

Improved Youth Participation via CBPR and PAR

～ An Alternative Direction for Japanese Education ～

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Introduction

This paper presents an argument for greater and more meaningful youth participation, before conducting a literature review of community based project research (CBPR) and participatory action research (PAR) involving youth, revealing opportunities and problems common to both. The overall view of CBPR and PAR is positive showing that, when correctly employed, enabling children's voice benefits both adults and children. However, it is also shown that little such research truly involves youth at every stage of the process, and that problems exist such as adults being reluctant to transfer power to young people. This indicates a need to avoid tokenism when using CBPR and PAR. The information gained suggests that CBPR and PAR approaches could be used to avoid or mitigate social problems in Japan such as *ijime* (bullying) and *hikkikomori* (acute social withdrawal), which are particular problems experienced by some teens and pre-teens in the Japanese educational system. In sum, the literature reviews conducted in this paper are brought together to suggest an alternate direction for Japanese education than the one currently or previously followed.

Keywords: *CBPR, PAR, youth-involved, Japan education reform*

1. Rights and responsibilities of children

1.1 Interpretation of the UNCRC for education

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UNCRC (UN, 1989) states the rights and responsibilities of children. It gives reasons children should have these rights and responsibilities, including:

- children are both individuals, and also members of a wider community
- children need special care and protection
- children develop best if appropriately provided with love, understanding and happiness
- children should be allowed to grow up in peace and dignity

Children's rights and responsibilities include the right to express their views and have those views listened to, as written in Article 12 of the UNCRC (UN, 1989). Article 12 can be described as one which gives the child a voice (although some have criticized the word "voice" as not being enough to explain the rights of the child given in the

article (Lundy, 2007)). Kanyal and Cooper (2012) say that Articles 12, 13 and 14 together specifically acknowledge the right of children to participation in their learning and that, as a “group of social actors in their own right” (Kanyal and Cooper, 2012, p.60), they should have autonomy over such learning.

The discussion of learning brings us to Article 29 of the UNCRC, which describes education for young people as being about full development, not only academic progress. It reminds us of the purpose of education which, although an enigma for most of us (Steinbacher, 2012), is according to Jones (2012) not only about examinations but includes:

- Preparing (children) for citizenship
- Cultivating a skilled workforce
- Teaching cultural literacy
- Helping learners become critical thinkers
- Helping to compete in a global marketplace

Individual researchers and company leaders are not alone in listing educational goals, with some nations also listing desired objectives of education (Lynch, 2014). For nations, however, politics can make it difficult to agree on the goals of education, such as in the UK (Gillard, 2011) and, in Japan, where there is “some confusion” arising from legacies of the past (Kaneko, 2011, p.116), while other nations such as Singapore have succeeded in noting “skills gained not just by preparing for and passing examinations, but by interacting with others (peers, teachers, etc.), by experience of both failure and success, and by expanding the child’s worldview” (Lynch, 2014), skills which reflect Jones’s description, above.

It is essential that children have an education which enables them to develop fully, not just academically (Lynch, 2014). It has been suggested that the presence or absence of children’s voices in education is the difference between its (education’s) relevance or otherwise (Young, 2012). The issue of hearing and listening to the voice of the main stakeholders in education, i.e. children, has been tackled by enabling children become researchers in their own right. Kellett has shown how provision of a voice space can empower the child, and result in increased and improved “participation, empowerment, voice and emancipation” (Kellett, 2010, p.195).

