

Contrasting the Nature of Peer support systems between Japan and Western nations

Hideo Kato Haruo Magari

『教育学論集』第68号

(2017年3月)

Contrasting the Nature of Peer support systems between Japan and Western nations

Hideo Kato¹ Haruo Magari²

¹ *PhD student University of Surrey, UK*

² *Soka University*

Background

Peer support is an approach that builds on the helpfulness and altruism characteristic of friendships by extending it beyond friendship to the wider peer group. Peer support approaches have been developing in Western countries for over 20 years but it is only in the past 10 years that there has been a growing interest in these methods in Japan. These peer-led educational activities encourage children to support peers who have emotional and behavioural issues. During the last decade, peer support has begun to be integrated under the umbrella of the moral and citizenship education in Japan. Peer support is very flexible in its use of activities and broadly relates to existing Japanese moral approaches and activities that encompass behavioural and emotional support. In a sense, peer support itself is the umbrella term, which allows its activities to suit various school needs, depending on the situations (James, 2014).

This means that peer support programmes can be adopted to suit individual practices within schools that seems to incorporate cultural and moral differences.

To a large extent, the willingness to develop peer support methods in Japan has arisen from a deepening concern about the increase in social and emotional difficulties currently experienced by Japanese children within the educational system (Nakano, 2004). Evidence suggests, that, bullying, school non-attendance (school refusal), and school violence, are related to insufficient interpersonal relationships among, which are caused by their poor ability to communicate with others chil-

* Requests for prints should be address to Hideo Kato, Division of Health and Social Care, University of Surrey, Duke of Kent Building, Guildford, Surrey GU27XH, UK (email : hideo.tom.kato@gmail.com)

dren (Nakano & Sato, 2013; Edahiro et al., 2012; Igarashi, 2011; Makino, 2011; Miyahara & Koizumi, 2009; Katsuya & Kawamura, 2004; Iida, 2003; Emura & Okayasu, 2003; Fujieda & Aikawa, 2001).

For example, Nakano and Sato (2013) explored the relationships between children's perceived quality of school life (the level of school adjustment) and their social skills among the lower secondary school children aged 12 – 15 years (256 boys and 273 girls). These researchers found that children who have a lower level of school adjustment, showed significantly lower level of social skills (pro-social behaviour, hesitation to take action, and managing aggressive behaviours) over the children who have a higher level of school adjustment.

This implies that children, who have a lower level of social skills, tend to have difficulties developing relationships with others. The studies indicate that there is a complex set of interactions amongst these characteristics. Of course, we cannot assume that there is a direct causal link between lack of social skills and relationship difficulties. However, due to cultural and educational backgrounds, interrelationships among children (peers) seem to be related to their social skill levels in Japan where this is strongly influenced by the collectivism. In short, it seemed to be important for children to keep good peer relationships in their group and societies; in this sense, their social skills seemed to play a critical role in that purpose.

Several studies (Harada, 2011; 2010; Arihara et al., 2009; Emura, 2008; Enai et al, 2006), designed to explore the relationship between children's social skills and their peer relations in school, have demonstrated similar results as other studies have described above. In this vein, Nakahara (2012) summarised that various causes seemed to operate together to cause the current educational issues. He suggested that the issues need to be tackled from various points, which are education at school, at home and in local society. In terms of education at school, many researchers appear to place emphasis on children's level of school adjustment. Thus, researchers and educators have paid attention to Social and Emotional Learning programmes as a prevention method against such issues as bullying, school violence and non-attendance.

As mentioned, peer support, a relatively new concept in Japan, is an approach that builds on characteristics of friendship such as helpfulness and altruism and extends it beyond individual friendships to the wider peer group. Children seem to benefit from receiving and delivering peer support activities; emotional and behavioural support, development of social skills, and enhancing

altruistic attitudes and behaviours. It appears to be an effective approach to tackle the issues described (e.g. bullying, non-attendance at school, and school refusal); hence these approaches have been developed and implemented in recent years in Japan (Cowie & Kurihara, 2009).

Forms of peer support in the west

Given the complexity and variability of peer support, definitions need to take account of a number of characteristics and interrelated variables. Peer support encompasses a range of activities and systems through which young people can be given training in such skills as mentoring, active listening, conflict resolution, befriending, conflict resolution and the promotion of children's rights to work and learn in a safe environment (Cowie & Wallace, 2000). In addition, peer support offers a framework within which bystanders can be active in challenging bullying (Cowie, 2011). Even in online contexts, peer supporters can challenge cyberbullying when it happens and can create a social environment where bystanders refuse to collude with cyberbullying (DiBasilio, 2008). Essentially, peer support programmes provide a flexible framework (Cowie & Jennifer, 2008). Cowie and Wallace (2000) summarised the key features of peer support in the West as follows:

- *Young people are trained to work together outside friendship groups. This type of interaction helps to reduce prejudice and foster trust across gender and ethnic groups.*
- *Young people are given the opportunity through training to learn good communication skills, to share information and to reflect on their own emotions in relationships with others.*
- *Young people are trained to deal with conflict and to help peers to relate to one another in a more constructive, non-violent way.*

According to the age groups of the peer supporters and the needs of schools, the systems of peer support vary quite widely. The most common forms of peer support are peer counselling, befriending/buddying, peer tutoring, peer mediation/conflict resolution, mentoring, and group leadership (Cowie & Jennifer, 2008; Nishiyama & Yamamoto, 2002; Cowie, et al, 2002). In terms of the whole-school approach against bullying outlined by Cowie and Jennifer (2008), the forms

of peer support are summarised in figure 1.

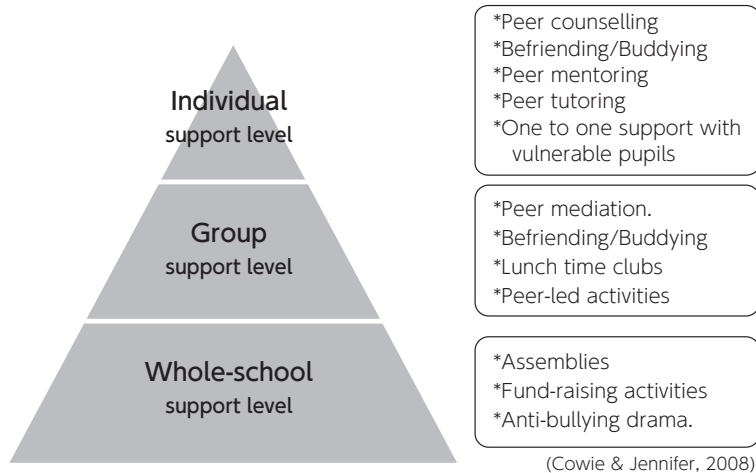


Figure 1: Forms of peer support and support levels in the West

In peer counselling, peer supporters are trained to use counselling skills (e.g. active listening) to support peers in distress. Usually peer supporters are given a wide repertoire of counselling skills and are regularly supervised by a qualified counsellor, a psychologist or teachers who manage the peer support scheme. The earliest types of peer support emerged from the counselling model (Cowie and Jennifer 2008), but over time this approach changed since pupils often found it hard to go to a one-to-one counselling-based session and often preferred more group-based activities. Nevertheless, the training in Western countries continues to be strongly influenced by counselling theory, in particular by the principles of client-centred therapy. One of the difficulties involved in transferring this counselling-based model to Japan could be that the Japanese culture is not particularly oriented towards a counselling-based way of resolving interpersonal difficulties. Rather, they place high value on the group-based activities which seem to give a strong influence to individuals through the collective pressure to conform to the norms of the group. This will be explored later in the next section.

