

Comparison of Extended Education and Research in this Field in Taiwan and in Switzerland

Marianne Schuepbach & Denise Huang

Abstract: During the past two decades, there is a global growing interest in the field of extended education. Countries in both the East and the West alike have been investing in developing systems to support student learning after the traditional school hours. This paper examines the similarities and differences in this trend of development in Taiwan and Switzerland. Cultural influences, the beliefs and values of these countries, and the importance of contextualization in comparative education are discussed.

Keywords: Extended education, afterschool, Switzerland, Taiwan, comparison study

Introduction

During the past 10 to 20 years, there have been numerous efforts to expand institutional education and using opportunities during the after school hours to supplement school learning in almost every modern country in Europe, North and South America, Asia, and Australia. Out-of-school time and extracurricular learning during childhood and adolescence have been gaining more and more attention. In referring to this period of time for learning after school, various terms have been used. In recent years, the term *extended education* has been used popularly to identify this field of education internationally.

In response to this global interest in extended education, in this contribution the authors compare two cultural systems, Switzerland and Taiwan, on two different continents in their developments in extended education. In comparing extended education in Taiwan and Switzerland, we have to keep in mind the purpose of comparative education. Comparative Education is a discipline in the social sciences that involves the analysis and comparison of educational system. This field is interested in developing meaningful terminology and standards for education worldwide, improving education systems, and creating a framework for assessing the successes of education programs and initiatives (Bray, 1995). This paper intends to employ Taiwan and Switzerland, though hardly symbolic of but sufficient to broadly represent the East and the West cultures, and to demonstrate how different cultural context shapes students' learning and development, and why acknowledgement of certain

strategies of success in student achievement in one cultural context cannot be simply transferred to replicate success in another culture.

Many researchers identify differences between western countries and Asian societies on the dimensions individualism and collectivism (Walker & Dimmock, 2000). Altbach (1997) specifically stated that Confucianism influences Taiwan not only relating to the national development goals and political loyalty but also relating to the culture and education. Using these theoretical assertions as background, this contribution will describe the context of extended education in these two locations, and proceed to expand understanding of the influences of cultures on extended education beyond these generally accepted assumptions.

Rationale for the Study

As growing number of Asian students enrolled in European and United States Universities while at the same time, more and more European and United States students entered Asian Universities as well; debates on the superiority between Eastern and Western education surfaced and gained attention. However, one cannot compare teaching and learning strategies without understanding the context of the cultural systems, especially when the essence of education is very different in these two cultures. Consequently, these distinct characteristics of cultures become vital in understanding how students learn and interact with each other and how they function in their environment. Using a convenient example of the cultures that the authors have deep understandings (insiders perspective) in, the authors will present these arguments after first introducing the extended education system in the locales that they represent, namely, Switzerland and Taiwan.

First, an overview on the situation in Switzerland will be presented. The traditional school scheduling, the starting position and expectations of extended education, the current structure of the offerings, and an overview of research in the field of extended education will be described. Followed with the same presentation of the system in Taiwan. Then the authors will discuss the cultural impact in the field of extended education in these two locations. Finally, the authors will end with remarks on the challenges for future research and possible research from an international comparative point of view.

The Situation in Switzerland

Starting Position and Expectations for Utilizing Extended Education

The impetuses were changes in social and family conditions, and the PISA results, which were lower than had been expected. Societal changes over the last decades have shaped the discourse on the content of education and the importance of the education system in Switzerland (Schuepach, 2010). Here, extended education is often seen as a possible response to growing challenges and demands, and expectations concerning extended education are manifold: Extended education is a contribution to the sociocultural infrastructure for parents, makes it easier for children to participate in society and education, and is seen as the

answer to the increasing requirements placed on school graduates. Last but not least, extended education is supposed to reduce educational inequalities based on social origins (Schuepbach, 2010).

Another impetus came from elsewhere the PISA results of PISA 2000. The results for Switzerland were lower than had been expected. Thus, there was a need for action and provided evidence-based legitimation for long-needed educational reforms. PISA was used as a window of opportunity to make corrections in the education system and legitimize reform goals (Bieber, 2010). One of the reform goals was the introduction of extended education.

