Inclusive education approaches in a local context: A practitioner's experience in two elementary schools in Japan

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Education
in
Inclusive Education

at Massey University, Palmerston North,

New Zealand.

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2021

Abstract

This qualitative study utilised semi-structured interviews to gain an understanding of the perspectives of an education practitioner who experienced an alternative educational practice implemented in Japan. Being informed by a social constructionism research paradigm, this investigation took a position which was inclined to subjectivism in order to carefully elucidate the full meaning of the practitioners' voices. The findings suggest a level of alignment between their practice and the inclusive practices discussed in international literature. The enabling factors identified for their practice include a humane approach, the centrality of children's interests, a sense of security for children and teachers, and teacher agency. Their approach which eventually facilitated an inclusive education for all children suggests a methodological implication to see inclusive education as everyone's business. Their achievement within Japan's unique socio-cultural structure sends an encouraging message that inclusive education is possible.

Acknowledgement

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors Dr Jude MacArthur and Associate Professor Dr Alison Kearney for their patience and significant support, along with their wealth of knowledge throughout the course of my study. Your clear guidance eventually led me to an engagement with the topics I wished to investigate. I cannot thank you enough for this.

To the participant teachers that so openly, honestly, and warmly shared their knowledge, experience, time, and personalities. I believe that your passion for creating a secure school for all children will contribute to a knowledge of the educational field internationally.

To my friends and all the professionals I have been acquainted with during my study, for your encouragement, proofing assistance, and generous academic support.

To my daughter Ayumu for your input to my study with your ideas of 'how to make a school a happy and exciting place for all children'. To my son Makoto, your arrival has brought a great joy to our lives, and also has further motivated me to advance my study. To my mother for your unconditional love and support to us all. To my husband Yasuo for being an amazing full-time dad to our children by juggling your work hours as needed.

Lastly, to my father for sharing your intelligence and wisdom until the very last moment of your life. Our lengthy discussions related to my thesis topic will never be forgotten.

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Introduction

There is a view that, at any time in the current learning environment, any of our children could fall into the situation where they experience difficulties. This reflects on the current education system where a level of tensions is imposed on all of us including our children. 'All' here includes a range of the population from those who are experiencing marginalisation or exclusion, to others who seem to enjoy the advantages of the current system and thrive on it. Regardless of our condition, we all experience an invisible, ongoing pressure to 'fit in' to an available educational arrangement which has largely been informed by the current dominant culture's political, economic, and societal priorities; to name, hegemonic ideologies, neoliberalism, and meritocracy (Rutherford, 2016).

From this standpoint, we are all vulnerable to falling through the crack of the current education system at any time. This could be caused by a slight change in our circumstances or a faint feeling of insecurity. In other words, we along with our children could be marginalised, and further, 'disabled' at any time by the current system and socially conditioned people's ways of thinking. Importantly, the same pressure is also applicable to teachers.

This contention may raise a query of how we would like ourselves or our children to be treated by the education system, as well as society, when this occurs. Two broad educational and societal approaches to this could be exclusion of these populations for the higher achievement of 'most' people; or inclusion for the success of 'all'. It is assumed that most people would appreciate the 'inclusion' option, especially when it relates to their own issues. From this perspective, inclusive education is not a charity or someone else's problem, but everyone's business. In fact, this corresponds to the latest world agenda for inclusive education (Slee, 2019).

Since UNESCO's (2016, 2017) recent elucidations of a paradigm shift where disability is now attributed to societally created barriers, the discussion focus of inclusive education has been clarified to be a removal of restricting factors for inclusion of all

children (Ainscow et al., 2019). In other words, an inclusive education agenda aims to transform the general education system in order to adopt and respond to each child's needs and ensure a meaningful school life for all children. Therefore, inclusive education is everyone's business (Slee, 2019).

However, we face many challenges due to recent societal and political priorities and deep-rooted ways of seeing disabilities as individual traits (Rutherford, 2016). In addition, the ambiguity of the definition of 'inclusive education' in government documents in many countries' has been causing more confusion in practice (Slee, 2019). Furthermore, a scarcity of empirical research which reflects on the UNESCO's paradigm shift, has been caused inclusive education to be perceived as an unachievable ideal (Göransson & Nilholm, 2014). As a result, certain members of our society have still been left marginalised or at risk of future marginalisation.

The current research aims to add to the investigation of the field of inclusive education. It seeks to gain understanding of a practitioner's perceptions of, and knowledge construction of, an alternative school practice achieved in Japan. This practice ensured 'all' children's attendance in mainstream classrooms and their meaningful participation in all aspects of school life. This appears to embody a similar quality to internationally defined concepts of inclusive education which reflect on the recent UNESCO's paradigm shift (Ainscow et al., 2006). An exploration into the practitioner's experiences and perceptions of this practice may provide a useful account for a methodology for inclusive education from a viewpoint which sees inclusive education as everyone's business.

The background information of the current case is that the practitioner experienced the alternative practice at first as a deputy principal of School A and then implemented it as the principal of the same school. After that, he implemented the approach he had developed based on this experience, at School B after being assigned as the principal.

Being informed by the social constructionist research paradigm (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), this research aims to delineate the local practitioners' social reality and meaning making of the practice, by answering the three research questions.

Japanese context

The general Japanese education system consists of pre-primary, elementary, lower and upper secondary, and higher education; together with special education schools, special classrooms, and resource rooms to accommodate the needs of individual children. Special education schools aim to provide suited education to meet the needs of children with relatively severe disabilities. Special classrooms are situated in regular schools and designed for children with comparatively mild disabilities. Resource rooms are also situated in regular schools for children who mostly learn in regular classrooms visit a few times a week to receive an additional support (MEXT, n.d. a).

In an elementary school which is the target level of education of the current research, each classroom has up to 40 children for one class teacher. Schools usually have four 45 minutes sessions in the mornings and two of them in the afternoon, with 10 minutes break between each session and a one-hour lunch break. Children's desks are set in the classrooms in an orderly way where each child usually uses a designated seat every day.

Regarding an inclusion, there is about a five percent of population who are not able to attend a school regularly because of psychological, emotional, or other social factors, which is called 'non-attendance at school' (MEXT, n.d. b). It is not necessarily that these children have neurodevelopmental disabilities or diagnosis; however, they have been marginalised in the ways they are not able to enjoy their school life as other children do because of their needs not being met. This has been a nation-wide phenomenon in Japan and regarded as one of the serious societal issues (MEXT, n.d. b). This population is one of the target populations for inclusion in the current research.

Research Questions

Research Question 1

How did the practitioner experience an inclusive education approach in school A and how were his beliefs constructed through this experience?

Research Question 2

How did the practitioner implement an inclusive education approach in School B and how was this implementation perceived by the teachers in School B?

Research Question 3

From the practitioner's perspective:

- o What influence does their teaching culture have on the implementation of an inclusive education approach?

- o What influence does the personnel appointment system in Japan have on the implementation of an inclusive education approach?

The discussion will be followed by possible implications for research and practice as well as the limitations of the current research.

Defining the Boundary for the Current Research

This research focuses on the exclusion or barriers for inclusive education which have been created by the influence of the sociological contexts. Therefore, the target

population includes children who experience difficulties in education settings; who may or may not have neurodevelopmental disorders or other diagnosis. Accordingly, the literature review explores sociological elements for exclusionary practices along with the possible enabling factors for inclusive education approaches.

Language use

'Children' and 'Students'

The term 'children' is used instead of 'students', to describe the young people of primary school age in the participants' voices, for a more authentic and nuanced translation. Whereas, 'students' are also used when referring to international literature which uses this term. This is to show an appreciation for those researchers in respect to each research context.

'Children with Disability' and 'Disabled Children'

The use of these terms is to acknowledge the ways certain members of a society have experienced difficulties because of the barriers created by society; therefore, disabled. In other words, it is based on a premise that it is the society which creates difficulties, not the inherent individual qualities.

Literature Review

Educational equity and meaningful schooling for all school aged children remains as one of the largest challenges in many school settings across the world. In addressing this, UNESCO has been continuously demonstrating their commitment to achieve equitable educational opportunities for all by shifting the focus from individual to social models of disability. From this standpoint, disability is seen to have been created by society and therefore the main approach to promoting inclusive education is to 'identify and dismantle' societal barriers for inclusion (Slee, 2019). To avoid confusion, it is important to note the target for the inclusive education agenda is not exclusively disabled children.

One of the definitions of inclusion reflects the UNESCO's paradigm shift and sees inclusion as "a principled approach for education and society" (Ainscow et al, 2006, p. 15). Accordingly, the creation of an inclusive school environment involves an identification and removal of barriers for inclusive education as well as a shift in people's ways of thinking (Ainscow, 2005; Slee, 2019). However, empirical research which provides insights into the factors that create a more inclusive environment from this definitional stance is scarce (Göransson & Nilholm, 2014; Messiou, 2017).

This literature review will start with clarifying the definitional standpoint of the current study. Considering the tensions revealed from existing research around the conceptualisation of inclusion, the discussion will move onto the overarching aims for education through the work of Scottish philosopher John Macmurray (1964, 2012). This will be followed by an examination of societal factors where exclusionary practice of particular groups of children have been legitimised and tolerated, and teachers' agentic actions have been constrained. The subsequent section will explore the roles of teacher agency and well-being in promoting positive changes through the lens of teacher professional identity and emotional security. Finally, possible leadership practice for a transformation of a school culture will be discussed.

Inclusive Education and World Agenda

World Agenda

The right to education has been regarded as one of the fundamental human rights, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR; 1948). It is guaranteed in human rights treaties related to the concept of inclusive education such as the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (CADE; 1960), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR; 1966), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW; 1979); and most comprehensively in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC;1989).

Despite these human rights treaties and conventions, research consensus emphasises an existence of persistent exclusionary practices (Slee, 2019). Attending to this, UNESCO demonstrated their commitment to achieve all children's access to education at the World Conference on Education for All in 1990 with an acknowledgement especially to the population with no access to basic education. The following Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action in 1994 targeted the educational rights for children with disability.

The significance of this statement was a conversion of the paradigm which asserts that disabled children's educational rights are to be guaranteed by the local schools, not by special schools. In addition, the term 'inclusive education' internationally gained popularity through this publication (Slee, 2019). Although this perspective shift was prominent in its time, research identified a restriction in bringing radical moves because of the underlying deficit discourses where disability was seen inherent to individuals (Ainscow et al., 2019).

In 2006, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD; 2006) set out another paradigm shift in relation to the inclusive education agenda by elucidating the social models of disability. In this model, disability is seen to have been produced by societally constructed norms and conventions, instead of

individuals' conditions (Carrington & MacArthur, 2013). Consequently, a focus of inclusive education is reallocated to influencing the change across the whole system to accommodate individuals' unique needs by removing restricting factors. This involves a shift in people's ways of thinking (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Miles & Singal, 2010).

Accordingly, the inclusive education agenda has been merged to become a foundation for quality education for all, not limited to disabled children. Through the course of several paradigm shifts, inclusive education has become everyone's business. The global commitment for 'all' is clearly delineated in the two latest UNESCO documents the Education 2030 Framework for Action, and in the UNESCO Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education (2017; as cited in Ainscow et al., 2019); "the central message is simple: every learner matters and matters equally" (UNESCO, 2017 as cited in Slee, 2019, p. 6).

Despite UNESCO's articulation of the world direction towards inclusion, conceptualisation of inclusion has been controversial among researchers internationally (Messiou, 2017; Slee, 2019). The following section examines the current knowledge of the concept of inclusive education. It would also be important to clarify the researcher's standpoint.

Conceptualising Inclusion

To summarise recent research (Ainscow et al., 2006; Göransson & Nilholm, 2014; Messiou, 2017; Slee, 2019), the ways to conceptualise inclusive education could be classified in two broad categories; one focuses on specific populations and individuals' needs, and the other concerns shifting the entire practice, system, or community. The former includes a physical placement of those population, and specified support for individuals' needs. The latter involves influencing people's ways of thinking. It could be said that the former is based on individual models of disability, and the latter on social models of disability. In order to explore a methodology to achieve inclusive education, it would be crucial to stand on the conceptualisation which embodies social models of disability.

From the standpoint of social models of disability, Ainscow et al. (2006) suggest their understanding of inclusion as a 'principled approach to education and society', as a starting point for discussions (p. 15). In addition, they articulated that inclusive education concerns all children's "presence, participation and achievement", from a practical viewpoint (Ainscow et al., 2006, p. 25). Underlying this is the value of equity and sustainability.

In relation to Ainscow and his colleagues' conception of participation, Black-Hawkins (2010) discusses the essence of 'participation' as in Ainscow et al. (2006). This is aimed to bridge the gap in practice between 'presence' and 'achievement', by providing a "nuanced understanding" (Black-Hawkins, 2010, p. 23) of how 'successful participation' may look. The significance of her elucidation is assumed to be the emphasis on the meaningfulness of all students' school life across all aspects through active and collaborative learning.

This conceptualisation shows a strong commitment to move away from previous special education notions which have persistently existed through the history of education (Slee, 2019). The current study takes Ainscow and his colleagues' (2006) conceptualisation of inclusive education and sees it is a principled approach to education and society.

Another significance of this broad concept of inclusion is its underlying value of sustainability; where the aims of education are focused on preparing children to live in the community with respect to human relations and their connections with the environment. This suggests that the purpose of education should be seen broadly, not as exclusively academic achievement. The aims for education will be discussed in more details in the following sections.

Creation of School Culture as a Method to Achieve Inclusion

From this conceptualisation, the creation of an inclusive school culture is a key topic for the methodology to achieve inclusive education. This involves influencing people's

thoughts and actions. This section explores a possible method to successfully establish an inclusive school culture.

Ainscow (2005) discusses that high leverage to bring a change across the system is a creation of "communities of practice" (Wenger, 1998 as cited in Ainscow, 2005, p. 113), rather than a top-down implementation such as a policy change. In other words, of importance is the establishment of a school culture where teachers believe that they can make a change to each child's lives by challenging the existing ways of thinking, rather than installing a one-size-fits-all framework. This is based on Ainscow's acknowledgement that a largest barrier to achieve inclusion is people's ways of thinking.

Considering this, Ainscow (2005) extends that one of the key elements for successful community of practice is a mutual support for teachers' professional identity negotiation. Since the implementation of inclusive education approaches often involve a challenge to existing ways of thinking, it is important for teachers to have a space where their identity as a teacher is safely renegotiated (Hart et al., 2007). Ainscow reports that this process usually involves the development of a common language among staff. It could be said that an increase of communal knowledge is a crucial element to build up the capacity of school to adapt to diverse needs of children. A reciprocal support for teacher identity renegotiation is also important when considering the difficulties in understanding the alternative discourse within differently prioritised contextual pressures (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Angelides, 2011; DeMatthews, 2020; Hart et al., 2007; Higham & Booth, 2018).

In a similar line, Swann et al. (2012) report the creation of a school culture of an English primary school where anti-determinist pedagogy was internalised. They assert that it was the creation of a learning community where teachers' negotiation of their previous pedagogical beliefs was supported, that enabled the school transformation. In details, the stimulation the leader provided challenged the teachers' stipulated ways of thinking. The slow and steady process of supporting teachers' meaning making and cultivating their inquisitive dispositions eventually generated a culture of a self-sustainable learning cycle towards the school's value-based visions.   Implications are

that such school transformation is possible, and the leadership support that empowers teachers could be the key for further investigation of enabling factors.

Index for Inclusion

The Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2016) outlines a guideline for a school to address the contextual barriers and to shift their value system to a more inclusive one. It defines inclusive education as a process to influence the system by involving all stakeholders in conversations. Its detailed indicators of inclusion aim to support school leaders and management teams to identify the barriers for inclusion as well as to articulate their values for a school transformation (Higham & Booth, 2018). The Index for Inclusion has been translated in over forty languages and utilised internationally as a tool for a school's internal evaluation in many countries (Slee, 2019).

Although positive outcomes of the use of the indicators have been reported in numerous articles (Carrington & MacArthur, 2013; Higham & Booth, 2018; McMaster, 2015; Slee, 2019), the ways of implementation and success at a local practitioner level can be cross-examined. Research has also reported local practitioners' distant attitudes towards the terms and concepts of inclusive education partly because of their perceptions of it as an imported concept (Miles et al., 2014; Sharma et al., 2016). Although a few researchers have reported success with a context-sensible approach (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Slee, 2019), an increased number of research which delineates the local practitioners' meaning making around inclusion is assumed to be useful for a more meaningful implementation.

Additionally, in this document, emphasis is placed on all stakeholders' agentic actions in identifying barriers and transforming schools to be more inclusive. This may imply a space for inclusive research to investigate creating an organisational culture where all actors' agency is enhanced within this wider definition of inclusion.

Implications for Academics

From the viewpoint of this conceptualisation of inclusion, Messiou (2017) emphasises the need for academic research to also focus on a whole system transformation. She bases this contention on her previous research findings (Messiou, 2002, 2006, 2012 as cited in Messiou, 2017) where research methods which target specific groups of children could intensify exclusion by pointing them out in their community, or overlook children who are not in one of the categories of 'special needs'. Her literature review findings revealed that the research from the broad definition of inclusion as principled approaches for education and society, comprised only 8% of studies published in the International Journal of Inclusive Education between 2005 and 2015. Similarly, Göransson and Nilholm (2014) indicate a lack of empirical research which concentrates on this broad concept of inclusion. They assert that this has resulted in inclusive education as suggested by the world agenda to be perceived as the "art of the impossible" (p. 276). The implications of these findings are two-fold. Firstly, there are persistent special education notions even among inclusive education researchers which signify the challenges that prevail with this broad definition of inclusion in the education field. Secondly, there is a gap and therefore a need for inclusive research which embodies this broad definition of inclusion as a principled approach to education and society.

Tensions and Underlying Philosophy

There is a level of consensus among educational researchers that discussion of inclusive education targeting disabled children can unintentionally intensify exclusion by the use of language which impacts on people's notion of special education (MacArthur & Rutherford, 2016; Messiou, 2017; Hornby, 2015; Norwich, 2014; Rutherford, 2016; Slee, 2019). Another tension identified is the conflicting debate between academic focus and that of inclusion; which leads us to a discussion of the aims of education. In the current system of education which is mainly driven by neoliberal priorities, schools have been forced to negotiate ethical aspects and inclusive contexts among other priorities (Ainscow et al., 2006; Black-Hawkins, 2010;

Göransson & Nilholm, 2014). This tension will be further discussed in later sections.
The two conflicting standpoints invites us to a discussion at a philosophical level
about what education should aim to achieve (Fielding, 2012; Göransson & Nilholm,
2014; Miles & Singal, 2010; Pring, 2012; Rutherford, 2016).

