ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JAPAN-KOREA COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN GENDER INEQUALITY

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GENDER GAP INDEX OF THE WORLD FORUM -2025

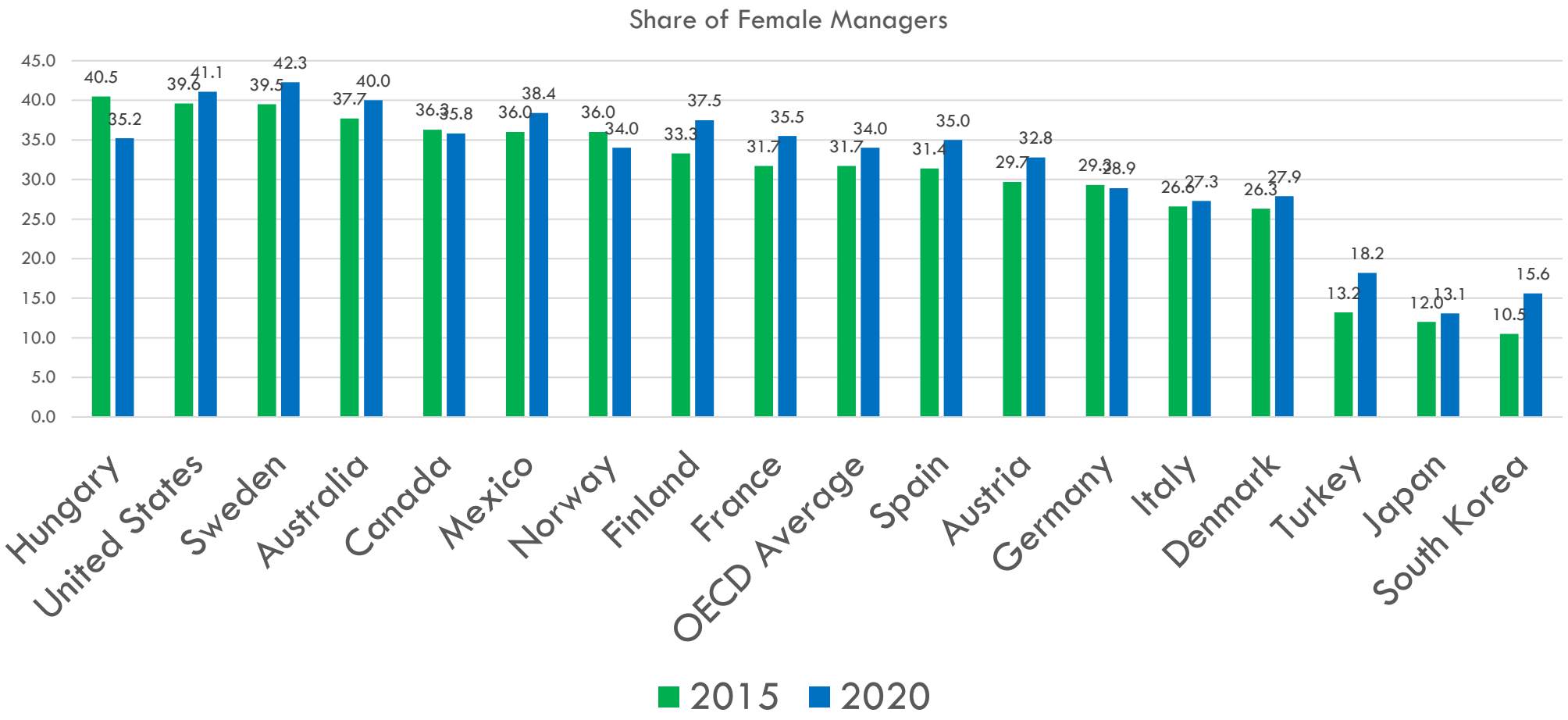
(1) GGI overall (out of 148 countries)

