

Career Education during the School Years and Young Peoples' Occupational Lives

Summary

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Overview

In this study, we surveyed approximately 4,000 young people between the ages of 23 and 27 to ask their opinions of the career education they received during their school years, and to ask about their memories of the classes and events regarding occupations and career paths held while they were in school, as well as how these opinions and memories are related to their careers after graduation, current employment status and employment awareness, among others. In addition, we conducted an analysis using free response data as well as an analysis to clarify how career education is related to the education and labor indices provided in regional areas. Based on the results of the survey, we provided suggestions on how future career education should be linked to

labor administration with a view to promoting career education within the scope of labor administration.

1. Purpose of Study

As we enter the age of full-fledged career education, the measurement of its effects and evaluation becomes a very important issue. Of the various perspectives regarding the effectiveness and effects of career education, it is especially important to look at this issue from the medium- to long-term perspective on how career education provided at the school stage influences subsequent career development or occupational life, given that career education is provided at the preliminary stage of future career development. However, there have been few studies conducted in Japan employing such a perspective. Within the labor administration, there is interest in the possibility of career education influencing the subsequent labor market and the demand and supply of labor, and priority is placed on this possibility. Therefore, the interest is not in the short-term effects of career education but in its medium- to long-term effects from the viewpoint of the occupational lives of individuals after they enter the labor market.

There are problems, however, in analyzing and examining the relationship between career education and subsequent occupational lives. One of the problems is that it is difficult to collect large amounts of data by employing the method of follow-up studies of people after they graduate from school, in terms of cost and the period of study. It is also difficult to extract the effects of career education because occupational lives are influenced not only by career education but also by various other experiences.

By employing the above-mentioned method, this survey research provides suggestions from various angles on how and in what aspects career education during the school years is related to the occupational lives of young people in concrete terms, and examines the effectiveness of medium- to long-term career education, among others.

2. Method of Study and Overview of Collected Data

(1) People Surveyed

We surveyed young people around the age of 25 (from 23 to 27). We decided to survey those around 25 for the following two reasons: (i) people who were in junior high school during the late 1990s when career education became common are now reaching their mid-20s; and (ii) three years have passed since they graduated from college/university, and it can be considered that this serves as a turning point in evaluating their transition from school to society and settlement in society. With the objective of

examining regional differences within Japan, we decided to secure at least 30 respondents from each prefecture. We also paid due diligence to ensure the absence of extreme bias by sex, educational background, and occupation, among others.

(2) Surveyed Items

- Basic attributes (sex, current and past places of residence, age) of respondents
- Career after graduation (whether they engaged in job hunting activities, their paths after graduation, experience of leaving or switching jobs)
- Current occupation (working hours, wage, type of industry/job)
- Career education and career guidance received during school years (impression and memories of career education received during school years)
- Experience during school years that respondents find useful in their current occupational lives (free response)
- Learning through work experience, career guidance at high school, career consultation and counseling
- Current awareness about life and occupation (satisfaction, self-esteem, troubles), etc.

(3) Survey Method

We conducted the survey from February to March 2010. Through research company, we distributed surveys by mail to their registered respondents, and asked them to return the surveys. In the end, we were able to collect surveys from 5,576 respondents (1,932 male and 3,643 female) between the ages of 23 and 27. However, because we gave priority to securing at least 30 respondents from each prefecture, the male-female ratio of the respondents who returned the surveys was 35:65. Since the female ratio was quite high, we randomly re-sampled 2,000 surveys from the female respondents to make the male-female ratio close to 1:1, and used data from 3,932 people for subsequent analysis.

(4) Overview of Collected Data

As a result of the above-mentioned re-sampling, the male-female ratio was approximately 1:1 for each age, although there was slight variance in age and sex (see Table 1). Regarding educational background, the ratio of respondents in this survey who have graduated from “college/university or graduate school” was higher and “high school” lower compared with the ratio of respondents by educational background in the Employment Status Survey 2007. This is one point to keep in mind when interpreting

the survey results of this report. There was no distortion in the ratio of respondents by educational background across the age groups. We also examined the respondents' current positions at work, and no extreme distortion was found in comparison with the data of the respondents of the same age group surveyed in the Labour Force Survey 2008.