Section Summary

With respect to the recent world agenda, the current study will take Ainscow and his
colleagues' conceptualisation of inclusion as a principled approach to education and
society. This definition focuses on all children's meaningful participation in practice.
From the review of literature from this viewpoint, a lever to shift a school culture lies
in the development of a community of practice with clear visions articulated. In order
to create such a culture, teacher agency and leadership practice seem to be one of the
possible areas for exploration. For academics, this is one of the areas where empirical
evidence is still scarce.   The literature reviewed in this section also revealed a tension
between the two incompatible stances of the current societal priorities and alternative
discourses for educational equity, which leads us to a philosophical discussion about
the purpose of education.

Purpose of Education: John Macmurray's Priorities in Education

John Macmurray is a Scottish philosopher whose contribution is known as the
"primacy of action" (Clarke, 2006, p. 137). This is where a philosophical focus was
shifted from 'thought' to 'action' (Macmurray, 1961, p. 15). Therefore, human
mutuality and interdependent nature are discussed in depth in his work.   Macmurray
(1964, 2012) discusses three educational elements where the priority is placed on
personal relations and the education of emotions, which is then followed by subject
teaching.

Personal Relations

Macmurray asserts that the primacy of education is "learning to live in personal relation to other people" and calls this a "learning to live in community" (2012, p. 667); which he concludes are fundamental human needs in this rapidly changing world. Underlying this is a paradoxical nature of human being where the two states of controlling self and being controlled always co-exist; as in Confucius, "there can be no man ... until there are two men in relation" (as cited in Macmurray, 2012, p. 669). This relational concept implies the ultimate importance of the skills and actions to enter into personal relations, as well as an unavoidable influence of societal factors on our life. An entering into personal relations here means stepping into a state where we share learning experiences; therefore, points to the skills needed to establish a trusting relationship with others (Macmurray, 1964). This notion may challenge our perceptions of what teacher profession means, and have us ponder our role as a person in many educational situations.

Macmurray extends his concept of personal relations to teacher-student relations as well as teacher-teacher relations. He asserts that if human connections are based on a caring mind for others, all school activities will be 'straightened out' and the school will become a "community" (Macmurray, 1946, as cited in Fielding, 2012, p. 685). This does not mean that these factors eliminate all difficulties related to children; however, the staff and children will be confident that all issues will be well-handled in such a community where personal relations are established. This suggests that education should aim for 'persisting effects' through establishing trusting human relationships.

> You have produced an atmosphere of humanity, of human relations, of people who ... care for one another as people. ... The children respond to it by imitation, and their relations to one another become of the same kind. ...once we have established this element of personal community which underlies the process of education and produces the atmosphere in which real education becomes possible' (Macmurray, 1964, p. 23-24).

From this stance, importance comes to be a principle of humanity where the teaching approach is characterised by "freedom and equality" (Macmurray, 1964, p. 17) with enough space for children to 'think' (Macmurray, 1964; Pring, 2012). This brings about a discussion of a relational element where teacher-student relationship should be mutual and therefore the learning is reciprocal. In the recent contexts, a more level learning structure in school with trusting, respectful and reciprocal relationships have been reported as one of the enabling factors for a more inclusive approach (Carrington & MacArthur, 2013; te Riele et al., 2017). The importance of child-centred approaches for positive holistic development have also been well-studied (Walsh et al., 2017).

Pring (2012) points out many commonalities between Macmurray and Dewey's contentions around personal relations, community, and child-centred views. Dewey is an influential American philosopher who also emphasised the centrality of humanity in education; against the highly scientific orientation which was dominant in his time. He maintains that this is enabled by a community where children's personal development is mutually supported and enriched (Dewey, 1916; Pring, 2012). His claims, as Macmurray's do, also challenge the current educational arrangement where teacher priorities are brought forward and the notions of humanity tend to be left out.

> The child becomes the sun about which the appliances of
> education revolve; he is the centre about which they are organized
> (Dewey, 1910 as cited in Pring, 2012, p. 759).

Education of the Emotions
Macmurray places the education of emotions as the next important element (Fielding, 2012; Macmurray, 1964, 2012; Rutherford, 2016). Cultivation and refinement of senses towards human experiences increases our emotional capacities. When we are in a deeper level of thinking, our attention is egocentrically focused on the object to evaluate its unique quality; and it is our senses and emotions that try to objectively apprehend its value. In other words, this may be the place where children refine their

senses to become sensitive to others' needs and to be creative how they express themselves.

It has been argued in current educational research that the educational contexts where an emphasis is narrowly placed on measurable achievement can blunt children's and adults' sensibility towards others' needs (Hargreaves, 1998; Lasky, 2005; Pring, 2012; Rutherford, 2016; Skinner et al., 2021; Slee, 2011; Swann et al., 2012). With his assertion of "to learn to be human is to learn to be creative" (2012, p. 672), Macmurray criticises an excessive focus on subject teaching which seems to be a suppression of human imagination; and emphasises the significance of the education of the emotion in relation to personal relations.

Subject Teaching

This aspect is defined as children's acquisition of practical techniques which is required by the industrialised society for a prioritisation of economic efficiency (Fielding, 2012; Macmurray, 1964, 2012). While this is important, Macmurray insists that this should not be regarded as the whole education; since a failure in the first two humanistic elements mentioned above will be "fundamental failure" (2012, p. 662). Therefore, of importance is the way technological aspects are integrated within the other two elements. This implies that a construction of curricula and elaboration of methods influenced strongly by the technical aspects can make a person-focused education impossible.

> 'Here, I believe, is the greatest threat to education in our own society. We are becoming more and more technically minded: gradually we are falling victims to the illusion that all problems can be solved by proper organisation: that when we fail it is because we are doing the job in the wrong way, and that all that is needed is the 'know-how'. To think thus in education is to pervert education. It is not an engineering job. It is personal and human' (Macmurray, 2012, p. 662).

Section Summary and Implications to Inclusive Education

Macmurray's theory challenges ways of thinking about what education should aim for, by placing priorities on an establishment of personal relations and education of emotions. Recent research findings support many of his contentions in regard to teaching approaches relating to inclusive education. Implications are the possibilities of humane approaches for a more inclusive practice in the current educational arrangement. A careful consideration into the balance between these two educational needs may be a key for successful educational outcomes.

Sociological factors for exclusionary practice

Hegemony and Habitus

It has been reported that children experience exclusion or marginalisation by the conditions which is created by social factors (MacArthur & Rutherford, 2016). This section will examine, through the lens of humanity, the impact of the current social and educational system on the inclusive education agenda internationally. Children here include any of them who may experience difficulties in fitting into the current education systems, regardless of the fact of having neurodevelopmental conditions and/or diagnosis. The notion above therefore directs our attention to the debate that disability is not necessarily inherent. This means that the focus is the influence of socially constructed 'categories' on people's perceptions. One important notion is that anyone can fall into such disabling categories with an influence of external conditions.

Human perceptions are strongly conditioned by the values held across the society (Bartolom, 2007; Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Mayo, 2015; Rutherford, 2016; Schaffer, 2004). In details, they are consciously and unconsciously ruled by the values of the dominant social group or culture; and therefore, reproduced. The two major sociological conceptualisations for this notion are hegemony (Gramsci, 1971 as cited in Mayo, 2015) and habitus (Bourdieu, 1993). While hegemony denotes social practices or forces externally brought into to rule human

consciousness, the concept of habitus embodies a phenomenological conduct where our ways of being is unconsciously conditioned (Schaffer, 2004).

Hegemonic Ideology. The ideas of hegemony, which is frequently attributed to Gramsci's (as cited in Mayo, 2015) conceptualisation, has a root in the theory of consciousness developed by Marx and Engels (1970 as cited in Mayo, 2015). They argue that the ruling ideas are the expression of "the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas" (Marx & Engels, 1970, p. 64 as cited in Mayo, 2015, p. 13). This is from their historical materialism standpoint which sees history as a result of a creation of the political structures based on material conditions, rather than human consciousness (Marx, 1845a; 1845b; Marx & Engels, 1976; Marx et al, 1930). In other words, it is in relation with the productivity of the necessities in our life that creates the social classes and the relationships between them; as in ruling and ruled, greater productivity and that of lesser or subordinate, respectively. Accordingly, the ruling ideas are dominant group's ideals for ascendency. This eventually establishes a political structure where the ways of thinking in society is externally conditioned. Further, these ideas tend to be represented as "the only rational, universally valid ones", to be shared by all the society members (Marx & Engels, 1970, p. 66 as cited in Mayo, 2015, p. 13).

Being influenced by Marx, Gramsci developed his ideas of hegemony as "the colonisation of the consciousness by dominant social forces" (Gramsci, as cited in Schaffer, 2004, p. 102). From this viewpoint, education can be seen as a re/production of citizens who are appropriate to dominant group's achievement of their ideals. Not surprisingly, in the education contexts, the concept of hegemony is frequently employed as a discourse to confront neoliberal priorities posed on it (Mayo, 2015). Neoliberalism is defined as market-oriented reform policies which are characterised by a denationalisation of entities, and an emphasis on individual performability (Springer et al., 2016). It's impacts on educational settings include emphasised measurable accountability criteria for teacher performance as well as for children's learning outcomes (Davies & Bansel, 2007; Olssen & Peters, 2005).

Neoliberalism and Legitimation of categorising children. Researchers argue that the neoliberal hegemony has brought about a replacement of the traditional educational focus on humane relations by an "institutional stress on performability" (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 313). Subsequently, a level of exclusionary practices has been tolerated (Rutherford, 2016). To illustrate, an introduction of student achievement measures associated with the accountability pressure has posed teachers a level of pressure to individually prove their performance efficacy (Davies & Bansel, 2007; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Rutherford, 2016). In addition, categorisation and grouping of children has been justified to effectively achieve most children's higher academic performances. One of the examples is "attainment grouping" (Hargreaves et al., 2021, p. 80) where children are grouped according to their academic performance. Researchers also debate that the legitimation of these practices has left less space for teachers' enactment of their power to enhance individual children's learning based on their strength and uniqueness (Ball, 2003; Hart, 1998). Eventually, such contextual pressure has led teachers' relationships building with children, parents and colleagues being more functional and business like instead of personal (Fielding, 2012; Hargreaves, 1998; Lasky, 2005; Pring, 2012; Rutherford, 2016; Skinner et al., 2021). Consequently, exclusionary practice for children who are perceived as 'having difficulties' tends to be justified by consciously prioritising the benefit of the dominant classes' values and ideas (Hargreaves et al., 2021; Rutherford, 2016).

Hegemony and Deficit Discourses. Another relevant disabling element often discussed in line with hegemonic ideology is the persistent deficit discourses which denote deterministic views of human intelligence and ability (Carrington & MacArthur, 2013). The development of deficit discourses is frequently discussed by an association with the advancement of the Western compulsory schooling system (Slee, 2019). Rutherford (2016) argues that development of "scientific study of human being" (Valle & Connor, 2011, as cited in Rutherford, 2016, p. 130) has promoted deficit discourses, especially through the numeric ways of presenting human 'ability'. This is where a notion of human ability as a fixed trait has been established through a

categorisation of children by quantified performance measures. Accordingly, disability is seen as inherent and therefore children with disabilities are thought to be "uneducable" in the mainstream classrooms (Slee, 2019, p. 20). Together with the meritocratic ideas where learning opportunity of children with 'ability' should be guaranteed to aspire the highest, exclusionary practices of particular groups of children have been justified through people's conscious mind (Rutherford, 2016). Researchers also report that these deficit discourses persistently exist in people's ways of thinking, to reproduce further exclusionary practices (Forlin et al., 2015; Rutherford, 2016; Slee, 2019).

Section Summary. Gramsi's concepts of hegemony suggests the conscious justification of exclusionary practice. In educational contexts, neoliberal ideology and deficit discourses are often debated from this viewpoint.

Habitus/Bourdieu. Bourdieu, who is also influenced by Marx, discusses a phenomenological aspect of a societal and educational exclusionary practice by using the concepts of 'capital', 'habitus' and 'field' (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Capital refers to the values which has been transmitted throughout the time by the societal conditions as well as families. Habitus denotes a 'product of conditioning' which means learnt and internalised cultural values; where such social conditions are unconsciously 'reproduced' (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 87). Field is defined by Bourdieu as a social space where interactions take place therefore a state of struggle between the powers of different habitus is brought about. Educational practice therefore consists of the field where habitus of different capitals interact (Agbenyega & Sharma, 2014). From this viewpoint of habitus by Bourdieu, the societal ways of thinking are unconsciously transmitted and reproduced through our leaning of the internalised values.

Symbolic Violence. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) extend this to the educational exclusionary practice. They argue that education activities embody an

unconsciously exerted power to exclude or marginalise certain groups of children, which they called "symbolic violence" (p. 31). To illustrate, all educational actions are based on the ways society functions which is a reflection of the dominant classes' cultural values. This means that the cultural capital of children from the dominated classes tends to be unconsciously devalued. Accordingly, the legitimate authority which Bourdieu and Passeron call a misrecognised power, imposes the dominant classes practice as if it was the universal truth. They also assert that for children whose habitus are not congruent with the dominant classes' values, schooling could work as a "re-education or deculturation" (p. 43). Further, the standardised framework of the education system usually consists of the language or symbols of the dominant culture. Consequently, it could produce underachievement or dropout of children from the dominated groups.

Implications for Practice. Agbenyega and Sharma (2014) emphasises the importance of a collective habitus in the field to achieve inclusive education. This is based on their Bourdieuian views of how the dominant cultural capital has exploited particular groups of children through the tools such as language, social norms, symbols, and artifacts (Bourdieu, 1993). Since our value system is unconsciously conditioned by our own cultural capital, educational equity for all from different cultural capital cannot be brought about without consciously paying attention to the capitals outside the dominant one. Another important implication here is a fluidity of such power relations because of the continuously changing personnel and their needs. This suggests that there are no prescribed techniques which respond to the needs of all children.

Summary. Bourdieu's ideas of habitus suggest an unconsciously exerted power which could marginalise or exclude certain member of society from educational activities. An implication for practices is a conscious involvement of different cultural capitals in decision making and school practice.

Section Summary. Overall, a narrow conceptualisation of educational achievement can infringe particular groups of children's educational rights by labelling them. These types of approaches have also impacted teachers who centralise humanity in education.

Impact on Teachers

Through a prioritisation of the neoliberal priorities within sociological conditions, many teachers underwent an internal conflict between what they value as a human teacher and their responsibility for accountability (Ball, 2003; Hargreaves, 1998; Hart, 1998; Lasky, 2005; Skinner et al., 2021). Although some teachers seem to have thrived successfully in such culture, some have not. The reform context has caused a struggle with a feeling of their professional identity being undermined, less empowered, and emotionally insecure to many others who value human relations in education. To illustrate, teachers continuously feel the pressure of being judged for their performance and improvement. At the same time, they feel insecure because of the fear of failure. In addition, the relationships between teachers' performance and securing employment has brought forward an anxiety towards managerial authority (Ball, 2003). Furthermore, school leaders have also been pressured by a highly centralised structure of accountability responsibility (DeMatthews, 2020; Higham & Booth, 2018). In such a culture, human relations based on care are replaced by the nature of measurement, comparison and competitiveness; where people feel 'less humanistic' (Lasky, 2005, p. 913) or a 'loss of meaningful relationships' (Skinner et al., 2021, p. 13) and may develop a sense of fear instead of security (Hargreaves, 1998). Research also suggests that teacher perceptions of insecurity, or not being supported, can decrease their autonomy to take actions for positive educational outcomes (Ainscow, 2001 as cited in Agbenyega & Sharma, 2014; Swann et al., 2012).

Consequently, a sense of autonomy for the teacher who value human relations in education, can be negatively influenced by becoming a part of the system under such managerial structures. This has resulted in a diminution in teacher sense of belonging

and motivation towards work (Lasky, 2005; Skinner et al., 2021). Teacher agency is constrained because of the accountability framework which restricts a space to being creative in teaching approaches (Ball, 2003; Lasky, 2005). Also, a notion of hierarchical values among departments set by the measurable performativity agenda implies a decreased level of teachers' sense of importance where they feel powerless in influencing positive educational outcomes. This is prominent especially with the teachers who work in the domain where their achievement is outside the assessment measures (Ball, 2003). Together with the fear of judgement mentioned above, such gradual depowering of teachers has affected their 'sense of self' (Skinner et al., 2021, p. 2), which may also alter their motivation and sense of belonging to the workplace. Recent research emphasises that undermined teachers' sense of autonomy and agency could negatively impact on their job commitment, leading to a withdrawal attitude for taking risks towards positive student outcomes (Ball, 2003; Fernet et al., 2016; Skinner et al., 2021; Hargreaves, 1998; Lasky, 2005; Skinner et al., 2021).

Section Summary

Exclusionary practices have been legitimated broadly through both sociological concepts. One is a conscious prioritisation of the dominant culture's values, and the other is an unconscious exertion of a power which devalues dominated classes' cultural capitals.

It has been argued that recent neoliberal priorities have imposed a level of pressure for teachers which has had a restrictive effect on their autonomy to take risks for more inclusive and positive educational outcomes. Conversely, an environment which is humane and safe with a focus on enhancing teachers' sense of power and agency may be more likely to bring about an alternative effect. The following section will explore the factors for such environment where teacher agency can be positively supported.

