



Research on Japan's Higher Education and Vocational Training System

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Abstract. The development of society needs the combination of higher education and vocational training, and it is the need of the development of the times to cultivate professional talents who are familiar with theory and skilled in technical operation. After the Meiji Restoration, Japan highly integrated higher education with vocational training, which made higher education fully oriented to enterprises and industries, and trained many high-level technical talents for Japan. These high-level technical talents are all over Japan in various fields and have become the pillar forces of Japan's industry, manufacturing and other industries. Through the investigation of the process of combining higher education with vocational training in Japan, this paper aims to clarify the educational goal and overall thinking of Japanese vocational education, clarify the planning route and important measures of talent cultivation in Japan under the background of declining birthrate, understand the development process of combining higher education with vocational training in Japan, and find out the enlightenment that is beneficial to China and conforms to China's national conditions, so as to provide a positive and valuable reference for the development of higher education and vocational training in China.

Keywords: Database Japan; higher education; vocational training; Declining birth rate

1 Introduction

The perfect combination of higher education and vocational training is the highest goal pursued by talent cultivation, because this mode can not only enable workers to have high theoretical literacy, but also enable workers to have rich practical ability, and can be comfortable in their careers. With its perfect laws, regulations and educational system, Japan perfectly combines higher education with vocational training, so that graduates can quickly and efficiently adapt to the needs of jobs after leaving school, and apply theories to practice. This training mode not only improves the competitiveness of workers themselves in the reality of increasing employment pressure, but also effectively saves the employment cost of enterprises, which can be described

as killing multiple birds with one stone. Below, this paper will examine the development process of combining higher education with vocational training in combination with Japan's national conditions, clarify the effective path of combining higher education with vocational training in Japan, and find a useful reference for China.

2 The Background of Japan's Combination of Higher Education and Vocational Training

In 1853, the black ship incident launched by the United States against Japan forced Japan, which was closed to the outside world, to open to western capitalism. After seeing the development of western capitalism, in 1868, Emperor Meiji promulgated the Five Oaths. At this point, Japan began its economic, military, cultural and educational innovations, namely the Meiji Restoration. The Meiji Restoration made capitalism develop rapidly in Japan, and a large number of factories were established in Japan, resulting in the need for large-scale skilled workers in Japan. Against this background, the Japanese government realized that in order to develop industry on a large scale, it was necessary to cultivate high-quality workers with knowledge and technology[1]. Since then, the Japanese government has started educational reform, consciously combining higher education with vocational training, and cultivating high-quality and high-level workers who can adapt to the development of Japan's industry and industry.

The Meiji Restoration was the beginning of the combination of education and vocational training in Japan. With the development of the times and the progress of science and technology, after entering the 20th century, Japan paid more attention to the combination of higher education and vocational training, especially after entering a society with low birthrate and aging, Japan especially hoped to cultivate workers with profound knowledge and outstanding ability. Therefore, no matter at the enterprise level, at the national level, industrial level and regional level, Japan is actively planning, from revising the legal system to establishing a "specialized vocational graduate school" system[2], from improving the vocational training curriculum system to urging enterprises to establish and improve the training mechanism, etc., all of which reflect the good intentions of the Japanese government to accelerate the combination of higher education and vocational training. Below, we examine the specific measures taken by the Japanese government one by one.

3 Laws and Amendments to Laws

In 1958, Japan enacted the Vocational Training Law. Because Japan paid special attention to the combination of law and social phenomena, the Vocational Training Law was revised in 1969, 1974, 1978 and Japan respectively. In 1985, when Japan revised the Vocational Training Law again, the name of the Vocational Training Law was changed to the Vocational Ability Development Promotion Law. Since then,

Japan has amended the Vocational Ability Development Promotion Law six times in 1987, 1992, 1997, 1999, 2001 and 2006[3].