Table 1 Breakdown of survey respondents by sex and age

	23	24	25	26	27	Total
Male	179	241	393	506	608	1,927
	52.2%	45.2%	52.8%	48.9%	48.1%	49.2%
Female	164	292	351	528	656	1,991
	47.8%	54.8%	47.2%	51.1%	51.9%	50.8%
Total	343	553	744	1,034	1,264	3,918
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*In addition to the above, there were 14 respondents whose ages were unknown.

3. Results of Study – Main Contents of Each Chapter

(1) Main Contents of “Chapter 2: Opinion of Career Education Received during School Years”

In Chapter 2, we examined the overall impression and opinions of career education received in junior high school and high school. The ratio of respondents who “remember” the career education received in junior high school was approximately 30%, which include those who “remember quite well” and “somewhat remember” the career education they received. This ratio was approximately 40% regarding career education received during high school (see Figure 1). As a result of the examination of the differences by sex, age, and region, a difference by age emerged, whereby the younger the respondents were, the better they remembered the career education.

When respondents were asked whether the career education received in junior high school and high school has been “useful,” the largest number of respondents replied that “it has hardly been useful” about both junior high school and high school, each accounting for about 30% of the total replies. The ratio of respondents who replied that “it has been useful” was approximately 20% and 25% for education received in junior high school and high school, respectively (see Figure 2).

Figure 1 Ratio of respondents who remember what they learned about career paths and occupations in junior high and high school

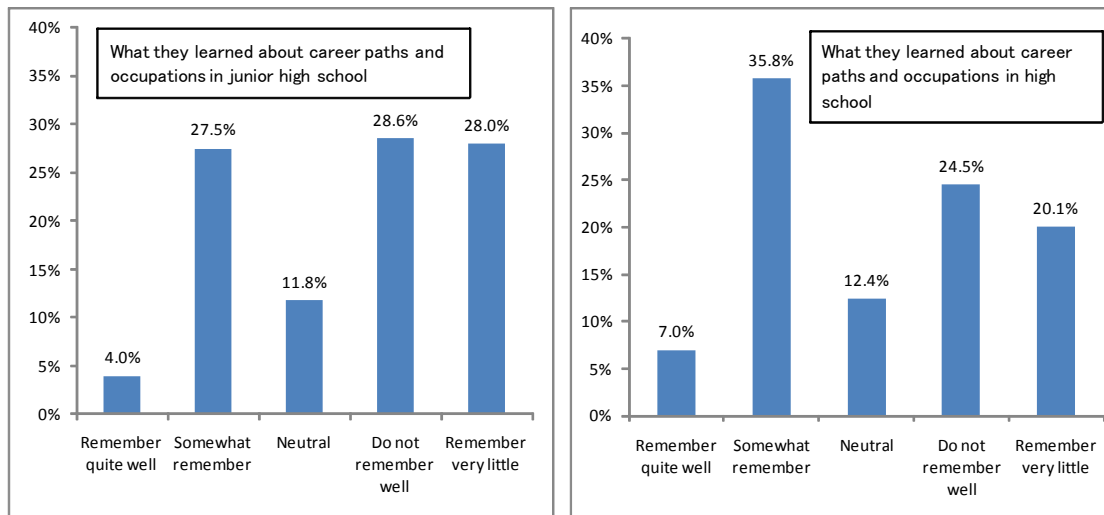
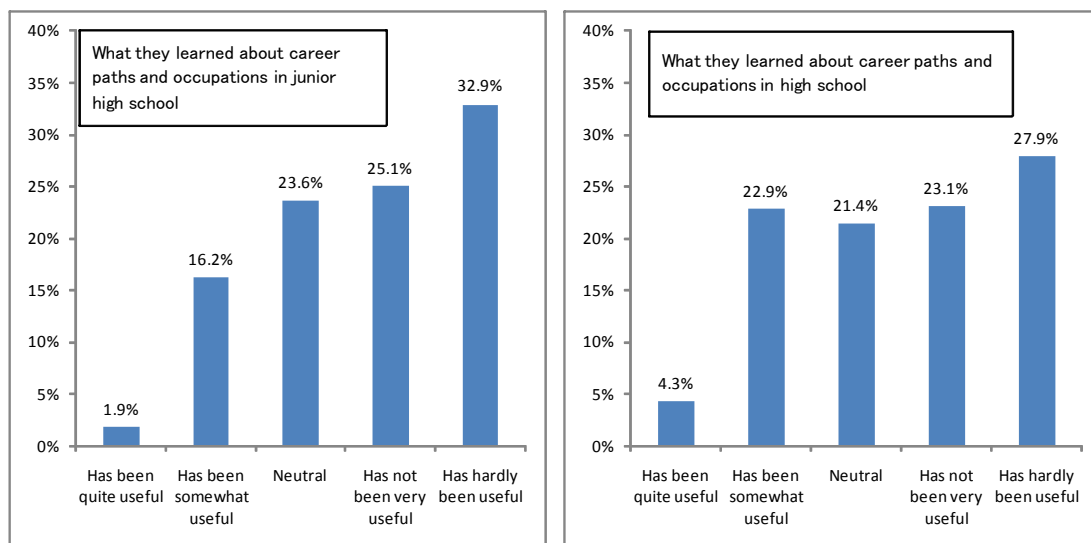


