

The Development of Comparative Education in Japanese Universities

TAKEKUMA, Hisao

九州大学大学院人間環境学研究院教育学部門：准教授

<https://doi.org/10.15017/7376514>

出版情報：国際教育文化研究. 9, pp.51-60, 2009-07-07. 九州大学大学院人間環境学研究院国際教育文化研究会

バージョン：

権利関係：



The Development of Comparative Education in Japanese Universities

Hisao TAKEKUMA

This brief paper surveys the modern history and the present situation of comparative education in Japan. This development of comparative education (CE), even in Japan, has been studied from various aspects, through the development of the educational research, academic societies and the relation with the government institution and so on. The focuses of this paper are about “the development of CE and its relationship to the University as an incubator” from the aspect of teaching history in the universities. This kind of Japanese case study may provide a unique model for considering future evolution of CE. First, we start to grasp the original form of CE from the preliminary period of Japan. Next, by outlining three periods of Introduction, Expansion and Diversification of CE as a subject and/or a discipline, we examine its transformational processes. Finally, we extract one future prospect of CE from various situations in present Japanese universities.

1. The trace of Comparative Education: Pre-institutionalized period

The oldest representative comparative research of education was done by Fujimaro Tanaka (1845-1909) and assisted by Joh Neesima (1843-1890) early in the Meiji Period, Japan. Tanaka was well known as a high-ranking government official on education and is known now as a pioneer in Japanese comparative education research. Neesima was a famous independent educationalist who founded Doshisha University. In their work *Riji-kotei* (1873-75), eight country-reports (that is, USA, UK, France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Swiss, Denmark, and Russia) were compiled and juxtaposed along each country's educational system outline. It aimed at utilizing some beneficial parts of education for Japanese administrative reform. Later on, this book was opened to the public for reference.

Prior to this work, Japan also had a long history of exchange with China and East Asia. In the Middle Ages, more information about modernization was imported from European countries through missionary or commercial trade. But those previous educational absorptions from foreign countries' study were disseminated only to limited positions and educationalists, not to the public systems.

Journey reports of individual study or various delegations continued through the Meiji Period to the Second World War. One of the great works was a research series on the trend of overseas educational thought, which was published between 1927 and 1948 by the Study Group of Educational Thought in the Research Room of Education, Tokyo Imperial University. During this period, Japanese national education policies and provisions as formal aspects were influenced by those reports. In other words, those reports had an innovative nature that placed academic aspects on the study. Thus, the ground of Comparative Education study was molded in accordance with proceeding deeper and wider foreign studies.

The early lectures on Comparative Education at universities seem to have been given in the 1920s. They didn't have the name of "comparative" and were incorporated into generally named subjects such as "education" or "pedagogy" which were allocated to faculties of literature as a humanities subject. At this time, universities tended to prefer genuine science in their nature. Such prejudice toward pragmatic and applied spheres excluded these contents connected to Comparative Education from the formal subjects of the course.

As the number of successive compilation of foreign countries' reports grew, gradually the contents of those lectures became more fertile. University teachers, who were initially interested in educational reform or theory of education, used instead the name of "the Study of Educational System" set for learning foreign educational systems. Interest gradually moved to comparative education as a study.

The emergence of great books on "Comparative Education Study" in western countries immediately came under the notice of Japanese educationalists and researchers. A professor of Tokyo Imperial University, Shigetaka Abe, first introduced the name of Comparative Education to Japanese educational society in 1918 (Kobayashi 1979). Around 1920 (through the Taisho Period), Chyoichi Higuchi, Ken-ichi Hida, and many educational researchers were given opportunities to visit European and American education offices to gather valuable materials. One of them, K. Hida, made an acquaintance with two comparative educationalists at Colombia University: P. Monroe and I. L. Kandel. C. Higuchi and K. Hida were also professors of Tokyo Higher Normal School. It was recorded that Hida gave the lecture "The Recent Trend of Education in Europe and the USA" in 1929. Also Higuchi wrote the book "Comparative Education" in Japanese in 1928 on the basis of his overseas experiences. Higuchi's introductory book was not intended to be a juxtaposing countries' report book but an explanatory research book. Educational items such as "academic education", "vocational education", "compulsory education", "co-education", "teacher education", and so forth were systematically organized to manage for "problem comparison", not only for the "country's understanding as a whole"(Higuchi 1928). Moreover, some educational problems, prospects, and research methodology were also attempted to apply to the study in his book. From his enunciation of the book's introduction, it is noted that he was influenced by the writings of N. Hans, I. L. Kandel, or P. Sandiford. Higuchi's books and then the subsequent writings were written for the sake of

researchers or educationalists. But it is also estimated that the same contents might have been used as a textbook even at the university education.

