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INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION IN JAPAN AND SPAIN. A COMPARATIVE STUDY

*Formación inicial del profesorado en Japón y España.
Un estudio comparado*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to examine, from a comparative perspective, the initial teacher training systems in Spain and Japan. We will analyze the current design of teacher educational programs, from Infant level to Secondary level. The relevance of teacher performances has been endorsed by several studies, placing international attention on teachers' training policies. The results show similar trends relating to programs' structure and students' selection. Nevertheless, there are many differences when analyzing duration, flexibility or accreditation, which could provided us with key elements to reflect upon our own educational context. Such reflections could contribute to the improvement of our teachers' training systems, the promotion of theoretical and practical development on educational policies, and a higher quality of educational practices.

KEY WORDS: Teacher Education, Initial Training, Comparative and International Education, Japan, Spain.

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RESUMEN

El propósito de este artículo es examinar, bajo una perspectiva comparada, los sistemas de formación inicial del profesorado en España y Japón. Analizaremos el diseño actual de los programas de formación de docentes, desde la etapa de Educación Infantil hasta la etapa de Educación Secundaria. La relevancia del desempeño del docente ha sido avalada por numerosos estudios, situando su formación en un plano de interés internacional. Los resultados muestran tendencias similares en la estructuración de los programas así como en los procesos de selección de los estudiantes. Sin embargo existen numerosas diferencias en duración, flexibilidad o acreditación, que podrían aportarnos importantes elementos de reflexión sobre nuestro contexto educativo. Dichas reflexiones podrían contribuir a la mejora del sistema de formación de nuestros docentes así como a impulsar el desarrollo teórico y práctico de políticas y prácticas educativas de mayor calidad.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Formación de Profesores, Formación Inicial, Educación Comparada e Internacional, Japón, España.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many International Organizations (IO) as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Organization of Ibero-American States (Spanish and Portuguese acronym -OEI-), and the European Union (EU), are concerned about the paths proposed regarding teachers' training programs. This concern emerges from the latest explosion of reform policies in many countries in the world.

Some of these efforts have been in process since UNESCO led the World Conference on Education for All (EFA), which took place in Thailand in 1990. The 5 stakeholders (UNESCO, UNDP¹, UNFPA², UNICEF³ and the WORLD BANK) started an innovative and educational global proposal aimed at meeting the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015. Since then, the links among them have become stronger, and education policies have become more relevant in the international context.

One of the terms often used when talking about international and supranational education is quality, and recent studies and authors - as McKinsey (2007), OECD (2005) or UNESCO (2006) - link it with teachers' performance and teacher's training. There are

¹ United Nations Development Programme.

² United Nations Population Fund.

³ United Nations Children's Fund.

many documents that define quality, such as *Priorities and Strategies for Education* (1995), a World Bank report where this reference can be found:

“Quality in education is difficult to define and measure. An adequate definition must include student outcomes. Most educators would also include in the definition the nature of the educational experience that helps to produce thus outcomes - the learning environment.” (WORLD BANK, 1995: 46).

Teachers matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective teachers (OECD, 2005), states that “(...) raising teacher quality is perhaps the policy direction most likely to lead to substantial gains in school performance” and that “The teacher characteristics (...) can be vital to student learning need to be more prominent in teacher preparation and employment.” (OECD, 2005: 23).

EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005 (UNESCO, 2004), directly related quality of education and to that of teachers, as referred to in statements like “how well pupils are taught and how much they learn, can have a crucial impact on how long they stay in school and how regularly they attend” (UNESCO, 2004: 28) or:

“Human resource inputs include managers, administrators, other support staff, supervisors, inspectors and, most importantly, teachers. Teachers are vital to the education process. They are both affected by the macro context in which it takes place and central to its successful outcomes.” (UNESCO, 2004: 36).

Moving in the same direction, in 1997, The World Bank established the *Education Quality and Economic Growth* report, which added:

“The most consistent finding across a wide range of investigations is that the quality of teacher in the classroom is one of the most important attributes of schools. Good teachers, defined in terms of student learning, are able to move the achievement of their students far ahead of those of poor teachers”. (WORLD BANK, 2007: 16).

In addition, many correlations between education and economic development are mentioned in this document, establishing that “Educational quality—measured by what people know—has powerful effects on individual earnings, on the distribution of income, and on economic growth (WORLD BANK, 2007: 2).

In this article, we intend to analyze how international and national policies, regarding teachers’ education quality, merge in a different way in two competitive countries: Japan and Spain. To develop this article, we applied a comparative method in order to determine similarities and differences which will lead us to a common understanding and improvement. Japan, as one of the most developed countries in Asia, has been a reference for many Asian countries as a model of growth. And Spain, as a member of the European Union, was one of the first countries in Europe to adapt their structures to fit the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The main sources used to expand these arguments are international and national documents and legislation. As a general framework, we will describe the complete route from student to teacher selection. However, as a core topic, we will focus on curricular and program design.

Internet World Stats places Japan as one of the most populous countries in the world (10th) and, according to the International Monetary Fund, it is also one of the richest, ranked in 22nd position among 187 ranking countries. This country has always shown a great interest in education, often looking to other western countries to compare and improve their system. As an example, the Iwakura mission, the most famous but not the only one of its kind, was started on 1871. The two main goals of this world tour were to renegotiate the unequal treaties with the United States, Great Britain and other European countries, and to gather information in many fields, which included education, technology and culture. The Japanese were already eager to analyze military, social and economic structures from the countries visited in order to accelerate modernization in Japan.

After World War II, Japanese society reached a level of welfare higher than that of any other country in Asia. Regarding education, its educational system was rebuilt following the American model with a remarkable democratic philosophy. Since then, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has been responsible for educational administration and the numerous reforms have been made in all educational levels.