Befriending or buddying is usually described as an approach that builds on the natural helping skills that young people learn through the process of every-

day interaction with friends and family (Cowie et al., 2002). Befriending involves training in active listening, assertiveness and leadership to enable peer supporters to offer direct support to peers in distress, but its approach is much more informal, compared to the counselling-based approach (Cowie & Smith, 2010; Cowie et al., 2002). For example, befriending (buddying) often uses a 'buddy bench' or 'friendship stop' where pupils can go in the playground if they would like peer support (Cowie & Smith, 2010).

In peer tutoring, older pupils or pupils of the same age support other pupils with academic work such as reading, writing, and mathematics.

Peer mediation/conflict resolution is a structured process in which peer supporters' act as mediators to defuse interpersonal disagreements among peers (Cremin, 2007; Cowie & Hutson, 2005; Cowie, et al 2002). Peer supporters are given the training to gain and develop the necessary skills of mediation through the role-playing of typical situations. Peer mediation/conflict resolution needs a follow-up meeting in which participants review the success or otherwise of the solution and acknowledge their willingness to make adjustments if necessary (Cowie & Jennifer, 2008).

Mentoring is usually described as a supportive one-to-one relationship between a younger pupil (the mentee) and a more experienced pupil (the mentor) in school (Cowie, et al 2002). Basically the aims of mentor are to promote heightened aspirations, to offer positive reinforcement and open-ended support, and to provide an arena in which to develop a problem-solving stance towards important life-span development issues, such as career choice (Cowie, et al 2002).

Group leadership concerns the situation where older children, some selected pupils, or pupils in student councils play a role as a group leader in school events, such as a sports festival, school trip or recreational activity. Also they have taken the initiative to run activities for other pupils during the school break, such as lunchtime clubs, circle time, group work etc. (James, 2013).

However, in terms of UK's data (Houlston et al, 2009), most primary and secondary schools were engaged in activities at the individual support level (e.g. befriending, peer counselling, mentoring, and mediation), where less than 10% of schools applied for other forms of peer support (e.g. group leadership). This will be explained in the next section.

Forms of peer support in the East (Japan)

These innovative peer support systems (e.g. peer counselling, befriending, peer mentoring and peer mediation) appeared to harmonise with the existing Japanese moral approaches. Cowie and Kurihara (2009) suggested that Japanese culture provides a good foundation for the peer support in school. As a part of citizenship education, Japanese children are expected to carry out everyday activities to train them in socially accepted behaviours (e.g. cleaning activity). Consequently, the Western style peer supports have been modified to suit the Japanese culture (Toda, 2005), in order to create other peer support forms and variations. For example, peer support was applied into existing activities (e.g. clubs) and school events (e.g. sports festivals), and these activities often have been developed into the wider community level.

Even though Japanese scholars and researchers learned the concepts and approaches of peer support from Western nations, Japan has developed their own views and approaches, which harmonise with Japanese culture and was influenced by collective aspects. The following are examples of other types of peer support activities in Japan.

Newsletters (Q&A Hand-out)

Anonymous Newsletters are a unique form of peer support which has emerged in Japan (Toda, 2005; Toda & Ito, 2005). These methods provide children with opportunities to write about their worries anonymously to a team of peer supporters who then circulate their answers in a newsletter for the whole school.

School summit

The nationwide and/or the city-wide lower secondary school summits are organised by pupils a few times per year. The representatives (generally student council members and peer supporters) from each school attend the summits to discuss educational issues and give presentations about their own school's peer-led activities. Attendees are able to learn from other school activities and deepen the philosophy of citizenship, which influence their own school's activities (Takeuchi, 2010).

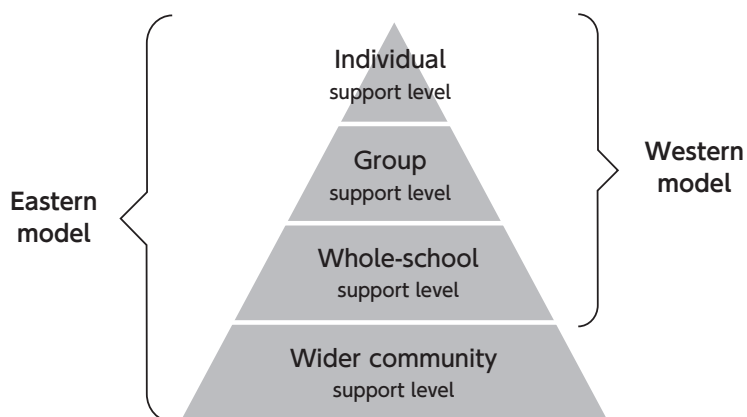


Figure 2: Support levels in peer support schemes

Anti-bullying drama

Anti-bullying drama has often been conducted as a city-wide peer support programme. All actors are recruited from pupil volunteers across the city. The drama scripts are also composed by pupils themselves, which are based on their own experiences in schools. Through the rehearsal activities, pupils from different schools have deepened their friendships and have created pupils' networks to contribute to other peer support activities. Generally, the anti-bullying dramas have been performed in public theatres and school auditoriums. Not only secondary school pupils, but also primary school children and their parents were invited to attend. Nowadays, DVDs are created for anti-bullying material based on these dramas in some projects (Takeuchi, 2010; Fujikame, 2006).

Fund-raising activities

Fund-raising activities are generally single school-based activities, and particularly in the last 5 years, the activities were conducted for the great east Japan earthquake disaster. Pupil volunteers, holding a donation box, go around within the school to ask for donations of money. Also pupil volunteers go to the shopping street to ask for donations (Kasugai, 2009).

School-based school summit

Some schools organise school summits within their own schools annually. Generally several representatives (peer supporters) from each class are assembled in the large meeting room, and give a presentation about their class's activities, which contributed both academic and behavioural improvements. The summit encourages attendees to make further efforts in their classes, and also contribute to create positive school ethos.

