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Selected international higher education system: Student psychological concerns

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Selected international higher education system: Student psychological concerns

Abstract

International higher education systems particularly in Japan and the United States, and other selected western countries are in need of student psychological concerns data. There are a number of student environmental and psychological concerns which affect performance in education, such as: learning environments within the family; school and community; students' motivation to learn; professional goals; evaluation of achievement by examinations; and related psychological elements such as anxiety, stress and pressure. This study will survey related student environments and their psychological concerns to provide a better understanding of related international education systems, and how the system affects environmental pressures.

**Selected International Higher Education System:
Student Psychological Concerns**

A Research Paper

Submitted to

The Department of Educational Psychology & Foundations

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education:

General Educational Psychology

University of Northern Iowa

Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614-0607

By

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

International higher education systems particularly in Japan and the United States, and other selected western countries are in need of student psychological concerns data. There are a number of student environmental and psychological concerns which affect performance in education, such as: learning environments within the family; school and community; students' motivation to learn; professional goals; evaluation of achievement by examinations; and related psychological elements such as anxiety, stress and pressure. This study will survey related student environments and their psychological concerns to provide a better understanding of related international education systems, and how the system affects environmental pressures.

Nagai stated, "With the advancement of industrialization, the demand for professional education has risen in Japan (Nagai, 1971)." Japanese students are motivated to obtain higher education which enables them to obtain successful career positions. The entrance to a Japanese university, however, is restricted. Most students prefer to enter national, prestigious universities, which results in the entrance examination to these universities being very competitive. In addition, the tuition for the private universities or colleges is about seven times higher than the tuition for the national universities. The attendance at private universities or colleges is limited to those students whose parents can afford the high cost of higher education.

Thus, the majority of students, particularly economically disadvantaged youth, are the subjects of heavy pressures of competition (Nagai, 1971). Similar problems often exist in western countries such as France, the Federal Republic of Germany, England, Canada, and Australia (Califf, 1970).

The entrance examination to universities and colleges in Japan has become increasingly competitive from year to year. Most of the students will apply for admission to more than three universities at one time to ensure their enrollment in a university or a college. Thus, students may not be satisfied with their university or college selection. However, the majority of students are motivated to enter more prestigious universities from desires for successful completion of studies; for success toward professional goals; and because of the support of their parents and personal self-expectation. For example, Japanese mothers devote themselves to rearing children, assisting children at home, and arranging the family life to ensure a home environment of study. Yet their children develop psychological pressures from disappointment of university policies, peer pressure, feelings of isolation, finding a satisfactory job, and anxiety for becoming a responsible member of society. (Vogel, 1979)

Statement of Problem

This study will provide information regarding the effect of psychological pressures upon selected students in higher education in Japan. An original questionnaire will provide the information to correlate the five independent educational psychological variables and

how they affect the dependent variable of education systems. This study can be used to understand the psychological relationships of students in higher education in Japan, then compare it to the United States and other related western countries.

Assumptions

In this study, it is assumed that motivation, evaluation, professional goals, family support, and psychological involvements affect students' behavior in higher education in Japan.

Limitations

This study will address higher education in Japan with relationship to the United States, and the five selected western countries of France, the Federal Republic of Germany, England, Canada, and Australia to better understand international education systems. The five independent variables to be used in this study are motivation, evaluation, professional goals, family support and psychological involvements.

Definitions of Terms

MOTIVATION: Frymier (1970) defined motivation as giving direction and intensity to behavior. The direction implies possible variations in pressures of goals. The intensity implies possible variation in terms of the degree of effort or energy put into attaining the goal.

ENTRANCE EXAMINATION: The entrance examination in Japan, according to Vogel (1979), evaluates acquired knowledge, innate

ability, IQ or general aptitude, and capacity to use innate ability. Students who fail to pass an examination at a desired school remain for a year or more to prepare for another try at the entrance examinations.

PSYCHOLOGICAL INVOLVEMENTS: Psychological involvements in this study include the institutional policy, peer pressure, feelings of isolation, career planning and parental expectations.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION: International education in this study addresses major issues and problems of higher education systems regardless of national origin and cultural differences. Countries respond to these common problems in different manners. At the same time, each country shares common programs in higher education to fulfill and maintain their educational needs. In this sense, goals for higher education become international. Cooperative study and analysis between these systems is necessary to understand the whole spectrum of educational curriculums which can improve higher education.

HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN JAPAN: There are 382 universities which are divided into six groups. First, national, comprehensive universities distinguish themselves by a high quality of learning. Those are the universities such as Tokyo University, Kyoto University, and Osaka University. They are composed of six to ten facilities and a number of research institutes. Second, some state composite universities, mainly emphasize undergraduate education. They are situated in the nine prefectures, and usually serve as regional and local centers of higher education. Third, some 30 state universities concentrate on one specialty. Fourth, there are 270 private universities of which 20 are comprehensive and or research institutes

with student population over 10,000. Fifth, eighty-three women's universities offer courses in liberal arts, home economics, and specialized fields such as medicine and pharmaceutical. Sixth, forty-six teacher training universities are situated one in each prefecture and primarily provide teachers for elementary and secondary schools. The majority of the 479 junior colleges are small in size, consisting of one to three departments, with a few hundred students. The major function of the junior college is to provide semi-professional training. The technical schools receive graduating students from middle schools and offer a three to five year course aimed at vocational programs and fine arts.

Methodology

In order to understand the international education systems and conduct the research, the information will be collected from literature on higher education systems of Japan, the United States and the selected countries of France, the Federal Republic of Germany, England, Canada, and Australia. A questionnaire was sent to one hundred university students in Japan on April 1, 1984 to selectively survey related information from that higher education system. The subjects will be randomly selected from freshman students to answer the original questionnaire. The questionnaire will be returned to the University of Northern Iowa by May 31, 1984. The statistical significance of the correlations among variables will be shown by computing the mean of each variable.

Summary

This study will obtain information for better understanding of psychological problems of selected higher education students in Japan concerning environmental and psychological pressures most related to their success in a college/university. Japan is used as a selected international country because of the western/eastern representation in education and thus was used as an example of international education problems as related to psychological concerns.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

This comparative education study will review the literature for five selected psychological concerns of student behavior in higher education settings in Japan. The dependent variables will demonstrate the evidence of student psychological pressures. Secondary education in Japan and the United States is reviewed. The five areas of educational psychology pressures in this study include: 1. motivation; 2. evaluation; 3. professional goals; 4. family support; and 5. psychological involvements.

Motivation

Why do students decide to go to a university? Why are parents in Japan so interested in having their children admitted into a prestigious university? Those and other related questions on motivation will be reviewed herein.

The Japanese mother devotes herself to the child-rearing. She spend an abundance of time and effort to provide the best environment for the child's education. In verbal and nonverbal ways, she remains the child for her deep feelings that the child is the most important person in the world. As a result of such a positive reinforcement by the mother, the child's responsibility is to live up to her expectation, which means that he/she will show her a successful academic achievement (Vogel, 1979).

The Japanese mother-child relationship is summarized in a word "Amae". Hiroshi Azuma, Professor of Education at the University of Tokyo, defined it as an attitude toward people characterized by affection, feelings of dependency, and emotionally satisfying responses (Garfinkel, 1983). "Amae" is the foundation of Japanese teaching, according to Azuma. It is the bond between mother and child, and later between the child and teacher. This development helps the child to be more willing to accept the intrusion of others into his/her learning, and helps provide the child with a willingness to strive for a common, acceptable goal (Garfinkel, 1983).

The idea model of education inspired by "Amae" and a large number of teachers and parents in Japan is to send their children to Fuzoku Elementary School and Fuzoku secondary school which are both affiliated with universities, then send them to high school which is disciplined for preparatory training to a university. Numerous tutoring services and tutoring schools are operating in parallel with the elementary and secondary schools and college preparatory schools. This is an attempt to send their children to the most competitive schools which can possibly provide entrance into Tokyo University which is the most prestigious university in Japan (Japan /Teacher's Union 1975). As mentioned, academic success is a common value for Japanese students in Japan, which is a similar value seen among students in the United States.

A Nation at Risk, the National Commission of Excellence in Education (1983) implies that excellence in education means performing within the boundary of individual ability; setting high expectations

and goals for learners; and helping students reach social expectations and educational goals. Parents have called for a back-to-basic curriculum; restoration of academic standards and discipline; and better vocational programs. Traditionalists have insisted that some kinds of extrinsic motivation, and external discipline, such as grades, course requirements, competition and achievements, are necessary for educational standards (Raich, 1983).

