Characterizing Parents' and School Staff's Involvement with Student Attendance from the Perspective of School Staff in Japan

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Abstract

This study investigated the relations between parents and various school staff involvement, and student attendance across time from the viewpoint of school staff in Japan. In addition, student attendance characteristics were classified to investigate potential differences among students related to time and involvement of parents and staff. The research participants were Japanese elementary, junior, and senior high school staff ($N = 206$) who consented to participate in the survey. All participants were sampled from various areas of Japan and recruited through a web-based survey. Data were collected by the polling organization Internet Research Service MELLINKS (Tokyo, Japan), through their web panel (see www.mellinks.co.jp). The results indicated that during the early period of support, there was no positive correlation between class teachers' involvement and students' attendance. However, during the late period of support, it had a positive correlation. Surprisingly, the school nurses' involvement was critical even in the early periods. Furthermore, in the late period, the results of ANOVAs assessing difference among the student attendance categories showed that maintaining and recovery types had higher scores of parents' and class teachers' involvement than non-maintaining and declining types. This study suggests that flexibility of collaboration among parents and various school staff across time is an important component to support student attendance.

Keywords: parents' involvement, school staff involvement, student attendance

In recent years, adolescents that postpone becoming independent, such as Freeter, NEETs and Hikikomori have been increasing in Japan. They are Japanese expressions, referring to people who are not in full-time employment, those who confine themselves to home for long periods and are withdrawn from social life respectively. (e.g. Heinze & Thomas, 2014). In 2010, the number of Hikikomori was estimated at 700,000 among youth aged 15 up to people aged 34, but it did not include "potential" Hikikomori, who were averse to social involvement and kept withdrawing completely from society (Naikakufu, 2010). Long-term school refusal often leads to Hikikomori. In order to prevent Hikikomori, it is important to appropriately cope with school refusal in the early stages.

In Japan, there are over 120,000 potential students currently who have refused to go to school, so school refusal is a serious problem in the country (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology [MEXT], 2015). When supporting such students, it is important to provide support for the students' parents, by making appropriate contact with the students' families, as parents play a significant role in their children's lives, and the choices they make. However, too much focus on dealing with parents sometimes detracts the attention of the school staff from the students. On the other hand, many schools try to construct good relationships with the parents and support the families. Unfortunately, in spite of such efforts, those schools may be faced with the challenge of providing ways for all parents to contact and communicate with teachers and administrators so that information about students flows in two directions—from school to home and from home to school (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005)

Parent involvement in school has been significantly related to lower rates of high school dropout (Barnard, 2004). Dropout rates vary in different configurations of background risk factors, including family socioeconomic status (SES), family type, and family stress level (Alexander, Entwise, & Kabbni, 2001). Negative parental attitudes about school, low expectations, and poor parenting style contribute to poor student performance and, ultimately, to school dropout (Fagan & Pabon, 1990; Miller & Plant, 1999). Similarly, dropout levels are associated with family factors such as monitoring of child and the quality of parent-child interactions. Students whose parents monitor and regulate their activities provide emotional support, and encourage independent decision-making are less likely to drop out of school (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulos, Ritter, & Doronbush, 1990; Rumberger, 1995). A finding also indicated that parental involvement was generally a salient factor in explaining behavioral but not cognitive outcomes, with greatest support for parent-child discussion and involvement in parent-teacher organizations (McNeal, 1999).

While parents are important for education outcomes, the quality of the relationship between teachers and students is associated with students' success (Davis & Dupper, 2004). It can be said that many students end up refusing school in childhood because they do not experience good relationships with their teachers. In fact, Kensting (2008) insisted that their biggest complaint about school was uncaring and disrespectful teachers and administrators. Kensting also stated that one of the most critical components of students' persistence in attending school was the support they received from teachers who cared about their success in school. Rumberger and Thomas (2000) found that the higher the quality of the teachers as perceived by students, the lower the dropout rate, while the higher the quality of the teachers as perceived by the principal, the higher the dropout rate. Therefore, student-teacher relationships are an integral part of students' school experience.

