



## A Preliminary Comparison of Career Education for Youth among Ten Asian countries: A Synthesis of Country Reports from the 2017 ARACD Conference

Hyuncheol Kim \*

National Youth Policy Institute in Korea, Seoul, South Korea

Takao Mimura

Graduate School of Teacher Education, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan

### Abstract

This paper synthesizes country reports presented in the 2017 ARACD (Asian Regional Association for Career Development) conference. The focus of this synthesis is to compare career education for youth among the ten Asian countries or areas of Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, and Taiwan. Even though we could say that a high secondary school enrollment rate should be premised on improving career education the findings suggest otherwise. We also found variations in the emphasis of career guidance. Indonesia and India stress the importance of culture in developing career education. Iran is trying to bridge the gap with the international standards in developing career education. Malaysia provides direction for career education development through its Education Blueprint. Pakistan is developing career education through private services. While Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan have high secondary enrollment rates, career education is emphasized as a means to overcome the problem of excessive academic competitiveness in each of these countries.

**Key Words:** job experience, secondary school enrollment rate, academic competition

This paper compares career education for youth in ten countries or regions of Asia: Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, and Taiwan. This comparison is based on country reports presented in the international conference held jointly by the Korean Youth Policy Institute (NYPI) and Asian Regional Association for Career Development (ARACD) in May 2017. The details of the presenters are provided at the end of

the paper. With a view to comparing systems in these different countries we extracted information on the educational systems and career education of each country or region which was relatively unique. Although this survey is about school education, it should be noted that a significant proportion of children from many participating countries do not even belong to the school set up, because of the inability of their families or societies to provide all children with opportunities to enter secondary school or receive formal school/curriculum-based education.

---

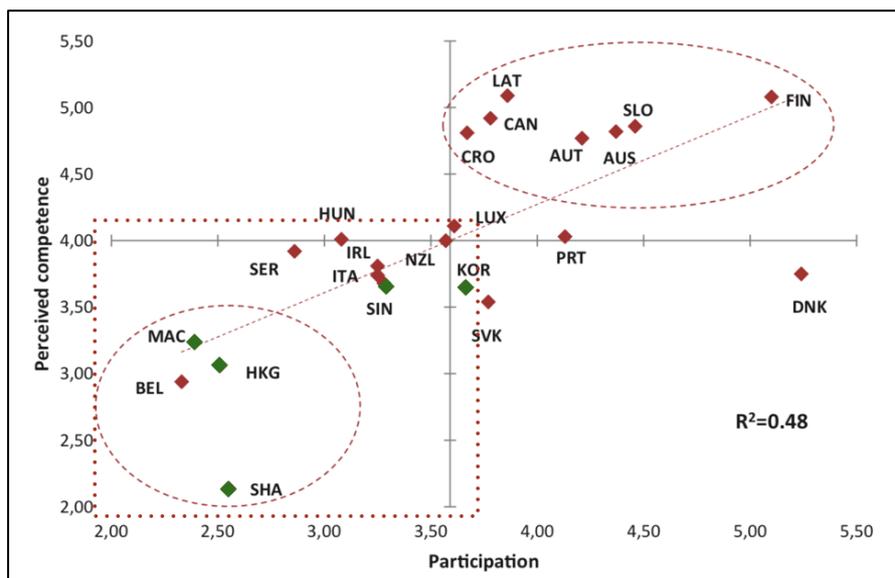
\* Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Hyuncheol Kim: demi1964@gmail.com

Here, Arulmani’s livelihood planning idea is relevant (Arulmani, 2009). He introduced the idea of livelihood planning and described it to be the application of the principles of career guidance at the broader level (e.g., for out-of school children) and facilitating individuals’ traditional engagement with work such that it gains contemporary relevance.

The participation of Hong Kong, Macao, Korea, Shanghai, and Singapore in the 2012 PISA supplementary survey provides some information about the career education situation in these countries. The ELGPN research paper written by Sweet, Nissinen and Vuorinen (2014) comparing the countries participating in this survey shows interesting results. They classified career education types among countries on two axes: by perceived competencies and participation in career education activities. Figure1 shows one of the representative results of this survey, which suggests that the more youth participate in career-related experiences,

the higher the job competence perceived by themselves. For example, Sweet et al., (2014) show that Korean youth have more opportunity for career experiences and also higher perceived career competence than other Asian regions such as Hong Kong, Shanghai and Macao, and Singapore, where youth have relatively fewer career experiences and score lower in self-reported ratings of competence for different jobs. These results do not necessarily mean that participating in many career experiences improve job competencies. Statistically, the amount of career-related experiences explains up to 48% of the individual differences seen in reports of perceived competence for different jobs. This suggests that more than 50% of the differences seen in individual perceptions of competence for jobs may be explained by other factors and we need more information about each country in order to further examine the relation between the amount of career experiences and perceived competences.