High expectations by parents and teachers are a motivator for students to learn as the parents and teachers in both Japan and the United States have demonstrated the necessity for setting high expectations and goals for learners. However, it is true that often high expectations by adults cause emotional strain upon the students' educational performance.

Evaluation

Students suffer from constant academic evaluations in Japan and the United States. This point of inference is more seriously related examinations and university entrance in Japan than in other countries.

Each state in the United States is responsible for the curriculum areas that must be offered at public schools within that state. The states may also require certain minimum standards or levels of competency in the mandated curriculum areas. Some states require minimum competency tests as part of graduation requirements for students (Moehlman, 1963). This also applies to entrance into state colleges and universities.

On the contrary, the university entrance examinations in Japan are a critical concern for students, parents, and teachers. Preparations for the examinations generally starts around the age of twelve or thirteen and thus schooling is oriented toward the examination. Most of the students at the secondary school level eliminate extra curriculum activities and neglect social development to concentrate on preparation for this examination. More than one half of all students attend supplementary schools, called Juku, during their elementary and or secondary school year to improve their chances of passing the entrance examination. Students who fail the passing examination in their desired university remain in Juku for another year or more preparing to retake the examination. In spite of such an intensive study, they continue to learn and have life-long career ambitions (Vogel, 1979). Pressures for individuals to pass the entrance examinations intensify in the increasing adolescent years. Once students are accepted to universities, these pressures diminish. After graduation from the university, students generally remain emotionally stable (Inukai, 1981).

In comparison, universities in the United States generally do not require examinations if the student's high school grades indicate academic achievement and scholarship. Pressures for individual achievement increase progressively through the college years (Noma, 1982). R. H. Moose (1978) states that an emphasis on the competitive aspect of academic life, combined with little or no emotional support, seems to increase stress resulting in student complaints of physical health symptoms.

Professional Goals

Since the 1960s, students have become more withdrawn in order to concentrate on academic matters and preparing to compete for entrance into a tighter job market. Most students desire to pursue prestigious careers (Nagai, 1971).

Education in Japan suffers from distortions in relationship to the purposes for which it was designed. An academic degree, employment, and personal success are legitimized by the capacities to enhance the contribution the individual can make to the society. As the examination competition becomes more intense, the value of the degree increases. This, in turn, reinforces the social order based on academic achievement. It is a vicious circle in which the study for an entrance examination is undertaken to obtain a prestigious diploma and a key job (Kobayashi, 1971).

Access to large private firms and governmental institutions in Japan is determined by the level of a young person's education and more importantly by the reputation of the university from which he/she graduated. Major employers regard the level of institutional prestige as the major criterion for judging the qualifications of job applicants; this is called Shiteikosei (the judging of applicants based upon university prestige). According to an important survey, 35 percent of the major employers in Japan use Shiteikosei to recruit applicants for office personnel (Japanese Recruit Center, 1975).

A majority of college graduates in the United States and Japan are predominantly employees in white collar office jobs, engineering and

managerial operations. Erikson (1983) said that occupational job choice is particularly difficult in America because of the advancement to technology; the efficiency of the assembly line; and rapid changes in the job markets. Therefore, many individuals compete against each other for desirable jobs (Di Caprio, 1983). The major difference between the United States and Japan is that the Japanese employers regard the level of institutional prestige for the qualification of job applicants while the American employers regard the applicant's educational background skills and personal qualities.

Family Support

Financial support and related psychological support can effect students' educational attainment. The family's financial status is an important determinate in their children's educational attainment in Japan as well as in the United States. Depending upon the family's economic status, each individual should be able to obtain a higher share of the nation's educational resources. When higher priced education is available only to a minority, this minority is usually academically talented and/or financially advantaged. Yet, the major problem is that the amount of schooling people receive usually influences the chances of entering high-level occupations (Deutek, 1982).

The Japanese family is prepared to make great financial and psychological sacrifices for their children's educational attainment. They expect that their children will be accepted at an elite secondary school and famous university. The family life is arranged to ensure

proper structure for their children. The Japanese parents spend approximately 10 percent of their income on private tutors and special schools to help their children prepare for entrance examinations to higher education institutions (Inukai, 1981). On the contrary, Americans spend about 6 percent of their income on education for their children (Walberg & Profitaschiller, 1982). According to Kirst (1981), about 90 percent of junior high school students entered into high school in Japan, by contrast 80 to 86 percent of junior high school students entered into high schools in the United States (Kirst, 1981).

