

PRIVATE SCHOOL IN INDONESIA AND JAPAN: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECT

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Introduction

The world in the 21st century is a world without boundary. The development of technology and the advancement of communication have put all countries at the stage of globalization. Today's world would require people to have higher technology literacy and global communication skill. Education has been even more demanding than it was before. Mainly in developed countries, most of the schools have the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) lesson and one or more foreign language lessons are being taught in the class.

Private school has been an alternative for formal education with the autonomy to design its own curricula and policy management. Families with high income or even middle income would rather choose to secure better education for their children. Education nowadays has even been seen as an investment for the children's future. More and more private elementary schools exist recently.

Private school is defined as a school belongs to and managed by a non-government organization that serves as a formal education institution, registered and under the supervision of the ministry of education. The non-government organization can be religious organization or simply private-owned organization. Some schools accept funding support from the government, yet there are also some others remain financially independent.

The curriculum used could be vary depends on the school. Some schools follow the national curriculum, while some others adapt curriculum from other countries or any international education foundation, for example the International Baccalaureate (IB). The leaders and managers would decide this at the very beginning when the school is founded.

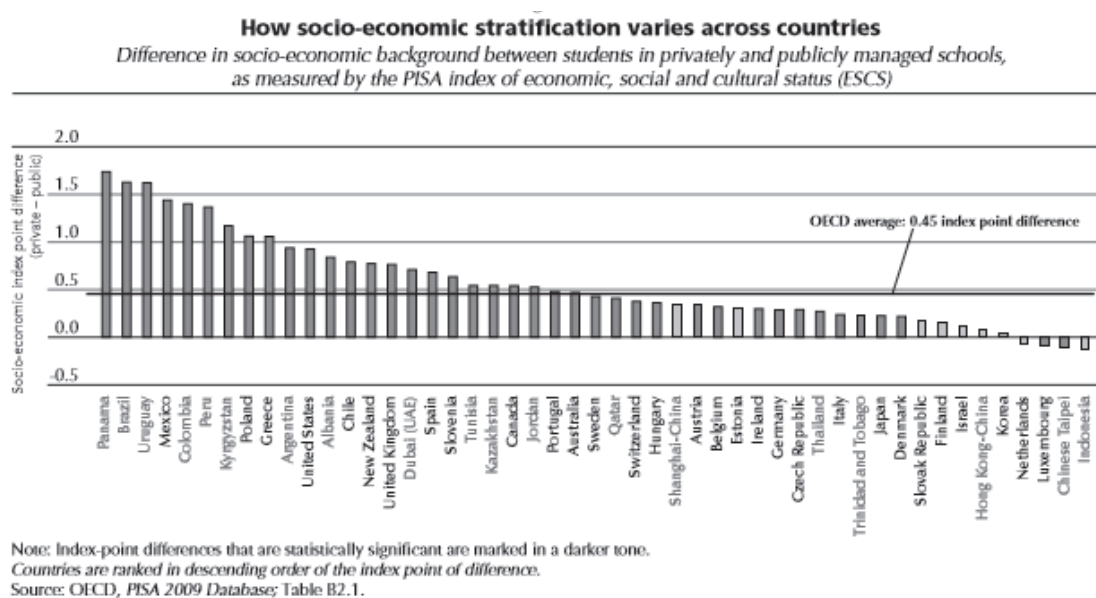
One of the advantages of private school is that it has autonomy to manage and decide its own school policy, compared to those of public or national school. Therefore, the school is supposed to have better adaptability with today's educational demand and higher possibility to provide good education quality. It has now become an alternative of securing better education for children.

As the number of private schools grows these days, it is important to look deeper into the fact of what is going on so far to the private school, what have been the challenges, and how the future would be. Thus, this study is conducted by tracing the number of private school over the years, observing the growth of students enrollment, and surveying the practice of private school, both in Indonesia and Japan.

The purpose of this study is to define the relevance of today's private school, to identify the challenges encountered and to propose the future development of private school in Indonesia and Japan, both qualitative and quantitative.

Comparing Private Schools in Indonesia and Japan

Data from PISA 2009 showed that the OECD average index point of difference is 0.45. In Indonesia, this index even showed a negative point of difference. Students going to private schools did not necessarily reflect better socio-economic background. It has proven that the private schools in Indonesia were easily accessible by the students despite of their socio-economic background. While in Japan, this difference seemed to be more obvious, although it was still below the average level of OECD countries. The result showed that the students attending private schools in Japan had a slightly better socio-economic background.¹



How is the composition of students attending public and private schools in Indonesia and Japan? The table below showed data from OECD in PISA 2009.