Rank: South Korea 111, Japan 118

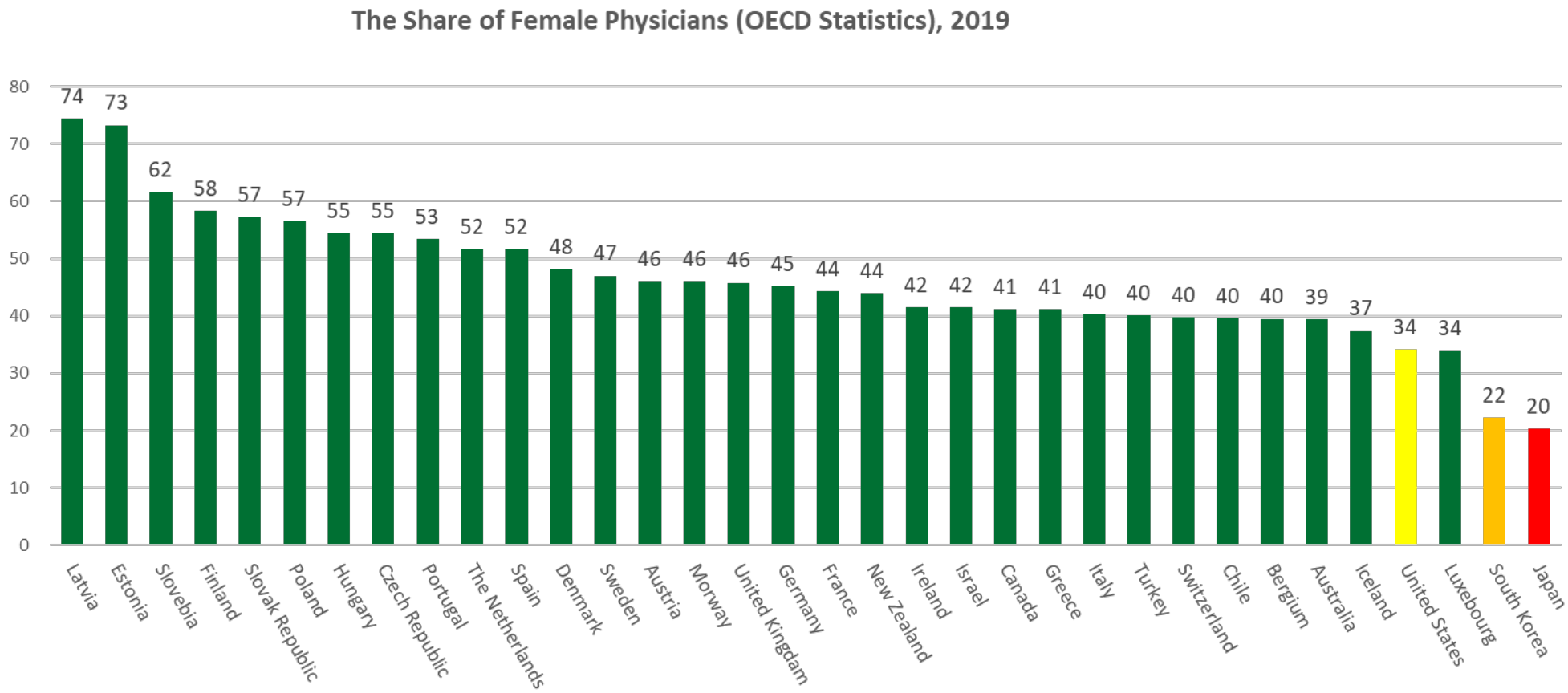
(2) GGI: Economic Participation and Opportunity (out of 148 countries)