The Vocational Training Act of 1958 defines "vocational training" as "training for the purpose of enabling a worker to acquire or improve the skills required for the occupation" (Article 2, paragraph 2). In 1969, when Japan amended the Vocational Training Law, it deleted the above definition of "vocational training". When the Law on the Promotion of Vocational Ability Development was amended in 1997, "vocational training" was changed to "vocational-related education and training". Until 2001, when the Law on the Promotion of Vocational Ability Development was amended, "vocational ability" was defined as "the ability required by workers to engage in their occupations" (Article 2, paragraph 2 of the Law on the Promotion of Vocational Ability Development). At the same time, the law added the concept of "professional life design" and clearly stated that "professional life design refers to the determination of occupation-related purposes in the long-term professional life of workers, and to make their own plans for occupation choice, development and improvement efforts and other matters in order to achieve this purpose according to their abilities, professional experience and other actual conditions" (Article 2, paragraph 4). At this point, "vocational training" has been restored to the law[4].

Since "vocational training" was changed into "vocational-related education and training" when the Law on the Promotion of Vocational Competence Development was amended in 1997, following this rule, more diverse cases of combining higher education with vocational training have emerged in Japan. For example, the specialized vocational graduate school system that combines profound knowledge with excellent ability to engage in highly professional occupations, and the Japanese legal college system that combines higher professional ability with qualification examination[5]. These two systems are examples of the perfect combination of higher education and vocational training in Japan. Let's examine them one by one below.

4 Japan's Specialized Vocational Graduate School System

(a) Background of the Establishment of Japanese Specialized Vocational Graduate Schools

In 1949, Japan formulated the Graduate School Standards (hereinafter referred to as the Standards) for the first time. The "Standard" is formulated on the basis of the "Review of the University Standards Association". According to the "Standard", Japanese graduate schools have two stages of master's and doctoral courses. The purposes of the master's and doctoral courses are as follows: "The purpose of the curriculum for granting master's degree is to enable students to conduct research in professional fields with a broad vision on the basis of undergraduate general education and specialized education, so as to cultivate fresh knowledge and research ability", "The curriculum for granting doctoral degree is to add new insights to the original academic level through original research, contribute to the development of culture, and cultivate the ability to guide research related to professional fields"[6].

From the purpose of the above-mentioned master's and doctoral programs, it can be seen that the doctoral and master's programs are all set up to cultivate "researchers", that is to say, Japanese graduate schools are the bases for cultivating "researchers". However, there is another point that cannot be ignored, that is, in addition to the above provisions, in the Graduate School Standards, as "exam preparation", there is also the following provision: "This standard is for graduate schools whose main purpose is to train academic researchers and professors. Separate provisions are made for the main purpose of training people engaged in specialized occupations (such as doctors, lawyers, etc.)." That is to say, when Japan set up graduate schools in 1949, it has considered the combination of higher education and vocational training in addition to "training academics and professors". However, when people realized that they wanted to establish graduate schools related to training professional talents, it was already after 1970.

(b) The process of establishing specialized vocational graduate schools in Japan

In 1991, Japan put forward the idea of actively expanding graduate schools in the university review report "On the Maintenance and Enrichment of Graduate Schools", and clearly pointed out that the establishment of specialized vocational graduate schools was to cultivate specialized vocational talents.

By examining the data of the number of graduate students in Japan from 1973 to 1998, it can be seen that the number of graduate students in Japan was 62,000 in 1973, and it increased to 179,000 in 1998, an increase of nearly three times[7].

According to the List of National Universities in Japan in 1998, among the post-graduate schools of social sciences, the names of research departments closely related to the training of professional talents include social information, comprehensive policy, comprehensive policy science, policy science, regional policy science, regional policy science, public policy, economic and social policy science, international development, administration, management and policy science, management informatics, circulation science and other research departments. Most of them are research subject names that were not available at that time in 1973. From here, it can be seen that Japanese universities have finally begun to devote themselves to cultivating "highly professional professionals" in the fields of policy, management and operation[8].