According to the data, across OECD countries, the average number of students attending private schools was only 18%. Both, Indonesia and Japan were countries with the percentage of students enrolling in private school above the average of OECD. The percentage of enrollment in Indonesia and Japan were 43% and 29% respectively.¹

Private School in Indonesia

The system of law and regulations in Indonesia does not clearly define the education act that conveys private school. Under the Education Law No. 20 of 2003 that unified Indonesia's education system, private schools are considered equal to public schools and thus are required to comply with national education regulations in the areas of curriculum, educational calendar, teaching load and teacher quality standards.

Public and private management of schools

	Percentage of students who attend:	
	Publicly managed schools	Privately managed schools
Macao-China	4	96
Hong Kong-China	7	93
Dubai (UAE)	21	79
Belgium	31	69
Netherlands	34	66
Ireland	39	61
Chile	42	58
Indonesia	57	43
Australia	60	40
Korea	63	37
Chinese Taipei	64	36
Argentina	64	36
Spain	66	34
Qatar	69	31
Japan	71	29
Panama	77	23
Denmark	77	23
Peru	78	22
Colombia	81	19
Jordan	81	19
OECD average	82	18
Uruguay	82	18
Israel	82	18

Source: OECD, PISA 2009 Data

Private schools in Indonesia can be of general, religious, or technical and vocational programs. Most of the schools are under the Ministry of National Education (MONE), while some madrasah and religious schools are private and under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). Most of the schools in Indonesia are under the MONE, and among those majorities are public schools, except in the upper secondary level (SSE) more than half belonged to private.²

Field Study and Observation

For the case of Indonesia, questionnaires were sent to the principals of a Christian private school located in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. The school was founded in 2008 by a faithful evangelist and well-known preacher in Indonesia, across Asia, even some other parts of the world. The principals of both lower and upper secondary school involved in responding to this study in January 2016.

Unlike a lot of famous high schools in Jakarta, the school is not solely stressing on academic achievement but prioritizing character building. The academic achievement itself is not based on knowledge memorization but more on critical thinking, analysis and writing skills. One of the uniqueness of the school is of its integrated studies along with biblical understanding. The integration of Christian faith with different field of studies, including philosophy, science, social studies, and art, has been the characteristic of the curriculum.

The aim of the school is to bring-out every student in the school intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually Christian. The school is guiding the students toward knowing and finding their passions and callings.

Present Education Challenges

In dealing with 21st century world, there are always changes in every society and they happen too quick, often impossible to catch-up. The school keeps itself updated with the issues that the students curious about, brings in the positive points and criticizes what is necessary to be critically

considered.

One of the biggest issues in Indonesia is the lower habit of reading and writing. Therefore, the school provides reading and writing training during school's orientation day. On top of that, during school year, the teachers give homework that may require the students a number of reading and short essays writings.

The school also provides several opportunities for students to be aware of and involved in responding to social issues that is happening around the school, such as collecting used plastic bottles, using water and paper towel wisely, helping the neighborhood in cleaning garbage in the area and the river.

Bullying and violence have also occurred in alarming rate. In many subjects, teachers not only reminding students to prevent such behaviors but also discussing and explaining the cause and negative effects of them.

School Management Strategy

The teachers are all encouraged to be creative and innovative in their classes. The school has put teacher and teaching quality at the very top priority. Therefore, most of the programs are developed to assure this. From the questionnaire, the routine activities that the school does in one academic year are listed as follows:

- monthly group discussion about faith and spiritual life of teachers,
- subject's group meeting every 3 months,
- bi-annual retreat for all teachers and staff,
- special training by inviting professional speakers,
- training provided by Christian seminary college, and
- attending church's seminar once every 3 months.

Relating to formal studies, the school encourages and supports the teacher who is potential to be a leader to continue his/her education in graduate and/or doctoral programs. Currently, there are some teachers who are doing graduate studies.

Teacher's Quality and Competence

The school pays a very serious attention on the spirituality of the teacher. The teacher has to be a believer, a born-again-Christian who is fearing God above all else and willing to obey God's word. The teacher should be clear about his calling as a teacher, who wants to dedicate himself/herself for the better future of Indonesia. The teacher should be able to balance between his/her confessed and professed faith.

One of the characters that the teacher should have is the character of a shepherd, someone the students could look up to as a role model and has a loving heart toward them. The teacher should be able to show his/her beliefs to the student by the way he/she thinks (teaching method), talks (rebuking student, praising student) and does (whatever and whenever it is).