Family roles in the United States changed after World War II; this was due mostly to the increase in one parent households and a trend toward women remaining in the workforce after they have children. Working parents are viewed by some sociologists as having less time to socialize their children and teach them the appropriate learning tasks (Deutek, 1982). This change has not necessarily taken place in Japan. In conclusion, because parental, financial, and psychological support influences their children's educational attainment, economically disadvantaged youth are the subjects of extra heavy pressure to obtain a higher education. This is much more true in Japan than in the United States.

Psychological Involvement

There are quite a few similar psychological involvements which students in Japan and the United States commonly possess in higher education settings. Both have stresses from student-professor

classroom relationship in the institutional bureaucracy as well as a need for conformity to rules and standards (Califf, 1970).

Students in Japan and the United States both perceive the world as being dominated by large impersonal institutions which impose conformity to their moral standards. Japanese students protest against impersonal mechanized institutions pursuing a more centralized government (Inukai, '98').

Nagai (1971) states that tangible elements in the society whose survival depend on customs and tradition, will not allow an individual's life style to change. When the individual university student realizes that there is a conflict, he/she reacts violently against the old institutions to reform that society. The desire to reform society at large by implementing social radicalism originates in the firm belief that such a reform will be the best possible means of altering society (Nagai, 1971). In the case of Japan, a university is regarded as an education and training institution for a high salaried man, and is often forgotten as being an educational research institution. Students are squeezed into over-crowded classrooms without second thoughts. High tuition rates in Japan restrict the attendance at the private universities to students of high middle and upper income families. Private universities have been criticized for the tuition increase decision (Vogel, 1979). The financial problems of the private universities have also led to student-teacher ratios that are over three times that of the national universities (Vogel, 1979).

On the other hand, in the 1960s the goals of young activists in the United States were basically centered around the implementation of

university curriculum, promotion of students' rights and concern for the less fortunate people. These students valued human attitudes, personal freedom and more independent life-style; they also expressed dissatisfactions with adult's authority, traditional political groups and the middle class establishment. That counter-culture of the 1960s was born out of dissatisfaction with the prevailing life style. The counter-culture was largely populated by middle class youth and their younger high school counter parts who has learned the counter-culture was largely populated by middle class youth and their younger high school counter parts who had learned the counter-culture ideas from older peers. This revolution in moral and social thinking still effects youth who represent newer values and a more "Natural life style" (Backerson, 1979).

Child-centered humanistic educators in the United States connected the former open-classroom atmosphere and open-ended method of teaching with a more democratic classroom. Rules, regulations, and teaching methods are viewed by students as authoritarian and more suited of an authoritarian society. Those educators who accept the traditional school are considered to be repressive. Another group of educators who are psychologically oriented, including Carl Rogers and the late Abraham Maslow, viewed a democratic school as one that enables students to understand themselves and others. Such a school is thought potentially to develop more self-actualized students (Deutek, 1982).

CHAPTER III

Research Procedures

This educational psychology study will review five selected psychological concerns of students in selected higher education settings in Japan, and compare these concerns to students in the United States. This survey will compare student psychological pressures in these two countries. The five research areas of study include: 1) motivation; 2) evaluation; 3) professional goals; 4) family support systems and 5) psychological pressure. The format of the study is descriptive methodology.

Procedure

Information obtained for this study was designed to demonstrate psychological concerns of students in higher education settings in Japan and the United States. The data was collected from in depth study and an original questionnaire.

The library study collected literature studies for higher education systems in Japan and the United States from ERIC, abstracts, government documents, text books, and other related source materials.

The ERIC system was used extensively for reviewing literature associated with the descriptors of the research problem. The Thesaurus of ERIC descriptors was used to search for the descriptors related to higher education systems as well as the subject index of Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE).

Unavailable documents were ordered form inter-library loan through the ERIC document production service.

Preliminary sources of print-out abstracts were collected through the computer search of ERIC and CIJE.