Furthermore, a positive relationship with teachers may be especially important for the school adjustment of those students who are at higher risk of school failure due to family background variables. In other words, teachers become important agents of socialization and sources of support outside the home environment for children (Almakadma & Ramisetty-Mikler, 2015). Jungert and Koestner (2015) reported that teacher's support for student's autonomy and systemizing are significantly related to motivation, self-efficacy, and achievement over time, but parental support for autonomy is not directly related to the outcomes. However, as parents become more involved with their children's education, they may be more likely to communicate with school personnel about their child's adjustment and behavior in class. In turn, parents may become more informed about their children's social difficulties from teachers and school staff, and then subsequently address and reinforce more positive behaviors at home (Nokali, Bechman, & Votruba-Drazal, 2010). Thus, parent involvement can be encouraged by teachers.

Another section of school staff members that have been shown to influence education outcomes are the school nurses. Lightfoot and Bines (2000) paid attention to the complementary roles of nurses and school staff. School nurses could be a trusted alternative when neither parents nor teachers are appropriate. Similarly, school counselors can play a guiding role in preventing school dropout. Some researchers have described school counselors as being instrumental in the integration of community-wide mental health services (e.g., Bemak, 2000; Keys & Bemak, 1997). Taylor and Davis (2008) suggested several practical strategies for school counselors to promote parent involvement.

As mentioned above, the results of whose support is effective varies among the findings of different researchers. There is a need to reveal not only "who" is important in supporting students, but also what other factors lie in the desirable support system. That is, it is essential to specify "when" and "who" should offer support "to whom", in order to develop effective support plans. From the view of relationships among students, parents, and school staff, the theoretical background of this study is the model of structural family therapy suggested by Minuchin (1974). In this model, preferable family forms are considered to have such structures as cooperative alliance between parents, and appropriate boundaries between parents and children. This theoretical model can be considered applicable to school settings, which are as important as family settings for children. Constructing collaborative relationships between teachers and parents might be the key to finding a solution to students' school refusals.

In this study, the period of support was divided into three: early, middle, and late. This study investigated the relations among parents and various school staff members, and student attendance across time from the viewpoint of school staff in Japan. Similar patterns of findings emerged for teacher and parent reports of parent involvement (Nokali, Bechman, & Votruba-Drazal, 2010). Researchers investigating the validity of teacher-student relationship quality (TSRQ) reported good correspondence with both direct observations of the teacher-student relationship (Doumen, Verschueren, Koomen, & Buyse, 2008). Also, teacher rating of TSRQ demonstrated good test-retest reliability over periods of three to four months (Doumen et al., 2008). Thus, this study was investigated from the point of view of the school staff. In addition, students' attendance characteristics were classified to investigate the potential differences among students in relation to the time and involvement levels of parents and school staff.

Method

Participants
All participants were sampled from each area in Japan and recruited through a web-based survey. Data were collected by the polling organization Internet Research Service MELLINKS (Tokyo, Japan), through their web panel (see www.mellinks.co.jp). The details of the survey were sent to potential participants, who had registered and received one ID, by an e-mail in early May 2012. If potential participants agreed to participate in this survey, they clicked on another link to view the survey, which began after they had entered their ID. Participants could not skip any questionnaire items. Elementary, junior, and senior high school staff members who were working in schools located in Hokkaido, Tohoku, Kanto, Chubu, Kinki, Chugoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu were randomly chosen from this database ($N = 210$, 177 men and 33 women, age range: 23-76 years; working in elementary school, $n = 60$, junior high school, $n = 73$, senior high school, $n = 73$, and secondary school, $n = 4$). The four secondary school staff members (1 man and 3 women) were excluded. Responses from 206 participants were then analyzed in this study.

Procedure
Firstly, age, school location, type of school, and type of occupation were inquired into. In this study, students that had been absent from school for more than 30 days a year were regarded as school non-attending, according to the definition by MEXT (2015). The participants were required to answer one completed case of school non-attendance in which they had continuously provided support for over three months. Age and sex of the student were also inquired. It took approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Items regarding the degree of parents and school staff involvement in the case were developed, by referring to *Parent Involvement at School* (Jimerson, 2000). Furthermore, items inquiring into the time and number of days during which students had refused to attend school were developed by referring to *Feeling of School Avoidance Scale* (Watanabe & Koishi, 2000).

