

A Qualitative Study on the Politics of Implementing a Korean Higher Educational Policy¹

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Abstract

This article explores how and why a governmental policy, Graduation Quota System, in Korean higher education was altered prior to full implementation in spite of a committed, strong central government. For the research, I gathered data from various sources, including interviews with participants in the decision-making and implementation process as well as from document review. I chose five colleges and universities, each representing a different type of institution, to examine the implementation process and to evaluate the policy impact. I have utilized primarily qualitative methods to analyze information to incorporate participants' perspectives. My findings suggest that the implementation outcomes were affected by various factors: the environmental context and the decision-making process; relationships among the actors or groups who were involved in the implementation process and the structure and culture of implementing agencies; Implementing agencies' learning and adaptation to the settings through feedback from the field sites.

I. Introduction

Koreans believe that once the government institutes a policy, it will be implemented smoothly. This belief stems from the Korean government's successful economic development policies over past decades. However, the Korean governmental reforms in higher education show that smooth policy implementation is not always the case. The 1980 educational reform to promote rapid enrollment expansion which was yet controlled by graduation quota met with strong resist-

1. This paper is based upon the author's doctoral dissertation, "The Politics of Implementing Educational Reform: A Graduation Quota System in Korean Higher Educational Institutions," (Harvard University, 1990). The paper focuses on dynamic changes of the policy that occurred during the implementation process.

ance. As a result, government officials were forced to change the directions of policy after three years' of partial implementation. This dissertation, through a case analysis, seeks to understand why the government's formal policy in higher education altered its direction before full scale implementation in spite of a strong commitment from the central government.

In 1980, the Korean government changed the enrollment policy for all higher educational institutions from one based upon an Admission Quota System to one based upon a Graduation Quota System. While the goal of the former policy served to control the number of students entering each college or university, the latter served to control the number graduating. The new policy was designed to expand opportunities for higher education and also to foster a more studious atmosphere on campuses. The policy required that all higher educational institutions substantially expand admittances while instituting graduation quotas; this required that "excess" students be dismissed before they graduated. If this policy had been fully implemented, the Korean higher educational system would have changed substantially. The policy faced considerable opposition, however, including students' resistance to enforced dismissals, which led to modifications in the policy.

This article analyzes the implementation process of the policy and interprets how and why the policy changed its direction. It aims to highlight the political interactions between the program, the central implementation agency, schools, and other participants. I draw on the insights of a growing number of studies of policy implementation to interpret this Korean experience. The existing literature on implementation studies focuses primarily on the organizational structure of the implementation agency neglecting interactions among actors who are involved in the implementation. Most studies are conducted in more decentralized systems, and tend, therefore, not to consider the implementation obstacles faced by centralized governments.

II. Conceptual Frame of the Research

It was not until the early 1970s that the importance of implementation research was recognized (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). There was an implicit assumption that once a policy has been formulated the policy will be smoothly implemented. Implementation was viewed as automatic administration by the bureaucrats. Influenced by the classic Weberian view of administration, it was assumed that with well-articulated goals and a detailed specification of actions that are to take place, implementation required only hierarchical authority, trained staff, and close supervision. There was, therefore, no serious implementation research. However, this assumption was proven invalid, especially after the experiences of policy failures of the Johnson administration in the United States; these failures led to the begin-

ning of serious implementation research.

Many implementation studies primarily ask why there are implementation failures and focus on finding factors that affect implementation outcomes. Along this line, alternative views of implementation have arisen during the last two decades. First, implementation was viewed as a process which involves intra- and interorganizational change (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1974). It has been pointed out that implementation may improve when there is clarity and consensus about goals, tasks and ways of work.

Implementation success may decline when there is no sound causal theory underlying the policy goals and the action plan, when it involves large system change in terms of the numbers of institutions affected, and the amount of change required (Cerych & Sabatier, 1986).

In a second approach, implementation as a political process, the underlying assumption is that a significant part of the translation of law or policy into practice is accomplished through regulations and guidelines (Bardach, 1977; Rabinovitz, Pressman, & Rein, 1976). The guideline development process is considered an opportunity for interest groups to bargain. It is argued that individuals and groups vie for control of or defense against program during implementation process. This approach focuses on individual actors or groups, their stakes, their strategies and resources (Bardach, 1977).

