

The Institutionalization of Neoliberal Ideas in the Management and Evaluation of Higher Education in Korea and Japan

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to explore how neoliberal ideas have been institutionally contextualized in Korean and Japanese higher education. As Japan and Korea are both located in Northeast Asia, they have long influenced each other's society and economics, and higher education is no exception. Since 1990, the governments and universities in Korea and Japan have focused on responding to neoliberalism based on their interpretations of the concept. This study poses the following two research questions, taking the comparative perspective of selective isomorphism. 1) Which phenomena in higher education in Korea and Japan have been affected by neoliberalism? 2) How have neoliberal ideas been institutionalized in higher education institutions in Korea and Japan? This study uses macroscopic and mesoscopic approaches to explain the organizational changes that neoliberalism has triggered, particularly in the management and evaluation of higher education institutions.

Keywords: higher education, institutionalization, neoliberal policy, university management, performance-based evaluation

Introduction

With the advent of the knowledge-based society, social expectations about the functions and roles of universities have steadily increased. Various interest groups and marketing principles have begun to influence the operations of universities (Clark, 1983). New public management techniques based on neoliberalism have become prominent in universities, resulting in changes to funding strategies, competition, performance evaluations, and daily operations.

This phenomenon is not confined to Korean and Japanese universities. This problem is common to many universities worldwide (Lorenz, 2012; Sporn, 2003). Since the 1990s, neoliberalism and globalization have triggered similar changes in many different countries' higher

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education systems. Many universities have selectively imitated the higher education systems of economically advanced countries. They have institutionalized these systems based on their own historical and cultural backgrounds. Universities are influenced by economic, political, cultural, and historical changes at home and abroad. They are not only responsible for education and research, but also for perpetuating the social systems of a nation. This study treats the university as a mesoscopic institution within the macroscopic context of globalization.

This study analyzes and compares the institutionalization of neoliberalism in the higher education systems of Korea and Japan. In addition to the geopolitical characteristics of being Northeast Asian countries, Korea and Japan share social values and culture built over many years. In Korea, the formation and development of the higher education system began later than in Japan, but the universities of both countries have characteristics in common. Nonetheless, the Korean higher education system differs from that of Japan in several ways. Previous studies have focused on the neoliberal policy context in each country or limited the extent of comparison to specific issues, such as the incorporation of national universities or evaluation-based funding. This study considers the institutional context of higher education by comparing the countries' similarities and differences on the macro and meso levels. The following research questions guide this study. 1) Which phenomena in higher education in Korea and Japan have been affected by neoliberalism? 2) How have neoliberal ideas been institutionalized in higher education institutions?

The neoliberal policy context of higher education in Japan and Korea

In Japan and Korea, neoliberal policies have been introduced into higher education since the 1990s to strengthen competitiveness. These neoliberal policies have comparable characteristics because the countries' central governments have implemented similar higher education policies. However, they differ in terms of timing and enforcement.

The debate surrounding neoliberal policy in Japan has reflected reforms in the provisional education council on advancing academic research and higher education from 1990 onward (MEXT, 2012). Policies have sought to reconstruct loosen university establishment standards, improve university self-evaluation and degree systems, enhance graduate school assessment, and create degree-awarding organizations. Universities now have increased discretion concerning curriculum development, teaching methods, and full-time faculty appointment. The continued evaluation of universities was expected to reform education, research, and daily operations. Universities have actively responded to government policy to improve Japan's international status, academic research, and higher education. They have paid particular attention to structural reforms associated with "small government," based on neoliberal ideas such as deregulation, privatization, and efficiency (Yokoyama, 2010).

In 2001, with the Toyama Plan, also known as "the university structural reform policy," the

