

An Empirical Study on Mechanisms of Local Government Reform

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Abstract

This article aims to empirically explicate why the variation in government reform appears among local governments. For this, this study uses a school district as the units of analysis and tests six hypotheses made based on coercive isomorphism, social networks, and jurisdictions' attributes. In the United States, a school district as a local government has tried to reform its own conventional public education system by operating several school choice movement tools. Among them, charter schools have been recognized as a representative school choice movement tool that leads a school district to reform itself. This study uses the percentage of charter schools in each school district to measure the response variable. Using multiple ordinary least square regression analysis, this study finds that three explanatory variables—coercive isomorphism, social networks, and residents' socioeconomic status—are statistically significant. Namely, these analyzed findings can be explained as follows: A school district that 1) receives many financial aids from a state government, 2) has strong social networks with other public organizations supporting conventional education system reform, and 3) has many highly educated residents more actively attempts its own government reform. Meanwhile, introducing the contents and principles of the school choice movement to Korea, the author emphasizes that to success local government reform, it is very important to apply the competitive approach of government reform into Korea.

Key words: Local government reform, education welfare service, school districts, coercive isomorphism, social networks

I . Introduction

Government reform has always been a very popular research topic in the public administration field. Especially, a new administration in advanced countries has focused on reforming its own government structure to accomplish better government performance results (Howard &

McDermott, 2016; Kettl, 2002; McLaughlin et al., 2002; Rusaw, 1997). One of several strategies for government reform has been to change a monopolistic government structure to a competitive government structure (Ocampo, 2000). Some scholars (Friedman & Friedman, 1990; Ostorner & Gaebler, 1990) emphasize that the school choice movement (SCM) has provided an excellent guideline for the competition-based government reform, which has been known as an approach to accomplish better government performance results and handle citizen's requests for public services well. In the early 1990s, Osborne and Gaebler (1992) named this competition-based government reform tendency the reinventing government movement. They had introduced multiple strategies and tactics for the competition-based government reform (Howard & McDermott, 2016; Lenkowsky & Perry, 2000).

Several scholars (Brown & Cloke, 2005; Davis, 2013; Garrett, 2010; Hall, 2011) indicate that the neoliberalism is a core philosophy providing logic for the competition-based government reform. The main perspective of the neoliberalism is that the competitive and decentralized government structure produces better performance more than the monopolistic and centralized government structure does. Friedman (1962) introduced the concept of school choice movement (SCM) to show an instance of the competitive and decentralized government structure. He points out that SCM has multiple innovative tools—charter schools, school vouchers, open enrollment law, etc.—driving schools in the conventional public education system to produce better performance results. This means that schools in the conventional public education system need to offer better education services to education demanders such as students and their parents to survive themselves in the competitive and decentralized circumstance. If they cannot do that, they will lose their education demanders. Friedman and other neoliberals regard education customers as a self-interested individual, who chooses the best one among several options to increase their benefits or properties. Therefore, it is natural for education demanders to leave a school that does not offer what they want and choose a school that does offer what they want (Buckley & Schneider, 2007; Chubb & Moe, 1990; Friedman & Friedman, 1990). A positive role of the competition-based government reform mentioned in the SCM logic is to lead a government to accomplish its better performance, which means that provide citizens with public services that they want to receive from a government. This competitive and market-based approach that the SCM pundits support has been introduced as a main idea representative of American government reform.

Since the 1990s, diverse innovative SCM tools have been used to reform the conventional public education system. Mintrom (2000) states that the representative SCM tools are charter schools, open enrollment law, tax credits, school vouchers, etc. 50 states and Washington D.C. of American jurisdictions have gradually enacted a law to implement an innovative SCM tool in their

own territory. If a state passes a law for a specific SCM tool, a local government under state's law adopts and conducts the SCM tool. Especially, charter schools among SCM tools have received much attention from education demanders since Buddy and Shanker introduced the concept of charter school to the USA (Buckley & Schneider, 2007; Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005; Vergari, 2007; Wong & Klopott, 2009). Up until now, 44 states and Washington, D. C. have possessed their own charter school law. And, school districts in 45 jurisdictions have conducted their own government reform by operating charter schools (Center for Education Reform, 2018). Namely, school districts have operated charter schools to change their conventional public education system and provide their education demanders with more diverse education services.