In a third approach, implementation as an on-going process, it is assumed that implementation is an evolving process where there are continuous adjustments, modifications, and adaptations in the execution of the program (McLaughlin, 1976). It is pointed out that project methods are modified to suit clientele needs and the institutional settings. This approach suggests that implementation strategies should be devised that give users learning opportunities necessary to make choices effectively. Implementation outcomes may improve when a program builds on the consensus of those affected, when change is introduced slowly, and room is left for change.

A fourth approach, the backward mapping approach, focuses on the perspectives of actors in the implementation (Elmore, 1979). It is distinguished from the forward mapping approach that focuses on a policy objective and outcomes (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983). On the contrary, backward mapping starts with an analysis of the specific behavior at the lowest level of the implementation process and focuses on the implementation strategies that would affect that behavior; it focuses on the actors involved in service delivery, their goals, strategies and resources.

As shown in the above review of implementation studies, implementation theorists have turned attention to actors who deliver services, focusing on their interactions at the micro level. At the macro level, theorists have also paid attention to the importance of the environmental context of implementation including

other stages of the policy process. Implementation studies should also focus on the implementation process, because that is where dynamic interactions among participants occur leading to a transformation of the policy from its original mandate.

This article attempts to (1) understand more fully the dynamic interactions among participants that affected the policy transformation process, and (2) identify those factors that affected the implementation outcomes in a centralized state.

In order to answer these research questions, from the analysis of the literature I have developed the conceptual frame as shown in Figure 1. The policy is processed throughout the stages that includes policy formulation, implementation, policy outcomes and feedback to original policy and policy reformulation (Grindle, 1980; Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983; Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980).

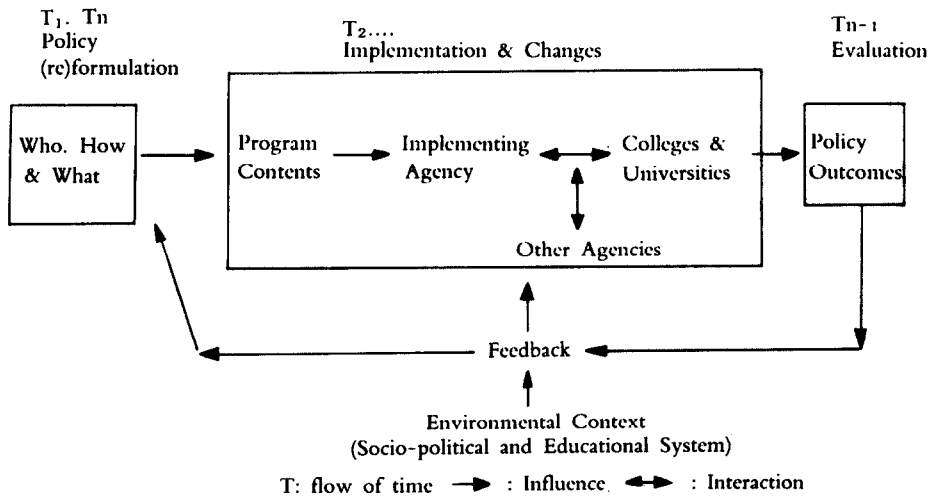


Figure 1. A Conceptual Model of the Policy Process in Korean Higher Education Policy

III. Methodology

I chose systematically eleven sites from the population of 103 colleges and universities in Korea to examine the implementation process and to evaluate policy outcomes. Based upon the pilot study of the eleven sites, I narrowed down the number of field sites to five sites for extensive study and in depth research. The five sites included five representative types: Old (private, coed, prestigious); Western (private, women's, prestigious); South (national, coed, prestigious); Eastern (private, coed, nonprestigious); Young (private, women's, nonprestigious).

To ensure accuracy of data for the study, I collected data from several sources, i. e., triangulation of evidence from documents, interviews, and my observation.

First, I analyzed official documents from the agencies that were involved in the implementation, including the Ministry of Education, and colleges and universities. Second source of information comes from interviews with key participants in the policy process. An intensive interviewing method was employed, because it is the best method to examine the process of decision-making and implementation (Murphy, 1980). The interviewees were selected by purposive sampling based upon their participation in the decision-making and implementation process. To understand the different perspectives of those involving organizations or levels of government, I interviewed members of the initial policy-making agency; officials of the Ministry of Education; Faculty members and students. For the third source of information is my previous experience at one of schools chosen for the study. I observed the effects of the policy on the university and changes of the policy when I worked for the institution.