Structure of the Offerings

In Switzerland, you can find various models of extended education including those that are provided by the schools, or supplementary to that by other institutions. Different terms are used by the canton and the municipality. For example, the term *Tagesstrukturen* (or ‘day structures’ in English) is used. Day structures are defined as extra-family education and care opportunities meeting the needs of children and adolescents from birth to the end of compulsory schooling (or in special education to the age of 20) (EDK & SODK, 2008, p. 1). One form of day structures are all-day schools, and they are defined by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) as schools with all-day care offerings (including lunch) on several days per week (EDK, 2013). These are extracurricular offerings—that are usually under the care of the school principal and are conducted by a director of extended education. Use of the EDK definition is not obligatory, however, and only a part of the schools that accord with this definition are actually called *all-day schools*. Certain cantons, municipalities, and schools, do not use this term for historical or political reasons. That means, some political parties connect a specific form of schooling with this term and the Ministry of Education of some cantons will not meet this expectation. Where all-day schools or similar offerings are still found mainly at the primary level and not at the secondary level.

In many cantons the (demand-based) introduction and expansion of extended education and the associated financial costs are left largely to the municipalities and the costs are shared between canton, municipality, and parents.

As we found in our recent study free play—and thus free play activities versus guided activities—clearly predominate (Schuepbach, Rohrbach-Nussbaum, & Grütter, 2018). *Free play activities* means that students may choose freely among various activities and may also change their activities. Free and also organized changing between activities are possible. *Guided activities* were defined as activities led by educational staff. These offerings at certain times—with a starting time and end time, conducted regularly—take place in a fixed group; they are voluntary but binding once chosen. Also, the results of this study confirmed that free play is very important in all-day schools in the German-speaking part of Switzerland and that the children have considerable free play opportunities. Here, mainly exercise and sports and handicrafts and art activities are offered in almost all all-day schools’ extended education programs (Schuepbach et al., 2018).

School Laws and Educational Principles and Goals for Extended Education

In Switzerland, the 26 cantons organize their education structures independently. The political organization of Switzerland is a federal structure: Confederation, cantons, and communes (municipalities) share supervisory responsibility for various parts of the system in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. The cantons have jurisdiction in educational matters. At the same time, however, the cantons are obligated to cooperate with the federal government on educational matters (EDK & SODK, 2008). Thus, there are no national guidelines on the organization of extended education. As a consequence, some cantons have regulated extended education in their cantonal public school laws; in other cantons, this is not yet the case (Schuepach, 2014).

Research Overview

We come to a short research overview on the research in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, as the developments in school practice vary across the different language regions of the country. The research on extended education overall is still much in its infancy. Research interest has increased in parallel with the developments outlined above. This means that the implementation in Switzerland was at first not evidence-based on results in the field of extended education. The available studies in the German-speaking part of Switzerland today – and to our knowledge, there are no research studies available on the other language regions – can be divided into five areas: (1) studies on supply and demand, (2) evaluations of all-day schools, (3) a few recent studies on cooperation between different actors in the field, (4) a study on utilization of extended education, and (5) studies on quality and effectiveness. In this contribution we will present results in the areas 4 and 5, because there are the most recent studies.

First we will present results on *utilization of extended education*. In Switzerland there is the expectation that all-day schools can help combat existing educational inequality. As compared to other European countries, there is strong educational inequality in Switzerland. This affects mainly children with a migration background for one part and children with low socioeconomic status for the other part. The expectation is that all-day schools, providing as optimal an environment as possible, will promote these children's development better. The *EduCare-TaSe: All-Day School and School Success?* study, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), was the first study examined questions on utilization of extended education. The main finding is that, children with a migration background are more likely to utilize extended education. Children from families with high socioeconomic status are more likely to utilize extended education, and further, that children from families with medium socioeconomic status have a low probability of utilizing extended education. A possible explanation for this finding is that parents with high socioeconomic status might pursue work more often than other parents, have less time for their children and accordingly show higher odds of utilizing extended education offerings. The income-dependent fee for the offerings charged in Switzerland could be a reason for the quadratic effect of socioeconomic status found in this study. From a financial standpoint, extended education offerings are possibly easier to afford by families with low and high incomes. For families with middle socioeconomic status and thus middle incomes, utilization of extended education offer-

ings possibly does not pay. There are thus no indications that the two (risk) factors migration background and low socioeconomic status mutually influence each other with regard to general utilization of extended education. That means, these children are not especially disadvantaged (Schüpbach, von Allmen, Frei, & Nieuwenboom, 2017a).

