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# A Comparative Analysis on News Values: Comparing Coverage of Education in South Korea and the United States<sup>†</sup>

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Abstract

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This study investigates how Korean major dailies covered educational issues regarding universities, and compares its findings with those of leading American newspapers. The results show that Korean newspapers covered the universities much more negatively than their American counterparts did. Korean newspapers also demonstrated lower journalistic standards as compared with the American newspapers. There were some gaps in terms of news values in covering education at the college level between Korean and American newspapers. Nevertheless, these professional gaps were not too wide to be bridged. In addition, Ettema and Glasser's three new news values of investigative reporting were not unique from the traditional ones in this study. They were mixed with those of fairness and professional reporting. From these findings, we discuss typical characteristics of Korean newspaper coverage and suggest new ways of covering the education beats in South Korea as a newly advanced and democratized country.

**Key words:** *Educational Reform, News Values, Comparative Journalistic Standards, Education Reporting, University News, Diversity, New Long Journalism*

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**Editorial Note:** This article, which is the translated and updated version of a paper published in Korean elsewhere years ago, appears here by the author's permission. The KSSJ Editorial Board has decided to publish it in the spirit of 'informing scholars and policymakers abroad of research findings in Korean social sciences', as articulated in the *Journal's* Aims & Scope. Note that this translated article is not, on its own, to be considered as the authors' academic achievement.

## **I. Introduction**

In the realm of journalism studies, comparative research has not only yielded valuable insights beyond a mere description of similarities and differences, but also played a crucial role in contributing to our understanding of specific countries (Hanitzsch, 2009). In doing so, comparative studies in journalism have revealed that news production is contingent on the cultural, political, and historical contexts that shape journalist's work. Comparative studies are, therefore, not only indispensable for establishing the generalizability of theories and findings, but it also forces us to test our interpretations against cross-cultural differences and inconsistencies (Kohn, 1989). Given the lack of literature on the comparison of news values in covering education across countries, this study aims to contribute to comparative journalism research by investigating how Korean and American newspapers cover educational news, in particular university issues, in terms of news values.

When investigating the news values of educational news in different countries, it is noted that the educational system ensures any nation's plan for 100 years of prosperity. Nevertheless, education is not the number one priority for journalists to cover, even though they deal with educational issues for certain periods such as the period of college admissions and political campaigns. In the United States, for example, the status of educational reporters in the newsroom was once evaluated lower than that of reporters specializing in real estate (Gerbner, 1967a, 1967b). As a result, there have been only a few reporters specializing in educational news stories. It is the young reporters, with only 3 or 4 years of

experience, who have usually covered the university issues and problems (Shoonmaker, 1985).<sup>1</sup>

This situation does not quite differ from ‘education fever’ in which people consider education as the most important matter of child rearing, following the Confucian tradition (Kim, 2005). Entry-level reporters specializing in police beats are likely to cover the universities routinely in South Korea, and these reporters usually have less than five years of journalism experience. They usually cover police beats for one or two years and then shift to cover other important beats, such as politics and economics. In South Korea, covering stories on universities has been considered formal training that young reporters should complete during the probation period. In other words, young reporters have been recruited through entrance examinations, and those selected a few usually start their jobs without any journalistic experience prior to being hired. At the beginning of their careers, these young reporters are assigned to police beats without much exception, and they regularly cover the major universities within the area of assigned police stations.

Media critics in Korea argue that educational stories do not reach a professional standard. Moreover, they argue that college reform has not been achieved because of poor reporting on the university issue. Based on their logic, the direct negative reporting—described as cynical, episodic, and problem-centered—has consequently ruined the college educational system. They claim that newspaper reports make the public attribute the cause of the poor college-educational system to the inherently unique

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<sup>1</sup>. According to a recent survey with 275 education reporter in the US (Willen & Snider, 2008), 91 percent of respondents believe covering education requires specialized training and knowledge. 41 percent say more training is what they need most to improve their coverage – nearly twice the percentage who say they need either more time for stories or more knowledgeable education editors.

phenomena of universities in South Korea (see Iyengar, 1991 for this logic).

Are these valid claims? Such arguments address the issues of how Korean newspapers cover the college issues and problems and lead to the question of how Korean journalistic standards of the coverage compare to the standards of American newspapers including the *New York Times*. One of the assumptions of this study is that news values are universal (O'Neill & Harcup, 2009). That is, news is the commercial product made by a team of reporters and editors. Thus, this study looks at how two countries' newspapers, covering the sensitive issue of education in terms of their news values compare. It is our position that news as a cultural product can be compared with each other on an international level, just as cars or wireless phones can be compared with those overseas. It is with the aim of improving the journalistic standards of educational beats in a newly industrialized and democratized country like South Korea that this study was undertaken.

## **II. Education Reporting and Concept Explication of News Values**

### **1. Education Reporting**

In the US, journalistic research is conducted simultaneously whenever the government reforms the educational system. This is because the news coverage of the educational system is considered as a significant factor in the success of educational reform. Thus, it

is necessary to take the history of educational reform into account in education reporting. In a broader sense, American educational reform could be classified as the structural, philosophical and functional reforms depending on the periods in which the reform has been conducted (Pai, 1994). The first American educational reform in the modern age was initiated by the government after the Soviet Union had launched the Sputnik satellite. Pai (1994) calls it the Post Sputnik Reform and considers it a failure since this structural change of education brought with it unbalanced human resources of science majors.