The questionnaire was an original educational instrument needed to assess the five selected psychological concerns of students in higher education settings in Japan. Sources and references used to develop the questionnaire were collected from the aforementioned related literature. The five selected independent variables of motivation, evaluation, professional goals, family support and psychological involvements were equally distributed as associated questionnaire items. To provide needed reliability and validity, a faculty panel in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Northern Iowa assisted in the development of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was sent to one hundred student volunteers at Seika College with an enrollment of 1400 in Kyoto, Japan on April 1, 1984, to survey psychological stress variables in higher education systems in Japan. The subjects were randomly selected from the college's student body and volunteers were asked to respond to the related original questionnaire in this study.

The data were first reviewed in a narrative summary. The percentage of the responses to each questionnaire item were calculated to demonstrate student opinions for each of the five selected psychological concerns of student behavior. Statistical correlations among the items of each variable was shown by computing the mean of each variable. The results of the assumptions about the independent

variable affect on student behavior will be found at the end of the next chapter. Reliability and validity factors were not an issue in this original descriptive study except construct validity took place through the University of Northern Iowa, College of Education faculty who assisted in the development of the questionnaire.

CHAPTER IV

Research Findings

In this chapter the percentage of each questionnaire item was calculated to demonstrate the psychological effect of each of the five selected psychological concerns of student behavior in higher education settings in Japan. The following analytical results were obtained through the responses to the questionnaire. The percentages follow under each question for each of the five psychological concerns.

Motivation

Four kinds of motivators were used as explanations why students pursue higher education. These included a feeling of responsibility to the family and school, interest potential, concerns for the future, and a desire to maximize one's potentials. In the responses to the questionnaire, 90 percent of the students decided to go to college because of their desire to pursue higher education and maximize their earning potential. They were interested in both personal enrichment and professional skill, however, 68 percent of them were more interested in attaining professional skill rather than personal enrichment. Finally, 55 percent of them preferred to attend a prestigious college.

1. I decided to go to college because of my parents' suggestions: 5% yes & 95% no.

2. I decided to go to college because of my former teacher's suggestions: 0% yes & 100% no.
3. I decided to go to college because my friends were going to college: 5% yes & 95% no.
4. I study for personal enrichment rather than to attain a professional skill: 63% yes & 37% no.
5. I am equally interested in both personal enrichment and professional skill: 95% yes & 5% no.
6. I preferred to attend a prestigious college: 57% yes & 43% no.

Evaluation

College entrance examinations in Japan are very competitive, so students prepare for college or university entrance examinations by studying at a Juku, and/or hiring a tutor, when they are in high school. In the responses, 53 percent of the students prepared for the entrance examination to college/university by themselves, 26 percent studied at Juku and 16 percent hired a tutor to prepare for the entrance examination. Sixty-two percent of the students indicated that the entrance examination to Seika College was very difficult.

1. When I was in high school, I went to Juku to prepare for the college/university entrance examination: 26% yes & 74% no.
2. When I was in high school, I hired tutor to prepare for the entrance examination: 16% yes & 84% no.
3. When I was in high school, I prepared for the entrance

examination only by myself: 53% yes & 42% no, & 5% no answer.

4. The entrance examination to my college/university was very difficult: 63% yes & 37% no.

Professional Goals

Most students concentrated on academic matters, and inferred that they would need to be able to compete intensely in a tight job market. The quality of the college, the students' own ability and the prestige associated with the students' career expectations were major factors reflected by the students' opinions as to a future occupation. In obtaining a professional job, 89 percent of the students of Seika College thought that an academic degree was important and that their college provided the necessary courses to prepare for their career; and 89 percent responded that they would not change their major field of study. Yet, 84 percent worried about future employment.

1. An academic degree is very important in obtaining a professional job: 98% yes & 2% no.
2. My college/university provides the necessary courses to prepare for my career: 89% yes & 11% no.
3. There is a possibility that I will change my major field of study: 11% yes & 89% no.
4. I worry about my future employment: 84% yes & 16% no.
5. I am fairly sure about my major as a career goal: 53% yes & 47% no.

Family Support

Parental, financial, and psychological support were often reflected in their children's educational and occupational responses. Fifty-eight percent stated that their parents felt that college studies of their children were important and their parents supported them with paying for the tuition and living expenses at the college. None of the students had scholarships and 42 percent had a part-time job to help pay for their expense. The questionnaire data indicated that 53 percent of the respondents lived with their parents while going to college; 26 percent lived in the dormitories provided by the college; and 42 percent preferred to live with members of their families while going to college. Lastly, 42 percent of the students stated that most of the time discussed personal problems with their parents.

