Do Political Institutions Matter to Education Policy?: Lessons from Charter School Growth in the United States^{*}

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정치적 제도가 교육정책에 중요한가?: 미국의 차터스쿨 성장으로부터의 시사점

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Abstract Complicated political situation still plagues charter schools despite their innovative education. Nevertheless, they experienced growth around 2011, yet only a few studies have explored why they had expanded from the political viewpoints. Therefore, using political institutions and political market framework, this study investigated the relationship between political institutions and charter school growth in the US(United States). To do so, this study conducted multiple regression analyses of school growth measured by the number of schools allowed, implementation points, and guaranteed funding. The findings revealed that only governors' partisanship has a significant influence on the number of schools. Moreover, supportive privatization organizations, governors' partisanship, and per capita income affects implementation points. Meanwhile, regarding guaranteed fiscal funding for the charter schools, the teachers' union enrollment rate, governors' partisanship, and per capita income are crucially influential. Finally, the results confirmed that political institutions are also important for education.

Key Words : Charter School, Political Institutions, Political Market Framework, Political Market Institutions

요 약 차터스쿨을 통한 혁신 사회 지속가능성에도 불구하고, 차터스쿨은 여전히 복잡한 정치 상황 아래에서 성장과 쇠퇴를 반복하고 있다. 2011경에 일어난 차터스쿨의 성장에도 불구하고, 이를 정치적인 관점에서 연구한 연구는 찾아 보기 힘들다. 따라서 정치제도와 정치시장 분석틀을 사용하여, 본 연구는 미국의 주정부 자료를 바탕으로 정치적 제도 와 차터스쿨 성장과의 관계를 회귀분석을 활용하여 분석하였다. 그 결과 주지사의 소속정당은 차터스쿨의 수에 영향을 미치고 있었으며, 민영화지지 단체, 주지사의 소속정당과 1인당 소득은 차터스쿨의 집행 점수에 통계적으로 유의미한 관계를 나타냈다. 또한 주정부 내 교원 노동조합의 등록비율, 주지사의 소속정당과 1인당 소득은 차터스쿨의 보장된 재정지원에 영향을 미치는 중요한 요인으로 작용하였다. 결국, 본 연구의 결과를 통해 정치적 제도가 교육에 중요한 요소임을 확인할 수 있었다.

주제어 : 차터스쿨, 정치적 제도, 정치시장 분석틀, 정치시장 제도

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1. Introduction

In a democracy, the political institutions are fundamental for society to maintain their functions while the actors compete in the political market. Social sustainability implies a process of creating successful places that promote wellbeing and increase the quality of life in the social system[1]. As one of the main factors of life quality and social foundation, education is a significant component in our society because much social capital has been inherited from the parents to children through education. Political institutions have influenced education as a part of the social system, and the governments and politicians have provided education as a public good for citizens for a long time. They combine infra-structure facilities with supporting social and cultural life with social systems and amenities.

Many actors are involved in reforming society, such as bureaucrats, congressperson, politicians, and citizens. Recently, some reformers have critiqued hierarchical education services. Rather, the reformers try to spread the concept of market-based educational services. One of them is school choice. Theoretically, school choice is based on public choice and rational choice theory, which argues that individual actions are based on self-interest and bolstered by the concept of rationality to maximize their position[2]. This kind of market-based system encourages schools to compete for providing education services in our society. The proponents of school choice assume that the existing education system is bureaucratic and wasteful, and increasing market competition can solve these problems[2,3].

A charter school is one type of school choice built on a market-based approach. Charter schools are a school system that receives public funding but operates independently from the state schools to maintain sustainable social education and offer a better education system. Occasionally, by using the charter schools, politicians and elected bureaucrats influence the education system by allowing charter schools to operate to boost the quality of education. Charter school growth cannot be free from political institutions, such as political parties, interest groups, and labor unions. These institutions construct the people's minds, and they may significantly affect the prosperity of the charter school.