Figure 2 Ratio of respondents who find that what they learned about career paths and occupations in junior high and high school has been useful



Regarding the classes and events related to career education held during their school years, there was a similarity between what the respondents remember about junior high school and high school in that they remember the teacher-student meetings and parent-teacher-student meetings. As for junior high school, many respondents remember the hands-on activities such as volunteer work and the classes in which they listened to lectures by professionals. On the other hand, as for high school, the ratio of respondents who remember things such as individual consultation and counseling, and interest and aptitude tests was higher. Regarding college/university, in the same way as

high school, many respondents remember things such as interest and aptitude tests, but a high ratio of respondents remember more concrete things; namely, receiving instructions on how to proceed with job hunting activities and how to write resumes, and attending classes about job interviews and preparation for employment examinations (see Table 2).

Table 2 Ratio of respondents who remember each item as part of classes and events held in junior high and high school, college/university, etc.

	Junior high school	High school	College, university, etc.	Items considered important in junior high school	Items considered important in high school	Items considered important in college/university	Other
Tests such as interest tests and aptitude tests	19.3%	33.5%	44.0%			○	
Tests to understand one's own personality	21.7%	32.7%	42.4%			○	
Classes in which students research occupations and jobs	31.1%	21.8%	21.5%	○			
Classes in which students listen to lectures by professionals or people in the area about work	31.5%	15.1%	18.4%				○
Learning through work experience and internships	26.3%	11.7%	30.6%				○
Hands-on activities such as volunteer work	31.9%	20.2%	15.5%	○			
Teacher-student meetings and parent-teacher-student meetings regarding career paths	68.1%	80.2%	17.7%		○		
Individual consultation and counseling regarding career paths	22.3%	41.6%	29.1%		○		
Classes in which students think about objectives and plans regarding career paths	18.9%	31.9%	18.6%		○		
Practice in resume writing and job interviews	11.3%	25.5%	47.9%			○	
Classes on how to proceed with job hunting activities and preparation for employment examinations	4.5%	16.5%	48.5%			○	
Classes in which students learn about communication and manners	5.8%	14.8%	32.5%			○	
Classes about labor laws (laws related to work)	3.5%	7.7%	21.4%			○	

*The numbers indicate the ratio of respondents who replied that they remember the items. The top three items at each school stage are shaded.

The "items considered important in junior high school, high school, college/university" show the tendencies of the replies as determined from the percentages expressed in the table.

(2) Main Contents of “Chapter 3: Relationship between Career Education Received during School Years and Career after Graduation”

In Chapter 3, we examined the relationship between career education received during the school years and career after graduation. The conclusions of this chapter are summarized in two points. First, respondents who have followed “linear” career paths such as those who are college graduates who were employed as regular workers immediately after graduation, and have no experience of working as non-regular workers or switching jobs had high opinions of the career education received in junior high school and high school. Second, respondents who have not followed the “linear” career paths in some way had low opinions in general of the career education received in junior high school and high school (see Table 3). For people who had the possibility of following “linear” career paths, it was college/university or other institutions that served as the place to learn the most about future career paths or occupations, and for people who had the possibility of following “non-linear” paths, it was junior high and high school. We therefore suggested that it was necessary to provide indirect support for career education that is appropriate for each group.