The second educational reform in the United States followed in the Johnson (1965) era after President Lyndon Johnson's State of the Union Address, proposing the "Great Society" program. His domestic agenda was to build a prosperous society that could provide equal human rights for every citizen. Pai (1994) calls the Johnson's educational reform a philosophical one and considers it a success. In the early 1980s, the National Commission on 'Excellence in Education' (1983) published a small report titled *A Nation at Risk*. With its guidelines, the United States conducted the third educational reform. Pai (1994) calls this a functional reform; the schools enforced a severe tenure evaluation, asked its members to seek funding in research and pay close attention to their teaching performance in class.

Along the three distinctive periods of educational reform in the US, journalism research on the subject of education beats began. For example, Gerbner (1967a) conducted research on the comparison of reporters and educators and described the current status of educational beats and their problems. Duncan (1966) also analyzed the content of educational beats in 52 American newspapers and argued that journalists were more likely to

sensationalize the educational issues. Moreover, Tichenor, Donohue and Olien (1970) proposed the knowledge gap hypothesis during this period. We could interpret that this type of research was conducted to find out the mechanism that underpins the wider socio-economic gap between the rich and the poor by their use of mass media resources.

In particular, research in educational reporting analyzed how well the media organization delivered the reality of the school to their audiences. For example, Ross (1983) analyzed the content of the *Los Angeles Times* for a ten year period and found that 1) the educational beat was composed of 3.5 percent of the whole newspaper; 2) among them, university management and student activities were the most frequently reported subject, reaching 20 percent each; and 3) half of the educational beats dealt with the inside of the school. But some of these reports did not reach a professional level in terms of journalistic standards, and they tended to focus on the educational events rather than academic issues or problems. Moreover, there were not many investigative or specialized enterprise stories in education and not many reports applied economic or political perspectives to the educational coverage (Schoonmaker, 1985; Ray & Mickelson, 1990).

Through these research efforts, the American standard of education reporting tends to improve significantly, compared to the past (Hynds, 1989). For example, a local reporter in Omaha, Nebraska tends to pinpoint unequal scores and scholastic gaps of student performance among various school districts by conducting advanced statistical analysis such as multiple regressions (Napolitan, 1999). In addition, De Riemer (1988) found that the amount of space for educational beats in American newspapers since 1960 averaged four percent and those newspapers have

continuously paid attention to education in their coverage. With these efforts, American newspapers have reached a certain standard nationally and the gaps between those with journalistic awards and no awards have disappeared. Nevertheless, newspapers with journalistic awards tend to cover educational stories much larger than those with no awards.

Unfortunately, there is little research in South Korea dealing with educational reporting although education has been considered a very important subject on a national level and with a global perspective (Shim, 1986).

## **2. Concept Explication of News Values**

Since Breed (1956) described several types and characteristics of news, three conceptual types of news values have been explicated over the last half-century. First of all, Shoemaker and her colleagues have proposed the model of newsworthiness, classifying the traditional news values such as sensationalism, human interest, exceptionalness, and conflict into the various types of deviance: statistical, normative, pathological, and potential for social change deviance. From this model, Shoemaker developed the theory of deviance and social significance that suggests how journalists select the news when they cover various news events and issues; the more the news item is deviant and socially significant, the more it is likely to be covered as a news story (see, e.g., Lee, 1992; Moon & Shim, 2010; Shoemaker, Danielian, & Brendlinger, 1991; Shoemaker, 1996; Shoemaker & Eichholz, 2000; Shim & Fredin, 2004).

Secondly, we could consider objectivity as a criterion for



evaluating the journalistic performance of news coverage. Merrill (1993) argues that news reporting must be TUFF. In the newsroom, TUFF stands for truthful, unbiased, full, and fair coverage, to indicate news making principles. McQuail (1992) explicates the concept of objectivity further, dividing its sub-dimension into factuality and impartiality. Factuality includes truth and relevance; impartiality includes balance and neutrality.

Thirdly, Ettema and Glasser (1987, 1998) propose a new type of news value, which is related to the concept of investigative reporting. According to them, news stories must have certain characteristics of investigation and they conceptualize these characteristics into new news values of publicity, accountability, and solidarity (Ettema & Glasser, 1987, 1998; Glasser & Ettema, 1989). The first dimension of investigation as a news value is publicity, which refers to the degree of revelation in the public sphere against the villains' willingness to keep it secret. By revealing the secret information of higher education, newspaper readers would pay attention to those stories that would certainly arouse public alertness. If this important information is not published or is buried within the inside pages, its publicity as a news value amounts to zero or at the very least, is not considered highly enough.