Since a school district in Minnesota started to operate the first charter school in 1991, a charter school has played a role as a facilitator reforming the conventional public education system and has gradually spread across the USA. The current picture of American local government reform shows that there is a wide variation in school districts' government reform. That is to say, some school districts have very actively attempted their own government reform through providing their education customers with more charter schools while other school districts have not actively attempted their own government reform. Based on the variation shown in school districts' charter school operation, this article aims to empirically explicate a main cause leading this variation of school districts' government reform.

II. Government Reform Movement and School Choice Movement (SCM)

In the early 1990s, the government reform movement in the USA focused on reforming the centralized and top-down governance style (Kearney & Hays, 1998). Its primary logic is that the centralized and top-down governance style has a limit in satisfying contemporary citizens who are highly educated and have experienced more advanced ICT. Therefore, several scholars (Lenkowsky & Perry, 2000; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Vito & Kunselman, 2000) point out that the centralized and top-down governance style must be changed to the decentralized and bottom-up governance style to satisfy multiple citizen requests.

When Osborne and Gaebler (1992) introduced the term reinventing government movement to express American government reform movement at the beginning of the 1990s, public administration scholars recognized this government reform movement as a paradigm shift because it aimed to create a new governance style by transforming the monopolistic and

command-controlled government structure to the market-based and competitive government structure (Kearney & Hays, 1998). The government reform advocates highlight that the decentralized and bottom-up governance style is good in satisfying contemporary self-interested citizens (deLeon & Denhardt, 2000; Kamarck, 2004; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992).

Some scholars (Chubb & Moe, 1990; Friedman, 2002; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992) indicate that goals and directions of the government reform movement are shown in the school choice movement very well. Friedman (2002) indicates that the school choice movement has a positive view supporting the market-based government reform. The school choice movement leads public schools in the conventional public education system to have greater capacities because public schools would lose their education demanders when they cannot provide their education demanders with good education services that education demanders want to receive from public schools. Thus, public schools in the conventional public education system must try to improve their own education service quality in order not to lose their students and in order to keep their status. Friedman and his advocates confirm that eventually, trials of public schools will improve the quality and performance of the whole conventional public education system. Moreover, several school choice movement tools allow education demanders to have more opportunities in choosing schools offering better education services that education demanders want to receive. School choice movement advocates emphasize that several innovative school choice movement tools play a pivotal role as a facilitator to make the whole American public education's circumstance and performance better by stimulating public schools to develop themselves (Davis, 2013; Howell & Peterson, 2006).

Based on this school choice movement rationale, Osborne and Gaebler (1992) have introduced an innovative school choice movement tool as a practical exemplar explaining and leading American government reform. The representative school choice movement tools are charter schools, tax credits, school vouchers, and the open enrollment law (Howell & Peterson, 2006). Among them, charter schools have been very popular in the USA and have steadily spread across the USA since the early 1990s (Buckley & Schneider, 2007; Mintrom, 2000; Vergari, 2007; Wong & Klopott, 2009). Especially, Buckley and Schneider (2007) argue that charter schools among several school choice movement tools are the best example of the Osborne and Gaebler's government reform movement.

In 1991, Minnesota was the first state adopting the charter school law to reform its conventional public education system (Buckley & Schneider, 2007; Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005; Schneider et al., 2000; Stoddard & Corcoran, 2007; Vergari, 2007; Wong & Langevin, 2007). Minnesota's decision to enact the charter school law has driven other states to adopt their own charter school law. As of 2017, 45 jurisdictions—44 states plus Washington, D.C.—have passed

charter school legislations (Center for Education Reform, 2018). Their steady growth has been remarkable. And, charter schools have been recognized as a successful education tool leading American public education reform (Kemerer, 2009; Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005; Wong & Klopott, 2009). Currently, this popularity of charter schools has become an example yielding the broad variation in local government reform.

III. Theoretical Backgrounds to Local Government Reform

1. Coercive Isomorphism

This article focuses on empirically examining why the variation in government reform appears among school districts as a local government. To answer to this research question, this article borrows academic logic from the coercive isomorphism. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) have given a scholar an academic clue about why an organization or a jurisdiction—a school district, city, county, and state—reforms or changes itself. They stress that the main keyword of isomorphism is the term emulation, which embraces the meaning that an actor—individual, organization, and jurisdiction—imitates and resembles other actors. Namely, real actions that actors reform or change themselves appear due to other actors' influence (Lee, 2014; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Rivera et al., 2006). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) have used the contents of coercive, mimetic, and normative isomorphism to find what causes lead an organization to reform or change itself.