Due to their innovative education methods, charter schools have expanded while their effectiveness has been discussed and highlighted. Within ten years of the first charter school being established in Minnesota, 36 more states adopted the system. Additionally, a historic surge in charter schools occurred nationwide, increasing to 322 schools in 2010-2011 and 422 schools in 2011-2012[38] even after almost 20 years of first charter school in Minnesota. The early rise of charter schools reflects their popularity due to their innovative idea. However, since 2012, charter school growth has slowed. According to the Digest of Education Statistics [38,39]. 282 new schools opened in 2014-2015, 108 schools opened in 2015-2016, 156 schools in 2016-2017, 182 schools in 2017-2018, and 234 schools in 2018-2019. What political factors influenced states' charter school growth in 2011? Although the dramatic upsurge in the number of charter schools in 2011-2012 should have been investigated to prepare for or predict the future upsurge of charter schools in terms of openings, this topic remains unexplored.

Furthermore, many scholars have struggled to delve into how the political setting intervenes to boost, accept, or repeal charter schools. It is crucial to consider the actors in the political institutions' decision-making processes and their influences as well as the market competition of political actors when predicting our society's future. However, the framework from which to explore these political institutions is insufficient. Political institutions influence education policy. Accordingly, this study investigated the relationship between political institutions and growth within a state of charter schools to answer these questions.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Charter School and Politics

Since "Nation at Risk," revealed during the Reagan administration, public education has experienced increased competition[4]. One of the competition systems is a charter school. The Center for Education Reform(CER) defined charter schools as "innovative public schools designed by educators, parents, or civic leaders that are open by choice, accountable for results, and free from most unnecessary rules and regulations governing conventional public schools"[5]. The core ideas of charter schools are flexibility and accountability, which means if charter schools fail to perform, they could be closed down[6]. Teachers have the freedom to innovate and structure learning according to student needs. Thus, they are independent of state and local government regulations[7]. According to Henry, public charter schools compete for students while operating autonomously[8]. Since 1991, when the first charter school was established in Minnesota, more states in the US have accepted the system. At the national and local levels, charter schools remain one of the key issues in politics[9].

Diverse actors influence the growth of charter schools. Charter school legislation provides politicians with the opportunity to show off their educational concerns. The continued existence and expansion of the charter school paradigm cannot be isolated from politics. Each US state has a different system. Thus, each state's charter schools have different forms. Since teachers' unions generally support the Democratic Party and the democratic platform supports the principle of "big government," they tend to oppose charter school expansion.

On the other hand, conservatives commonly oppose government intervention and support competition and parents' and students' choices. Thus, Republicans are more likely to support charter schools[9]. In addition, charter school legislation fits the Republican viewpoint, which stresses decentralization and market competition[10]. These differences are reflected in each state's political culture.

The bureaucrats also have their autonomy. They can delay or facilitate one policy depending on their political preferences. The governor especially has strong power to influence law and implementation. Most governors are influenced by their party platform and pressure from interest groups. Hassel mentioned that Republican governors tend to have an incentive to adopt charter school laws due to party ideology[11].

Citizens influence the policy process via voting and forming interest groups based on their political position, socioeconomic status, and demographic factors. People represent their institutions by supporting their politicians and groups, while the underlying institutions interpret their relationships[12]. However, it is difficult to find a framework to represent these political institutions theoretically and systematically, even though many people are curious about these influences of the various policies on our lives.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Political market institutions are a combination of political or democratic institutions[13] and political market framework. Moe tried to synthesize politics and public policy as a new institutional approach, especially advocating that

a public organization possesses political aspects, like negotiating, bargaining, and temporary interests, as a part of the institution's characteristics [14]. He argued that public officials' action in the decision-making process includes economic and political behaviors. The details of personnel, structure, funding, location, and oversight in public organizations are settled through specific public authority acts. Political institutions are a set of contextual features in a collective choice setting that defines constraints on and opportunities for individual behavior in that setting [15]. Additionally, a set of "rules of the game" allows concerned parties to structure expectations, shape preferences, and evolve strategies[16]. Thus. political institutions influence the incentives of local actors and affect the capacity planner and official[17].