Japanese government announced the reorganization and integration of national universities, the transition to national university corporations, the introduction of private management techniques, and the implementation of third-party university evaluation and competition principles (Tsuruta, 2003). The integration of universities was centered on provincial universities, which absorbed colleges and were integrated with universities with similar characteristics within the same province or city (Kong, 2005; Okada, 2005). The transition of the national university system to a corporation was implemented in April 2004 to secure universities' autonomy by prompting them to establish revenue streams beyond public grants. Finally, third-party evaluations were implemented to encourage competition among national, public, and private universities and improve Japan's international competitiveness. They were also used to determine the top 30 universities and the provision of support for these top institutions. The Center for Excellence (COE) Program was implemented in 2002, and 274 projects from over 90 universities were awarded over 13 billion yen per year (Eades, 2005). Japan applied the principles of selection and resource concentration through the Global COE Program, which has invested heavily in graduate school education, and foreshadowed the launch of the "Super Global University" scheme in 2014. With 10 years of support (6.4 billion yen), the Japanese government sought to get 10 of its universities ranked in the top 100 worldwide by 2023, and 20 of its universities to become globally competitive (Yonezawa & Hou, 2014). The government awarded grants to 37 universities for internationalization and university reform, of which 13 were selected as Type A (Top Type) and 24 were selected as Type B (Global Traction Type).

In April 2004, the incorporation of national universities in Japan was implemented. This process had begun in the mid-1990s, when it was argued that the incorporation of national universities would improve the quality of university education, research, and operations. In June 1998, the incorporation reform was prepared, and in April 1999, a cabinet meeting was held to review the independent administrative incorporation of national universities. The National University Corporation Act was submitted in February 2003 by the investigation committee, the law was enacted in October 2003, and the national university corporation was launched in April 2004. All national universities were converted into corporations (Lee & Myung, 2010). The incorporation of Japanese national universities was meant to secure their competitiveness in the international community and to transform them into engines of economic growth (Hatakenaka, 2005). However, it was also meant to shape universities' powers and responsibilities based on economic logic (Shin, 2007). This intention was confirmed through the application of private business management methods, an emphasis on competition-based evaluations, and the introduction of a performance-oriented personnel system. These changes were made to ensure accountability to society and the nation (Kim, 2008).

In the Korean case, a concrete discussion on neoliberal policies in higher education began with the Education Reform Plan for Establishing a New Education System (5.31 Education Reform Plan) enacted on May 31, 1995. This neoliberal education reform, implemented by the Kim Young-sam administration, sought to improve national competitiveness in education. Under the umbrella of

university diversification and specialization, the government proposed the following goals: 1) diversification and specialization, 2) relaxation of university establishment rules, 3) autonomous operation of the university, 4) excellence, and 5) internationalization (Education and Reform Commission, 1995). The 5.31 Education Reform Plan included an undergraduate system, foundation rules, the establishment of professional graduate schools, the incorporation of national universities, and evaluations of financial support. The realization of university establishment rules through the foundation of universities and the deregulation of student populations to ensure universities' autonomy offer clear evidence of neoliberal characteristics (Choi et al., 2008).

After the economic crisis at the end of 1997, discussion turned to restructuring through the integration of universities, the development of research-oriented universities, and the accelerated incorporation of national universities (Moon & Kim, 2001; Shin, 2004). Announced in August 2004, the University Reform Strategy for Strengthening University Competitiveness sought to address the low quality of higher education, inefficiency due to a lack of functional differentiation, the number of university students, the role of local universities, and the demand for university information disclosure (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2004). This strategy presented challenges based on the two strategies of functional restructuring and university autonomy to improve the quality of the university sector by making quantitative reductions.

The Brain Korea 21 (BK 21) project is the most representative policy of the fundamental goals and actual development of research-oriented universities in Korea. To create a world-class, research-oriented university sector based on selection and concentration, 3.1 trillion won were invested in two 7-year stages from 1999 to 2012. BK 21 was designed to strengthen the research capacity of universities and expand—previously professor-centered—research funding to include graduate students and new researchers. After the success of BK 21, the World Class University (WCU) project was launched in 2008. It sought to apply the principles of selection, concentration, and competition to encourage the qualitative improvement in research. From 2008 to 2012, the WCU project awarded 825 billion won to increase the competitiveness of individual college departments, and the BK 21 project supported groups (or teams) from specific majors (Suh & Park, 2014). The logic was that these projects would create world-leading universities by attracting prominent professors (Park & Jang, 2012). The third stage of the BK 21 project, BK 21 Plus, was launched in 2013 to overcome the limited qualitative improvement of the previous two stages and the promotion of WCU internationalization strategies. It included qualitative evaluations, and 1.9 trillion won were invested from 2013 to 2020. BK 21 Plus continued to align with previous policies as it was competition-based and evaluation-oriented. The fourth stage of BK 21 will be launched in late 2020 to support 19,000 graduate students with 2.9 trillion won over 7 years.