I used primarily qualitative methodology to analyze my data (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Strauss, 1973 and 1987; Yin, 1984). I incorporated information gathered from the above sources into a case record, and again into a case narrative from which I drew the patterns and themes relating how the policy was made and implemented, what policy outcomes were. Based upon the constant comparisons of the emerging data-based themes and patterns I tried to gain a "plausible explanation" of the policy process.

IV. The Implementation Process

A. The Overview of the Implementation Process

The implementation process can be divided into several stages: preparation of the implementation program, enforcement of the program over a period of time, policy impact, policy adjustments, and policy change.

At the initial stage the MOE prepared the implementation program in consultation with scholars and university administrators. Guidelines developed by the MOE were forwarded to all colleges and universities with strong support from the Office of the President. When individual institutions actually implemented the policy, however, some problems occurred.

While university administrators and scholars began to address those problems cautiously, the MOE contended that there was a new studious atmosphere on campuses due to the policy. Later, the problems became apparent and various groups voiced their concerns. But the MOE could not accommodate those opinions, because the Office of the President had taken a hard line relating to the policy.

Faced with threats and inconvenience because of the policy, colleges and universities complied passively with the directions from the MOE. Students as well

as faculty members complained about the policy. Students raised the issue in their protests against the regime. Because of these unexpected serious actions, the government, including the MOE, considered various options to solve those problems and instituted relief measures.

After the MOE instituted several relief measures, the policy changed considerably from its original form. In addition, the Presidential Commission for Education Reform recommended that the policy be formally changed. Along the way, the Office of the President also recommended abolition of the policy to the President in 1986. Upon reviewing the recommendations, the President changed the policy back to former Admission Quota System of 1980 for the 1988 entrants.

B. Participants' Strategies, Interactions and Policy Transformation

During the implementation process, various actors and groups were involved in the implementation of the policy. For example, some serious problems were occurred due to the introduction of the policy, college students and faculty members articulated complaints about the policy. Individual schools communicated their own concerns to the MOE. The impacts of the policy on colleges drew the attention and participation from various groups, including the media, politicians, interest groups and the public. The involvement of these actors, who had different perspectives and agendas, contributed to the policy changes.

(a) The Ministry of Education

First of all, the MOE played a key role in the implementation process. The MOE tried to keep its own policy principle and policy rationality.

When the Ministry designed the concrete implementation program, it made some efforts to find a common denominator for the implementation plan that could be used as a general guideline across all colleges and universities. However, there were potential trade-offs between institutional autonomy and accountability to the MOE. For example, the Ministry worried that, by allowing the institutions to exercise more autonomy in designing the implementing plan, greater diversity among institutions would result. By contrast, if the Ministry were to increase its authority over the schools, there would be greater uniformity regardless of the particular circumstances at each institution. As a result, the Ministry tried to balance the particularity of each institution and its relationship with other institutions.

After consulting with the university administrators, the Ministry decided that it would establish the basic principles of the implementation plan, but delegate detailed matters to the institutions themselves. Within that principle, the institutions were required to make their respective implementation plans. However, as the process went on, the Ministry came to issue more concrete guidelines such as the student dismissal rates for each grade.

As the MOE issued detailed guidelines, it tended to consider more seriously the following issues: equity (or equality) among institutions; workability of the implementation program; avoiding continually setting new precedents; and keeping the policy consistent. Due to these considerations, the Ministry ultimately responded rather rigidly to the particular conditions of individual schools. For example, the MOE tended to adopt a uniform policy taking into account the administrative convenience and practical ease of policy implementation.

To gain compliance from colleges and universities, the MOE utilized various resources and strategies. The MOE adopted several measures, including administrative and financial measures, to enforce the policy at the colleges and universities (see Table 1). The MOE loaned money to schools so that they could invest in educational facilities. It controlled student admission or graduation quota when schools did not comply with the MOE guidelines. The MOE also did initiate some public relations based upon the information gathered by various sources in order to advocate the merits of the policy.