Table 3 Opinion of career education received in high school seen by career type after graduation

Whether respondents remember the career education they received					Whether respondents find the career education they received useful				
Educational background	Type of employment immediately after graduation	Experience of working as a non-regular worker	Experience of switching jobs	Ratio of respondents who remember the career education they received	Educational background	Type of employment immediately after graduation	Experience of working as a non-regular worker	Experience of switching jobs	Ratio of respondents who useful the career education they received
University graduate	Regular worker	No	No	48.3%	Non-university graduate	Regular worker	No	Yes	33.5%
University graduate	Non-regular worker	less than 3 years	Yes	47.5%	Non-university graduate	Regular worker	3 years or more	Yes	32.4%
Non-university graduate	Regular worker	No	Yes	46.1%	University graduate	Non-regular worker	less than 3 years	Yes	30.5%
University graduate	Regular worker	less than 3 years	No	43.2%	University graduate	Regular worker	No	No	30.3%
Total				43.0%	Total				26.6%
University graduate	Regular worker	No	Yes	42.8%	University graduate	Regular worker	No	Yes	26.1%
University graduate	Non-regular worker	less than 3 years	No	42.0%	Non-university graduate	Non-regular worker	less than 3 years	Yes	25.2%
University graduate	Non-regular worker	3 years or more	No	41.5%	University graduate	Non-regular worker	3 years or more	No	24.6%
Non-university graduate	Regular worker	3 years or more	Yes	40.8%	University graduate	Non-regular worker	less than 3 years	No	24.4%
Non-university graduate	Non-regular worker	less than 3 years	Yes	40.3%	University graduate	Regular worker	less than 3 years	No	24.3%
Non-university graduate	Non-regular worker	3 years or more	No	38.4%	Non-university graduate	Non-regular worker	3 years or more	No	22.1%
University graduate	Unemployed	No	No	36.8%	University graduate	Non-regular worker	3 years or more	Yes	19.5%
University graduate	Regular worker	less than 3 years	Yes	36.0%	Non-university graduate	Non-regular worker	less than 3 years	No	17.7%
University graduate	Non-regular worker	3 years or more	Yes	34.1%	Non-university graduate	Non-regular worker	3 years or more	Yes	17.6%
Non-university graduate	Non-regular worker	less than 3 years	No	32.3%	Non-university graduate	Unemployed	less than 3 years	No	16.1%
University graduate	Unemployed	less than 3 years	No	31.5%	University graduate	Unemployed	No	No	15.8%
Non-university graduate	Non-regular worker	3 years or more	Yes	27.9%	University graduate	Regular worker	less than 3 years	Yes	12.7%
Non-university graduate	Unemployed	less than 3 years	No	19.4%	University graduate	Unemployed	less than 3 years	No	11.1%

(3) Main Contents of “Chapter 4: Relationship between Career Education Received during School Years and Current Employment Status”

In Chapter 4, we examined the relationship between career education received during the school years and current employment status and employment awareness. The results showed that in general, respondents who have comparatively high incomes, and are working in industries such as transport, postal services, education and learning support, medicine and welfare, and engaged in professional, technical or managerial

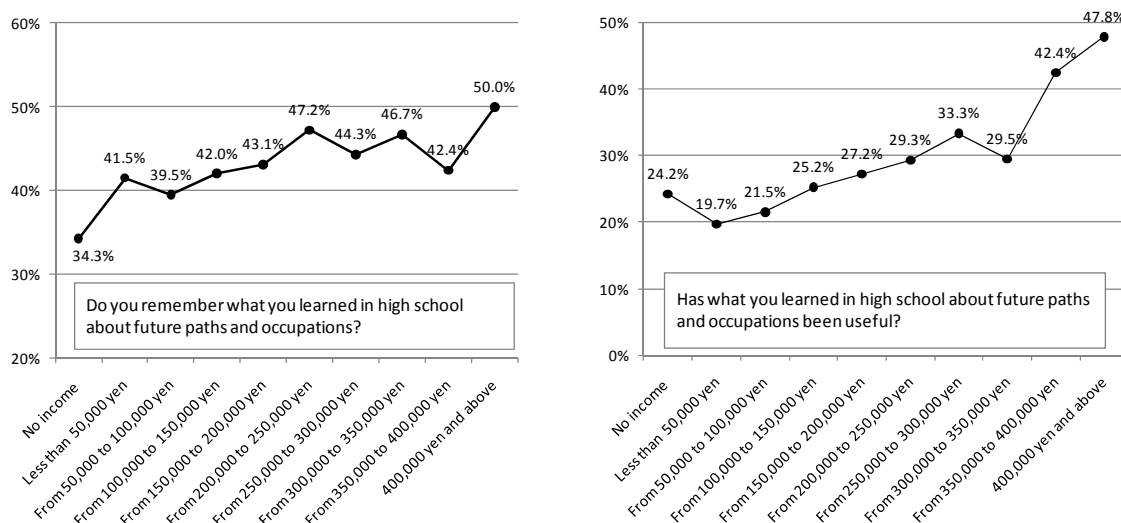
positions, and have no experience of working as non-regular workers had high opinions of the career education they received during their school years. On the other hand, respondents who are currently not employed or are looking for work, those working as temporary workers or part-time workers, those who were not employed immediately after graduation and only have experience as non-regular workers, and those whose current occupations are in the production process or construction fields had overall low opinions of the career education they received during their school years (see Table 4 Table 4 and Figure 3).