During the 1920s, the name of “Comparative Education” was acknowledged as an academic field in some universities and normal schools. “Comparative Educational Systems” as a teaching subject was first introduced in literature departments at Tokyo University in 1938. There is also proof that at Kyushu University, Masunori Hiratsuka (1907-1981), who later became the first president of the Japan Comparative Education Society and a former Director of Education UNESCO, used Hans’s “The Principles of Educational Policy” as a textbook at the first seminar for undergraduate students. This was when he took up the chair of Education in the Department of Literature & Law in 1944. (Hiratsuka 1985)

2. Establishment of the chair in Comparative Education (CE) as a new disciplinary field

During the wartime and before, CE couldn’t have enough influence to change the antagonistic national tide. After the Second World War, a new democratic atmosphere surrounded the academic world and universities in Japan. Following generations who had already received tutelage from enlightened professors long before began to play an active role in educational reforms focusing on comparative study based on their reflection on imperialism and exclusive nationalism.

Many researchers and teachers appeared in the field of CE at this time. At Tokyo, Kyoto, and Kyushu National University, which were former imperial universities, and at two universities of education, which were integrated and restructured on the basis of the former higher normal schools in Tokyo and Hiroshima, some of the professors in charge of “pedagogy” were oriented toward comparative study. CE was getting recognized as a popular research field in academic circles of education simultaneously with a worldwide popularization and internationalization of education.

The first established chair of CE was for “the Course of Comparative Education” at Kyushu University in 1952. For the lecturer in charge of the Comparative Education Course in the undergraduate program, which was called *Kouza* in Japanese, Masuko Otake was invited under M. Hiratsuka, who was also the first director of Faculty of Education. M. Otake was the first female teacher in Kyushu University and might have been the first female teacher on CE in Japan. Her research field was the Philippine’s education and she had just received a Ph.D. from Yale University. Successively, at Kyushu University “The Research Institute of Comparative Education and Culture” was founded in 1955, which was attached to the Faculty of Education. This research institution was very influential to the undergraduate and graduate students within each program of education because that institute could possess various researchers who were interested in both education and culture and studied on every perspective. The staff members who belonged to either a course or an institute jointly carried out multidisciplinary field research projects in Europe, America, and next in Asia. The outcomes of those research projects made a wide impact not only on CE researchers but

also on other academic fields like educational anthropology and educational sociology. Both facilities functioned complementarily in the two aspects of training and research. Provided with wide perspectives and methods, graduate students intended to acquire CE and lead the society of CE to become more active.

In other universities a similar movement of expecting CE as a new field increased. Hiroshima University founded the chair of CE in 1953. Professor Susumu Ikeda of Kyoto University held the chair of CE in 1965. Unfortunately, except for Tokyo University (1967) and Nagoya University (1995), no other new chair has been established. Even in these conditions, new CE researchers were hired at universities in positions as teacher of the chair named “education system”, “education policy”, and so on rather than CE. They built this second way to train and educate CE researchers in Japan.

As soon as the chair of CE was established in these universities, their successors translated a lot of western books into Japanese and published some introductory books about world education or comparative research. For example, S. Ikeda, in his research-oriented introductory books, mentioned the needs of studying “the process of comparison”, “tasks of CE”, and “methodological perspectives” by using western theories (Ikeda 1969). Also, in this way various eminent researchers and professors were created by learning the contemporary situation of overseas education and research methods from those Japanese textbooks and western books (either translated ones or used directly).