The second dimension of investigative news values is called accountability. This refers to the degree of explanation that would be required by the sources or possible audiences of the news reports. If the information is insufficient to make a connection between the perpetrators and the wrongful social behaviors, then the accountability of investigative reporting will not be powerful enough to persuade readers. If this be the case, then sources in the news reports would not agree with reporters as to the verity of the news report, indicating a questionable accountability. In order to be

accountable therefore, the news reports must be fair and balanced, while at the same time being accurate and relevant.

The third dimension of investigative reporting as a news value is solidarity. This relates to the subsequent results or consequences of reporting. If the investigation beat is accountable, then each side of the conflict can acknowledge the truth of the story. Then, they might accept a certain solution to the conflict or find a resolution from the socially wrong behaviors or policies. Through reporters' efforts at investigative reporting, solutions to individual or group conflicts can be sought by the societal members. As a result, conflicts can be resolved to create a more harmonious society. Thus, social integration could be achieved through journalistic activities which help people agree on "the broad outline of reality" or to a certain truth concerning the society.

As MacDougall (1982) argues, any news stories tend to have certain characteristics of investigative mental efforts. Since news can be considered "the best available version of the truth," we can measure and compare the investigative characteristics of higher education news stories within the Korean and American press.

Three conceptual types of news values are all relevant when researchers evaluate journalistic performance of education stories. When desk editors assign field reporters to education beats, they consider Shoemaker's news values of deviance and social significance; when an education news item is deviant and socially significant, it is more likely to be covered by news professionals. When they cover the item, they should do it in the following manner: truthfully, unbiased, fairly, and fully. That is, reporters should cover the education beat objectively without regards to the degree of deviance and social significance. Moreover, they should investigate its meaning of social, political, economic and cultural

significance embedded in the news item.

In addition, we should not ignore the news value of diversity when we evaluate the journalistic performance of newspapers in a democratic society. Our position is that free and responsible newspapers need to report various perspectives or ideas from different angles (Voakes et al., 1996). If reporters meet various sources, quote accurately what they say, and deliver their perspectives fairly, they could overcome their cultural or political bias. Reporters should not reveal only one side of the truth.

We attempt to find out how Korean newspapers include the above mentioned news values in their coverage of education stories. Furthermore, we compare the selected Korean newspapers with other leading American newspapers.

### **III. Hypotheses Construction**

As was discussed above, police reporters in South Korea tend to cover the university beats. Thus, they tend to report them in the same way they cover police beats including crimes, accidents or problems in universities. Moreover, they tend to pick up the stories based on the traditional news values. As reporters assume that “bad news is good news” in the coverage of education beats, our first hypothesis is that Korean newspapers are more likely to emphasize the negative side of university news stories, compared to their American counterparts. In addition, Korean newspapers do not present the philosophical issues of university reform as much as American newspapers, while Korean reporters might meet the standard of American newspapers when they cover the functional

or structural side of educational reforms. This is because police reporters might be too busy to consider the philosophical matters behind the news stories. Since the job of police reporters is to chase after facts, they try to find out the bad or scandalous facts rather than the philosophical debates or possible consequences of educational reforms.

Our second set of hypotheses deals with the traditional news values including deviance and social significance. Korea is the most homogeneous country in the world in terms of culture, language and race. Thus, Korean newspapers might bring the conflict side of educational news to the public less than American newspapers. According to the gatekeeping theory of Tichenor, Donohue and Olien (1980), newspapers in a homogeneous community are less likely to cover the conflict than those of the heterogeneous community. We apply this logic to the national level and come up with the second hypothesis. That is, Korean newspapers tend to downplay conflict-related news values compared to American newspapers when they cover education beats. Nevertheless, Korean newspapers tend to meet the standard of American newspapers in terms of news selection. That is, Korean newspapers tend to cover the episodic-related news events and issues. Thus, there is not much difference in news values of deviance and social significance between Korean and American newspapers. The news values of episodic deviance include human interest, sensationalism, and exceptionalness.

Our third set of hypotheses deals with the news values related to journalistic performance including diversity, fairness, and objectivity. We predict that education stories in Korean newspapers are less diverse than those in American newspapers in terms of the number of ideas, perspectives and sources cited in the news stories. This is not only because of the smaller size of South Korea

compared to the United States, but because of Korean newspapers' straightforward styles of the inverted pyramid in news writing. If the reporters use the inverted pyramid style, there is less room to include diverse ideas or perspectives; Korean reporters tend to cite one or two important sources because there is a limit of space for the education beat, which competes with other stories in the city-desk, metro-section, or societal pages. Nevertheless, we hypothesize that their standards of journalistic performance are equivalent to those of their American counterparts in terms of objectivity including fairness, accuracy, balance, and truthfulness. Otherwise, Korean readers may not consider the education beat as truthful information and they would not consume it as news.

Our fourth set of hypotheses deals with Ettema and Glasser's new news values of investigation including publicity, accountability, and solidarity. We hypothesize that Korean newspapers might not have the resources or luxuries necessary to consider these new news values when they cover university stories. Police reporters in South Korea tend to have heavy workloads and cover many things including street crimes and newsmakers' socially-ill or scandalous activities. Simply, they do not have the time to concentrate on the educational beats unless major news develops at the universities that are worthy such as the entrance exam fraud or a great scientific achievement such as cloning a dog (Kim, 2005).