The political market framework explains the policies as an outcome of interactions between policy suppliers and policy demanders[18,19]. This provides а tool to describe local sustainability policy[19]. Many policy demand and policy supply actors in the political institutions follow their institutions and reach the equilibrium under the institutional arrangements[20]. Feiock and Kim mentioned that the political market focuses on exchanging elected officials as suppliers and constituents or interest groups as demanders[19]. To reach their equilibrium, the government officials and politicians supply demander's favorable policies in exchange for demanders' votes, campaign contributions, and media exposure to secure desired outcomes despite transaction costs, such as limited cognition, information, time, and effort [19,21]. The relative political power of the demanders and the willingness of government authorities to supply favorable policies to various interests are principal factors of the process. Different forms of political institutions favor different interests, either reducing or enhancing the ability of interests to affect policy

decisions[22]. State leaders' political and career incentives have implications for their attentiveness to the timing and level of collective benefits and willingness to implement the policies.

Political institutions facilitate exchange by determining the transaction cost of seeking agreement, exchanging mutual policies, monitoring, and enforcing decisions[19]. Ghosh classified political institutions into two types, primary and secondary[23]. Primary political institutions refer to political parties and the executive and legislative wings of the government. Secondary political institutions include pressure groups using power relations and the judiciary. However, the judiciary does not have much influence on charter school growth. Thus, this study excluded the judiciary branch as a factor of interest.

Lewis-Beck and Rice posited that group demand, elite preference, and mass support are three extensive variables as a function of government growth in the US[24]. Group demand, elite preference, and mass support are employed to organize democratic political institutions [12,13,24]. Group demand and mass support reflect the demand of the political market, while the elite preference represents its supply[12]. These elements are borrowed from system theory, group theory, and elite theory and combined into a satisfactory fusion[24]. Based on system theory, the models include independent variables, such as demographic indicators, economic measures, socioeconomic environments, and political institutions[24]. Group theory suggests that public policy emerges from competition among groups[25]. In terms of political elites, Cameron argued that a government composed of left-leaning people is willing to increase public sector growth[26]. In addition, Lewis-Beck and Rice pointed out that the elite and group theories do not recognize the role of mass support[24]. Thus, they stressed the masses' role

in forming policy. Interest group theory holds that the policy participants are at utility maximizers operating under different institutional constraints.

2.3 Hypotheses

Based on the arguments above, this study proposed hypotheses to evaluate the growth of charter schools in the US. First, more supportive privatization organizations are likely to engender the state's charter school growth policies. Still, more teacher unions are likely to weaken the state's charter school growth. For their reelection, public officials cannot help considering dominant interest groups when setting priorities for their organizations and managing decision-making for interests[27]. Stoddard and Corcoran showed that states with a small unionized teaching force are more likely to pass charter school legislation[28]. Additionally, Renzulli and Roscigno claimed that the percentage of unionized teachers influences strong law[4]. Strong teacher unions in states make it more difficult to adopt school-choice laws[29].

Hypothesis 1: More supportive privatization organizations improve state charter school growth policies.

Hypothesis 2: Increased teacher union enrollment worsens state charter school growth policies.

Second, more Republican party politicians in state congress and a Republican governor are likely to produce more charter schools and promote state charter school growth policies. Renzulli and Roscigno considered Republican governors and the percentage of Republicans in the legislature to analyze intrastate charter school adoption, stating that political bodies do not influence charter school law[4]. Although some conservative Democrats support charter schools in a few states, the Republican politicians who support the free market are more willing to be pro-charter school advocates in states like Arizona, Michigan, and Pennsylvania[30-33]. Additionally, Renzulli and Roscigno showed that the percentage of Republicans in the legislature influences a strong charter law[4].