The school prefers teacher who is a graduate of a well-known university. The teacher should like learning, keep improving himself/herself and his/her teaching method. The teacher should love to teach and share his/her life to the students. The teacher should be willing to be corrected if he/she did wrong. While as a member of God's family, the teacher should be willing to work hard and cooperate in a team.

Private School in Japan

Unlike Indonesia, the private school in Japan has a clear written law. In the Education Act No. 270 of December 15, 1949 about Private School Law article 1, it is written that the purpose of the act is to promote the sound development of private schools by taking account of their characteristic features, putting a high value on their autonomy, and enhancing their public nature.³

In the context of Japanese education history, the number of schools multiplied following the increasing number of children in two baby bloom periods. But this number kept declining over the years following the lower birthrate. An average of 400–500 schools, from elementary to upper secondary across Japan, had closed every year. The number of enrollment dropped accordingly as seen in the following graph.⁴

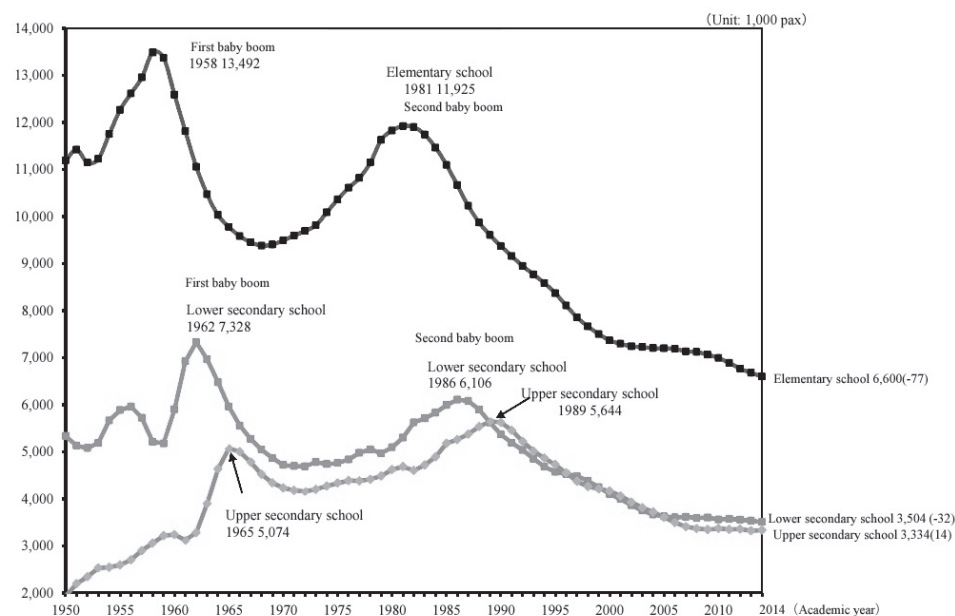
Field Study and Observation

Two private schools have been visited in Kyoto in November 2015 and both are religious schools founded before the Second World War. The private schools were given a set of open-ended questions about the respond to the issues such as lower birthrate and globalization, about the management strategy, and about the teacher's quality and professional development program.

Respondent One

The first private school observed is a Christian lower secondary school. It is a co-educational school which educating both boys and girls. The school was founded over 140 years. From the questionnaire, school observation, small group discussion with the vice principal and teachers, the following data has been collected.

(Reference:) Shifts in enrollment numbers for the various educational stages (Figure 1)



Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), FY2014 School Basic Survey

Present Education Challenges

The shrinking birthrate has been a nationwide issue and there is nothing much that the school could do with it, the vice principal replied. In responding to this, the respondent personally believed that as how the people in their age were able to survive thriving through different challenges, the same will apply to the students. The students are believed to be capable of gaining wisdom and strength to cope with problems that they have to face in the future.

In dealing with globalization, the vice principal explained that no country could live alone without the need of other countries. It is necessary to develop a proper relationship, especially with the countries in Asia. Countries in this region are optimistically believed to be a strong economic region in the future. In accordance to this belief, the school provides greater chance for the students to meet up with students from other Asian countries besides also some countries in other part of the world, like Australia and United States. The school expects the students to have the spirit of working together with people from other parts of the world to solve problems they are facing.