In 2003, Japan amended the School Education Law and established the system of "specialized vocational graduate schools". Article 60 of Japan's School Education Law before the revision stipulates: "The goal of graduate schools is to teach and study academic theories and their applications, explore their own mysteries and make contributions to the development of culture". The revised School Education Law changes this provision to: "Graduate school professors study academic theories and applications, cultivate profound knowledge and excellent abilities, and make contributions to the development of culture with the aim of being competent for esoteric or highly professional occupations". In addition, the revised law adds a second item to Article 60, and the newly added second item clearly stipulates the purpose of establishing specialized vocational graduate schools, that is, "in graduate schools, professors study academic theories and applications for the purpose of undertaking professions that require high professionalism and cultivating profound knowledge and outstanding

abilities, this is a specialized vocational graduate school". Taking the revision of the School Education Law (2003) as an opportunity, Japan has formed two types of graduate schools, namely, graduate schools and specialized vocational graduate schools. In order to distinguish them from specialized vocational graduate schools, Japan calls the original graduate schools general graduate schools. So far, the dualization of Japanese graduate schools has been completed [9]. This is a major reform in the field of education in Japan since the Second World War. This reform has raised the combination of higher education and vocational training in Japan to an unprecedented height. Previously, some of the combinations of higher education and vocational training were in high school (for example, vocational high schools) and some in university (for example, short-term universities, specialized schools, etc.) [10], but this time, it has been directly promoted to the postgraduate stage.

5 Characteristics of Japanese Specialized Vocational Graduate Schools

Up to now, the professional graduate school has the following characteristics:

(a) Certification and evaluation system of Japanese specialized vocational graduate schools

The establishment of specialized vocational graduate schools is a bold attempt in Japanese academic circles, and it is also a difficult challenge to combine higher education with vocational training in a high-level space. As the Japanese government itself said "the quality assurance of highly professional vocational education institutions is entrusted to universities themselves or third parties instead of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, which is a major feature of the specialized vocational graduate school system". Accordingly, Japan's School Education Act specifically establishes a paragraph that states that "according to the purpose for which specialized vocational postgraduate schools are established ... the status of educational curriculum, teacher organization and other educational research activities, accreditation evaluation shall be carried out within the time limit prescribed by Cabinet Order" (Article 69, paragraph 3, of the School Education Act). This is the belief pursued by Japan of "engaging in pre-control to post-inspection". However, at present, the above-mentioned "certification evaluation" system only restricts graduate schools of law, because Japan's Law on Cooperation between Education and Judicial Examination of graduate schools of law enacted in 2002 stipulates that graduate schools of law must accept their "certification evaluation" by an evaluation agency recognized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Tourism. In contrast, specialized vocational graduate schools in other fields can accept "the evaluation of foreign internationally recognized evaluation institutions" or "conduct external verification of self-examination and evaluation, and publish the results" and report to the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

(b) Four major areas of specialized vocational education in Japan's higher education system

Specialized vocational education in Japan's higher education system is mainly divided into four major fields, specifically 1) medical field, 2) industrial and agricultural fields, 3) social and human resources fields, and 4) behavioral or human science fields. The cultivation of talents in these four areas is as follows:

First, in the medical field. In this field, the training of the four most traditional specialized professional talents, doctors, dentists, pharmacists and nurses, is completed at the undergraduate level. Among them, medicine and dentistry are 6 years and pharmacy and nursing are 4 years, but pharmacy has now started to slowly transition to 6 years. Regarding the training of talents in the above-mentioned medical fields, Japan also considers learning from the United States, because in the United States, these medical professionals are trained in specialized vocational graduate schools (or specialized schools). This time, in the process of establishing Japanese vocational colleges, there was almost no voice of transitioning talent training in the medical field to vocational graduate schools[11].

Secondly, in technical fields such as industry and agriculture. The training of industrial technicians in this field is usually carried out at the undergraduate and graduate school stages, but slowly, its focus has begun to shift to the training of graduate schools. With the increase of the number of graduate students enrolled in Japan, how to carry out basic education, cultural education and professional vocational education in undergraduate and postgraduate stages has become a topic for the Japanese government to think about.

