International Comparative Study on the Research of History of Education

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Introduction

Hirst (1983), in “Educational Theory and its Foundation Disciplines,” divided educational foundation theory into four disciplines, as follows: history of education, philosophy of education, psychology of education, and sociology of education, according to Peters’ recommendation. Because these disciplines develop over time, the status and scientific nature of history of education are inconclusive, with the nature and body of knowledge in education remaining debatable.

Because history of education is one of the specific subjects in the study of history, compared to the emerging social science, its nature is relatively weak in teaching subjects of teacher education programs because of its emphasis on proven historical facts. However, it remains connected to current topics or issues by gathering information and data of past events and explaining their influence on modern education, and emphasizing the importance of tracing back to determine the effect of history on modern society.

This study explored the trend of research studies on history of education by analyzing statistics on keywords from the most representative journals with comprehensive articles in the six countries. Each researcher from the “education research comprehensive research team” under the leadership of Professor Yang, Shen-Keng selected a journal from 1990 to 2009 to demonstrate the trend and emphasis of these countries by analyzing most
frequent keywords in the journal. These journals were selected for the published history, contributing the accumulation of education research or the representative in education research. According to the research’s experience and prudent judgment who got the credential or be exchange scholar from the research country, the journal be analyzed has the relative validity.

The Development of History of Education

History of Education and Teacher Education Curriculum

Before the 21st century, both the history of education and psychology played vital roles in the development of teachers. The purpose of teaching history of education was to help students to understand the advantages and disadvantages of education systems in the past, and their transformation. In addition, through learning the life and personality of past great educationists, teachers can be motivated to cultivate the love and support of those educationists within themselves (Xu & Chou, 1997, p. 1). This indicates that education history as a main course is markedly related to the development of teacher education curriculum.

For the U.S., the content of American teacher education courses in the early stages included reading, writing, counting, spelling, geography, grammar, education history, education science, psychological science, and internship (Urban, 1990, pp. 61-62). Because the content of most of these courses was technically directed, numerous people at the time thought that education history and other subjects were guided by experience (Brubacher, 1990, p. 604). Because of their large number of technically directed courses, scholars such as Bestor (1985), Borrowman (1996), and Feiman-Nemser (1990) discussed and attempted to determine whether this type of curriculum allowed teachers to develop sufficient teaching abilities that included critical thinking and basic knowledge.

The history of education is one of the basic subjects of education and teacher education courses that also include philosophy of education, sociology of education, and psychology of education. Conant (1963, p. 127) suggested that the contents of these
courses often originate from history, philosophy, sociology, and psychology. However, these courses are instructed by professors who did not major in these subjects, resulting in courses that only attempt to differentiate between various schools of thought and theories, and are insufficient and weak in high-quality contents; therefore, they are not helpful for teachers who must have a comprehensive understanding and background of liberal arts and critical thinking ability. In the real-time teaching situation, teachers use experiences and skills, not knowledge, in educational theories (Koerner, 1963, p. 51). For a teacher, basic subjects of education, which include education history, are differ considerably from practical teaching competency.

Conversely, it was discussed whether pedagogy was a sufficient discipline to train future teachers. Broudy (1980, pp.441-451) proposed that pedagogy does not have the science foundation to build standard rules because educational theories are sprawled over other sciences. Because pedagogy cannot build a basic knowledge system, it is difficult to program teacher education curriculum. Consequently, the professional knowledge of teachers does not become a framework of knowledge systematically. Alternatively, Ritsch (1980, p. 409) proposed that education cannot become a systematic, methodical, or rigid discipline because it affects how humans think of ideologies, and also has an effect on our lives and extends our minds. Mialaret (1985, pp. 22-24) suggested that the content of pedagogy, education history, philosophy of education, sociology of education, and educational anthropology are factors of the manner in which society affects teachers and students; therefore, education history is one of the teaching sciences.

History of education and other educational basic subjects are regarded as the perspectives provided to train the personal education ideology of teachers. From the historical development point of view, scholars never overlook pedagogy when categorizing educational knowledge, including the knowledge of education history. For example, Olivera (1988) considers education history as an applied educational research, which is meant to understand the internal and external factors during the education process that affects the education system. Schwab (1964, pp. 16-17), when categorizing patterns of educational knowledge, regarded regular and established knowledge content as theoretical
disciplines, which can be used as the background knowledge to comprehend context. Shulman (1987, p. 8) classified educational knowledge, such as education purpose, value, and philosophy as the background knowledge of educational objectives. Even in the 21st century, Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2005) in "Preparing teachers for a changing world" suggested that teachers must hold knowledge about the learners and recognize their context of social development to understand the various learning and cultural backgrounds of students. From the perspective of historical development, when scholars categorize educational knowledge, they never ignore the importance of disciplines in educational foundation theory in education development of teachers, as well as the inspiration of education history on teachers who attempt to understand the difference in learning backgrounds of students by paying attention to the context of sociocultural development.

