

Q Studies in Korea: Past and Present

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ABSTRACT: Korean universities have made remarkable progress in mass communication education. Out of a total of 110 South Korean universities, 48 institutions offer journalism and mass communication courses. In 1972, Yong Chang, a graduate of the University of Missouri School of Journalism, first introduced Q methodology to Korean communication scholars, but failed to receive widespread recognition. In 1980, Won Ho Chang of the University of Missouri taught Q methodology at Korea University as a visiting professor. He also supervised 16 Korean Ph.D.s who went back to Korea and became the backbone of Q studies in Korea. In 1996, The Korean Society for Q Study was officially formed, and Q methodology is finally taking its place in communication research and education society in Korea.

Development of Communication Research and Education

Korean universities have made remarkable progress in mass communication education. One explanation for this astonishing scholarly growth is the attempt of higher education to keep pace with the rapid developments recently achieved in the media industry. Most modern Korean mass media enterprises—including popular national magazines as well as commercial radio and television networks—began in the 1960s and

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took off in the 1970s, when mass leisure and mass affluence emerged alongside the development of national economics and technology. Responding to this development, Korean universities established programs in media education.

Nevertheless, the institutional history of mass communication education in Korea is short compared to that of the nation's mass media. Whereas 1995 marked the centennial of the first Korean daily newspaper, the college education of mass communication dates back only to the 1950s. The first journalism course at a regular college was offered at Seoul National University in 1949; other universities—including Korea, Yonsei, Joongang, and Ewha—began to offer journalism courses shortly thereafter.

These courses gradually clustered into journalism departments in the late 1950s. The first was launched at Hong Ik University in 1955, rapidly followed by Joongang in 1957, Ewha in 1960, Hanyang in 1963, Korea in 1965, Sung Kyung Kwhan in 1967, and Sogang in 1968. In tandem with this new area of study, most major universities in Seoul created mass communication departments in the 1960s. There has been a subsequent steady increase in the number of South Korean universities offering regular 4-year courses in journalism and communication.

Out of a total of about 110 South Korean universities, 48 institutions of higher learning offer such courses today. Korea is perhaps second only to the United States in the number of colleges offering regular 4-year programs. Almost 300 full-time teachers of communication and journalism are employed in Korean higher education. Of them, fully 200 have Ph.D.s in journalism and communication, half of them having received training in the United States. The number of students enrolled at the 4-year colleges is about 6,000, with 120 currently enrolled in doctoral programs. Mass communication is the fastest growing area of education in South Korea.

Because of the long literary tradition and prestigious intellectual heritage of Korean journalism, the initial focus of Korean mass media education was on print media. This education began under the formative influence of the German *Zeitungswissenschaft*—"newspaper science." Most mass communication departments were called *Sinmoon-Hak-Kwa*—"department of press" or "department of newspaper journalism." Not surprisingly, college curricula reflected this emphasis on newspaper journalism. With the general objective of training future journalists, the curricula primarily featured communication theories based on models from a literary and humanities tradition rather than the

empirical emphasis of social science.

The 1970s ushered in a period of tremendous growth for Korean popular culture. The arts and news were disseminated through such emerging media as radio, television, and popular weekly magazines. Millions of Koreans were watching television every night, and popular weeklies were piled up at newsstands throughout the country. Signaling the ascendancy of the role of broadcasting in Korean popular culture, media personalities became the nation's new idols.

Broadcasting outstripped the growth of print media in the 1970s, and its expanded audience lent even more social influence to the media. This growth was reflected in the academy, as departments offered broadcasting courses and hired internationally educated scholars. The change in the academic environment of the 1970s communication studies went as follows: First, broadcasting education was given new attention and began to achieve balance with newspaper journalism education, which had once dominated the curricula. Accordingly, the names of the departments have changed from Newspaper or Newspaper Journalism to Newspaper and Broadcasting. Second, since the 1970s mass communication education has gradually moved from training in practical matters (and literary writing) toward the academic study of communication theory. With the influx of scholars trained in American social science, the empirical approach has gained hegemony in communication study. Mass communication education has also tended to prefer theory and research over training in practical skills.

Significantly, the first graduate school of communication was established at Seoul National University in 1968. This opened a new era of graduate study of communication in Korea and also played a central academic role in legitimating empirical research in communication. The composition of the faculty influenced the school's interdisciplinary character and social scientific commitment and included scholars from sociology, psychology, political science, and communication. Many other universities soon thereafter began sponsoring new courses and graduate programs in the social scientific study of communication. It is fair to say that the earlier heyday of the humanistic study of "newspaper journalism" or "newspaper science" in Korea was outmoded by the 1970s.

As more young scholars who had studied abroad returned to join the Korean academic community, they further accelerated this climate of intellectual change so that the empirical study of communication assumed "mainstream" status in the Korean academy.

