

# Janitorial Studies in South Korea

Economist Richard Vedder and co-authors once joked:

*While people will become increasingly aware that a bachelor's degree is no longer a very assured ticket to success, more and more people will try to get a competitive edge in the labor market by obtaining master's or even doctoral degrees to demonstrate competence. We jokingly predict that colleges will offer a master's degree in Janitorial Studies within a decade or two and anyone seeking employment as a janitor will discover no one will hire unless proof of possession of such a degree is presented.*

At least by some measures, South Korea now leads the world in college completion. What's happening to its job market? Well, a South Korean reader just sent me this story.

*Many of the applicants seeking to become Seoul janitors have college degrees, Eunpyeong-gu district office said Thursday.*

*A total of 66 people applied for four janitor positions in the district, marking a competition rate of 16.5 to 1.*

*Over one-third of the applicants were college graduates, and one candidate had worked as a military captain before.*

*[...]*

*Of the four successful applicants, three had obtained a university diploma and one held a degree from a community college.*

*The four applicants will begin work next month.*

Yes, this is very likely an outlier. But still!