Table 4 Classes and events held during school years that respondents remember seen by current occupational position

		Regular worker, Self-employed worker N=238	Non-regular worker N=827	Housewife N=430	Unemployed, Other N=268
Junior high school	Hands-on activities such as volunteer work	33.8%	30.1%	30.7%	<u>22.0%</u>
	Practice in resume writing and job interviews	<u>9.7%</u>	12.7%	13.7%	16.0%
High school	Learning through work experience and internships	<u>10.4%</u>	13.7%	16.0%	10.4%
	Teacher-student meetings and parent-teacher-student meetings regarding career paths	81.4%	79.8%	80.2%	<u>71.6%</u>
	Individual consultation and counseling regarding career paths	41.3%	43.7%	44.0%	<u>32.1%</u>
	Practice in resume writing and job interviews	<u>22.7%</u>	28.3%	36.5%	24.3%
College/university	Classes on how to proceed with job hunting activities and preparation for employment examinations	<u>15.2%</u>	17.9%	22.6%	13.8%
	Classes in which students learn about communication and manners	<u>13.8%</u>	16.3%	19.5%	11.6%
	Classes about labor laws (laws related to work)	<u>6.7%</u>	8.6%	11.2%	8.6%
	Tests such as interest tests and aptitude tests	48.2%	<u>39.4%</u>	<u>35.3%</u>	<u>32.1%</u>
College/university	Tests to understand one's own personality	47.4%	<u>35.9%</u>	<u>31.4%</u>	<u>32.8%</u>
	Classes in which students research occupations and jobs	23.6%	19.3%	18.4%	<u>14.6%</u>
	Learning through work experience and internships	34.1%	<u>25.0%</u>	<u>26.3%</u>	<u>21.3%</u>
	Practice in resume writing and job interviews	51.6%	45.2%	<u>37.9%</u>	<u>37.7%</u>
	Classes on how to proceed with job hunting activities and preparation for employment examinations	53.0%	<u>44.5%</u>	<u>38.1%</u>	<u>37.3%</u>
	Classes about labor laws (laws related to work)	23.7%	<u>19.0%</u>	<u>14.9%</u>	19.4%

※All the figures are statistically significant at the significance level of 1%. As a result of residual analysis, the statistically significant high numbers are shaded, and statistically low numbers are underlined.

Figure 3 Opinion of career education received in high school seen by average monthly income



If we interpret this to mean that those who remember the career education received during their school years well and learned many things from it are currently following “linear” and “privileged” career paths, career education at school is an important factor that greatly influences the future occupational lives of young people. Therefore, we can suggest that the educational environment for career education at school should be further enhanced so that more young people are able to learn much from career education.