Figure 1. Participation in career development activities and perceived career development competence



Source: An Analysis of the Career Development Items in PISA 2012 (Sweet, Nissinen & Vuorinen, 2014).

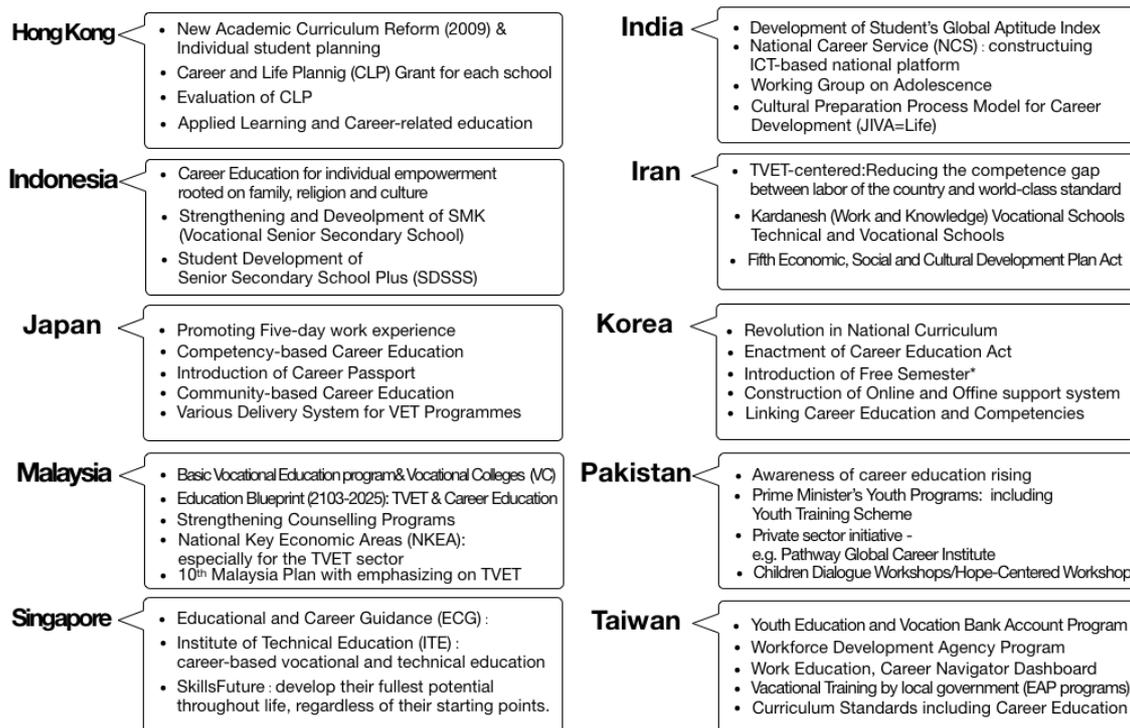
Further research is needed regarding the treatment of occupational information and work experience in school education in each country, as well as on occupational values and ethics. Even though the country reports of the 2017 ARACD conference do not provide enough information to further examine the PISA findings, it is still possible to compare the situation of career education in different regions of Asia

**Method**

We first constructed a questionnaire around the most basic information needed to compare career education in each country. For this we regarded career education as defined by the OECD (2010) as a way for students to learn about the world of work and develop career management skills through classroom teaching, and through other activities. In this connection, we considered TVET as one of training types that parallels vocational education. However, it doesn't mean necessarily that career and vocational education are completely

exclusive. The questionnaire covered the following areas: (1) school education system, (2) characteristics of the transition process from school to work, the situation of youth labor market such as unemployment rate and the status of those not in education, employment or training (NEET) and governments' support policy for NEET, (3) outline and evaluation of career education, vocational training and vocational education policy for secondary school dropouts and out-of-school youth, (4) career education and vocational training for adolescents or a representative example of a vocational education(policy or program). Using these data, we extracted elements described as career education in each country or region. We set three criteria to identify these elements: First, the secondary school enrollment rate. Second, whether the country is more interested in career education or vocational education. Last, how much does each country focus on boosting youth to participate in career-related experiences.