Thirdly, in the field of social human resources. Talent training in this field is mainly concentrated in law, management, finance, accounting, administration and other industries. Among them, the training of lawyers and certified public accountants needs to be combined with the international qualification examination. Therefore, it is not difficult to conclude that the vocational training of law and accounting is completely insufficient only at the undergraduate level. Therefore, there are legal colleges and specialized vocational graduate schools that specialize in training judicial talents.

Finally, in the field of behavioral or human sciences. The training of talents in this field is mainly concentrated in clinical psychology, social welfare and school education. In addition to school teachers, many of the occupations corresponding to these majors are emerging occupations in Japan, such as psychologists, social welfare practitioners, etc. The educational curriculum system and related qualification examination systems of these emerging professional practitioners are being developed and improved in Japan.

Due to the emergence of the system of specialized vocational college, the talent training in the above four fields is facing major reforms and adjustments. At present, the Japanese government is actively referring to the American model to improve the talent training in the above four fields by specialized vocational graduate schools.

6 Japanese Law School System

Law is the most fundamental requirement to regulate the social system. Whether a country's legal system is sound or not depends not only on the maturity of the legisla-

ture, but also on whether legal talents can really play their role. In order to ensure that people who study law finally really engage in legal work, Japan put forward the establishment of law school system in 2001. That is to say, only after receiving the education of law school (a graduate school set up for people who inspire lawyers, prosecutors, judges and other legal professions) and meeting the requirements of law school can they be eligible to take the "judicial examination". This practice in Japan not only realizes "applying what they have learned", but also avoids the waste of "qualifications". As we all know, the number of people who pass the judicial examination every year is quantitative. If you pass the judicial examination but don't engage in the legal profession, it will cause a waste of "qualifications". Japan has reduced this waste of "qualifications" with three years of study time in law school. Japan's law school system, as a "professional" training base "for cultivating professionals in the judicial field, has achieved good results in the past 20 years. This system provides a particularly good reference for cultivating highly professional professionals in the judicial field in China. In order to better provide a reference path for our country, the establishment process of Japan's law school system will be described below.

In June, 2001, Japan clearly pointed out in the Opinions of the Judicial System Reform Commission that the legal training system with law school as the core is a process. In order to train high-quality and high-quantity legal professionals and support the judiciary in the 21st century, "we should establish a new legal training system, organically combining legal education, judicial examination and judicial training, instead of just selecting through the (previous) judicial examination", and "we should establish a legal training professional school as the core of the legal training system"[12]. On this basis, the 155th National Assembly (temporary session) of Japan passed three related laws (November 2002), including the Law on Cooperation between law school Education and Judicial Examination.

According to the above-mentioned law, in 2004, Japan established law school. Compared with the standard academic system of 2 years in other graduate schools, the standard academic system of law school is 3 years. In order to achieve the training goal of "having both quality and ability", law school implements "small number of people and high density" teaching. Besides legal theory education such as basic legal subjects (Constitution, civil law, criminal law, etc.), it also implements high-intensity practical education to cultivate students' practical application ability.

Since the implementation of the law school system, there were 74 law schools in Japan from 2005 to 2010. As of 2019, the number of law schools has dropped to 36; the number of students applying for law school was 72,800 in 2004 and 9,117 in 2019; from 2005 to 2007, the enrollment of the University of Law and Sciences was 5,825, and in 2019, the enrollment will reach 2,253[13]. From the comparison of the above figures, it can be seen that the admission of Japanese law school has strict requirements, which can screen out those who really want to engage in the legal profession. After all, if you don't really want to engage in the legal profession after graduation, people who just want a master's degree in law will rarely "spend" three years in law school in vain.

So to speak. Japan's law school system provides a reference path for our country to screen people who really want to engage in legal profession and cultivate people who really want to engage in legal profession.