Now we will present you results on *educational quality and effectiveness* of the same study. In both studies the educational quality was examined using a standardized observation scale, “Hort- und Ganztagsangebote-Skala” (HUGS), which is a German adaptation by Tietze, Roßbach, Stendel, and Wellner (2005) of the standardized instrument School- Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS) (Harms, Jacobs, & White, 1996). The SACERS assumes that education quality is comprised of the three central areas of process, orientation, and structural quality (Tietze et al., 2005, p. 7). The results show, that from the perspective of outside observers the quality of extended education is medium (scores from 3 to 5 on a scale from 1 to 7)¹, which is a slight improvement over the ratings in the previous SNSF-study, EduCare for school year 2006/07. Still rated the lowest area in quality, even though it is rated much higher than in the previous study, is the quality area *activities*. For this reason, the quality of the area *activities* was also examined and differentiated from another perspective, from the perspective of persons responsible for the offerings (Schüpbach, von Allmen, Frei, & Nieuwenboom, 2017b).

What about effects on student’s development? The results of the *EduCare-TaSe: All-Day School and School Success?* study show further that an extended education does not have a general effect on school achievement. But the study revealed that attendance at high-quality offerings has an effect in tendency on student’s achievement development (von Allmen, Schuepbach, Frei, & Nieuwenboom, 2018). Longer attendance at offerings had no effect on the development of student achievement in mathematics even when the quality of the offerings was high (Schüpbach, Frei, von Allmen, & Nieuwenboom, submitted).

We examined the same questions also especially for children at risk. The results pointed out, that there is also no compensatory effect concerning foreign language or with regard to socioeconomic status in development of achievement in language (Schuepbach, Frei, von Allmen, & Nieuwenboom, 2018). The results in mathematics are more positive: Continuous utilization of all-day school offerings reduced disparities based on socioeconomic status in achievement in mathematics (Schüpbach et al., submitted).

All in all, the findings on educational quality show that quality has improved in recent years in all-day schools in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. The findings show further, that quality of the extended education is important for student development but in these days the activities are only medium quality. For the future that means that to achieve the desired educational effects, the quality of extended education must be improved. At this moment there is a lot of room for improvement of the learning setting.

1 For example, a rating of 3 on the scale indicates *minimum quality*, where basic materials are available to students but the educational support is low and there is hardly any educational use of the materials to be observed. A rating of 5 on the scale indicates *good quality*, where there are appropriate materials in appropriate surroundings, and where students have developmentally appropriate experiences supported by educational staff (Tietze et al., 2005).

The Situation in Taiwan

Starting Position and Expectations for Utilizing Extended Education

As with the global trend, dual income families have become a necessity and the norm for most young families in Taiwan. With the large number of women entering work force, the social and family structure changes, and the need of afterschool programs (for uniformity, will be referred to as extended education in this paper from here on) has increased tremendously for school age children in many industrialized countries, including Taiwan, consequently, what kinds of activities these school age children pursue after the school hours has become of interest to many countries.

For example, in an attempt to understand some of the reasons for the higher academic achievement of Chinese and Japanese children in comparison to children in the western culture, such as the United States, Stevenson et al. (1990) examined and found that elementary school students from different cultures allocated their time in different ways. In another review study on how children and adolescents throughout the world spend their time, Larson and Verma (1999) expanded economists' conception of time as a unit of "human capital" and proposed that the youth's time use is a resource that enables them to develop a much wider range of abilities, including skills, knowledge, and experiences.

In applying these concerns to Taiwan, a study was conducted by Chen and Chang (2015) to examine how students spent their after school hours. They collected data on the precise amount of time spent on activities for seven school days and three non-school days with daily activity diaries on 318 5th graders (153 boys and 165 girls) in 11 classes from three elementary schools in Northern Taiwan. These Taiwanese 5th graders reported that, on average, they spent 70 minutes per day on homework and one hour on after-school private programs; 27 minutes on print-based reading and 11 minutes on online reading; and 50 minutes on TV, as well as 30 minutes on online films/games. In comparison to Stevenson et al.'s similar data of Taiwanese students in 1990, the results appear to reflect a change in social structure, in that many busy parents have begun to send their children to private after-school programs, and also a change in media format, in that some print-based reading might be replaced by online reading and some TV watching might be replaced by online films/games. However, how Taiwanese 5th graders are allocating their out-of-school time, has remained somewhat stable along the timeline despite societal changes in some economic and family structures.