School Management Strategy

One of school's strategies to manage the learning resources is through the concept of *media space*. The school area is divided into different sections according to subject divisions in the school system, for instance science, mathematics, social studies, etc. The space in the hallway is used to display the projects that the students have created. In the social studies area, a collection of artworks, historical artifacts, and maps of different parts of the world could be found. Display of insects and modeled planets in their respective size proportion could be seen in the hallway in front of the science laboratory. While in another hallway, a model of suspension bridge was displayed with the design concept and necessary information.

The learning experience is spread along the hallway to let the other students learn from the projects, add to their knowledge and being inspired. The works will remain to be kept that way there even years after, for they will deliver unspoken message of creativity and innovation. It is expected that both students and teachers could always have a new perspective of thinking and never stop discovering creative ways of doing things.

In classical way of learning, it is common that a teacher gets into the class and the students remain in the same class. The school has implemented a moving class concept. The school area is classified into different divisions and there will be one station in each division where the teachers stay and work as their office. The students will move to different class according to the subject they need to attend. What is unique here is that there is no bell rings to remind the time of the lesson starts and ends, just like in most of the colleges or universities.

The school has developed a network and collaborative learning with other schools in other countries. International exchange program or short summer course program is one of the choices provided for students. The aim is to broaden students' perspective about other student's way of living and culture; and enriched their own experience. Through these activities, students will have a better view and understanding on what is going on in other parts of the world, in which they will be prepared better to deal with the global issues in the future.

Teacher's Quality and Competence

The vice principal stated that the school is looking for teachers who have interest in learning, a

seeking mind that never stops innovating new idea of teaching. The teachers are expected to be never ceasing learners that keep their minds improved. The teachers should be passionate in overcoming problems that come across. Being perseverant is one of the qualities needed by a teacher to deal with difficulties.

The vice principal added that the teachers should have good social life, share with other teachers, and have broader social network. The school expected the teachers to be open minded. In dealing with students, the teachers should treat each student personally, able to differentiate fast and slow learners, and help them with their difficulties. While in responding to the teacher development program, the vice principal said that there is no specific teacher training program yet conducted by the school.

There were some other additional findings during the school visit. From the discussion, the vice principal also stated about proposing to hold a science and technology competition among private schools in Asia. The school has been building network with some schools in Asia and will expand even more.

While through the class observation, the use of technology in the class has been acknowledged in certain subjects besides ICT. Since 2014, each student has their own iPad to help them with the lesson. In the geography class for example, the students used their iPad to find out countries from their digital map. Additional information such as country's profile also accessible by the support of technology.

Respondent Two

The second private school visited is a Buddhist upper secondary school. According to the principal, the school has been running for about 80 years. Since the school was founded, it consistently focuses on the education of girls. The school believes that educating boys and girls is essentially different. The school provides religious events for students to find their true selves. In order to raise the students' motivation to study, it is necessary to make the students notice about their hidden ability inside them.

Present Education Challenges

In dealing with birthrate issue, there is not much the school can do. It is a nationwide matter, the principal responded. While to deal with globalization, the school teaches the students to be humble enough to admit differences of each individual and learns to accept them as they are; as so the aim of religious education is to find oneself as a basis of religious subject. The school principal also added that today's society has exceeding information of which most of them ill-matched with mentally-immature students. And this has caused different social issues in the society.

School Management Strategy

The school offers five different courses to students that the students can choose and decide only during the enrollment. The courses are emphasizing on different area of studies and time allocation, divided mainly to facilitate students with different interests. The five different courses offered are:

1. Super Advanced Course

This course is designed for those students who want to be prepared to pass the higher level public or

private universities in Japan. The students will be given extra guidance, more studying time, and with more complex learning materials. They are prepared to pass the national university entrance exam.

2. Advanced Course

Students who plan to go for the middle or lower level of public or private universities in Japan, or even those who plan to study abroad after graduating from high school are recommended to take this course.

3. Special Lessons Course – Kindergarten or Nursing

This course is for those who want to be a kindergarten teacher or nurse. More practical learning and hands-on activities are conducted in this course, like changing diapers for the nursing course. A kindergarten attached to the school is right beside the school building. The secondary students will have chance to experience teaching kindergarten students.

4. General Course – Find Your Own Dream

In this course, students are free to find their own dream and decide what they want to learn, besides taking some compulsory subjects with more simplified learning materials.

5. Athlete Course – Additional time for club activities

The students still learn other compulsory subjects, like mathematics, science and social studies, but with different emphasize, material of studies, and level of expectation. This has been one of the most look forward courses in this school. The female softball team has won several times in the prefectural and even national match.