On the other hand, according to the Spanish National Statistic Institute (INE), Spain is the 5th most populous and the 2nd biggest country in the EU. The Spanish education system has been modified many times. The latest development on education has been strongly linked to the EU programs and its proposals: reforms on higher education and vocational training or mobility and exchange programs, among others. Some of the most relevant information about these two countries has been summarized in the next table:

Table 1. Japan and Spain General Information

	JAPAN	SPAIN
Geographical localization	Asia	Europe
Capital	Tokyo	Madrid
Political system	Parliamentary monarchy	Parliamentary monarchy
Area	377,915 sq km	505,370 sq km
Population	Around 127 millions	Around 47 millions
GDP	\$4.729 trillion (2013 est.)	\$1.389 trillion (2013 est.)
Currency	Yen	Euro

Language	Japanese languages, Ryukyuan languages Aynu itak	Castilian Spanish (official) 74%, Catalan 17%, Galician 7%, and Basque 2%
Religions	Shintoism 83.9%, Buddhism 71.4%, Christianity 2%, other 7.8% (Some people belong to both Shintoism and Buddhism)	Catholic 71%, non-religious 16%, atheist 9%, others religions 2,5%, others 2,5% (CIS, 2013)
Education expenditure	3,8%	5%

* Source: Personal compilation

2. GENERAL VIEW OF SPANISH AND JAPANESE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Education in Japan is divided into compulsory and non-compulsory levels. Nevertheless, in 2009, the Education at a Glance report on Japan found out that:

“The share of people participating in education beyond compulsory schooling has grown from a small minority to the vast majority. This expansion continues, as near-universal participation at upper-secondary level is followed by ever-wider enrolment in tertiary-level institutions.” (OECD, 2009).

This increase has been developed in a 3-6-3-3-4 years’ system (Infant-primary-junior secondary-senior-secondary and university). The six-year period corresponds to primary school, and the next three-year period to low or junior secondary education. These two stages of education are compulsory and free of tuition fees at public schools. This educational period covers six to twelve and twelve to fifteen-year-olds respectively. At age fifteen, teenagers start senior secondary level.

Though the three years of education at senior high school level are not a part of the compulsory education, the Japanese government passed the “Act on Free Tuition Fee at Public High Schools and High School Enrolment Support Fund” in April 2010. This decree made tuition free at public high schools, and established the High School Enrolment Support Fund system for tuition payment for private high school students. The last four-year period corresponds to college or universities which are not compulsory or free. There are also two-year degrees, which are called “short term degrees” and lead to different certifications, as we will see in the pre-service teacher training epigraph.

Besides these stages, infant education is another non-compulsory level. Starting at the age of three, parents can choose zero to three years of early childhood education. Kindergartens educations are available from three to five-year-old children, while younger kids can go to nursery schools.

The latest Japanese statistics confirm what the OCDE found in their 2009 report. The rate of students who enter senior high schools and universities after finishing the

previous stage is quite high. In 2013, according to the MEXT, 96.6% of junior high schools graduates entered senior high schools, and 55.1% of those from senior high schools entered universities or colleges (MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS, 2013a). The same documents established that in Japan:

“The number of individuals that have attained tertiary education has increased, on average, by 4.5% each year since 1998, and by 7% per year or more in Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey.” (OECD, 2009).

As we have noticed, Spain has also increased their attained rates. The Spanish system is now organized as a 3-3-6-4-2-4 scheme. This system is described in more details in the Education Organic Law 2/2006 of May 3rd. However, this current education law will be replaced by the Education’s Quality Improvement Organic Law 8/2013 of December 9th by the 2014-2015 school year.

The structure of the system will not change. Primary and lower secondary education are compulsory and free, and therefore, have near-universal enrollment rates. The compulsory and free stages cover from six to sixteen-years-old. After age sixteen, students enter a high secondary level. The OECD (2012) detected that in this non-compulsory level, “Spain has one of the lowest attainment rates for secondary education among 25-34 year-olds” (65%, compared to the OECD average of 82%; Spain ranks 31st out of 36 OECD and non-OECD countries). However, this rate does not seem so low when compared to the previous generations. Most of the students reach higher levels than their parents.

On the other hand, facts show how the non-compulsory level 0-6, reaches high levels of attendance, especially in 3-6 infant schools. According to the same OECD Indicator (2012), Education at a Glance, “Spain has the second-highest enrolment rate for three-year-olds, at 99%, compared to the OECD average of 66%. It is one of only seven countries in which more than 90% of three-year-olds are enrolled in pre-primary education”.

The university stage is planned according to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Degrees last four years, and are designed according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). After obtaining a four-year degree, students can begin a post-graduate degree, of one or two years.

3. TEACHER TRAINING: A MATTER OF LAWS

Like many other countries, Japan and Spain have been modifying their education laws with regard to educational systems and teachers training. These latest reforms were aimed at updating their structures to meet the needs of a new, globalized and diverse

society. We will describe the latest policy reform concerning the pre-service teacher training in both chosen countries.

Japan's Licensing Principle for a teacher's license establishes that "a teacher must be an individual with an appropriate license granted in accordance with the Teachers License Act", and the General Open System Rule for the teacher's licenses establish that "our country's teacher training is conducted by general universities and teacher-training universities exercising their respective characteristics".

In December 2006, Japan's Basic Act on Education was reformed for the first time in sixty years. This reform included changes on the School Education Act, the Educational Administration Act, the Teachers License Act and the Special Law for Educational Public Officials.

One year later, in March 2007, some parts of the Ordinance of the MEXT were revised. The revision made had three purposes: to nurture teachers with practical teaching skills, to nurture school leaders by targeting in-service teachers and to facilitate efficiency of the teacher training at college and university levels by suggesting the educational system model for skillful teachers (MEXT, 2007a).