Peer-led clean-up activities

Both inside and outside school, pupil volunteers pick up litter. Generally the peer supporters encourage pupils to volunteer for it. As a contribution to local community, occasionally pupil volunteers go to shopping streets and the park to clean up litter (Kasugai, 2009).

Greeting activities

Generally peer supporters stand in front of the school gate, and say “good morning” to all pupils and school staff when they arrive at the school. The aim of this activity is to encourage pupils to greet with a smile and a cheerful greeting (Fujikame, 2006)

Comparison of peer support used in the West and Japan

Peer support provides a flexible framework, which harmonises with the existing Japanese moral approaches. The figures in the previous sections show that Japanese model of peer supports tends to cover a wider range of activities, including individual, group, whole-school, and wider community support levels.

School activities and schemes have been influenced by the cultural context directly and indirectly, thus it is natural that peer relationships among children have been linked to and/or affected by the cultural values and social contexts. In terms of exploring the cultural diversity, the work of Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) allows us to analysis the children's emotional and behavioural development considering the cultural dimensions. For more than 30 years, Hofstede and Hofstede have investigated and discussed the dimensions of culture and their views on organisational culture as an idea system that is largely shared between organisational members. In Hofstede and Hofstede's work (2005), there are four

dimensions; 1) power distance, 2) collectivism versus individualism, 3) femininity versus masculinity and 4) uncertainty avoidance. Especially, in terms of a comparison of peer support activities among children between the West and East, the dimension of collectivism versus individualism, appears to be directly linked to peer relationships among children in each nation.

For example, Hoftstede and Hoftstede (2005) uses the individualism index to rank a nation's individuality. Out of 74 countries, UK is ranked 3rd most individualistic, while USA is 1st, and Canada is 4th. However, Japan is ranked 33-35th and Korea is 63rd. As expected, generally East Asian countries (e.g. Japan, Korea) are often referred to as being strong examples of collectivist societies. Here, an interesting observation is that Japanese educators and researchers have learnt the Western model of peer support schemes, adapted them into their school activities, and modified those considering Japanese cultural contexts. As figure 2 shows, peer support schemes have been developed in the wider community support level in the East. Especially, school summits, anti-bullying drama, fund-raising activities, and recycling activities (collecting cans) are unique forms of peer support which have emerged in the Eastern nations. As expected, these activities were generally driven by peer supporters' will and passion. These activities have often been conducted in wider community support levels, and allow the peer supporters to work with other schools' peer supporters.

Also, the wider community support level activities often allow peer supporters to work outside the school, where several schools have organised support activities between the lower secondary schools and primary schools (Takeuchi, 2008). For example, Takeuchi (2008) reported that peer supporters answered questions and issued letters of advice to primary school pupils. This provided pupils with useful advice and information, which helped them to diminish worries about daily school life in the lower secondary school. In a sense, these activities can be regarded as prevention methods for school bullying and school non-attendance during the transition from primary school to the lower secondary school. The activities in the wider community support level, provide various forms of peer support, where children take the initiative to provide support to others often outside of school.

Regarding the types of peer support approach used, Naylor and Cowie (1999) used a questionnaire survey to explore the breakdown of the types of peer support approach in secondary schools and colleges (n=51, a response rate of 83.6%) in the UK. Also 10 years later, Houlston et al (2009) conducted a large-

scale survey to explore how peer support is currently used in English primary (n=130) and secondary schools (n=110). Tables below summarise the breakdown of the types of peer support both in 1999 and in 2009.

Table 1 : Breakdown of peer support in secondary schools and colleges in UK

Befriending.....	70%	Mentoring.....	6%
Counselling.....	18%	Mediation.....	6%

(Naylor and Cowie, 1999)

Table 2 : Breakdown of peer support in primary and secondary school in UK

Type of approach	Primary school		Secondary school		Total	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Befriending	75	(84.3)	71	(73.2)	146	(78.5)
Mentoring	23	(25.8)	82	(84.5)	105	(56.5)
Mediation	53	(59.6)	45	(45.4)	99	(53.2)
Counselling	5	(5.6)	30	(30.9)	35	(18.8)
Others	8	(9.0)	8	(8.2)	16	(6.7)

*Many schools reported using more than one type of approach

(Houlston et al, 2009)

It is clear from these findings that the most popular approach is “befriending”, as more than 70% of both primary and secondary schools employed it. It is also evident that the use of Mediation and Mentoring has increased over the last 10 years, especially mediation in primary and mentoring in secondary schools. The earliest types of peer support were developed from a counselling model. However, many teachers and peer supporters expressed a preference for more informal models, and so there has been a tendency to move away from counselling-based systems to more informal befriending systems (Cowie, et al 2002). However, it is still rare to employ peer support in both a whole school and wider community support levels in the UK.

No Japanese studies have investigated the breakdown of the types of peer support approaches. However, from the research papers, it seems a large number of Japanese schools also employ befriending, and other types of peer support scheme, which are often related with a whole school and wider community support. Also because of the development and usage of peer support, other forms of peer support have arisen and are categorised, such as cyber peer support, and

social action (James, 2013; Cowie & Jennifer, 2008). These developments have been caused through teachers realising that applying of one particular model of peer support could be too inflexible and instead suggesting that it was necessary to adapt to the particular needs of the school and its pupils, which have strongly been influenced by their culture (Cowie, et al, 2002).

Influences of collectivism in peer support

As mentioned, peer support programmes are flexible in order to meet the school needs and age differences, depending each situation. Many studies seemed to indicate that the practices of peer support in Japan radically differ very much from the western nation's approach. Due to cultural influences, Japanese peer support programmes have been boldly developed to harmonise with the existing traditional activities. This eventually resulted in covering wider range of educational issues and activities beyond the original concept of peer support approach.

Japan, located in Far East Asia, has been traditionally influenced by collectivist culture. Collectivism means that a society in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-group, which throughout people's lifetime continues to protect them in exchange for unquestioned loyalty (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). Therefore, it is natural that Japan has own specific educational systems and practices based on its own culture and tradition, which have been developed over the years.

In general, the practice of peer support in the western nations is strongly based on a person-centred (Rogerian model) approach (e.g. peer counselling, befriending, peer mentoring, peer tutoring and peer mediation). On the other hand, some practices in Japan seem to be changed or evolved into citizenship oriented approach. In other words, in terms of the western nations' concepts, several forms of peer support activities in Japan seemed not to be considered as peer support, rather other different educational activities, which are related to (or are oriented towards) citizenship education. In short, peer support activities, which are strongly based on Rogerian model, should be classified as different activities from other group activities, such as greeting campaigns, clearing campaign, fund-raising activities, and anti-bullying dramas.