In Korea, discussion on the incorporation of national universities began with the University Special Incorporation of the Council for Education Reform in 1987, enacted through the National University Special Account Act. It was included in the 5.31 Education Reform Plan in 1995 and the

5-year education development plan in 1999. In the 2000s, the Ministry of Education accomplished university restructuring and national university integration by adopting the Special Act on the Operation of the National University. The law on incorporation has since been revised and amended, and the National University Advancement Plan, announced by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology on September 28, 2010, is foundational to the incorporation of national universities. Unlike Japan's incorporation of national universities, Korea's implementation is limited. On March 1, 2012, Seoul National University became the first and only independent corporation.¹ With the incorporation of national universities in Korea, it is difficult to guarantee autonomy due to the possibility of government intervention and interference. Several national universities have expressed distrust of the transition due to concerns about insufficient financial support (B.W. Kim, 2007).

Theoretical framework for comparison

This study applies a neo-institutionalist perspective to analyze and compare the neoliberal institutional contexts of higher education in Japan and Korea. Both countries have tried to achieve global competitiveness within higher education, and their central governments have applied neoliberal policy initiatives over several decades. Sociological institutionalism explains the phenomenon of modern social organizations that share similar aspects, even if they originally had different functions, through the concepts of meaning and symbols (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Some nations have sustained differentiation and diversity in their institutions and policies despite expectations of convergence towards a similar model (Amable, 2002; Hall & Soskice, 2001).

The perspective of selective isomorphism is applied in this study to compare Korean and Japanese higher education. Certain institutions tend to become similar because of the historical and institutional contexts of each country. This perspective differs from that of isomorphism and homogenization, which are based on social institutionalism (Ha, 2011). As Cemy et al. (2005) showed, neoliberal ideas in higher education can be contextualized based on the existence of diversity within convergence.

In this paper, the institutional contexts of higher education are compared based on key phenomena, and changes in the university organizations are divided according to whether they were administrative or performance-related. Whether the two countries show similar trends, how their university organizations have changed, and which characteristics are due to the influence of neoliberalism, are also analyzed.

¹ Ulsan Science and Technology University opened in March 2009 as a corporatized national university. Incheon University transitioned from a private university to a national university corporation. It was established as a private university, but became a municipal university through founders' donations and was later converted into a corporatized national university due to financial difficulties.

Comparison of key phenomena in the higher education systems of Korea and Japan

The expansion and reform of higher education

The popularization of higher education signals a change from education being for the elite to being for the wider public. Following World War II, the demand for higher education increased due to social demands to cultivate high-quality human resources and develop science and technology at the national level. In the knowledge-based society of the 21st century, universities further popularized higher education by expanding the reach of their knowledge production into society. This global phenomenon is reflected in the structures and policies of higher education systems in the East and West. However, differences in purpose and direction are based on unique histories and traditions (Shin & Kehm, 2013; Teichler, 1988). Trow (1970) distinguished the phases of higher education as elite, mass, and universal. Korea and Japan have already reached the universal phase.

The popularization of higher education in Japan had three distinct periods based on university entrance rates. The first period went from 1963 to the late 1970s, the second extended from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, and the third went from the late 1990s to the early 2010s (Huang, 2012). In the first period, both demand for higher education and university enrollment rates rapidly increased due to the social demand for cultivating human resources in industry, science, and engineering. In the second period, despite the government's quality assurance policy, the demand for higher education decreased due to domestic and overseas economic crises, resulting in a reduction in university enrollment rates. However, other types of higher education institutions expanded, such as those providing specialized training. In the third period, the enrollment rates of universities, colleges, and specialized training colleges steadily increased.

In Korea, the expansion of higher education has progressed gradually since the 1950s, echoing the expansion of elementary and secondary education (Shin, 2012). By the late 1960s, the enrollment rates of elementary schools had increased sharply. From the 1970s to the 1980s, the enrollment rates of secondary schools increased rapidly. From the 1980s to the 1990s, the enrollment rates of higher education institutions increased before, in the 2000s, graduate school entry rates increased. After the Korean War, the number of registered students at each level increased stepwise. As the number of students and parents who wanted to obtain higher education increased, it became necessary to provide more educational opportunities. Various attempts were made at the national level to solve the bottlenecks that occurred every time students moved from school to school, which eventually led to the expansion and popularization of higher education.