Compared to other countries, advanced normal practicum became one of teacher education subjects in Taiwan since the late Qing Dynasty. However, according to Chou (1998, p. 372), education history was changed over time from a required subject into an elective subject, and subsequently disappeared after 1987. Conversely, after the Teacher Education Act was implemented, education history was an option for elective subjects again in the education program of every school. During this process of development, the relationship between education history and teacher education courses turns from close to lose. In addition to decreasing student class hours, the fact that education history was less practical than other subjects was another reason that education history was omitted from teacher program courses. The connection between education history and practical teaching is the weakest among the four educational basic subjects. Therefore, it is worthy to examine whether education history will disappear from the Taiwan academic community in the future by losing its protection of teacher education courses.

The Research for Education History in Taiwan

Chia (1993) indicated that one of the reasons that pedagogy is not fully established is that it lacks unique research methods. However, Yang (1987, p. 15) suggested that, to establish education science, we must not depend on traditional scientific research methods,
and instead use education, which is composed of multiple disciplines and has multilevel and multimodality patterns, as the core idea and establish trans-subjective communication with other subjects. Education history has blended contents of history, society, philosophy, and education, and its unique research method is based on historical research methods. For example, Lee (1999) and Lee (2004) introduced and achieved research standard for historical research, such as research method for expanding education history and research trend of education history. In the research on the development of education history in England, Chou (1994) analyzed the development of teacher education courses related to education history, development of institute of education history, and the trend of education history research. He indicated that, in England’s context, research goals extend from teacher education to academic research; research orientations switch from older history to modern history; research topics change from exclusive to diverse; research methods of social science are applied in the framework of theories; research methods cover historical data research to statistical analysis; historical resources used for research include non-historical documents; time period used in research spreads to present day; and organizations replaced single scholars as the main researchers and formed academic communities.

In addition, Chou (1999, p. 168) used documentary analysis to execute quantitative analysis on research works from 1949 to 1998 in Taiwan. He analyzed 826 treatises in National Teacher Normal University Library Information System by categories, theses, published time, and forms. Based on his research, Chou suggested the following: 1. attempt to adopt people’s history for research orientations to broaden the scope; 2. attempt to integrate modern social sciences into research theories; 3. narrating can also be used as a method for conducting research on people’s history; 4. expand the range of research topics and conduct comparative research of history; 5. historical references must include historical records or documents, and non-documentary data, such as cultural heritage and folklores; and 6. historical theories can be used as the academic basis for education history (Chou, 1999, p. 188). Moreover, to add to his research in 1999, Chou (2003) published “A Study on the Development of the Study of History of Education in Taiwan (1949-2002)” to
fill in the gap of education history from 1998 to 2002.

By example of Chou’s research, although the application of historical research methods is unique and common in education history, quantitative analysis and comparative study on education history were also integrated into the research in recent years. Research topics tend to diversify, and non-documentary data are emphasized. Under this trend, we aimed to determine the research development of education history in the fringe of being marginalized in teacher education courses, and implement the comparative study by quantitative analysis to identify the international developing trend of education history.

Research Method

Keywords in the articles were calculated to find the trend of education history in published journals. To compare the trend in these countries, a representative journal (Table 1) from each country was selected by different researchers. For the initial year of 1990, different journals were selected for 1990-2009. However, during 2000-2009, consensuses in the U.K. and Japan were reached by researchers who discussed various conditions of journals in more than 10 meetings.

Table 1
List of Journals Selected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The United States</td>
<td>Harvard Educational Review</td>
<td>1990-2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The United Kingdom</td>
<td>Educational Research</td>
<td>2000-2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für Pädagogik</td>
<td>1990-2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australian Journal of Education</td>
<td>1990-2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies</td>
<td>1990-2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, the number of articles in categories of educational foundation theory was counted in the U.S., U.K., Germany, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan to analyze the
trend of research studies. Second, in the framework of keywords (Table 2), researchers counted keywords in the articles of selected journal. The illustration for the trend of history education was made according to the amount of keywords determined by the researcher. As one of the educational foundation theories, along with philosophy of education, psychology of education, and sociology of education, history of education was also included to value its importance on educational studies.