Thus basically, afterschool programs/extended education can still be categorized into four types: relative care, non-relative care, self-care, and extended education programs (Hideko & Winsler, 2004). In Taiwan, according to Lee et al., (2002), relative care has been becoming less popular because fewer relatives (especially grandparents) of the children live nearby as Taiwan becomes more globalized. Non-relative care, on the other hand, often-times has the problems of long-term instability and higher chances of unavailability. As for the self-care children, the occupied working parents will always worry about what their children are doing by themselves after school. It is also not uncommon that due to the lack of supervision, self-care children are more likely to pertain to harmful situations and are more likely to obtain disordered behaviors such as addiction to online games, TVs, or even violent conducts (Brandona & Hoffert, 2003). Under these circumstances, programs for ex-

tended education have become more popular. Moreover, literature on extended education programs generally has supported the services of these care (Huang, 2016). Studies generally stated that extended education programs can keep children safe (Huang, Goldschmidt, & La Torres, 2014), inspire them to learn (Huang, 2013; Huang, Leon, & La Torres, 2014), and more importantly, it can help resolve working parents' worries about their children during non-school hours (Huang & Dietel, 2011).

Therefore, in Taiwan, especially with the decline in birth rate (CIA, World Fact book, 2017), parents are expecting more from their children and are very willing to invest on their children's education. More and more parents are sending their school-age children to extended education programs and various educational classes after school, with the expectation that these programs will assist their children in completing their school homework and reviewing academic subjects so that their children's academic performance will be enhanced at school (Hsiao & Kuo, 2013).

Thereby when schools let out, students are sent to extended education programs by choice of parents, these privatized learning centers are called "buxiban" or better known as "cram schools". Activities in these extended education programs consists of mainly drills: memorize, regurgitate, repeat. Teachers and parents believe these practices help students to get ahead in schools where students are tested in almost every subject every day (Jennings, 2015). Many of the students stay in these programs until 8p.m. every day. At preference of parents, and with additional charges, students can elect to enroll in musical lessons, art lessons, or other talent and enrichment curriculum offered by the program. Since most students' time during the weekdays are occupied by school and extended education programs in order to accelerate their academic achievement, many of the parents may also elected to enroll their children in extracurricular enrichment activities such as Science programs, dance classes, drama clubs, etc. during the weekend. Since these enrichment programs only occupied a couple of hours per week, they would not be categorized as extended education programs in this paper.

School Laws and Educational Principles and Goals for Extended Education

Similar to the global trend that the distribution of wealth in Taiwan is no longer in a normal distribution, but instead, the rich tends to get richer, and the poor gets poorer, with the middle class moves to the polarized ends of the rich and the poor. In Asia, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan, this phenomenon is commonly referred to as the appearance of M-shaped society. The concept "M-Shaped society" is coined by Japanese management guru Kenichi Ohmae in his book published in 2006. This concept explains the "one Taiwan, two worlds" phenomenon, and reflects how people struggle to make ends meet, echoing people's fear to be the "new poor" or "working poor" class (Kuang, 2006). However, the struggling situation of the middle class is not a crisis limited to the East Asia, the middle-class people in Europe and the US have these experiences as well. The M-Shaped society phenomenon is tightly linked with the new order of global economy (Carmichael, 2011; Goven, 2012; Luce, 2010; Magaridge, 2011).

Thus, with these economical changes in Taiwan, educational, social, and cultural divides among students who 'have' and 'have not' are expanding rapidly (Cheng, 2004; Cheng and Jacobs, 2008). In response, Taiwan has been adapting educational policies to fo-

cus more on issues regarding disadvantaged students and their schooling. In fact, Taiwan has educational policies for disadvantaged students dated back to 1995.

More specifically, in regards to after school time, the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Taiwan started to review the issue of remedial teaching and extended education programs for disadvantaged students in 1998. With the majority of the average student population attending private for profit extended education programs or “buxiban” where they get prepared for testing, and have the opportunity to re-learn or learn ahead of the school curriculum, the achievement gap between the average and disadvantaged students get even wider. In 2003, the National Educational Development Committee more concretely strived to improve educational opportunities of minority groups and maximize their social mobility with new policies, plans and regulations. Three years later, in 2006, the government integrated the remedial teaching plans into the Hand in Hand Afterschool Program and encouraged college students and retired teachers to serve as mentors for the program. In the following year, 2007, the ministry invested a total of \$450 million, with 2,303 or 70% of all schools participating and 121,966 students benefiting. The program provides disadvantaged elementary and secondary school students with aggressive study assistance, ensuring social fairness and justice. More comprehensively, this program also included enhanced administrative planning and teacher training on remedial teaching in the hope of remedying the areas in which the students lag behind through small-class, fine-tuned and personalized teaching. According to the regulation, the number of students in each class was limited to 6-10, with each college teacher teaching 3-6 students.

In 2008 and 2010, the MOE continued to establish the Night Angel Enlightening Program.² Most recently, in 2013, the government amalgamated all the programs into the Remedial Teaching Program to ensure disadvantaged students would benefit from the same quality of education whether in school, after school, or out of schools (Cheng, 2013).