7 Conclusion

The development of society needs high-level and multi-level talents, and the combination of higher education and vocational training is precisely an effective way to cultivate high-level and multi-level talents. Through the combination of higher education and vocational training, Japan has cultivated high-level and multi-level talents for enterprises, industries and many other fields, and made outstanding contributions to the development of Japan's industry and manufacturing industries. At the same time, Japan has also implemented its unique law school system in the field of legal talent training, and successfully screened out professional talents who really want to study law and engage in law in the future. Japan's talent training mode of combining higher education with vocational training provides the following talent training paths for China:

(a) Introduce industry standards and vocational qualification certification system to ensure that students have vocational skills that meet market demand.

Most students are not sure what kind of occupation they will pursue in the future in the process of receiving higher education, and there are many phenomena that their jobs after graduation are quite different from their majors. For example, those who study law may not necessarily engage in a real legal profession after graduation, but may engage in a profession that has nothing to do with law. In order to run through this standard of applying what they have learned, Japan has set up a law school system, which gives us a good hint. In order to ensure students' real "applying what they have learned", we should introduce industry standards and professional qualification certification system, and let students know the industry label and the corresponding professional qualification system from the moment of admission.

(b) Strengthen school-enterprise cooperation and realize a high degree of integration of Industry-University-Research

Technical applied talents are the pillar force for the development of socialist market economy. The integration of Industry-University-Research integrates skills training, enterprise production, quality training, teaching links and scientific research achievements, which not only shows the research nature of higher education, but also shows the practicality and application of vocational training; It can not only effectively enhance the participation of enterprises in the field of talent training in colleges and universities, but also effectively increase the contribution of enterprises in the talent training system in colleges and universities; It can not only promote the transformation of scientific research achievements, but also realize the complementarity of school-enterprise resources. Therefore, in terms of talent training, we should actively promote the school-enterprise cooperation between counterpart enterprises and corresponding majors in colleges and universities, strive for enterprises to participate in the talent training programs of colleges and universities, build a curriculum system that

meets the employment needs, set up talent evaluation standards that meet the needs of enterprises, establish a "dual-subject" education mode of schools and enterprises that meets the market demand, give full play to the diversified advantages of joint talent training between schools and enterprises, and realize the real high integration of Industry-University-Research.

(c) Optimize the curriculum system and teaching content to ensure that the educational content is highly consistent with the needs of the industry

The state attaches special importance to the cultivation of knowledge-based, skilled and innovative workers. In March 2018, the Ministry of Education issued the Third Batch of Modern Apprenticeship Pilot Work Plan (hereinafter referred to as the Plan). In October of the same year, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security issued the Opinions on Comprehensively Implementing the New Apprenticeship System in Enterprises (hereinafter referred to as the Opinions). At the same time, the Program and the Opinions establish the objectives and tasks of "joint training between schools and enterprises". At the same time, the Opinions point out that "enterprises should be the main body, training institutions should be encouraged to participate, and about 500,000 apprentices should be trained annually". At the same time, the Program mentions "improving the teaching documents of apprenticeship training" and "forming and promoting a modern apprenticeship system with Chinese characteristics with government guidance, industry participation, social support, and enterprises and vocational colleges"[14]. Therefore, colleges and universities should carefully think about how to "build a team of teachers shared by schools and enterprises", and enterprises should arrange "instructors with corresponding professional knowledge and operational skills" for students. On the basis of establishing a "school-enterprise double-qualified" training system, they should fully investigate the needs of the industry, optimize the curriculum system and teaching content, realize deep school-enterprise integration, and ensure that the educational content is highly compatible with the needs of the industry.

(d) Build a diversified evaluation system to comprehensively evaluate students' abilities