Rank: Japan 112, South Korea 114

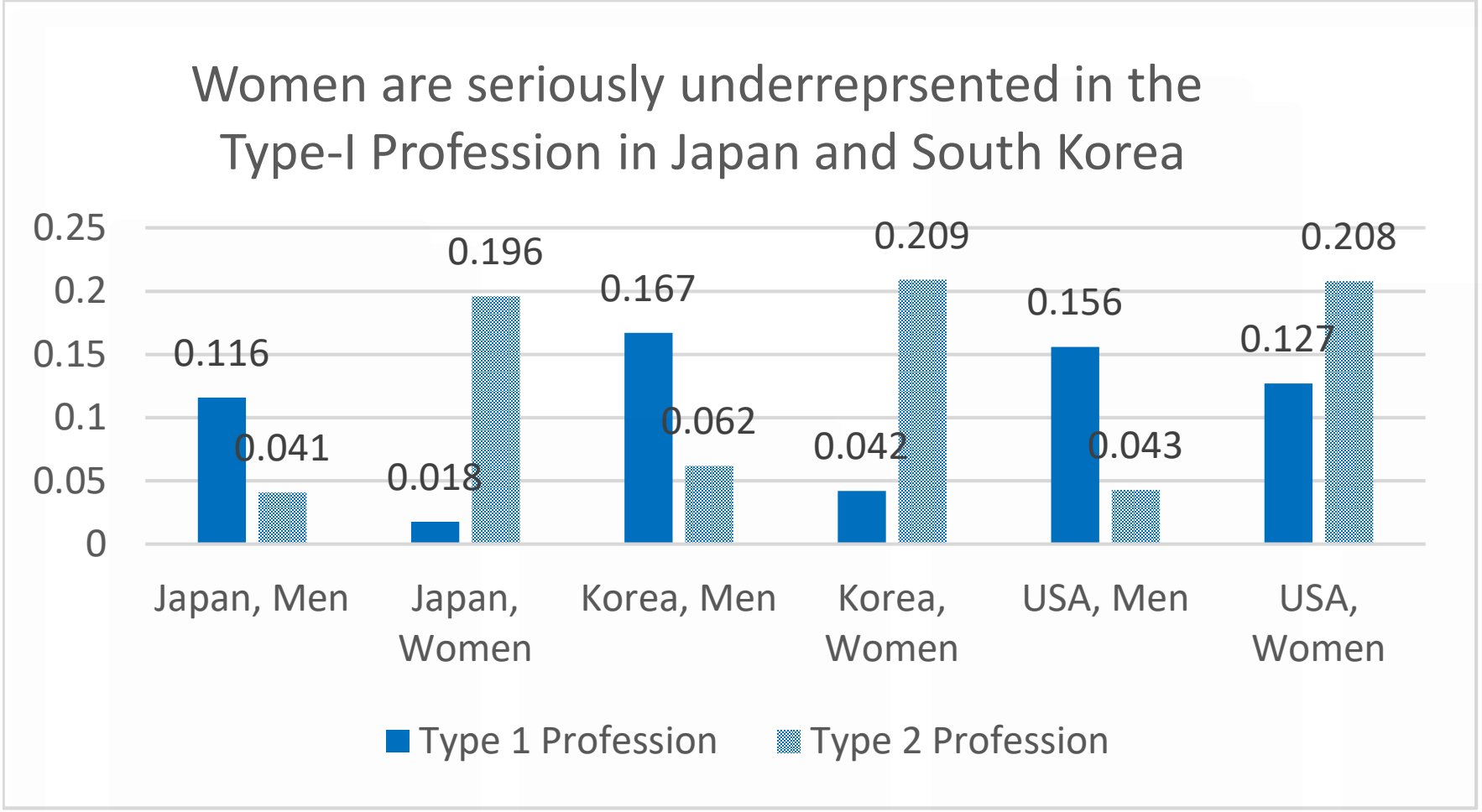
A SERIOUS UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN MANAGERIAL POSITION IN JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA



THE PROPORTION OF WOMEN AMONG PHYSICIANS IS ALSO SMALL IN JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA: PROFESSIONAL STEREOTYPING IS CULTURALLY SPECIFIC.