1.2 Child participation in research

While child participation in research has increased in recent years, child-led research is still uncommon. Kellett (2010) reasons that putting the child in the role of research leader can result in a rift between the traditional roles of adult and child, or “new protagonist frontiers” (Kellett, 2010, p.195), but regards this as a mainly positive result. Kellett (2009a) gives examples of tokenism, and how to identify and avoid it using such tools as Hart’s Ladder of Children’s Participation (Hart, 2002), or Shier’s model of participation frames of reference (Shier, 2001),

emphasizing ultimate collaboration between adults and children with both sides bringing knowledge to the table. Evidence exists that children are morally and cognitively competent, while recognizing that children themselves see barriers to their participation as being dependent on the world of adults (Skelton, 2008). However, leading/participation in research can give children more confidence in their status as children (Graham and Fitzgerald, 2008). The benefits are not only for children, there are also benefits in children's voices being heard for adults. Kellett gives examples of how child-led research can give new insights into social issues that affect them, and how such research can result in changes helping society as a whole; such as a girl who reports her childhood is adversely affected by public transport system limitations for wheelchair users like her father (Kellett, 2010), and a child who highlights the fear felt by children living in deprived areas (Frank, 2005). However, Kellett (2010) claims that the foremost benefit of child-led research is self-esteem.

2. Youth-involved CBPR and PAR, and models of participation

2.1 A literature review of CBPR with youth

Do other researchers identify strong benefits such as self-esteem as a result of child-led/involved research? A literature review by Jacquez et al. (2013) of 385 papers claiming to be based on youth-involved CBPR gives an insight into this. CBPR is research that “places value on equitable collaborations” (Jacquez et al., 2013, p.176) between academics and members of the community, reducing the focus on who is leading, and increasing the focus on those involved in research. Also, it emphasizes that members included in research have an equal status so, while all are participants, all also lead. CBPR is described as an “empowering process through which participants can increase control over their lives” (Minkler and Wallerstein, cited in Jacquez et al., 2013), resulting in greater personal confidence and giving a concrete and positive view to a child about their own status (of being an important member of society) (Graham and Fitzgerald, 2008). Jacquez et al. (2013) argue that the involvement of youth in research is essential to successfully capture contextual input to represent their experiences, thus making the research more valuable. However, they also recognize resistance by researchers to partner with younger children, with a major reason being Piaget's argument that children are unable to take part as researchers due to their limited or underdeveloped cognitive abilities (Piaget, 1973). Jacquez et al. (2013) argue that this is not the case, as more recent research shows that young children are capable of such roles.

It could be because Piaget's work “had the greatest lasting impact on developmental psychology of any theorist” (Bjorklund and Hernandez, cited in Marti and Rodriguez, 2013), that adult researchers are still reluctant to involve children as researchers. However, unlike Vygotsky and Bronfenbrenner, Piaget's approach fails to emphasise “roles of culture and the environment in the child's learning” (Gray and MacBlain, 2013, p.136) and doesn't see children as active participants in learning, meaning following Piaget's approach makes it difficult to adopt a child-centred approach, while those influenced by Bruner, Vygotsky and/or Bronfenbrenner can find such an approach more natural (Gray and MacBlain, 2013). Piaget's impact may have resulted in lack of recognition of

the importance of involving children as researchers. Overlooking the significance of young people as participants and de-emphasising the role of culture and environment produces an incomplete picture of a child's learning. CBPR is a way of remedying this, ensuring involvement of all key stakeholders in research collaboration.

However, when CBPR methods are used to conduct research with young people, problems are seen to exist between the intent, perception and presentation of writers of research papers, and the reality. Jacquez et al. (2013) found that out of 385 papers found by searching for “CBPR with youth”, only 56 papers (15%) could be described as such because only that number focused on projects in which the partners were children. This tells us that some projects may not be what they claim. Furthermore, the levels at which children were involved in research projects varied, with few satisfying the intention of CBPR, i.e. having equitable collaborations. The authors conclude that “great variability exists in the degree to which youth are partners in the true spirit of CBPR” (Jacquez et al., 2013, p.182), meaning that there is a restriction in youth involvement, despite researchers claims of equitable involvement. If children are restricted in their involvement, and others (adults) are not, then their participation cannot be equitable. In order to assess the extent to which youth are involved in research, Israel et al. (2005) give five phases of youth involvement¹ in CBPR, with Phase 5 being the most advanced (most desirable). The phases, with added descriptions are:

- Phase 1: Partnership Formation and Maintenance
Youth active in research input through formal mechanisms (e.g. Youth Advisory Board)
- Phase 2: Community Assessment & Diagnosis
Youth involved in research question, goals and priority identification
- Phase 3: Issue Definition
Youth involved in research design & execution
- Phase 4: Documentation & evaluation of the partnership (process)
Youth participation in data analysis & summarization, and/or findings interpretation & understanding
- Phase 5: Results Feedback, Interpretation, Dissemination, and Application
Youth participation in the above

It was found that the percentage of youth engaged in all five phases was just 18% (ten papers) of the 56 papers they had identified as being true CBPR with youth (Jacquez et al., 2013), meaning that full participation of youth in CBPR was just 2.6% of the entire group of 385 papers claiming to involve youth in CBPR. It appears that only a small fraction of those claiming to include young people are, in fact, giving them a full voice.

The above (difference in claims of engaging youth and the reality) is important to remember as, later in this paper, a situation is introduced which demanded that attempts be made to enable children's voice; the educational situation in Japan and its role in various social problems such as bullying, refusing to go to school, and other issues.

However, those attempts did not realise clear benefits indicating that, in reality, nothing changed. In the meantime, the problematic social issues have, as a matter of course, not changed or have gotten worse. In order to “serve children well”, Kellett (2009b, p.237), distinguishes between youth participation and youth voice, reminding us that children may be afforded the space to express their views but, without the personal facility to do so (in their own way, including non-verbal communication), an audience to listen to that voice, and the voice of the child having influence, their communication will “frequently go unheard” (Kellett, 2009b, p.238). In other words, Lundy’s conceptualisation of children’s voice being constituted of the four parts of 1. space, 2. voice, 3. audience, and 4. influence (Lundy, 2007), highlight the importance of “a combination of circumstances” (Kellett, 2009b, p.239) needed for the child to communicate properly. With this in mind, we can see how the five CBPR research phases of Israel et al. (2005) are not things that happen by chance, they have to be planned for and striven towards. The resultant effort needed to achieve Phase 5 may be why such a low number of researchers in the literature review had involved youth in feedback, interpretation, dissemination and application of results. Agencies and researchers may claim that their work fully involves young people but there is “a discrepancy between the theoretical position and what happens in practice” (Warming cited in Kellett, 2009b, p.248).

A review of CBPR papers claiming to involve young people shows that the vast majority fail to fully engage with children. This suggests that some may not expect success (of the research project they are involved in) when young people participate and their voice is listened to, or that it may not be worth the effort to set up such a situation.

2.2 A literature review of PAR with youth

On the contrary, a literature review of PAR with youth shows that success can be achieved, while highlighting points of difficulty. Furthermore, as this literature review hopes to reveal solutions for solving social problems in Japan in which the Japanese educational system plays a part, a literature review of research into PAR involving children around the age of the most vulnerable Japanese (pre-teens and early-to-mid teens (Hays, 2012)) is conducted.

Langhout and Thomas (2010) say that, while children are obviously at the core of social issues influencing themselves, it tends to be adult researchers who determine problem definitions, design research data observational procedures and collection measures, and, ultimately, conduct research for children rather than with children (Langhout and Thomas, 2010). They introduce a collection of thirteen papers which carry out participatory action research involving children in middle schools in the USA (approximate age: 11~14 years old). Langhout and Thomas (2010) agree with Rogoff (2003) and Kellett et al. (2004) in supporting children taking up more active roles than was previously assumed by Piaget (1973), claiming that children can gain more “control of the resources that affect their lives” by participating in research (Langhout and Thomas, 2010, p.61). To aid in understanding PAR

based research, Langhout and Thomas advocate creating three focus subsets; theory and methods, school-based examples, and community based examples. Then they suggest examining the papers across the two dimensions of guiding paradigms and theoretical traditions, with further subgroups within these.