Each school staff, indicated in Table 1, was required to evaluate the degree of involvement by parents and other school staff, as well as student attendance. In other words, each school staff responded to queries not only about their own involvement but also the involvement of other staff and student attendance from their own perspective.

Measures

Involvement Score. Participants were asked questions about how strongly parents were involved with truant children. They responded using a four-point Likert scale: 1 (weak), 2 (relatively weak), 3 (relatively strong) and 4 (strong), depending on early, middle, and latter periods after starting support. The involvement of each school staff member, such as class teachers, managerial teachers, school nurses, and school counselors, were examined through similar questions and participants were required to respond, using the identical four-point scale, regarding the three periods described above.

Student Attendance Score. Student attendance scores were examined through a question assessing how many times the truant students attended school, by using a four-point Likert scale: 1 (very few times), 2 (relatively few times), 3 (relatively often), and 4 (very often), depending on the three periods of time. Participants were also asked the question about how long the truant students stayed at school, and they responded using a four-point scale: 1 (very

short time), 2 (relatively short time), 3 (relatively long time), and 4 (very long time). The total score of the above two items were regarded as "Student Attendance Score".

Ethical Considerations. Before the survey, the author explained to the participants the aim of this study, protection of their anonymity, and their right to freely refuse to answer questions or take part in the survey, and obtained their consent. The author also explained that the data resulting from the study would be used only for research purposes and how the data would be stored, used, and destroyed.

Data Analysis. The data were analyzed using SPSS 21.0. Questionnaire total scores were calculated as sums of item scores. The data were analyzed by Pearson Product Moment Correlation, hierarchical cluster analysis and ANOVAs.

Results

Demographics

The attributes of the participants are indicated below in Table 1. The research participants were Japanese elementary, junior, and senior high school staff ($N = 206$, 176 men and 30 women, 60 elementary, 73 junior, and 73 senior high school staff, $M_{age} = 48.02$, $SD = 7.68$). The participants were required to recall one completed school non-attendance case in which they had provided support continuously over three months for the student that had been absent from school over 30 days a year. The age and sex of the student was inquired. The results indicated the following: 113 boys, and 93 girls, $M_{age} = 13.73$ ($SD = 2.46$). The average length of the period during which support was provided was 10.37 months ($SD = 7.12$).

Table 1: Demographics

		$N = 206$
Ages・Gender	Men	$n = 176$
	Women	$n = 30$
	Mean age	$48.02 (SD = 7.68)$
School category	Elementary school staff	$n = 60$
	Junior high school staff	$n = 73$
	Senior high school staff	$n = 73$
Position	Administrators	$n = 23$
	School teachers	$n = 179$
	School nurses	$n = 3$
	School counselors	$n = 1$
Supported student	Boys	113
	Girls	93
	Mean age	$13.73 (SD = 2.46)$
	Length of support (month)	$10.37 (SD = 7.12)$

Correlation

Table 2 shows the results of Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. During the early period of providing support, the class teachers' involvement had positive correlations with that of managerial teachers' ($r = .41$, $p < .001$), school nurses ($r = .33$, $p < .001$), and school counselors ($r = .22$, $p < .001$). Moreover, managerial teachers' involvement had positive correlations with that of school nurses ($r = .56$, $p < .001$) and school counselors ($r = .26$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, school nurses' involvement had a positive correlation with that of school counselors ($r = .34$, $p < .001$). Although the correlation coefficient was low, parents' involvement had a positive correlation with that of class teachers ($r = .16$, $p < .05$). Similarly, school nurses' involvement had a positive correlation with student attendance ($r = .16$, $p < .05$).

During the middle period, parents' involvement had positive correlation with that of class teachers ($r = .35$, $p < .001$) and student attendance ($r = .21$, $p < .01$). Class teachers' involvement had positive correlations with that of managerial teachers ($r = .43$, $p < .001$), school nurses ($r = .36$, $P < .001$), and school counselors ($r = .25$, $p < .001$). Moreover, managerial teachers' involvement had positive correlations with that of school nurses ($r = .49$, $p < .001$) and school counselors ($r = .26$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, the school nurses' involvement had a positive correlation with that of school counselors ($r = .32$, $p < .001$).