Meanwhile, along with the government official extended education programs, a group of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and non-profit organizations (NPOs) have also committed themselves to extended education programs and focused on remedial teaching to increase the academic achievement of disadvantaged students since 2005. These organizations aim to focus on remedial teaching for disadvantaged students and give them a positive learning experience with the aim to reduce the learning gap between the “haves” and “have nots” (Cheng & Jacobs, 2016).

In summary, the extended education field in Taiwan is basically offered by these three enterprises, the private for profit organizations, government supported public schools, and non-profit organizations.

2 Night Angel Program – To enhance educational assistance for underprivileged children, the Ministry of Education began in 2008 to offer free-of-charge after-school guidance for schoolchildren from families unable to provide proper care. Qualified personnel are assigned to help children with their schoolwork in a safe environment, and dinner is provided, which allows parents to concentrate on their work with peace of mind, and a wide range of academic and cultural activities encourage parent and teacher cooperation in after-school care.

Structure of the Offerings

In response to population demands, Taiwan have provided various services during the after school hours. Based on recent observations (Ho, 2014), an overview of the general structures includes:

- Extended education care centers/programs- their curricular design basically focuses on children's homework assistance and provides repeated practices on schoolwork.
- Talent/enrichment "classes"- lesson oriented classes catering towards specific subjects with the aim to enhance children's talents in music, arts, mathematics, science, etc.
- Cram/tutorial classes³ focuses on enhancing school performances.
- Generally, these programs are operated by three different organizations as shown in the Table below.

Table 1. General Description of the Afterschool Services in Taiwan

	General Public	Elementary Schools	Non-Profit Organizations
	Business licenses	Department of Education permits	Department of Social Work permits
Clientele	General population	Students whom need supervision after school hours	Disadvantaged youths
Services Provided	After school supervision; group activities; homework help; talent classes;	Supervision after school hours; homework help; recreational/group activities	Supervision after school hours; homework help; group activities; family counselling as needed; character development
Types	Extended Education Centers, Cram Schools, Specific arts & sport classes/clubs	Run by school, or collaboration, or hired other organizations to run the program for the school on school site	Non-profit groups; religious entities; community organizations; Programs operated in public sites or churches
Staff /qualification	Early child care licenses; teaching permits, etc.	School teacher, high school graduates with licenses	Missionaries; volunteers; teachers

Typically, remedial teaching in in Taiwan places emphasis on mastering content. Tutors in charge of remedial teaching use the same regular textbooks as the school, and the teaching methods employed would typically be to re-teach content for a second or third time. Furthermore, most of the schools that provide extended education programs select the completion of homework as their major goal, and very few schools and tutors will prepare different kinds of learning materials. Key contents typically center on reading and math (Cheng, 2010).

In short, majority of the extended education programs in Taiwan have goals that are academic achievement oriented, such as: remedial teaching, extension of students' learning time, tests preparation, and enhancement teaching.

3 **Cram classes** or "buxiban" are specialized classes/institutions that train their students to meet particular goals, most commonly to pass the entrance examinations of preferable schools or universities. The English name is derived from the slang term "cramming", meaning to study hard or to study a large amount of material in a short period of time.

Research Overview

Similar to Switzerland, not much research has been conducted on the extended education programs in Taiwan. Only sporadic studies on these programs were available. It was not until 2003 when more NPO organized extended education program emerged and due to their needs for accountability, related studies on these programs doubled. Up until 2012 there were 319 articles, thesis, and dissertations published. There are about equal numbers of qualitative and quantitative studies. Most (70% overall & 47%NPO) studies are survey based, only a handful (4% overall, 1% NPO) are experimental studies (Ho, 2014). These studies tend to focus on variables regarding to achievement, types of programs offered, qualification of staff, and parent satisfaction. Subjects were mainly students, teachers, and parents. Most of these studies demonstrated effectiveness. There is a noticeable lack of attention in other areas such as program environment, indicators of effectiveness, student engagement, etc., or causal-experimental studies. Additionally, there are very few comparison studies on achievement of behavioral outcomes. One of the major obstacles in conducting research in Taiwan is that there is no central or private database on student attendance, achievement or behavioral records.