Challenges to implementing PAR successfully include impacts of power relationships and difficulties in conceptualising the research relationship between adults and children. Clark (2010) points out that the problems are not all caused by children, calling the adult researcher an “authentic novice” (Clark, 2010, p.119). Ethical and political issues also may exist, where the researcher/research audience may not like what they hear the participating children saying, especially when it challenges the status quo (Langhout and Thomas, 2010) or goes outside ideas held by adults about problems, increasing subordination and/or vulnerability of participating children. Also, like CBPR, few researchers have truly included the child as a collaborator, social actor and/or researcher (Langhout and Thomas, 2010). This seems to go against the description of PAR as a collaborative methodology designed to ensure a voice for those affected by research projects (Nelson et al. 1998).

Chen et al.’s paper on engaging girls in PAR investigated how the environments of girls in their learning and social program, Girls Inc., concluded with recommendations for using PAR in evaluation of youth development programs (Chen et al., 2010). Their research found that PAR is “an effective strategy to involve girls in evaluation” (Chen et al., 2010, p.233), and that it could aid learning about and improve learning program environments when using Wheeler’s (2000) youth-adult partnership model which sees children as equal partners to adults. Their description indicates that the use of PAR in their programs sought to involve the young people in each stage of Shier’s (2001) model of participation frames of reference. Chen et al. (2010) claim that using PAR allows their organisation to commit to justice, equality and improvement of the lives of the young people in their program, and their communities (in the USA). Furthermore, they point out that PAR’s collective knowledge construction results in historically excluded groups being empowered to work towards social change. Importantly for young people, they can build a “greater sense of control over their lives” through greater social development, self-efficacy and confidence (Chen et al. 2010, p.230).

Camino (2005) says that certain misconceptions can adversely affect youth-adult partnerships. These misconceptions are: (1) believing that young people have to do all important tasks; (2) assuming adults have to give up all their power; and (3) focusing on the participation of young people, rather than on partnership between them and adults. Chen et al. (2010) agree that it is essential to avoid the misconceptions, and claim that adults need to form strategies to provide environments which support the voice of young people. They also found children reported positive peer pressure as being valuable in PAR-based programs. On the other hand, Porter et al. (2010) found that age and gender issues were important impeding or facilitating factors in the work of the child researchers in their research into PAR in Africa, and claim that that rhetoric of child participation can, in reality, be

socially or culturally constructed obeying of adults wishes (for them to volunteer). However, they also point out that child researchers are of great benefit to adult researchers “because they know the politics and dos and don’ts of the community” (Porter et al., 2010, p.219). They also often found expectations of reward (monetary or in the form of social connections benefiting their future), meaning that the relationship was not a balanced one. The children did get monetary payment but also got further benefits such as training in communication and research skills, likely to positively affect their future careers. Overall, despite some issues, Porter et al. were also generally positive about the benefits of PAR for young people in a context very different than the North American one of Chen et al. (2010).

Most other papers reviewed were also positive about PAR. Newman Phillips et al. (2010) found youth PAR suitable for working with and empowering marginalized youth in education, and that it addresses “structural disparities at individual and group levels” (Newman Phillips et al., 2010, p.179). Although they claim to have made mistakes (in engaging students), they say that the benefits of using youth-PAR outweigh the effort required, with one of those benefits being that “the mantle of dominance” is removed (Gaventa and Cornwall cited in Newman Phillips et al. (2010), p. 181), while teachers can also be empowered by its use. They found that PAR can reveal gaps between theory and practice in middle school. Ozer et al. (2010) admit that there can be difficulties in sustaining PAR in schools, due to the enhanced critical thinking skills required of students, and unevenness of student maturity. However, they claim that PAR develops a positive identity among youth and encourages students to hold constructive perspectives. They conclude that this methodology supports students in developing skills and improves the quality of middle schools for students “development as thinkers and citizens” (Ozer et al., 2012, p.165).