The university models in the U.S. and Japan have influenced aspects of education in Korea. In the 1880s, higher education institutions were established with the support of Christians from the U.S. Then, in the colonial era, the Japanese higher education system had a direct effect, with the opening of Kyungseong Imperial University on May 1, 1926. Kyungseong Imperial University was modeled after

the University of Tokyo, and Tokyo Imperial University was modeled after a German university (M.R. Kim, 2007; Lee, 1989). Likewise, the values of “freedom to attend college and freedom to learn” were frequently expressed in Japan (Park, 2005), which resembled the German Humboldt University model.

As the U.S. military regime entered the Korean Peninsula, Kyungseong Imperial University changed its name to Seoul National University and was subsequently influenced by U.S. universities (Lee, 1989; Shin, 2012). The U.S. university model appeared later than the German university model, and they differ in many ways. According to Clark (1983), the U.S. university model has a dual system of undergraduate and graduate programs and features curricula based on shared governance and the various missions and credits of each university. The German model features academic freedom, a rigid hierarchy among scholars, and the dean’s strong authority. After liberation in 1945, 80 Korean educators and administrators and 10 U.S. military officers formed the National Committee on Educational Planning. They liquidated the remnants of the Japanese higher education system from the colonial era to establish a higher education system and philosophy suitable for Korea. Soon after, approximately 100 Korean scholars who had studied in the U.S. returned home with American ways of thinking and scholarship (Lee, 1989). As a result, Korean universities have developed as a mixture of the German, Japanese, and U.S. university models (Shin, 2012).

Periods of rapid growth in the university sector are evident in both countries, during Japan’s postwar period after the 1950s, and following Korea’s economic development after the 1980s, respectively. However, the recent decreases in the birth rate and the school-age population in both countries have made it difficult for universities to recruit students, which has increased competition between universities. In Japan, the shortage of university students has been a topic of discussion since the early 1990s. In Korea, how to address the issue has been debated since the 2000s. In response, both Korea and Japan have developed plans to reform their university structures.

In Japan, the development of national university reform began in earnest in June 2001 with a policy announcement by Toyama Atsuko, then Minister of Education, Science and Technology. The announced policy was based on a discussion that had started with an amendment to university establishment standards in 1991. To guarantee and expand universities’ autonomy, there were calls for the privatization of universities, the operation of entrepreneurial schools, and the introduction of the principles of competition and external evaluation. Effectively, there would be changes to the structure, purpose, and meaning of universities.

In Korea, on December 28, 2004, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (currently the Ministry of Education) announced plans to restructure the university and promote university autonomy. The plans were divided into three periods, lasting until 2022, and the ministry has since conducted evaluations of public and private universities. It also planned to reduce the student quota based on the evaluation levels mentioned in reforms announced in January 2014, to improve the quality of university education and prepare for the decrease in the school-age population.

Securing the global competitiveness of higher education

Although the concepts of globalization and internationalization are sometimes used interchangeably, globalization is a macroscopic social and economic phenomenon, whereas internationalization is a policy or institutional response to globalization as a phenomenon (Y. Kim, 2009; Van der Wende, 1997). The globalization of higher education and the responding efforts to internationalize universities have accelerated with the release of world university rankings. Since the 2000s, international migration for higher education has increased, and information has shifted rapidly. Likewise, world university rankings have become a source of international competition and increasing pressure.

The higher education systems of Japan and Korea are characterized by their universities not having emerged organically, but being a product of the West. Both countries had to develop government-led international competitiveness measures from Western universities and implemented policies and programs at both the national and institutional levels (Lee & Lee, 2010; Shin, 2006).

The transition to a knowledge-based society has increased social interest in universities as a core institution of knowledge production and has made society more sensitive to the global environment beyond national boundaries. The interest in the internationalization of universities increased in the 2000s with the publication of world university rankings, such as the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, QS World University Ranking, and Leiden Ranking. Universities in English-speaking countries, such as the U.S. and the U.K., comprise the majority of the top rankings, although several universities in Asia and continental Europe are included. The evaluation indicator that determines the ranks of universities globally is composed of quantitative sub-indicators concerning research achievements, peer evaluations, and Nobel Prize winners. Asian universities have attempted various policy approaches at the national and institutional levels to increase their global rankings, a move which has been criticized as an overemphasis on ranking positions (Hawkins, 2016).