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005), the leading scholars of the cultural studies in anthropology, likened the culture to mental programming. They argued that mental programmes vary as much as the social environments in which they were acquired, thus people's thoughts and behaviours seem to differ from others in terms of their culture and experiences (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). A typical cultural example is that Japanese people have a reputation for their politeness and good social behaviour, which are strongly related to cultural habits (Komiya, 1999). Their collective behaviours are mutually related with peer pressure, conformity and (group) norms, thus, in terms of behavioural modification (change), it is critical to consider the peer relationships among groups as external factors, which are opposite to internal (individual) factors. In this vein, Komiya (1999) indicates that Japanese people's high self-control and sense of security seemed to be influenced by their peer pressure and norms.

Since the mid-90s, Japanese scholars (educators) started conducting peer support programmes, based on the Western model (Nakano & Morikawa, 2009). During this early stage, the implementation of peer support practice in Japan was the same as the western approach, which is based on a counselling model. That is to say, most activities of peer support were limited to peer counselling and befriending due to no example of peer support practice in Japanese schools. In fact, Nishikidai lower secondary school and Hongo lower secondary school in Yokohama city applied a peer support scheme in the mid-90's, and their practices were purely based on the person-centred (Rogerian model) approach. The selected peer counsellors supported pupils who were in distress due to school bullying (Sakai, 1996; Sakai, 1998).

However, peer support has gradually been developed into a much wider range of practices in order to harmonise with cultural and traditional issues in school. In this process, several cultural and educational factors seemed to promote the structural change of the western approach into Japanese style peer support. These factors seemed to be "debate between a counselling model view and an educational model view"; "peer group influence", and "direct supporting activities and indirect interventions". In fact, many peer support studies were aimed to show how peer support activities bring positive results to children in terms of these factors.

The following sections will discuss how these cultural factors gave impact on peer support practice, which resulted in forming Japanese style peer support programmes.

“Counselling model view” and “Educational model view”

Cowie and Kurihara (2009) mentioned that in Japan, peer support programmes have been developed with influence of two different views; 1) “Counselling model view” whose emphasis is to emotionally care and look after children in distress and 2) “Educational model view” which is to provide children with social skills training for preventing them from being in troubled situations. In terms of “Education model view”, it is desired that children have the opportunity to receive social skills training as a part of a prevention strategy. This seems to bring a notable difference between Japan and other western countries, regarding the selection of peer supporters. Usually in the UK, Canada, US, and Australia, selected children who want to be peer supporters, have been given training by a teacher or a psychologist. In short, most peer supporters are working as volunteers in western approaches. For example, in the selection, teachers draw up a short list on the basis of the candidates’ documents and/or interviewed those candidates, and a relatively small number of peer supporters were selected for training (Cowie & Olafsson, 2000). Also in most cases, the majority of peer supporters are female pupils and the number of male peer supporters is generally very small.

By contrast, in Japan, training of peer support was often given to all children as a whole class activity (Kurihara, 2007; Nakano, 2006). This is because peer support seems to be educationally a very meaningful activity for children’s emotional development, and it seems much more effective to give training to all children in order to create a supportive school atmosphere (Nakano, 2006). As a reflection of this view, peer supporters are sometimes sent somewhere outside the school environment to have experiences of supporting activities. From the viewpoints of western approaches, it might be peculiar to do the supporting activities somewhere outside schools, however, many studies report pupils’ supporting activities outside school as a part of peer support programmes in Japan (e.g. Takahashi, 2010; Takeuchi, 2008; Konno & Ikejima, 2007). One of the examples is the peer support programme in Futaba lower secondary school in Hiroshima, Japan (Takahashi, 2010). In Futaba lower school, after the training, a whole class in the first and second year pupils were sent to local primary schools, kindergarten, nursery, and a nursing home for the supporting activities. Depending on the situations, their supporting activities took various forms such as supporting club activities, supporting math class, helping story hour, supporting cooking practice, and

so on. In the assessments (pre- and post-test), pupils' emotional and behavioural developments were improved after the activities and also their school climate was improved too (Takahashi, 2010). In fact, the supporting activities outside their own schools was often reported in Japan and there is also a very wide diversity in their supporting relationships, such as "upper secondary school pupils support lower secondary school pupils (Seto & Mori, 2009)", "lower secondary school pupils support primary school pupils (Takeuchi, 2008; Takahashi, 2010)", and "university students support secondary school pupils" (Konno & Ikejima, 2007).

In terms of the "Education model view", it seems to be important for pupils to have experiences of interpersonal supporting activities to enrich their emotional and behavioural development, and eventually this creates a supportive climate in their own school. This view also has been applied for various activities in Japan (e.g. clearing the local area, school trips, experience of farm work, older pupils' teaching to younger pupils, other group activities in school), and these seem to provide opportunities for children to develop their social skills which can be applied in daily life (Nakabayashi, 2005). From the above, peer support programmes widely vary according to school needs, and provide a flexible framework which offers appropriate support to peers through the training and activities.

Peer group influence

The collective behaviours are mutually related with peer pressure, conformity and (group) norms, thus, in terms of behavioural modification, it is critical to consider the peer relationships among groups as external factors. One example is the indifference of bystanders (peers) to bullying in Japan. Children's attitudes and behaviours seemed to be strongly influenced by cultural contexts, especially group norms and peer relationships. In Japan, as pupils get older, they tend to avoid involvement in bullying situations, which negatively influences their friends' behaviours and peer relations. In short, as pupils grow, they become more reluctant to provide support with other pupils who are in distress. In terms of children's prosocial behaviours, in the last decade, the studies have paid more attention to social groups and interpersonal relationships, such as "conformity", "group norm", and "pupils' interrelationships" in schools (e.g. Nipedal, et al, 2010; Sutton & Keogh, 2000; Sutton & Smith, 1999). Various factors in social groups and interrelationships seem to give strong influences on children's social behaviours.

Therefore, especially in Japan, it is necessary to take into account these issues in order to effectively provide educational services. This view seemed to promote the peer support programmes into wider group and community level activities, which are beyond a person-centred (Rogerian model) approach.

The term, “Conformity” means a general tendency to allow one’s opinion, attitudes actions and even perceptions to be affected by prevailing opinions, attitudes, actions and perception (Reber, 1995). Especially in pre-adolescence, it is thought that personal judgements and actions are easily connected with the standard and actions of people of the same generation. In Addition, Costanzo (1966) explained that it is during the period of 11 to 13 years of age that fellow feelings and conformity are promoted. Therefore it is entirely possible that as the relationships among friends develop, children would receive a greater influence from friends rather than parents and teachers. In this sense, it seems much more effective to give training to all children in order to create supportive peer relationships in school. In short, as the number of pupils who actively provide support to others grows in proportion to the school population, school climates are more positively reinforced (Lane-Garon & Richardson, 2003). From the reasons above, peer group membership is exceedingly important to children and also the peer group has the potential to exert considerable influence on group members.