Table 1 Implementation Resources utilized by the MOE

Incentives	Loans Increase of student quota
Sanctions	Audit Reduction of student quota Personnel appointment
Public Relations Information	Books, letters, pamphlets and meetings Survey, Evaluation by scholars

The MOE also utilized diverse channels to communicate with other implementing agencies, colleges and universities (see Table 2). The MOE utilized laws and ordinances, official documents such as correspondence and policy guidelines, meetings, telephone calls and personal contacts. Based upon the authority granted by presential Decrees, the Ministry issued policy directives through official documents. The Ministry also issued policy guidelines, by which it presented guidelines and indicators on specific matters. One of the preferred methods of the MOE was meeting with key administrators in charge of policy implementation when there were changes to be discussed. At the meetings, the Ministry could discuss its measures and have the opportunity to explain relevant background concerns about policy measures as well as get feedback from the colleges and universities. The MOE held various levels of meetings, including Meeting of Presidents or Deans, Meetings of Deans or Section Chiefs of Academic Affairs.

Table. 2 Communication Methods Utilized by the MOE

Type	Frequency of Use
1. Laws and Ordinances	rarely
2. Official Letters	frequent
3. Official Letters with Guideline or with Explanatory Data	occasionally
4. Formal Meetings with College and University Administrators	occasionally
5. Informal Contact with College and University Administrators	occasionally

*Compiled by author from these sources: Education Law; Internal memoranda and official letters of the MOE from 1980 to 1988; Interviews with MOE officials, University and college administrators.

The MOE utilized those meetings in order to announce particular measures, to direct detailed policy guidelines, to explain background material and to educate university administrators.

It was also crucial for the Ministry to gain cooperation from the leading universities about the newly introduced policy, which could subsequently affect cooperation with other colleges and universities. Once the Ministry established a spirit of cooperation with the five prominent universities in Seoul, it could easily gain compliance from other colleges and universities. The Ministry, consequently, expended considerable effort to gain cooperation from the leading institutions.

The Ministry gained considerable professional advice from educational scholars as well as from college administrators during the implementation process. For example, the Ministry consulted with educational professionals about how to design the initial implementation plan. The Ministry again acquired information when it developed complementary measures to address some of the plan's negative side effects. The Ministry actively utilized research results from educational professionals or hands-on knowledge from university administrators in various ways such as general guidance, finding evidence of problems in the existing service and identifying strategies for future efforts.

(b) Colleges and Universities

Due to the wide supervisory power of the Ministry over the institutions, the colleges and universities had limited institutional autonomy and consequently tended to conform to the government policies. This phenomenon, in particular, is shown in the change process of school regulations.

Colleges and universities responded slightly in different ways to the policy depending upon their own interests and the particular conditions of the school such as the seriousness of the problems. The institutions experienced different degrees of problems. Women's institutions or prestigious schools experienced more severe problems, since they had low natural dropout rates. However, they had no discretionary power to solve the problems. Administrators from these institutions had to contact MOE officials in order to communicate the policy problems and to try to eliminate the difficulties. Thus, they actively approached MOE officials, including the Minister of Education, and negotiated with them about the number of student dismissals.

Each institution notified MOE officials about their problems in the hope of reducing the number of dismissals. Some schools could lower the number by utilizing alternative strategies such as the transfer system, leaves of absence and revision of regulations, while others had to dismiss their students as planned. Ultimately, large numbers of students were still dismissed.

Depending upon its interests, each institution's reaction was very different. For example, when each institution could adjust student admissions to a certain extent in 1984, they showed different rates of student admission over graduation quota. Private institutions, such as O, E, W, and Y universities, tended to have higher admission rates over the graduation quota and tried to keep as many students as possible (see Table 3). This approach served their financial interests. Private non-prestigious institutions, such as E and Y universities, were most concerned with

⟨Table. 3⟩ Comparison of the Ratio of Student Admissions to Graduation Quotas* (%)

	South	Old	Eastern	Western	Young
1983	130	130	130	130	130
1984	127	127	128	127.5	127
1985	109	114	128	115.7	127
1986	107	110	125	113.9	126
1987	105	109	124	105.9	—

Source: *Decree on University Student Quota 1983-1987*

*The names of universities are pseudonyms.

the size of the student population. By contrast, national prestigious institutions, such as S university, tended to admit fewer students over the graduation quota, which lessened the potential problem of student dismissals.