Both Korea and Japan recognize the social responsibility of universities to show national and world-class competitiveness. Their central governments have concluded that the neoliberal business management method, with its emphasis on competition, performance, evaluation, efficiency, and excellence, should be applied to higher education, despite the public nature of their universities. This tendency has resulted in the marginalization of the humanities and social sciences compared to life sciences and engineering, and course content has been changed to become more practical and directly useful to society (Ushioji, 1997).

Intensive investment has fostered world-class engineering, science, and technology universities in Japan and Korea. According to the 2005 “OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education,” Korea and Japan has supplemented or renewed their certification systems for the purposes of university evaluation and quality assurance. Japan has implemented

various national policies to develop its universities into globally competitive institutions. Since the announcement of the Jutenka policy in 1991, it has shifted to an intensive investment style centered on graduate schools. In 1996, Japan began investing through the Science and Technology Basic Plan, which reached its fifth stage in 2016. The Toyama Plan of 2001 sought to develop the top 30 national, public, and private universities on competition principles. The 21st-Century COE program (2002) was implemented based on this initiative, followed by the Global COE (2007) and Super Global COE (2014) programs, which expanded universities' research capacities through national, public, and private competition.

A U.S. style accreditation system was first introduced in Japan in 1947 (Yonezawa, 2011). Since then, university evaluation policy has shifted from establishment-approved evaluations (from the postwar period to 1991) to self-check evaluations (from 1991 to the early 2000s) and to third-party certification systems (from the early 2000s to the 2010s; Lee, 2010). Although the university certification evaluation system started earlier in Korea, the system in Japan was constructed independently rather than by imitating other evaluation systems. The criteria for evaluation have been diversified and specialized to enhance the quality assurance of higher education and strengthen international competitiveness (Hahn & Chung, 2005). Especially, following the incorporation of national universities in 2004, many have strived to become specialized because the government only provided a comparatively large budget only at universities that achieved high results (S.S. Kim, 2007).

Korea improved its original 1982 evaluation system for higher education with the Higher Education Act, which includes a requirement for evaluation and certification. Since 2009, Korea has conducted university self-evaluations. Since the 5.31 Education Reform Plan was launched, Korean policies to globalize research have included supporting grants for joint research projects with foreign scholars or famous research institutes, the cost of publishing in excellent domestic academic journals, and research equipment (Ministry of Education, 1998). In addition, through BK 21, Seoul National University and other top universities have ranked higher in science citation indexed academic journals and world university rankings (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2006).

Changing the core subject (key actor) in higher education

Privatization is the act of reducing the role of government and increasing the role of the private sector in any activity or ownership (Savas, 1989). Thus, university privatization refers to the government's lack of direct involvement in establishing, funding, or operating universities (Kim, 2005). Privatization is marketed as strengthening internal accountability and giving autonomy to the university regarding its overall operations, including personnel, finances, and evaluations.

In countries with many private universities, the introduction of market principles based on neoliberalism has proceeded faster than in other countries (Arimoto, 1997). Korea and Japan have maintained high percentages of private universities based on their social need for higher education

(approximately 80% in Korea and 75% in Japan). In addition, the incorporation of national universities since the 2000s has paved the way for more universities to apply operating principles from the private sector.

The high proportion of private universities in Korea and Japan is due to the countries' flexible attitudes toward establishing private providers, to meet the rapidly increasing demand for higher education. Despite criticism over the quality of higher education in the early years of their establishment, private universities have contributed significantly. Private universities have more relaxed establishment standards than national and public universities do. Whereas private universities are relatively autonomous in their organizational and financial practices, the establishment standards of national and public universities are under government control. Thus, in Korea and Japan, private universities have helped expand education opportunities during periods of rapid social change.

The European universities established in the early 12th century were forms of guild learning and teaching. However, Japan and Korea have strong centralized features, and their national universities are the result of government-led higher education policies. National and public universities have been established in every province, but the centers are Tokyo Imperial University in Japan and Kyungsung Imperial University in Korea. Both countries' university establishment standards were introduced so that private universities could be established. The sudden demand for higher education could not be met by government-led universities alone, and to overcome the limitations of their slow-moving bureaucratic systems, Korea and Japan decided to implement policies to foster private universities (Kim, 1995; M. Kim, 2009).

