Characteristics and Development Patterns of the Process of Vocational Education for Chinese and Japanese Performing Arts:
A Comparative Analysis

Takuya Shimizu, Kansai University of International Studies, Japan

Kumiko Nishio, Kyoto Womens University, Japan

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this research is to contribute to the literature related to management studies and studies on performing arts education by shedding light on the important roles played by formal education at schools for training performers and management talents. The research compares the process of educational modernization for Chinese traditional theater and Japanese Takarazuka Revue to illuminate respective characteristics and developmental patterns. Although Japan and China have very different modernization processes and political systems, both cases of performing arts have been relying on school institutions for human resources development which has evolved from apprenticeship or something alike. By this comparison, the research then clarifies the ways schools are involved in improving skills and inculcating occupational identities of performers and management talents, thereby constantly producing capable young talents. Finally, the research shows how the result can provide a better view on vocational education for future research in the related field.

KEYWORDS

Art and Management Talent Cultivation, Chinese Traditional Theater, Educational Modernization, Human Resources Development, Japanese Takarazuka Revue, Schoolnization, Vocational Education

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the literature related to studies on educational anthropology of performing arts and management studies by taking an interdisciplinary approach to shed light on the important roles played by formal education at schools for training performers and cultivating talent management. This topic has been insufficiently explored by previous studies of both fields. By focusing on apprenticeships, which are often regarded as the exact opposite of school education, the research cross-culturally compares the process of educational modernization for Qin opera (traditional theater of northwestern China) and Takarazuka Revue (all-female Japanese theater) to illuminate respective characteristics and developmental patterns because in both cases, despite huge political differences, they have been relying on school institutions for human resources development for years and have evolved from apprenticeships. Through this comparison, the research clarifies how schools are involved with improving skills and inculcating occupational identities of performers and talent management. It also suggests school education, with its systematic and scientific basic training, facilitates graduates to smoothly prepare for on the job training (OJT) in theatrical companies. Finally,

the results show how a better view of vocational education can be provided. Moreover, future research in related fields should formulate the broad concept of *schoolnization* based on wide-ranging data from two culturally similar yet politically different cases.

WHAT IS AN APPRENTICESHIP?

First, it is important to define the meaning of apprenticeship because both the Chinese and Japanese cases mentioned above have developed in one way or another from apprenticeship. Focusing on the definition helps gain a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of current school education. An apprenticeship can be defined as human relations based on mastery of certain occupational skills and acquisition of occupational identities (Rikowski, 1999). More specifically, it involves master-apprentice relations (sometimes with fictive kinship) and methods of learning on the job (Coy, 1989). In the world of traditional performing arts, it is generally characterized as a process of learning basic forms as well as spiritual dimensions of performance from masters who could be quite authoritative and exclusive when it comes to teaching (Fukushima,1995; Ikuta, 1987). Apprenticeships are often compared to school education because of their lack of tests, curriculums, and textbooks (Sigaut, 1993). Moreover, based on its basic characteristics, some education studies researchers and cognitive scientists have developed a learning theory that characterized apprenticeship learning as a way to increase the amount of participation in the community (where practitioners with different level of mastery of skills mutually interact); it also effectively illuminated the decontextualized nature of school learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

In terms of industrial history, however, apprenticeships are usually regarded as the product of pre-industrial society, so they now only exist in traditional craftsmanship, in the entertainment industry, or in certain limited modern occupations such as meat-butcher, iron-steel worker, and doctor (Fukushima, 2002; Geer, 1972; Long, 1998; Williams, 1981). Furthermore, existing apprenticeships have undergone a certain degree of historical change. The British construction industry is one example. According to Clarke (1999), it has transformed itself in the construction industry in at least four different historical stages, including the trade company apprenticeship, statutory apprenticeship, and so on since the 14th century. Similar situations are observable in many other industries (Ainley & Rainbird, 1999; Aldrich, 1999; Ryan, 1999). Meanwhile, in some cases, such as in the performing arts, apprenticeships have gradually developed back into modern schools while retaining some features from the old days.

Finally, there are several educational merits and demerits of apprenticeship. In general, apprenticeships take longer than school education to train novices. Moreover, apprenticeships cannot train many people at the same time, so it is not fit to mass-produce experts like school education (Coy, 1989; Sigaut, 1993). The lack of curriculum and textbook can also result in arbitrary decision making by masters who may exploit apprentices as cheap labor. However, the methods of learning on the job can provide more sufficient opportunities for novices to learn practical skills than school education, where decontextualized learning is dominant (Becker, 1972; Singleton, 1998). In the case of traditional performing arts, an apprenticeship offers learners an important opportunity for immersion (often supported by fictive kinship in master-apprentice relations), which is necessary to gain a firm understanding of spiritual dimensions of performance (Ikuta, 1987). In sum, an apprenticeship is not all that bad, though it is often viewed as outdated and is being replaced by school education in the cases of China and Japan.

In the section on implications and recommendations, the strengths and weaknesses of school education are compared to the strengths and weaknesses of an apprenticeship in China and Japan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research is informed by two different disciplines: educational anthropology of performing arts and management studies. The former's focus on "transmission" and the latter's interest in "career

Related Content

Classification of Firewall Log Files Using Supervised Machine Learning Techniques

Sri Danalaksmi, Geethalakshmi, A. Roshniand Padmavathi Ganapathi (2023). *Malware Analysis and Intrusion Detection in Cyber-Physical Systems (pp. 85-114).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/classification-of-firewall-log-files-using-supervised-machine-learning-techniques/331301

Autonomous Execution of Reliable Sensor Network Applications on Varying Node Hardware

Steffen Ortmannand Peter Langendoerfer (2015). *Handbook of Research on Innovations in Systems and Software Engineering (pp. 602-663).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/autonomous-execution-of-reliable-sensor-network-applications-on-varying-node-hardware/117943

A Two-Stage Long Text Summarization Method Based on Discourse Structure

Xin Zhang, Qiyi Wei, Qing Songand Pengzhou Zhang (2023). *International Journal of Software Innovation (pp. 1-20).*

www.irma-international.org/article/a-two-stage-long-text-summarization-method-based-on-discourse-structure/331091

Enterprise Integration: Architectural Approaches

Venky Shankararamanand Alan Megargel (2013). *Service-Driven Approaches to Architecture and Enterprise Integration (pp. 67-84).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/enterprise-integration-architectural-approaches/77945

Secure Image Watermarking in a Compressed SPIHT Domain Using Paillier Cryptosystem