General Findings

According to the website hosted by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan⁴ (2018), after receiving remedial teaching after school hours:

- Most students began paying more attention to their studies (the students begin to take their roles as a student in school more seriously).
- They became more diligent in their studies, with progress of varying degrees.
- Most of them made progress in Mandarin and math.
- With the help of the program, over three-fourths of the students changed their attitude for the better, with more than 80% of students able to finish their homework.
- However, they didn't make noticeable progress in English, perhaps due to the fact that it was offered only for one semester

On the other hand, there is a study that claim the time spent on academic-related activities during the after school hours had positive effects on the educational achievement of the children, but spending time in private cram schools had negative effects on their psychological well-being (Chen & Lu, 2009).

Cultural Differences in General and Similarities and Differences

As mentioned above, in comparing the extended education system in Taiwan and Switzerland, one has to keep in mind the purpose of comparative education. This field is interested in developing meaningful terminology and standards for education worldwide, improving education systems, and creating a framework for assessing the successes of education

4 <http://english.moe.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=13853&CtNode=11407&mp=1>

programs and initiatives. The purposes of the authors in this contribution are to employ their home countries as examples to illustrate how contextualization of the East and West not only shape how students learn and interact but also hidden is the main purpose/goal of how cultures employ education to develop the characteristics of their desired citizens.

Contextualization

As mentioned in the introduction, in this contribution we compare two locations on two different continents with different cultural backgrounds. Confucianism influences Taiwan not only relating to the national development goals and political loyalty but also on their culture and education (Altbach, 1997). Other researchers identify differences between western countries and Chinese societies on the dimensions individualism and collectivism (Walker & Dimmock, 2000). Broadly speaking, Taiwan has a collective perspective while Switzerland has an individualist perspective on education. These perspectives are summarized in the table below.

Table 2. Individualist versus Collectivist Perspectives on Education

Individualist Perspective	Collectivist Perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work independently; helping others may be cheating. • Students engage in discussion and argument to learn to think critically. • Property belongs to individuals, and others must ask to borrow it. • Teacher manages the school environment indirectly and encourages students' self-discipline in learning behaviors and paces. • Parents are integral to child's academic progress and participate actively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work with peers and provide assistance when needed. • Students are quiet and respectful in class in order to learn more efficiently. • Property is communal. • Teacher is the primary authority, but peers guide each other's behavior. • Parents yield to teacher's expertise to provide academic instruction and guidance.

Source: Adapted from Individualist and Collectivist Perspectives on Education, from the Diversity Kit (2002) Providence, R.I.: The Education Alliance

However, it is too narrow to coin that the only differences between the East and the West is the collective/individualistic perspective. Other than this common notion, Geert Hofstede (2001) further identified five dimensions of national culture that will influence education. He asserted that the how and what of education is very much connected to culture of the country at hand. Cultural values establish different expectations on the roles of the teachers and the students, which in turn influence the experience of learning. His original data were based on an extensive IBM database for which 116,000 questionnaires were used in 72 countries and in 20 languages. The results of his research were validated against about 40 cross-cultural studies from a variety of disciplines. These five dimensions are (Geert Hofstede (2001):

- Power Distance Index (PDI)

Power distance is the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept that power is distributed unequally. In high power-distance cultures everybody has his/her rightful

place in society. Countries high in PDI, such as Taiwan, Korea, and Japan, old age is respected, and status is important. People in countries like the US, Canada, the UK, Switzerland, all Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands score low on the power-distance index and are more likely to accept ideas like empowerment, matrix management and flat organizations.

- Individualism vs. collectivism (IDV)

In individualistic cultures, as represented by most Western countries, people look after themselves and their immediately family mostly; in collective cultures, as represented by cultures like Asia and Africa, people belong to “in-groups” who look after their members in exchange for loyalty. In individualistic cultures, values are in the person, whereas in collective cultures, identity is based on the social network to which one belongs.

- Masculinity vs. femininity (MAS)

In masculine cultures like USA, UK, Germany, Taiwan, Japan and Italy, the dominant values are achievement and success. The dominant values in feminine cultures are consensus seeking, caring for others and quality of life. In masculine cultures performance, achievement, and status are important. Feminine cultures like the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, and the Netherlands are more people orientation and status is not so important.

- Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI -for uncertainty control)

In cultures with strong uncertainty avoidance, people have a strong emotional need for rules and formality to structure life. The way people think and learn is influenced by this value. In High UAI countries like Korea, Taiwan, Germany, Russia, France, Iran and Brazil, the need is to know about what people in the past and present already said about a certain subject. This results in high status for experts, as opposed to weak uncertainty-avoidance cultures, like the UK, the USA, Switzerland, and Denmark in which the views of practitioners are more highly respected.