Among three styles of isomorphism, coercive isomorphism emphasizes that power of other upper organizations is a keyword leading an organization to reform or change itself (Martinez-Ferrero & Garcia-Sanchez, 2017). The primary idea of coercive isomorphism is that a weak organization follows and resembles actions of a strong organization due to a strong organization's power and pressure (Buchko, 2011; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). That is to say, an organization is reformed or changed by an upper organization's influence. This coercive isomorphism phenomenon is proved in Rivera and deLeon's empirical study, which has found why an organization adopts a specific program. Their research result indicates that coercive isomorphic pressure is a main factor leading a ski resort to adopt the Sustainable Slopes Program (SSP). Namely, their study explains that a ski resort more actively adopts and conducts SSP when federal or state governments very strongly control a ski resort for environmental preservation. Rivera and deLeon (2004) have described federal and state governments as upper and stronger

organizations and have indicated a ski resort as a subordinate and weaker organization. Their study proves that a weaker organization is changed by stronger (upper) organization's pressure. This coercive isomorphism phenomenon is also shown at the state level. A state that depends on federal financial assistance more actively adopts or implements federal laws (Daley & Garand, 2005). Portz (1996) also proves that financial assistance from an upper government is a main factor in leading a subordinate government to follow and implement rules that an upper government makes.

The contents of coercive isomorphism offer a researcher a clue about why a local government attempts its own government reform. The main factor driving a local government to reform itself is state's power and pressure at the upper level. A state government has its influence on a local government by offering funding or incentives to it. Based on the contents of coercive isomorphism, this article hypothesizes that if a school district's budget depends more on financial assistance from a state, the school district more actively attempts its own government reform. The literature review indicates that Colorado charter school law is highly ranked in the USA (Center for Education Reform, 2018). Its ranking is 6th among 45 jurisdictions (Washington, D.C. and 44 states) that have adopted charter school law. This fact means that Colorado is a state strongly supporting its charter school law and a school district in Colorado has a high probability following the state's direction and preference for charter schools. Therefore, it is hypothesized that this coercive isomorphism explanatory variable has a positive relationship with the response variable. This coercive isomorphism explanatory variable is estimated by the amount of state-supported financial assistance of each school district.

2. Social Networks

This study tests if social networks of actors are critical in explaining why a school district attempts its own government reform. The term social networks means inter-individual or organizational arrangements, which are connected with each other (Aldrich, 2008; Lubell et al., 2002; Scott, 2000). They cooperate with each other for the same goal such as government reform or innovation adoption. In social networks, actors are not isolated but cooperative entities (Freeman, 2004; Granovetter, 1982). The roles of social networks shed lights on accounting for why actors conduct an innovative action such as government reform (Cohen & Horev, 2017; Moyo & Modiba, 2013; Shearer et al., 2016). The first role of social networks is to increase actors' trust, which decreases transaction costs and lowers collective action problems in accomplishing their goals (Burt, 2000; Granovetter, 1973). Moreover, social networks help actors more easily obtain information necessary for achieving their goals (Borgatti & Foster, 2003).

Social networks are interactive processes of interdependent actors (Aldrich, 2008; Aldrich & Whetten, 1981; Granovetter, 1973, 1982). The point of the interactive approach is that actors cannot ignore other actors in the open system. For an actor to develop, it needs to require information and resources from other actors. An actor is naturally familiar with actions exchanging something important with each other. Namely, the keyword of social networks is ties (links) among actors (Scott, 2000). Ties help an actor to share information with other actors (Aldrich & Whetten, 1981; Freeman, 2004). Many scholars (Bressers & O'Toole, 1998; Howlett, 2002; Provan & Milward, 2001) in the public administration field have also demonstrated that interdependent actors—individuals and organizations—facilitate government reform because they can more easily adopt and implement innovations than an isolated public organization can do.

This article focuses on testing if social networks, which are created by seven organizations that work for the public education reform in Colorado and each school district, influence each school district's own government reform.¹⁾ To know about the effect of social networks on school districts' government reform, this article first of all needs to seek empirical research proving that social networks play pivotal roles in reforming education entities such as school districts. Mintrom and Vergari's study (1998) has empirically explored if social networks influence state's public education reform through adopting charter school policy. Their empirical study demonstrates that internal and external social networks facilitate state's government reform by helping a state adopt an education reform tool as a charter school law. Torenvlied et al. (2012) have explained that the development and reform of American education have been influenced by networks of interdependent organizations.