The idea of the new teacher training system at the Professional Schools for Teacher Education is based on this Ordinance, and its main contents are (MEXT, 2007a):

- Revision of the standards for establishing Professional Schools: name these institutions as Professional Schools for Teacher Education, establishing the period of study as one-two years or longer, the requirement to complete two years of study or longer while taking forty-five or more credits;
- Revision of the rule for degrees: creating and establishing the Master of Pedagogy as Professional;
- Establishment of some new policies: the percentage of teachers with teaching degrees at schools should be 40% or more, and the courses should have five fields of subjects for a systematic course design.

These Professional Schools for Teacher Education started within nineteen universities in 2008, by April 2014 there were twenty-five schools all across Japan.

A particular feature in Japan is the different kind of licenses a teacher can hold, which we will detail later on. The Teachers License Renewal System was implemented on April 1st, 2009 after the reform of the previous Teachers License Act of 2007. Its main purposes are to help teachers to maintain their teaching abilities by updating them with the latest knowledge and skills, to keep them working in classrooms with confidence and pride,

and to achieve respect and trust from the society (MEXT, 2007b). The main change which was newly introduced was the ten-year validity period for Ordinary License and Special License.

Those licenses can be renewed when the holders complete the License Renewal Courses which are composed of more than thirty hours of lectures at universities, or, if the Prefectural Board of Education (PBE) accept one's knowledge and skills. Only those license holders who are on-the-job teachers and the ones who are going to be in charge of teaching jobs take the Renewal Courses. It is not planned for those who are called 'Paper Teachers' (people who hold a teachers license but have never worked as a school teacher), neither to those who have to take Instructional Improvement Training. Instructional Improvement Training is imposed on teachers whose instructional practice is inadequate, which is judged by the principals of the PBE.

The latest analysis regarding teacher training was made in October 2013. The MEXT published a report about the Collaborators' Meeting toward Policy Implementation of Improvement Concerning Teachers' Professional Development. School situation and teachers' education problems are specified as follows:

- It is necessary to adopt new types of learning, deal with problems happening in today's schools, handle a large number of retiring and incoming teachers, and nurture school leaders dealing with the changing social environment;
- Teacher education currently depends on each university, so it is vital to certify its quality;
- Teacher education at graduate level has not been very effective in promoting in-service teachers and lacks the provisions of systematic programs.

The Japanese government is going to design new policies concerning pre-service and in-service teacher training, since the report also points out that these necessities and problems could be solved by boosting educational actions as a reform and an improvement to the teacher education program at a graduate level, the publication of information about teacher education, and its adaptation to globalization (MEXT, 2013).

Another change referred to in the Training for Pedagogical Practice was the implementation of a four-year teacher education course with the purpose of "ensuring the quality of teachers" in 2013 (YOSHIDA, 2013).

As for Spain, we have already mentioned the Organic Law of General Arrangement of the Educational System 2/2006 of May 3rd which included the basic requirement for teachers in each of the educational levels. In Title III, Chapter II "Teachers of different education levels," this law establishes that teachers in infant and primary education, though

they should possess a teaching degree specializing in these areas, can teach all subjects with the exception of music, physical education and foreign languages, which subjects should be taught by specialized teachers. As for secondary teachers, it required them to have five-year degrees (this law was drawn up before the implementation of the EHEA degrees was concluded, now degrees are designed as four-year programs) in one specialized subject, an architecture degree or any engineering degree, plus pedagogical and didactical training acquired through a post-graduate degree.

In Chapter III “Teacher Training”, this law mentioned different aspects of the process of initial teacher training, recruitment in public schools, and permanent training. It details how teachers should be certified according to education level, and it determined that teacher training should be designed according to the EHEA and divided by degree and post degree.

Nowadays, universities offer two different teacher training programs at a degree level adapted in accordance with the EHEA: Infant Teachers Training and Primary Teachers Training. The Royal Decree 1594/2011 of November 4th, sets the teaching specialities for these two stages and establishes that teachers can acquire a major in: Foreign Language (English, French or German), Physical Education, Music, Therapeutic Pedagogy or Hearing and Language Disabilities Treatment.

As for secondary teachers, universities offer a one-year master’s accessible after obtaining a four-years degree. This master’s is regulated by the ECI Order 3858/2007 of December 27th, which concerns the requirements for the verification of official university degrees that qualify for the practice of Secondary Education Professors. As we will explain later, this Order also defined how the sixty ECTS should be divided.

4. STEP BY STEP: BECOMING A TEACHER

4.1. Students Selection

“No education system can be better than its teachers. Recruiting the brightest and best into teaching is a critical imperative in all nations, whatever their wealth or poverty its value in society.” (VARKEY GEMS FOUNDATION, 2013: 9).

Many researches claim the need to select good students to create a good teacher force. In Japan, candidates are selected by each college or university through an entrance examination and a teacher’s license is granted by each PBE when a training course is complete. Public universities’ entrance examination is divided into two steps. The first stage is a standardized test. In all universities and colleges throughout Japan, the same

exams are carried out. The second one is elaborated on by each university depending on the major a student wishes to pursue.

The standardized examination is called the National Center Test (NCT), and according to the MEXT it is held by the National Center for University Entrance Examinations (NCUEE). The Ordinance of MEXT concerning NCUEE was made effective on March 31st 2001; the latest version came out on November 26th, 2010.

In the NCT, candidates choose the subjects according to the degrees, or the areas of study in which they hope to enroll. However, the entrance examination in Japan is quite complicated, since it is not very standardized. As an example, in Tokyo University, one of the most prestigious universities in Japan, there is no specific way to enroll in the “education major” or any other specific academic fields. There are only three Human Sciences (I-III) and three Natural Sciences (I-III) sections for candidates to select during the admission process. All students select their major after their third academic year. Many of the students in Human Sciences III choose the educational field. In the NCT, these candidates for Human Sciences III are required to take the following subjects:

- Japanese,
- Two selective subjects from World or Japanese History, Geography, Ethics, and Politics & Economics.
- Two Mathematics subjects.
- One out of Physics, Chemistry, Biology or Geology.
- One foreign language chosen among English, German, French, Chinese or Korean.