- Long Term Orientation (LTO)

The Long Term Orientation is the extent to which a society exhibits a future-orientated perspective rather than a near term point of view. Low scoring countries like the USA, Switzerland, and West European countries believe there is an absolute and indivisible truth. In high scoring countries such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, people believe truth depends on time, context and situation.

Differences are Apparent in Afterschool Practices Between Taiwan and Switzerland

These dimensions are well reflected by the way extended education programs practices in Taiwan and Switzerland. For example, Switzerland has an educational system that reflects more local control whereas in Taiwan, education is pretty much under central government control. As for extended education programs, in Switzerland there are mostly public offerings. But other than for a small percentage of disadvantaged youths whom participated in government assisted programs, in Taiwan extended education programs are mostly offered by non-public organizations such as foundation and for profit organization as a business enterprise. It should be noted here that although extended education is mostly operated by private for profit entities in Taiwan. The nature of these private or non-profit organization op-

erated extended education programs mainly followed the government directed central curriculum, focusing on practicing, re-teaching, or teaching ahead of the school curriculum, and test preparation for the national junior high and high school examination.

As for teaching, learning, space arrangement and contents, in accordance with the index described above, differences are apparent. In Switzerland programs are less academically oriented, there are a lot of free-play activities, with some guided learning, and students have a lot of autonomy. There are also ample outdoor spaces for students to stretch and exercise. Whereas, in Taiwan most programs are academic oriented. Taiwan employed teacher-centered learning, with heavy tactics on memorization and direct tutoring. It is not uncommon that outdoor spaces are very limited and scarce for extended education programs in Taiwan, and no outdoor play as part of the curricular.

Stecher stated in the Economist report (2014): “Cultural values are deeply rooted and very consistent over time”. The Taiwan culture stresses long-term orientation, represents a masculine society, with emphasis on collectivism, high power distance emphasis, and uncertainty avoidance. These beliefs prompted Taiwan teachers to place a heavy emphasis on rote learning, steeped in discipline and organize highly structured classroom, with very few student autonomy and are obsessive in test preparation. These emphases continue from the school day and flow into the after school hours as well. Simultaneously, Asian students tend to aim at getting better grades, and becoming a “successful” person. They also tend to pay more attention to the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics). These beliefs and practices are probably responsible for the high performance of Taiwanese students in global testing, as reflected by the rankings in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

However, these successes also come with shortcomings. One is the concern that the stress to succeed makes the suicide rates among students very high in countries like South Korea, China, Taiwan, and Japan (Zeng & Tendre, 1998; World Health Organization, 2012)). Another frequent criticism is that students in these cultures lack autonomy and creativity. It is quoted (Taiwan’s Child Culture, 2013) that: “Chinese schools emphasized testing too much, and produced students who lacked curiosity and the ability to think critically or independently”.

In contrast, western cultures such as Switzerland, focused more on fostering student autonomy, creativity, and curiosity. They focused more on thinking and writing, leading students to solve real world problems and form their own opinions rather than learning by rote. Consequently, many innovations, creative arts, and new research ideas are germinated in the western cultures.

In summary, there are some major differences between these two educational approaches, including overall educational policies and educational systems. All these distinct differences are responsible in shaping student characteristics. How governments set their policies influence population and school size, parents’ and students’ educational orientation, and the community’s attitudes towards education and the importance of examination results. These resulted in how students see their own role in learning, and their future orientations.

Thus, the most important differences are more than the physical schools, sitting arrangements, or even teaching styles. Under these cultural systems, there is a whole different mindset, expectations, and hopes. Different cultural systems demand different types of citi-

zens, and local educational systems are designed to cultivate citizens that will function well in their society.

As we compare educational systems across countries we should also understand that to make a “best practice” work requires translation to a different culture/value system. For instance, in high Power Distance Index (PDI) countries it should be done top down, committing first the top of the educational field. In low PDI countries with a high score on Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) it is a must to commit first the recognized experts in the field, while in countries with low PDI and Femininity all stakeholders must be involved from scratch (Geert Hofstede, 2001).

In the Economist report (2014) Stecher was quoted: “Schools are both recipients and creators of cultural patterns: over the long term they help to shape norms for the next generation. These cultural values are deeply rooted and are very consistent over time. It is the “collective programming of mind” starts from the moment children are born. Therefore, it is shortsighted to expect countries to be effective in introducing new ideas if these ideas are not likely to fit in the context of their values.”

However, there also appears to be two golden rules that could apply across cultures. According to “The Learning Curve”, there are two issues that are globally recognized as the core of understanding educational quality:

- a supportive culture for education and
- the need for a high status of teachers.