Teacher Agency and Emotional Well-Being

Conceptualising Agency

In general, agency refers to an individual's power or ability to take actions or make decisions, and for their action to influence their own work (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021; Vähäsantanen, 2015). In the educational context, understanding teacher agency involves an insight into the sociological contexts of teachers' work as well as individual factors (Eteläpelto et al., 2013; Lasky, 2005). The sociological contexts point to the social, cultural and historical influence of the particular place and time as well as the structural such as education reform; whereas individual factors include teachers' beliefs and values, different experiences, temporal relation with their environment, discursive practices, knowledge, and skills. It is important to clarify the researcher's viewpoint where such individual factors are also seen as a product of the social reality which has been constructed through human interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

Teacher agency has been conceptualised from various ontological stances, ranging from that of a realist position where agency is assumed as intentional and task oriented and therefore should be analysed separately from social contexts (Archer, 2003 as cited in Eteläpelto et al., 2013); to that of a 'strong' post-structuralism which discusses human agency as a "discursive and social phenomenon" (Eteläpelto et al., 2013, p. 51), where in other words, it concerns a debate of whether human agency exists or not. In addition, a growing number of researchers discuss socio-cultural approaches to human agency where the impact of the contextual factors on human actions is emphasised. While an extreme socio-cultural approach could take a similar stance to the 'strong' post-structuralism approach, there is an emergent recognition of the existence of individual agency among these researchers. This type of conceptualisation takes a position where subjectivity is seen to be prioritised in analysis while human actions are inclusively analysed within the social contexts (Eteläpelto et al., 2013).

In the recent context of a neoliberal managerial structure at school, teachers are expected to raise their performability on an individual basis as discussed above. This means that the exercise of teacher agency varies depending on the individual's

perspectives to work which have been conditioned through their different social experiences. Therefore, it would be useful to conceptualise agency with a realisation the existence of subjectivity is accepted while acknowledging the societal impact on it.

Such conceptualisation may allow an examination of the enabling factors for individual teacher agency, by being given a space to examine the contextual impact such as leadership practice or organisational culture within the larger socio-cultural contexts, interdependently but separately from teachers' individual factors. The current study will take this conceptualisation of teacher agency.

On the practical side, teacher agency has been defined from various perspectives (Vähäsantanen, Paloniemi, Hökkä, & Eteläpelto, 2017a). In the context of teachers' workplace learning, agency can be understood on as action basis, rather than as internal capacity. Agency is often enacted especially when confronting challenges with work, in order not to bring about negative consequences which may affect an individual's well-being. Therefore, teacher agency involves one's negotiation of professional identity as a teacher (Lasky, 2005). While such agency is proactive in organisational innovation and development, there has been identified less proactive or strongly negative forms of agency which can work as a resistance to organisational changes (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015; Priestley et al., 2012; Vähäsantanen et al., 2017). Agency is also exerted individually as well as collectively. Collective agency is often built up from individual initiative through sharing of visions and understandings, to create an innovative work culture (Vähäsantanen et al., 2017).

Promoting elements for teacher agency

The level of enactment of teacher agency appears to be influenced by the organisational culture for creative collaboration, especially in the context of bringing about positive change. One of the prerequisites for teacher agency is a structure where individual teachers' participation is positively supported, their voices are heard, and everyone's actions are valued (Alasoini, 2011; Eteläpelto, & Lahti, 2008; Vähäsantanen et al., 2017). Three identified themes from existing literature are

discursive collective practice, teacher professional identity, and emotion and teacher agency.

Discursive Collective Practice. The socio-cultural context of power structure within an organisation has been identified as one of the decisive factors for a creation of such organisational dynamics (Clegg, Courpasson & Phillips, 2006; Paloniemi & Collin, 2012). This means that it can function as restrictive as well as a promotive factor for creative cooperation. Hierarchical power relations have been identified as one of the obstacles to creating an innovative and transformative organisational culture (Kalliola & Nakari, 2007; Vähäsantanen et al., 2017). In contrast, research also suggests that such organisational culture can be enhanced by a 'discursive power' where individuals' acts are collectively supported by their discursive practice of the particular place (Paloniemi & Collin, 2012, p. 24). Discourse here points to a generalised notion of the workplace's system of knowledge which has been constructed through shared experience (Foucault, 2002). Agentic actions are closely related to the discursive collective acts and this consequently renegotiates power relations within the organisational hierarchy each time. It then creates a platform which enables mutual dialogues within the existing power relations. This implies that a possible enabling platform for teacher agency is not a non-hierarchical structure, but a clear leadership vision for a creation of a discursive practice where proactive agentic actions are collectively supported.

Teacher Professional Identity. Another enabling element for teacher agency is in relation to their professional identity; in other words, it concerns how teachers feel about their agentic actions. Teacher professional identity refers to teachers' perceptions of themselves as a professional in relation to their socio-cultural contexts (Lasky, 2005; Vähäsantanen, 2015). It is reciprocally constructed through their agentic actions, and is closely associated with motivation, job commitment and therefore sense of belonging (Fernet et al., 2016; Lasky, 2005). In other words, it works as a backdrop to how teachers feel about doing what they believe to be right or about

contributing towards positive outcomes at their work. Lasky (2005) reports that teachers can feel immensely satisfied when they exercise agency based on what they value as a teacher such as building authentic relationships with students; although the neoliberal priorities of the reform contexts have been challenging this and have constrained their agency. On similar lines, Vähäsantanen (2015) argues that teachers tend to have a strong sense of agency at a practical and pedagogical level, even in the reform contexts. Together, these findings imply that teachers' agentic actions empower themselves when they exercise agency by following their pedagogical beliefs and moral senses; which then leads reciprocally to an enhancement of teacher agency and positive emotional well-being.

Similarly, Swann et al. (2012) discuss, in their empirical study of a school transformation against the dominant value system, that one of the contributing factors for enhancement of teacher autonomy is "teachers' sense of their power" (p. 96) and the "power of the collective" (p. 101). They contend that when teachers were supported and inspired to became aware of their power to influence the transformation, they became autonomous and self-sustained learners who were active contributors for school transformation. In addition, teacher autonomy was further heightened in the organisational culture where their transformative choices were openly shared and celebrated where the results of their focus on children's learning "tapped into people's deep-rooted commitment to doing their very best to children" (p. 105). This seems to support the discussions of enabling elements above where; it is the organisational culture where teachers' sense of professional identity is collectively supported; and teachers' enactment of agency reciprocally empower them when following their values and beliefs. In addition, another aspect from their study is the teachers' awareness of their power as a teacher.

Emotions and Teacher Agency. Emotions and teacher agency are interrelated; in which positive emotional experience is associated with an active enactment of agency (Eteläpelto & Lahti, 2008; Hökkä et al., 2017). Similarly, Fernet et al. (2016) report that teacher well-being led to positive classroom outcomes. In contrast, teachers' sense of insecurity and fear can impede teacher agency (Chen, 2016;

Eteläpelto & Lahti, 2008; Latta, 2005). This can be related to the 'terror of performability' (Lyotard, 1984 as cited in Ball, 2003), where their performances are always monitored and judged based on measurable criteria, and therefore failure is associated with teacher incompetence and blame. With respect to fear and blame, Douglas (1992 as cited in Hargreaves, 1998) suggests a 'no-fault' environment to replace the "culture of blaming" (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 851), where individuals are not blamed for problem-solving situations.

Section Summary

Overall, the current research will take a conceptualisation of teacher agency which accepts the influence of personal factors while acknowledging the impact of social contexts on them. Existing research highlights the importance of a practice where teacher agency is collectively supported by their discursive practice; teacher professional identity is enhanced; and teachers' emotional security is ensured for teachers to confront challenges to bring about positive educational outcomes. The enactment of agency brings about teachers' sense of satisfaction especially when it is based on their pedagogical beliefs and moral senses that support their teacher identity. Since fear can hinder teacher agency, implementation of preventing strategies such as no-fault approaches could be useful. Underlying is care and personal relations, instead of technical or functional relationships (Hargreaves, 1998; Lasky, 2005; O'Conner, 2008). An implication is a leadership practice which brings about these factors. Positive interrelations between teacher agency and successful implementation of inclusive education approach may be a further area of investigation.

Leadership Practice

School Leadership

Over the last forty years, the overall trend in school leadership has seen a transition from the leadership tradition of the centrality of authority with student academic achievement focus in earlier days; to shared and more democratic forms of leadership which aim to transform a school by shared values and beliefs (Gumus et al., 2018; Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood & Sun, 2012). This transition reflects the impact of increased accountability and responsibility to the management, constant needs for school transformation, increasing student diversity, and a limitation of the traditional individual leadership model.

Current leadership models show a consensus for school transformation, which includes; value led leadership, collective performance focus, and a context focus (Agbenyega & Sharma, 2014; Gumus et al., 2018; Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Vähäsantanen, 2015; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Consistency is found in the findings from inclusive leadership (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Angelides, 2012; DeMatthews, 2020; Higham & Booth, 2018; Swann et al., 2012).

Leadership in Inclusive Contexts

One of the main features of leadership in inclusive education contexts are transformative and democratic models, which reflect the contextual needs of shifting the organisational culture by challenging people's ways of thinking (Agbenyega & Sharma, 2014; Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Angelides, 2012; DeMatthews, 2020; Higham & Booth, 2018; Swann et al., 2012). This can be linked to transformational leadership (Gumus et al., 2018) where articulated clear vision leads to organisational capacity building, and distributed leadership (Hallinger, 2011) in which all stakeholders' agency are encouraged and valued. However, it is important to note that these are only the frameworks (Harris & Spillane, 2008 as cited in Agbenyega & Sharma, 2014, p. 119), and the significance for investigation lies in how these frameworks may enhance the leadership practices in relation to inclusive education. The following section will examine the recent leadership phenomenon of value-led, collective performance focus, and context focusing on the inclusive context through the lens of humanity and teacher agency.

Value-Led Leadership. From the standpoint where inclusive education is about challenging existing educational arrangements and shifting people's ways of thinking, the focus of leadership practice comes to be a transforming "community of practice" (Ainscow, 2005, p. 113) which is more inclusive. Existing inclusive education research commonly suggests a pathway for an establishment of a practice through value-led transformational leadership (Agbenyega & Sharma, 2014; Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Higham & Booth, 2018; Swann et al., 2012). It starts from setting values as a source of decision making which; give directions to leaders to support and inspire teachers; make teachers conscious of their work; encourage teachers to take risks for what they think is important against taken-for-granted ways of thinking; and eventually shift teacher practice. Of importance is an underlying condition where teachers feel safe by being supported in a humane way (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Swann et al., 2012).

Swann et al. (2012) delineate how a leadership practice enabled a shift in practice which created a self-sustainable learning culture in a school. They discuss the interrelations between the leader's external support and how the teachers' internal dispositions arose as a result of the external support. The teacher support and stimulation which was led by the school vision effectively enhanced the teachers' awareness of their power, which reciprocally led them to be more inquisitive towards many of the educational challenges. In addition, these reciprocal interactions between the leader and teachers created a secure environment for teachers to actively share their ideas and experiences. This eventually brought about "the emergence of a consensus" (p. 102) where teachers commonly and collectively enacted their agency to take risks for better outcomes in relation to the school vision. This indicates the potential of value-led transformational leadership to empower teachers through distributing authority.

The significance of a transformational leadership model in an inclusive context is its capacity to distribute authority in the ways that encourage teachers' "transforming choices" (Swann et al., 2012, p. 96). To illustrate, teachers are given the power to make decisions to develop their practice in ways which align with the organisation's

inclusive values. In synthesising this with teacher agency research findings discussed above, distributed authority is assumed to enable teachers' enactment of agency as their professional identity is satisfied. The resulting positive outcomes may bring about a stronger sense of power, which may convince them to further pursue their practice while embodying inclusive values which can often be against societally imposed norms. This implies that the distribution of authority may empower teachers through their agentic action, which reciprocally raises their internal motivation towards achieving the organisation's aspirations. It is however important to remember that this would only be possible under leadership which guides the process with articulated values (Fullan, 2003 as cited in Swann et al., 2012, p. 107).

Higham and Booth (2018) argue in their inclusive leadership research that it is the collectively set core values which should be regarded as the leadership authority, not the personal vision of a charismatic leader. Although strong leadership has been implicitly associated with that of authoritarian styles (Gumus et al., 2018), Higham and Booth's findings suggest that it was the explicated inclusive values that the research participants identified as a success factor. Research in the area of motivation also supports this contention. Autonomous motivation, which refers to teachers' internal desires to accomplish tasks by following their values and beliefs, is more positively associated with job commitment, emotional well-being, and classroom performance than controlled motivation which denotes their completion of tasks because of externally imposed pressure (Fernet et al., 2016). In other words, it would be teachers' heightened consciousness towards the importance of the school vision that would bring about more positive educational consequences including emotional security, rather than the imposed responsibilities arranged by the leader's personal provision. This tends to interrogate a sense of insecurity and fear. Also, teachers' internalisation of school aspirations through transformative leadership tends to bring an interrelated cycle of enhanced motivation, commitment, moral responsibility, and teachers' sense of their power (Thoonen et al., 2011). This reinforces the importance of an articulation of values and shared aspirations emphasised by Ainscow et al. (2006) in his conceptualisation of inclusive education. An implication is the limitation of the

traditional authoritarian style of leadership and the needs for leadership as a collaborative practice.

Collaborative Practice. It has been discussed that inclusion is inevitably collaborative and it is vital to involve all stakeholders in the decision-making process (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Higham & Booth, 2018; Messiou, 2017; Slee, 2019). From the viewpoint of a collective capacity building, empowerment of teachers by delegating decision making is an unescapable prerequisite to establish a level of consensus among them (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010).

There is a contradictive notion about power distribution where the control of the head can increase when giving the power away (Higham & Booth, 2018; Leithwood et al., 2020). This is supported by Higham and Booth's discussion that it was teachers' sense of "collective responsibility" that increased by the distribution of authority (p. 153). By synthesising this with teacher agency research, it is assumed that the delegation of authority brings about autonomous motivation (Fernet et al., 2016) to teachers with the opportunity to enact their agency by following their pedagogical beliefs and values. This may reciprocally empower teachers to commit to the organisational aspirations as discussed above. Consequently, each teacher's autonomous work towards the shared organisational values strengthens the head's power to transform the community of practice. It is assumed that their agentic actions for distributed authority bring about their positive sense of power, enhanced sense of security, and further motivation to take risks for positive consequences. Investigation into this assumed interrelationship among teacher agency, well-being and distributed authority within transformational leadership model may be a further area for exploration. Empirical research which delineates this reciprocity may reinforce the existing knowledge.

In contrast, challenges to an implementation of distributed leadership have also been pointed out. Ainscow and Sandill (2010) report the difficulties associated with introducing and establishing the ideas of distributed leadership discussed into the contexts where hierarchical structures are dominant. Similarly, Higham and Booth

(2018) argue that with remaining notions of power centrality, the collaborative practice may not be fully exercised at its best; often with the notion of individual leadership taking precedence. Implications include the deep-rooted existing ways of thinking which are one of the largest obstacles, as well as the importance of an appreciation and understanding for the local context when trying to implement or research inclusive education approaches.

Context Based. A comprehensive insight into local contexts have been suggested as one of the prerequisites for inclusive school leadership (Ainscow, 2005; Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Angelides, 2012; Higham & Booth, 2018; Miles., 2014; Slee, 2019). Collaborative practice which involves a sharing of values and beliefs cannot be actualised without taking into account the complex interplay between the socio-cultural context and school transformation. Since each school context has different cultures and social backgrounds, this notion may be applied to all education settings. From the countries where the concept of inclusive education has been intensely studied, to the countries where the influence of such literature is scarce.

It would be worth investigating whether the concept of inclusive education which is discussed mainly through the lens of European contexts is always applicable in different contexts. Along with the controversial nature of this term (Slee, 2019), it has also been reported that the definitional ambiguity of inclusive education has been seen in governmental policy documents in many countries (Ainscow, 2005; Forlin et al., 2015; Hornby, 2015; MacArthur & Rutherford, 2016; Norwich, 2014; Slee, 2019). This is assumed to be a reflection of their ostensible use of the term 'inclusive education', which therefore causes confusion in practice. In other words, such a superficial concept of inclusion has no meaning to the local practitioners without a thorough effort to merge the local meaning making process to the broader concept of inclusion.

For example, Sharma et al. (2016) found that, in the Pacific Islands contexts, an application of "foreign ideas" (p. 401) of inclusive education tended to receive resistance from local practitioners and eventually slowed their inclusive development. Instead, people-focused approaches based on their value system such as an

establishment of personal relations with children and families were viewed as one of the key contributors by the research participants. Angelides (2012) discusses in the Cyprus education contexts, that leaders who were flexible in modifying their strategies to meet the local learning culture succeeded in creating a more inclusive school environment. In this context, it was the importance of "informal learning environments" (p. 29) which local teachers had found beneficial for the inclusion of diverse children. 'Informal learning' refers to the learning outside school, such as museum visits, which are integrated into their curriculum. These findings suggest that every school context has their own implications for inclusive education. The importance lies in a recognition of the inclusive practice which has been developed within the local context. Implementation of the concept of inclusive education could prove more successful when it is designed to evolve around the locally developed inclusive practice. Making the change meaningful to all local stakeholders may be one of the success factors. Research which investigates the in-depth meanings of inclusion for local practitioners along with a development of inclusive practice may be one of the areas for further exploration.

Furthermore, humane ways of approaching inclusive education according to the local value system are identified as significant in these two cases. The extent of how such approaches could be generated in a wider context could another area worth investigating further.

 Additionally, Angelides (2012) argues the importance of including children's voices when considering the local contexts. Children's viewpoint often gives teachers considerable 'interruptions' (Ainscow, 2005) in their taken-for-granted ways of thinking (Ainscow & Messiou, 2018). Research suggests that teachers' espoused notions of their inclusive practice do not always reflect their actual behaviours (Engelbrecht & Savolainen, 2017; Messiou, 2012). Although there has been identified methodological difficulties associated with collecting and dealing with children's voices which range from physical interview arrangement to the validity of the contents (Fielding, 2004; Messiou, 2012), this is assumed to be one of the most powerful ways to challenge our educational beliefs and decide to what extent the practice has been successful. This also echoes Agbenyega and Sharma's (2014) contention that the

success of inclusive leadership should be decided through how the core values are embodied to ensure the educational rights for all children, rather than by how the rules and policies are set.

Together, an implication could be the importance of respect for locally developed approaches towards inclusion and practitioners' views of this along with a thorough examination of these. Children's voices could also bring a critical examination of our practice. Further exploration of these areas may increase our knowledge outside existing inclusive frameworks which could also be generalised in a wider context.