Bureaucrats could influence and reflect their political viewpoint on states' charter school growth policies at their discretion. In a similar vein, governors express and conduct their intention implicitly or explicitly. Lubell et al. maintained that an executive chief influences reform. interest and government groups, structures depending on their power[22]. Governors' partisanship could be the main criterion due to its influence on personnel. Republicans are more likely to support charter schools[9].

On the other hand, in the US, the power of the Democratic partly contributes to increasing the budget[34]. This causes the increase of charter school implementation, especially during the Democrat governor's term. However, Republicans tend to support charter school growth. This leads us to assume that Republican governors tend to gain incentives to adopt charter school laws due to Republican party preferences[11].

Hypothesis 3: More Republican party members in state congress is associated with better state charter school growth policies.

Hypothesis 4: States with Republican governors have better state charter school growth policies.

Third, it is necessary to consider the citizens' mass support in the political market and institutions. Many scholars have chosen diversity, race, and citizens' wealth as key variables in policy studies[4]. The higher ratio of whites in

each state and the more per capita income are likely to generate better state charter school growth policies. Public opinion influences lawmakers. Several scholars contend that school-choice policy is usually motivated by the personal-political return rather than a quest for better student achievement[35]. In general, the minority advocates redistributive programs for social equity, and the population with higher personal income is more receptive to social change and policy innovation[36,37].

Hypothesis 5: States with a higher ratio of whites have better state charter school growth policies.

Hypothesis 6: States with more per capita income have better state charter school growth policies.

Fig. 1 describes the overall conceptual framework of this research.

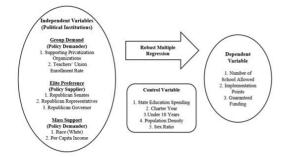


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework

3. Data and Methods

3.1 Data Collection and Method

Based on the CER law score, ranking, and charter school implementation points widely used in academic research, this study measured states' charter school growth policies in terms of dependent variables. It also included group demand, elite preference, and mass support as independent variables derived from the prior studies[12,24]. The data were collected from the CER in 2011, the National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education, US Census State Characteristics, the Bureau of Business & Economic Research, US Government Spending, United States Census, and Hirsch et al.[40].

This study focused on the surge of charter school openings between 2010 and 2012. Thus, examining the year 2011 is important to find unique developmental growth. Forty-one states adopted charter schools by 2011. However, data employed forty states of charter schools, since Washington DC is not a state without a governor. The hypotheses were tested using regression analysis.

3.2 Variable Measurement

Three dependent variables from the CER were scored as follows: 1) The number of schools allowed was measured by the number of charter schools allowed to open and caps to limit their growth and development with a maximum of 10 points[5]; 2) Implementation points were given for schools' performance and accountability based on the netted points in some cases[5], accounting for loss and gain from a minimum of -5 points to a maximum of 3 points; 3) Guaranteed funding was measured as the degree of activity of the school[5,31]. Charter schools are publicly funded and operate autonomously, free from conventional school districts' direct control and regulation [6,41]. Thus, guaranteed funding is important to secure their operation.

The components of political institutions included 1) group demands measured by the number of organizations to support privatization in each state and the teachers' union enrollment rate; 2) elite preference conceptualized by the number of Republican party members in the Senate and the House of Representatives and the governors' partisanship; 3) mass supports

		Variable	Measurement				
Dependent Variables		State's Charter School Growth Policies	Number of schools allowedImplementation pointsGuaranteed funding				
	Group Demands	Supportive Privatization Organizations	• Number of organizations that tend to support privatization in each state.				
	Demands	Teachers' Union Enrollment	• Teachers' union enrollment rate				
Independent	Elite Preference	Republican Senates • The number of Republican party members in the Senate					
Variables		Republican Representatives	• The number of Republican party members in the House of Representatives				
		Governor Partisanship	• Governor's partisanship in each state.				
	Mass Support	Race	• Ratio of whites in each state				
		Personal Income	• Per capita personal income				
		State Education Spending	• Ratio of state education spending(State Education Spending/State Total Population)				
		Charter Year	• The years that have passed since adopting charter schools.				
Control '	Variables	Under 18 Years	• Percent of under 18 years in each state				
		Population Density	• Number of people divided by the state area in square miles				
		Sex Ratio	• Ratio of male divided by female				

Table 1. Description of Variables Used in the Analysis

measured by the ratio of whites in the state and per capita personal income acting as a proxy for race and income.

