A general analysis of the shadow education industry and its connection to education equality was previously carried out by Bray and Lykins (2012) that focused specifically on South and East Asian regions. Rohlen (1980), Hannisch (1994), Russel (1997), Roesgaard (2006) and Mawer (2015) researched the origin, curriculum and content elements of the most common Japanese shadow education formations, known as juku. A similar study was made with a focus on the Korean case (hagwon) by Kim (2016).

Relationships between participation in shadow schooling and academic achievement in Korea and Japan were previously investigated by Stevenson and Baker (1992), Baker et al. (2001), Choi et al. (2012), Matsuoka (2015) and Enrich (2014).


The “process” part studies the regulations applied to shadow education systems.

In 2015 total private expenditures for all types of tutoring in Japan were about 12 billion USD (~7.8 billion USD on juku). In Korea, total private expenditures were about 18 billion USD (~9 billion USD on hagwon). Estimated household expenditures for shadow education are also higher in Korea than in Japan (~17% and ~10% on average on all school levels respectively).

The participation rate in tutoring for academic subjects is generally higher in Korea than in Japan: almost 10% more for elementary, 4% more for middle and 20% more for high school students. Besides, the number of tutoring organizations in Korea is higher than in Japan (69,678 vs 50,000). About half of high school students in Korea used shadow education for competition. In Japan, only about 13% of middle and high school children attended juku for that purpose. The main reasons for the attendance are remedial and socialization. Costs of hagwon are generally higher than on juku, e.g.: 305 vs 531 USD for high school.

Different regulatory response patterns to shadow education were identified. The Korean government connected shadow education to the issues of social inequality and to the “examination hell” problem. In contrast, the Japanese government used mainly laissez-faire and indirect approaches leaving the system to the market forces.

The analysis indicated 4 main response patterns: policies equalizing school allocation and regulating resources; policies limiting private tutoring; policies improving the quality of mainstream education and policies broadening access to shadow education.

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Examination Date: 10 September 2020