Section Summary

To conclude, a transformational leadership model which embodies the concept of distributed leadership has been identified as a success model. In this model, decision making authority is delegated to all stakeholders with clear and articulated organisational visions. Having a secure and supportive environment as a prerequisite, this leadership model seems to have the potential to bring success in transforming school practice. Interrelations among distributed authority, teacher agency, teachers' sense of power and security in the inclusive context can be a further area of exploration. Challenges have also been identified in implementing shared leadership especially in the contexts where the ideas of traditional management models are persistent. Empirical studies suggest the significance of thorough consideration into the local contexts. Humane approaches have also been identified as an enabler for a more inclusive practice in the two empirical research; however, further scrutiny may be necessary for a generalisation.

Inclusive education in Japanese context
Legal status

In 1947, implementation of the Basic Act on Education and School Education Act introduced compulsory education for all children with disability in Japan. However, this system contained an exemption of enrolment for children with severe disabilities

and Local school districts possessed an authority over decision making for this. This resulted in the situation where a number of children were excluded from compulsory school; therefore, their educational rights on these children were not fully guaranteed (University of Tokyo, n.d.). It was in 1979 when the rights for all children including those with severe disabilities to attend compulsory schooling were guaranteed. On the other hand, this movement emphasised the existence of special schools, resulted in intensifying an enforcement of attendance at special schools of children with disability who used to attend a regular school (University of Tokyo, n.d.).

A provision of a support for children with disability who attend regular schools commenced in 1993 with an amendment of the School Education Act. This provision introduced a system to support children with mild disabilities who attend regular schools, by providing individualised or specialised curriculum.

In 2006, a part of the School Education Act was amended with a focus on supporting each individual children with disabilities. This aimed to assist their skills to be independent and to actively participate in society. Throughout these regulatory changes, the Japanese education system gradually moved towards an approach to focus on meeting the needs of each individual within their dual regular and special education system.

One of the recent regulatory changes which had a significant impact on children with disabilities and their families was a revision of the Articles on the Enforcement Order for the School Education Law (Government of Japan, 2013 as cited in Forlin et al., 2014, p. 315). In this revision, the decision for a school enrolment is supposed to be made by considering the opinions from parents and related educational and medical professionals. This has slightly loosened the constrain for educational opportunities for children with disabilities. However, the discussion still stays on a special education perspective where focus is placed only on the children with disabilities and physical placement of them (Forlin et al., 2014).

The current governmental perspective in regard to inclusive education is that special school teachers to collaborate with and support regular school teachers to move the Japanese education system toward a more inclusive one (MEXT, 2012). The definition

of inclusive education in Japan points to a system where children with disabilities learn with those without disabilities in their local schools.

In regard to the international agenda, Japan ratified the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC) in 1994, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) in 2007. Despite their ratification of these conventions, the Japanese education system has been receiving condemnation for not having taken sufficient measures to ensure the educational rights of children with disabilities (Forlin et al., 2014). Forlin and her colleagues discuss that the challenges of their system could be the ambiguity of the governmental decision on whether to maintain their traditional dual regular and special education system; insufficient in-service professional development system for inclusive approaches; and immaturity of the societal understanding of inclusion where a focus is still placed mainly on an inclusion of people with disability, not aligning with an international understanding about inclusion of how to create a society where diversity is respected and celebrated.

Statistics

MEXT (2021) reports the ratio of children and students who require additional educational supports was 4.3% in total, which consists of 0.8% attending special schools, 3.1% attending special classrooms, and 1.4% receiving supports in resource rooms. While the ratio of children and student who attend special school and resource room in 2021 displayed only a small increase to that of the statistics in 2011, the ratio of special classroom attendance in 2021 was more than double of that in 2021. Considering the regulatory alternation in 2013 mentioned above, this could have been a result of widened possibility for parental choices of a type of the school for children.

The report also suggests that roughly about 6.5% of children and students who attend regular classrooms may have a condition such as LD, ADHD, and Asperger syndrome which have been causing a level of learning and behavioural difficulties. In addition, there are about a 5% of population who have difficulties in regularly attending a school.

Conclusion

From the standpoint where inclusive education is seen as a principled approach to education and society, this literature review explored the possible enablers for the creation of more inclusive learning environments. The research consensus sees that the essence of inclusion lies in articulation of values as a school and shifting towards a community of practice. With a consideration of the societal factors which could hinder inclusive education, teacher support through value-led transformational leadership seems to have a possibility for successful implementation. A research gap has been suggested in the following areas of empirical research which; adopts the definition that sees inclusive education as a principled approach to education and society; investigates the interrelations between teacher agency, teacher sense of power, that of security in relation to a successful inclusive practice; and delineates the local practitioners' meaning making around inclusion for a more meaningful implementation of inclusive concepts.

Methodology

This section aims to set out a methodology that will elicit the meanings of inclusive education from the local practitioners, with a purpose of addressing the research gap identified in the literature review. Underlying this is the viewpoint which sees inclusion as a principled approach to education and society. Limitations and strategies to bring a level of research credibility will also be discussed.

Research Paradigm

Social Constructionism

Social constructionism stands on a premise that knowledge and social reality are constructed as a result of human interactions (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Burr, 1995). In other words, social reality comes to have a meaning through the symbolic activities developed through the establishment of a common language (Burr, 1995). These meanings are routinised and habituated; and consequently, reproduced as taken-for-granted ways of thinking; which people come to think of as objective reality.

In practical terms, this research paradigm recognises that the way people's thinking currently, has been accustomed by the dominant discursive practices and value system. Therefore, people's knowledge construction through their experience of different discourses requires a level of negotiation in their understanding about what they consider to be a reality. The current research, through a social constructionism lens, aims to explore the factors which may have influenced the participants' existing ways of thinking, in order to bring about alternative teaching approaches.

Epistemological and Ontological Standpoint

Social constructionist research tends to adapt a subjectivist epistemological stance which assumes that a reality can only be known through people's subjective voices;

and an ontological standpoint of relativist where a reality is assumed as relative therefore multiple realities exist (Andrews, 2012; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). In addition, since research participants' voices are presented through the researchers' subjective views, an acknowledgement of, and careful portrayal of, researcher bias is assumed to be vital.

Paradigm Shift

One of the main contributions to this research paradigm is a shift of research focus; from discovering pathological and essential human nature, to analysing the interactional and social process of knowledge construction (Burr, 1995). In other words, it is a separation of problems from the individual, to an attribution to the sociological and discursive influence. A social constructionist approach aligns well with the broad definition of inclusion (Ainscow et al., 2006) with its paradigm shift in inclusive education from an individual model of disability to that of a social model. To illustrate, the experience of disability can be understood as coming from social processes that construct disability as deviance and illness.

With this epistemological and ontological stance, the current research adopts a qualitative research method with semi-structured interviews. Examination of the interview script is accordingly guided by a constructionism thematic analysis.

Qualitative Research and Research Credibility

Ontological Discussion

Qualitative study aims to gain understandings of the participants' subjective account of their social reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Patton, 2015). Accordingly, it involves an examination of written and/or spoken language.

Simultaneously, the credibility of qualitative research has been argued because of its subjective nature (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Hammersley, 1992; Noble & Smith, 2015).

Qualitative researchers address a challenge to present qualitative findings through a combination of the two ontologically opposite stances of realism and relativism, suggesting a limitation of the existing research framework (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Hammersley, 1992; Noble & Smith, 2015; Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2009). This points to the contradiction of a request for a realism-oriented validity in the research of subjective voices from a relativism research paradigm. Two major discussion foci are the trustworthiness of research findings and researcher bias, by pointing to qualitative research's lack of transparency and scientific rigor in justifying the data collection and analytical method (Noble & Smith, 2015). This means, research can result in 'just another account' from this point of view (Andrews, 2012, p. 42).

Notably, raising trustworthiness and reducing the impact of researcher bias are contradictive activity. Hammersley (1992) acknowledges the shortcomings as well as the significance of each ontological position of realism and relativism, and suggests a standpoint somewhat in the middle of the dichotomy, which he called a "subtle realism" (p. 52). This standpoint therefore accepts the influence of researchers' subjective views on the interpretation of reality; and simultaneously, seeks to represent a reality as authentic as possible while producing research findings which contribute to academic knowledge. One of the key elements Hammersley conveys is an acknowledgement of knowledge being 'reasonably credible' instead of being absolutely certain.

The current research takes a stance which is inclined to subjectivism with an acknowledgement of the limited credibility of the knowledge produced, based on this ontological discussion.

Bringing Authenticity

To raise the level of authenticity in the findings report, a level of mutuality in communication has been suggested as a strategy (Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2009). This

mutuality involves a common understanding regarding the contexts, shared identity, and mediated power relations and social distance between the two parties (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Subsequently, the conversations between the two parties may successfully elicit clearer meanings of the participants' underlying social reality.

However, this mutuality could also influence the participants' account production. Possible influencing factors are the participants' perceptions of the researcher's expectations, and the researcher's verbal or non-verbal cues based on their own bias which could unconsciously steer the direction of participants' narrative (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Noble & Smith, 2015; Patton, 2015). This shows a conflict of interest between the two ontologically different stances discussed above, and implies the importance of clarifying the researcher standpoint and acknowledging its limitations.

In addition, Richardson and St. Pierre (2018) propose a delineation of a researchers' identity along with the research procedure, which allows the readers' arbitration over the written context. The use of this strategy along with a clarification of the researcher's standpoint is assumed to be useful to maintain a subjective stance in providing a trustworthy account of the local meaning making.

Section Summary

The current research takes a stance which is more inclined to subjectivism. This aims to gain an increased level of authenticity in participants' narrative production by building mutuality in communication. It also acknowledges the knowledge produced as being 'reasonably credible' by the co-existence of the two contradictory ontological standpoints in its methodology. Possible researcher bias is discussed through researcher identity being presented for the readers' arbitration. The effort to eliminate the researcher's influence from narrative production will be made and reported.

Researcher Identity and Possible Researcher Bias

The researcher is a native speaker of Japanese who was trained and had taught as a registered public-school teacher in Japan prior to emigrating to New Zealand. This research was conducted after her having lived, worked and studied in New Zealand for 13 years. The researcher visited the participants at their school several times prior to the interview and had built a level of acquaintance and mutual understanding of the research topic.

Possible researcher biases are her perceptions of the limitations in the current Japanese education system from her own experiences; the researcher-participants distance and limited experience and skills to conduct a research project.

Participants

Three participants took part in the research; one, the principal, and the other two teachers of School B who worked closely with the principal. Snowball Sampling method (Parker et at., 2020) was employed in a recruitment of the participants where the two teachers were nominated by the principal. The identified factors which influenced the nomination process were their pedagogical standpoint and availability of time for interviews.

All participants were Japanese males who worked in a school in Japan (School B) at the time of the interviews. The principal had 31 years' teaching experience, including his principalship of three years at School A and one year at School B. One of the two teachers had nine years of teaching experience in primary schools, including five years at School B. The other teacher had six years teaching in primary schools after several years of teaching at a supplemental after school learning institute. This was his second year at School B.

It is acknowledged that the impact of a snowball effect on research credibility (Parker et al., 2020) and a possible power relationship where the nominator is the one is in a higher status in their hierarchical system. In addition, all participants were male, in

which perspectives obtained through the interviews could be narrower than a possible result of including diverse gender identities.

Interview Timeline

December 2018: Initial face to face discussion with the primary participant about the research purpose and his agreement to participate in it.

January 2019 – May 2019: Online communication with the primary participant about the arrangement of the research data collection, including his nomination of two other teachers

May 2019: Researcher spent a week becoming acquainted with and sharing common knowledge with the participant teachers. Written consents were obtained from the three participants. Interviews were conducted with all participants.

June 2019: Interview transcripts confirmed by all the participants.

Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews (Patton 2015) consist of core interview questions set by the researcher, and a space for the interviewees to expand the topic and steer the direction of the conversation. The strength of this method includes a potential for an extensive discussion which may allow not only for the interviewer to further comprehend the context, but also for the interviewees to deepen their thought through the mutual conversation process. An ontological limitation has been discussed above.

For the current study, interviews were conducted individually in a relaxed yet professional atmosphere in order to prompt each participants' true voice regarding the local meaning making of inclusive education. Commonly familiar words and non-biased prompt questions were consciously chosen to allow the participants to steer the direction of discussion rather than being led by researcher's cues. The principal's

interview was approximately an hour and a half, and the other teachers' around an hour each.

Interview schedules are presented in Appendix five (in English) and six (in Japanese).

Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

With a purpose of delineating participants' local meaning making, this research will adopt an inductive reasoning approach (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). In an inductive reasoning, the ideas or concepts emerging from participants' voices are analysed for a suggestion of a hypothesis or a new theory. In the current research, the most appropriate examination tool is assumed to be the guideline of thematic analysis since researchers' voices are examined by being cross-referenced with the concepts in international literature of inclusive education as themes, (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) involves a number of decisions required for analysis though a particular methodological lens; to name, the boundary of the themes, epistemological standpoint, the depth and width of analysis, and the analytical focus. In the current research, themes were identified by the "repeated patterns of meaning (p. 15)". From an epistemological standpoint of social constructionism, the interpretation of participants' voices in this research involves a deeper and critical investigation of the structural conditions. Simultaneously, it endeavours to present "a rich description of the data set (p. 11)", in order to provide readers with a wider picture of the local practice. Lastly, the analytic focus is clearly placed on the enablers for the inclusive education approach.

For the current study, the data was initially analysed from the Japanese script, and then translated to English by the researcher. Examples of analysis are presented in Appendix ten.

Ethics

This research was considered as low risk by the Massey University Ethics application.

With respect to the contextual aspects, one of the largest concerns is confidentiality because of the small community of the participants. Therefore, the risks were discussed and their autonomous participation was continually confirmed throughout the research process. The final summary of findings and discussion were shared with them before the submission of the thesis so that they had an opportunity to alter or remove the hazardous contents.

As for the trustworthiness of the data, the original Japanese transcripts were shared with each participant before the analysis stage; in order to confirm the accuracy of the researcher's understanding of the participants' perceptions of the underlying conditional contexts.

In regard to the promotion of the benefit of the research, all the participants individually mentioned their contentment in relation to their research participation. They appreciated the opportunity to ensure the value of their practice as well as to reflect on their own understanding of their practice.

Findings

This chapter considers the findings of inductive thematic analysis of the interview transcripts and how these inform the research objectives. It includes the background contexts, how the practitioner experienced and implemented the School A inclusive education approach, how he implemented an inclusive education approach in School B and how this was perceived by the teachers in School B. It also includes the practitioner's perceptions of the influence of the Japanese personnel system and their teaching culture on the implementation of an inclusive approach.

The brief description of this case is that the practitioner, who experienced an inclusive education approach in School A as the deputy and subsequently as the principal, was then implementing a similar approach as the principal in School B.

In this section, a pseudonym 'Mr. Suzuki' is used for the principal participant of this research, and that of 'Ms. Goto' is used for the former principal of School A who established an inclusive practice which Mr. Suzuki learnt from. Furthermore, fictious names were also used for the two school B teachers, namely Mr. Noda and Mr. Yamada.

Background Context

This section concerns participant teachers' perceptions of 'conventional' practice and inclusive education in their context. This aims to provide a picture of the background context this research was based on.

The main themes identified include a rigid hierarchical structure with centralised authorities, an individual performability focused classroom management practice, and a distant attitude towards the concept of and the term 'inclusive education.

Hierarchical Structure

The three teachers' comments revealed that it was a hierarchical structure with centralised authorities what they considered a 'conventional' practice in regard to

school management. Commonly mentioned sub-themes were that principals stayed in their office, and that their existence was perceived to have had very little relevance to teachers or children. Consequently, principals were perceived as distant. In Japan, principals are appointed to a school by the prefectural board of education who are the employers of all teachers including principals. The duration of the principals' service in one school was approximately three years at the time of the interviews.

> Mr. Noda: In a general school, the principal, deputy, and
>   curriculum coordinator are all so static, they never move
>   (from their office).

> Mr. Suzuki: They never move. ... My previous images of a principal
>   were a rather annoyed middle-aged man. I don't remember
>   talking with them. ... unless I was spoken to by them, I
>   wouldn't talk to them, and never went to their office.

> Researcher: Would you say that this is a general figure of a
> principal?

> Mr. Suzuki: Yes. Very distant.

> Mr. Yamada: One could be uninterested. Not interested in us
>   (teachers), or the children.... Some of them don't seem to
>   care about `anything as long as no issues arise... they are the
>   person who make a formal speech at school events, and
>   that's it. Another could be authoritarian, one who imposes
>   power over us.

Further comments showed that the centrality of authority along with accountability pressures could also bring about a culture where an issue was attributed to an individual teacher's misconduct; and consequently, the teachers were blamed for this.

Behind this was their functional human relations, instead of personal relationships, brought about by the societal pressures.

> Mr. Yamada: When issues arise, it can be like being blamed (by the management), kind of. ...being told off,. ... (the focus) tends to be more on political or diplomatic (ways of sorting problems), rather than on children, so that the management won't be accused when being pursued (by the external authority). Therefore, a radical method of problem solving cannot be expected.

Another aspect identified was the teachers' experience of their professional identity renegotiation through these conventional practices, within the hierarchical structure and their cultural contexts. Consequently, teachers were inclined to be conditioned by the school culture or the principal's direction.

> Mr. Noda: If they do not follow the principal's ways of doing, I was kind of this type though, but they are asked like, 'why don't you tell children to follow the particular ways of acting'. ... I used to be frequently told this, ... (I was always thinking that) 'well, that's a bit strange.' But we need to do things that way if we are told to do so (by the principal), don't we? ... if the principal is that type of person, well, we need to do that, right? There is no choice really.

The local socio-cultural contexts are visible in the teachers' comments where an attitude of obedience towards authority was expected. Their comments also infer that it is not only the principal's authority but also following the collective culture and practice which could restrict teachers' agentic actions according to their pedagogical beliefs. The following comments suggest how particular ways of working with children would be expected in such a school culture.

Mr. Noda: If the principal is that type of person (who tries to put children in a certain ways of behaving), then newly employed teachers accordingly think that this is the way it should be, so, then they focus only on that aspect.

Mr. Yamada: My idea of class management was more open when I first qualified. ... Once started working as a teacher, there was an atmosphere that this (the practice which tries to have children be obedient) was right, and accordingly (I learnt that) I needed to perform like this. Eventually I became like that when managing the classroom.

Such school cultures are also reflected in their descriptions of classroom management practice.