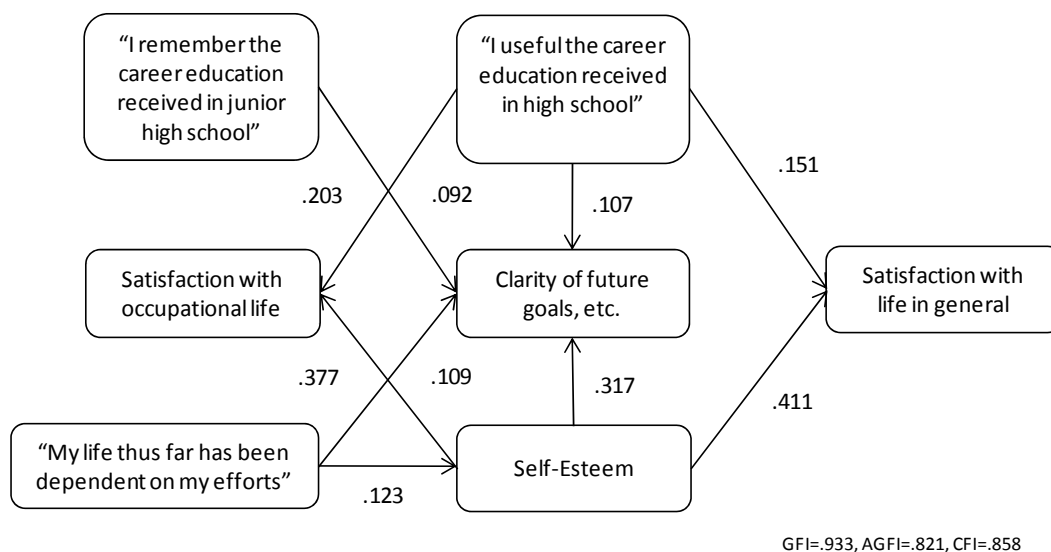
On the other hand, it can be considered that the conclusions of this chapter suggest that it is necessary to provide some form of support for career development to those who are unemployed, looking for work, or non-regular workers so that they will find it more useful. We suggested that it was desirable that career education should be provided at the school stage that would serve as a foundation for people to take the initiative to develop their own careers and lead full occupational lives in the long term, even when their careers include periods that are not “linear” or cannot be called “privileged.”

(4) Main Contents of “Chapter 5: Relationship between Career Education Received during School Years and Current Employment Awareness”

We examined the relationship between current employment awareness and opinion of career education received during the school years. The results showed that as a whole, career education is closely related to such factors as satisfaction with current life in general, satisfaction with past occupational life, clarity of future goals, and self-esteem.

After examining the relationship model between current employment awareness and opinions on career education received during the school years, we found out the following: (i) the respondent’s opinion that the career education received in high school has been “useful” had an overall influence on their satisfaction with occupational life, the clarity of future goals and other factors, and their satisfaction with life in general; (ii) the respondent’s self-esteem also had an overall influence on their satisfaction with occupational life, the clarity of future goals and other factors, and their satisfaction with life in general; (iii) the respondent’s sense that his/her life thus far has been dependent on his/her own efforts had an influence on the clarity of future goals and self-esteem; and (iv) whether the respondent “remembers” the career education they received during junior high school also had an influence on the clarity of future goals (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 Relationship model between current employment awareness and opinion of career education received during school years (estimate based on covariance structure analysis)



These results indicate that career education received during the school years is basically broadly related to the person’s current satisfaction and the clarity of future goals and other factors, and that the person’s self-esteem is an important factor that underpins their current satisfaction and the clarity of future goals.

Traditionally, career education has often only items related to career and finding employment as guidance goals. However, with a focus placed on the fact that a young person’s fundamental self-esteem has an overall influence on their employment awareness, we suggested that it was appropriate that some form of pioneering discussion should take place about issues such as how such self-esteem will be (or will

not be) incorporated into career education, and what kind of indirect support can be provided from the labor administration side.

(5) Main Contents of “Chapter 6: Relationship between Career Education Received during School Years and School and Family Life”

In Chapter 6, we examined the relationship between school and family life and career education received during the school years. The results of the examination indicated several points. First, in general, the better the respondents were adjusted to school, the higher their opinions were about the career education they received during the school years. Especially regarding junior high and high school, the fact that “there were teachers they were able to talk to” was strongly related to their opinions of career education (see Table 5). Second, young people who were successful in their job hunting activities, who did not drop out of school, and who feel that the knowledge they learned in school is useful in their current jobs had higher opinions of the career education received during the school years. Third, respondents who had better family lives had higher opinions of career education received during the school years. In particular, respondents who talked with their families about the future, such as those who talked about what happened at school or about their future with their families had higher opinions of the career education they received during their school years.

Based on these results, as one way for labor administration to engage in career education, we suggested that it was necessary to enhance closer coordination with career education provided during the school years, and always make available support for career development for those who were not able to learn sufficiently from the career education provided at school to compensate for the insufficiencies.