Among several organizations related to public education reform, a school district is regarded as a pivotal education entity because a decision-maker in a school district usually decides to adopt or implement an innovative education tool necessary for its own government reform. Meanwhile, Meier and O'Toole (2001) argue that it is possible for a school district to do this action due to cooperation with other organizations. They highlight that a school district basically needs to collaborate with other organizations to effectively adopt or implement an innovative education tool that supports its own government reform. In their article, they describe a school district as an education entity, which is basically familiar with and embedded in networked arrangements. That is to say, it is natural for a school district to collaborate with other actors—other school districts, state governments, local governments, and private organizations—to accomplish its own

1) There are seven public organizations for Colorado's public education reform. They have played a role as a facilitator that provides a school district with information or help necessary for a school district's government reform. These organizations are as follows: Colorado Education Association, Education Leadership Council, Best Board, Colorado Charter School Institute, Colorado Children's Campaign, Colorado Department of Education, and Colorado League of Charter Schools.

government reform. Therefore, it is assumed that a school district cooperates with other organizations when it attempts its own government reform.

The literature review shows that there are seven education organizations for Colorado's public education reform. They are the substantive public education organizations at the state level and have worked for reforming Colorado's public education system. This article targets to prove if a school district that has dense networks with seven public education organizations more actively attempts its own public education reform. As aforementioned, some scholars (Meier & O'Toole, 2001; Torenvlied et al., 2012) prove that an organization having dense networks with other organizations, which pursue the same goal, more easily accomplishes its own goal. Thus, it is hypothesized that a school district having strong social network density more actively attempts its own government reform by carrying out an innovative education tool.

3. Attributes of School Districts

This study tries to know about the explanatory power of the coercive isomorphism and social network factors on the variation in school districts' government reform. However, this study also needs to test the explanatory impetus of other factors that could possibly influence the response variable. In reality, many public administration and policy scholars (Berry & Berry, 2007; Mintrom, 2000; Ostrom, 2007) stress the importance of checking jurisdiction attributions in empirically examining mechanisms of jurisdiction's action process such as government reform.

1) Socioeconomic status

Several scholars (Lee & Kim, 2010; Ostrom, 2007; Teske et al., 2006) indicate that residents' socioeconomic status factors are important in explaining mechanisms of a jurisdiction's action such as government reform, which is accomplished by its innovation adoption and implementation. Their studies demonstrate that residents with a high socioeconomic status level ask a jurisdiction for more public services than residents with a low socioeconomic status level do (Berry & Berry, 2007). That is to say, a jurisdiction with many residents having high socioeconomic status faces more public service requests.

This social phenomenon is also shown in the school district case. Some scholars (Chubb & Moe, 1990; Teske et al., 2006) point out that it is usual for parents with high socioeconomic status to more easily obtain school information than parents with low socioeconomic status. Chubb and Moe (1990) explain that parents who have better school information request a school district more innovative education tools for their children. Stoddard and Corcoran (2007) prove

Chubb and Moe's academic insight. They discover that parents with higher socioeconomic status ask a school district to demand more education services. Therefore, it is possible to hypothesize that a school district with many residents having high socioeconomic status more actively attempts its own government reform by carrying out more innovative education tools. To operationalize this explanatory variable, this study uses residents' educational level of each school district.

2) Pro-interest groups

Interest groups are political entities leading a local government such as a school district, city, and county to reform itself by pressuring a local government to adopt or implement an innovative tool (Cahn, 1995; Grossmann, 2012). The USA is a democratic country allowing interest groups to participate in the decision-making process of a government. It is because multiple ideas and thoughts of interest groups help a government adopt and implement the best institution (Beyers & Braun, 2014; Boatright, 2011). In the USA, political participation of various interest groups is regarded as a necessary and sufficient condition in making, choosing, and implementing institutions. Thus, public administration scholars (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Paster, 2018; Teske, 1991) highlight to examine roles of interest groups in studying mechanisms of multiple government actions such as government reform. They stress that government reform is inclined to be designed and conducted according to interest groups' opinions because bureaucrats or decision-makers are influenced by interest groups' political power such as votes or financial supports. On the other hand, interest groups pressure a government to implement an innovative tool that is beneficial to them. Therefore, government reform can be regarded as an outcome which is totally affected by interest groups.

