

A Comparative Study on Student Career Education in China and Japan Development, Practice and Breakthrough

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Abstract: *As an early practice of college students' career education, Japan has achieved certain results, and has formed a more mature and complete system framework. However, the domestic university career education which started late is still in the exploration stage, and still needs to find the direction of localization development. This paper expounds the development challenges and breakthrough paths of college career education in Japan and China. On this basis, some suggestions can be put forward for reference to Chinese colleges and universities.*

Keywords: *Career education, Career development, Comparative study*

1. Introduction

In Japan, university career education has been greatly focused on and vigorously developed. Since the Meiji Restoration, vocational education has become a major factor in improving Japan's national strength. Through more than 100 years of development, Japan has gradually formed a more systematic career education system based on the vocational education. Now, Japan is in the forefront of the world in all aspects of educational structure, school running mode and funds investment. However, career education has not been popular in Chinese universities at present. In order to help college students plan their life better than before, Chinese universities need to learn more about the setting of career education curriculum, career education cycle and integration with major from Japan.

2. Literature Review

At present, there are few comparative studies on career education in colleges and universities in China. The research angles of existing articles mostly concentrate on the characteristics of the existing system, and similar suggestions are put forward for the development of career education in domestic colleges and universities.

Yao Wenjie and He Bin[1] compares the characteristics of undergraduate vocational education in Germany, the United States and Japan from five aspects. Wang Wenmin [2] analyzes the investment system of vocational education in developed countries such as the United States, Germany and Japan, and puts forward some constructive suggestions. Kong Xiameng[3] points out that domestic colleges and universities still need to strengthen the awareness of other factors such as employment region and organizational environment in the localization process of career education curriculum in China. Huang Ping [4] thinks that most universities only regard career education as a part of employment guidance, while ignoring the systematicness of it. She also suggests that college career education should be carried out with the combination of individual characteristics and major knowledge of students.

3. Development of Career Education in China

Although the start of exploration in the field of career education by Chinese educators is close to that of foreign related studies, the development of career education in China is not smooth or even almost stagnant in the middle due to the war and other social unrest. Until the end of the 20th century, career education in Chinese colleges and universities has finally revived. Therefore, the developing process of Chinese career education can be divided into four periods: initial formation period, slow development period, rapid development period and all-round development period.

3.1 Initial Formation Period (1916 to the Outbreak of the War of Resistance)

In 1916, Zhou Jimei, the principal of Tsinghua University at that time, invited experts from industry and education to give professional speeches on campus and instructed students with their job preference. This is the start of Chinese college career education. In this period, the concept of career education was relatively broad and lacks sufficient theoretical support. The content was not only limited to the employment guidance for college students after graduation, but also involved the guidance for further education.

3.2 Slow Development Period (War of Resistance Broke out to the Founding of New China)

During this period, college career education has not completely stalled though the situation in China was turbulent. Under the influence of the war, the form of career education in colleges and universities at that time also changed to a certain extent. Teachers were not sticking to specific students in specific conditions, but actively guided all the youth to study together, and took patriotic education as the main content.

3.3 One-Sided Development Period (Founding of New China to Reform and Opening-Up)

After the founding of New China, China entered the period of planned economy, where people's production, consumption, life and other aspects were managed and controlled. In the long run, the subjective initiative of career education in colleges and universities had been greatly hit, and few people paid attention to the development of career education for college students.

3.4 Comprehensive Development Period (Reform and Opening-Up to Now)

Since reform and opening-up, the government proposed a series of policy to “establish a guiding system for student development”. Subsequently, career education began to be gradually defined as one of the important contents of student training by most colleges and universities. After years of practice and exploration, the majority of universities in China have initially formed a basic framework based on career curriculum and assisted by personality counseling.

4 Problems in the Development of Student Career Education in Colleges and Universities and Its Breakthrough Paths

4.1 Japan

Many scholars point out that the social and economic transformation in Japan has brought great changes to the employment environment. At the same time, in the 20th century, due to the war and other factors, the function of career education in colleges and universities has not been brought into play normally. Employment difficulties and other issues were increasingly prominent.