In summary, Korean coverage of education beats are more likely to be negative than that of American newspapers. In addition, Korean newspapers tend not to consider news values like conflict and diversity as much as American newspapers. Nevertheless, their news standards of journalistic performance including covering episodically deviant events and covering them fairly and objectively are comparable or equivalent to those of American newspapers.

However, Korean reporters' investigative reporting has not been fully developed and therefore Korean newspapers are not yet up to the standards of their American counterparts in this regard.

## **IV. Research Methods and Operational Definitions**

Our research strategy was to use the most similar and the most different system design that was once applied to research conducted by Dimmick and Coit (1982). One of the strengths of this research design is to single out the most important factor in producing differences among various systems; the systems here are newspapers and this design allows us to pinpoint the most important factor of why differences occur when we compare Korean and American newspapers (see Przeworski & Teune, 1970 for the logic of comparison). To that end, we conducted a content analysis about Korean and American newspapers. Our unit of analysis was a news article.

### **1. Selection of News Samples**

In this study, we defined the university beat as a higher education story excluding simple straight or publicity-related news. Making an exception, we included the stories dealing with university development or college-level educational issues even though they were generated from the public relations activities.

We selected 353 news stories using a random number table from the population of 1,423 university-related stories that were picked up from the KINDS database from January 1, 1999 to January 31,

2001. We searched various keywords of university and college combined with the words of administration, structure, reputation, image, system, reform, mishap, corruption, culture and so forth. Among 353 news stories that we actually analyzed, there were 60 stories from the *Donga Ilbo*; *Chosun*, 87; *Joonang*, 101; *Hankyoreh*, 105. We utilized the PROQUEST to find American educational stories and applied the same procedure to the search engine. We finally got 51 stories from the *New York Times*, 31 from the *Washington Post*, and 47 from the *Los Angeles Times* for our content analysis. All together, we analyzed 129 articles in American newspapers for a comparison.

## **2. Items for Content Analysis and Measurement**

We measured Shoemaker's six news values of deviance, Merrill's four news values, so called the TUFF principle, and Ettema and Glasser's three news values that are related to investigative journalism. After extensive training, we measured those news values on a scale of 11 points, which ranged from "Very Strong Enough"(10) to "Not At All" (0). We also measured news stories' relevance to students and parents, consequences to the individual readers, and the degree of diversity by using a same scale of 11 points. Furthermore, we evaluated separately how highly the news stories were implicated to functional, structural, and philosophical university reforms using the same 11-point scale. In addition, we evaluated whether the news article was negative or positive in its content and direction as a whole.

Specifically, we measured the "philosophical reform" item as a degree of how the news story dealt with the fundamental role, and

as a degree of the responsibility society has given the university to perform. For example, the *New York Times* reported that the City University's educational reform for the higher admission standard might deprive the poor and minority of the college educational opportunity. This news dealt mainly with the arguments between the competitiveness of the university and the poor and minorities' equal opportunities for higher education. Thus, we coded 9 points among 10 since it dealt with the philosophical issue of university reform. On the other hand, one of the *Joongang Ilbo's* articles dealt mainly with the functional and structural sides of the Korean university evaluation system. The article was written in order to improve Korean universities' competitiveness but had little implication of the universities' roles in society. Thus, we gave four points to the philosophical education reform item. In a similar way, we measured the structural side of university reform with a reference to ownership and university management including the structural change of the student entrance and evaluation system. If the articles dealt with curriculum improvement, new faculty development projects, and the introduction of a class evaluation system, then we considered and measured them as related to functional educational reform.

For the measurement of news values as mentioned above, we used the operational definition developed and confirmed over the last 20 years by Shoemaker and her colleagues (Shoemaker, 1987, 1996; Shoemaker, Danielian, & Brendlinger, 1991; Shoemaker & Eichholz, 2000; Shim & Fredin, 2004). One example of the coding scheme is presented below.

According to Shoemaker and her colleagues, conflict indicates structural deviance. It is the degree of tension or disagreement when individuals or groups do not give up their interest. Thus, conflict is



defined in this research as a disagreement or a dispute between two or more groups regarding the distribution of resources. Conflict as structural deviance has certainly been a potential for social change. We measured it by using two items: scope and intensity of conflict among relevant groups and individuals. They are two of the three dimensions of social conflict identified by Cohen, Adoni, and Bantz (1990). In education news, structural conflict was measured in terms of the structural scope of conflict among government authorities, university administrators, employees, and students. For example, when several college students in Seoul refused an increase of university tuition and fees, they occupied a university president's office and burned some office materials. The university responded by expelling them permanently from the university registry and there was little expectation of compromise between the student body and the university. In this case, we coded 8 among the maximum of 10 points for the intensity of conflict item. But the rest of the students were not interested in this dispute over tuition increase, and conflict would be expected to be solved soon. Thus, we coded 3 among 10 points for the item of the structural scope of conflict.