Interest groups are a critical political entity that really influences the adoption and implementation of an innovative government reform tool, which is related to interest groups' benefits (Andlovic & Lehmann, 2014). Teske (2004) emphasizes that interest groups lobby legislators and bureaucrats to adopt or implement an innovative tool that positively influences their benefits and profits. He regards interest groups as self-interested political entities.

Interest groups also appear in the school choice movement that has led public education reform in the USA. Hill and Jochim (2009) point out that there are many interest groups influenced by school choice movement tools. They are distinguished by two groups—pro-interest groups and anti-interest groups—for school choice movement tools. Both interest groups for school choice movement tools are decided according to existence or non-existence of benefits to interest groups (Chubb & Moe, 1990). For instance, pro-SCM interest groups want a government

to accept and carry out an innovative school choice movement tool to change or reform the monopolistic conventional public education system embedded in the top down style. They argue that the school choice movement will lead the American education system to produce its better performance and provide qualified education services to education demanders. If decision-makers or bureaucrats agree with the logic of pro-SCM interest groups, they will consider adopting and implementing an innovative school choice movement tool for their education customers.

In sum, interest groups always exist in the school choice movement case. That is to say, interest groups are ones of pivotal factors in determining the variation in government reform among school districts. To empirically confirm if interest groups influence the local government reform, this article tests if there is a relationship between pro-school choice movement interest groups and school districts' government reform. Several scholars (Jefferson, 2004, Kirst, 2010; Molnar, 1996) point out that pro-school choice movement interest groups embrace parent groups dissatisfied with conventional public school services, faith-based organizations, local business associations, and real estate associations. Therefore, it is hypothesized that a school district with many pro-school choice movement interest groups more actively attempts its own government reform. To measure this pro-interest group explanatory variable, the author uses the number of pro-school choice movement interest groups as a proxy.

3) Student performance of school districts

A school district will consider finding a new education tool if its own student performance is lower or worse than students' in other school districts. Namely, low and bad student performance of a school district is a primary cause for a school district to attempt its own government reform by adopting or carrying out an innovative education tool (Robert, 2010; Wohlstetter et al., 2015). A school district usually receives requests from parents if their children's performance is not good. Education leaders, decision-makers, or bureaucrats in a school district must seek a new education tool that fits what its education demanders ask for. Therefore, a school district will try to adopt and carry out an innovative education tool if its student performance is bad. Some scholars (Gill, 2001; Stoddard & Corcoran, 2007; Timpane et al., 2001) point out that this low student performance drives a jurisdiction such as a state and a school district to adopt and carry out an innovative school choice movement tool. Based on the previous research results on low student performance, it is hypothesized that a school district with bad student performance results more actively attempts its own government reform. In this study, the percentage of K-12 student graduation is used to operationalize this explanatory variable.

4) Residents' population

Some scholars (Curristine et al., 2007; Lockner, 2013; Walker, 1981) point out that a jurisdiction's population size is an explanatory factor in accounting for government reform mechanisms. In reality, if a jurisdiction—school district, city, county, and state—has many residents, the jurisdiction confronts various public service requests that its own residents ask for. Namely, the number of a jurisdiction's residents is an important cause explaining why a jurisdiction conducts its own government reform through accepting and operating a new innovative tool.

Powers et al. (2012) demonstrate that this phenomenon is shown in the public education reform case as well. If many residents live in a school district, the school district more actively attempts to adopt or implement government reform tools in order to respond to various education service requests from its residents (Buckley & Schneider, 2007; Schneider et al., 2000). These previous studies support that a school district more actively attempts its own government reform by accepting and operating a new innovative education tool that fits education service requests from residents when the school district embraces many residents. Therefore, it is hypothesized that a school district with many residents more actively attempts its own government reform by adopting and carrying out an innovative school choice movement tool. This explanatory variable is measured by the population density of each school district.