The number of private universities has increased sharply, now accounting for more than 75% of universities in both Korea and Japan. The absolute number of universities in Japan is far higher than it is in Korea, but the proportion of private institutions is only slightly higher in Korea. In Japan, the proportion of private universities steadily increased from 1955 but has remained at around 75% since the 1970s. The number of students enrolled in private universities in Korea and Japan is steadily increasing. More than 75% of students are currently enrolled in private universities, and high private university enrollment rates have been commonplace in both countries since the 1970s.

Since the 2000s, the incorporation of national universities in Korea and Japan has been characterized by limited government intervention in and control of university operations. The university is no longer conceived of as an ivory tower of study disconnected from the outside world. It is supported by grants based on the evaluation of external institutions and must live by the principle of survival of the fittest.

In Japan, national universities are high status. They play an important role in promoting advanced academic research, cultivating human resources, contributing to regional revitalization, and securing equality in higher education (Ko, 2014). The characteristics of the Japanese national university corporation system include autonomous operation through incorporation, the introduction of private management methods, third-party participation in university administration and evaluation, and

a flexible personnel system (Ko, 2014; Morozumi, 2019).

In Korea, the 5.31 Education Reform measures launched in 1995 have facilitated restructuring and financial investment for the advancement of higher education. To enhance the competitiveness of its universities, the country has proceeded based on policies of diversification, specialization, and autonomy (Kim, 2005). The Education Deregulation Committee has emphasized the Educational Deregulation Plan and a consumer-centered education policy. Modifications to regulations have also made the establishment of universities autonomous.

In Korea and Japan, criticism has been directed at bureaucratic control structures following their governments' guidelines and changes in performance-based evaluations and competitive systems (Kim, 2001). Other complaints concern how universities must depend on revenue from students and parents in the form of tuition fees, or secure research funds from companies to replace reduced government subsidies. Finally, concerns over the prioritization of application-oriented knowledge and technology production over pure science also exist (Gibbons et al., 1994).

Structural changes have been made both within and outside the university. As universities that had been part of the national administrative organization became independent legal entities, they gained decision-making authority. As regulations on external budgets, personnel, and organizations were eased, universities were guaranteed more autonomy. Universities are now led by the president, who is the chief executive officer of the executive board and has autonomous authority, which has only been strengthened. The faculty's role in the administration of the university may change depending on the type of leadership practiced by the president, further transferring the power of university administration from professors to presidents (Jung, 2004).

Institutionalized neoliberal ideas in Korean and Japanese universities

Accountability: The university management aspect

Both Korea and Japan have popularized higher education through government-led policies and have private sectors increasing at a faster pace than in Europe and the U.S. In Korea, the U.S. model was accepted due to the U.S. military presence during the postwar period; however, Japan accepted the U.S. model to increase its competitiveness. Japan is characterized by an active acceptance of Western university models and its status as one of the few Asian countries that have not been colonized.

Japanese universities modeled on German universities focus on research more than education, and university professors perceive themselves as researchers (Ehara, 1998). Universities operate in Japan according to one of two types: centered on the faculty (Kyojukai-shihai), or led by the president (gakucho-shihai) or steering committee (University Councils; rijikai-shihai; Goodman, 2005). Until the late 1990s, the latter model only existed in private universities, after which it began appearing at national universities. In Japanese national universities, the collegiality of university professors is

strong. Japanese universities' chair system is modeled on German universities, and the lecture system is linked to lecturers and graduate students (Ogawa, 2002). Professors are expected to be familiar with the characteristics of their students and the subjects they teach; thus, autonomy is guaranteed for education (Brooks & Brooks, 2012). Through these structures, professors in Japan can feel free from external evaluation criteria.

Despite recently enacting the U.S. style credit systems, Japanese universities have retained features of apprenticeships. They are gradually changing to respond to the needs of society and becoming more efficient. The number of chairs has been reduced and the range of faculty has been expanded. The resulting democratic accountability and decision-making practices have made it easier to respond more flexibly (M.R. Kim, 2007). Traditional national characteristics have remained intact for several well-known national universities (Ogawa, 2002). Since the incorporation of the government in 2004, autonomy for university administration has been guaranteed, but the intervention of the central government has been indirectly expanding (Jung, 2004). All national universities are assigned a budget based on evaluations conducted every 6 years, and the government influences the appointment of university presidents and the recruitment of professors.