Classroom Management

The three teachers commonly mentioned an aspect of their system where each classroom was expected to be managed by the classroom teacher. Their comments infer a system where 'most' children's higher academic achievement was the focus and children's obedient attitudes towards teachers were thought to be the strategy to follow.

The main topic mentioned was the pressure on individual teachers from such a system. To illustrate, issues in the classroom such as students' challenging behaviours tended to be attributed to the class teacher's lack of competency. Underlying was the ways of thinking where children's demonstration of difficulties at school is seen as inherent; therefore, the problems were not seen as an issue to be solved by the school. Accordingly, teachers developed a sense of fear over their skills being judged as less competent especially dealing with children's challenging behaviours on their own; and consequently, became defensive of their classroom practice.

Mr. Yamada: When there was a child who ran away from the classroom, this was thought to be the classroom teacher's

lack of class management skills. So, it was as if you were
told, 'you deal with that somehow', kind of.

Mr. Noda: I think they (teachers) don't like it when, their
classrooms are being judged as chaotic and not well
managed when several children are standing and moving
around. I too feel the same, but I think this is what they
don't want to be seen.

Mr. Suzuki: You can see this (teacher defensiveness) from such
comments as "Mr Principal, you do not need to come,
please. ... I will deal with it".

Inclusive Education

A consistency among the participant teachers' comment about inclusive education
was found in the way they see inclusive education as a recently emerged unfamiliar
concept. Their comments suggest their local understandings where the term was
perceived as distant, and they felt a level of discomfort in their practice when
associated with the term inclusive education.

Mr. Yamada: I don't know much about inclusive education, but just
feel from my childhood experience, ...It was kind of sad
seeing friends disappearing from mainstream classrooms ...
So, I think ideally it would be best that all children could
learn together at least up to the end of the compulsory
education; although I don't know how. That's pretty much
all I can think of about inclusive education.

Mr. Noda: As for inclusive (education), I haven't studied about it in
detail and therefore I don't have a good understanding of it,
but what I'm thinking is inclusive (education) is kind of like
not taking out children from the (mainstream) classroom,

and bringing them into the (mainstream) classroom, kind of like that, I think. But there is nothing in my mind such as 'this is what inclusive should look like'. I think what Mr Suzuki has been trying to do here is, or must be, inclusive (education), and what I'm doing may possibly be inclusive, but definitely, I'm not doing this with a conscious mind to say that this is what inclusive should be.

Researcher: Do you mean that not needing to be particularly holding onto such a word as inclusive education, but what you are doing is resulting in...

Mr. Noda: [nodding] possibly inclusive, I think. ... The concept and terms have been prevailed through government documentation, ... but their publication of the term has been forming some kind of ostensible framework....

A snapshot of the system of supporting children with additional learning support was also given by participant teachers. A classroom, which they called a 'support classroom', was generally set up in the schools where children who experienced difficulties in learning in the mainstream classroom would spend some time during the school day. Several teachers were usually assigned to this class within the school personnel, and curriculum was arranged to meet individual children's needs. Teachers' comments infer the distance of this support class from the mainstream classrooms.

Together, these findings show a glimpse of the basic condition of the research participants' background contexts. It is a rigidly structured system which seems to have little flexibility to introduce alternative approaches. With this as a basis, the following paragraphs will describe the participant teachers' experiences and perceptions of inclusive approaches through their voices

The Practitioner's Experience in School A

This section considers the findings relating to the first research question:

- How did the principal experience an inclusive education approach in school A and how were his beliefs constructed through this experience?

The first two subsections consist of Mr. Suzuki's experiences as the deputy of School A, and the second half of this section focuses on his learning through the principalship at School A.

Relational practices

Children to feel secure. This section will explore Mr. Suzuki's perceptions of the School A practice as the deputy.

One of the core aspects of School A practice appeared in Mr Suzuki's comments which enabled 'all' children's meaningful participation was relational practices. This was perceived by him as a radical difference from general school practice where children were supposed to be looked after by the classroom teacher each year, and individual performance was focused.

His encounter with School A whole school practice started from one incident in which Mr. Suzuki called the 'typhoon incident'. This occurred during the first school term of his deputyship at School A. Before this incident, he would stay at his deputy desk in the staff room all day and work on his computer dealing with paperwork as ordinary deputies do; as a result, he had little direct contact with children.

The incident occurred on the day when the school was shut because of torrential rain. A child came to school alone, not knowing that the school was closed. Mr Suzuki, through an interphone conversation, kindly directed the child to go home, unaccompanied. This was one of the usual practices in general Japanese schools at that time. However, Ms. Goto, the principal at the time stepped in immediately after that, along with the other teachers, to ensure the safety of the child's way home. This was

when Mr. Suzuki acutely realised that his ways of working as the deputy were challenged because he had little knowledge of the individual children in the school he was working at.

Ms. Goto and the other teachers' quick response was only possible because of their knowledge of the condition of this particular child. The child had a mild developmental disability, and his single mother had a health condition that constrained her ability to care for the details of the child's schooling.

> Mr. Suzuki: "With this as a start, something inside me changed. It was a turning point. I thought that I should see the children, that I should spend more time with the children. I was strongly aware that I shouldn't be sitting at such a place (deputy's desk)."

Relational practice was also perceived by Mr. Suzuki in School A classroom practice. His experience started with an enormous disruption in his thinking in which he experienced a disturbance in his pedagogical beliefs. However, his interactions with teachers and children helped him negotiate the meanings of his experience, and eventually helped him develop his own understandings of how this practice enabled an inclusion of all children with their individual needs.

Mr. Suzuki described his first impression of the classroom sessions at School A as 'impossible'. He meant that he perceived it as unacceptable school practice from his conventional viewpoint, where children were supposed to sit quietly during the session. His comment shows the contrast of School A practice from that of general classrooms he had known, and that his previous educational beliefs were completely challenged.

> Mr. Suzuki: I thought that this was impossible. I mean, 'is a session being conducted properly?' 'What is this?' 'What's going on?' The classrooms were noisy, children were

chatting throughout the sessions, some were crying, … some ran away from the classroom during the session. I thought 'what on earth is this?' … So, my first impression was 'I wonder if any learning is happening in such conditions.'

School A relational practice also supported Mr. Suzuki's learning of their inclusive practice. There was a school-wide culture where all teachers and children work together to promote positive educational outcomes. He realised, through his connection with children and staff, that all children were consciously involved in the important matters despite its chaotic appearance. Although the classroom orientation was completely different from that of his prior experiences, he could see that this relational practice was supporting all children's sense of security and therefore their learning in an optimal way.

> Mr. Suzuki: When a child acted up and ran out of the classroom, a teacher from another classroom ran after the child and listened to him or her, regardless of the syndicate or classroom. Then there were parents and volunteers from the community on the scene, you know. I thought at first, 'what on earth is this?' But I felt in the meantime that, 'this is it'. 'This is how all children are saved from psychological pressure'.

Eventually, Mr. Suzuki constructed his understandings of how School A relational practice enabled their inclusive practice, through how the children were.

> Mr. Suzuki: The result was shown in how the children were. If the children rebelled against the teachers and they were not listening to them, I wouldn't have thought that this was the way. Instead, however, it was clear that the children were feeling secure in this school. I could see that. The fact that

there was no 'non-attendance at school' showed that, don't you think?

'All children' in the context of the current study therefore includes those children who experienced difficulties in adjusting themselves to the current education system, as well as the ones with neurodevelopmental, learning, or behavioural disabilities. Mr. Suzuki analysed that one of the causes for this societal issue in the Japanese system was the situation where these children did not have a place where they felt secure at school. This occurred especially when the school expectations for children's learning did not meet their individual needs. Some children found it difficult to adjust themselves to the classroom learning situation where everyone was expected to do the same. When the classroom was the only place to be, these children could easily lose their sense of belonging in the school.

Therefore, the significance of the School A relational practice in Mr. Suzuki's understanding is the fact that they created a safe space for each child by not categorising them into the conventional framework.

> Mr. Suzuki: Everyone attends school here. I wondered why? I concluded, 'because in this school, they feel secure'. Then, I pondered on why they would feel secure. I later realised that, 'there are adults who accept them as they are right beside them'. It was sometimes the class teacher, sometimes a non-class teacher. It could be some familiar people from their community or could be the principal or deputy. A variety of adults surrounded the children and all the adults accepted every single child as they were; therefore, all children could come to school feeling safe.... So...of course I was totally surprised and challenged. But, I thought, 'yes, in this school, children are feeling secure. So, this is it'.

Mr. Suzuki concluded that by focusing on each child's needs from this perspective as a team, School A created a space for all children without a boundary that separated them out because they had a diagnosis. This was a paradigm shift for him through his School A experience. Mr. Suzuki's idea of inclusion was not about trying to physically place children who needed learning support into a mainstream classroom, but about creating a space for all children where they were supported to be themselves.

What enabled tis paradigm shift within his beliefs was his acknowledgement of fluidity of such children's needs therefore school practice is required to be constantly modified. Additional information which Mr. Suzuki emphasised was that School A practice were not informed by the ideas of inclusive education in the government guidelines nor international literature. Therefore, it could be said, in this particular case, that the teachers' locally prioritised focus on this particular population resulted in enabling an inclusion of all children within the existing societal and educational framework.

Teachers to feel secure. The relational practice Mr. Suzuki experienced also included that of among the teachers. He perceived that the teachers were also feeling secure and how it was important in their inclusive education approach.

Teachers' Sense of security. Mr. Suzuki mentioned several times about teachers' sense of security as well as that of children in relation to teacher agency. The key factor he perceived was the supportive culture which was underpinned by their acceptance of the limitations of teachers' isolated acts. Mr. Suzuki mentioned that all teachers experienced a stage where they realised the limitations of what one teacher could do, especially in a situation where all children included so many who would usually be categorised as needing additional support, learning together.

> Researcher: What do you think it was that sustained such a
> supportive school culture in School A?

> Mr. Suzuki: It was an acceptance [laughter]. By every single staff.
> Acceptance. Yes. They all recognised that they wouldn't be

able to cope with these situations on their own, ... Since

they had all given up relying solely on their own skills, they

all helped each other [with a gesture of holding hands].

He identified that it was the creation of a secure space for teachers through a sharing of experiences, that eventually encouraged teacher agency and their relentless efforts to be responsive to each child's needs.

Mr. Suzuki: Everyone understood how powerless the others would

feel when facing the situations, from their own experience.

'I understand how you feel. I've experienced similar

situations', things like this. That is, a type of secure feeling.

... 'there was a time I had trouble dealing with issues which

children had brought. So, I understand how you feel.' Then

they would share what they did in the past, although this

was not always the exact answer (for the new situation).

Mr. Suzuki emphasised that it was a continual effort by the staff to be sensitive to the children's needs and to be responsive to them, not a manual. One of the key factors Mr. Suzuki identified was the school culture where staff were confident that any issue would be safely shared and dealt with; therefore, they felt secure. Mr. Suzuki also asserts that the adults' human connections would filter down to the children. This was linked to his previous comment about a success factor of School A practice; a place where children could feel secure about being themselves.

Mr. Suzuki: Therefore, the School A teachers would continuously

observe the children in front of them, notice any changes in

the children, and cooperatively see what might work. If one

strategy works, it can be shared. Nonetheless, it doesn't

mean that the same strategy will work next time. So, one

step at a time, sensibly dealing with the issues in front of us.

Therefore, we don't need a manual. Yes. It's not about a

manual.

Researcher: You are saying that of importance is the school culture of mutual support, not a manual?

Mr. Suzuki: Yes, you are right. Yes. (The space where) anything can be communicated. Yes. (We all) can sense that this is a safe place. So, I would say that it was the environment where adults were able to be themselves safely. Therefore, children were also able to come to school feeling secure. Children wouldn't feel secure if adults were producing an awkward atmosphere, would they?

Contrary to Ms. Goto's charismatic principalship, Mr. Suzuki established his own style of leadership through his struggles with managing the 'unconventional' school culture which was led by the school visions to actualise all children's meaningful participation. Of fundamental importance is his commitment to create an environment for all people to feel secure.

The basic principle that underpinned this practice was what is important as a human teacher.

Mr. Suzuki: What made me think through my experience at School A is how we should be as a teacher. Even before that, how an adult should be. How an adult should be when facing a child. Furthermore, what we should do as a human [nodding to himself].

The impact of relational practice. This episode below shows how the School A relational practice fostered the child's sensitivity towards others' needs. The story started when Mr. Suzuki tried, but failed to help a boy who was unsettled; and it was

another child who 'instructed' Mr. Suzuki to leave him alone and give the boy some space.

> Mr. Suzuki: I asked the child why. Then what the child said was
> that, 'the boy (who was unsettled) just needs some extra
> time to settle into the routine, and he is doing totally fine'.
> ... So, I realised that it was me thinking that I need to help
> him 'because I'm a teacher', but I was wrong. ...... Because
> they have been learning together for some time, they knew
> about each other way better than someone like me who had
> a title as a deputy principal and came from somewhere else.

This episode demonstrates how the school culture which focused on human connections had fostered their sensitivity to the needs of others'. Furthermore, such a culture enhanced the child's enactment of their agentic actions to support his friend.

Section Summary. Mr. Suzuki's experience of School A relational practice led him to a paradigm shift where focus is placed on all children's emotionally secure schooling. Another element of their relational practice which led to a successful inclusive practice was teachers' sense of security. Children demonstrated their agency to naturally support their peers' needs.

Leadership practice

This section mainly consists of Mr. Suzuki's comments about his experiences as the principal at School A.

Delegation and underlying values. Mr Suzuki perceived Ms. Goto as a charismatic leader who directed the transformation of School A with her clear vision and her personal qualities. Therefore, the level of pressure Mr Suzuki experienced was

immense when he was assigned as the principal to take over from Ms. Goto. He now analysed that it was an unnecessary pressure because of his mindset which was trying to implement the same framework Ms. Goto created. It was through his experience of delegation which led him to realise that it was not the framework but the underlying values that was important.

After a period of struggles with the pressure, one event changed Mr. Suzuki's internal conflict. The story starts with his delegation of tasks, which resulted in his knowledge construction of a leadership model which included all staff.

In School A, there was a whole school moral education session that took place one hour a week which had been devised and conducted by Ms. Goto. This was again different from the conventional practice where the moral education sessions were usually held in each classroom by introducing the topics suggested in the textbook. Whereas in School A, the topic of each session was set by Ms. Goto and was usually an open-ended question which would not have one particular answer. Therefore, the topics would challenge all participants' existing ways of thinking. Subsequently this had provided a space for adults also to question their own thinking while learning with the children.

Since this session was perceived by Mr. Suzuki as the 'core' of Ms. Goto's practice, he experienced an extreme level of pressure when taking it over. He tried to play the role Ms. Goto had; however, he found himself failing the whole school in spite of his best efforts to improve each week.

It was when he delegated the leading role of these sessions to the middle leaders that Mr. Suzuki felt he had finally made a breakthrough in this situation. He mentioned that it was 'asking for help' rather than delegating as a leadership practice. This was because he had totally been 'stuck' in the situation where he could not think of any better ways to improve in his practice. However, the consequence achieved even more than an improvement in the whole school moral education class. The principal perceived that the middle leaders had begun working with vitality as they took advantage of being delegated a leading role. This experience convinced him that he should pursue his own method to create a school for all by utilising available

resources; instead of trying to squeeze himself into the framework which Ms. Goto had formed.

> Mr. Suzuki: By delegating the whole school moral education classes, ... I would say I was relieved. I thought, 'right, it is ok for me to be myself. I don't have to do the same as Ms Goto.' ... When I handed over the whole school moral classes, it was clearly visualised that the middle leaders were activated and started energetically enacting their agentic actions. I thought, 'that's right. This is what should be done. ...This must be what 'creating a school' means.

This experience convinced him that it was not the framework, but the underlying values and beliefs that were important, to sustain a school culture where all children and staff had a place they belonged.

Teachers' sense of ownership. Mr. Suzuki mentioned that in School A, all teachers had a sense of ownership, which pointed to their strong awareness of being the ones who had created the school according to their school vision. Also, his comments infer a collective practice in which the school vision was internalised therefore teachers' agentic actions were encouraged and supported.

> Mr. Suzuki: The beauty of School A teaching staff was that they all had a sense of ownership. (It was) the sense that 'I am the one who is making this school'. Since they had such a sense, despite difficulties, they of course wouldn't do things on their own, but by cooperating with all the other staff and sharing their knowledge and experiences. Each time they continued overcoming the barriers which we confronted. Therefore, (my principalship at School A was about) working in collaborative practice with them, which means that it was not that I had done something special because I was the principal.

Mr. Suzuki's further comment also infers how such a collective practice negotiated the conventional hierarchical power relationships through teachers' agentic actions. Therefore, innovative ideas were encouraged and evolved, and the possibilities for children's meaningful schooling were expanded.

> Mr. Suzuki: I was managing the school of course as I was the principal, but at School A, it always included consulting with the staff and their collective actions, in a positive manner. ... In School A, everyone would deliver their ideas without hesitation. Therefore, I was managing the school as the principal, but at the same time it always came with my gauging staffs' responses and sharing their ideas.

This was reflected in Mr. Suzuki's leadership style established through his construction of the knowledge of School A practice. Underlying this is relational practice based on respect and care for the staff members.

> Mr. Suzuki: Well, because I was not skilled in all areas, I delegated the tasks one after another, such as 'can you do this, please', and 'can you do that, please.' And this was, you know, all about a trust and respect. (It depended on) how much I could trust the staff. I always kept this particular concept in my mind; that I should trust them; I'm sure it will go ok; that I can count on these people. So, I would say 'yes, that sounds good', or 'yes, you have a go' to almost all ideas which were suggested by the staff.

Section Summary. Through his struggles, Mr. Suzuki concluded that it was the underlying values which should be passed on, not the previously invented frameworks. His experiences of a distribution of the tasks and responsibility within their relational practice supported his knowledge construction of leadership. He also

identified that such relational practice encouraged teachers' sense of ownership of the school which allowed a negotiation of power relations and eventually led to be innovative in their teaching approach.

The Practitioner's Experience in School B

This section considers the findings relating to the second research question:

- How did the principal implement an inclusive education approach in school B and how was his practice perceived by the two teachers?

After three years of principalship at School A, Mr. Suzuki was assigned as the principal of School B, where conventional practices had been implemented. The following comment shows his commitment to create a school where everyone would feel secure in his new environment.