Some universities which didn’t have the subject name of CE in each of its own courses allocated subjects such as foreign education study in the teacher training program or in the basics of educational sciences. As a result, CE was taught through learning western educational systems, policies, administration, thought, and so forth. Takao Ando, who was a professor of Tokyo University of Education (presently Tsukuba University) and such a CE teacher and researcher, started to give the lecture or seminar on CE in his “course of educational policy” from 1950 (Ando 1965). This kind of university spread throughout the country and produced a large number of students who were interested in CE. This trend led to making the field of CE more fertile, then created the other way of turning out researchers and getting recognition from educational circles.

As interest in CE grew and the number of researchers increased, the Japan Comparative Education Society (JCES) was founded in 1965. Many young CE researchers were recruited by The National Institute for Educational Research (presently The National Institute for Educational Policy Research). They engaged in various CE works such as collecting the data of overseas education, international cooperative research, and comparative studies.

3. Expansion and diversification of CE

The Japanese publication of “The Encyclopedia of World Education” in 1972 and the revised and enlarged second edition, as well as the 4th WCCES Congress held at Tokyo in 1980, shows the contribution of the educational professionals centering on JCES members as the core.

The expansion of Comparative Education to universities required training more researchers in graduate programs. In many cases at Japanese universities, each academic course normally had its own research room that consisted of one professor and/or one associate professor and students. Some research rooms had a unique “apprenticeship” style as a training custom. It was a somewhat authoritarian system to the inside and exclusive to the outside and sometimes compared to an “octopus trap: a fractionalization of the research room” or an “ivory tower”. This convention has continued until these days and has been unavoidable even for CE. But in such a climate, each university created its own research perspective and atmosphere individually. As another result, CE education developed in various directions.

At the undergraduate level, CE was generally taught either as a basic subject to train pre-teachers or as one of the liberal arts. Almost all subjects were taught in the manner of lectures. The contents started from an explanation about the outline of CE, including its aims, history, and method and introduced some cases of overseas education focusing on popular topics in order to widen the students’ view and give useful information for the internationalization of education.

On the other hand, at a dozen of the major universities, CE was taught for the preparation for educational research. This type of CE was given in lectures or seminars by reading introductory textbooks which were translated or written by Japanese researchers. Those were presented to the students who belonged to the course of educational research as one of the specialized fields. At the more specialized CE seminars, dedicated teachers used original foreign textbooks or documents which they collected from foreign countries, mainly from the UK, the USA, or the country which they had researched.

At the universities’ equipped graduate level, lots of young researchers hoped and were expected to have an experience of studying abroad in the duration of the program or as a post graduate. As noted above, various entrances and processes to CE researchers existed in the graduate education of the university. Some students who were interested in foreign countries started their learning from “country study” then continued to comparative study, but others started from analyzing educational issues and next continued to learn foreign languages and so on as the “country study” or the case study.

At this time, two research inclinations were recognized; that is, the Problem Approach, which intended to make international comparison on educational problems in a more scientific way, and the Areal Approach, which intended to gain a holistic understanding of the targeted area. The amount of overseas survey projects was organized to include graduate students under the tide of

positivism. These projects produced a lot of monographs about several aspects of one country's education and comparative compilation books juxtaposed with "country case studies" on a certain theme.

Both approaches came to be shared with close areas in departments of education, especially educational administration, teaching methods, philosophy, history, and other educational sciences because of their interdisciplinary nature. This prevalence, however, permitted such fields to conduct simple and quick comparative studies in disregard of "context". As a result, a misunderstanding of CE threatened the identity of Comparative Education as a field itself within the university. In this situation, CE also seemed to incline slightly toward the "areal education study" so as to insist on the importance of "context" and criticize easy comparison.

4. The present state of Comparative Education at university

As university teachers, some leading CE researchers in Japan who were members of JCES have conducted surveys about teaching CE on some occasions (see References). In this part, those survey reports and some syllabi gathered through the Internet are analyzed and the present states are described.

(1) Institutional infrastructure

In Japan, *Kouza* as the "chair" means the place for teaching that is appointed to a teacher and is accompanied by some subjects which are recognized as constructing an academic field in an undergraduate program. In graduate programs *Kouza* as a "course" means the place where the teacher both teaches and does research in his or her common research room in addition to the meaning of chair. In the case that teachers hold subjects related to CE in both undergraduate and graduate levels, such courses can provide through a variety of teachers and accumulated resources a desirable environment for the students. But those are limited to several major universities. The system and the name of *Kouza* are now disappearing gradually under the new standards for university chartering.