Figure 2. Thematic extraction of reports on career education by country or region



\* Free Semester is modeled on Irish 'Transition Year'. Every middle school has to use one semester as Free Semester in Korea

**Results and Discussion**

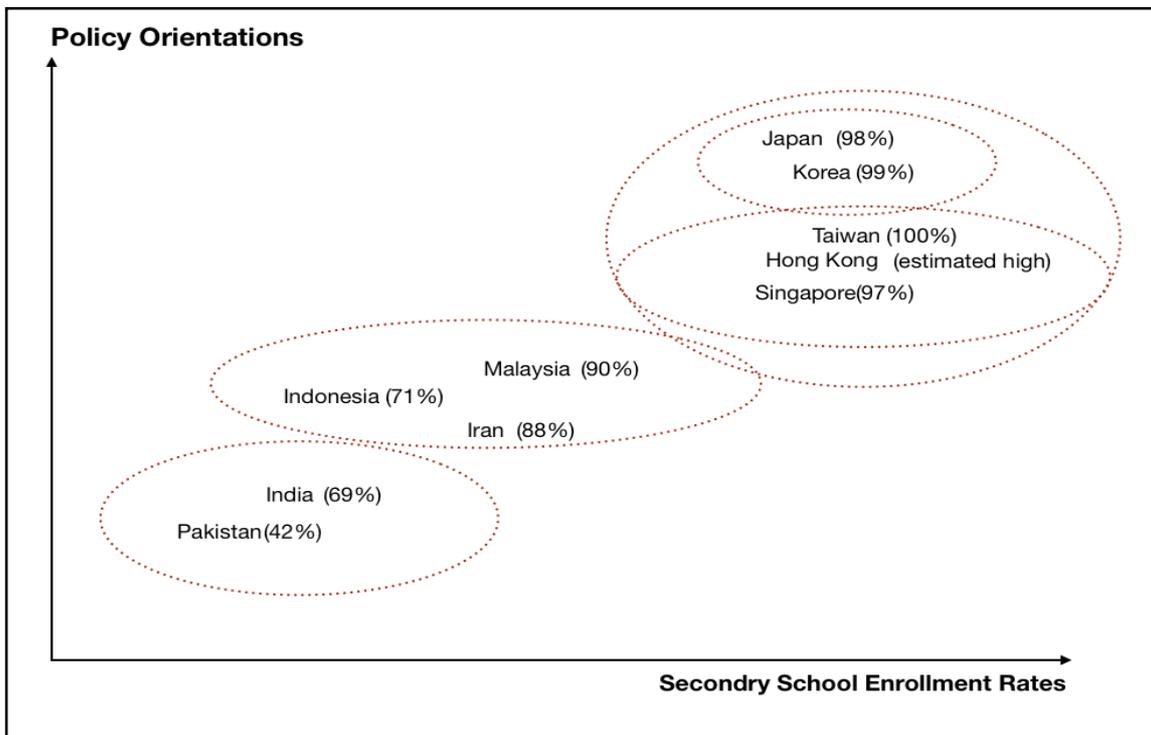
Figure 2 shows the information we extracted showing trends in career education in each country from the country reports. As per the reports made, Iran is aiming to reduce the competence gap between the country’s labour force and international standards. In Pakistan the private sector is taking the lead in laying the foundation for the development of career education. Reports from India and Indonesia laid strong emphasis on the importance of acknowledging cultural influences on career development. Malaysia has the Education Blueprint (2013-2025) in place to promote career and vocational education. Singapore has set up Educational and Career Guidance (ECG) and its SkillsFuture intervention

aims at developing its youth to their fullest throughout life, regardless of their starting points. Hong Kong and Taiwan are developing career education through curriculum reform and has set up curriculum standards for career education. Similarly, Taiwan is developing new career education programmes through academic and curriculum reform and focusing on methods to support individual student planning.

**Analysis**

As shown in Figure 3, the data extracted from the reports was analysed using secondary school enrollment and policy orientations as the key elements.

Figure 3. Mapping of secondary school enrollment rates and policy orientations



As shown in Figure 3, we classify India and Pakistan as a typical TVET-based country which also has a low secondary

enrollment rate and does not seem to have reached career education policy goals. On the other hand, even though Malaysia, Indonesia, and Iran have higher secondary school enrollment rate and

appear to be more likely to be focusing on career education than India and Pakistan, they do not seem to have achieved sufficient investment in career education as yet. Therefore we classify these countries as types that emphasize TVET more than career education. In contrast, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong have very high secondary enrollment rates and we classify them as career education-oriented countries. However, there is another aspect that is of interest, and this is linked to the country reports on the level of education competitiveness. Although Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong have high secondary enrolment rates, career education tends to be emphasized as a way to overcome the problem of excessive academic competitiveness. We indicate that it is the excessive academic competitiveness in these countries that prevents the development of a more comprehensive career education programme. These situations also vary from country to country. For example, in Japan, the emergence of career education has begun to overhaul many years of excessive academic competition. On the other hand, the National Institute for Educational Research Policy (2013) reported that junior high school work experience is correlated with increased motivation to learn. There is a movement to overcome these challenges by showing a strong link

between academic achievement and career education.