### **3. Coding Procedure and Reliability**

In order to improve the internal validity of measuring news values, the principal researcher and seven graduate students read the relevant literature and had a brainstorming session for coding. We discussed until seven among 8 coders agreed with a difference of 2 points on a scale of 11 points. After two days of training and pretest, we carried out our actual coding in a remote resort. Even in the actual coding, if a coder had difficulty measuring the item, he or

she consulted with the principal researcher. We measured each news value independently embedded in a news article that was randomly assigned to each coder.

After our coding was completed, we selected 30 news articles randomly from the sample of 482 articles, measured relevant news values again by different coders, and examined the inter-coder reliability coefficients in terms of Cronbach's Alpha by two coders. We used Cronbach's Alpha since we measured them on a continuous scale. For the educational reform items, their inter-coder reliability coefficients were .78(functional reform), .52(structural reform), and .51(philosophical reform). For news values, they were .87(structural conflict), .53(intensity of conflict), .63(human interest), .52(sensationalism), .56(truthfulness without slant), .85(truthfulness without guess), .81(timeliness), .73(readability), .90(fullness of the coverage), .69(the degree of content specialization), .54(logicalness in a story), .59(connection between one story to another), .81(the number of ideas in a story), .87(the number of sources), .58(relevance to students), .58(relevance to parents), .68(consequences to individual readers), .78(publicity), .82(accountability), and .79(solidarity). For the news stories' negative valence, we used the ratio of coders' agreement and found 77 percent of agreement.

## V. Results

The average size of education news articles we analyzed was 1,349 Korean alphabets. The *Joongang Ilbo* was more likely to write longer stories than other newspapers, showing 1,705 alphabets on average. Fifty-two percent of our Korean news samples dealt with

the stories of university reform, and we confirmed that university reform was one of the most important subjects in Korean education beats in this period. Fifteen percent of the stories dealt with the campus struggle, injustice or illegal activities in the university. The average size of the *New York Times* articles was 6,414 words; 4,032 words for the *Washington Post* and 4,082 words for the *Los Angeles Times*. Fifty-one percent of American news stories related to the subject of education reform and this figure was quite similar to that of Korean newspapers. We compared our results of analysis between Korean and American newspapers, focusing on the content of education beats and news values embedded in this content.

## **1. Content of University News Stories**

About half of the university news stories in both Korean and American newspapers dealt with educational reform. We found that there was not much difference between Korean and American newspapers in dealing with functional or structural educational reforms in terms of the scope and the intensity of their coverage. Nevertheless, as Table 1 shows, American newspapers considered the more philosophical side of university reforms and brought that side into the articles more than Korean newspapers. The average scores of the four Korean newspapers we studied were all below 3 points out of a maximum of 10 points in terms of their philosophical consideration of university reforms; those of American newspapers were all above 3 points.

**Table 1.** One-way ANOVA on University Reform Types

Reform Types	Donga (n=59)	Chosun (n=85)	Joins (n=99)	Hani (n=104)	NYT (n=51)	WP (n=31)	LAT (n=47)	Sig.
Functional	4.92 <sub>abc</sub>	4.32 <sub>ab</sub>	5.46 <sub>bc</sub>	4.33 <sub>ab</sub>	5.8 <sub>bc</sub>	4.00 <sub>a</sub>	5.09 <sub>abc</sub>	p<.001
Structural	4.73	4.91	5.35	5.23	4.86	4.87	5.70	ns
Philosophical	2.56 <sub>a</sub>	2.40 <sub>a</sub>	2.96 <sub>ab</sub>	2.54 <sub>a</sub>	3.73 <sub>b</sub>	3.70 <sub>b</sub>	3.66 <sub>b</sub>	p<.001

\* Different subscripts indicate significant difference at p<.05; Joins refers to the *Joongang Ilbo* and Hani, the *Hankyoreh Shinmoon*.

Korean newspapers often covered the education beats with a negative valence. As Table 2 shows, more than half of the news stories in Korean newspapers were covered negatively except those of the *Joongang*. Sixty-five percent of stories in *Donga* and 60 percent of the *Hankyoreh* stories were negatively written. However, about 20 percent of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* articles were written with a negative valence while only 10 percent of the *Los Angeles Times* stories were covered negatively when they dealt with education beats. The percentage of negative articles in Korean and American newspapers was significantly different (p<.001).

**Table 2.** One-way ANOVA on Negative Valence

Valence of Content	Donga (n=60)	Chosun (n=87)	Joins (n=100)	Hani (n=105)	NYT (n=51)	WP (n=31)	LAT (n=47)	Sig.
Negative	65% <sub>c</sub>	57% <sub>c</sub>	43% <sub>bc</sub>	60% <sub>c</sub>	25% <sub>ab</sub>	19% <sub>a</sub>	10% <sub>a</sub>	p<.001

\* Different subscripts indicate significant difference at p<.05.

## **2. Factors in News Values**

We conducted the factor analysis with 26 items of news values that we measured on a scale of 11 points, and rotated them with the Varimax method. As Table 3 shows, we found six major factors and they were named as public interest, human interest, diversity, truthfulness, conflict, and relevance. The public interest factor was composed of news values that relate to the four items of fairness and factuality, three items of professionalism, and three items of investigative reporting. This finding indicates that the new news values of investigative journalism were not distinguished from those of fairness and factuality, and from those of professionalism in our analysis. If the news coverage was fair and balanced, conducted professionally and investigated fully, then we could say that newspapers play their roles of informing readers about what is going on in the world and perform their watchdog or surveillance functions appropriately in society. Thus, we consider that the news values of public interest were composed of fairness, professionalism, and investigation reporting.