(2) Place in undergraduate programs

Comparative Education is taught as a liberal education subject to all students of the university, as noted above, as one subject of a teacher training program (mandatory or not), or as a specialized subject in the department of educational sciences. In general, CE and related subjects are taught by a CE researcher who has received special training. Because these subjects are recognized to have a crossover character, liberal education and teacher training are in need not only of a CE-specialized teacher but also a teacher whose expertise is based on a foreign language or area study. CE and

related subjects tend to be distributed widely among subjects with the appearance of closer fields like comparative culture, comparative higher education, international education, international understanding, intercultural education, international cooperation of education, etc. Therefore, CE is apt to be recognized as one such subject except for some specialized courses.

The aims of Comparative Education teaching are diversified depending on each course idea and the surrounding situation. For example, in a teachers' training program, CE subjects are located as a part of an "education for international understanding" subject, which is recognized more in circles of school teachers and administrators. Even within liberal education, CE as a subject emphasizes knowledge-based information for widening one's view; hence, it tends to be an introduction of an overseas education series. On the other hand, in specialized courses the aims of CE subjects are rather investigative and theoretical so as to train and educate the prospective researcher. Students have an opportunity to learn various aspects of CE from a general outline to specific methods in a series of classes. In such a course, almost all students are required to write graduation theses on their own decided themes.

Curricula and methods are also various. Lectures are mainly divided into two curricula types. The general outline of CE includes the aims, history, and methods of CE first, continues to an introduction to and an explanation of some major countries, and concludes with prospects and a summary using comparison. The lectures of study on particular topics are elaborated on depending on the aim of whether it is an areal or problematic study. Especially for the introduction of overseas education, photos, slides, VTRs, and DVDs that are recorded in the field research or through broadcasting programs are required to be utilized as much as teachers can. Seminars are held to read introductory books or journal articles on overseas education or CE and discuss educational issues and methods. Each student is required to present the summary of his or her assigned part of books on the day allocated. Then the participants are expected to study by themselves, sometimes through the Internet. Most of these curricula tend to deal with educational systems, policies, reforms, primary and secondary education, and the present and past history of foreign countries. An overseas field study tour is adopted in several universities in order to arouse students' interest.

Textbooks of CE are used by about a third of the teachers. These are mainly current Japanese books and translations of western research books (Editorial Secretariat 1999), but it depends on the conditions of the publication of books on the latest data or theory. When the seminars or the lectures aim to treat comparatively a particular topic, some popular matters such as "international trends of reform" or "bullying in the world" are adopted. When necessary, overseas books are used in each language.

(3) Place in graduate programs;

Generally there are two-year master programs and three-year doctoral programs at the graduate level. In the past, there were only limited universities that offered graduate programs on CE,

especially up to the doctoral program. Nowadays, the pressures of the corporatization of universities and the restructuring of graduate education require CE to cover interdisciplinary studies or practical studies. As a result, traditional universities insisting on orthodoxy face a paradoxical dilemma. On the other hand, new graduate courses associated with and close to CE are increasing in private and public universities. The expansion of graduate education has produced another measure of training researchers in related interdisciplinary fields that are not necessarily CE. The interdisciplinary situation brings about a kind of flexibility of multiple belongings to various academic societies like JCES and others.

Graduate courses that specialize in CE emphasize the combination of areal studies and methodological studies in order to complete the Ph.D. dissertation. Graduate students have been encouraged to study abroad in their field or in advanced countries about their theme. Recently, this kind of course has been receiving more foreign students from various countries, especially mainland China.

The aims of Comparative Education teaching are to train comparative education researchers on each theme. Students in master programs and doctoral programs respectively need to submit a thesis at the end of the duration. Graduate students are required to conduct research: overseas research if possible for completion of the master thesis, inevitably for the doctoral thesis. Most classes are seminar-type classes for deepening students' cognition of the task, learning their research methods, and acquiring necessary skills depending on their theme. Generally, as the prior conditions for a Ph. D., only the student whose paper has been printed in the JCES journal or distinguished foreign journals is permitted to write the Ph. D. dissertation.