> Mr. Suzuki: When I was notified to be assigned as the principal at School B, I thought, 'at last, this will be the place I am genuinely tested'. You know how I had always been told that, 'you succeeded (in creating such a school) because it was School A'. Before (when Ms. Goto was the principal), it was 'because it was Ms. Goto (who initiated the school transformation), it was possible'. After that (when Mr. Suzuki took over the principalship), all said that 'because it was School A, you've succeeded. Do you think this would be achievable at other schools?'. So, for me, this (appointment at School B) was where my aim to create a school for everyone would be tested. Therefore, I felt strongly motivated, rather than pressured.

The three themes identified from Mr. Suzuki's comments regarding his principalship at School B are the articulation of the school vision, creation of a secure environment for children, and enhancement of agency and collective practice.

Articulation of the School Vision

Although he had experienced and learnt about School A practice, Mr. Suzuki made it clear when he started at School B that he was not aiming to create or replicate School A practice.

> Mr. Suzuki: 'I came from School A, but I'm not aiming to make School A here.' This was my first message to all the School B staff. This was what I said. 'But I still want to make a school which is made by everyone for everyone'. I then talked to them about the school vision, objectives for children's learning, and that of the teaching team. And then stated that, 'let's create such a school together.' This was my first message for the School B staff.

The school vision he presented was in the phrase 'a school made by everyone for everyone.' The three children's learning objectives were 'to be considerate towards self and others', 'to think on your own and to act spontaneously (to be an agency of own actions)', and 'to challenge, don't be afraid of failure'. The main theme for teaching team objectives was 'children to be the subject (of conversations)' through an establishment of human connections. These became the guideline for decision making in Mr. Suzuki's practice at School B.

Mr. Suzuki mentioned that he did not aim to immediately change the structure of the existing 'support classroom' setting, although in a longer term he was looking at merging it into the mainstream education. With the personnel system where the duration of principalship at one school was generally three years at the time of this interview, Mr. Suzuki prioritised the value-based practice for the creation of an environment where all children would come to school feeling secure, rather than the modification of existing physical arrangement. His contention was that such an

arrangement was just a framework, and of importance for him was the sharing of underlying values to create a safe space for all children, especially within their local conditions of 'conventional practice'.

A secure Environment for Children

Once the school term had started, Mr. Suzuki discovered the conventional practices which were occurring in School B did not, in his opinion, help all children develop a sense of security. This included an authoritarian teaching approach and the closed classroom where individual teachers would take full responsibility for the classroom management. To bring about a change in this practice, Mr. Suzuki focused on opening up the school both internally and to the community. His underlying intention was the establishment of a support system where teachers could openly ask for help, through the visualization of the inside of the classroom. One of his approaches 'from inside' was to make the inside of the classroom visible by installing transparent acrylic windows; and 'to the community' by inviting parents into the classrooms. He perceived that in the school staff reactions were relatively positive, therefore he thought that this would work. His comment infers teachers' general protective attitudes towards showing their classroom practice.

> Mr. Suzuki: Well, first of all, when I said (to the staff) that I wanted a variety of adults to come to school, their reactions were like, 'what?' ... but surprisingly, the staffs' responses towards the idea of transparent acrylic windows were mostly positive. ... and furthermore, there were some teachers who were willing to welcome parents to the classroom, saying that they would appreciate the parents' help. So, I thought, yes, this will work.

In addition to their teaching culture which may have created a closed environment, there was another factor where the Japanese school practice became further closed. People became anxious about the safety aspects.

> Mr. Suzuki: While the school is trying to open up, one of the
>
> parents asked me what if a stranger slipped into school.
>
> Yes, she is right. ... because of some incidences in the past,
>
> the school became a place where people cannot go in.

'Some incidence' include a situation which occurred about 20 years ago where a stranger went into a school and seriously hurt children and. Since then, a robust school gate with a sophisticated locking system was installed in each school and the schools were advised not to invite external people without an appropriately arranged appointment. However, Mr. Suzuki suggested alternative ways of thinking where human connections among the school community may enable an elimination of strangers' breaking in.

> Mr. Suzuki: Conversely, when many adults are in the school, a
>
> stranger may not slip in. ... When there are many adults
>
> who know each other, the stranger would feel
>
> uncomfortable, and even if he or she comes in, it would be
>
> noticeable because of their strangeness. So, this is the
>
> reverse of our ways of thinking, ... in order to ask for help
>
> from the community. ... Although, of course school cannot
>
> be fully open...

As teachers had perceived positive outcomes from inviting parents into the classroom, the staff attitudes towards this practice started to change. Also, Mr. Suzuki said that parents had started to comment on the positive changes in the school practices where children felt more secure. Underlying this success was how he met the local contextual needs and meaning-making.

Simultaneously, Mr. Suzuki also approached the parents and community to come into the school through direct communication, as well as via the school home page or social media. All visiting parents were encouraged to go into the classroom, which usually surprised them. Accordingly, some teachers started delivering sessions which was designed to encourage parents' participation. Mr. Suzuki perceived that an

increasing number of teachers would start internalising his ideas of creating a school together and would be willing to actively participate with them.

Agency and the Creation of a Collective Practice

When talking about creating or making a school, Mr. Suzuki emphasized his particular adherence to the phrase 'each of us' to make this school, not 'all of us'. In the Japanese language, the phrasal difference between these two expressions is the use of a single particle of one syllable which is frequently used interchangeably. Now, the difference between these two phrases was one of the elements he had learnt at School A when he was the deputy.

> Mr. Suzuki: When I was in School A, as part of my discussion with staff, I said, 'all of us will make a school'. Then one of the staff picked this up, saying that the phrase was not right. I said, 'why? Aren't they the same?' The teacher said, 'no.' ... The idea was that when saying 'all of us', this means 'all'. But if you say 'each of us', that means 'I' myself makes this school. Of importance is the sense that 'I' make this school. ... And this is how I feel I like the school. Therefore, I am particular about this. I think that it is important that the staff are able to think that this is my school (for success in creating a culture which enhances teacher agency and a collective practice).

His commitment has gradually been communicated with, and understood by, the parents. Subsequently, he is delighted that the parent committees have started working on changing their organization from a structure oriented conventional one to their own original one focusing on benefit for the children.

> Mr. Suzuki: The largest change that happened was in the parent committee. They are now trying to draft a new structure from scratch. This phrase was suggested by the committee

members, 'excitement, for the future, for our children'. ...
they are trying to move away from what used to happen....
In this sense, I'm excited about the parents' changes – a
sense of creating a school. They have now started giving me
input, from their point of view, on how to encourage parent
participation. ...

He had also continuously been working to encourage teachers to be an agent for the
creation of a school. Since teacher agency has not been one of the traditional teacher
cultures in their context, Mr. Suzuki understood that he could not expect them all to
understand and act immediately. However, his comments reflect one of the most
important learnings from School A leadership. The key elements were the human
connections and delegation which would enable each teacher to enact their agency.

Mr. Suzuki: It's about the ways of thinking that we are not alone.
We borrow everyone's skills and power. Of course, I try to
verbally communicate this concept to staff, but of
importance is to act myself, I think. I ask for help for what I
cannot do. I delegate it. Such as, 'counting on you with this
as I'm not good at it.' ... In this sense, I am deliberately
trying to put this concept into my own practice.

Again, it was not a matter of frameworks that support his leadership, but the
underlying values and his strong vision to create a school which is made by everyone
and for everyone.

Mr. Suzuki: Ultimately, it is about implementing it in the ways I
understand and can in order to create a school which is
made by everyone for everyone. Here in School B, the
teacher agency which was seen in School A cannot be
expected yet, so I am trying to encourage the staff in this
direction. It is like, 'let's do this', 'let's do this together'.
Therefore, I feel enlivened and enriched.

The following comment from Mr. Suzuki, which was made at the end of the interview, reinforces the concept that it was 'not about the framework'.

> Researcher: So, is it correct to say that it is not what is called 'inclusive education' that you are trying to achieve?

> Mr. Suzuki: Correct [he made a big smile]. All I want is a school for everyone. A school where all children and all adults feel secure, and feel excited about coming to school, if possible. The governmental or academic framework of inclusive education doesn't really mean much for my approach.

Section Summary

In School B, Mr. Suzuki focused on an internalisation of the values and visions in order to create a school which was made by everyone for everyone. One of the strategies he employed was opening up the classrooms within the school as well as to the community. Several teachers demonstrated their understandings towards the positive educational outcomes of this practice and started enacting their agentic actions towards a creation of a school. One positive aspect Mr. Suzuki perceived was the parent committee members' understandings of such concepts. Mr. Suzuki continuously worked on encouraging teacher agency by demonstrating it himself.

Personnel System

Personnel system

The background personnel system was that a teacher would be allocated to a school in the district of the Prefectural Board of Education in which they had been employed. The usual timespan for a classroom teacher was approximately seven years. That of management personnel could be one to three years. With a recognition of the advantages and disadvantages of this system, Mr. Suzuki's basic standpoint was that

they needed to somehow manage within it. Therefore, an implementation of visions seemed to be a battle with time.

> Mr. Suzuki: We never know how long we have at each school.
> Therefore, each year is a contest. Even, each day is a fight.
> It's about what I can do each moment in the battle in front
> of me. So, when I was appointed to this school, I thought
> that I would have three years, so I committed myself to do it
> (a creation of a school for everyone), but I thought I really
> have limited time. I really felt rushed. ... Since I like to
> achieve what I aim for.

Mr. Suzuki also talked about a relatively new system where the principal might be able to nominate up to two teachers in a two-year period who he would like to have. Although only two, Mr. Suzuki said that he was willing to use this system especially with a longer-term vision to create a school for everyone.

> Researcher: Is this system still useful?

> Mr. Suzuki: Yes, of course. Of course, if I don't use it, it will be a
> loss of possibilities. ... Yes, this is the principal's job.
> Personnel.

This comment suggests that Mr. Suzuki was seeing inclusion to be achievable even within the unique employment conditions.

Impact on School Management

Mr. Suzuki mentioned that there would be an impact on the basic Japanese teacher personnel system of school management, but his comment inferred that this was not decisive and he believed that an implementation of his visions would be possible.

> Researcher: Is there an influence on the basic Japanese personnel
> system of school management where teachers keep moving
> around?

Mr. Suzuki: I would say yes. I don't think there are no impact from it, but it's not good for children if teachers are working according to such a value system anyway. If a teacher has one more year left of service, then the teacher will move away in one year, but this doesn't give a professional teacher an excuse not to bring their best to the children. ... I feel that, if a teacher has an attitude that she or he will be moving soon so they won't put in their best effort, that's not a professional work attitudes particularly where the child is the subject of conversation anyway. So ultimately it is left up to each teachers' conscience, I think.

This comment infers that it was the teacher's attitudes towards work, not the length of service assigned, that he thought would be crucial. It was more about the quality of the teacher who may contribute to an actualisation of his vision. This means that, in Mr. Suzuki's vision, the creation of a school for everyone would not require personnel with special qualities. Moreover, of importance was the general professional attitude of a teacher who would place children at the centre of conversations and bring their best to support the children's learning. The comment also shows how the influence of their local context of the teachers' ways of thinking and establishing human connections could be oriented.

Within such a personnel system, Mr. Suzuki emphasised the importance of a conscious acknowledgement of the classroom teachers' daily efforts. Mr. Suzuki asserted that such encouragement played a significant role in establishing human relations with teachers. The acknowledgement did not include the staff's achievement, but also the process of a teacher's detailed daily effort.

Mr. Suzuki: I have been trying to be mindful of each teacher's spontaneous actions and work detail, and acknowledge them. ... Not only the results, but also the process as well. ... By regularly communicating with the teachers like this, they

feel secure in the sense that the principal has been watching over them. ... This connection with teachers is of most importance when I want to introduce something new to them. ... It is about how well human connections have been established with them. Yes. Daily acknowledgement.

During the course of this interview question, Mr. Suzuki talked about his aspirations for the creation of a school. The key was a school where everyone regularly attends. Although he acknowledged the recent conceptualisation of schooling where school was not seen as the only place for children's learning, Mr. Suzuki still believed that there must be something that can be achieved at school and because of school. His comment below shows a link to his beliefs where an optimal school culture among teachers would filter down to children.

> Mr. Suzuki: I would like to make school into a place where children feel fun, secure, and excited about coming to.

> Researcher: How would you act on the teachers in order to achieve that?

> Mr. Suzuki: I believe that when staff feels excited, children will feel excited about coming to school. In order to have staff excited, they must have opportunities to bring their strength into school management. ... I would like to make such a team. And then, most importantly, delegate them. Entrust them. Afterwards, acknowledge their effort, process and the consequence, regardless of the results. It's ok even if the results are not optimal, as long as no harm is imposed on children. Things can be redone any number of times. So, I delegate and encourage them to act.

Section Summary

Their unique personnel system could be one of the restricting factors for an implementation of a value-based practice; however, Mr. Suzuki perceived that it was not the system but each teacher's positive attitudes towards working with children, that would be decisive for a successful school management. One of the useful strategies for an implementation of his approach within such a system was a regular acknowledgement of teachers' efforts, which assisted with an establishment of human connections with them.

Two Teachers' Perceptions of the Practitioner's Approach

Overall

The two teachers commonly mentioned that overall, the school had been changing positively through Mr. Suzuki's approach. Although it was perceived that some teachers had resistant attitudes towards Mr. Suzuki's bringing changes too quickly, more and more teachers now showed understandings of his approach.

> Mr. Noda: I decided to apply for the position of deputy last year, …
> in the atmosphere where the school was going to change, …
> well, it was a recognition the school was getting better, and
> I didn't want that flow to be distorted (by someone else
> coming here as the deputy). I also thought that I could
> learn about his approach closely as well.

> Mr. Yamada: At first, probably because, Mr. Suzuki came to this
> school from outside and also made various changes to
> school management, there was a kind of reaction from staff
> such as 'what is this all about?' Yes. … But, well, let me
> think. There is one particular teacher who at first wasn't
> positive about Mr. Suzuki's approach. This person altered
> his attitudes probably almost 180 degrees and has recently

been working cooperatively with Mr. Suzuki. By observing

such scenes, I feel 'wow, a person can change.'

Despite not all staff being positive about Mr. Suzuki's approach, teachers who were open to new ideas and had a positive attitude towards learning had been perceived to have changed.

Mr. Noda: It has been said that when there are ten percent of staff

who are on board, the school can be changed. So, at first,

there were three to four teachers who were on this side

including the principal, so I was thinking that it can be

possible to change the school. Now, the number has

increased, and we often talk about, such as 'this person has

been changing.'

Along with many strategies Mr. Suzuki had implemented, his articulation of het school vision was perceived by the two teachers as innovative and useful to change the school culture. This was in contrast to the types of principal who would just conform the existing school culture.

Researcher: What do you think about the influence of the public

school personnel system on the creation of this type of

school culture?

Mr. Noda: I think it depends on the personnel. The school may

change even within this system if the principal is a person

like Mr. Suzuki who articulates their visions clearly.

Otherwise, ... schools won't change.

Articulation of the School Vision

Centrality of Children's Interests. One of the main themes identified by both teachers was a humane approach where children were placed at the centre of decision making. This was clearly articulated as the school vision. The two teachers often mentioned that this idea 'naturally settled into their educational philosophy', along with their perceptions of positive changes in the school culture and the children's achievement.

> Mr. Noda: Mr. Suzuki always says, 'let's put the children in the
> centre of the conversation.'

Mr. Noda said that through this viewpoint, managerial decision making became more straightforward. Especially in a challenging decision-making situation where each party's interests' conflict, this centralisation of children's interests helps to clarify the way.

Mr Noda also recognised how Mr Suzuki's practice had been internalised within his own practice through his own reaction to a 'conventional' practice. The story started with a visitor coming for a planned meeting with the principal when a child was in the principal's room, escaping from his own classroom. The principal's room in Japanese schools usually serves both as the principal's office and the only reception room in schools; therefore, they are often formally furnished with leather sofas and a coffee table. One of the teachers then approached Mr Noda saying that they should take the child out of the principal's room, which is a usual practice in Japanese schools. Some additional information regarding the teacher was that she had taken the previous year off for leave, and had just returned to work at the time of this episode. This was when Mr Noda perceived a slight feeling of discomfort about the suggestion, because he had automatically thought the meeting could be moved to another room. He then realised that the child's sense of security had come to be the priority for his decision making through his experience with Mr Suzuki's approach.

> Mr. Noda: When I was asked, I instantly thought, well, the
> principal could go to another room. ... The child is now
> feeling comfortable in here. ... Because I was watching Mr.

Suzuki's practice last year... Then I realised that I had internalised this way of thinking myself, which is something normal for me and many others who have been working with Mr. Suzuki, but not for teachers who've come from outside.

Mr Noda also mentioned Mr Suzuki's distance from the children, which he perceived much closer than other principals he had known. This received a level of resistance by the teachers because of their protectiveness at first, but eventually his connections with the children had resulted in building trust with the teachers.

Mr Noda: The distance between him and the children is close. He lets children into the principal's office. Although there was a strong resistance by the teachers to this at first. ... I assume that the teachers didn't like it when children directly talked to the principal about the classroom occurrences, especially about what they perceived as negative. ... But this has changed positively. ... The principal's room has become the place where teachers call in to ask for help if they are having problems.

Human Connections. Mr Suzuki's vision for the teaching team was also perceived to have brought a positive change. First of all, Mr Suzuki's approach was based on human connections and therefore could be trusted when issues arose.

Mr Yamada: Yes, he is about people. He is dependable. Last year there were a few problems with my classroom management, and I asked for advice several times... there is a secure feeling that, at the end of the day, the management will help us cope with any problem.

Mr Yamada perceived that Mr Suzuki's approach had been encouraging the building of human connections among teachers in various aspects of school management. This included the arrangement of teaching teams and the layout of teachers' desks in the

staff room. In the staffroom of Japanese schools, each teacher is allocated their work desk and these desks are usually arranged in an orderly way by following a broad direction from the management. Mr Yamada perceived an increased number of conversations after Mr Suzuki's arrangement for the year.

> Mr Yamada: He is approaching it from various directions, such as the teachers' desk layout in the staffroom. ... Last year .. was random. Now, there are blocks of the year 1 and 2 teachers, that of year 3 and 4, and that of year 5 and 6. And this has been naturally fostering conversation. ... one of the veteran teachers was very impressed with it after observing such scenes.