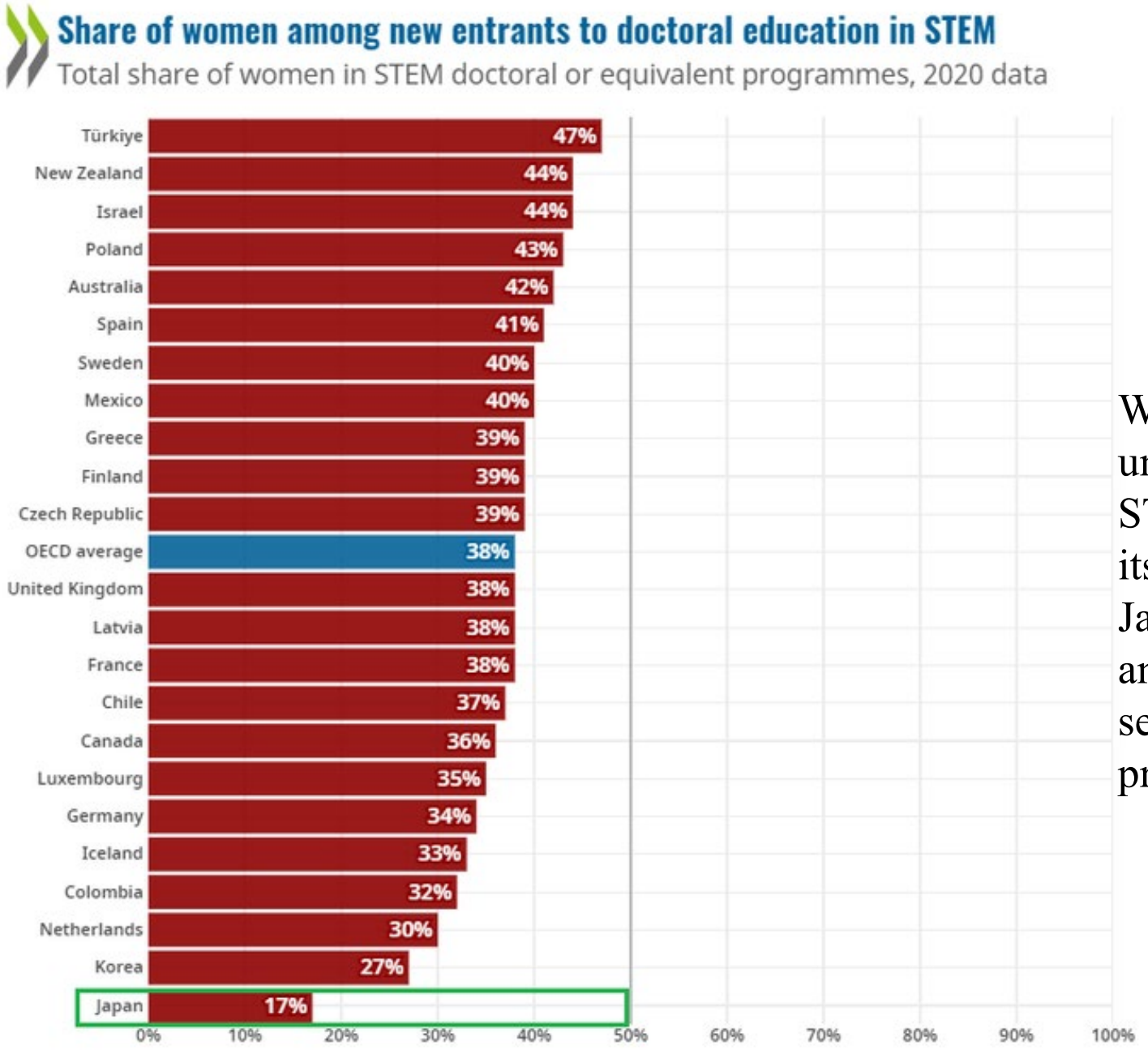
- USA: 31th of 34 countries
- South Korea: 33th of 34
- Japan: 34th (last)



Type 2 profession includes all professional occupations in human services (education, care, medical/health, welfare), excluding three major high SES professions (physicians & surgeons, dentists, and educators in universities/colleges.

Type 1 profession includes all other professional occupations: (1) all professionals in non-human services, and (2) physicians & surgeons, dentists, and educators in universities/colleges.

Data: Japan, the 2005 Social Stratification and Mobility (SSM) survey; South Korea, 2009 Korean Labor and Income Panel Survey (KLIPS); USA, 2010 Population Census



Note: STEM refers to the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
Source: OECD (2023), Education at a Glance 2022: OECD Indicators, Table B4.3. Share of women among new entrants to tertiary education, by selected fields of study and level of education (2020).

Women are underrepresented in the STEM field. However, its extent varies, and Japan has the lowest, and South Korea has the second-lowest proportion of women.

