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## International Journal of Educational Development

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/ijedudev](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/ijedudev)

## IJED Volume 92 article summaries

Volume 92 is replete with novel information. Most analysis of shadow education concerns the demand of families to provide children with an advantage on selection examinations. Does shadow education continue if all schools are private, where academic orientation is based on family choice and where access to post-secondary education is assured? This is the circumstance described by the paper titled: "Multiple Systems, Multiple Shadows: Diversity of Supplementary Tutoring," by Mark Bray and Alexandre Ventura. They describe Dubai in which 89 % of the children attend private schools. Shadow education differs by business model (where private tutoring can be supplied within schools); fee structures and policies of different school principals. In sum, private tutoring continues but in a diverse way.

Research on education system coherence has been investigated since the 1990's. System coherence involves the argument that education cannot be effective unless there is 'alignment' between the intended curriculum, textbooks, the curriculum actually experienced in the classroom, teacher training and the content of selection examinations. While the issue has been explored in some depth in OECD countries, it is not as well explored elsewhere. In the paper titled: "Measuring Education System Coherence: Alignment of curriculum standards, examinations, and teacher instruction in Tanzania and Uganda," the issue of system coherence becomes the center of attention. Authors Julius Atuhurra and Michelle Kaffenberger find high levels of incoherence across curriculum standards, the delivered curriculum and national examinations. In the Ugandan English curriculum for example, only four out of 14 topics appear on the examination. Teachers tend to cover content which is not aligned either with the curriculum or with the examination content. They do point out however, that in Uganda, mathematics standards, examinations, and teacher training are aligned properly.

Economic theory suggests that education systems would be more efficient and higher in quality if families were given a free choice in choosing schools. But what happens when free choice is available and there is a wide range of available options? The education system in Chile provides an illustration. In the paper titled: "The Dynamics of Achievement Inequality: the role of performance and choice in Chile," authors Francisco Ceron, Thijs Bol and Herman van de Werfhorst discover that inequalities in academic performance can be exacerbated by the educational preference and expectations of wealthy parents. These preferences explain the social composition effect of schools on achievement inequality. They conclude that choice does not solve the social inequity problem because of the social processes in which families choose schools.

Is it necessarily the case that economic theory (noted above) adequately incorporates the role of family preference? Economic theory tends to emphasize academic achievement as the criterion for measuring

educational success. But what happens if families prefer other criteria? This may be the case in which families choose kindergartens in Addis Ababa. In the article titled: "Perceived Determinants of Parental Kindergarten School Choice in Addis Ababa: Implications for Policy," authors Miressa Yadessa and Geta Miressa Berkabil explored the reasons for parents choosing community-based, faith-based and privately owned kindergartens. All parents valued proximity, childcare, safety, teacher competence and ethics. Beyond that they differed. Some chose kindergartens on the basis of playgrounds and instructional materials, instruction in foreign languages, ethical instruction and transportation. Others preferred qualities such as free lunch and low school fees.

Several papers in volume 92 address issues of gender. The Syrian war has displaced more than five million people, most above the age of secondary education. How can refugee women overcome gender handicaps in attending higher education in Lebanon and Jordan instead of their home country? This is the topic of the paper titled: "Syrian Refugee Woman's Negotiation of Higher Education Opportunities in Jordan and Lebanon." Author Kathleen Fincham describes the strategies they employed.

In the paper titled: "Educational Attainment, Use of Numeracy at Work and Gender Wage Gaps: Evidence from 12 Middle-Income Countries," authors Huacong Liu, Frank Fernandez and Gregor Dutz ask whether the use of mathematics affects women's earnings. They discover that a one-unit increase in women's use of numeracy skills in their employment is associated with a five percent increase in women's wages.

Teachers are the topics in two papers in Volume 92. Do teacher skill requirements shift when education systems operate on line? This is the topic in the paper titled: "Skill Requirements and Renumerations in the Private Teacher Labor Market: Estimations with online advertisements in China." Authors Jinyan Zhou, Ping Du, Wen Zhao and Siche Feng study 130,000 on-line teacher advertisements and conclude that the requirements are shifting. Secondary completion is uniformly expected, but the acquisition of socio-emotional and higher level cognitive skills can offset lower salaries associated with degrees from institutions with lower prestige.

Does a development assistance agency, such as the World Bank, adequately understand the complexities of teaching? In a paper titled: "The World Bank's Construction of Teachers and the Work: A Critical Analysis," authors Joseph Christopher Pesambili, Yusuf Sayed and Amy Stambach say the answer is 'no'. They suggest that because the complexity of the teaching profession is inadequately understood, the World Bank concentrates on regulations which govern performance and accountability. In turn, they suggest that this precipitates a skepticism in the teaching profession. They conclude by observing the

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2022.102632>

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counterproductive result: the World Bank's ambivalence with respect to teachers being able to provide equitable and quality education while, at the same time, treating teachers as the solution to the very reforms the Bank supports.

Are educational reforms effective? One paper in Volume 92 concludes the answer is no; two conclude that the answer is yes. The first covers the last two decades of education reform in South Korea. In the paper titled: "Who Have Fallen Behind?: The Educational Reform toward Differentiated Learning Opportunities and Growing Educational Inequality in South Korea," authors Youngshin Lim and Hyunjoon Park argue that the emphasis on individualized and differentiated learning opportunities in mathematics has been a failure. Overall performance in mathematics has declined and the socio-economic gap in performance has widened.

Does proficiency in English affect later economic development? In a paper titled: "Does English Proficiency Support the Economic Development of non-English-speaking countries: the case of Asia," authors Yufan Li, Weichen Teng, Limin Tsai, and Tom Lin argue that English proficiency exerts a significant effect on economic development. They conclude by suggesting that non-English-speaking countries without history of colonization by an English-speaking country should give

priority to English education reforms, even more than bi-lingual policy.

The final topic is that of conditional cash transfers. In a paper titled: "Breaking the Poverty Cycle? Conditional Cash Transfers and Higher Educational Attainment," authors Anouk Patel-Campillo and Vania Bitia Salas Garcia point out that recipients of conditional cash transfers are 8.5 % more likely to attain study in technical subjects and 11.4 % more likely to attain university studies.

### Summary

It is obvious that education is not an exact science. It is not health care. The papers in Volume 92, reiterate that difference. Education involves multiple personalities, cultures, and objectives. On the other hand, it might be wise to remind ourselves that education and schooling are not identical; and the question posed so long ago as to whether virtue can be taught, today remains a universal goal.

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