The literature review revealed that PAR has the potential to benefit young people’s situations. Clark (2010) shows how PAR can be used to understand the current concerns of young children, and also reveal those of older children as all children do not mature at the same pace (Ozer et al., 2010). Kellett (2010) states that involving children in active research should be celebrated and is beneficial to adults as well as children. Ren and Langhout (2010) find that PAR during school recess can create a space facilitating and empowering younger children, and Van Sluys (2010) argues that PAR can (positively) redefine learning, ensuring that all students benefit. Liegghio et al. (2010) conclude that community psychologists should be encouraged to use PAR with children with mental health issue. Foster-Fishman et al., (2010) reminds us that it is important to involve youth in all phases of the investigation, as the different phases offer different benefits. They offer a method, the ReACT Method, to enable involvement in the data analysis phase.

There are some warnings about and criticisms of PAR. Duckett et al., (2010) show how PAR can be used in “healthy-schools” (Duckett et al., 2010, p.167), not only in schools where there are problems. However, they warn that some difficulties in implementation can be caused due to adults having problems with the challenging of the

power relationship between adults and children. While acknowledging the potential benefits of participatory child-centric work, they find that the “pitting of children’s interests and rights against those of adults” (Duckett et al., 2010, p.177) is unlikely to prove an easy success. Maglajlic (2010) identified prejudices (between adults and children) and organizational barriers in Community-Based Participation of children with PAR, and reminds us of ethical issues such as the issue of what happens to a project once the adults have gained their research knowledge and also shows how CBPR and PAR are connected. She also says that practical implementation problems must be dealt with to avoid practical research becoming the “new tyranny” (Maglajlic, 2010, p.213).

2.3 Alternative models of participation

Wong et al. (2010) introduce Treseder’s approaches to participation to offer an alternative model to Hart’s (2002) and Shier’s (2001) linear view of participation to “avoid the assumption that youth-driven participation is ideal” (Wong et al., 2010, p.104). Treseder’s approaches to participation is not a hierarchical structure, rather it is a collection of five suitable participation types, as follows (in no particular order):

- Assigned but informed

Adults decide on the project and children volunteer for it. The children understand the project, they know who decided to involve them, and why. Adults respect young people’s views.

- Adult initiated, shared decisions with young people

Adults have the initial idea, but young people are involved in every step of the planning and implementation. Not only are their views considered, but children are also involved in taking the decisions.

- Young people-initiated and directed

Young people have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Adults are available but do not take charge.

- Young people-initiated shared decisions with adults

Children have the ideas, set up projects and come to adults for advice, discussion and support. The adults do not direct, but offer their expertise for young people to consider.

- Consulted and informed

The project is designed and run by adults, but children are consulted. The children have a full understanding of the process and their opinions are taken seriously.

Wong et al. then developed The TYPE (Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment) Pyramid to move beyond Treseder. The TYPE Pyramid (Figure 2) describes degrees of youth–adult involvement based on an empowerment framework. This pyramid shows participation on a continuum, places emphasis on youth and adult involvement, and gives five participation types that express degrees of youth empowerment and development. It shows that the most empowering for both adults and youths is pluralistic involvement (indicated by ③ in Figure 2) where youth has a voice and an active participant role while both youth and adults share control.

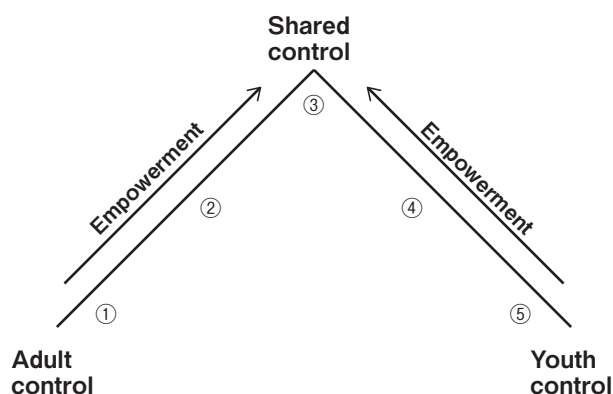


Figure 1. The TYPE Pyramid. Wong et al. (2010)

The numbers in Figure 1, above, refer to the following:

- | | | |
|----------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| ① <u>Vessel</u> | - Lack of youth voice & participation | - Adults have total control |
| ② <u>Symbolic</u> | - Youth have voice | - Adults have most control |
| ③ <u>Pluralistic</u> | - Youth have voice and active participant role | - Youth and adults share control |
| ④ <u>Independent</u> | - Youth have voice and active participant role | - Adults give youth most control |
| ⑤ <u>Autonomous</u> | - Youth have voice and active participant role | - Youth have total control |

3. The case of Japan

3.1 Claims and reality

The above section builds a strong argument that children's participation in research projects has benefits although it has also been shown that full participation is not common, or that claims of participation exist when participation may be limited or even tokenistic. Problems exist, especially in implementation and in convincing adults that a power shift can yield benefits. How do these findings fit in with Japan? A review of recent events in Japanese education (both problems and attempts to overcome such problems) show a need for what Kellett and others are arguing for; the facilitation of the participation of children, yet also show how the reality of implementation has resulted in such participation having little effect. This, according to Shinkichi (2012), could be due to some Japanese youth having their idea of their group place damaged due to environmental and cultural factors. One such factor is *ijime* (bullying), which is an environmental hazard with magnified effects due to cultural issues, as argued in the next section.

3.2 Unique effects of *ijime* and other problems

The type of bullying in Japan tends not to leave any evidence, includes tactics such as name calling and ostracism, and is known as *ijime* (Shobo, 2001 cited in Shinkichi, 2012)². However, research indicates that this seems to be the case for other countries too (Shinkichi, 2012), so why use a Japanese word to describe it? Although

large differences don't exist between countries in the categories of name-calling, teasing, "silent treatment" and ostracism, Shinkichi claims that such relational aggression (which damages a person's idea of their place within a group) is less damaging in cultures which emphasise individual uniqueness, such as in Western societies (Shinkichi, 2012). Therefore, Japanese young people are, in general, more affected by such bullying than those in the other data groups, so using the word *ijime* describes not only the bullying but also its effect in Japanese society.

Shinkichi considers bystanders and collective self-defence by analysing findings of a longitudinal study by a Japanese government agency, the National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER). The data (2004-2009) showed that, outside Japan, the percentage of bystanders (children who see an act of bullying happen, but are not involved) who intervene to stop bullying rises steadily with age. However, in Japan, the percentage intervening falls until reaching a low at early adolescence: the age at which bullying is most likely (Shinkichi, 2012). This indicates that the confidence of Japanese students to voice their thoughts diminishes with age/schooling in Japan. Furthermore, Shinkichi claims that bullying's impact is magnified by the tendency of the Japanese to blame themselves (intropunitive) instead of the bully (extropunitive), and that societies emphasizing self-reliance and individualism tend to be extropunitive and take steps independently to stop bullying. This shows that Japan's education system does not successfully emphasise self-reliance and individualism, despite Fukuzawa Yukichi, the man regarded as having introduced Western education, institutions, and social thought to Japan, emphasising the importance of such qualities (Powell, 2012).

Shinkichi's findings about the unique effect of bullying on young people in Japan are echoed by Taki et al. (2008) in another longitudinal comparative study of countries. Peaslee (2011) reveals that the suicide rate among adolescents in Japan is twice that of the same group in the USA, and blames this on *ijime*. Furthermore, *Hikkikomori*, where a person (often a male adolescent) suffers from severe social withdrawal, is another problem and affects approximately 1 million people, or about 1% of the Japanese population (Kato et al., 2011). Kato et al. (2011) argue that although this could be a pandemic issue, it is not as pronounced in other countries as in Japan, showing the Japanese situation is also unique in problems other than *ijime*.