Curricula and methods are decided depending on the necessity of some topics such as the global trend of CE, methodological problems, urgent issues of education, field research methods, etc. Every participant in the seminar must give a presentation of the article assigned, present a summary, and discuss with others under the instruction of the teacher. Besides the seminar, they are also bound to report on their research progress regularly and get various advice on how to organize their research plans, conduct field research, and complete their theses. Some of them fortunately can receive the precious experience of taking part in scholarly research projects to learn project work, which is one of the features of CE.

As textbooks, the latest Japanese and foreign research books, journal articles, and documents from overseas countries are mainly used.

5. Conclusion

Primarily, CE in Japan started from a bureaucratic and nationalistic base for the purpose of pragmatic education borrowing based on the needs for a domestic state's interest. But via the period

of translation/absorption of the study of western institutions, ethos, intellectual styles, instruction methods, and also methodological studies, CE was localized in the Japanese university by emphasizing its pragmatic merit for education reform. Introductory textbooks based on their own methodological research and many research books that utilized western research were published. It is often said, therefore, CE since then has been seeking to be a discipline in academic fields. Besides, as stated above, various research orientations produced diversification of comparative educational methods, approaches, and notions in many Japanese universities.

Now, CE in Japan is swaying between pragmatism (which represents “efficiency” or practical cooperation with other agencies) and academism (which pursues “pure” science, methodology, and inquiry to educational phenomena) in the University. This shows that Comparative Education is still challenging to establish a new academic direction under the current globalization and university administration situation.

Main References

Books

- Ando, T. (1965): *The Principles of Comparative Education*, Tokyo; Iwasaki-shoten.
- Higuchi, C. (1928): *Comparative Education*, Tokyo; Hobun-do.
- Hiratsuka, M. (1985): *Collection of Hiratsuka Masunori's writings*, Vol. 5, Foundation of Educational Development Institute.
- Ikeda S. (1969): *The Research of Comparative Education*, Tokyo; Fukumura Pub.

Chapter in an edited book

- Kobayashi, T. (1974): A Commentary on “Riji-Kotei”. In Ministry of Education (ed.), *Riji-Kotei* (reprinted), Kyoto: Rinsen-shoten, pp.1-13.
- Kobayashi, T. (1979): Bibliographical notes on Japan's Comparative education; from Meiji Period until the WWII. In Kobayashi, T. (eds.), *Study on the History of Comparative Education*, Research Room of Comparative Education, Faculty of Education, Kyoto University, pp.1-11.

Journal article

- Editorial Secretariat, (1999): Present Situation of Comparative Education Teaching – Questionnaire survey-, in Bulletin of the Japan Comparative Education Society (JCES), *Comparative Education*, No.25, pp.67-77.
- Kubota, S., (1993): Report of the Survey on Teaching of Comparative Education, in Bulletin of the Japan Comparative Education Society (JCES), *Comparative Education*, No.19, pp.132-143.

Ninomiya, A. & Sato, H. & Kanai Y., (2006): A Comparative Study of Teaching Comparative Education, in *Bulletin of the Graduate School of Education*, Part III, Vol.55, Education and Human Science, Hiroshima University, pp.37-44.

Umakoshi, T. (1987): Problems in the Teaching of Comparative Education; in Japanese Colleges and Universities, In *Bulletin of the Faculty of Education*, Vol.34, Department of Education, Nagoya University, pp.271-286.

Edited book

JCES (ed.) (2004): *40years' History of Japan Comparative Education Society*, Tokyo; Toshin-do.

Ministry of Education (ed.) (1974), *Riji-Koutei* (reprinted), Kyoto; Rinsen-shoten

Okihara, Y. (ed.) (1981): *Comparative Education*, the Series of Contemporary Education Vol.8, Tokyo; Yushin-do.

Yoshida, M. (ed.) (1990): *Comparative Education*, the Series of Scientific Teaching Profession Vo.8, Tokyo; Fukumura Pub.

※This brief paper was basically presented as one chapter of the book titled “COMPARATIVE EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITIES WORLD WIDE; second edition” edited Charl Wolhuter, Nikolay Popov, Maria Manzon & Bruno Leutwyler supported by World Council of comparative Education Societies: WCCES, 2008. I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Nikolay Popov for accepting my proposal of printing the original manuscript.