There was a complex process between the directions from the Ministry and its transmission to the final policy target--that is, college students. Although the MOE as a single bureaucratic organization was responsible for the overall imple-

mentation, actual implementation work was carried out by a large number of dispersed individual decision makers. School administrators of individual institutions were local implementers of the educational program (Grindle, 1980).

For example, when the Ministry developed policy guidelines and directions for the institutions, there were several decision points at the lowest level of the implementation process--that is, school or university departments. The decision points included the Ministry, each institution, each department, and faculty members.

At the institutional level, senior administrators and support staff tended to accommodate to the directions from the MOE, because they maintained close working relationships with the Ministry. They understood the background of the policy. They also paid attention to the directions from the Ministry, since they had to view the institution as a whole.

In contrast, at the department level, or the administrative post closest to the students, faculty as well as support staff act as street-level implementers (Lipsky, 1980). As such they had some discretion with different perspective about the policy. Faculty members and support staff had daily contact with students and understood students as well as the local conditions. Hence, they were more willing to consider the particular situations of individual students. Moreover, it was primarily faculty members who had difficulty in establishing new relationship with students because of the policy. They had to adjust themselves to the new practices governing evaluation methods and student dismissals. Therefore, when the policy was enforced at the schools, it encountered much more resistance.

The major actors' diverse perspectives within the colleges and universities also affected the implementation process, since there were different reactions from actors within the institutions as well as other participants. Actors at the institutions can be classified into administrators, faculty, administrative staff, students and foundations.

The national or public institution is a subordinate implementing agency under MOE supervision. At the national institution, administrators and support staff who are public officials receive directions from and report to the Ministry; this can be characterized as a bureaucratic relationship. The institutions have many departments to which both faculty and students belong.

Faculty members build relationships with students that are characterized as mentor-students relationships, which are strongly legitimated by Korea's Confucian ethical heritage. Faculty members regarded grading as a very difficult job because of student dismissal, which was contrary to the relationship between student and faculty members. At private institutions, foundations considered students in terms of an entrepreneurial perspective, that is, taking into account the financial condition of the school since it is so closely connected to the number of

students. Therefore actors of the institutions responded to the policy differently according to their interests. Students cared more about their benefits from the institution. Due to the policy, they faced great potential threats of dismissal. Consequently, students and their parents raised their voices strongly against the policy. Faculty members cared more about their work-loads and general working conditions, authority, and relationships with students, all of which were affected by the policy. Administrators cared more about the institution as a whole, which led to an ambivalent position. Foundations cared more about the financial condition of the institutions.

(c) Other Participants' Responses and Strategies

Other participants were involved in the implementation process and affected the policy revision and transformation process. Participants had different positions upon their interests that affected the implementation of the policy. They supported or opposed the policy depending upon their own perspectives and interests. The Office of the President, for example, supported the policy strongly, but the Ministry of Interior did not.

(1) The Office of President

Although the Minister of Education was responsible for the final decision and its implementation, he reported most of the important matters to the President and had to obtain his prior approval for major decisions. Upon hearing the report, the President usually approved the proposal from the Minister, but the President made final decisions on important policy revisions during the implementation process. Thereby, the Office of the President also played an important role in determining matters of educational policy. These could be grouped into four categories, i. e., monitoring, advisory function, coordination, and information processing.

When there was discussion on the policy in 1983, the Blue House was inclined to continue the policy. They objected to changes in a short period of time in spite of the intention of policy adoption. To change the policy after only two or three years of implementation was considered hasty especially as the public had criticized the frequent changes of past educational policies. The MOE also did not want to abolish it, although they wanted to adjust the policy to the situation. Instead of abolition, they decided to change the policy contents during the implementation process. Another reason for the policy continuation could be the fact that the policy was the backbone of the 1980 educational reform. Therefore, the policy-makers could not acknowledge that the policy was wrong; rather they had to justify the policy and keep it.