IV. Variables and Methods

1. Response Variable

In this article, the response variable is the variation in school districts' government reform. This response variable is measured by the percentage of charter schools among total K-12 public schools in a school district. In the USA, charter schools have been used to change and reform the conventional public education system since the early 1990s (Benezra, 2016; Ertas, 2013, Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). On the other hand, the author uses Colorado's school districts as this study's units of analysis. Colorado has 178 school districts. Thus, the sample size of this study is 178. Colorado is ideal for this study because compared to other states, Colorado has given a school district strong discretionary power in operating charter schools since its charter school law was passed in 1993 (Griffin, 2013; Hirsch, 2002). As of 2017, 183 charter schools are operated in 178 Colorado's school districts. This indicates that approximately 10% among the whole state's K-12

public schools are charter schools. And, nearly 110,000 students have studied in those charter schools.

2. Explanatory Variables

〈Table 1〉 describes measurement for each explanatory variable, each explanatory variable's potential direction for the response variable, and data source for each explanatory variable. First, the coercive isomorphism (CRPH) explanatory variable is measured by the amount of state-supported financial aid of each school district. It is expected that there is a positive relationship between this CRPH explanatory variable and the response variable. Second, the social networks (SONT) explanatory variable is measured by the density of social networks among seven public education organizations and each school district. It is expected that there is a positive relationship between the SONT explanatory variable and the response variable.

As aforementioned, there are four explanatory variables indicating school district attributes in this study. First, the socioeconomic status (SEST) explanatory variable is measured by the percentage of residents with bachelor degree or higher degrees in each school district. It is expected that there is a positive relationship between the SEST explanatory variable and the response variable. Second, the pro-interest groups (PRIG) explanatory variable is estimated by the number of pro-school choice movement interest groups. It is expected that there is a positive relationship between the PRIG explanatory variable and the response variable. Third, the student performance (SUPF) explanatory variable is measured by the percentage of K-12 student gradation of each school district. It is expected that there is a negative relationship between the SUPF explanatory variable and the response variable. Finally, the residents' population (RSPP) explanatory variable is estimated by the percentage of population density of each school district. It is expected that there is a positive relationship between the RSPP explanatory variable and the response variable.

〈Table 1〉 Measurement, Expected Direction, and Data Source of Each Explanatory Variable

Explanatory Variable	Measurement	Expected Direction	Data Source
Coercive Isomorphism (CRPH)	Amount of state-supported financial aid of each school district	+	FindTheData
Social Networks (SONT)	Density of social networks among each school district and public education organizations	+	Survey
Socioeconomic Status (SEST)	Percentage of residents with bachelor degree or higher degrees in each school district.	+	Colorado Department of Education
Pro-interest Groups (PRIG)	Number of pro-charter school interest groups in each school district	+	Survey
Student Performance (SUPF)	Percentage of K-12 student gradation of each school district	-	Colorado Department of Education
Residents' Population (RSPP)	Percentage of population density of each school district	+	Colorado Department of Education

Note: Response variable is the variation in government reform of each school district.

3. Statistical Method

This article targets to empirically explore why there is the broad variation in school districts' government reform. To find an answer to the research question, this article estimates the associations among the response variable—the variation in school districts government reform—and six explanatory variables. The response variable is operationalized by the percentage of charter schools among K-12 public schools in each school district. Multiple ordinary least square (OLS) regression analysis is utilized to test six hypotheses. Several scholars (Gujarati, 2003; Leech et al., 2011; O'Sullivan et al., 2011; Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011) recommend to utilize multiple OLS regression analysis when both response variable and explanatory variables are continuous. Thus, it is appropriate to use multiple OLS regression analysis because both response variable and six explanatory variables used in this study are continuous variables.

V. Analyzed Results

The analyzed results of the multiple ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis are shown in 〈Table 2〉. First of all, this study needs to check if six explanatory variables in the final equation model have a serious multicollinearity issue. Some scholars (Gujarati, 2003; Hair et al.,

2010; Kennedy, 2008) highlight that final results of multivariate statistical techniques might be not accurate if a specific explanatory variable in an equation model has serious multicollinearity with other explanatory variables. Thus, they ask a scholar to check a multicollinearity issue among explanatory variables before she or he operates a multivariate statistical technique. They explain that if an explanatory variable possesses strong multicollinearity with other predictor variables, a final result that a main statistical technique estimates might be wrong. Table 2 shows that there is no serious multicollinearity issue because all of the values of variance inflation factor (VIF) are smaller than 10 while all of the values of tolerance level are bigger than 0.1. These final results of both variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance level indicate that any explanatory variables among six explanatory variables do not have any perfect linear relationships. This means that any explanatory variables do not possess the same or similar characteristics and information among other explanatory variables in the final equation model. Thus, we can think that the main statistical technique yields a more accurate answer to the research question.