The university publishes the number of students that can enroll in each section, but does not communicate the needed scores on the NCT. Instead, candidates can research the last three years’ required marks on its website, to decide on one field or another.

According to the 2013 data, exam candidates applying for Human Sciences III needed to reach at least 707 points out of 900 for all subjects. This means the percentage of the score was approximately 78.6%, and it was the highest score needed among the five sections (Human Sciences I does not show the score for that year). In the same year, the lowest score of all candidates was 574 (approx. 63.8%), which was needed to enter Natural Sciences’ I, the section for Engineering, Science, and Agriculture (TOKYO UNIVERSITY, 2014). The difficulty and easiness for enrollment in each section differ every year. On the other hand, private universities and colleges give their candidates more options on their admissions. Besides the NCT’ score, other tests are carried out in each institution, where students should study the subjects which match their field. Other systems used are interviews, essays, and original examinations held by each institution.

Alternatively, Teikyo Heisei University requires lower scores, compared to Tokyo University. A candidate for the Elementary and Special Education Course has to select only one of these six subjects: Japanese, Japanese History, Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology or English. The maximum score of each subject is 200. According to the latest data, in 2014 the borderline score for this teaching course was 123 (approx. 61.5%). The highest one of all the twenty-eight courses offered at this university was 145 points (approx. 72.5%), which was required for the nursing course. The lowest score was ninety-eight points (49%), the number required for entry in the Media Culture and the Business Management Courses (TEIKYO HEISEI UNIVERSITY, 2014).

In fact, candidates for any public or private institution can take and use their scores on the NCT for enrollment, but they need to choose the best way of applying in order to enter private ones without failure, given that they are usually more prestigious. Japanese institutions also publish information for admissions, such as the number of students that can enroll in each field, instead of communicating the requirements for examination scores beforehand.

A similar system is carried out in Spain, where all students must take an entrance examination called *Prueba de Acceso a la Universidad* (PAU). This exam is regulated by the Royal Decree 1892/2008, of November 14th, and was developed by the Order 3208/2009 of July 2nd. The examination is comprised of a compulsory phase and a specific voluntary phase. Exams last an hour and a half, and a break of at least forty-five minutes is scheduled between one test and the next.

The first phase is related to general knowledge learned in secondary school, and includes four exams, or five, if the Autonomous Community has two official languages. The examination subjects are: Spanish Language and Literature, Foreign Language (German, French, Italian or Portuguese), History or Philosophy and one high school subjects chosen by the student. The final grade of this part will be the result of adding the average of secondary grades (worth 60%) and 40% of the PAU's mark. During the second phase, students can take a maximum of four exams related to the discipline s/he wants to study at the university. This phase can add up to four points to the final score. Therefore, the maximum grade a student can reach is fourteen.

Each university establishes the grade necessary to enter each degree program, but requirements are not very high for Infant and Primary teachers training degrees. Most private universities demand a five as the minimum score, as they do in many other degrees. Still, the minimum score for public universities is quite low. In the 2014 PAU examination, the average minimum mark among all public universities in Madrid, Spain's capital city, was 6.57 for Infant teacher training degrees, and 5.54 for Primary teacher training degrees. On the other hand, in the same Autonomous Community, the highest marks were requested

for medicine (12.47), double degrees in mathematics and physics (13.04), biotechnology (12.06) or dentistry (11.51). Similar marks were needed in other Autonomous Communities, which shows the substantial differences between requirement marks and how low the competitiveness is to enter the teaching profession.

4.2. Initial Teacher Education models

As it is well known, three different paths can be followed in different countries to gain a teacher's certificate. While some countries organize it in a concurrent model, defined by Musset (2010) as the teacher training model in which "academic subjects are studied alongside educational and professional studies throughout the duration of the course", other nations choose the consecutive model where "the specialized courses in pedagogy and in teacher teaching are accessible after having completed another degree in a discipline taught in school." In general terms, this last model is usually longer but can be more flexible. There is also a third type of organization, called the mixed model, by J. Manso and J. Valle (MANSO and VALLE, 2013) in which both models can coexist.

Regarding this matter, Japanese training programs are designed for all levels in a concurrent model. Nevertheless, due to a lack of certificated teachers in some areas, and as an exception, future teachers may also be qualified by passing a test. It is called the Acknowledgement Test for Teaching Qualification. No degree is necessary to take the test, but the applicant needs to meet some requirements. There are two conditions which allow access to the test. The first is to have studied at a university or college for at least two years and to have taken sixty-two or more credits before applying for the test; The second way is to be twenty years old or older, and to have graduated from high school or to be qualified to access higher education before April 1st of the year in which s/he will take the test. If an individual passes the examination, s/he can only receive a Secondary License of Ordinary License which is introduced in detail in the section about Types of Teacher's License.

On the other hand, there are no alternative paths in Spain; an identical training path is offered at each level. A one-year concurrent model is designed for infant and primary teachers and a five-year (four-year degree + one-year master's) consecutive model for secondary teachers.