(2) Policy Monitoring Agencies

There were other monitoring agencies concerned with the policy including the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Security Planning, and the Counter Intelligence Command. They consulted with the MOE when it developed complementary measures for policy revision in 1983. The policy monitoring agencies were involved in the policy consultation process, since it was crucial to control student protests for the security of the regime. They had information gathering channels with a focus on sociopolitical stability. However, the Ministry of Home Affairs that was in charge of security opposed the policy on the grounds that it promoted student protests against the regime.

(3) Political Parties and the National Assembly

Political parties also expressed their opinions throughout the process. The ruling party as well as the opposition parties raised their opinion about the policy effects and they were critical of the policy itself. National assemblymen objected to the policy and demanded that the Ministry change the policy while in session, since they were more sensitive to public opinion.

(4) Media

The communications media also played an important role in shaping the direction of policy transformation as well as that of school management. The media influenced the public as well as policy-makers by reporting problems the policy created. Hence policy monitoring agencies were very sensitive to media reports and university administrators had to pay particular attention to those reports (Kang, 1982).

(5) Interest Groups

The Korean Council on University Education

After the KCUE was established in 1982, it was involved in the implementation of the policy. The MOE delegated its evaluation work regarding the Graduation Quota System at each institution to the KCUE in 1982 (MOE, 1982. 7.28). As the policy was implemented, the KCUE recognized the problems it created and presented suggestions to the government via academic journals, research papers and seminars. The KCUE used a cautious approach in speaking to the MOE for higher educational institutions. The KCUE changed its voice as the policy progressed: at the initial stage it suggested that the policy should be altered and at later stages it argued for policy abolition.

(6) Scholars

Scholars participated in the implementation process as well as in the decision--

making process. Some scholars cooperated with the MOE in developing initial implementation measures. When problems occurred during the implementation process, scholars also presented plans for dealing with those problems. Some other scholars, however, criticized the policy, although those criticisms were not considered serious because of tough position of the regime against criticism of the policy. Scholars also participated in evaluating the policy. Some of them, in particular, evaluated the policy effects in cooperation with the MOE or Presidential Commission for Education Reform.

In sum, various actors who participated in the implementation process had different perspectives and positions relating to the policy, since they had different interests and constituencies (see Table 4). As a result, there were continual interactions among the various actors during the policy process that brought about an ongoing transformation.

(Table. 4) Participants' Interests and Perspectives

Actors	Interests	Perspectives
Office of the President	consistency	strongly support
Ministry of Education	consistency	support
Policy Monitoring Agencies	consistency	support
Foundations of Pri. Univ.	benefit	moderately support
Administrators of Univ.	benefit/cost	ambivalent
Ministry of Home Affairs	student protest	against
KCUE	schools	moderately against
Ruling Party	constituencies	against
Scholars	problems	against
Mass Media	problems	against
Faculty	problems	strongly against
parents of Students	cost	strongly against
Students	cost	strongly against

*Compiled by the Author

V. The Policy Transformation Process

A. Deflection of Goal

Initially, the implementing agency emphasized the academic reforms to accomplish the goal of upgrading the quality of higher education. As the policy was implemented, the implementing agency focused on regulating the "number" of students over the graduation quota, that is, the means by which the policy was intended to accomplish a given goal, and not on the goal itself (Kang 1986; Lee 1989).

The goal of upgrading the quality of education was closely related to academic affairs, financial support and the administrative reform of individual colleges. Evaluation of this process required comprehensive work. Therefore, the Ministry delegated the evaluation work to the KCUE in 1982. The KCUE produced evaluation reports, but the schools generally did not respond to evaluation, since the KCUE did not have the authority to use either sanctions or incentives. Although institutions did install the committee on academic reforms, its function was limited in screening regulations relating to the policy, evaluation methods and teaching methods. The institutions did not utilize the committee actively.

The Ministry seemed to consider the number of students over the graduation quota as an important indicator of the policy's overall goal to improve the quality of education and to motivate students to work hard by maintaining competition. Thereby, the Ministry regulated the number of students strictly which again led the institutions to count the number of students often.

B. Delay of the Policy Application

Due to the initial uniformity of the policy, problems occurred later. The policy problems resulted from the policy not fitting with the particular conditions of individual institutions. The institutions complained to the Ministry. The MOE thus learned from the environment by trial and error, which led it to "delay" policy enforcement. Institutions also faced complaints and resistance from their clients, which again led to postponement of the application of the policy. By postponing application, the institutions could avoid sacrifices temporarily. Some schools, for example, utilized military enlistment as a strategy.