〈Table 2〉 describes the analyzed results of the multiple OLS regression analysis. First of all, there are 110 valid cases in the analyzed sample size. The F-statistic ($F=13.823$, $df=6, 104$) is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This result shows that the variation of the response variable (the variation in school districts' government reform) is significantly predicted by the final equation model that is composed of six explanatory variables. Namely, this F-statistic result supports that the combination of all of the explanatory variables in the equation model significantly predicts the variation of the response variable very well. The adjusted R-squared value is 0.412, which means that all of the explanatory variables in the equation model explain approximately 41% of the variation in the response variable.

Among six explanatory variables analyzed in this article, three explanatory variables are statistically significant. They are the coercive isomorphism (CRPH) explanatory variable, social networks (SONT) explanatory variable, and socioeconomic status (SEST) explanatory variable. However, the remaining explanatory variables are not statistically significant. The CRPH (coercive isomorphism) explanatory variable is statistically significant at the 0.05 level while the SONT (social networks) and SEST (socioeconomic status) explanatory variables are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. As predicted, the directions of three statistically significant explanatory variables have the positive associations with the response variable.

The unstandardized coefficients (slopes) of three statistically significant explanatory variables indicate how the response variable is accounted for by each statistically significant explanatory variable. First, the unstandardized coefficient of the CRPH (coercive isomorphism) explanatory variable is 0.05, which means that an increase of one unit for the CRPH (coercive isomorphism)

explanatory variable results in an expected increase in 0.05 of the response variable when all other explanatory variables are held constant. Namely, this interpretation accounts for that a school district receiving much financial aids from state is more likely to attempt its own government reform. Second, the unstandardized coefficient of the SONT (social networks) explanatory variable is 45.211, which implies that an increase of one unit for the SONT (social networks) explanatory variable results in an expected increase in 45.211 of the response variable when all other explanatory variables are held constant. That is, this interpretation means that a school district with strong social networks with other public education organizations having the same goal is more likely to attempt its own government reform. Finally, the unstandardized coefficient of the SEST (socioeconomic status) explanatory variables is 0.134, which indicates that an increase of one unit for the SEST (socioeconomic status) explanatory variable results in an expected increase in 0.134 of the response variable when all other explanatory variables are held constant. That is to say, this interpretation implies that a school district with many high-educated residents is more likely to attempt its own government reform.

〈Table 2〉 Determinants for Response Variable

	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	VIF	Tolerance Level
	B	S.E.	Beta				
CRPH**	0.050	0.022	0.244	2.297	0.024	2.117	0.472
SONT***	45.211	13.628	0.330	3.318	0.001	1.850	0.541
SEST***	0.134	0.047	0.237	2.872	0.005	1.274	0.785
PRIG	0.321	0.390	0.069	0.822	0.413	1.309	0.764
SUPF	0.023	0.033	0.055	0.704	0.483	1.146	0.873
RSPP	0.001	0.001	0.050	0.499	0.619	1.913	0.523
Constant	-34.187	9.763		-3.502	0.001		
N	110						
F(6,104)***	13.823						
Adjusted R ²	0.412						

Note: *** significant at 0.01 level; ** significant at 0.05 level; * significant at 0.1 level

Response variable: Variation in government reform of school districts

Explanatory variables: CRPH=coercive isomorphism; SONT=social networks, SEST=socioeconomic status; PRIG=pro-interest groups; SUPF: student performance; RSPP: residents' population

VI. Conclusions

Since the early 1990s, many countries have applied the competition-based and market-oriented government to provide their citizens with better public services. Osborne and Gaebler (1992) were a representative scholar highlighting this government reform style. They stressed that the decentralized and competitive government system is better than the centralized and monopolistic government system in delivering good public services to citizens and accomplishing good government performance. They introduced the concept of school choice as an exemplar of the decentralized and competitive government style. School choice scholars argue that a government must provide more public education services to demanders and this is possible in the decentralized and competitive government style. To make the conventional education system style more competitive and decentralized, they have led a school district to adopt and operate charter schools, magnet schools, home schooling, etc. as innovative education tools. This study empirically conducted to know what factors drive a school district as a local government to more actively attempt its own government reform.