4.3. Teacher's Education Design

4.3.1. Japan: Different paths and Licenses

There are three types of licenses: Ordinary License, Special License and Temporary License. An Ordinary License is granted to those who have met the basic degree requirements and have completed the teacher training courses at universities. It is

valid for 10 years in all prefectures, all over Japan. The Ordinary License is also divided into three different levels depending on the basic degree requirements and the training courses: Specialized Certificate, Primary License and Secondary License. The specific characteristics for them are shown on Table 1; programs are described with credits points. Credit points are units of a university and a college’s coursework, as defined by the Standards for Establishment of University and College section in the School Education Act (MIC, 2013b). According to the Act, one credit corresponds to forty-five hours of study. Most subjects at university and college are composed of two credits. A lecture for a two-credit subject generally lasts ninety minutes and it’s held once a week during one semester. Each semester lasts fifteen weeks, which means lectures cover approximately one-third of the defined time, and students need to do more than thirty hours of homework, in addition to lectures. There are different paths and lengths to become a teacher: two-year junior college study, four-year bachelor’s course and six-year master’s course are necessary for the Secondary License, Primary License and Specialized Certificate respectively. The curriculum of those teacher training courses is defined in the Teachers License Act. It is divided into five main categories:

- Pedagogy subjects (two credits out of three elective subjects).
- Basic theories of education subjects (3-6 credits out of three elective subjects).
- Curriculum and teaching methodologies subjects (3-22 credits out of five elective subjects for elementary and secondary school teachers, and 12-18 credits out of three elective subjects for kindergarten teachers).
- Instruction for students and educational counselling subjects (2-4 credits out of three elective subjects for elementary and secondary school teachers, and two credits out of two elective subjects for kindergarten teachers).
- Training for Pedagogical Practice (two credits).
- Practicum (four weeks for kindergarten and elementary school, two weeks for only junior high/high school, and three weeks for both junior high and senior high school teachers, respectively).

These licenses are different only in their names and the requirements, but there is no difference in the professional tasks among teachers within these qualifications.

Table 2. Ordinary License Types and Curricular Design

Ordinary License Types		Basic degree requirements/ Length	Credit points			Total
			Specific subjects	Pedagogy	Pedagogy on Specific Subject	
Kindergarten teachers	Specialized certificate	Master 2 years	6	35	34	75

	Primary license	College graduate 4 years	6	35	10	51
	Secondary license	Junior college 2 years	4	27		31
Elementary school teachers	Specialized certificate	Master 2 years	8	41	34	82
	Primary license	College graduate 4 years	8	41	10	59
	Secondary license	Junior college 2 years	4	31	2	37
Junior high school teachers	Specialized certificate	Master 2 years	20	31	32	83
	Primary license	College graduate 4 years	20	31	8	59
	Secondary license	Junior college 2 years	10	21	4	35
Senior high school teachers	Specialized certificate	Master 2 years	20	23	40	83
	Primary license	College graduate 4 years	20	23	16	59

*Source: (MIC, 2012) The Teachers License Act

Special Licenses are granted to those society members who passed the educational personnel examination held by their PBE. This system aims to welcome individuals with excellent knowledge/experience but without Ordinary Teacher's Licenses. It is also valid for ten years.

Temporary Licenses are offered, by PBEs, as an exception to "assistant teachers" only when teachers with Ordinary Licenses cannot be hired. It is valid for three years. Both Special Licenses and Temporary Licenses are valid only within the prefecture where the licenses were granted. All the license types are differentiated by each school type and by each special subject for junior high school and senior high school teachers.

Table 3. Number of each type of license granted in 2008

Type of teacher's license		Number of licenses granted in 2008
Ordinary Licences	Specialized Certificate	15,599
	Primary License	154,590
	Secondary License	47,437
Special License		56
Temporary License		9,598

*Source: (MEXT, 2014b)

According to the MEXT's research in 2013, there are 770 public and private universities and colleges in Japan, and most of them have teacher training courses (MEXT, 2014b). Teacher's licenses for elementary school are only held by those who graduated with an education major and passed the Acknowledgement Test for Teaching Qualification. However, students with other majors can also take teacher training courses if their universities or colleges have being designated as teacher training institutions by MEXT. Therefore, the number of license holders is much larger than the number of actual teachers.

4.3.2. Spain: according to the educational level

Unlike Japan, all teachers must have a certification to teach inside schools and there are not any different kinds of licences to teach at the same level; consequently, there are no temporary or specialized licenses. Also unlike Japan, Spanish licenses are permanent and all teachers obtain the same certification, with their specific major if they possess one. Therefore, all of them have the same responsibilities inside the school. According to the Ministry⁴ of Education, there are eighty-one public centers offering primary and infant teacher training and twenty-six and twenty-eight private centers offering infant and primary teacher training programs, respectively. As for a Master's in Secondary Teacher Training, it can be studied at sixty-six public and twenty-six private universities.

As explained before, teacher training is designed according to the EHEA. One academic year corresponds to sixty ECTS, and one credit is equivalent to 25-30 hours. Credits are assigned to all academic work: lectures, laboratory work, seminars, private study and theses. Usually, student workload ranges from 1,500 to 1,800 hours in an academic year.

Spain established the ECTS system more than 10 years ago, therefore, all institutions currently design their plans according to the European system. During the four-year degree to become an infant or primary teacher, students must take 240 ECTS. Secondary Teachers Training includes a sixty-ECTS one-year master's. We will explain teacher training programs as described in the following orders: Order ECI/3854/2007 of December 27th, regarding the requirements for official university degrees in order to design Infant Teacher Education; Order ECI/3857/2007 of December 27th, regarding the requirements for official university degrees in order to design Primary Teacher Education; and Order ECI/3858/2007 of 27 December 27th, regarding the requirements for official university degrees in order to design Secondary Teacher, Vocational and Languages Teachers Education.