Finally, quite a number of students who were beyond the graduation quotas could avoid dismissals because of the delay of policy application, which shows the positive side of delay. However, other students from the institutions that did not delay the policy application were dismissed.

C. Detour Strategy

When the problems became serious, the Ministry had to adjust its direction to reduce the problems. The MOE was responsible for implementing the policies and had to maintain close relationships with other concerned agencies, including the Office of the President. The Ministry was supposed to consult with other concerned agencies and report important plans to the President to gain approval before making any announcements. The Ministry, consequently, faced limitations in responding to the problems of the schools in spite of its recognition of those problems. Although MOE officials were willing to respond to those problems, they were limited by other involved agencies, including the Office of the President.

Due to this relationship with the monitoring agencies, the MOE would use a detour strategy by keeping the principle but revising the contents of the program to avoid problems. When the superior agency insisted on maintaining certain principles, however, the Ministry was obligated to comply even in the face of complaints and problems from local implementing agencies. In order to accommodate to those complaints, the MOE had to bypass the problems. One example of this detouring strategy was the development of complementary measures in 1983 that contained eleven items, including a qualifying exam for the students over the graduation quota. By these complementary measures, the policy was substantially transformed from its original objectives.

D. Time Lag of Policy Adjustment and Intervention

There were also time constraints governing the Ministry's adjustments to the difficulties that arose during the implementation process. The implementing agency learns from the environment through feedback, since the agency does not have access to complete information and knowledge about all the future consequences of options during the planning stage (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). The implementing agency should be responsive to the changing situations and should adjust its policy to the environment based upon feedback from the field sites, in this case, the colleges and universities.

The MOE as a central agency, in particular, had to rely upon a large number of higher educational institutions that functioned as local implementing agencies. It took time for the MOE to acquire information about policy outcomes from the field sites. In addition, it also took time for the MOE to reflect upon new information and integrate it into the policy revision process, because the Ministry had to gain consultation with concerned agencies and prior approval from the President. Therefore, there was a time lag between recognition of policy prob-

lems, feedback and policy adjustment.

Due to the time lag of intervention, in spite of the implementing agency's responsiveness to the local problems, hundreds of students were sacrificed as "scapegoats" in the stage between initial enforcement in 1981 and the introduction of the Qualifying Examination in 1984. This raises the issue of the ethics of the policy.

VI. Conclusion

The following points relating to the policy transformation during the implementation process emerge from the analysis of the case. First, conditions of the colleges and universities were not ready for the radical introduction of the policy. Policy-makers did not take into account the specific circumstances of the institutions, although favorable local circumstances were essential if the policy was to be implemented effectively. Researchers recommended an incremental introduction of the graduation quota system, but the authorities designed and implemented the policy suddenly, essentially disregarding the suggestions (KEDI, 1979).

Second, dynamic interaction among actors contributed to the policy transformation and the policy adjustments. After the policy was adopted, many actors were involved in developing guidelines, oversight and evaluation. Their perspectives, intensity and resources were different based upon their positions, interests, and time. While some of them were, for example, for the policy, others were against it. These actors' active participation in the implementation process contributed to the policy changes. This shows that in a centralized authoritarian regime the implementation process can be regarded as a political process, where individuals or groups vie for control of or defense against programs (Grindle, 1980).

Third, implementation resources and strategies were important in gaining compliance from colleges and universities. As a central government agency, the MOE exercised comprehensive authority over the institutions. At the initial stage, there were strong advocates of the policy within the government. The MOE utilized incentives and sanctions to gain compliance from the institutions. The MOE adopted various strategies to institute the policy. The Ministry, for example, made efforts to gain professional input to the implementation program, but its use was limited to the technical rationality of cause-effects and developing administrative measures within prescribed policy directions. The Ministry did not test policy feasibility with administrators of the institutions who had hands-on experiences during the decision-making stage.

Fourth, central implementing agency utilized diverse channels to communicate with local institutions including meetings and guidelines. At the meetings with university administrators, it was able to gain information about the sites where

the policy was being enforced, which helped MOE officials to develop complementary measures. The Ministry, however, imposed unitary directions as a superior and supervisory agency on the colleges and universities through uniform guidelines. Therefore, the communication between the central implementing agency and local institutions was less collaborative and constructive, which brought only passive cooperation from the institutions.