Two Fathers of Modern Communication Education in Korea

In the late 1960s to early 1970s, Korean mass communication fields underwent drastic changes. In media practice, the Korean Broadcasting System and Munhwa Broadcasting Company, two major broadcasting networks today, were born. These newly established networks needed educated mass media experts. In academia, this was the period when departments of mass communication were created in major universities such as Korea University, Seoul National University, Yonsei University, and so on. These rapidly expanding mass communication departments were obliged to produce the mass media experts that the media industries urgently needed. As much as teaching media practices to college students, these mass communication departments also needed to establish mass communication theories and research methods to develop an independent discipline. However, the universities themselves needed formally educated mass communication scholars to teach in the mass communication departments. Kyuhwan Kim and Yong Chang are two scholars who responded to the needs of both academic fields and the media industry.

Kim and Chang foresaw what Korean mass communication fields would be like in the 1960s and 1970s. To prepare for the future introduction of these new fields, both of them spent the late 1950s and early 1960s in graduate schools in two countries, Japan and the United States, which had been major influences on the development of Korean media and academia. Kim studied mass communication in the sociology department at Tokyo University. He returned to Korea and became a professor at Seoul National University. Chang studied journalism at the University of Missouri at Columbia, which was the first journalism school in the United States.

Kim and Chang returned to the Korean mass communication community in almost the same period. Both worked as journalists in the newspaper industry as well as scholars in universities. They answered the calling of the Korean mass communication community, introduced formal mass communication education, and rebuilt the Korean mass communication community. They were the fathers of modern mass communication education in Korea.

As much as they possess similar traits, Chang and Kim have differed in their academic careers. Kim, who was a professor at the most prestigious school in Korea, has always been at center stage in the academic and media worlds. Professor Chang of Hanyang University,

a private institution, has never moved beyond a peripheral area in both academia and the media. Kim became the second president of the Korean Association for Education for Journalism and Mass Communication and revived it. Chang, in contrast, was a reclusive scholar who has never become a leader in Korean mass communication society. Whereas Professor Kim always enjoyed recognition and acclaim in his academic and professional life, Professor Chang has remained in obscurity throughout his career. Professor Chang's lonely work in his academic scholarship has influenced the establishment of Q methodology.

Social-Scientific Study and Journalistic Study

In the beginning, Korean mass communication education was based on journalism and the liberal arts to correspond with the needs of the media industry. However, when Kim became a professor at Seoul National University, the journalism and liberal arts orientation was replaced by a social-scientific orientation. Kim's communication studies reflected the sociological basis of Tokyo University. With his academic background, Kim shaped the journalism department of Seoul National University with various professors from sociology, psychology, and political science. He streamlined communication theories and education into a social-scientific one. Other universities followed Kim's model, and all mass communication studies became very social-scientific in emphasis.

Chang's communication studies are rooted in the approach of American journalism, which was founded by Walter Williams at the University of Missouri at Columbia. Williams' writings at the beginning of Chang's *Readings in Mass Communication* reflect Williams' emphasis on practical journalistic training, and this continues in Chang's academic work. Chang's communication theory starts from journalism as liberal arts, whereas Kim's communication study starts from Paul Lazarsfeld's and Harold Lasswell's sociological theory.

As stated earlier, both Kim and Chang have certainly influenced Korean communication education. However, Kim's objective and social-scientific mass communication studies became the major theory and method of mass communication, whereas Chang's journalistic mass communication approach became peripheral. Chang's position on the periphery meant that Q methodology also moved out of center stage.

Q Methodology in the World of R Methodology

After Kim's propagation of social-scientific methodology and the appearance of Lazarsfeld's sociological theory, the mainstream theory and methodology became R methodology, which focused on statistically significant proofs using objective variables. As much as most Korean communication researchers worshiped the social-scientific method, they disregarded the psychological examination of individual human behavior with subjective variables. Therefore, most researchers used large samples and the R method, whereas Q method research using small samples was almost nonexistent.

The R method was accepted as a traditional research method in Korean mass communication society when Chang returned from the University of Missouri with Q methodology. In a time of R method's absolute dominance, Chang tried to introduce Q methodology. However, the academic community would not accept it as a traditional research method. To R-methodological scholars, who represented most communication researchers, Q methodology was heretical. The philosophical concept of Q methodology was not fully understood by the members of the Korean mass communication community. To Korean social scientists, Q methodology not only seemed an improper measuring technique, but also looked "unscientific."

In this unsupportive and unpopular environment, Chang tried to introduce Q method, only to be disregarded by Korean communication scholars. In 1972, he himself published *Research on Scientific Reporting and Efficient Distribution of Policy*, using Q method. Again, no one in the Korean academy paid any attention to his methodology. It was almost 10 years later, in 1980, when Chang's Q methodology was accepted by the academic society. Two professors from Hanyang University, Wonsoon Paeng and Sookyung Jung, received doctoral degrees. Paeng received his degree from Seoul National University and Jung from Korea University.

During the winter semester of 1980, Won Ho Chang of the University of Missouri, a Q researcher, taught at Korea University as a visiting professor. His teaching of a graduate-level research methods course was a very intensive application of Q method to the study of the mass communication field. Soo-Kyung Jung was one of his students. They both wrote their doctoral dissertations using Q method. Finally, 10 years after Chang's first introduction, the unique utility of Q methodology was officially accepted.