Table 4. Spanish Teacher Training Curricular Design

⁴ (<https://www.educacion.gob.es/notasdecorte/busquedaSimple.action>)

	Infant Teacher Training	Primary Teacher Training	Secondary Teacher Training
Length/ Certification	Four-year degree	Four-year degree	One-year master's (four-year degree plus one)
General Knowledge	100	60	12
Pedagogy and Specific Subject Pedagogy	60	100	24
Major/ Elective classes or classes designed by universities	Between 30-60	Between 30-60	8
Practicum	50	50	16
Total ECTS	240	240	60

*Source: (MINISTRY OF EDUCACION, CULTURE and SPORT, 2007a, 2007b and 2007c)

All three designs were passed into law according to the competency that teacher should acquire. For Infant Teacher training and Primary Teacher Training twelve skills are established, while eleven are named for Secondary Teacher Training.

5. TEACHERS AFTER EDUCATION

5.1. Teachers recruitment

Musset (2010) underlines some changes and requirements to get teaching certifications and to enter the professional field. In the OECD report, he highlights:

“To improve teacher quality, policy makers can also allow both the rise of teacher certification requirements and the accreditation for teacher education programmes. In half of the OECD countries, having followed a teacher education programme is not enough to obtain a teaching certification. In France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Korea and Spain, aspiring teachers have to pass a competitive exam to be certified and enter the profession. The examination can be used to obtain a teaching license but also to obtain tenure in a public school. In other countries, they also have to complete a period of probation before getting their certification; in Spain and Italy this period is of one year.” (MUSSET, 2010: 46).

In Japan, public and private schools differ in their ways of recruitment. Private schools have autonomy on how they hire their own workers, and each PBE is empowered to recruit their teachers for public schools in its own district by holding a recruitment test once or twice a year. A recruitment test generally consists of a paper test and an interview including a teaching demonstration.

As an exception, part-time and yearly contracted teachers are selected from the PBD's teachers' list. It depends on the district whether the selection is made through a

paper test, an interview, and/or a teaching demonstration, or none of them. Only licensed teachers or students that are going to graduate with a teacher's license can apply for a teaching post at a school, regardless of whether it is a public or private one.

A similar process is followed in Spain, where private and co-funded schools can choose their teachers without any external control. The only requirement is to have a teacher training certification. On the other hand, teachers in public schools should hold a teaching certificate and go through a selection process. The selection process is divided into two parts. In the first part, future teachers take a practical exam and expand upon a topic. During the second part, whose objective is to show the pedagogical knowledge of the candidate, teachers must present a teaching program based on the first exam, and prepare and do an oral presentation of a teaching unit. The final grade will include examination marks, teaching experience and academic certifications.

Exams take place every two years, and each Autonomous Community offers a number of working positions. Once the candidates have passed the exam, they can choose the school they want to work in, based on the highest marks.

5.2. Teachers' salaries

It is complicated to specify teachers' salaries in both countries, since the international data usually cannot include bonuses due to extra functions, or experience. Neither includes taxes reduction, different in each country, location and personal situation.

In Japan, each local government has its own salary system for public school teachers; however, salaries are, in the end, quite similar.

Nenshu-Labo⁵, a website which makes reference to the statistical data collected by Japan's governmental organizations, provides original yearly income models of various kinds of occupations. Related to public school teachers, it determines that the average amount of elementary and junior high school teachers' salary was approximately JPY 7,422,000 (around 53,374.85 Euros) in 2013. It also shows the average age of those school teachers, 43.8 years old. This salary is slightly lower than that of high school teachers, whose average age was 44.4 in the same year. For the latter group, it was approximately JPY 7,769,000 (around 55,870.28 Euros) per year, slightly higher than local governmental workers in administrative sectors whose average age was 43.7 and earned approximately JPY 7,150,000 (around 51,480 Euros) per year.

⁵ (http://nensyu-labo.com/2nd_syokugyou.htm) (In Japanese)

Nevertheless, this data corresponds to the average salary along all ages. In most of the fifty districts in which Japan is divided, organizations and prefectures salaries increase according to the worker's ages and experience.

For instance, the Nagano⁶ prefectural government has opened its salary models for elementary and junior high school teachers. These teachers, whose average age is twenty-five, earn JPY 3,688,872 (26,528.29 Euros) per year, but for a forty-five-year-old teacher, salary beings at JPY 6,644,515 (47,783.62 Euros) per year. In the case of high school teachers, whose average age is twenty-five, the initial salary is the same as for the others school, but the starting point rises to JPY 6,791,102 (48,837.79 Euros) per year for teachers at the age of forty-five.

In Spain, salaries depend on the General State Budget, which establishes salary rates according to the degree level and accreditation needed. This base-salary is the same for all teachers. Another part of salaries depend on the different regulations made each year either by National Government or/and the Autonomous Communities. Communities fix the bonuses for the salaries. Government workers usually have fourteen payments a year. The two extra payments, usually received in June and December, are not always full-salary, but a percentage sometimes established by the Autonomous Communities. As an example, for 2014, primary teachers' salary base was 958.98 Euros per month. A bonus of 473 Euros was settled on in most Communities, and specific extra pay went from around 400 Euros to 500 in most places. Combining the different supplements, the final salary was approximately 2,000 Euros a month.

The situation is similar for secondary teachers. Base salary in 2014 was 1,109.05 in every Autonomous Regions, and complements were design by every Region's government. Destination bonus was roughly 580 Euros, while specific extra pay was around 550 Euros in most places. The final salary was about 2,300 Euros a month.

Some other supplements should be added, depending on different responsibilities and experience. According to the Eurydice report, Teachers' and School Heads' Salaries and Allowances in Europe, 2012/13, a Primary teacher's minimum salary is 27,993 Euros, while maximum would be 39,676 Euros per year. In the case of secondary teachers, 31,342 Euros would be the minimum and 43,920 the maximum. The average number of years a teacher must work to obtain the maximum salary is forty for primary education and thirty-eight for secondary education.