In terms of peer group’s influences, Ojala and Nesdale (2004) found interesting results. Their study found that among pupils aged 10-13 years, in-group members considered bullying behaviours to be much more acceptable when it was consistent with group norms. This seems to demonstrate that group members are required to behave in accordance with the group norms. Even if individual group members have negative feelings toward anti-social behaviours, they may take anti-social behaviours when anti-social behaviours are normative in the group. In a sense, the influence of pupil’s group norms seems to weaken their individuals’ factors, such as their empathetic motives. Similarly, Nipedal et al (2010) found that the group norms significantly influenced the group members’ direct and indirect aggressions among 7 and 10 years old children. However, more interestingly Nipedale et al (2010) found that “the school norms” tended to decrease the impact of “the group norm” on the children’s aggressive intentions when the two norms were in opposition, although this effect was only significant for 7 year old children. In this regard, Nipedal et al (2010) mentioned that 10 year old children’s aggressive intentions were significantly less than those of 7 year old children. Therefore it was difficult to make further reduction of 10 year old children’s ag-

gressive intentions by the school norm. These findings suggest the possibility that by reinforcing the positive school norms (climates), children's prosocial behaviours can be improved effectively through the peer support methods. This seems to strongly support the views of Cowie and Kurihara (2009) and Lane-Garon & Richardson (2003), which is that as the number of pupils who actively provide support to others grows, school climates are improved and it encourages further study to deepen the detail of pupils' views about the relationship between peer support services and peer group influences.

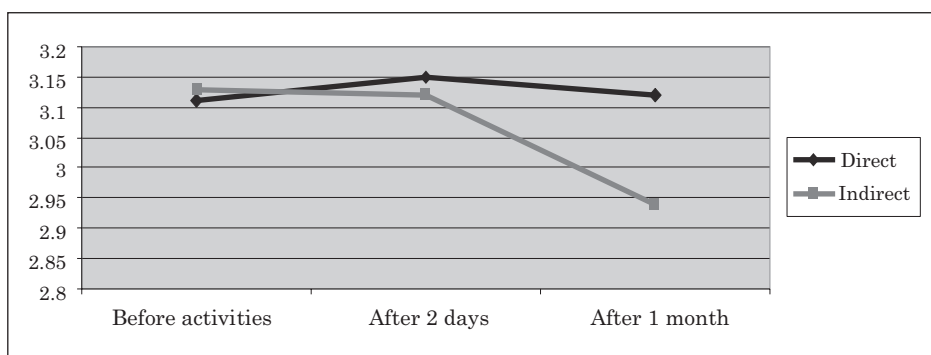
It appeared that in a collectivist culture, it was more beneficial to integrate the peer support activities with wider group level activities. As indicated, the core principle of peer support was originally to encourage children to help their peers who are in distress, based on the person-centred (Rogerian model) approach. However, considering peer group influences, wider group level activities have been encouraged to harmonise with existing group activities, and eventually this resulted in producing peer-led activities, indulging anti-bullying drama, peer-led volunteering, farming activities, and cleaning campaign. Again, these peer-led activities appeared not to be considered as peer support activities in the western nations. However, in Japanese research, when children took on roles to support other children, it appeared to be called "peer support".

"Direct supporting activities" and "Indirect interventions".

It is also important to examine the difference between "Direct supporting activities" and "Indirect interventions" in terms of children's emotional and behavioural developments. "Direct supporting activities" refers to children's involvement in direct experiential activities (e.g. experience of joining supporting activities and skill training). "Indirect interventions" refers to children receiving moral education lessons (e.g. reading stories and episodes from textbooks). In terms of children's behavioural change, Japanese peer support studies have paid attention to relationships between the training and supporting activities, and how each factor influences peers' thoughts and behaviours. According to the Japanese National Survey of Enhancement of Moral Education (2003), most (81.5%) moral education lessons in Japan were carried out by reading stories and episodes from textbooks, hence there was not much opportunity for children to be involved in direct supporting activities. Also social changes, such as reliance on the internet for social

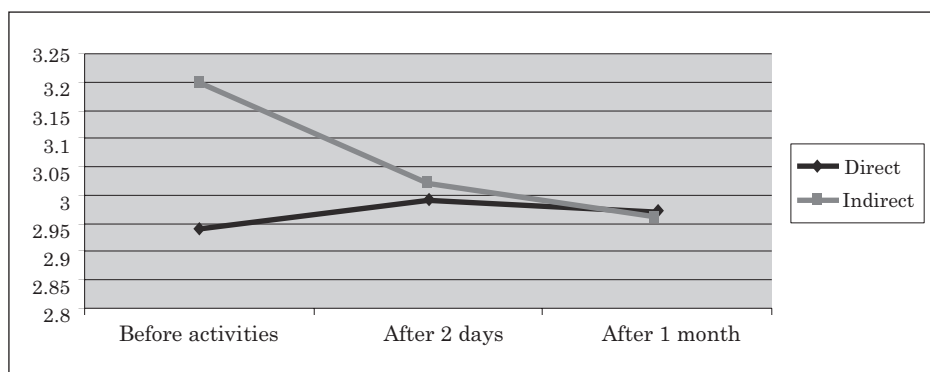
interaction, have decreased the opportunities for communicating with other peers. This appears to negatively influence the development of children’s social and communication skills (Kobayashi & Aikawa, 1999; Ito et al., 2014). Therefore the experiences of being involved in peer support schemes provides the opportunities for children to have direct supporting activities, which seem to effectively contribute to their emotional and cognitive development. In a sense, the peer support studies in Japan tended to focus on peer supporters’ benefits (gaining social skills), rather than benefits of users (peers) who are in distress. That is to say, the direct support activities in peer support have been viewed as the part of social skills training.

In terms of the impact of peer’s supporting activities, Miyasato (2008) indicated interesting findings about “Direct supporting activities” and “Indirect interventions”. Miyasato’s study’s aim was to identify the impact on pupils’ altruistic attitudes of participating in either direct experiential activities or indirect interventions among year 4 primary school pupils (10 year old) in Japan. Samples were 121 pupils in year 4 classes; 60 pupils (30 boys and 30 girls) for the direct supporting activities and 61 pupils (35 boys and 26 girls) for the indirect interventions. In the direct supporting activities, 60 pupils were sent to a local nursery school and each pupil played together with younger children. In indirect interventions, pupils read stories and episodes of a textbook, which explained how important it is to take care of younger children (nursery school children). The study applied a pre-post test using questionnaires that measured their altruistic attitudes and behaviours before and after direct and indirect interventions.