Table 2
Framework of Key Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Key words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational foundation theory</td>
<td>History of school, History of education system, History of teacher, History of curriculum, History of gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of education</td>
<td>Nature of pedagogy, Analysis of educational conception, Meta-modern, Justice, Power, Phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy of education</td>
<td>Learning theory, Motive theory, Development, Teaching theory, Cognition theory, Behavior, Intelligence, Student-Teacher interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology of education</td>
<td>Sociology of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socialization, School and society, Educational opportunity, Education and ethnicity, Family, Educational involvement, Social stratification, Career option, Educational expansion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Profile on History of Education

United States

The “Harvard Educational Review” (HER) was selected as representative journal for analysis in America. The HER was established in 1930 by Harvard University, with four issues per year. The HER is a scholarly journal of opinion and research in education, and is one of the most prestigious journals of education in U.S. Total number of keywords of educational foundation theory is 127 of 494 articles analyzed in HER. The research studies of educational foundation theory in 1990-2009 are as the Figure 1.

![Harvard Educational Review](image)

**Figure 1** the key word statistics of Harvard Educational Review

As shown in this chart, among the four foundation theories of education, articles related to history of education were published the least in HER from 1990 to 1999, and
was not published at all during 2000-2009, indicating that this topic was omitted from academic discussion in the U.S, whereas the number of psychology of education increased considerably from 2000 to 2009.

United Kingdom

“Educational Research” (ER) was selected as the representative journal in UK. In 1958, ER was established by National Foundation for Education Research, which was established in 1946 to conduct educational research, review educational training programs, and provide various informations on education with its own database, because it also collects educational data for Eurydice (networks on education systems and policies in Europe) in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The ER is a leading forum for informed thinking on issues of contemporary concern in education. It published 3 issues per year in the beginning, and 4 issues per year since 2007. Since the second issue in 1995 (Vol. 37, no. 2), it provides keywords mentioned in the articles after summaries. Total number of keywords of educational foundation theory is 28 of 228 articles analyzed in ER. The research studies in 2000-2009 are as shown in Fig as Figure 2.

![Figure 2](image-url)  the keyword statistics of Educational Research
According to the statistics on RE, the number of psychology of education in research studies is the highest; however, history of education was not discussed in the studies.

**Germany**

"Zeitschrift für Pädagogik" (ZuP) was selected as representative journal in Germany. Total number of keywords of educational foundation theory is 43 of 274 articles analyzed in ER. The research studies in 1990-2009 are as shown in the following Figure 3:

![Figure 3: The keyword statistics of Zeitschrift für Pädagogik](image)

The analysis on ZuP demonstrated that the number of history of education in research studies is second to last, more than sociology of education, but has been declining in recent years.

**Australia**

"Australian Journal of Education" (AJE) was selected as the representative journal in Australia. The AJE was established by Australian Council for Education Research in 1957, with three issues per year in April, August, and November. The AJE is a leader in provision
of quality educational research, both in Australia and internationally. Total number of keywords of educational foundation theory is 134 of 328 articles analyzed in AJE. The research studies in 1990-2009 are as shown in the following Figure 4.

![Australian Journal of Education](chart.png)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>History of education</th>
<th>Philosophy of education</th>
<th>Psychology of education</th>
<th>Sociology of education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-2009</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4** the keyword statistics of Australian Journal of Education

The results of statistics on AJE reveal that history of education is considerably less emphasized in Australia compared to other educational foundation theories.

4.5 New Zealand

The “New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies” (NZJES) was selected as representative journal for analysis in New Zealand. The NZJES was established in 1966 by the New Zealand Association for Research in Education and the New Zealand Council for Education Research, with two issues per year. The NZJES is both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary in approach. Total number of keywords of educational foundation theory was 21 of 207 articles analyzed in NZJES. The research studies of educational foundation theory in 1997-2009 are as Figure 5.
In contrast to the results from other countries, the analysis demonstrates that the number of research studies in history of education is highest on NZJES.

Japan

The “Journal of Education Studies” (JES) was selected as the representative journal for analysis in Japan. The JES was established in 1932 by Japan Association for Research in Education, which is a large and important organization in Japan, with three issues per year. Total number of keywords of educational foundation theory was 39 of 207 articles analyzed in JES. The research studies of educational foundation theory in 2000-2009 are as shown in the following Figure 6.
Figure 6  the keyword statistics of Journal of Education Studies

This chart shows a comparison between the two theories; history of education appeared only once on the keyword count in JES during 2000-2009, whereas sociology of education appeared 29 times, and was also the topic in most of the articles.

The combined number of research studies (as Figure 7) in these countries shows that history of education is the least-advantaged discipline in educational foundation theory. Relatively, sociology of education was the most popular field of educational foundation theory in 1990s and 2000s.
Figure 7  the percentage of four disciplines of educational foundation theory

The statistical result of the four disciplines can be frustrating and depressing for those who are interested in history of education and plan to master in this field. The apparent developing trend in these countries caused us to question the events surrounding the history of education, which is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Analysis on keywords

According to framework of keywords, statistics on history of education is as follows (Table 3):
Table 3  
Frequency distribution on fields of history of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Keyword</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>U.K.</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Sum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History of school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of school institution</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of teacher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of curriculum</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of gender</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table, history of school institution is the most popular field of study in this discipline. Although history of gender is the second popular field, a large gap exists between the two fields. Therefore, history of school institution is the most attractive topic for researchers to study.