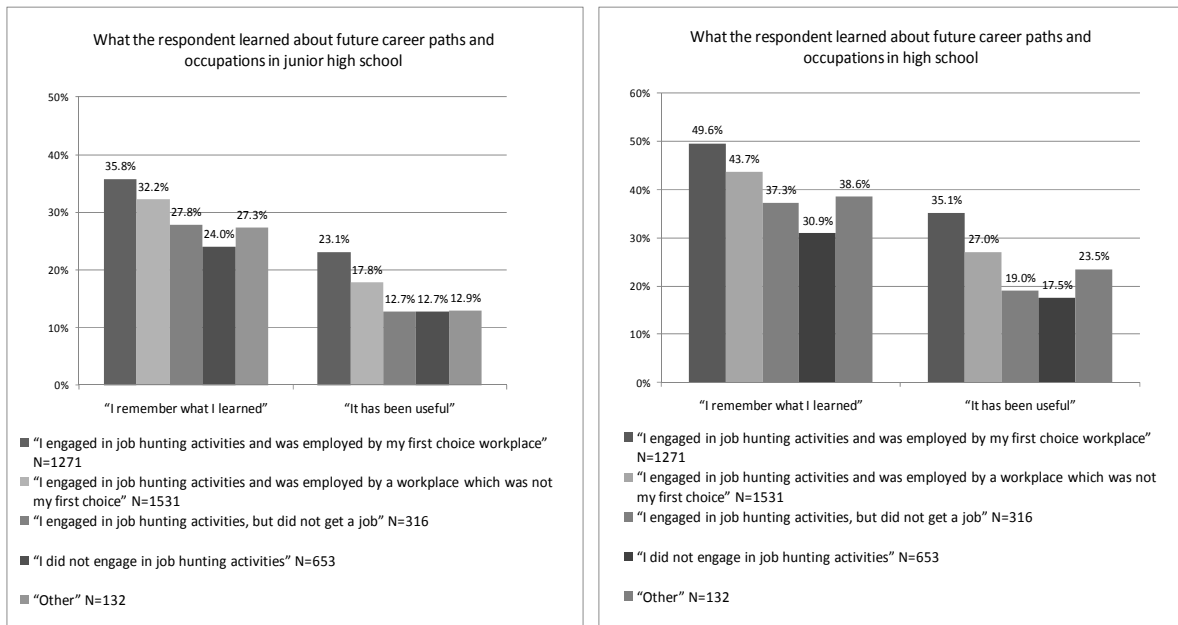
Table 5 Relationship between school life and opinion of career education

Junior high school	What the respondent learned about future career paths and occupations		High school	What the respondent learned about future career paths and occupations	
	“Do you remember what you learned?”	“Has it been useful?”		“Do you remember what you learned?”	“Has it been useful?”
“I had a teacher I liked”	.153	.156	“I had a teacher I liked”	.184	.193
“I had a teacher I could talk to”	.188	.233	“I had a teacher I could talk to”	.218	.229
“I was often absent from school”	-.017	-.034	“I was often absent from school”	-.102	-.097
“I studied a lot at home”	.162	.136	“I studied a lot at home”	.210	.169
“I had many friends”	.169	.143	“I had many friends”	.180	.170
“I was bullied”	.012	-.016	“I was bullied”	.003	.005
“I devoted myself to school club activities”	.107	.118	“I devoted myself to school club activities”	.161	.157
“School was fun”	.129	.147	“School was fun”	.188	.193

*The figures are rank correlation coefficients. Correlation coefficients that are statistically significant at the significance level of 1% are shaded. The largest correlation coefficient in each column is shown in bold.

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Figure 5 Opinion of career education during school years by type and result of job hunting activities at graduation



(6) Main Contents of “Chapter 7: Analysis of Free Response Data regarding Career Education during School Years”

In Chapter 7, we analyzed the free response data about things that happened in school including elementary, junior high and high school, and college/university, which the respondents thought were related to their current occupational lives (see Table 6).

The results led to several findings. First, through the analysis of chronological change in the free responses, we obtained basic findings in each stage of school that are related to occupational lives. In concrete terms, the results showed that over the years, (i) a broader circle of people have been involved and the activities have expanded, and (ii) the meanings of identical words and phrases have changed. Second, when respondents were asked to recall their experiences during their school years from the standpoint of their current occupational lives, some mentioned “career education” provided in class. However, the results showed a tendency for them to consider experiences such as part time work an “event that is related to current occupational life” to a greater degree; such experiences include activities through which they can learn the basic rules for leading their lives, and has the effect of teaching social rules that are related to occupational life. Third, (i) when asked when the “time in life that is most related to the current occupation” was, approximately 70% of people chose “the last school or institution,” regardless of their educational background, but (ii) depending on their “current position,” the ratio of people who chose “the last school or institution”

decreased. This fact clarified that the experience of “finding employment” becomes a turning point in life that may change the meaning of the past, depending on its results, and that people’s memories are related to their current and social status.