1. My parents feel that my college studies are important: 58% yes & 42% no.
2. Most of the time I discuss personal problems with my parents: 42% yes & 58% no.
3. My parents support me by paying for my tuition and living expenses at the college/university: 100% yes & 0% no.
4. I have a part-time job to help pay for my living expenses at my college/university: 42% yes & 58% no.
5. I have a scholarship to help pay for my expenses: 0% yes & 100% no.
6. I live in a dormitory provided by the college/university: 26% yes & 74% no.

7. I live with my parents while going to college/university:
53% yes & 47% no.
8. I would prefer to live with my family while going to
college/university: 42% yes & 53% no, & 5% no answer.

Psychological Involvement

Nagai (1971) indicated that many students suffer from stress and depression which stems from environmental pressures focused upon the bureaucracy, conformity and congestion. In the surveyed class at Seika College, 68 percent of the students said that they knew others, however, only 5 percent of them were taking part in general student campus discussions. They stated that on campus 58 percent of the respondents enjoyed music, art, movies and sport activities; 68 percent were not interested in political and social issues; and only 21 percent tended to study longer hours to get good grades. With regard to conformity, 37 percent of the students could act and think independently without too much regard for social opinion. Although 58 percent of the students felt that the professors were helpful and supportive, 58 percent did not feel free to express their ideas and concerns in class and 74 percent did not feel free to visit a professor's office. Finally, only 11 percent of the students felt that some classes were overcrowded, and 89 percent responded that students support one another.

1. I enjoy music, art, movies, sport activities on campus: 58%
yes & 42% no.

2. Most of the students in my classes know each other: 68% yes & 32% no.
3. Students help and support one another: 89% yes & 11% no.
4. I act and think independently without too much regard for social opinion: 37% yes & 63% no.
5. I am interested in political and social issues: 32% yes & 68% no.
6. I often take part in general discussions at the classroom: 5% yes & 95% no.
7. I feel that some of my classes are overcrowded: 11% yes & 89% no.
8. I feel that professors are helpful and supportive of students: 58% yes & 42% no.
9. I feel free to express my thinking in class: 42% yes & 58% no.
10. I feel free to visit a professor's office: 26% yes & 74% no.
11. I tend to study long hours to get good grades: 21% yes & 79% no.

Findings

The reason why students pursue higher education was addressed in this original questionnaire. Ninety percent of the students at Seika College were interested in maximizing their potential and 68 percent desired to attain professional skill at the college.

Concerning preparation for the entrance examination, 26 percent of the students studied at Juku, and 16 percent hired tutors. Sixty-two

percent of the students felt that the entrance examination to Seika College was very difficult.

Since the prestige associated with the students' career expectations reflected the students' responses for a future occupation, 89 percent of the Seika students thought that an academic degree was important. Yet, 84 percent worried about their future employment.

Since parental financial and psychological support reflected educational and occupational responses, 58 percent of the parents of Seika students believed that college studies were important. Parents supported their children's studies by paying for the tuition and living expenses at the college.

Many students were suffering from environmental pressures such as bureaucracy, conformity and congestion. In the responses, only 37 percent of the students could act and think independently without too much regard for social opinion. Fifty percent did not feel free to express their ideas in class, and 74 percent did not feel free to visit a professor's office. Finally, the result of this study supported the assumptions made in Chapter I that motivation, evaluation, professional goals, family support and psychological involvement will give psychological direction and intensity to students' behavior in higher education in Japan.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

This study reviewed selected students' considerations of higher education systems in Japan and compared related problems to the United States education system which was responsible for Japan's early educational post-war development. This was reviewed through educational psychological descriptive research which seemed to indicate psychological effect upon the performance of students. These concerns included the learning environment in the school, the family, the community, student motivation, professional goals, evaluation of achievement, and other psychological considerations such as anxiety, stress and pressure.