(Miyasato, 2008)

Figure 3: Willingness to support others



(Miyasato, 2008)

Figure 4: Emotional aspects for caring others

From the figures above, the results showed that pupils who had direct supporting activities (e.g. experience of physically supporting others) tend to retain the levels of altruistic attitudes after the interventions in both “willingness to support others” and “emotional aspects for caring others”. This seems to imply that direct supporting activities (e.g. experience of physically supporting others) may give the stronger influences on pupils’ social behaviours and emotional developments. In terms of Japanese practice, the Miyasato’s findings may raise the further question in the relationships between the training and supporting activities. In Japan, some programmes (e.g. Nakano, 2006) mainly focus on their skills training itself and the supporting activities are something to be carried out by children spontaneously. That is to say, supporting activities are not organised as a part of implementation of peer support programme. Other peer support programmes (e.g. Morikawa et al, 2008) focus on both training and supporting activities, and after the training, supporting activities are always organised and carried out without exception.

The social skills training involves basic social skills, which cultivate children’s motivations and social skills, and these were often carried out through the role-play among peers who join the same training sessions (Ikejima & Takeuchi, 2011; Morikawa & Hishida, 2002). This means that through the simulated experiences (the role-play), pupils are able to cultivate their motivations and social skills. As the research findings showed, the majority of peer supporters mentioned the improvements in their self-esteem and sense of responsibility as the benefits to peer supporters. Also other study (Takahashi, 2010) showed that the level of self-efficacy and self-approval have significantly increased after the peer support

activities. These psychological (emotional) improvements seem come from the experience of supporting others.

From the above, peer support contributes to not only improvements of children's social skills, but also their emotional developments. In consideration of this point, peer support practices aimed to provide children with opportunities to be involved in direct supporting activities according to the Japanese style. In this vein, the wider group level of activities are encouraged in Japan which forms the current peer support structure in Japan.

Peer support as a citizenship-oriented approach in Japan

The previous sections suggested that peer support practices in Japan have been directed towards a more social skill training and citizenship-oriented approach, which seem to be different from the Rogerian model peer support approach used in the western nations. It is clear that peer support practice in the west has been strongly based on the person-centred (Rogerian model) approach, which aims to provide emotional and behavioural support to other children. On the other hand, peer support in Japan has been developed in the wider-range of activities, where some of them seem to have no relation to the person-centred approach.

In a sense, peer support practice in the West is strongly based on person-centred approach, where its training encourages the peer supporter to develop their counselling principles. For example, Carl Rogers (1957) identified the six necessary and sufficient conditions which are required to improve the effectiveness of their counselling practices. In this vein, peer supporters developed their counselling mind, which includes unconditional regard for others, and attitudes to patiently listen to other's words. Therefore, it seems to classify and call these practices as peer support in the West.

In terms of the Western view, some Japanese peer support activities (e.g. anti-bullying drama, greeting campaign, fund-raising activities, and community actions) seem to not be classified as peer support practice, and these seem to be the part of citizenship-oriented activities (Warden & Christie, 1997).

Citizenship education and community action has been focused on development of children's prosocial behaviours and how it can be promoted (Warden & Christie, 1997). In the area of citizenship education, prosocial behaviours are con-

sidered as socially responsible behaviours, and children have been encouraged to behave prosaically towards other children (Warden & Christie, 1997). From figure 5, peer support practices, which required to apply for the counselling mind (peer counselling, befriending, peer mentoring and peer mediation) are common in the Japanese and Western peer support structures. However, in the lower range, the citizenship orientated approaches are unique to the Japanese structure (classified as peer support in Japan), which allows peer supporters to have a more active role as a group leader (facilitator) in peer-led activities. In this vein, two different qualities of peer support activities exist in Japan; one is based on the counselling mind (role as a counsellor) and the other is based on peer-led activities (role as a group leader). In short, there seemed to have two different qualities, existing in Japanese peer support activities, and both different qualities of activities were still considered as “peer support” all together.

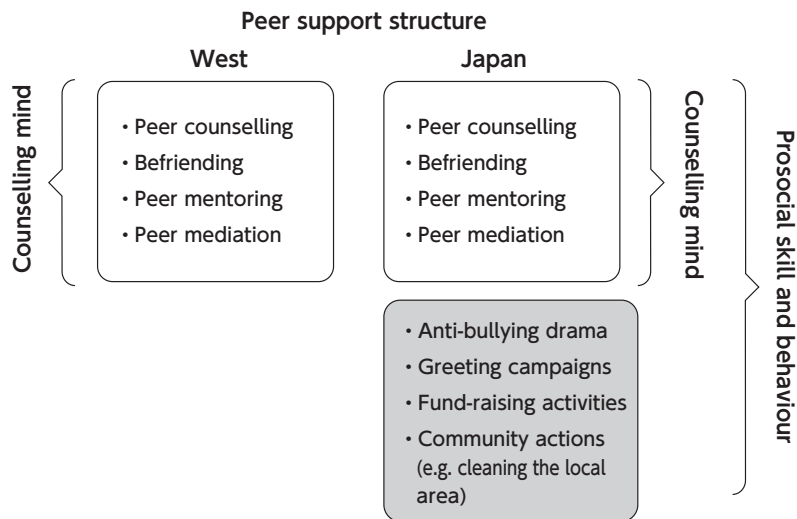


Figure 5: Peer support practices and their necessary skills

In order to gain the deeper understanding of these diversities (counsellors’ role vs. group leaders’ role), it is necessary to investigate the details of the peer supporter’s perspectives, attitudes and behaviours in their practices. Especially, by employing semi-structured interviews, peer supporter’s lived experiences could provide rich data which would provide useful information and insight into Japanese peer support practices comprehensively. This also seems to suggest new

relations between peer support activities and its training sessions. It is important that peer supporters need to be trained in appropriate training sessions in order to match the nature of their actual activities. In this sense, current peer support training sessions (Rogerian model) seem to be inappropriate to train peer supporters who take the lead in citizenship orientated activities, such as cleaning local areas and greeting campaign.

Conclusion

This study discussed both interesting findings and conflicting findings in the West and Japan. Even though Japanese scholars and researchers learned the concepts and approaches of peer support from Western nations, Japan has developed their own views and approaches, which harmonise with Japanese culture and was influenced by collective aspects. In terms of the key features of both Japanese style peer support and the Western style peer support, some Japanese style peer support did not match the Western style peer support at all. These citizenship orientated approaches (e.g. greeting campaigns, clearing campaign, fund-raising activities, and anti-bullying drama) are unique to the Japanese peer support practices (still classified as peer support in Japan), which allows peer supporters to have a more active role as a group leader (facilitator) in peer-led activities. In this vein, two different qualities of peer support activities exist in Japan: one is based on the person-centred approach (role as a counsellor) and the other is based on citizenship orientated approach (role as a group leader).