During the late period, parents' involvement had positive correlation with class teachers' involvement ($r = .38$, $p < .001$) and student attendance ($r = .45$, $p < .001$). The class teachers' involvement had positive correlation with that of managerial teacher ($r = .47$, $p < .001$), school nurses ($r = .35$, $p < .001$), and student attendance ($r = .37$, $p < .001$). Moreover, managerial teacher involvement had positive correlation with that of school nurses ($r = .48$, $p < .001$) and school counselors ($r = .26$, $p < .001$). Again, the school nurses' involvement had a positive correlation with that of school counselors ($r = .26$, $p < .001$). Though the correlation coefficient was low, parents' involvement had weak positive correlation with that of managerial teacher involvement ($r = .18$, $p < .01$) and the school nurses ($r = .16$, $p < .05$). Similarly, class teachers' involvement had a weak positive correlation with that of school counselors ($r = .16$, $p < .05$). Furthermore, student attendance had weak positive correlations with that of managerial teacher ($r = .14$, $p < .05$) and school nurses ($r = .19$, $p < .05$).

Table 2:

Correlations between Parents and Various School Staff Involvement and Student attendance across Each Period

		2	3	4	5	6
Early	1. Parents' involvement	.16*	-.03	.04	-.03	.11
	2. Class teachers' involvement	–	.41***	.33***	.22***	.04
	3. Administrators' involvement	–	–	.56***	.26***	.06
	4. School nurses' involvement	–	–	–	.34***	.18*
	5. School counselors' involvement	–	–	–	–	.01
	6. School attendance	–	–	–	–	–
Middle	1. Parents' involvement	.35***	.11	.09	.12	.21**
	2. Class teachers' involvement	–	.43***	.36***	.25***	.14
	3. Administrators' involvement	–	–	.49***	.26***	.07
	4. School nurses' involvement	–	–	–	.32***	.12
	5. School counselors' involvement	–	–	–	–	.10
	6. School attendance	–	–	–	–	–
Late	1. Parents' involvement	.38***	.18**	.16*	.13	.45***
	2. Class teachers' involvement	–	.47***	.35***	.16*	.37***
	3. Admisitrators' involvement	–	–	.48***	.26***	.14*
	4. School nurses' involvement	–	–	–	.26***	.19**
	5. School counselors' involvement	–	–	–	–	.05
	6. School attendance	–	–	–	–	–

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Creating Attendance Categories

In order to classify changes in the student attendance score by school absentees into different types, hierarchical cluster analysis (Ward's method, Average Euclidean distance) was conducted. The results indicated the following four clusters from the perspective of possible interpretation (Figure 1): The first cluster was named "non-maintaining type ($n = 45$)," in which student attendance scores were always low, regardless of the support period. The second cluster was named "maintaining type ($n = 55$)," in which the student attendance scores were always high, regardless of the support period. The third cluster was named "recovery type ($n = 56$)," in which the frequency and times of attending school increased as time passed. The fourth cluster was named "declining type ($n = 50$)," in which the student attendance score decreased as time passed.