Whether students can "meet the needs of the industry" can't be judged simply according to their test scores, which requires the construction of a diversified evaluation system. The so-called diversification means that we can evaluate students not only through academic achievements, but also through practical achievements, and through the process of learning and practice. In order to achieve a truly high integration of higher education and vocational training, we must establish an effective, fair, just, transparent and diversified evaluation system, and through this evaluation system, we can truly grasp the degree of students' application of knowledge, and through the evaluation results, we can find out the problems in our teaching process in time, so as to truly check for deficiencies and catch up for leaks and cultivate the real "talents" needed by the industry. Take law as an example. In order to enable students to get legal professional qualifications, and to make them truly comfortable in legal practice, we should integrate the assessment content related to future legal practice into the assessment at the end of our semester, instead of just taking exams for the sake of exams, but only examining some things memorized by rote. We should increase stu-

dents' analysis and assessment of cases, for example, letting students play judges, prosecutors, lawyers, etc., and analyze the same case from the perspective of different legal professionals. Building a similar assessment mechanism and system can meet the requirements of "comprehensively evaluating students' abilities", speed up the integration of higher education and vocational training, and speed up the pace of cultivating talents needed for social and economic development.

(e) Increase policy and financial support to enhance the attractiveness and social status of vocational education

In order to promote the integration of higher education and vocational training on a large scale and with high quality, we must get strong support from the government in terms of policies and funds, which requires the government to formulate corresponding policies, rules and regulations, and allocate special funds to provide sufficient policy guarantee, institutional guarantee and financial support for the integration of higher education and vocational training. Local governments at all levels can formulate relevant policies and regulations suitable for local economic development and industry needs, and give certain financial support. If these policies and regulations are successfully promulgated and financial support is in place on time, then the hardware facilities and software facilities of related vocational education will be improved and upgraded, which will not only enhance the attractiveness of vocational education, but also enhance the social status of vocational education, which can be described as killing multiple birds with one stone.

(f) Promote the construction of lifelong learning system to meet the dual needs of personal career development and social progress.

General Secretary Jinping Xi pointed out at the symposium of expert representatives in the fields of education, culture, health and sports that "it is necessary to improve the promotion mechanism of lifelong learning for all, and build a lifelong learning system with more flexible methods, richer resources and more convenient learning"[15]. The teaching concept of integrating higher education with vocational training just meets the requirements of promoting the construction of lifelong learning system. Vocational training is in line with the implementation of "learning everywhere", and can improve the dilemma of "unable to do what you want" encountered in personal career development; the content of vocational training can complement the theoretical study in higher education. It not only meets the practical knowledge, industry knowledge and social knowledge needed by personal career development, but also effectively urges us to "keep pace with the times", keep up with the pace of career development, and constantly "charge" and learn. It is an important part of promoting the construction of lifelong learning system, and it is also the dual needs of personal career development and social progress.

(g) Strengthen international exchanges and cooperation, and enhance the internationalization level of vocational education and local innovation ability

Looking around the world, apart from Japan, European countries also attach great importance to vocational training. As early as 2000, the European Union put forward ET2020 (European Strategic Framework for Education and Training Cooperation). ET2020 is divided into four strategic objectives, namely: (1) lifelong learning and social mobility, (2) improving the quality and efficiency of education and training, (3)

promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship, and (4) enhancing creativity and innovation at all levels of education and training, including entrepreneurship. Following the above four strategic objectives, EU countries pay special attention to the certification of non-formal and informal learning and guidance; By 2010, link all national qualifications systems to the EQF (European Qualifications Framework) to provide standards, qualifications, assessment and accreditation; Develop the professional ability of college teachers and vocational training teachers; Promote the modernization of higher education and the quality assurance framework of vocational training, adopt close cooperation between general education and vocational education, and remove barriers to the return of dropouts to education and training; Further consider transversal key competences in terms of curriculum, assessment and qualifications[16].The above-mentioned goals and implementation plans in Europe have provided brand-new thinking for China's development of the path of integrating higher education and vocational training. Therefore, we should strengthen exchanges and cooperation with countries with advanced vocational training levels, such as Japan and the European Union, conduct on-the-spot investigations on the local mode of combining higher education and vocational training, and find out ways suitable for China's national conditions, so as to enhance the internationalization level and local innovation ability of vocational education in China.

Cultivating compound talents who understand both theory and practice is the ultimate goal of the integration of higher education and vocational training in China. It is expected that the above suggestions can help China explore a development path of combining higher education and vocational training in line with its own national conditions, and provide strong talent support for economic and social development.

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