Discussion

History of education is at a disadvantage in education disciplines according to the amount of articles in educational foundation theory or by the quantity of keywords in those countries studied. The trend of research studies and selective subject in the teacher education program causes few researchers to list history of education as an academic major or to teach history of education in university. Even if history of education, as one of the educational foundation theories, is available in context as one category of knowledge for future teachers, it loses its impact on student teachers in the trend of international comparison.

History of education is one of the main subjects taught in normal schools to prepare
teachers. Does studying history of education make teachers more effective? As stated in the preface of “American Education: A History” by Urban & Wagoner (2000, p. xvii), “Does it really make any difference if we understand what has happened in the past? For that matter, with our postmodern consciousness, can we really know what happened in the past and why things have happened as they did?” Even if student teachers make sense of the past, can they be good teachers? Concerns brought by these questions represent attempts to make sense of the past from the perspective of the present to distinguish facts from beliefs. History makes it possible for student teachers to learn a variety of political and philosophical material that would speak directly to some of the dilemmas and contradictions. It is also believed that, by understanding the past, people can see their present more clearly, which reinforces conventional wisdom (Urban & Wagoner, 2000, p. xix). Additionally, by studying the thoughts of great educators, student teachers can establish the fundamentals of teaching and cultivate the love of education (Hsu & Chou, 1997, p. 1). However, history involves intellectual thoughts of conflicting interpretations, and issues or reflections on emotions and images, which all have crucial influence on future choices and actions of teachers.

However, it is difficult to define such influences with substantial evidence of validity. For example, even though history is designed to comprehend events of the past, it may be biased or misunderstood by the people in the present. Especially in politics and economics, pressures can markedly influence the interpretations in the history of education by authors who place ongoing debates of knowledge about reality into records. Even if history of school institution is an attractive topic, it has a continuing debate about the political, social, and economic contents of schooling. As stated by Spring (1997, p. 3), this type of ideological maneuver involves the creation and distribution of knowledge in the society that student teachers must be aware of to distinguish between truth and fabrication. However, no evidence is available to prove whether teachers learned to differentiate ideological maneuver from facts by studying history of education or by the other three disciplines, or even other subjects. This focus must be studied to emphasize the importance and value that history of education offers for student teachers to learn and study.
Conclusion

Based on the discussions, this study offers the following conclusions:

1. History of education is marginalized gradually across the globe as a teaching subject. In the case of Taiwan, it has been reduced from requirement credit to non-existent in the teacher education program. History of education became a selective credit since the Teacher Education Act of 1994.

2. History of education can be changed from a disadvantaged subject in the teacher education program into a specific academic subject. Although history of education is increasingly ignored, it has status, value, and importance in nurturing future teachers and raising their social awareness of ideological conflicts. As one category of the educational knowledge, it can also be a specific academic subject for scholars to research.

3. As mentioned in this paper, the developing trend in researching history of education is becoming more multidimensional in research methods, topics, perspectives, and data.

4. According to the statistics of represented journals in selected countries during the last 20 years, history of education falls into last position in regard to keywords compared to other disciplines in educational foundation theory. Consequently, history of education is a less emphasized study subject in the international developing trend of education.

5. This research used keywords analysis on the representative journals from selected countries; however, because these journals included research papers from other educational fields as well, other journals that are more dedicated to educational foundation theory may be available in each country. Thus, the lower number of studies on history of education in the represented journals does not indicate that it is paid less attention in the selected countries. To prove whether this hypothesis is true, more quantitative analysis from various types of journals, including specialized journals, are required to prove whether this hypothesis is true.

6. This research revealed only the trend of quantitative development of education
history and educational foundation theory in selected countries by accounting keywords; however, to fully understand the multidimensional characteristic of international research trend, it is crucial to analyze the topics and the research to determine whether research methods, topics, perspectives and data used are multidimensional.

7. From the quantitative analysis of education history and other disciplines in educational foundation theory, educational emphasis differs from country to country. This may be attributed to journals selected or the distinction of focus on education in each country traditionally. For example, Germany, which started educational research a long before other countries, has relatively fewer research papers on history of education. However, in New Zealand, where practical teaching is more emphasized, research papers on history of education accounted for more than other educational disciplines. Further detailed analysis is required to determine the reason for this phenomenon.

8. Because the researcher is limited by foreign language barriers, he must rely on other researchers who are fluent in the language of countries selected to conduct the quantitative analysis. This may be part of the reason that the total number of keywords counted in every country is so far apart. To obtain more accurate numbers and to enable easier international comparative research, counting method and rules can be discussed in more detail for researchers to follow during analysis.
Reference