Figure 1: Student attendance characteristics
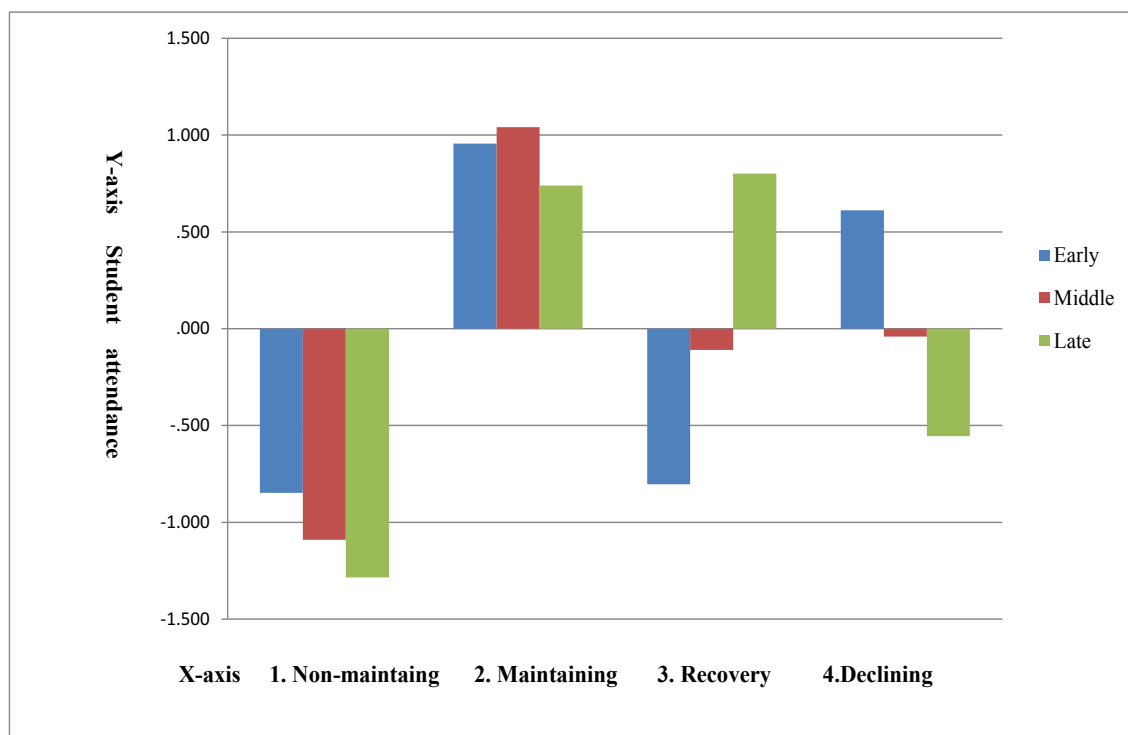
Student attendance characteristics were classified into four categories in accordance with three periods. Zero indicates the average value. A plus indicates the positive value beyond an average. A minus indicates the negative value below the average. Each cluster was organized by the attendance types. The cluster that showed the best attendance was the second cluster, while the first cluster showed the worst attendance.

Attendance category comparisons

Next, one-way mixed design ANOVA was conducted on parents' and school staff's involvement in the early, middle, and late periods of support as an independent variable, and each cluster as a between-subjects factor. The results indicated the main effects between clusters in the middle period (F (3, 202) = 4.68, p < .01, η^2 = .01) and in the late period (F (3, 202) = 14.57, p < .001, η^2 = .03) of parents' involvement in school attendance. Bonferroni multiple comparison tests indicated that in the middle period, the degree of parental involvement in the maintaining type was higher than that in the non-maintaining, or declining, type. In the late period, parents' involvement in the maintaining type and the recovery type were higher than that in the non-maintaining type, or declining, type. Regarding the class teachers' involvement, main effects were observed in both clusters in the middle period (F (3, 202) = 2.95, p < .05, η^2 = .00) and late period (F (3, 202) = 7.94, p < .001, η^2 = .01). Bonferroni multiple comparison tests indicated that in the middle period, the class teachers' involvement in the recovery type was higher than that in the non-maintaining type. In the late period, the class teachers' involvement in the recovery type was higher than in the non-maintaining, or declining, types. Class teachers' involvement in the maintaining type was higher than that in the non-maintaining type. Regarding the school nurses' involvement, main effects were observed in all clusters in the early (F (3, 202) = 4.57, p < .01, η^2 = .01), middle (F (3, 202) = 3.68, p < 01, η^2 = .00), and late periods (F (3, 202) = 3.33, p < .05, η^2 = .00). Bonferroni multiple comparison tests indicated that school nurses' involvement during the early period in the maintaining type was higher than that in the non-

maintaining type, or declining, type. Moreover, school nurses' involvement during the middle and late periods in the maintaining type was higher than that in the non-maintaining type.