Table 6 Words and phrases regarding time in college, university, etc., that the respondents consider to be related to their current occupational lives, which appeared most frequently in the free responses

Part-time work (<i>arubaito</i>)	1257	Service to customers	211	Friend (<i>tomodachi</i>)	117	Graduation	76
Activity	488	Society	206	Company	111	Examination	74
Study	418	Relationship	205	Internship	106	Overseas	73
Finding employment	394	Practical training	182	Interests	105	Education	73
Self	388	Part-time work (<i>baito</i>)	176	Communication	98	Story	69
Work	370	Research	167	Corporation	88	Participation	69
College/university	348	Volunteer	162	Humans	87	Club activity	68
Class	340	Qualification/Certification	160	Studying overseas	82	Annual	65
Specialty	293	Knowledge	156	Seminar	81	Travel	61
School	266	Life	153	Acquisition	79	Field	60
Friend (<i>yujin</i>)	247	Occupation	143	Teacher	78	Peers	54
Group activity	239	Money	131	Experience	78		
Experience	221	Manners	120	Computer	76		

(7) Main Contents of “Chapter 8: For the Promotion of Career Education in Labor Administration”

In Chapter 8, we summarized the issues derived from the results of the analysis of each chapter that will be a focus of attention in the promotion of future career education, and provided some suggestions regarding matters such as the policy of promoting career education in the labor administration.

As one of the indices used to review the effectiveness of career education, we paid attention to the memory of career education as recalled from the standpoint of present occupational life. We also confirmed the importance of each learning area regarding self-understanding, understanding of work, enlightening experience, and decision making including “tests such as interest tests and aptitude tests,” “classes in which students research occupations and jobs,” “classes in which students listen to lectures by professionals or people in the area about work,” “classes in which students think about objectives and plans regarding career paths,” “hands-on activities such as volunteer work,” and “classes in which students learn about communication and manners,” which have an influence on whether a person remembers the career education they received. We then indicated that the challenge would be to implement these activities so that they will be considered useful later on. There was also a strong tendency among the respondents to respond that they learned the most about their future career paths and

occupations while attending their last schools or institutions, or those that are close to being their last schools or institutions. Based on this fact, we pointed out the significance of career education provided at the school stage while or immediately before attending the final school as the completing phase of such education.

Furthermore, respondents who were successful in their job hunting activities at the time of graduation and have led linear careers remembered their career education better and had higher opinions of it, describing it as useful. On the other hand, even among respondents who have not led linear careers, such as those who have been employed as non-regular workers, those who had high opinions of career education had reached a certain level of income. Based on this finding, we expressed our expectations for career education that would foster basic skills to develop a career even when faced with difficulties in the labor market.

In addition, we paid attention to the positive influence of career education and self-esteem on occupational life, life in general, and the establishment of future goals, and the positive influence of the idea that “my life thus far has been dependent on my efforts” on self-esteem. We then suggested that new experience and stimulation provided by career education may guide the students to proactively engage in their school lives and believe that their lives are influenced by their own efforts. It can be construed that by ensuring that career education encourages students to proactively engage in their school lives and work hard, it will be possible to create a virtuous cycle between career education and aspects of school life including school subjects.

In this way, the possibility of a virtuous cycle between career education and school life and a positive influence on occupational life is inherent in career education. In order to make these a reality, it is necessary for educational and other forms of administration to closely coordinate to effectively utilize resources outside of schools and provide multifaceted support for education.

Regarding labor administration, we pointed out that it is important that they take advantage of their position of being closest to occupation and labor to further contribute to career education. This should be realized through measures including the effective provision of vocational aptitude tests (support for self-understanding); the implementation of activities such as the collection and provision of information about occupations, provision of opportunities to hear lectures by professionals (support for understanding work) and hands-on work experience (support for inspirational experiences) in a creative manner in line with the actual situation in the region to familiarize students with occupations and help them gain interest in them; the enhancement of career consulting in the realm of educational institutions (support for

decision making) and the provision of support to strengthen capabilities in career consulting to this end; and the provision of know-how to colleges/universities and other institutions regarding how to proceed with job hunting activities and how to write resumes, among others, in order to effectively promote job hunting activities.