Mr Suzuki's humane approach also influenced Mr Noda's ways of thinking about being a teacher and how to connect with the parents. He used to think that he had a strong sense of being a 'teacher', therefore his connections with parents were more functional. This had changed through working with Mr Suzuki.

> Mr Noda: Well, we are human after all. .. each of us. The parents used to come to me as a 'teacher', but by me changing my stance, they started connecting to me as a person.

Opening Up the Classroom

One of Mr Suzuki's first foci to create a secure environment for children as well as teachers was opening up the classroom. The two teachers' comments demonstrated the changes that had occurred in the school culture. At first, there was an atmosphere in which teachers would feel uncomfortable with their class being seen by others. However, this had gradually changed for the better.

> Mr Noda: At first, being seen from the outside or people coming into the classroom, I wouldn't like that if I was the class teacher. ... Someone is staring into the classroom from the corridor. ... 'Who is this person?' kind of. ... So, this is one of the aspects that staff's conscience has modified.

Through such experiences of the classroom being openly observed, the teachers also perceived the support from Mr Suzuki. Teachers' comments infer Mr Suzuki's intention to create a supportive culture where teachers would feel secure, by having them open up the classroom. Together with their sharing of information which followed Mr Suzuki's approach of opening up the classroom, teachers started feeling comfortable about asking for help.

> Mr Yamada: Here, we know that we can ask for help [telephone gesture].
>
> Researcher: Where has the atmosphere that you can call for help come from?
>
> Mr Yamada: Mr Suzuki's constant input that we should call for a help when needed, and actually he gives us a hand. Well, it didn't sound realistic when we were directly being told to call for a help, you know, I didn't feel right at first. But by watching other teachers actually doing that, it made me think that 'well, it is really ok to call for a help'.

Relational practice

The themes of the centralisation of children, opening up the classroom and sharing information were all interrelated to gradually form a school culture where children would feel secure.

Another theme the two teachers commonly mentioned as one of their largest gains from Mr. Suzuki's approach was his idea of all children being taken care of by all staff, through working collaboratively towards better educational outcomes. The two teachers perceived that this approach had supported children who may struggle in one place such as their classroom.

> Mr. Noda: I myself went to support the children. A child who was in my class when he was year five two years ago, was in year six last year, and was still struggling going into the

> classroom. ... Thanks to this shared idea of all children
> being cared for by all staff, ... it was good that I was able to
> support these children outside their classroom.

In addition, the principal's room had become a place for those children to take refuge. Opening up the principal's room resulted in more children coming and talking comfortably with the principal and sharing their school life. Therefore, it was natural that the principal's room became a place for some children who found difficulties in their classroom to come for shelter. The two teachers perceived that these 'little' things had saved some children who had trouble adjusting to a one size fit all curriculum.

> Mr. Noda: Now, more children are able to come to school
> regularly – among those who used to be categorised in 'non-
> attendance at school'.

Section Summary

Overall, Mr Suzuki's approach was perceived by the two teachers to have brought a positive change to their school culture. Centralisation of children's interest based on a humane approach had been internalised within the school culture. Mr Suzuki's approach had also encouraged the establishment of the teachers' human connections which had also contributed to the creation of a more humane atmosphere. Mr Suzuki's approach of opening up the classroom was perceived to have fostered among teachers the culture where they could ask for help, and therefore feel more secure. The two teachers perceived that all these approaches were interrelated and had gradually been creating a relational practice where children felt secure.

Discussion

This chapter presents an interpretation of the current research findings in relation to the larger framework of existing research in the field of inclusive education. It also considers the implications and possible contributions of the research findings to the development of education policy and practice.

The three underlying elements identified throughout the findings in relation to the implementation of inclusive education approaches were:

- a relational practice which sees inclusion as a principles approach;
- a collective discursive practice where teacher agency was valued and secured; and
- practitioners' local meaning making.

The discussion framework is informed by a social constructionism research paradigm which sees social reality as constructed through human interactions, therefore relative.

Bridging the Meaning

The findings suggest that participants' experience of this school practice was an 'alternative' approach to education for them, rather than being 'inclusive' since they were not familiar with the internationally defined concepts of inclusive education. However, an overlap between their practice and international definitions has also been identified in the findings.

The current research findings suggest participant teachers' rather negative reactions to the term and concept of inclusive education. This is consistent with Sharma and colleagues' (2016) reporting that a top-down installation of 'inclusive education' tends to be perceived as "foreign ideas" (p. 401) and brings with it, a level of resistance. Along similar lines, Angelides (2012) points out that an insight into local meaning making was one of the enabling factors for successful inclusive education implementation. The implications for the current research are two-fold. One is the importance of respect for the local practitioners' meaning making. The other is a

sensible bridging between the local practice and internationally defined concepts throughout the research process. A deeper exploration of the essence of the participants' local practice through such methodology may generate an understanding which informs practices in a wider context.

Therefore, this chapter endeavours to 'bridge the meanings' between the participant teachers' understandings of their practice and the broad framework of inclusive education in international literature. This methodological stance is chosen for the purpose of a careful elucidation of the participants' local meaning making process, through a researcher stance of being relatively inclined to subjectivism as discussed in the methodology chapter.

Research Question 1

- How did the practitioner experience an inclusive education approach in school A, and how were his beliefs constructed through this experience?

The Practitioner's Experience of School A practice

This section will explore how the principal practitioner Mr. Suzuki experienced an inclusive education approach in School A. Discussion will be developed in three levels with respect to a larger framework of existing research, which are the paradigm, values and practice. Namely, social models of disability; underlying values; and all children's meaningful participation, respectively.

Social Models of Disability: Removal of Barriers. One of the key elements of School A practice is the identification of barriers through the eyes of many adults' and the removal of them through the relentless effort of the staff. The fundamental concept of this practice appears to align with social models of disability which underly

Ainscow and his colleagues' (2006) conceptualisation of inclusion as a principled approach to education and society.

The distinctiveness of Ainscow and his colleagues' (2006) conceptualisation of inclusive education is the paradigm shift from individual models of disability to that of social models (Messiou, 2017). This means that a focus is placed on identifying and removing the barriers imposed by society (Ainscow et al., 2006; Slee, 2019), instead of a physical integration of all children or a particular attention to specific disabilities. In the current findings, Mr Suzuki's description of School A practice suggests that the whole school worked cooperatively to remove the restricting factors for all children to attend school regularly. The restricting factors point to their conventional practice where functional human relationships were dominant within their sociological context and therefore a level of exclusionary practice was tolerated. Along with the resulting regular attendance of all children at school in the mainstream classrooms, this suggests that the School A approach embodied the social models of disability.

Underlying Values: Human Connections. In defining inclusion, Ainscow et al. (2006) articulate the values that are needed to guide practice. Values inform pedagogical actions; therefore, identification and articulation of underlying values are vital in a school when deciding their concept of inclusive education. Articulation of values also directs discussion to the aims of education.

One of the values Ainscow et al. (2006) suggests is sustainability which sees the aim of education as preparing children for living in the community and environment. This is, in other words, a centralisation of humane connections with others and with the education environment; in contrast to an excessive focus on subject.

The findings suggest that School A practice centralised a humane approach when establishing the school culture. It was respect and care for others which created an environment where teachers and children all mutually supported each other. This indicates that the values that underpinned School A practice also align with one of the values of sustainability articulated in Ainscow et al. (2006).
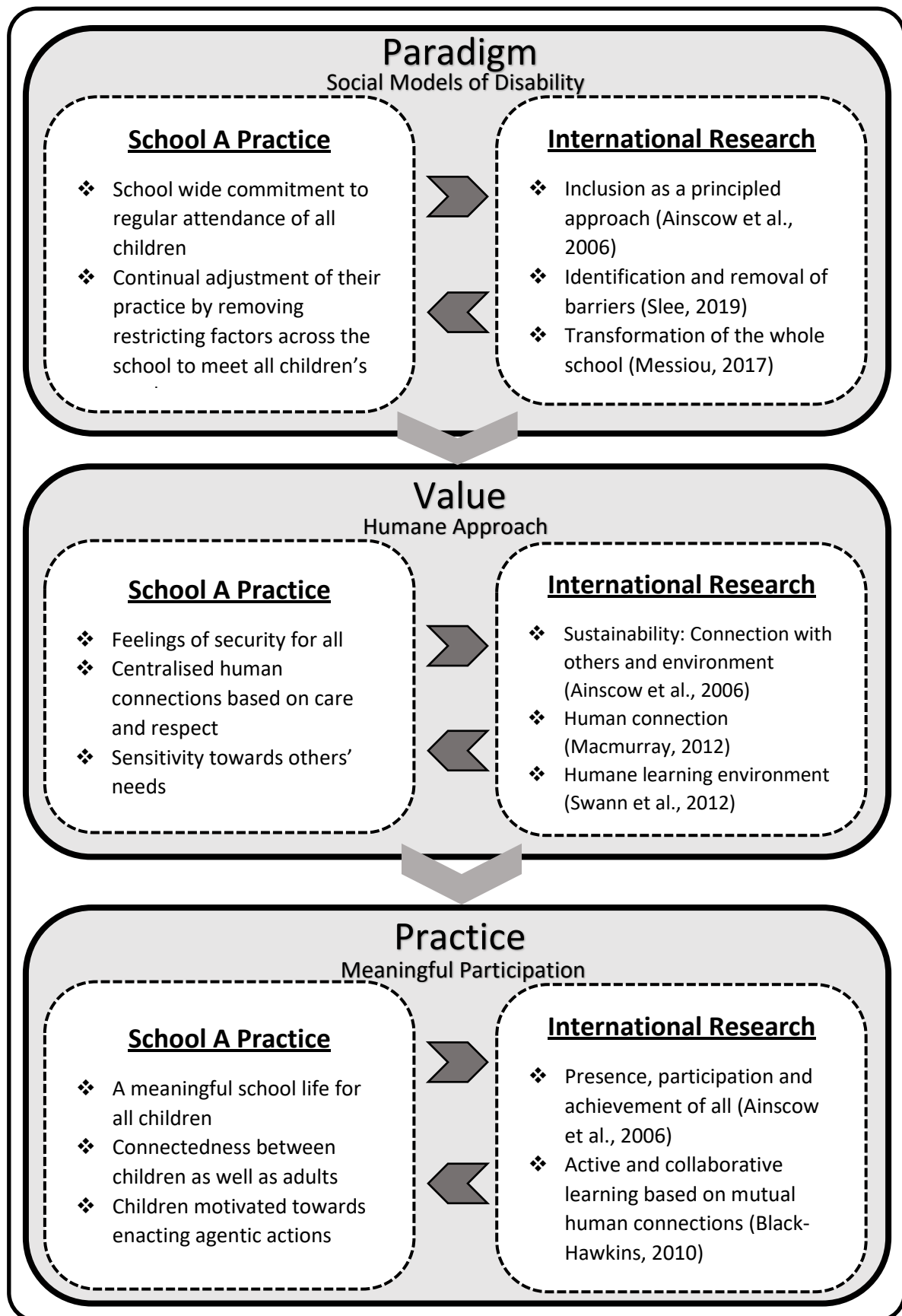
Figure 1: Bridging the meanings: School A practice and Inclusive education practice

All Children's Meaningful Participation. In practical terms, Ainscow et al. (2006) elucidated the characteristics of an inclusive approach as all children's "presence, participation and achievement. (p. 25)". Participation here concerns active and collaborative learning across all school life based on mutual human connections (Black-Hawkins, 2010). In order to achieve this, it inevitably involves a transformation of the whole school culture (Messiou, 2017). In addition, this is unavoidably a process which is always "on the move" (Ainscow et al., 2006, p. 25).

The findings suggest that the School A practice concentrated on all children's meaningful participation in their school life. This is evident from Mr Suzuki's comment about children's connectedness with peers and adults across all school activities; their sensitivity towards others' needs and peer support; all children's regular attendance at school in the mainstream classrooms; and their positively motivated attitudes towards their lives and agentic actions. This was achieved through the whole school's continual effort to respond to all children's needs from various angles.

Figure 1 shows how School A practice aligns with the definition and conceptualisation of inclusive education in international literature.

Summary. This suggests that Mr. Suzuki's experience of School A practice is compatible with Ainscow and colleagues' (2006) definition of inclusive education. An interesting fact is that they were not guided by the concept of inclusive education discussed in international literature, but developed their own practice within the available resources. Fundamentally, this was a relational practice which centralised human relations.

The Practitioner's Construction of Inclusive Beliefs

The findings suggest that Mr. Suzuki's knowledge construction evolved around his understandings as a teacher of local contexts and his meaning making of them. This

section will look into the three themes identified from Mr. Suzuki's construction of inclusive beliefs. They were identification of barriers; removal of barriers; and a humane approach.

Identified Barriers. The findings indicate there were barriers that had been socially created. Two dimensions identified are the barriers for children, and those for teachers. Underlying this is a sense of insecurity experienced by the children as well as the teachers.

Barriers for Children. The findings show that there were a certain number of children in their context who experienced difficulties in adjusting themselves to the education system. The children's conditions were complex and intertwined with the system framework, sociological influences, and their unique individual characteristics. This created a 'grey zone' where children tended to be categorised as having difficulties regardless whether they had neurodevelopmental disorders or a diagnosis. Accordingly, these children were at risk of future marginalisation or exclusion.

International research suggests possible causes for the categorisation of children and its associated exclusionary practices. From the viewpoint of neoliberal hegemony, this includes a justification for prioritising most, not all, children's higher academic achievement through a numerical measurement for children's achievement (Davies & Bansel, 2007; Mayo, 2015; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Rutherford, 2016). Further, researchers assert that the accountability pressures have created more functional teaching structures and affected teacher-child relationships (Fielding, 2012; Hargreaves, 1998; MacMurray, 2012; Skinner et al., 2021). As a result, a framework where exclusionary practices are legitimised, has been created.

Whereas, from the phenomenological viewpoint, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argue that children whose habitus is different from that of the dominant classes tend to be excluded throughout their educational experiences. This is attributed to the

legitimised practices posed by the dominant cultural capital, and Bourdieu and Passeron assert that this is a violation of habitus of children from subjugated groups. In Japanese public schools, children from a range of socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds learn in the same classroom, with the same curriculum. The curriculum is informed by governmental guidelines that use the language of dominant cultural groups in society. Consequently, children from families in the cultural minority or with lower socio-economic status could experience underachievement or drop out of the education system.

It appears that there is a level of alignment between the international literature and the current study. In addition, the current findings suggest a psychological pressure which may cause a number of children to be excluded from school practice. Mr. Suzuki's understanding of the children's feeling of insecurity at school could be interpreted as being caused by the contextual factors which posed psychological pressures on them. The contextual factors point to the school and societies expectations and the sociological structure. Once fear or doubt is associated with their perceptions of schooling, children may understandably choose not to attend school.

Regarding children's perceptions of exclusion, Hargreaves and her colleagues (2012) report students' feeling undermined because of the teaching methods for 'effective' teaching such as attainment grouping, which could reduce students' achievement. Carrington and MacArthur (2013) emphasise notions of social exclusion where children experience demoralization. However, little has been reported in the inclusive education literature about the psychological pressures which may impact on children's meaningful schooling. The current findings may suggest this as a further area for investigation.

Barriers for Teachers. The findings suggest the pressure on the teachers may have restricted inclusive approaches to their conventional practice. This includes pressure for individual performance and competency; standard teaching approaches where teachers' autonomous actions are restricted; as well as little support for the

negotiation of teachers' professional identity. As a result, teachers developed defensive attitudes which were associated with fear of failure. This suggests a level of alignment with international literature which argues the impact of neoliberal priorities in education (Ball, 2003; Lasky, 2005, Hart, 1998).

One of the practitioners mentioned a descendent hierarchy of the occupational values between teaching in regular classrooms and teaching in special classrooms. This may be a reflection of their societal perceptions which has been created through their history of dual regular and special classroom system (Forlin et al., 2014). This teacher mindset of regular school/classroom teachers being superior to special school/classroom teachers could have created a barrier for teachers to be openly share their experiences with children's challenging behaviours in the classroom, and possibly therefore restricting the possibility for a more inclusive approach.

Another possible barrier may be the Japanese society's conceptualisation of inclusive education which stays on a physical placement of children with disability into mainstream schools (Forlin et al., 2014). All the practitioners mentioned that they were not knowledgeable of the concept of inclusive education apart from the notion of including children with disability into mainstream schools. International literature suggests that inclusion should be seen as a principled approach to education and society, in order to achieve an inclusive approach (Ainscow et al., 2006). This implies that the governmental guideline which still mainly focused on children with disabilities, may need a scrutiny to promote a more inclusive approach in their society.

Removing Barriers. Mr Suzuki's comment indicates that School A inclusive practice was achieved through removal of the barriers faced by children and teachers. The consequence was a secure environment for children, and adults. Underlying this practice was a humane approach. The following sections will discuss how these practices were achieved, in relation to international research findings.

Secure Environment for Children. The two main practices which appear to have created a secure environment for children were centralised human connections, and the whole school approach where all teachers attended to all children's needs. These practices appear to have removed psychological pressures from the children, and consequently enabled the regular attendance of all children at school.

By centralising human connections, School A achieved a classroom practice which initially looked chaotic, but where all children had a place to be themselves. This appears to have been deeply interrelated with the adults' practice based on personal relationships. As a result, their practice provided children with a space to establish human personal relations, and to foster a sensitivity to others' needs; therefore, they all felt secure.

Macmurray (1964, 2012) discusses the importance of freedom and equity in personal relationships which he asserted, should be centralised in education. Freedom here could be associated with enough space for children to 'think', instead of obey (Pring, 2012). Equity may be understood as unbiased human relations where each individual is seen as a valuable contributor to the school community (Black-Hawkins, 2010). Such an environment is assumed to provide children with the opportunity to follow their emotions to work out how to establish genuine human connections with others. Emotion here points to the children's ability to sense the quality of the objects or matters they deal with continuously (Macmurray, 2012). Considering how societal values are transmitted to younger generations by absorbing the social practice of adults (Bourdieu, 1993), equity in relationships is assumed to be achieved in an environment where adults' practice embodies acceptance and respect for others. With all human relationships being based on mutual respect and acceptance, school may become a secure place for all children.