SOME MAJOR COMMON CAUSES-1

1. Strong persistence of the traditional division of household labor in the household and patriarchal family values

→ High opportunity costs of full-time employment and the difficulty of balancing work and family roles for married women

→ High rate of women's job leaves at the time of child-rearing

2. Strong endorsement of the traditional division of household labor by many firms

→ Firms' statistical discrimination against women through gendered career tracks, where many white-collar women are assigned to a dead-end clerical track.

→The presence of a high motherhood wage penalty.

SOME MAJOR COMMON CAUSES -2

Strong persistence of gender stereotyping of occupations through family, education, and labor-market experiences

Typical stereotypes:

Men for leadership, women for support

Men for the STEM profession, women for nurturant occupation (by Paura England)

SOME EVIDENCE OF GENDER STEREOTYPES IN JAPAN

Evidence (1): Primary school girls' dream jobs

USA: ① doctor, ② veterinarian, ③ scientist (Fatherly's 2017 imagination report)

Japan: ① eatery owner, ② kindergarten teacher/child caretaker, ③ nurse (Daiichi' insurance company's 2020 survey)

Evidence (2):

Gender gap in the liking of science as an academic subject increases with school grades:

A 10.0% gap (80% for boys vs. 70% for girls) in the primary school to a 19% gap (61% vs. 42%) in the junior high school. (Basic Survey on Learning, reported by The Gender Equality Bureau in 2020).

Evidence 3: Women's proportion in junior high schools' principals is the lowest in Japan (48% for the US, 20% for South Korea, and 7% for Japan) among the OECD countries. Secondary school teachers for the guidance of higher education are mostly men, and there are reports on the prevalence of cases where female students were discouraged by them to go to the STEM field.

Hence, early socialization, education in junior high schools, and college guidance in high schools all work against women to be professionals in the STEM fields.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA REGARDING THE EFFECTS OF EDUCATION

Rising women's attainment of higher education: More rapid in South Korea than in Japan. The college graduation rate is now higher for women than for men in South Korea, but not in Japan

Cohort gap in education: Greater in South Korea than in Japan

Globalization and growing competitiveness of higher education: Rapid progress in South Korea, slow or minimal in Japan

Increasing sense of relative deprivation among college graduates with a working-class family background. More pronounced in South Korea than in Japan.

Ex. Gold spoon versus clay spoon (in South Korea)

Oya-gacha (Japan)

SOME OTHER SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

(1) Irregular employment: very strongly over-represented by women in Japan (54% for women, 22% for men in 2021); overrepresented by women in South Korea, but not as strongly as in Japan (46% for women, 31% for men in 2022).

(2) Increasing gender gap in gender-role attitudes among younger generations: More pronounced in South Korea than in Japan.

(3) The problem of the poor elderly: More serious in South Korea than in Japan.

(4) Family system and its change: The male head of the family system (戸主制度） was abolished in 1947 in Japan under the post-war constitution; it was abolished in 2005 in South Korea. Separate surnames for married couples are prohibited in Japan and are compulsory in South Korea. Both are exceptional in the world.

Japan and South Korea share many social issues.

The promotion of evidence-based policies will make it mutually beneficial to share knowledge between public administrators and researchers of Japan and South Korea in finding effective ways to solve those common issues.

QUESTIONS FOR HONG SENSEI

1. For the AA Policy

. What are the major factors in the success of the AA in raising the proportion of women in management?

a) Firms' submission of the plan for improvement?

b) Firms' submission of the performance report?

c) Publication of the list of non-performing companies?

2. What parts of government organizations are directly involved in various stages of company evaluations , and approximately how many public administration staff are involved altogether each year

QUESTIONS FOR HONG SENSEI-CONTINUED

2. On WISET

1. For the inflow (training and attracting new personnel) stage,

How widely is the "Develop STEM Girl's Power Program" implemented in primary and middle schools? Do public schools have this program? Or, is the program an activity of regional municipalities or the private sector?

2. What does the WISET do in reducing the gender segregation of college majors?

A QUESTION FOR HAYASHI SENSEI

The gender gap in the non-regular (Hiseiki) employment is much wider in Japan than in South Korea. This is one of the primary reasons for the underutilization of female human resources in Japan.

What do you think the government policy can or should do to reduce this gap?