In addition, this research controlled state education spending, the year of charter schools adopted, percent of residents under 18 years of age, population density, and sex ratio that can influence the schools' growth in states. Table 1 summarizes all variables and measurements.

Variables	М	S.D.	Min	Max
1. Number of Schools Allowed	6.87	3.25	1	10
2. Implementation Points	-0.75	1.51	-5	2
3. Guaranteed Funding	5.17	2.50	0	9
4. Supportive Privatization Org.	3.45	2.77	1	12
5. Teachers' Union Enrollment Rate	4.23	0.33	3.29	4.59
6. Republican Senates	0.95	0.81	0	2
7. Republican Representatives	5.47	5.44	0	23
8. Republican Governor	0.62	0.49	0	1
9. Ratio of White	0.78	0.12	0.26	0.94
10. Log Per Capita Income	10.61	0.14	10.37	10.96
11. State Education Spending	9.43e-07	3.61e-07	4.88e-07	2.47e-06
12. Charter Year	14.60	3.55	1	20
13. Under 18 Years	24.12	1.90	21.3	31.5
14. Population Density	224.15	284.14	1.2	1195.5
15. Sex Ratio	97.36	3.13	93.4	108.5

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

4. Results

Table 2 provides descriptive information of the variables collected in 2011, except for the teacher enrollment rate, which was replaced with 2008 data due to limited data availability. Per capita income was transformed due to high standard deviation.

In Table 3, the results of the correlation analysis between the variables showed that most of them were less than 0.6, suggesting that multi-collinearity was not an issue. We conducted the regression analysis with robust options to prevent heteroscedasticity and other violations of regression assumptions to improve the model's reliability[42].

The three models had a good fit. The F-test was statistically significant at 0.01 level. The R^2 values for each model were 0.32, 0.53, and 0.60. According to the results, the three sets of factors can explain the charter school growth in states.

The results in Table 4 show that Republican governors strongly influenced the number of charter schools across states because they can affect states' charter school growth policies more directly than other political actors. Contrarily, regarding the implementation, Republican

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	1.00														
2	-0.39**	1.00													
3	0.00	0.47***	1.00												
4	-0.07	0.34**	0.39**	1.00											
5	0.06	-0.01	0.35**	0.26	1.00										
6	-0.06	-0.09	-0.22	-0.11	-0.53***	1.00									
7	-0.00	0.20	0.26 [•]	0.79***	0.00	0.11	1.00								
8	0.17	-0.21	-0.25	0.03	-0.45***	0.59***	0.21	1.00							
9	0.20	-0.06	0.10	0.07	0.04	0.19	-0.00	0.08	1.00						
10	0.14	-0.18	-0.04	0.12	0.60***	-0.52***	-0.07	-0.48***	-0.04	1.00					
11	-0.06	-0.20	-0.10	-0.27*	0.11	-0.21	-0.37**	-0.08	-0.52***	0.08	1.00				
12	0.27 *	0.03	0.33**	0.14	0.19	-0.28*	0.10	-0.19	0.10	0.21	0.18	1.00			
13	-0.00	0.00	0.05	0.00	-0.31**	0.50***	0.04	0.42***	0.13	-0.45***	0.11	-0.06	1.00		
14	-0.09	0.24	0.17	0.17	0.41***	-0.42***	-0.06	-0.32**	-0.11	0.62***	-0.05	0.03	-0.45***	1.00	
15	0.26°	-0.41***	0.00	-0.11	0.01	0.19	-0.15	0.17	0.13	-0.09	0.36**	0.20	0.45***	-0.56***	1.00
***p <	***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05 **The variables individual numbers describes are shown in Table 2.														