The factor of human interest was composed of items of the dramatization of the issues, episodically interesting human stories, issue personification, and sensationalism. The diversity factor includes the items measuring numbers of quotes, sources, and ideas. The factor of truthfulness includes items measuring the degree of coverage without slant, guess and exaggeration, and up-to-date reports. The conflict factor includes intensity of conflict and structural conflict. The relevance factor includes the items measuring news stories' relevance to students and parents, and their consequences on individual readers. These six factors explained sixty-nine percent of variance in the construct of news values.

**Table 3.** Factor Analysis on News Values

News Value Items	Public Interest	Episode Amusement	Diversity	Truthfulness	Conflict	Relevance
<b>Diligent Writing</b>	<b>0.85</b>	0.01	0.17	0.05	0	0.11
Want to Read Again	<b>0.78</b>	0.09	0.19	0.03	0.02	0.12
Completeness	<b>0.79</b>	0.01	0.28	-0.02	-0.02	0.11
Reflection of Reality	<b>0.60</b>	0.03	0.49	0.15	0.17	0.03
Content Specialization	<b>0.86</b>	-0.09	0.02	-0.06	-0.01	0.15
Logic of Writing	<b>0.80</b>	-0.08	0.13	-0.04	0.21	0.1
Continuity	<b>0.75</b>	0.12	-0.01	0.02	0.04	0.08
Publicity	<b>0.81</b>	0.18	0.09	0.01	0.03	0.19
Accountability	<b>0.87</b>	0.08	0.06	-0.04	0.09	0.17
Solidarity	<b>0.67</b>	0.23	0.11	-0.09	0.19	0.16
Issue of Dramatization	0.15	<b>0.79</b>	0.18	-0.15	0.04	0.06
Human Interest	0.21	<b>0.74</b>	0.15	0.01	-0.22	-0.04
Personification	-0.01	<b>0.73</b>	0.18	-0.11	-0.01	-0.02
Sensationalism	-0.00	<b>0.52</b>	-0.06	-0.29	0.28	0.04
Number of Quotes	0.16	0.22	<b>0.81</b>	-0.01	0.01	0.05
Number of Sources	0.16	0.27	<b>0.78</b>	0.04	0.07	0.1
Number of Ideas	0.51	0.02	<b>0.68</b>	-0.12	-0.08	0.09
No Slant	0.15	-0.15	0.02	<b>0.81</b>	-0.07	0.08
No Guess	0.09	-0.15	0.02	<b>0.79</b>	-0.25	0.11
Exaggeration	0.13	0.31	-0.07	<b>-0.67</b>	0.16	0.12
Timeliness	-0.23	0.13	-0.17	<b>0.59</b>	0.28	-0.01
Intensity of Conflict	0.15	0.01	0.03	0.13	<b>0.91</b>	0.03
Structural Conflict	0.2	-0.04	0.04	-0.1	<b>0.91</b>	-0.04
Relevance to Students	0.16	-0.1	0.17	-0.01	0.05	<b>0.83</b>
Consequence to Individuals	0.28	0.15	0.03	0.07	-0.05	<b>0.73</b>
Relevance to Parents	0.22	0.01	0	0	-0.02	<b>0.72</b>
Eigen Value	6.8	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.1	2.0
Cumulative Variance(%)	26.1	35.3	44.3	53	61	68.6

### **3. Comparison of News Values between Korean and American Newspapers**

The news values of the *Joongang Ilbo* in the public interest factor were the highest among the four Korean newspapers and their differences were statistically significant. In terms of journalistic performance, the *Joongang's* coverage showed a significantly higher standard than other Korean newspapers in the items of measuring diligent coverage, complete reporting, and the degree of publicity and accountability in investigative reporting. However, Korean newspapers did not differ in the rest of the 22 news value items.

As Table 4 shows, the *New York Times* was more highly evaluated than Korean newspapers overall in covering university stories. Among 26 items, fifteen news values measured in the *New York Times* articles were higher than the standards of Korean newspapers. These differences were apparent when we compared the fairness of coverage, professionalism, and investigation embedded in the articles. Nevertheless, the educational coverage of the *New York Times* coverage was not significantly different from that of Korean newspapers when news values were compared to the factors of truthfulness, conflict, and relevance.

As a group, we compared Korean newspapers and American newspapers and found that the latter showed higher standards than the former in 20 out of 26 items (see Table 5). However, Korean newspapers' coverage did not differ much from that of American newspapers in the following areas: sensationalism, exaggeration, timeliness, relevance to parents, intensity of conflict, and structural conflict.