Although these two features of education are highly influenced by culture and therefore implemented in different ways in different countries (Economist, 2014). With this in mind, we will turn our attention to future research.

Future Research from an International Comparative Point of View

In the last part of this contribution we focus on challenges in comparative research and on possible future research from an international comparative point of view.

Challenges for Future Research

There are some *general problems* in comparative research that we want to just touch upon (Osborne, 2004). One of the most basic theoretical topics is whether the concepts under study have any equivalent meaning in the cultures under study. Concepts can be more or less culturally specific. A further challenge is to develop equivalent indicators for the concepts. Concepts can differ in their salience for the culture as a whole. Or in some countries, teachers or students are possibly unwilling to discuss sensitive topics such as politics, sexual behavior, or income. Another challenge is to obtain linguistic equivalence through translation. Comparability can also be reduced by non-comparable or low-quality sampling frames or by different procedures for the selection of a sample (Osborne, 2004).

There are also specific challenges in the field of extended education for future research for instance *structural challenges*. There is no broad agreement on the expectations, principles and goals, forms, educational quality, and terms at present. There are not in every

country national guidelines, e.g., on the organization and quality of extended education, or the guidelines differ between countries. There are no or no useful reliable education statistics in the field of extended education in every country. Taiwan and Switzerland do not have reliable statistics, for instance.

Based on that, there are some *methodological challenges*. The population proved to be a challenge for our research, as there are no reliable education statistics for the field of extended education. For another, in some countries, e.g., Switzerland, you find different names for the same types of extended education. These are additional difficulties that are not usually encountered in school research. In addition, with an ex post facto design there is always self-selection, in this case with regard to utilization of extended education offerings. Another challenge is to produce the greatest possible comparability between the comparison groups, if you have an experimental and a control group.

What Should Future Research Studies Focus On, From an International Comparative Point of View?

There are different questions and decisions to make on different dimensions. First, how to define and limit the *research field*. In other words: (a) What is the field of extended education? In this connection, a characterization tool for programs in extended education would be helpful. (b) What exactly should comparative research investigate? The whole variety of offerings versus specific offerings of extended education? Should research be limited to the dimension of public versus private offerings/programs/activities of extended education? If research were limited to only public offerings, certain countries, such as Taiwan, would be excluded. (c) Another decision we have to make is on the level of the study: What level of comparative research do we focus on? Meaning, do we focus on systems, schools/institutions, activities, or on individual learners? Or which of these do we link in a comparative study? And with regard to *content*, we have to decide which (d) perspective to focus on in a study, e.g.

- Structural organization on the system level, on the school/institution level, and/or practices of extended education.
- (In)dependency of school curriculum and curriculum of offerings, and/or collaboration between different actors of different levels.
- “Head of extended education”: leadership and management of the offerings.
- Staff in extended education and staff’s professionalism.
- Students’ activities.
- Students: participation, selection effects, effects on learning, school achievement, social competencies.

In the next step we will focus on *methodological questions/decisions* as the choice of participating countries. Another decision is to make concerning an insider or outsider perspective. “Insider perspective” in this case, in the cross-national collaborative research team, means a researcher from the chosen country.

The population proved to be a challenge for research on extended education. There are decisions to make between qualitative or quantitative methods and between general indica-

tors to measure extended education across countries and specific indicators for some countries or regions.

Conclusions

From our point of view for conducting international comparative research, a cross-national research team is preferable, since a cross-national team is more likely to be able to take advantage of both insider and outsider perspectives. That allows us to identify ethnocentric assumptions and practices that are rooted in each country's own cultural context (Osborne, 2004). Regarding selection of topics, although there are many interesting concepts and questions to be examined, we suggest to start with one perspective. Because of the specificity of the population and due to the sampling difficulties in the field of extended education mentioned earlier, it would be more efficient to start with a combination of survey and qualitative methods. Osborne (2004, p. 272) says: "The combination of survey and qualitative methods in comparative research is a fruitful one and provides the analyst with additional sources of information for interpreting the findings, as well as immediate evidence on validity of the data." Thus, we can select different cases for a state or for a country to describe in case studies the diverse field in one country and across countries. This can be different cases relating to private or public, type of extended education, and so on. It would be especially interesting to have researchers and participating countries with different cultural backgrounds, for instance from Europe, the United States, and Asia. There is a lot that we can and should learn from each other. But as we are trying to improve student learning with the evidences we gathered in a different country, we should also be aware that in order to make a "best practice" work, it requires translation to a different culture/value system.

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