Table 3:
Effect of Parent and School Staff Involvement on Student Attendance Categories

		Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3		Cluster 4			
	Period	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F	Bonferroni's
Parents	Early	2.71	1.10	2.96	1.02	2.68	1.10	2.60	1.12	1.13	
	Middle	2.42	1.03	3.04	0.98	2.88	0.88	2.48	1.07	4.68[**]	2 > 1,4
	Late	2.42	1.12	3.25	0.91	3.29	0.78	2.40	0.93	14.57[***]	2,3 > 1,4
Class Teachers	Early	3.04	0.82	3.24	0.69	3.29	0.82	3.18	0.83	0.84	
	Middle	3.04	0.77	3.33	0.70	3.46	0.66	3.30	0.74	2.95[*]	3 > 1
	Late	2.93	0.84	3.42	0.76	3.63	0.59	3.24	0.74	7.94[***]	3 > 1,4 2 > 1
Administrators	Early	2.24	0.91	2.51	0.94	2.25	1.08	2.46	0.95	1.04	
	Middle	2.27	0.89	2.67	0.92	2.55	1.08	2.72	0.86	2.18	
	Late	2.36	1.05	2.73	1.01	2.77	1.10	2.80	0.93	1.92	
School Nurses	Early	2.36	0.93	2.93	0.94	2.30	1.01	2.52	0.99	4.57[**]	2 > 1,3
	Middle	2.33	0.95	2.96	0.90	2.63	1.07	2.78	0.95	3.68[*]	2 > 1
	Late	2.36	0.96	2.96	0.96	2.71	1.12	2.88	1.02	3.33[*]	2 > 1
School Counselors	Early	3.30	1.63	3.21	1.34	3.09	1.61	3.16	1.51	0.14	
	Middle	3.24	1.53	3.33	1.23	3.35	1.48	3.35	1.35	0.05	
	Late	3.21	1.49	3.41	1.26	3.38	1.45	3.41	1.31	0.19	

[*] $p < .05$, [**] $p < .01$, [***] $p < .001$

Discussion

The results of this study indicated that (a) involvement of class teachers and parents are correlated on all periods, (b) class teachers' involvement and student attendance is only related in late period, and (c) student attendance is related to parents' involvement in the middle and late periods. It is suggested that continuous relationships between class teachers and parents might be partially related to student attendance.

Wakashima, Ikuta, Massaki, Noguchi, and Itakura (2013) showed that a child's school satisfaction was strongly associated with parent-class teacher relationship in Japan. Higher levels of parent–school communication and more active types of parent involvement (i.e., help with a class activity) were associated with children's adaptive behavior (Marcon, 1999). In addition, Almakadma and Ramisetty-Mikler (2015) concluded that schools and parents should be encouraged to work as a team, and to recognize the importance of school connectedness in improving positive student behavior and outcomes. These results indicate that the structural family therapy model (Minuchin, 1974) could be applied to relationships between parents, class teachers, and students in the school settings, as well as to family relationships. Therefore, it is important to construct cooperative relationships between parents and class teachers by increasing the degree of their involvement in supporting truant students. In other words, an essential component of the supporting system is to maintain class teachers' continuous involvement with parents as well as the students. As a result of maintaining class teachers' involvement, parents' motivation to make their children attend

school increased in the middle period, and the frequency and times of students' attending school increased as well.

Furthermore, the involvement of class teachers and school counselors showed a middle positive correlation up to the middle period, whereas in the late period, class teachers' involvement had a weak positive correlation with school counselors' involvement. It is suggested that although school counselors provide support to students until the middle period by interacting with class teachers, in the late period, class teachers become more directly involved with the students. As a result, the correlation between class teachers' involvement and school counselors ' involvement becomes weak, which might be one of the effective styles of cooperation. In many school refusal cases, the relationships between students and their school tend to gradually weaken, and the role of the school counselor is considered important as a mediator between them (Fukumaru, 2005). By the same token, the teachers were found to have determined their actions with reference to guidance from the school counselor (Yamamoto, 2015). Therefore, it is expected that the school counselor would play the role of a bridge between parents and class teachers, as well as between students and class teachers.