**Table 4.** One-way ANOVA on News Values

News Values	Donga	Chosun	Joins	Hani	NYT	WP	LAT	Sig.
<b>Public Interest</b>	4.63 <sub>ab</sub>	4.48 <sub>a</sub>	5.32 <sub>bc</sub>	4.45 <sub>a</sub>	6.38 <sub>d</sub>	5.40 <sub>bc</sub>	5.73 <sub>cd</sub>	p<.001
<b>Fairness</b>	4.56 <sub>ab</sub>	4.45 <sub>ab</sub>	5.04 <sub>abc</sub>	4.27 <sub>a</sub>	6.33 <sub>d</sub>	5.27 <sub>bc</sub>	5.69 <sub>cd</sub>	p<.001
<b>Professionalism</b>	4.56 <sub>a</sub>	4.50 <sub>a</sub>	5.39 <sub>a</sub>	4.53 <sub>a</sub>	6.39 <sub>b</sub>	5.13 <sub>a</sub>	5.36 <sub>a</sub>	p<.001
<b>Investigation</b>	4.78 <sub>ab</sub>	4.48 <sub>a</sub>	5.53 <sub>bc</sub>	4.56 <sub>a</sub>	6.44 <sub>c</sub>	5.81 <sub>c</sub>	6.13 <sub>c</sub>	p<.001
<b>Amusement</b>	3.12 <sub>abc</sub>	2.89 <sub>ab</sub>	2.68 <sub>a</sub>	2.90 <sub>ab</sub>	3.97 <sub>d</sub>	3.79 <sub>cd</sub>	3.63 <sub>bcd</sub>	p<.001
<b>Diversity</b>	2.99 <sub>a</sub>	3.36 <sub>a</sub>	3.70 <sub>a</sub>	3.04 <sub>a</sub>	9.50 <sub>c</sub>	6.66 <sub>b</sub>	7.88 <sub>b</sub>	p<.001
<b>Truthfulness</b>	6.05	5.82	6.2	6.17	6.28	6.51	6.53	ns
<b>Conflict</b>	4.52	4.88	4	4.99	4.93	4.23	3.87	ns
<b>Relevance</b>	4.46 <sub>ab</sub>	4.13 <sub>ab</sub>	4.79 <sub>ab</sub>	3.93 <sub>a</sub>	5.03 <sub>b</sub>	4.29 <sub>ab</sub>	4.93 <sub>b</sub>	p<.001

\* Different subscripts indicate significant difference at p<.05; Joins refers to the *Joongang Ilbo* and Hani, the *Hankyoreh Shinmoon*.

**Table 5.** One-way ANOVA on News Values

News Values	Korean Newspapers	American Newspapers	Significance
<b>Public Interest</b>	4.74	5.91	p<.001
<b>Fairness</b>	4.59	5.84	p<.001
<b>Professionalism</b>	4.77	5.71	p<.001
<b>Investigation</b>	4.85	6.18	p<.001
<b>Amusement</b>	2.87	3.80	p<.001
<b>Diversity</b>	3.3	8.22	p<.001
<b>Truthfulness</b>	6.07	6.43	ns
<b>Conflict</b>	4.6	4.38	ns
<b>Relevance</b>	4.32	4.81	p<.001

#### 4. Underlying Variables That Make Performance Differences

To better understand underlying variables that make performance difference between Korean and American dailies, we conducted regression analyses on the various factors of news



values. For these regression equations, we entered the independent variables; they were dummy coded as to whether the news article appeared negative or not; whether it was straight news or not; whether it was related to university reforms or not; and whether it was in a Korean newspaper or not. In addition, we transformed the size of the news articles to the log size and entered these variables into the regression equations.

**Table 6** Multiple Regression Analysis on the Factor of Public Interest-related News Values

<b>Model</b>	<b>Public Interest</b>	<b>Fairness</b>	<b>Professionalism</b>	<b>Investigation</b>
<b>Negative News</b>	-.02	-.02	.01	.01
<b>Straight News</b>	-.15 ***	-.08 *	-.18 ***	-.16 ***
<b>Reform-related News</b>	.13 ***	.03	.19 ***	.08 *
<b>Log size of Article</b>	.22 ***	.74 ***	.53 ***	.60 ***
<b>Korean Newspaper</b>	-.10 *	-.15 **	-.04	-.04

Note. n = 482; independent variables were all dummy-coded except the log size of the article; figures in the cell indicate standardized regression coefficients; \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\* p<.001.

As Table 6 shows, in a condition of controlling four other independent variables, Korean newspapers' standard of dealing with public interest items was lower than that of American newspapers. Korean newspapers as a group did not cover university-related news fairly, compared to the coverage of American newspapers. Moreover, Korean newspapers' significantly lower performance on professionalism, diversity, and investigation disappeared when the four independent variables were controlled.

Surprisingly, the articles of Korean newspapers were more interesting on a human level, but this occurred probably because Korean newspapers dramatized and sensationalized the education issues more than American newspapers. Korean newspapers appeared to be less relevant to the public than American newspapers when they covered education beats.