The education in the United States has vacillated over the years. In the 1940s and early 1950s, a "good school" used progressive methods based on student interests, social interaction, and related activities. In the late 1950s, a "good school" was defined as one with high academic standards and special subjects such as science, foreign languages and mathematics. By the late 1960s though, the high academic standards started to fall, and the "good school" was one where student participation and choice was emphasized. Since the mid 1970s, education has moved back toward "basics", standards", competencies, and coherent curriculum (Ravich, 1983).

On the other hand, the educators in Japan learned some of their conservative education concepts from the Federal Republic of Germany, France, England, Canada, and Australia, and their related practices of the traditional educational curriculum. Testing and evaluations became mandatory requirements for the entire country of Japan. Japanese students suffer from high competition and high expectations; they strive for meeting high standards (Kasai, 1981). Neurosis exists in students to some extent which seems to help improve their inadequacies (Kasai, 1981). "A good school in Japan is designed as one with high academic standards and a wealth of specialized subjects such as science, mathematics and foreign languages" (Vogel, 1979).

Nagai (1971) implied that with the advance of industrialization, the demand for professional education has risen in Japan. The Japanese students are motivated to obtain higher education which enables them to obtain a successful job position. The gate to a university is narrow; nevertheless, most students prefer to enter national and prestigious universities. As a result, the entrance examinations into those universities have become extremely competitive. In addition, the tuition for the private universities or colleges are about twenty to thirty times higher than the tuition for the national universities. The attendance at the private universities or colleges is limited to those students whose parents can afford the high cost of education. Thus, the majority of students, particularly economically disadvantaged youths, are subject to heavy pressures for competition. Similar problems exist in western countries such as France, and the Federal Republic of Germany.

Conclusions

Five student concerns were the major considerations addressed in the study:

1. Motivation implies the selection of a goal or purpose, and the degree of effort or energy needed to put forth to obtain that goal. Four different kinds of motivators as to why students pursue higher education were considered. These included a feeling of responsibility to the family and school, interest potential, concerns for the future, and a desire to maximize one's potential.
2. Evaluation in higher education pertained to entrance examinations in Japan, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, England, Canada, and Australia which are all administered at the national and/or regional level. The aim of this screening is to measure scholastic achievement in the subjects learned at the secondary school level. The entrance examinations in Japan and France are particularly competitive. The Japanese students who fail the entrance examination to a desired school level remain for a year or more in preparation for another try for their examination. Competitive stress for students who are less talented is a very serious educational and psychological problem (Inukai, 1981).
3. Professional goals for most students are concentrated on academic matters which relate to competing intensely for a tighter job market. Thus, most of the Japanese students

pursue prestigious careers. The quality of the college, the parents' socio-economic status, the students' own ability, and the prestige associated with the students' career expectations are major concerns to be addressed because they reflect upon the students' future occupational goals.

4. Family support includes parental financial and psychological support which often reflects their children's educational and occupational attainment. Family's economic status influences student's chance of entering into a high status occupation and related prestigious university.
5. Psychological involvement for many students means suffering from stress and depression which stems from environmental pressure (Nagai, 1971). Some students revolt against authority, so they try to exert their power within the higher education society. Considered in the study were the elements of environmental pressures which focus around the complexities of technological urban life, the generation gap, societal bureaucracy, conformity and congestion.

Recommendations

1. Motivation: psychological pressures upon students are caused by high expectation of parents and teachers. Therefore, limit students in pursuit of higher education because of their inflated professional goals.
2. Evaluation: students must reasonably understand that they have objectives which vary from student to student, since

each student has different abilities. The principle here is that the stressful environment must be decreased.

3. Professional goals: students compete intensely for advancement toward a prestigious career, since higher education is the best means for attaining social mobility and success. Such competition, however, increases psychological pressures infringing upon students. Therefore, to pursue a prestigious career in many cases should be redirected.
4. Family support: in the academic and related communities parental financial and psychological support reflected their children's educational and occupational attainment. Families should understand that their children are suffering from a number of pressures to achieve high educational goals, and they should try to reduce some of these personal pressures.
5. Psychological involvement: attempts should be made to prevent student suffering from environmental pressures such as authority, bureaucracy, generation gap, and conformity. Counseling, small group study, and sociological research can be used to better redirect social outcome.

This study indicates that a number of psychological and environmental pressures exist in higher education systems in Japan, the United States and other western countries, and provides related data on how these pressures affect students' behavior. The study will be used as institutional information to provide a better environment for students in higher education systems, particularly in Japan.

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