoons and movies for children.

Another teacher said she wanted to provide educational support along with her children's search for popular culture. Her childcare center is more supportive of emerging free play than any other institution, so popular culture can be a resource to support her in learning. However, the

popular cultural material she has recognized so far has been limited to topics like dinosaurs –
already studied in the center – not new subjects, like robots or hero play.

THEME 3: Exploring popular culture as curriculum

Teachers have tried to explore popular culture as a curriculum based on the undeniable
fact that popular culture is usually of great interest to children. They consider educational policies,
the values of institutions, and parent-child dynamics, while some teachers also mention formal
educational experiences such as graduate programs. In particular, many teachers talk about Nuri-
curriculum, which is a main curriculum of the early childhood education system. This curriculum
is important because it should be followed in all institutions under educational law.

Nuri-curruiculum as a national curriculum was introduced by the Korean government in
2012 for all children aged 5 in both kindergarten and childcare centers. The Nuri-curriculum was
later expanded in 2013 to cover children aged 3-4. What distinguishes the Nuri-curriculum is that
it allows for the provision of a high-quality curriculum to all preschoolers regardless of the type
of educational service. The contents of the Nuri-curriculum are composed of five areas: physical
exercise, health, communication, social relationships, artistic experience, and nature exploration.
These five areas consist of 20 categories with 56 content areas for children aged 3 and 59 content
areas for children aged 4-5 (Chang, 2013).

Because there is teacher guide on the Nuri-curriculum, most teachers mentioned the
guide book when I asked about curriculum. The guide book covers a variety of lesson plans with
pictures, board games, videos and presentation files. It can help busy early childhood teachers to
prepare for their lessons more easily, and provide assurance that all children will have an equally
qualified education. Due to the authority of the Nuri-curriculum, most 2-3-year college teachers
were confused with how to incorporate popular culture into classroom activities.

[A-1]: But we have the specific lesson plan from Nuri curriculum, which has a monthly theme and a weekly sub-theme. Although popular culture is one of the most interesting things on children, I don't think it is fitted with education. I don't think it's a good idea to draw popular culture instead other teaching aids. The Nuri curriculum is well-planned.

[A-3]: I admit their pleasure, but I don't want to bring it to the curriculum. Because I feel that popular culture is separate from the Nuri curriculum and there are so many activities in kindergarten already.

One might speculate, like Bourdieu (1984) argues, that scholastic measurements of culture (such as direct, closed questions on authors, dates and events) are mostly taught at the low levels of schooling, but this reverses towards the highest levels of the system. In summary, in the lower educational institutions, students learn basic knowledge from text books, and from the theories of qualified classic scholars. On the other hand, in the highest levels of schooling, teachers and students have the opportunity to shift from the old traditional concepts to explore new paradigms such as race, social classes, and gender.

At the undergraduate level, students majoring in early childhood education often go through same course program, but more 4-year-university teachers have a possibility to pursue graduate programs compared to 2-3-year-college teachers. One of the points raised by 4-year-university teachers is that they could have a different perspective on children's popular culture programs by reading articles in the course of a graduate program.

[B-2] During the master's course, I read a paper on the effect of TV program characters on the social development of infants. At first, I was filled with negative thoughts, and after reading them, I became flexible. In order for children to participate in an activity, interest and initiative must be a prerequisite because it is television and character.

[B-3]The movie "Jurassic Park" has been released and the dinosaurs become one of interests of children. So I took the subject to the curriculum and tried to give them relevant materials and books during the afternoon. Another difficult part is

that the teacher knows a lot about Nuri curriculum, but dinosaurs are unfamiliar to us so I had to study. Dinosaurs are very helpful to get knowledge, but I don't like robot and other hero play because it is too hard to handle it.

 [B-4] If there is an educational part, it will be okay. For example, it will be okay to bring some clips of video for learning safety and manners.

The results were very interesting, as even though the 4-year university teachers showed a more negative perception of popular culture than their 2-3-year college counterparts, they also tried harder to explore the potential of popular culture as curriculum. In the case of teachers who attended 2-3-year colleges, they considered popular culture more friendly and closer to children's everyday lives but had a more passive attitude towards embracing popular culture as curriculum.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

The two groups from different classes and education levels were analyzed to reveal different views on children's popular culture. The result was that the two groups of teachers had in some ways similar, but in other ways subtly different, views on children's popular culture. 4-year-university teachers have seen children as being innocent, untainted creatures, influenced by the middle-class perspective of where they are mostly from and they adopt a defensive attitude on popular culture. Since their previous training programs have strengthened the teacher's power or authority to educate children, of course, in appropriate ways, they tend to look for educational topics and contents in children's popular culture. Therefore, when they try to embrace popular culture as pedagogy, they draw some parts of them that would be instructive for children and prefer ways that support middle-class values. While 2-3-year college teachers have seen children as members of society, who go through much the same experiences as adults so they don't regard of young children as far away from the adult world. They search for children's popular culture because the teachers want to have common interests with children, for chatting with them and forging connections. They said this is the way to show that teachers are interested in children's pleasure with affection.