Fifth, MOE had limited position within the government, which resulted in time-lag between policy problems and policy adjustments. Although the MOE had wide supervisory authority over the colleges and universities, its power was rather limited within the government. In the centralized authoritarian regime, government power was concentrated within the Office of the President. The Minister of Education was responsible for the overall implementation of the policy, but the Minister had to gain prior approval from the President on important policy revisions during the implementation process. The MOE also had to consult with other concerned government agencies or actors about the issues. Moreover, when the policy was closely connected with the President, the Minister of Education had limitations in responding to the problems occurring during the implementation. Consequently, the Ministry recognized local situations, but it took more time than expected to respond properly because of the consultation process and prior approval from its supervisory agency, leading to a time gap between the problems and the solutions.

Sixth, the MOE had bureaucratic rationality as a central implementing agency, which did not allow it to consider local variation of conditions. During the implementation process, the MOE took into account the rationality that was accumulated in the collective memory of the bureaucracy: consistency of the policy principle, workability and institutional interests (Rein & Rabinovitz, 1978). For example, the MOE primarily relied on uniform guidelines to institute the policy neglecting diversity of the institutions. The MOE came to regulate the contents of the school regulations to a great extent. Consequently, colleges and universities continued to revise their school regulations reflecting the policy changes.

Seventh, there were multiple decision points between the directions from the Ministry and their transmission to the final policy target--college students. Although the MOE developed guidelines, there were several clearances necessary at lower levels in the implementation process. The colleges and universities, for example, had to set their school regulations and the administrators as local implementers had to determine to apply their regulations to each case. Moreover, at a department level, university administrators and faculty members were more favorable to the students, which was not conducive to the implementation of the policy.

Eighth, Colleges' and universities' strategies to the policy were largely based

upon their interests. Although the institutions seemed to comply with the policy outwardly, they responded primarily on the basis of their own interests. For example, private institutions followed the policy initially by taking into account their potential financial gains, but later these same schools opposed the student dismissal plan. Institutions' interests are clearly crucial for implementing governmental policies. University administrators actively negotiated MOE officials to reduce the cost because of the policy.

Ninth, resistance from major participants was one of important reason of the policy change. Faculty members and students primarily resisted the introduction of the policy. Due to the policy, the faculty had to change their usual practices of grading and had to dismiss students. The student dismissal that was designed to foster a studious atmosphere on campus was a harsh penalty for the students: they could be stigmatized as being inferior students. This had tremendous impact on concerned students, in particular, on women students. Moreover, student dismissals by graduation quota did not fit well into the campus culture. W university, for example, had a strong community consciousness among members that was developed throughout its history and tradition. The community consciousness among its members was rooted in its history. The society had not built a mechanism for dismissed students. Consequently, major actors or groups within colleges and universities opposed the policy implementation, which contributed to the revision of the policy.

Tenth, administrative, socio-political context also contributed to the policy changes. In the authoritarian regime, the bureaucratic culture kept public officials and scholars from presenting information and solutions about the policy problems to the top policy maker. It took time for the policy-maker to gain proper information about the field sites, which led to only minor revisions of existing policy.

In short, my findings suggest that the implementation outcomes were affected by various factors. First, the environmental context and the decision-making process were important factors. For example, there was limited public citizen participation and little opportunity for public contributions in the decision-making phase. Consequently, both individuals and groups tried to voice their concerns during the implementation phase. Second, implementation outcomes were also affected by such factors as the relationships among participants and the structure and culture of implementing agencies. Third, actors or organizations learned about and adapted to the settings through feedback. For example, the central implementing agency obtained information about the policy's impact at the field sites and consequently changed the policy direction.

To improve the policy itself and the implementation outcomes, my study suggests the following: One, policy-makers should consult with concerned people to weigh their opinions about policy options and implementation feasibility.

Two, the central implementing agency should have a certain amount of autonomy within the government. Furthermore, it should consider other factors including the conditions of particular institutions, the existing culture, and participants' perspectives. Finally, policy-makers, implementers and policy analysts should consider ethical implications as well as political consequences of the policy in the entire policy process.

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