

Correlates of Cohabitation in East Asia: with special reference to the effects of education

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This article presents the results of comparative analysis of cohabitation and its correlates, drawing on microdata from the 2009 Survey on Comparative Study of Family Policies in East Asia (Korea, Singapore and Japan) and the 2005 Comparative Opinion Survey on Declining-Birthrate Societies (Korea and Japan only), which were conducted by the Section for Measures against Declining Birthrate, Director-General for Policies on Cohesive Society, Cabinet Office (Japanese Government).

The results of logit analyses show that ages in the late twenties and forties and their interaction with higher education tend to have positive effects on current cohabitation and cohabitation experience in the three countries, while the main effects of higher education tend to be negative. The results of proportional hazards models reveal that premarital cohabitation tends to have positive effects on the timing of marriage and childbearing among Japanese men and women as well as Singaporean women, while premarital cohabitation tends to have negative effects on the timing of childbearing among female college graduates in Japan and Singapore but positive effects among male college graduates in Korea.

In sum, there does not seem to be too much commonality among the three countries in the determinants of correlates of cohabitation, except for a few between Korea and Japan. The combination of countries and/or gender with common determinants often varies by correlate. Nevertheless, the negative effects of age and education on cohabitation and its correlates are found to be shared tendencies among the three countries. This article also reveals the unexpected result that, recently in Japan, female college graduates have been more likely to experience cohabitation in their late twenties, contrary to the general tendency among college graduates.