The correlations between the types of changes in school attendance and parents' involvement as well as the degree of school staff's involvement among clusters indicated no major difference in the early period. On the other hand, after the middle period, an increase in parents' involvement highly affected attendance in maintaining and recovery types. Moreover, the degree of class teachers' involvement with recovery type increased over time. This result also corroborated findings of previous studies to some extent (e.g., Barnard, 2004; Davis & Dupper, 2004).

It is a surprising point that the school nurses' involvement with the maintaining type was high from the early period. Furthermore, school nurses were more highly involved with the recovery type, compared to the non-maintaining type after the early period. Four key elements of the school nurse role were identified; safeguarding the health and welfare of children, health promotion, a pupils' confidante, and family support (Lightfoot & Bines, 2000). Thus, school nurses are considered to play an important role in the beginning of support. Especially, if a student goes to the school infirmary on arriving at school, this can be seen to be a sign of school absenteeism. Then the role of the school nurse in collaborating with other school staff may be effective for the prevention of school refusal.

On the other hand, parents' involvement and class teachers' involvement did not change, or decrease in the non-maintaining type and the declining type. Parent's involvement is generally a salient factor with greatest support for parent-child discussion and involvement in parent-teacher organization (McNeal, 1999). It would be important for class teachers to establish relationship with parents and increase their involvement for supporting students refusing to attend school. The results of this study suggest that in the early period, there are rarely significant changes, and people around the students might lose motivation to provide support. Thus, the crucial period can be considered to be the middle period. In this period, whether class teacher's and parents' involvement would increase or decrease might highly affect the prognosis of school refusal. Thus, cooperation with class teachers is considered effective in supporting students. In addition, Amitani (2001) has reported that teachers have a sense of failure and guilt when they cannot provide effective support to truant students. School nurses and school counselors have expert knowledge and, thus, they should help class teachers feel motivated to support students.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include the following: Firstly, this study was conducted only from the perspective of school staff. It is suggested that the results should be re-examined through paired analysis with other school staff, parents, and students. Secondly, the number of participants of this study was small, and gender differences among school staff and those among students refusing school were not investigated. Thirdly, differences in the types of schools were not examined in this study.

According to the MEXT, it is known that the rate of school non-attendance is different between elementary, junior, and senior high schools. It is suggested that gender differences and differences based on the type of school should be investigated in the future to develop support systems. Moreover, the participants in this study consisted of only Japanese people, and cultural differences were not considered. Therefore, it can be difficult to generalize the results of this study to other countries. It is suggested that future studies should take cultural differences into consideration.

Finally, the study did not include how to improve relationships between teachers and parents. As mentioned previously, the relationships between teachers and parents affect students in many ways. This study also indicated the importance of teacher-parent relationships, particularly in the late period. However, many schools face the difficulty of maintaining good relationships with certain parents. Harada et al. (2011) showed that the greatest number of issues on school refusal were problems related to parents. Further studies are expected to investigate effective ways of building these relationships.

Conclusion

In spite of above limitations, the result suggests effective three steps for supporting students. It can be said that the role of school staff and parents varies between each period. In the early period, of course, class teachers are required to be involved with the students. On the other hand, they have to establish good relationships with parents so that they can inform parents about the students' school life. At the time, the school counselor is expected to be an intermediator between them. During the middle period, referring to the sharing of information with teachers, parents will be able to increase interactions with their children. It can be important for class teachers to make connections with school nurses and school counselors, because they have expert knowledge on psychological support. In the late period, the alliance between teachers and parents will help in ensuring that the students attend school again.

The ratio of teachers to all workers in schools in Japan is higher than that of other countries in the West: The ratio in Japan is 82%, whereas that of the United States and the United Kingdom is 56% and 51%, respectively (MEXT, 2014). This implies more diversity of teachers' work, because the work in schools has not been divided among school staff properly. That is, teachers are burdened with various roles and deal with some issues as bullying, school refusal, and others. It can be inferred that the bonding between teachers and students in Japan is relatively stronger than in other countries. Although MEXT suggested the assignment of school staff's work toward "school as a team" in 2014, utilizing the present bonding is also assumed to be important. In other words, to maintain good relationships with students, they are required to collaborate with school counselors and school nurses. And then,

each school staff and parents are expected to play effective roles in accord with the three stages of school refusal.

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