**Table 7** Multiple Regression Analysis on the Factors of Traditional News Values

Model	Amusement	Diversity	Truthful-ness	Conflict	Relevance
Negative News	.13	-.04	-.29 ***	.49 ***	.02
Straight News	-.24 ***	.02	.30 ***	-.05	.01
Reform-related News	-.28 ***	-.12 ***	.03	.10 *	.04
Log size of Article	.18 **	.84 ***	-.15 *	.09	.43 ***
Korean Newspaper	.15 *	-.04	.09	.10	-.14 *

Note.  $n = 482$ ; independent variables were all dummy-coded except the log size of the article;

figures in the cell indicate standardized regression coefficients;

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Overall, without regard to Korean or American newspapers, a straight form of news writing in education stories related to lower scores of the public interest factor, compared to non-straight news.

Negatively covered news articles were more likely to be interesting and more conflict-laden, but they appeared less truthful than non-negative articles. News articles that dealt with university reforms showed higher public interest scores including fairness, professionalism, and investigation, but were less interesting and less diverse than no-reform university-related articles. The larger

the size of news articles, the higher the news values of public interest including fairness, professionalism, and investigation were. In addition, the larger the size of news articles, the higher scores of news values in the factors of human interest, diversity, truthfulness, and relevance were. One exception was the factor of conflict; that is, the longer stories did not necessarily relate to the more conflict-laden news.

## **5. Results of Hypotheses Testing**

Overall, Korean newspapers as a group covered education beats more negatively than American newspapers. In addition, Korean newspapers dealt with the philosophical side of university reform issues less than their American counterparts. Thus, the first hypothesis was supported in our analysis as we expected.

The second hypothesis, however, was not supported by our data; Korean newspapers did not differ much from American newspapers and they covered the conflict news as much as American newspapers. When we controlled four competing variables, Korean newspapers did not differ from American counterparts in covering diverse ideas and perspectives. These competing variables in the regression equation were negativity, straight news, reform-related news, and the log transformed size of articles as was discussed above.

The third hypothesis was partially supported in our analysis; there was not a significant difference between Korean and American newspapers in terms of delivering truthful and interesting news. After controlling four competing variables, we found that Korean newspapers appeared to be more interesting than American counterparts. Contrary to our prediction, Korean

newspapers delivered less relevant information to the public than American newspapers.

When we compared the umbrella factor of public interest-related news values, Korean newspapers as a group showed less journalistic standards than American counterparts as we showed above. Thus the fourth hypothesis was supported; that is, American newspapers delivered university news much more fairly and factually than Korean newspapers even after controlling the size, negativity, news writing style and the type of news articles. Nevertheless, their differences in professionalism and investigative reporting disappeared after controlling those four variables in the regression analysis.

## VI. Conclusions and Suggestions

From the above analysis, we conclude that a gap exists between Korean and American newspapers when they produce education news at the college level. But our analysis indicates that these gaps are not too wide to be bridged.

Then, our questions are, how can we bridge the gaps in order to be competitive with other leading newspapers in the global society, and how can we improve the newspapers' standards in a newly democratized society like South Korea? Answering these questions has a certain implication not only to improve the news media system outside of the United States, but also to improve the less-elaborated local media system domestically.

For this purpose, we examined the four independent variables in our regression analyses. First of all, news writing and reporting

emphasizing negativity seem not to contribute to improve journalistic standards. News reporting with negative valence does not contribute much to the enhancement of public interest; it only makes news interesting by sensationalizing issues and problems. Negative reporting also positively relates to conflict-laden news production; this positive correlation probably indicates that news that has more an intense and severely structured conflict is viewed negatively in university-related stories. However, negatively framed news contributes slightly to the higher standards of journalistic performance.

In addition, the straight-form of news writing including the inverted pyramid style does not help much to improve journalistic performances that reflect fair and balanced, professional, and investigative reporting. It relates all negatively to the three dimensions of public interest and does not make news interesting. Thus, we recommend that newspapers not stick to the straight news style of writing in order to enhance readers' public interest.

The choice of university reform issues as education beats seems to be noteworthy; the articles dealing with university reforms tend to work to improve public interest in education and certainly help to reform the university through newspapers' professional performance and investigative reporting. However, this coverage seems not to guarantee that people will be involved in the issues of university reforms. Thus, newspapers need to ask why university reforms are currently important, and bring various philosophical and ideological issues regarding the university's role and functions to society. Korean newspapers certainly need to bring the philosophical sides to the university reform-related articles as our earlier analysis demonstrates.

One of the most important findings in this research is that the

longer the education news stories were, the higher professional news values we examined here. The amount of coverage in education beats relates positively to various news values consistently. The longer stories were more likely to have higher standards in terms of fairness, professionalism, investigation, diversity, relevance, and human interest. With this finding, we recommend the longer and in-depth form of education beats. Nevertheless, this study shows that the longer stories do not guarantee in delivering truthful information. Thus, newspapers do not need to make educational coverage longer unless important news is developed.

Over all, we need to analyze further how Korean and American newspapers interact with these variables respectively when they deliver university-related news stories. Furthermore, we could expand this comparison to one between European and American newspapers since there are fewer cultural and language barriers in Western countries. American competition with European newspapers could be more intense than with newspapers of the Far East.

One of the conceptual contributions of this research is that Ettema and Glasser's three new news values of investigative reporting were not unique from the traditional news values and mixed with fair and professional reporting. We need to further examine the discriminant and convergent validity of these new constructs.

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