The Q researchers in Korea evolved from the academic connections

of the mass communication department at Hanyang University because all early Q researchers were either professors at Hanyang University or taught there. The Hanyang school consisted of Yong Chang, Jinhwan Oh, Kangsoo Lee, Hyeondew Kang, Sookyung Jung, and Wonsoon Paeng.

The early propagation of Q method began with Chang. Chang handed down Q method to Sookyung Jung of Hanyang University. Kangsoo Lee of Hanyang University, who studied Q methodology from L. Erwin Atwood of Southern Illinois University, taught it to Wonsoon Paeng of Hanyang University and Hyeondew Kang of Seoul National University. The latter, in turn, transmitted Q methodology to Eunhee Park of the Korean Broadcasting Institution and Changhyun Lee of Seoul National University.

Another big stream of Q studies has been conducted by Korean scholars at the University of Missouri School of Journalism since 1972. Under the direction of Won Ho Chang, who started his teaching of research methods after the retirement of William Stephenson in 1972, 10 doctoral dissertations were completed by Korean students. In 1984, Yong-Sang Park, a professor at Hanyang University wrote *The Concept of Freedom and the Press*, Jeong-Tak Kim, a professor of Sung Kyun Kwan University wrote *Alienation, Communication and Mass Media Behavior*, and Hung-Kyu Kim, a professor at Hankook University of Foreign Studies wrote *Police, Press, Public*. In 1987, Jung Ho Han, professor of Hanyang University, completed his dissertation on *Segmentation of Readers' Perception of Newspapers*, Sang-Won Lim, a professor of Korea University, wrote on *Ideology and International Information Flow*, and Suk-Hong Yoon, professor of Dankook University, wrote *National Interest and Press*.

During the early part of the 1990s, four more doctoral dissertations were approved: Girl-Jin Chung (1990), professor of Kyungbook National University, on *Attitudes Toward Advertising in Korea*; Young-Khee Kim (1991), professor of Chonnam National University on *Mass Media, Environment and Social Movement*; Min-kyu Lee (1992), professor of Sunchunhyang University, on *Personal Computer and Newspaper Journalists*; and Jong-Chan Kim, a lieutenant colonel in Korean Army, on *Press and Military*.

Q Method Research in Korea

It is difficult to say whether there are many Q researchers or studies. About 30 researchers use Q methodology. But they have not published

any collective journals in the formidable context of the R method world, although their research has been visible in various fields. Chang's *Research on Scientific Reporting and Efficient Distribution of Policy* (1972) was the first Q method work published. Without the QUANAL program, Chang's Q analysis shows his academic perseverance and love for scholarship.

The second published Q method study was that of Jinhwan Oh, who was working on Hanyang University's research on college newspaper editors at Korean Universities. Oh's *Analysis of Korean College Newspaper Chief Editor's Consciousness* used Q method as a tool for theory verification, taking a step forward from Chang's first work.

The third Q study was a joint project by Kangsoo Lee of Hanyang University and Hyeon-Dew Kang of Seoul National University. With their *Analysis of Korean Television Producers' Consciousness*, they expanded Q method applications to the areas of cultural studies.

Hyeon-Dew Kang has conducted a series of studies on journalists' news selection. With Guangyoung Choo of Seoul National University, he analyzed professional news journalists' socialization in Korea. Kang, with Professor Jaewon Lee of Cleveland University, compared news journalists in the United States and Korea to assess the difference in how they perceived news value.

Jungtak Kim of Sungyunguan University transposed R research data into Q data for his *Who Becomes a Newspaper Reporter?* With Changhyun Lee, Hyeon-Dew Kang conducted a study on *The Producers and the Korean Communication Commission's Mutual Understanding of Television Visual Expression*. In this research, the authors found that Q method has merit in visual expression research.

Rooting of Q Method in Korean Mass Communication Society

In 1990, 20 years after Chang's first introduction, Q method experienced a new resurgence. To teach the Q method successfully, a text was needed. Heungkyu Kim's *Understanding and the Application of Q method* (1990) was the first Q method textbook. Kim studied under Won Ho Chang of the University of Missouri at Columbia, the director of the Stephenson Research Center. He not only developed the Q method theoretically, but showed that this method is very useful in a practical sense in Korea. His series of analyses of advertisements using the Q method demonstrated both practical use and theoretical merit.

Kim extended the Q method to other fields. He conducted numerous

interdisciplinary studies with researchers in medical and nursing schools. These interdisciplinary studies produced many Q users in the medical field and at nursing schools, and deepened the general understanding of the method. Korean Q researchers started to participate in international organizations such as the International Society for the Scientific Study of Subjectivity.

In February 1993, there was an academic seminar to commemorate Professor Yong Chang at Hanyang University, which was the early center for Q research. Yong Chang's academic work was rediscovered at "Korean Mass Communication Education and Q method." In the same year, Hanyang University held a seminar on "Researches on Q methodology."

Soon, the number of researchers interested in Q methodology increased. In 1996, the "Korean Society for Q Study," which is the Korean version of the International Society for the Scientific Study of Subjectivity, was officially established, and since then it has held two Q forums. Q methodology is finally taking its place in communication research and education society in Korea.

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