### Discussion

An important point that emerges from this analysis is that it is important to raise secondary school enrollment rates in order to improve career education in some Asian countries. In some cases, the idea of good school, good company, and good life contributes to raising school enrollment rate, but this could also become a barrier to career education. This could be because students tend to use others' standards to define their own career development targets. This could arise from the collectivistic orientations of Asian cultures. At the same time excessive educational competition could prevent students from finding their own future defined by their own choices.

Future research in this area should consider a deeper analysis of the educational, cultural and socioeconomic situation of each country. It is also necessary to develop methodologies for comparative analysis of career education in Asian countries. The 2012 PISA supplementary survey gives us powerful suggestions to guide future research in Asia, keeping in mind that while Asian countries have many common features, they have very diverse cultural and historical backgrounds.

### Acknowledgements

Country reports were submitted by; Yuen, M. & Yau, F.S.Y., Tsui, J.Y.C., Tsang, J.C.T., & Lee, B.S.F. (Hong Kong); Arulmani, G.(India); Surya, M. (Indonesia); Saeid, S. M. (Iran); Fujita, T. (Japan); Lee, J.Y. (Korea); Krauss, S. (Malaysia); Abbas, R (Pakistan); Yin, T. S. (Singapore), and Tien, H. S. (Taiwan).

---

#### About the authors

**Hyuncheol Kim**, Senior Fellow, National Youth Policy Institute in Korea in Seoul, President of Asian Regional Association for Career Development (e-mail: demi1964@gmail.com)

**Takao Mimura**, Professor, Graduate School of Teacher Education, Waseda University in Tokyo, Vice-president of Asian Regional Association for Career Development (e-mail: mimura@waseda.jp)

---

## References

- Abbas, R. (2017). Pakistan: Overview and career education initiatives. *2017 NYPI and ARACD International Conference. Sejong: NYPI.*
- Arulmani, G. (2009). Career and livelihood planning: *Training manual*. Bangalore, India: Jiva Project, The Promise Foundation.
- Arulmani, G. (2015). A livelihoods approach to career guidance in Asia. *IAEVG International Conference in Japan, 2015.*
- Arulmani, G., Kumar, S. & Paul, J. (2017). Career education and job training in Asian countries: Country paper from India. *2017 NYPI & ARACD International Conference. Sejong: NYPI.*
- Fujita, T. (2017). Career education and vocational education and training in Japan. *NYPI & ARACD International Conference. Sejong: NYPI.*
- Kim, H., Baeck, H., & Lee, J. (2016/2017). *International comparison study on career experience activity of Asian youth. Sejong: NYPI.*
- Krauss, S. (2017). Career education and Vocational Education and Training in Malaysia. *2017 NYPI & ARACD International Conference. Sejong: NYPI.*
- Mimura, T. (2015). Career Education in Japan. *NYPI, the first Youth Forum in East-Northern Asia, 15-S09. Sejong: NYPI.*
- National Institute for Educational Research Policy. (2013). Comprehensive survey on career education and career guidance second report. [in Japanese]. Retrieved from [https://www.nier.go.jp/shido/centerhp/career\\_jittaityousa/pdf\\_2/rpt-all.pdf](https://www.nier.go.jp/shido/centerhp/career_jittaityousa/pdf_2/rpt-all.pdf)
- OECD. (2010), Learning for Jobs, OECD reviews of vocational education and training. OECD Publishing, Paris, 76. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264087460-en>.
- Saeid, S. M. & T., R. A. (2017). A report of technical and vocational training system in Iran. *2017 NYPI & ARACD International Conference. Sejong: NYPI.*
- Surya, M. (2017). Career education and guidance and vocational education and training: Indonesia Country Report. *2017 NYPI & ARACD International Conference. Sejong: NYPI.*
- Sweet, R., Nissinen, K. & Vuorinen, R. (2014). An analysis of the career development items in PISA 2012 and of their relationship to the characteristics of countries, schools, students and families. *The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network Research Paper No. 1.*
- Tien, H. S. (2017). Career Education in Taiwan. *2017 NYPI & ARACD International Conference. Sejong: NYPI.*
- Yin, T. S. (2017). Career Development in the Republic of Singapore. *2017 NYPI & ARACD International Conference. Sejong: NYPI.*
- Yuen, M. & Yau, F.S.Y., Tsui, J.Y.C., Tsang, J.C.T., & Lee, B.S.F. (2017). Career Education and Vocational Training in Hong Kong. *2017 NYPI & ARACD International Conference. Sejong: NYPI.*