However, out of these figures, taxes and medical care should be subtracted. The usually final salary is approximately 1,300 to 1,500 Euros for primary teachers and 1,800 Euros for secondary teachers.

⁶ (<http://www.pref.nagano.lg.jp/jinji/kensei/soshiki/soshiki/kencho/jinji/kyuyo/kyoiku.html>) (In Japanese)

The evolution of teacher's salary has been a matter of discussion recently, since teachers' salaries have been systematically cut or frozen. In 2010, teachers' salary decreased 5%, and during 2011 and 2012 salaries remained flat. While doing the comparison with the 2013 period, the General State Budget 2014 established that 651.47 millions Euros have been cut from teachers' salaries, eliminating the salary which includes one extra payment, increasing teaching hours and eliminating salary bonuses.

5.3. Teachers' Status and Professionalism

The *2013 Global Teacher Status Index*, a 21-country survey including Spain and Japan, remember that,

“Previous studies have convincingly related school performance to three variables: the academic qualifications of teachers, teacher pay and the competitiveness of entry into teacher training. The better the qualifications of teachers, and the more applicants per training place, the better the results achieved by an education system for its young people.” (VARKEY GEMS FOUNDATION, 2013: 9).

But as many studies highlight, this is not enough. The way we treat and value teachers also affects schools performance. As Varkey says in the same report,

“In many countries teachers no longer retain the elevated status that they used to enjoy. Consequently, its effects are profoundly damaging to the life chances of the next generation. If teachers aren't respected in society, children won't listen to them in class, parents won't reinforce the messages that are coming from school and the most talented graduates will continue to disregard teaching as a profession”. (VARKEY GEMS FOUNDATION, 2013)

Referring to the occupational teacher status, Hoyle (2001) proposed three components: occupational prestige, occupational status and occupational esteem. He highlights that “the debate about ‘status’ would be enhanced by a recognition that this generic term embraces three relatively independent phenomena, here labelled prestige, status – given here a more specific connotation than the generic term – and esteem” (HOYLE, 2001: 139). Hargreaves, Cunningham, Hansen, McIntyre and Oliver (2007) analysed how the concept of status corresponds with “occupational prestige”, which is the one related to the society and public perception.

There is another concept which links teachers' careers and society: professionalism. In 1975, Hoyle defined professionalism as “those strategies and rhetoric employed by members of an occupation in seeking to improve status, salary and conditions” (HOYLE, 1975: 315). From a more practical point of view Holroyd's (2000) emphasized that “professionalism is not some social-scientific absolute, but a historically changing and socially constructed concept-in-use”.

As we see, according to these definitions, there is a definite connection between social opinion, professionalization and teacher's status. Social opinion is, therefore, one of the main points regarding the demand and competitiveness to enter the profession. We show below how, according to the *2013 Global Teacher Status Index*, Spanish and Japanese societies rate their teachers and systems.

Table 5. Teachers and Educational Systems' Index in Japan and Spain.

	Spain	Japan	Average 21-country Sample
Raking (21 countries)	12 th	17 th	
Teacher Status Index (0 to 100)	30.7	16.2	37.03
Education system perception (min.1-max.10)	5.4 (15 th)	6.7 (4 th)	5.65
Trust in teachers (min.1-max.10)	6.9 (3 rd)	5.3 (20 th)	6.2

*Data compiled from (VARKEY GEMS FOUNDATION, 2013)

It contrast to what is usually thought in European countries, this data show how teachers are not very trusted in Japan, placing 2nd from the bottom in the trust in teachers ranking section. While Spanish teachers are well considered by society, being placed in 3rd place from the top. However, concerning education system assessment this perception reverses. Japanese society gives their system high grades, and places it in the 4th position out of the twenty-one countries, almost one point over the average. On the other hand, Spain believes in its teachers but places its education system slightly under the average, taking 15th place out of twenty-one.

Another study, carried out by the Spanish Centre of Sociological Research, in February 2013, highlights a teachers' positive evaluation. Compared to other professions, teachers get a seventy-five-point average in all levels, and placing them just under the 81,6 points given to doctors. When asking about the reasons a teacher could be discouraged, most of society refers to the economic situation and the salary and resources cuts, lack of and questioning of authority, underpaid profession, disrespect from the student and low social prestige. It seems that most of Spanish society values teachers, but they think the society in general does not value them enough.

6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the light of this information, we will propose some ideas to consider. Some data is glaring when comparing Japanese and Spanish teacher training. Both countries have

conducted several teacher training program reforms, which had led to a similar systems in many aspects but still widely different in others.

Apparently, the university selection process is similar in both countries; the main difference is Japan having two tests, one national exam and one for each university. However, minimum grades to entry a teacher training program are surprisingly different in both countries. While in Spain teaching degree requirements are placed at the bottom of the list in all universities, Japanese requirements start from the middle position of the ranking, when referring to low prestige universities (and still ahead of other careers like Business Management), to the highest part of the list in high profile universities like Tokyo's. While in Japan students' grades to become a teacher show how competitive the career is, in Spain, the requirements are rather low. At the same time, in Japan, part of the career's attraction and status is historically determined. Conversely, data show how society's ratings for teachers are higher in Spain, while educational systems' rates are higher in Japan. Salary can be an important bonus to make the teaching field an attractive career. Nevertheless, it is not the only one. According to our salary research in national Acts and legislations, and in the OECD report *Education at a Glance 2013*, it seems that teachers' salaries are quite high in both countries. But, as most of the international and national research highlights, other than salary, it is necessary to give responsibilities to our teachers, to raise their status, to offer real career prospects and to make them feel part of the education system which takes into account their opinions and experiences. Hence, the real matter is how we treat our teachers, and not only how much we pay them.