Although Korea has some of the structural characteristics of the U.S. university model, it also has characteristics of the Japanese/German model in terms of career goals. References to the U.S. model include the fact that students must complete a certain base level of credits and that curricula must be structured systematically. Korean professors consider themselves researchers and educators, and they strive to balance education and research. As in Japan, there is a difference in opinion about autonomy. Although the government has tried to increase the autonomy of the university, faculty members feel that their autonomy levels are low (Chae & Lee, 2005; Shin et al., 2007).

In the Constitution of the Republic of Korea, universities' autonomy encompasses the right to enact their own rules, the authority to maintain all administrative measures related to research and teaching without external instructions, and the ability to participate in university autonomy (Lee, 2008). However, the government continues to engage in direct and indirect administrative intervention via financial support based on government-led evaluations, rather than encourage autonomously determined regulation and implementation strategies at individual universities.

Accountability is closely related to autonomy. It is difficult to guarantee the autonomy of universities if the emphasis on accountability is too high. If autonomy is emphasized, it will limit the demand for accountability. The university has responsibilities to education consumers, such as students, parents, and society, but if accountability is stressed, the academic and administrative autonomy of the university cannot be guaranteed due to external intervention.

The content and extent of interventions differ depending on the social and cultural characteristics of each country. In Korea, the emphasis on accountability is limited in primary and secondary education, but the country is also characterized by the strongest need for political and bureaucratic accountability mechanisms. Almost all universities must respond sensitively to evaluations

associated with the government's financial support, the influences of which are broad and powerful (Byun et al., 2013). On the other hand, there is a lack of market accountability to specific industries, based on information disclosure to education consumers, or a mechanism for securing professional accountability through certification. The demand for accountability among universities in Korea thus emphasizes responsibility to the government and bureaucracy rather than to education consumers. There is also a tendency to concentrate on evaluation indicators and evaluation areas over other types of information.

Interest in the accountability of higher education in Japan has surpassed that of Korea. In 1986, the Board of Education proposed a measurement tool for evaluating national and private universities. In 1991, the university council proposed a program to develop internal processes to approve finances and departments and to evaluate the university by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Kitamura, 1997). In 2004, the government introduced various evaluation systems and demanded social responsibilities, such as improving the quality of university education, strengthening its research capacity, and providing services for society through reforms. Accordingly, universities must now fulfill their diverse functions and meet the expectations for their social contribution. Japan's accountability mechanism is based on political and bureaucratic accountability rather than market-oriented accountability; however, the connection to support projects seems low.

Discussion on university organizations' efficiency focuses on structural changes and the allocation and use of limited resources. Korea and Japan have implemented structural reforms of their national universities that adopt private-sector methods of efficiency. In Japan, national university corporations are required to submit a medium-term plan for improving the efficiency of business operations and to obtain the approval of the minister under the National College Corporation Act. In Korea, the incorporation of national universities has been proposed based on recognition of the need for structural changes to quickly cope with social changes and to achieve flexibility in confronting problems, such as the rigidity of national university operations (Suh, 2005).

Korea has attempted to improve its efficiency and increase its performance by strategically enforcing secured funds, due to the difficulty of securing financing quickly (Lee, 2008). However, Korea is confronting these dilemmas while competing with world-class universities. There are concerns over the idea of enhancing competitiveness by improving efficiency (Lee, 2011). The government tried to secure financial resources for universities through the implementation of national scholarships in 2012. However, this was criticized because it led to the maintenance of insolvent universities. Furthermore, the scholarships only reduced students' burdens and were not effective in securing financial resources for the universities. The Korean government is now investing in science and engineering development projects that can produce visible research results through efficient financial management.

Evaluation: The performance-based aspect

Since the 1990s, neoliberal policies have influenced Korean and Japanese society, especially their higher education systems. The performance and competition emphasized in the private sector have been used as key components of education policy. With the emergence of world university rankings, neoliberalism further encouraged the current emphasis on performance and evaluation (Shin et al., 2007; Shin, 2018; Yamada, 2001).