According to the course manager, the trend showed that the third and the fourth courses have more applicants, respectively consist of three and four classes in the ongoing academic year. The fourth course is usually chosen by students who have low motivation in learning. This is how the school facilitates students with different ability and are all welcomed to the learning environment.

Teacher's Quality and Competence

The principal has listed certain values that the teachers should have: being steady, being humane, and having wisdom. The teachers should apply those values in their teaching in the class. They should be able to understand, judge well the degree of student's understanding, and help them with their difficulties. At the other time outside the classroom, the teacher should also be able to share student's worries and deal with them calmly.

About the professional development program, the principal also responded that there is no specific training program for teachers in the school. The principal encourages teachers to take courses outside the school on their own initiatives to advance their competence, then share and implement what they have learned.

Conclusion

Private schools and the number of enrollment in both countries have been observed encouragingly increasing. During the observation, the private schools have been innovatively and creatively managing strategy to enhance the school's quality. The schools have shown necessary adaptability to cope with present educational challenges. The ability to clearly define the challenges the schools have to deal with is important in proposing strategy, plan, and action. A well-managed and high performing private school will have higher prospect to survive in the education system.

There are three principle qualities to be suggested for the private school: *dynamic*, *strategic* and *academic*. These three qualities are closely related to the role of leaders, managers, and teachers in the school system.

1. Dynamic

A private school, both as community or system, should be dynamic and able to keep up with today's global condition. As what have been discussed earlier, the impact of globalization has pushed the school to the global community demand. Some schools have started to build a collaboration with schools in other countries to give the students more global knowledge and skill. Being adaptable to global community does not necessary have to neglect the local community. The school still belongs to the local community, where both are mutually determining of each other's identity.

2. Strategic

The school leaders should have clear objective-oriented strategies to direct and manage the school. In order to perform well, strategies should be applied to the school's policy and practice and in response to necessary changes. Actions should be taken to make required adjustment and continuous improvement in all areas. As what have been observed in several schools, in order to carry on well each school is making use of its own resources as much as it should be to be productive and effective.

3. Academic

Private school, as a formal educational institution, should be academically accountable. Ability to educate in academic is the essence of its existence. Capability to perform well and stands out would secure the trust of the community, locally or even nationally.

In Indonesia, where the private school is easily accessible by students of any socio-economic background, a high performing private school will most likely higher the rate of student enrollment. Whereas in Japan, as the rate of birth drops, the school has no choice but become more and more competitive. Private schools with high academic performance will likely survive. The school's uniqueness in any other areas will only be an added value.

Three Areas of Concern in the Academic Development

In assuring the quality of a private school academically, the school should maintain and continuously develop these three areas: entities, curricula, and learning environment.

a. Entities – who?

The circle of core entities in school setting is the teacher and the student. A teacher's quality and

competence determine how well and how effective the teaching and learning would be. The key and major proportion role is taken by the teacher; assuring teacher's quality should be at the top of school's priority. The school management in this case needs to create a framework for continuous professional development for their teachers. Training program, special workshop or education conference is necessary for teacher's quality and competence development, both internally or joining other educational development programs offered by institutions outside the school.

In dealing with teaching material, a teacher should be a self-learner and active-explorer, creative and innovative especially in developing their own area of studies. A teacher who has passion in learning will leave a legacy and impart the same attitude toward their students.

b. Curricula – what, when, and why?

The content of learning, proper timing of learning and reason of learning are also important to assure effective learning and teaching taking place. The private school curriculum setter should design appropriate content at different stages of student's learning. Understanding the student's age and needs, and the readiness to learn is necessary. The reason of learning should also be introduced to students, so the learning experience is learning with understanding, not simply by memorizing. Student's reasoning should be exercised well in order to be critical in thinking.

c. Learning environment – where and how?

The school should create conducive environment to support effective learning and teaching, whether inside or outside the classroom. Making use of available space for the purpose of learning, like the media space introduced earlier by one of the private schools observed, has been really academic stimulating. There is a shifting in the meaning of 'classroom' today; it implies broader understanding rather than that four-wall-room design. Today's learning environment has expanded. High technology supporting devices are widely used in the classroom.

¹ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Public and Private Schools: How Management and Funding Relate to Their Socio-economic Profile. OECD, 2012. p19, p26

² British Council/Asian Development Bank. Indonesia: Technical Assistance for Preparing the Decentralized Senior Secondary Education Project. British Council/ADB, Manila, 2006. p51

³ Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. School Education Law. MEXT, Tokyo, 1949.

⁴ Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Announcement of FY2014 School Basic Survey. MEXT, Tokyo, 2014.