3.3 Solutions to the problems faced by Japanese youth

Issues faced by Japanese youth are pressure from an "examinations hell", a high level of *ijime* (psychologically damaging bullying), *futouko* (an inability of some to be able to go to school), *hikkikomori* (retreating from society), and other issues including suicide. However, it can be claimed that underlying all of these problems is the (limited) voice of Japanese youth themselves. Japanese youth are expected to stoically endure education at secondary level with the implied promise that, once they clear the hurdle of university entrance exams, Japanese tertiary educational institutions will "not demand strict study" (Saito, 2011, p.8). There was an attempt to tackle limitations of the student voice and related problems by the National Council on Education Reform (NCER)

which recommended emphasis on student individuality (NCER, 1987). These recommendations were converted to concrete policy with the two pillars of *ikiru chikara* (zest for living) and *yutori kyōiku* (pressure-free education) being included in educational reforms in 2002 (Kagohashi, 2010). These policies gave students extra time for project work and reduced their study load by 30% and the school week from six days to five. Japanese students finally had space to express their voice through project work, much like students in Singapore (Lynch, 2014). However, although this solution showed much promise, it was quickly challenged by the media, parents, and some academics worried about the future (examination) performance of the country's youth, forcing the Ministry of Education to reconsider as early as 2005 (Kagohashi, 2010). Cram schools saw opportunity in public fear, recruiting more students than ever before. The Ministry revised National Curriculum Guidelines in 2008 (coming into effect in 2011 or 2012 depending on the school), increasing class hours and content; in effect rolling back a large part of the earlier reforms (Kagohashi, 2010). Since then, however, the media focused again on *ijime*, *hikkikomori*, and other social problems (Hanano, 2013). It seems that there is no solution, or is there?

This paper's literature review of research enabling the voice of young people through participation in research and project work, combined with earlier work regarding the situation in Singapore (Lynch, 2014) gives clues for improving the situation of young people in Japan while satisfying the demand for high academic results. Japan's attempt at giving students a voice failed but maybe such an attempt was not carried out appropriately with classes "done by each teacher with trial and error" (James, 2006) without clear guidance.

While Japan has tried and failed, it seems that it had not tried in a way that was acceptable to both youth and adults. Wong et al.'s (2010) TYPE pyramid shows that having the interests of everyone in mind could be the best way to ensure success, while using lessons learned from CBPR and PAR. Japan could do well to once again looking abroad for solutions instead of finding home-grown ones.

4. Conclusion

This literature review provides an strong argument by showing how the major problems of CBPR and PAR revealed in the literature reviews (such as unwillingness of adults to allow children a voice due power transference, and difficult politics in organisations/countries), can be lessened by enabling the voice of youth in the environment of the school system, allowing true CBPR/PAR to be carried out with balanced sharing of roles and responsibilities. The literature reviewed was wide ranging (in terms of project types and research described), although a disproportionate number of papers about CBPR and PAR were from Europe or the USA. This paper attempted to investigate CBPR and PAR, with a view to using it in an Asian context; that of Japan.

This literature review could not find mention (positive or negative) of the possibility of using CBPR or PAR to solve the problems of Japan's education system, although information connecting it to the fields of artificial

intelligence, engineering, and health and welfare in Japan, such as in Nishida et al. (2012) were found. Also, much of the research regarding Japanese education in general criticised Japan's approach in recent years, but I was unable to find research which gave ideas for the improvement of the Japanese education system generally in a cost effective (realistic) way which attempted to satisfy all parties. The above indicates that this research fills a gap in the current body of research.

Future research could investigate the possible advantages/disadvantages of changing the current prevailing style of education management. One interesting development is using outside management in education, and much promise for this in the Japanese context can be seen in the example of a project in Yokohama Science Frontier High School run by Dr. Akiyoshi Wada (Cyranoski, 2009) and other initiatives where business leaders are used as school advisors. Their practical approach may be compatible with what this paper argues for; more hands-on work with children actively and freely working at the centre of their education. Some regard previous attempts to reform the educational system in Japan to have failed. This paper, combined with future research, may give ideas to increase the chances of success the next time around.

Notes

- ¹ Although Israel et al.'s work was concerned with using CBPR for health, the five phases are useful in other focuses such as the voice of children in research and its consequences. However, as they expand their five-phase model to a seven-phase model, specifically including health, in the second edition of their book (Israel et al., 2012), this paper uses the older, more general model.
- ² Shobo's data is based on a survey of children corresponding to grades 5 (elementary) to 9 (third year of junior high school) in the Japanese school system.

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