Although this study provided useful findings in peer support studies, further research is needed to expand the findings, which promote more conclusive answers. Also, since peer support is a relatively new educational scheme in Japan, continued research is vital to promote good practice in schools. There are several suggestions for further research below. Firstly, it is important to investigate children's perspectives at a deeper level. Even though previous studies revealed various aspects of peer supporters' nature, these did not seem to provide an overall representation. This study therefore emphasises the importance of investigating the perspectives of peer supporters (children) without bias and in their own words. Secondly, it is necessary to carry out further qualitative research in peer support studies in Japan. In fact, most prior studies had adopted a quantitative approach, using questionnaires and assessment sheets to examine the degree of children's

emotional and behavioural developments. As Smith (2008) highlights, a qualitative approach allows researchers to explore, describe and interpret the personal and social experiences of participants. In this sense, qualitative studies would contribute to a better understanding of knowledge in prior quantitative studies. Thirdly, researchers need to conduct cross-national studies in peer support. By taking cross-national perspectives (diversities), this study seemed to show the strengths, uniqueness and some critical issues of peer support practice in Japan.

This is not only to share various practices and findings from other nations, but also to highlight advantages and disadvantages of particular types of peer support activities, which suit cultural and educational backgrounds. This also helps to provide further direction for future peer support studies and practice.

References

- Arihara., R., Furusawa, Y., Dotani, C., Tadokoro, K., Ogata., & Takeuchi, H. (2009) Effect of Classroom-Based Social Skills Training on Social Self-Efficacy and Satisfaction in Homerooms : Elementary School Children (Practical Research). *Japanese journal of behaviour therapy*, **35**, pp. 177-188.
- Costanzo, P/ R. & Marvin, S. (1966) Conformity as a function of age level. *Child development*, **37**, pp. 967-975.
- Cowie, H. (2011) Peer support as an intervention to counteract school bullying: Listen to the children. *Children & Society*, **25**, pp. 287–292.
- Cowie, H & Hutson, N (2005) Peer Support: A strategy to help bystanders challenge school bullying. *Pastoral care*, June, p40-44.
- Cowie, H & Jennifer, D (2008) *New perspectives on bullying*. Open University Press. Maidenhead, UK.
- Cowie, H & Kurihara, S. (2009) Future perspectives on Peer support in Japan. In Nakano, T & Morikawa, S (eds.) *Peer support, Lesprit daujourdhui nombre 502*. Tokyo. Gyosei.
- Cowie, H., Naylor, P., Talamelli, L., Chauham, P., & Smith, P, K (2002) Knowledge, use of and attitudes towards peer support: a 2-year follow-up to the prince's trust survey. *Journal of Adolescence*, **25**, pp. 453-467.
- Cowie, H & Olafsson, R (2000). The role of peer support in helping the victims of bullying in a school with high levels of aggression. *School psychology international*,

- 21, pp. 79-95.
- Cowie, H. & Smith, P. K. (2010) Peer support as a means of improving school safety and reducing bullying and violence. *In: B. Doll, W. Pfohl & J. Yoon J. (ed.). Handbook of Youth Prevention Science.* New York: Routledge.
- Cowie, H. & Wallace, P. (2000) *Peer support in action.* Sage. London.
- Cremin, H (2007) *Peer Mediation. Citizenship and social inclusion revisited.* Open University Press. Maidenhead, England.
- DiBasilio, A. (2008) *Reducing bullying in middle school students through the use of student leaders. Field-based master's program.* University of Chicago-Illinois.
- Edahiro, K., Nakamura, T., Tamayama, M., & Kurihara, S (2012) The effects of peer support program on children's school adjustment. A study from the point of view of comprehensive school guidance and counselling program. *Bulletin of the Graduate School of Education, Hiroshima University*, **61**, pp. 205-211.
- Emura, R. (2008) The Effect of Classroom-based Social Skills Education on Peer Acceptance for Junior High School Students. *Bulletin of Miyazaki Women's Junior College*, **34**, pp. 25-30.
- Emura, R., & Okayasu, T. (2003) Classroom-based social skills education. Junior high school student. *Japanese journal of educational psychology*, **51**, pp. 339-350.
- Enai, T., Sugiyama, A., Baba, K., Marumine, R., Mizushima, Y., Takahara, K., Inoue, H., & Tanaka, E. (2006) The Practical Study of Social Skills Training for the Small Class in the Elementary School. *Bulletin of educational research and teacher development of Kagawa University*, **13**, pp. 33-46.
- Fujieda, S., & Aikawa, M. (2001) lasswide social skills training: Elementary school. *The Japanese association of educational psychology*. **49**, pp. 371-381.
- Fujikame, M. (2006) Peer support activity by student government. *Japanese Annals of Peer Support*, **3**, pp. 29-38.
- Harada, E. (2011) A Study on Survey Social Skills of High School Students : Conflict Situations on Friends. *Memoirs of Tokyo Management College*, **19**, pp. 119-133.
- Hofstede, G. & Hofstede, G. J. (2005) *Cultures and organisations: Software of the Mind* (2nd Edition), McGraw-Hill. New York.
- Houlston, C. & Smith, P.K. (2009) The impact of a peer counselling scheme to address bullying in an all-girl London secondary school: a short-term longitudinal study. *British journal of educational psychology*, **79**, pp. 69-86.
- Igarashi, T. (2011) Children's tendency to be absent from school and their school-life skills: transition from elementary to junior high school. *Japanese journal of*