Korea's emphasis on performance has led to the quantitative increase in research results. Through projects such as BK 21 and WCU, Korean universities' research capacities and international competitiveness have improved. Natural science and engineering research achievements have increased and raised awareness overseas (Ministry of Education, 2013). However, there remains an emphasis on quantitative performance and a lack of diversity in the performance evaluation methods (B.J. Kim, 2007). It is also uncertain whether government-funded projects based on evaluations adequately reflect a university's performance (Shin et al., 2009). The focus on performance in Korea has influenced project financial support, professor appointments, tenure examinations, and promotional incentive distribution. Quantitative evaluation is preferred due to the difficulty of qualitative performance evaluations. Although most universities divide performance into teaching, research and service, based on their regulations and bylaws, they tend to concentrate on research because of its distinctiveness (Yook, 2010).

The emphasis on performance evaluations in Japan is a recent phenomenon, and its connection to financial support started with growing interest in strengthening competitiveness in the 2000s. Performance evaluations confirm the degree of achievement of the vision and mission of the university rather than serve as a uniform evaluation indicator, establish agreed-upon goals at the beginning of the semester, and are completed after the semester has concluded (S.S. Kim, 2007). In evaluating the achievements of professors, only the minimum research achievement was required until the national and public universities were incorporated. Otherwise, there is little evaluation or intervention because university professors are guaranteed free status. The evaluation of performance is in an early stage because it was introduced after incorporation. A careful review has been conducted on the speed of change, terminology, and the purpose of evaluation in the personnel and faculty evaluation systems (S.S. Kim, 2007).

The world university rankings that emerged with globalization have extended the scope of competition. Korea has emphasized competition through policies highlighting excellence at the national level, whereas Japan has tried to reform its universities by incorporating them and expanding their autonomy. Both countries rely on neoliberal approaches that emphasize the market, but they differ in their solutions. Korea's education system is based on central government-led policy management. The autonomy of its universities has been nominally increased, but governmental and state institutions' interference through evaluations may increase further. In contrast, Japan has

implemented reforms to emphasize the autonomy and accountability of its universities through incorporation and policies to prevent internalized operations due to the decrease in the school-age population (Kong, 2005).

Korea and Japan have privatized higher education through the incorporation of national universities since the 2000s. Competition among their national universities and private universities has accelerated. Their governments' control over higher education has been reduced, but universities have been restructured according to socioeconomic needs, and universities face demands to create profit and innovation through industry–university links (Kim, 2005). Expectations of university achievement are increasing in both Korea and Japan, and they are met with the offering of financial support through performance-based evaluations rather than demanding output.

Conclusions

This study analyzes how neoliberal ideas have been contextualized or institutionalized in Korean and Japanese higher education. Based on the neoliberal policy contexts in both countries, it examines three critical phenomena in higher education. The final section explains how neoliberal ideas have been institutionalized in similar yet different ways in each country from the aspects of management and evaluation.

Although policy changes may not always be implemented in the actual practices of an institution (Mok & Oba, 2007), most East Asian countries have actively adopted and applied new public management systems to manage higher education institutions (Shin, 2018). National universities in Japan and Korea have become corporatized, and many management skills and methods have been applied at the institutional and national levels. Neoliberal ideas have been institutionalized differently despite the similarities between the countries. Both countries have strong central governance, with their respective ministries of education are leading enthusiastic efforts to increase the international competitiveness of their universities. Both have adopted neoliberalism under the guise of new public management. This similarity may be explained by their shared culture of Confucianism or their geopolitical location, as previous studies have noted (Altbach, 1978; Marginson, 2011; Yang, 2016). However, higher education institutions in Korea and Japan have approached the neoliberal phenomena differently based on their separate historical, cultural, and social contexts.

This study explores how the higher education systems of Korea and Japan, which may appear similar from a general point of view, have in fact institutionalized neoliberal ideas in different ways. Based on its results, this study presents the following major conclusions and policy suggestions. First, it is necessary to engage in theoretical and practical discussions to identify specific achievements in implementing neoliberal policies in higher education systems. In general, the implementation of neoliberal policies is often accompanied by pseudo-mythical beliefs about the success of decentralization, privatization, and efficiency. Understanding the institutional context of higher

education in a reflective and logical way is essential. Second, the neoliberal education policies of each country have been differently implemented based on their individual contexts. Rather than directly borrowing or copying policies from other countries, each country should formulate and implement policies that reflect their historical and cultural context. Further studies should focus on the inclusion of cultural contexts and historical backgrounds within university organizations rather than the visible implementation of policy.

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