4.1.1 Promoting the Combination of Study and Career Education

In order to change the mismatch between supply and demand, Japan mainly paid attention to the implementation of career education in colleges and universities, and promoted connection between universities and society. Colleges and universities set up a special career education committee, forming a systematic career education organization and having a clear career education plan and program. Meanwhile, the concept of lifelong education in career education was integrated to formulate the learning goals and contents of various disciplines. Many colleges and universities also set up career education departments which were dedicated to information management.

4.1.2 The Government Providing Guarantees

In the purpose of meeting the human resources needs of enterprises and coping with the trend of internationalization, the government of Japan has issued a number of policies and revised the laws to implement career education. The government policy clearly defined rights and responsibilities, aiming to form a sound career education with help of the society.

4.1.3 Promoting Cooperation between Universities and Society

Japan attaches importance to the cooperation between enterprises and colleges. According to data

from the Ministry of Education in 2011, 70.3% of universities have credit for vocational internships. As an important content, career education in “production, learning and official union” can effectively improve the educational model of colleges and universities to match social development, simultaneously providing effective information for social enterprises.

4.2 China

4.2.1 Combining with Domestic Practice, Introducing Foreign Theories

At present, Due to great demand of domestic career education research, most colleges and universities pay more attention to citation in the process of designing career education curriculum in order to solve the problems such as weak theory foundation and urgent career education needs. A solid theoretical foundation is the pillar of practical activities. Only with mature theoretical guidance can college students' career education determine the general direction of practice and clarify the core tasks of the next step. Now there are still some deficiencies in the field of relevant theory in China, while the theoretical systems abroad have developed more diverse and complete, which can effectively guide colleges and universities to carry out corresponding activities. However, because of some differences in cultural environment, educational tradition and mode of thinking, foreign theories will may not be adopted when guiding domestic practice. Chinese colleges and universities should always focus on the national conditions of China, carrying out career education activities step by step, gradually cultivating the awareness of career development, and finally achieve the purpose of realizing localization practice.

4.2.2 Subdividing the Process of Education, Defining the Planning Stage

Career education is not an overnight process. It should run through the whole process of college education, not just the graduating stage of college students. For each grade of undergraduate, colleges and universities should design the corresponding curriculum content. Looking at the exploration course of career education in Japanese colleges and universities, it is found that they all have a clear definition of the development stage of students, the tasks of each stage, the goals to be achieved and so on. Chinese colleges and universities can take this as a reference, dividing the stage of college career education in detail according to grade, along with setting up diversified curriculum contents according to the characteristics and development status of students in different stages, so as to help students learn from each other and improve their personal ability.

4.2.3 Blending Major Study and Career Education

Entering university, students have broken away from previous basic education and begun to explore in their respective professional fields. Therefore, one of the importance of college career education is to help students understand their major, thus achieving the basic purpose of career education -- ensuring the study willingness of students. But current career education courses in Chinese colleges and universities are generally based on employment guidance courses, innovative entrepreneurship courses or study lectures, which fail to integrate organically with various professional fields, so they can not help freshmen to know their profession well. At the same time, the presentation forms of career education are mainly public courses, special lectures, which are relatively single and difficult to arouse the interest of students. In Japan, with the continuous development of theory and practice, different schools provide individualized career education for students of different majors according to their own resources and platform advantages, combining with professional knowledge and characteristics of professional learning environment. This kind of university career education integrates the professional content, providing the students with the opportunity to thorough understand their major and social employment environment, offering abundant information to help the student to choose the suitable direction. Chinese colleges and universities often ignore the importance of professional knowledge when it comes to career education, separating career education curriculum from professional curriculum, which makes students have some dislocation in thinking mode and knowledge accumulation. Finally, it leads to the double failure of career education and professional employment. Therefore, Chinese colleges and universities should pay more attention to the integration of professional and career education, trying to cultivate students' interest in learning professional knowledge with career education, and promote the deep development of career education with professional learning.

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