The final analyzed results indicate that three explanatory variables—coercive isomorphism (CRPH), social networks (SONT), and socioeconomic status (SEST)—are statistically significant in accounting for the variation in school districts' government reform. The first statistical result means that a school district that receive more financial aids from a state provides its own education demanders with more charter school services. That is to say, a financial aid from an upper government is a pivotal factor leading a government at the lower level to accept and conduct an innovative institution that an upper government emphasizes and pursues for its own government reform.

Based on the statistical result for the explanatory power of social networks on the variation of the local government reform, this study proves that a school district that has strong social networks with other public organizations, which are a main actor working for Colorado's education reform, more actively conducts its own government reform by providing more charter schools as an innovative education reform tool to its education demanders in its own territory. This academic finding can be explained with the concept of information acquisition through social networks created by a school district and seven public organizations. That is to say, a school district more actively attempts its own government reform because a school district can decrease transaction costs with information obtained through social networks.

The final statistical result of the socioeconomic status explanatory variable demonstrates that the variation in government reform of a school district is influenced by residents' educational level in each school district. This socioeconomic status explanatory variable was estimated by

residents' educational level in each school district. Namely, this means that a school district with many highly educated residents in its own territory more actively conducts its own government reform. Some scholars (Gooding, 2001; Levin, 2001, Teske et al. 2006) have supported this statistical result. They have explained that in order to provide their children with better education services, highly educated parents gather and use information related to innovative education reform tools more than less educated parents do. That is to say, highly educated parents who know about information for innovative education reform tools such as charter schools, magnet schools, homeschooling, etc. ask their own school district to adopt and conduct an innovative education reform tool.

In conclusion, this study contributes to introducing the concepts of the school choice movement and charter school to Korea pursuing government reform. Furthermore, some scholars (Goldhaber, 1999; Wamba & Ascher, 2003; Wells et al., 2002) indicate that a charter school is an innovative educational institution including the concepts of education welfare service as well as education reform. Especially, they strongly state that a charter school providing special education programs for minority students, disabled students, and children in low income families is an excellent exemplar institution in developing and expanding the value of social equity. These days, many decision-makers and citizens in Korea have been gradually interested in social equity rather than social equality to construct the circumstance of social justice since the Moon Jae-In administration started in 2017. Compared to the conservative regimes, the Moon Jae-In administration has emphasized both social equity and redistributive policies to make Korea better. Thus, a charter school with this social equity characteristic will play a pivotal role as an innovative educational institution supporting children in the socially disadvantaged and facilitating the concept of social equity in Korea.

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국문요약

지방정부개혁 메커니즘에 관한 경험적 연구

이정호

본 연구는 지방정부개혁의 메커니즘을 연구한 논문이다. 연구분석단위는 지방정부인 교육구(school districts)이며 콜로라도 교육구를 표본으로 하고 있다. 콜로라도 교육구를 통해서 얻은 데이터 셋(data set)은 강압적 동형화(coercive isomorphism), 사회적 네트워크(social networks), 그리고 교육구의 특성 요소를 토대로 만들어진 여섯 개의 가설을 검증하는데 사용되고 있다. 전체 가설을 검증하기 위해서 사용된 통계기법은 다중회귀분석이며 최종분석결과는 1) 주정부로부터 재정적 지원을 많이 받고 있는 교육구, 2) 교육개혁을 주도하고 있는 타 공교육조직과 강한 네트워크를 형성하고 있는 교육구, 3) 고학력 주민이 많은 교육구일수록 정부개혁을 더 적극적으로 추진하는 것으로 나타났다. 한편 본 논문은 정부개혁의 주요 사례인 학교선택운동(school choice movement)의 내용과 원리를 한국에 소개하고 있다. 이에 저자는 21세기에 들어서 적극적인 정부개혁과 국민의 삶의 질을 높이하고자 노력하고 있는 한국 정부가 학교선택운동에서 강조하고 있는 경쟁적 접근법(competitive approach)과 사회적 형평성(social equity)의 의미를 올바르게 이해하고 적용함으로써 더 나은 국가를 만드는데 있어서 도움을 받을 수 있기를 기대한다.

주제어: 지방정부개혁, 교육복지서비스, 교육구, 강압적 동형화, 사회적 네트워크