While Japanese teachers reach their highest salary after 34 years of teaching and Spanish teachers after 38-40 years, average OECD countries are situated on 24 years. Some similar countries in this aspect are Hungary, Israel, Italy or Korea. On the other hand, teachers in Denmark, New Zealand, Estonia or Australia reach their highest salary after 6 to 8 years working. This slow evolution could give the feeling of no recognition to teacher's job in both countries. In this sense, there is an important difference between Japan and Spain. Out of the seventeen indicators established by the OCDE in *Education at a Glance 2011* to determine how teachers are granted better salaries, Spain only takes five factors into account to improve salary, while Japan takes eight.

Relating to the amount of working time, the same 2013 report specifies how Spanish teachers are over the OECD average, working around 900 hours per year in primary education and 700 hours per year in lower and higher secondary school, while Japanese teachers' working hours are way below this, reaching about 700 hours per year for primary teachers, 600 for lower secondary school and 500 for higher secondary school. However, Japanese teachers are usually involved in non-formal activities, the time spent on which activities doesn't appear on the table. It also shows how in the last decade Spanish and Japanese teachers have lost part of their salaries but have increased their working

hours. Analysing this information, it is doubtful that societies' and politicians real valuations of this professional group will become improve.

Regarding accreditation on teaching training programs, Japan offers much more diversification but much less harmony among their programs. Spanish teachers are trained in universities with different program depending on the level they will teach: always in four-year programs for primary and infant education, and in one-year master's for secondary teachers. The Japanese system offers two-year college, four-year college or two-year master's programs for all educational levels except senior high school, which can be accessed only with a four-year college program or a two-year master's program. The only diversification in Spain is the areas mentioned which cover Foreign Language, Physical Education or Music, among others.

These differences are more notable while analysing the amount and the distribution of the credits. In Spain, a one-year program always corresponds to sixty ECTS or 1,600-1,800 hours a year. Therefore, all primary and infant teachers should take 240 ECTS, which is equivalent to a total of 6,000-7,200 hours.

On the other hand, Japan does not have this kind of consensus. A year can be planned differently, from forty-one credits a year in some master's, (1,854 hours a year), to thirteen to fifteen credits a year in four-year college degrees (585-675 hours a year).

The design for same-level university degree programs dedicated to future different-educational level teachers also varies. Therefore, two-year degree programs can have between thirty-one credits for infant teachers to thirty-seven credits for elementary school teachers (a total of 1,395 to 1665 hours). Most of the four-year college degrees have fifty-nine credits (a total of 2,655 hours) but infant teacher training has fifty-one credits (2,295 hours). The highest amount of credits can be found in Master's level, where programs go from seventy-five credits (a total of 3,375 hours) for future infant teachers to eighty-three credits (a total of 3,735 hours) for junior and senior high school teachers. According to this data, most of the degrees in Japan require fewer hours per year, and fewer hours in total than the Spanish system, except for master's degree in which the amount of time is similar to that of the Spanish system, and thereby, to the EHEA design.

Another relevant fact to consider is the distribution of the credits between pedagogic and general classes. In Japan, most of the credits focus on general pedagogy and specific subject pedagogy. It varies from kindergarten programs (87% to 92%) to junior and senior high school programs (66% to 75%), giving more weight to pedagogy in lower level programs. The opposite evolutions happen when referring to specific subject training, where the minimum credits are assigned in infant education teacher training (8% to 13%) and the highest are assigned in junior and senior high school (25% to 34%).

Progression on the distribution of credits is similar in Spain, giving more importance to general knowledge for infant teachers (41%) than to primary (25%) or secondary teachers (29%), and again, the opposite happens with pedagogy and specific subject pedagogy; 25% is required for infant teachers, 41% for primary and 40% for secondary teachers. All careers have a similar percentage for practicum, 21% for infant and primary teachers and 26% for secondary teachers.

This difference in length, design and structure has its roots in the second half of the 20th century when Japan suffered a lack of teachers and needed to diversify programs and to educate as fast as possible. The development of this process had yet another consequence: the different types of licenses. In Spain, all teachers have the same title, whereas in Japan, 3 different licenses are provided. One of them, the Temporary license, is especially used for the cases where ordinary teachers cannot be hired or there are not enough teachers to hire. Nowadays, however, most teachers in Japan already hold some kind of license.

The supply of the special licenses opens a field where Spain doesn't offer any possibility: alternative paths. Other than the many paths we had already explained, Japan opted to offer another option outside of the university. It consists of passing an exam without having studied a teacher training program or without having a concrete degree. Even if this process gives the country the possibility of hiring high profile professionals, it can also take significance away from the pedagogic training process. The question is how prepared are these professional to work in the schools and if passing an exam gives them the appropriate knowledge about how to deal with kids and their needs. On the other hand, in Spain, the only way to become a teacher is to take the specific professional training route. There is no alternative route to working in schools.

This process ensures pedagogical training but closes the door to many people with deep knowledge in other fields and to the possibility of making education a more communicative and open field. This singular path makes education some kind of watertight compartment which doesn't have a real exchange with the "outside world". Therefore, a midway proposal between the Japanese and Spanish systems could somehow provide alternative paths: offering official training programs for other professionals' fields, providing pedagogical training in shorter degrees for people who already hold a degree in another subject, or by designing double degrees which include pedagogic training.

Although we have detected both major similarities and differences, this matter still ought to be studied in greater depth to continue improving teacher training education. From the information gathered about the Japanese and Spanish systems, we would suggest more open and flexible systems which do not forget the importance of pedagogical training, the teacher's status, the teacher's selection or the teacher's role as an active member of the system. Different results and patterns of education bring issues of quality, academic

performance and the teacher's relevance to the forefront of our modern societies. Our political, economic and social answers should help to place teachers and teacher training in a positive position, recognizing its main role in the outcome of education and, if possible, learning from the experiences of others in order to avoid making the same mistakes.

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