Obviously, Bourdieu (1984)'s idea that social class and the education system make a difference, reproduce and strengthen each individual's positioning is shown in the study. Different approaches are required for the two groups in different positions when we focus on exploring the possibilities of popular culture as curriculum. I suggest that 4-year-university teachers need to be out of the "innocent childhood" concept and be reconsider with popular culture as a part of children's everyday lives. For 2-3-year college teachers, it is necessary to

introduce various approaches and articles that demonstrate that popular culture can also be part of valuable knowledge-based learning for child-centered activities.

I also argue that teacher's knowledge of children's popular culture might be limited because they have no chance to learn about them in formal ways and it is too difficult to follow children's ever-changing cultural trends. It is time to learn children's popular culture through discussions with children, listening to their conversations, and from their own young children and relatives (Dickie and Shuker, 2014).

"In early childhood education, respect means valuing the worth of the child by seeing the child as a human being who has feelings, ideas, and wishes that should be honored to the greatest extent possible" (Feeney, 2012, p. 59). Popular culture as curriculum can be a sort of respectful action for young children who are usually marginalized from official knowledge which is planned by adults. Also, it will be helpful for young children who are in more marginalized groups in terms of class, race, language, and disability. If we pay attention to children's culture and bring it to school, which is a place of formal learning, children will have a confidence of themselves and actively engage in learning.

I recommend that teachers draw on popular culture as a component of the funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2006). Also, Hedges (2001) states that "teachers might be encouraged to analyze children's interest in popular culture in a more meaningful way in order to engage with children's underlying inquiry into what characteristics and qualities make a well-rounded, contributing member of a family, community culture and society. Teacher can use popular culture to develop children's funds of knowledge in the center setting." Thus, children's popular culture can be a part of the funds of knowledge and can be a good starting point to encourage learning processes beyond traditional schooling systems.

The early childhood education teachers are not only group to take care for young children but they are only one in our society with specialized knowledge and expertise in

supporting children's hands-on experience and relevant learning. Interviewing with teachers is a meaningful way to take a glimpse into their beliefs and practices in the early childhood setting, and to hear lively and informative anecdotal evidence. By exploring other aspects of teachers' views on popular culture, I hope to encourage the possibility of popular culture as a pedagogy bridging between real life experience and school knowledge and empowering young children's knowledge.

Reference

Apple, M. W. (2013). *Educating the right way: Markets, standards, god, and inequality*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. (1973). Cultural reproduction and social reproduction In P. Bourdieu, & R. Brown (Eds.), *Knowledge, education and cultural change* (pp. 173-184). London: Tavistock.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A Social critique of the judgment of taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-258). New York, NY: Greenwood.

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society, culture*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Brottman, M. (2005). *High theory/Low culture*. New York, NY: Springer.

Buckingham, D. (Ed.). (1998). *Teaching popular culture: Beyond radical pedagogy*. London: University College London Press.

Buckingham, D., & Sefton-Green, J. (Eds.). (1994). Cultural studies goes to school: Reading and teaching popular media. London: Taylor & Francis.

Chang, M. H. (2002). Cultural reproduction of social class: Effects of cultural capital on student ability test. *Korean Journal of Sociology, 36*(4), 223-251.

Chang, M. L. (2013). Nuri curriculum: The first step toward the integration of split systems of early childhood education and care in Korea. Seoul: Korea Institute of Child Care and Education.

Commonsense Media. (n.d.). *Is it ok for my kid to start her own YouTube channel?*. Retrieved from https://www.commonsensemedia.org/learning-with-technology/is-it-ok-for-my-kid-to-start-her-own-youtube-channel

Connor, M. E. (2002). *The Koreas: A global studies handbook*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Cross, G. (2004). *The cute and the cool: Wondrous innocence and modern American children's culture*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Danesi, M. (2015). *Popular culture: Introductory perspectives*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.

Dickie, J., & Shuker, M. J. (2014). Ben 10, superheroes and princesses: primary teachers' views of popular culture and school literacy. *Literacy, 48*(1), 32-38.

Dyson, A. H. (1997). *Writing superheroes: Contemporary childhood, popular culture, and classroom literacy*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Dyson, A. H. (2013). *Rewriting the basics: Literacy learning in children's cultures*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Elliot, M., Fairweather, I., Olsen, W., & Pampaka, M. (2016). *A dictionary of social research methods*. London: Oxford University Press.

Eriksen, N. (1980). Popular culture and revolutionary theory: Understanding punk rock. *Theoretical Review, 18*, 13-35.

Evans, J. (2005). *Literacy moves on: Popular culture, new technologies, and critical literacy in the elementary classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Feeney, S. (2012). Professionalism in early childhood education: Doing our best for young children. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Fiske, J. (2010). *Understanding popular culture*. London: Routledge.

Gans, H. J. (1999). *Popular culture and high culture an analysis and evaluation of taste*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

González, N., Neff, D., Amanti, C., & Moll, L. (1992). Funds of Knowledge for teaching; Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice, 31*(2).