- educational psychology*, **59**, pp. 64-76.
- Ikejima, T., & Takeuchi, K. (2011) Peer mediation against bullying. Honnomori press, Tokyo.
- Ito, J., Takao, S., & Munemori, J. (2014) Proposal and Application of Communication Support System at Mealtimes Using Tabletop Interface. *Journal of Information Processing Society of Japan*. **55**, pp.1287-1302.
- James, A. (2014) *The use and impact of peer support schemes in schools in the UK, and a comparison with use in Japan and South Korea*. Dr. Thesis from Goldsmiths, University of London.
- Kasugai, T. (2009) Group activities and peer support. In Nakano. T. & Morikawa. (eds.) *Peer Support. L'esprit daujourd'hui nombre 502*. Gyosei. Tokyo.
- Katsuya, T. & Kawamura, S. (2004) The relationship between maladaptation and social skills, as well as self-esteem in junior high school students. Comparison between school non-attendance and attendance. *Japanese journal of counselling science*. **37**, pp. 107-114.
- Kobayashi, T., & Aikawa, M. (1999) *Social skill education for children. -primary school children-*. Tosho-bunkasha, Tokyo.
- Komiya, N (1999) A cultural study of the low crime rate in Japan. *British Journal of Criminal*. **39**, pp. 369-390.
- Kurihara, S (2007) Possibility of development on peer support programs in Japan – in comparison with the programs in U.S., England and Canada. *Hiroshima University, Journal of school education*. **13**, pp. 11-21.
- Lane-Garon, L. & Richardson., T. (2003) Mediator mentors: Improving school climate, nurturing student disposition. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, **21**, pp. 47–67.
- Makino, K. (2011) A Development of the Communication Skills Training for Junior High School Students. *The Effects of Communication Skills Training on Self-Evaluation*. **18**, pp. 107-118.
- Miyahara, N., & Koizumi, R. (2009) Improvement of social and interpersonal abilities in school events of the junior high school. A trial practice of social and emotional learning program. *Bulletin of the School of Education, Fukuoka University*. **17**, pp. 143-150.
- Miyasato, T. (2008) The Impact on Pupils' Altruistic Attitudes: a Comparison of the effects of Direct Activities and Indirect Interventions. *Bulletin of faculty of education, Hiroshima University*. **57**, pp. 43-50.
- Nakano, T. (2004) A prefatory note. *Japanese annals of peer support*. **1**.
- Nakano. T. & Morikawa. (eds) (2009) *Peer Support. L'esprit daujourd'hui nombre 502*.

- Gyosei. Tokyo.
- Nakano, T., & Sato, Y. (2013) Exploration of pupils' emotional and behavioural factors for their school adjustment. *The Japanese association of educational psychology*. **55**, pp. 258.
- Nakano, Y. (2006) *Peer support*. Tosho Bunka. Tokyo.
- Naylor, P & Cowie, H (1999) The effectiveness of peer support systems in challenging school bullying: the perspectives and experiences of teachers and pupils. *Journal of Adolescence*. **22**, pp. 467-479.
- Nipedal, C., Nesdale, D., & Killen, M. (2010) Social group norms, social norms, and children's aggressive intentions. *Aggressive behaviour*. **36**, pp. 195-204.
- Nishiyama, H & Yamamoto, T. (2002) The background and trend of practical peer support and peer-assisted activities: the beginning to current tendency of peer support and peer-assisted activities. *The bulletin of Okayama University Educational centre*. **2**, pp. 81-93
- Ojala, Kris., & Nesdale, D. (2004) Bullying and social identity: the effects of group norms and distinctiveness threat on attitudes towards bullying. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*. **22**, pp. 19-35.
- Rogers, C. (1957) The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change. *The Journal of Consulting Psychology*. **21**, pp. 95-103
- Seto, T & Mori, N. (2009) Peer support and children's social problems. In Nakano. T. & Morikawa. (eds.) *Peer Support. L'esprit daujourdhui nombre 502*. Gyosei. Tokyo.
- Sutton, J., & Keogh, E. (2000) Social competition in school: Relationships with bullying, Machiavellianism and personality. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*. **70**, pp. 443-457.
- Sutton J., & Smith P.K. (1999) Bullying as a group process, an adaptation of the participant role approach. *Aggressive behaviour*. **25**, pp. 97-111.
- Takahashi, T., Kamigaki, K., & Kurihara, S. (2010) The actual record of implementation of peer support programme in: Nakano. T. & Morikawa. (eds.) *Peer Support. L'esprit daujourdhui nombre, 502*. Gyosei. Tokyo.
- Takeuchi, K. (2010). A practical study of peer support programme by school council of all junior high schools in a city. Focus on a play which aims to eradicate cyber bullying; by Osaka pref. Yeyagawa city junior high school students summit. *Japanese Annals of Peer Support*. **7**, pp. 19-28.
- Takeuchi, K. (2008) A study of peer support activities from junior high school students to elementary school. *Japanese Annals of Peer Support*. **5**, pp. 37-44.
- Toda, Y. (2005) International Comparison of Peer Support in Japan. In: M.

Tsuchiya, P. K., Smith, K., Soeda, K. and Oride, K. Kyoto, (eds.) *Ijime/Bullying, Responses and Measures to the Issues on Ijime/Bullying in Schools in Japan and the World*. Minerva Publishing Co Ltd. Tokyo.

Warden., D, & Mackinnon, S. (2003) Prosocial children, bullies and victims: An investigation of their sociometric status, empathy and social problem-solving strategies. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*. **21**, pp. 367–385.

Summary

This study discusses the nature of peer support systems in Japan, comparing with the peer support in the west (UK). Peer support, a relatively new concept in Japan, is an approach that builds on the helpfulness and altruism characteristic of friendship by extending it beyond friendship to the wider peer group. This often encourages children to offer other children strong emotional and behavioural support. Since the peer support approach had been introduced to Japan, several peer support practices have been developed as unique methods, which were suited to Japanese educational and traditional systems

In terms of the key features of both Japanese style peer support and the Western style peer support, some Japanese style peer support did not match the Western style peer support at all. These citizenship orientated approaches (e.g. greeting campaigns, clearing campaign, fund-raising activities, and anti-bullying drama) are unique to the Japanese peer support practices (still classified as peer support in Japan), which allows peer supporters to have a more active role as a group leader (facilitator) in peer-led activities. In this vein, two different qualities of peer support activities exist in Japan; one is based on the person-centred approach (role as a counsellor) and the other is based on citizenship orientated approach (role as a group leader). Also this study emphasises that further research is needed to expand the findings, which promote more conclusive answers. Especially, it is important to investigate children's perspectives at a deeper level. Since peer support is a relatively new educational scheme in Japan, continued research is vital to promote good practice in schools.

ピアサポートの特性に関する日本と欧米との比較

加藤 秀男 鈎 治雄

要 旨

本研究は、日本の小・中学校におけるピアサポートシステムの特徴を、欧米の（特に英国）ピアサポートと比較したものである。日本では、欧米のようなシステムとしてのピアサポートは、比較的新しいものである。そのため、ピアサポート導入初期（1995～2005年頃）は、欧米と同様の形態のものが多くみられたが、徐々に、文化や教育制度の影響もあり、日本のピアサポートの実践は独特の発展を遂げてきた。結果的に、ロジャーズのカウンセリング・モデルを基にする欧米のピアサポートよりも、日本のピアサポートは広範囲の活動を含むようになった。児童・生徒による、いじめ撲滅劇や、募金活動等はその例である。欧米のピアサポートの実践と比較しながら、日本のピアサポートの発展と特質を考えていきたい。