Table 3. Correlation Analysis

Table 4. Multiple Regression on State's Charter School Growth Policy

	Political Institutions	(Model 1) Number of Schools Allowed	(Model 2) Implementation Points	(Model 3) Guaranteed Funding	
Group Demand	Supportive Privatization Organizations	-0.41(0.36)	0.28**(0.13)	0.02(0.21)	
(Policy Demander)	Log Teachers' Union Enrollment Rate	0.24(2.47)	-0.13(0.73)	2.81**(1.11)	
	Republican Senates	-1.12(1.08)	0.05(0.39)	-0.37(0.54)	
Elite Preference (Policy Supplier)	Republican Representatives	0.09(0.19)	-0.07(0.07)	0.11(0.11)	
(roney ouppilor)	Republican Governor	2.81*(1.42)	-1.22**(0.52)	-1.89***(0.83)	
Mass Support	Ration of White	1.73(5.53)	-2.03(2.79)	-0.76(3.31)	
(Policy Demander)	Log Per Capita Income	5.26(4.73)	-5.88**(2.24)	-14.16***(3.53)	
	State Education Spending	-2311792.0(2442253)	-748281.4(1502591)	-1534839.0(1330258)	
	Charter Year	0.21(0.14)	0.066(0.054)	0.18*(0.10)	
Control Variable	Under 18 Years	-0.07(0.31)	016(0.10)	0.23(0.24)	
variable	Population Density	-0.00(0.00)	0.00*(0.00)	0.00***(0.00)	
	Sex Ration	0.30(0.22)	-0.11(0.15)	0.29*(0.15)	
	Constant	-79.89(51.97)	71.03***(20.59)	108.54***(29.00)	
	R^2	0.32	0.53	0.60	

 $^{***}p < .001, \ ^{**}p < .01, \ ^{*}p < .05$

governors were poor at implementing and funding the operation of charter schools. On the other hand, the findings confirmed the effects of group demand on privatization organizations and the mass support of the per capita income. Guaranteed funding was not related to the political position of the members of Congress or general pro-privatization organizations. Meanwhile, guaranteed funding was related more to the enrollment rate of teachers' unions, the political position of governors, and per capita income in the states. Overall, the results imply that the political preference for Democratic vs. Republican and demand vs. supply of political market frame could vary depending on the growth of education policy reflecting the political institutions and political market framework.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Even though public schools lack competition, charter schools have overcome it and enhanced educational sustainability. Charter schools have spread since 1991, and they are still captivating citizens and politicians. However, the importance of political institutions in the growth of education policies has been unexplored. From a political market perspective, the Republican governor as a supplier influences the number of schools allowed. On the other hand, when charter schools are implemented and funded, a left-leaning Democratic governor is more influential than a Republican, which was the unexpected result. Cameron mentioned that the left-leaning governor would tend to expand and improve public sector[26]. Probably, Democratic governors might pay more attention to the size of the charter schools implemented, providing a funding to enlarge their size. Besides the number of schools, this study verified the critical effects of demand part of supportive privatization organizations and the richer citizens favoring charter school growth policies. The results showed significant relationships of teachers' unions and richer citizens with the funding of charter schools.

This study has some practical and academic implications. The findings support the usefulness of the political market framework and the effectiveness of the political institutions for government growth suggested by Lewis-Beck and Rice in 1985[24]. In the end, this framework can help scholars and laypeople see and predict the future of the charter school system for sustainability of education depending on political settings and the political preference in the states. This political market institution framework may be applied for other venues' political institutions.

While this research contributes to determining the reasons for the highest increase in the number of charter schools and enrollment between 2010 and 2012, it focused on the year 2011 due to the data collection limitations. Furthermore, despite our efforts, the regression analysis could be restricted to develop arguments for the growth of charter schools in other countries. Thus, collecting time series data or other available materials contributing to political institutions and charter school growth in states would allow us to investigate causality. Finally, this study can deepen the understanding of better education in society and explore the growth and expansion of policy in various areas.

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