Grazian, D. (2010). *Mix it up: Popular culture, mass media, and society*. New York, NY: WW Norton.

Hedges, H. (2011). Rethinking sponge bob and ninja turtles: popular culture as FoK for curriculum co-construction. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood, 36*(1), 25-29.

Hong, E. (2014). *The birth of Korean cool: How one nation is conquering the world through pop culture*. New York, NY: Picador.

Jones. T., & Cuthrell. K. (2011). YouTube: Educational potentials and pitfalls, *Computers in the Schools*, 28(1), 75-85.

Kidd, D. (2014). *Pop culture freaks: Identity, mass media, and society*. Westview Press.

Kim, E, Y., Kim, G, S., & Lee, Y. J. (2016). Improving teacher qualifications in preparation for kindergarten and day care center integration: focused on the recognition of professors in teacher training institutions. *The Journal of Korean Teacher Education, 33*(1), 141-160.

Kim, K. H., & Choe, Y. (Eds.). (2014). *The Korean popular culture reader*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

KOSIS. (2017). *Survey on the Internet usage*. Retrieved from https://www.kosis.kr

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage Publications.

Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Lawson, T., & Garrod, J. (2012). *Dictionary of sociology*. London: Routledge.

Lee, K. S. (2012). *IT development in Korea: a broadband nirvana?*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Marsh, J. (1999). Batman and Batwoman go to school: Popular culture in the literacy curriculum. *International Journal of Early Years Education, 7*(2), 117-131.

Macdonald, D. (1953). A theory of mass culture. Diogenes, 1(3), 1-17.

Marsh, J. (2000). Teletubby tales: Popular culture in the early years language and literacy curriculum. *Contemporary issues in early childhood, 1*(2), 119-133.

Marshall , E. , & Özlem , S. (2011). *Rethinking popular culture and media*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

McCoy, C. A., & Scarborough, R. C. (2014). Watching "bad" television: Ironic consumption, camp, and guilty pleasures. *Poetics, 47*, 41-59.

Mcdonald, M. (2011). *Home Internet may get even faster in South Korea*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/22/technology/22iht-broadband22.html

Na, J., Moon, M., & Yoo, H. J. (2003). *Early childhood education and care policies in the Republic of Korea*. Seoul: Korean Educational Development Institute, Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development.

OECD. (2015). *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care*. OECD Publishing.

Orellana, M. F. (1994). Appropriating the voice of the superheroes: Three preschoolers' bilingual language uses in play. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 9*(2), 171-193.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2011). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oakes. CA: Sage Publications.

Seiter, E. (1999). Television and new media audiences. New York, NY: Oxford university press.

Simmons, C. A. (2014). Playing with popular culture–an ethnography of children's sociodramatic play in the classroom. *Ethnography and Education, 9*(3), 270-283.

Storey, J. (Ed.). (2006). *Cultural theory and popular culture: A reader*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Strinati, D. (2004). *An introduction to theories of popular culture*. London: Routledge.

Sullivan, A. (2002). Bourdieu and education: How useful is Bourdieu's theory for researchers?. *Netherlands Journal of Social Sciences, 38*(2), 144-166.

Weaver, J. A. (2005). *Popular culture primer*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Wright, D. (2015). *Understanding cultural taste: Sensation, skill and sensibility*. London: Springer.

Yoon, H. S. (2018). "The Imperial March" toward Early Literacy: Locating popular culture in a kindergarten classroom. *Language Arts, 95*(3), 171-181.

Zevenbergen, R. (2007). Digital natives come to preschool: Implications for early childhood practice. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 8*(1), 19-29.

Appendix

IRB Approval

PennState

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

Date: May 16, 2018

From: Jodi Mathieu, IRB Analyst

To: Jeonghye Nah

Type of Submission:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Korean teacher's view about popular culture in the early childhood setting
Principal Investigator:	Jeonghye Nah
Study ID:	STUDY00009099
Submission ID:	STUDY00009099
Funding:	Not Applicable
Documents Approved:	• IQ #2 (Jeonghye Nah).docx (0.02), Category: Data Collection Instrument • IRB Protocol #3 (Jeonghye Nah).pdf (0.07), Category: IRB Protocol

The Office for Research Protections determined that the proposed activity, as described in the above-referenced submission, does not require formal IRB review because the research met the criteria for exempt research according to the policies of this institution and the provisions of applicable federal regulations.

Continuing Progress Reports are **not** required for exempt research. Record of this research determined to be exempt will be maintained for five years from the date of this notification. If your research will continue beyond five years, please contact the Office for Research Protections closer to the determination end date.

Changes to exempt research only need to be submitted to the Office for Research Protections in limited circumstances described in the below-referenced Investigator Manual. If changes are being considered and there are questions about whether IRB review is needed, please contact the Office for Research Protections.

Penn State researchers are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within CATS IRB (http://irb.psu.edu).

This correspondence should be maintained with your records.