The current findings support this with the creation of a secure environment where all children would feel comfortable to be themselves, through the centralisation of their ability to establish personal relationships.

Another enabling element of School A practice Mr. Suzuki perceived was the strategy where all staff were involved in all children's school life to meet the needs of each child. Two components have been identified. One is about identifying the children's needs through more than one set of eyes; and the other is ensuring their sense of security by ensuring that more than one adult understands each child.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) point out that children from dominated classes tend to achieve lower or drop out because their habitus is not congruent with that of the dominant classes'. Since educational practice is tuned to the dominant classes' ways of meaning making, the experience of children from dominated classes could unconsciously be ignored. Agbenyega and Sharma (2014) argue that the needs of children from different cultural capital may be met through the involvement of a variety of adults in educational experiences so they can contribute to decision making. This implies an increased level of possibilities for the identification of each child's needs using the strategy of involving many adults in the children's learning at school. School A practice's success in removing the barriers might have been possible because of the more thorough identification of children's different needs.

In relation to ensuring children feel secure, Mr. Suzuki mentioned that it was the school practice for someone to always be available in the school as a safe guard for children. He emphasised the importance of this especially for the ones who struggled with some aspects of school life and felt the need to 'run away' from the classroom. Macmurray (2012) emphasises the importance of trusting human connections between the teacher and each child so the children feel secure to share their struggles. School A practice can be interpreted as a practice where having many adults establish personal relationships with different types of children, increased the possibilities for each child to have the space to share their struggles. An important note is that this was possible because of the school culture where information was safely shared among the teachers.

Secure Environment for Teachers. The findings suggest that School A practice also removed the barriers for teachers, which then creating a secure

environment for them to work in.   This was brought about through the teachers' acceptance of the limitations of an individual teacher's ability.   Therefore, they demonstrated a more accepting attitudes towards the struggle of other teachers' and were willing to help each other.   This could be where teacher pressures for individual performance (Ball, 2003) were removed.   Another factor identified was a fail-free environment.

International research suggests that teachers' autonomous actions can be impeded by their sense of fear and insecurity (Chen, 2016; Eteläpelto & Lahti, 2008; Latta, 2005).   In addition, failure tends to be associated with blame in the context where accountability pressures create a functional work relationship (Ball, 2003).   In such contexts, an environment where failure is not attributed to individuals has been suggested as a support for teachers' emotional well-being (Douglas, 1992; Hargreaves, 1998).   The current findings suggest that teachers felt secure in an environment where their experiences including failure could be shared safely.   Consequently, this enabled all teachers to help each other with their own learning and identity negotiation, in order to support all children's learning at school.

Humane Approach. Mr. Suzuki identified human connections as one of the fundamental elements at the foundation of School A's practice. A commonality is found in Macmurry's priorities in education (1964, 2012). Macmurry, from his relational conceptualisation of human beings as residents of a community, asserts that human connections are fundamental to education. He also discusses the human connections of adults' which filter down to children and then guides all school activities. Recent research also suggests trusting and reciprocal human relationships to be one of the enabling factors for inclusive education approaches (Carrington & MacArthur, 2013). Having a humane learning environment has also been reported in empirical research as a success factor for the creation of an inclusive culture (Swann et al., 2012). Collectively, a humane approach to education is assumed to be one of the elements which align with the inclusive values of sustainability suggested in Ainscow et al. (2006).

Figure 2 shows School A practice's identification and removal of barriers in the ways of their local meaning making.

Identified Barriers

Children's Feeling of Insecurity

School management's focus on 'most children's higher academic achievement'

↓

Pressure on Children

Legitimised practices imposed by the dominant cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990)

↓

Children from subjugated groups to experience difficulties

Barriers for teachers

Accountability pressures for individual performance and competency

+

Little support

↓

- ❖ Fear of failure
- ❖ Protectiveness
- ❖ Defensive attitude

Barriers Removed

Secure Environment

Centralised human connections

↓

- ❖ Accepting attitudes towards diversity
- ❖ Sensitivity to others' needs

All adults to all children

↓

- ❖ Identification of each child's needs from various perspectives
- ❖ Trusting relationships with more than one adult

Secure Environment

Fail-free environment

+

Secure atmosphere to share experiences

↓

- ❖ Accepting attitudes towards other teachers' struggles
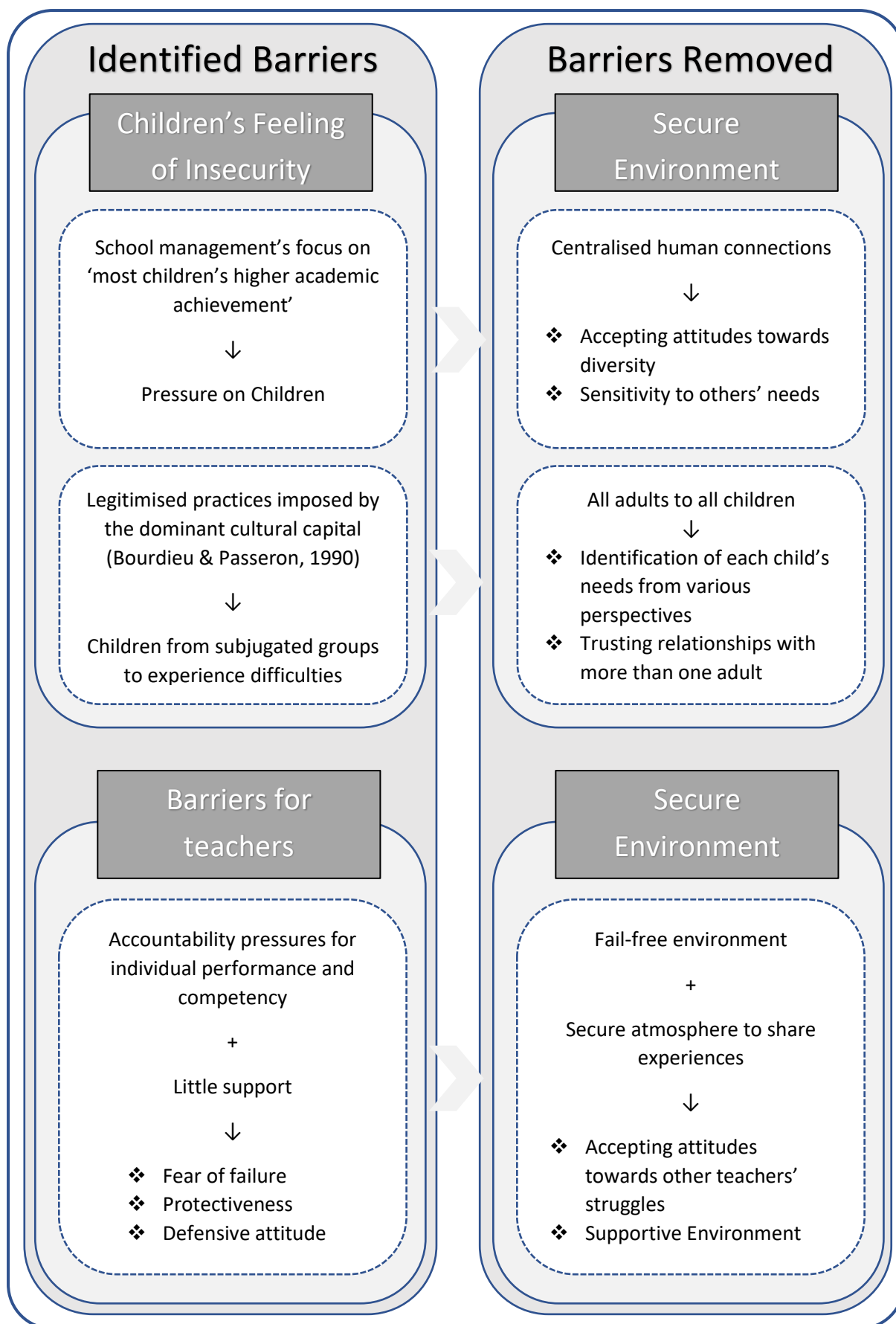- ❖ Supportive Environment

Figure 2: Identification and Removal of Barriers

Summary. Mr. Suzuki's understanding of the enabling elements of School A practice appears to be supported to an extent by existing international research. A sense of security for children and teachers could be a dimension of inclusion that is not yet thoroughly described in the research.

Leadership Learning. Mr. Suzuki understood that the core factor sustaining School A practice was the underlying values and the clear school visions in his leadership practice. His principalship started with a struggle as he tried to fit into the framework already set by the former principal, and in this, he failed. The solution to this situation was his delegation of tasks and responsibilities where Mr. Suzuki activated staff and enhanced their agency. Consequently, the whole school culture started moving towards their actualisation of the school's vision and a sustainable, dynamic community of practice which was always on the move.

The following subsections will look at these components separately in order to identify an alignment with the existing international research findings. Namely, value-led leadership; delegation; motivation; teacher agency; and emotional aspects. At the end, the interrelations between these components will be discussed.

Value-Led Leadership. Value-led leadership models have often been suggested in research literature as one of the core elements to guide school culture transformation into a more inclusive one (Agbenyega & Sharma, 2014; Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Higham & Booth, 2018; Swann et al., 2012). Mr. Suzuki's construction of knowledge about his value-led leadership style came from an activation of a whole school culture. This occurred through enhanced teacher agency as a result of his delegation of tasks and responsibilities to the staff who had internalised the shared school vision. This means that it was the underlying values and school vision that brought about the successful creation of an inclusive community of practice, not his specific personal qualities. This aligns with Higham and Booth's (2018) research

findings which assert that collectively set core values should be regarded as the leadership approach for a more successful value-based school transformation, not the personal visions of a charismatic leader. In contrast to personal authority led leadership, which could be associated with a sense of insecurity and anxiety (Ball, 2003), value-led leadership may be associated with a higher sense of security for teachers.

Delegation. Research suggests two broadly defined positive outcomes of distributed authority. One is an empowerment of the staff (Agbenyega & Sharma, 2014; Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Swann et al., 2012), the other is an increase of the head's control - in other words, an increase of the possibility across the school for innovative changes (Higham & Booth, 2018; Leithwood et al., 2020). For both aspects, the existence of a clear leadership vision to lead such practices is asserted to be of importance especially in inclusive education contexts (Higham & Booth, 2018; Swann et al., 2012).

Higham and Booth (2018) further support this with their research findings that it also increases teachers' sense of 'collective responsibility' through a delegation of decision-making authorities. In the current research, Mr. Suzuki mentioned that distribution of responsibilities had activated the staff's active participation in school activities. Together with Mr. Suzuki's idea of utilisation of various people's skills for an increase of the school capacity, the current research findings appear to support Higham and Booth's contention.

Mr. Suzuki understood that his delegation of tasks and responsibilities enabled the staff's sense of importance where they actively influenced positive educational outcomes. This resulted in encouraging staff to present innovative ideas and make value-based decisions. This suggests a level of consistency with existing research findings where the distribution of authority is assumed to empower teachers (Agbenyega & Sharma, 2014; Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Swann et al., 2012). Mr. Suzuki emphasised that a prerequisite for successful delegation is a secure environment for

the staff. The prerequisite for this empowerment leads the discussion to teacher motivation.

Motivation. Motivation is interrelated with teachers' actions through distributed responsibilities (Fernet et al., 2016; Thoonen et al., 2011). Different areas of research provide related indicators. The motivation which is derived from teachers' internal aspirations to achieve the objectives is often associated with their work commitment (Fernet et al., 2016). Lasky (2005) reports that teachers tend to be internally motivated when they are allowed to enact agency by following their pedagogical beliefs which then centralises human relations. Further, the teachers' internalised school vision is assumed to bring about an interrelated cycle of their sense of power, commitment, responsibility and motivation (Thoonen et al., 2011).

The current research findings suggest a possible synthesis of existing research. Mr. Suzuki's understanding and distribution of responsibilities created a staff dynamic where staff were empowered to bring innovative ideas. The internalised school vision which guided their practice also motivated them towards a commitment to school transformation. This motivation underpinned their agentic actions.

Secure Meaning Negotiation. Ainscow (2005) suggests that creating an inclusive community of practice involves a process of shared meaning making and the establishment of a common language. This process is especially important when supporting teachers' meaning negotiation in the context where different discourses are dominant (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Angelides, 2011; DeMatthews, 2020; Hart et al., 2007; Higham & Booth, 2018). In the current research, Mr. Suzuki described actively supporting his staff's meaning making within a community of practice. The two teachers' comments also show how Mr Suzuki's approach had been securely internalised through the establishment of a community of practice.

Mr. Suzuki's emphasis on empathy and care for each other in this process so the staff would feel secure, may add to the existing knowledge. Furthermore, in such an

environment, staff including Mr. Suzuki developed confidence that they could handle any issues together.   Underlying this was the notion of trusting human connections. This may be supported by Macmurray's (2012) contention which sees adults' establishment of personal relations as a prerequisite for a school to be a community where all school related issues can be handled with confidence.

Teacher Agency.   Another aspect identified in Mr. Suzuki's knowledge construction of leadership practice is teacher agency. From the viewpoint where teachers are the agent for positive educational change, an insight and investigation into this aspect would be of significant importance (Chen, 2016; Lasky, 2005). In this discussion, teacher agency is conceptualised as an action based on individual factors which acknowledges the strong impact of the social contexts and dominant discourses (Eteläpelto et al., 2013; Lasky, 2005).

Mr Suzuki mentioned several times, School A staff's sense of ownership which denoted a strong awareness of being an agent in creating the school. He understood that this was one of the decisive elements for the success of School A's practice. The staffs' enactment of agency was encouraged and supported by an environment where their voices and actions were valued and acknowledged. As a result, teachers became energetic to bring creative ideas for the school transformation. This is consistent with one of the prerequisites for an optimal platform for teacher agency suggested in existing research (Alasoini, 2011; Eteläpelto, & Lahti, 2008; Vähäsantanen et al., 2017).

In addition, the current research findings suggest that teacher agency is further enhanced by the school's collective discursive practice. This is a practice where each staff's active enactment of their agency created a culture where their further agentic actions were encouraged. Moreover, such collective dispositions allowed mutual dialogues across the staff hierarchy. This enabled staff to deliver their innovative ideas across the school, and eventually increase the school capacity to meet children's diverse needs. This is consistent with Paloniemi and Collin's (2012) report of the impact of discursive collective practices which support individuals' agentic acts, that may renegotiate the power relations within an organisational hierarchy.

Further, international research argues the importance of a strong vision in leadership practice to support the establishment of such discursive collective actions (Paloniemi & Collin, 2012; Swann et al, 2012). The current findings also support this.

Figure 3 shows the School A value-led leadership model and the interrelations between delegation, motivation, and teacher agency.
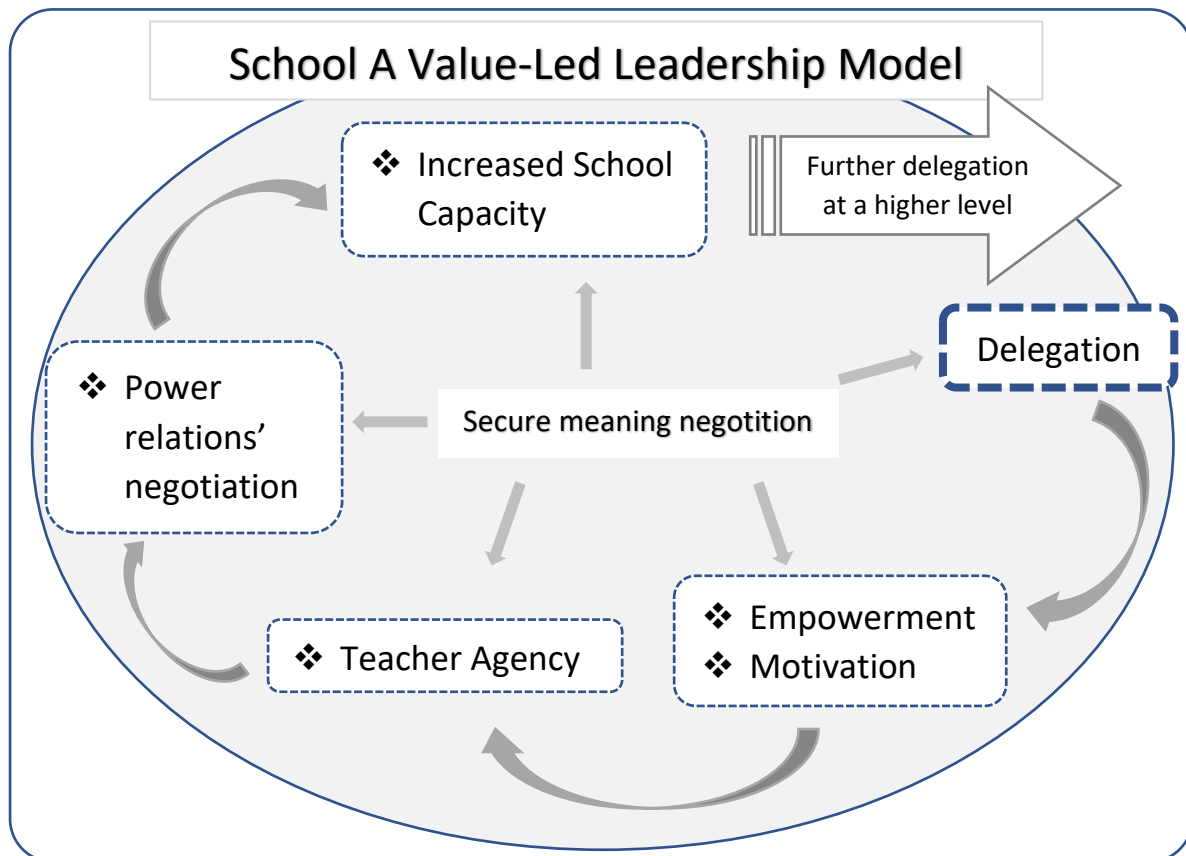
Figure 3: School A value-led leadership model and the interrelations between delegation, motivation, and teacher agency

Summary. The components identified for successful leadership to sustain School A practice are value-led leadership, delegation, motivation, teacher agency and secure meaning making. These elements interconnected to eventually increase the school capacity.   The concept of teachers' sense of security and teacher agency may add to the existing understanding of inclusion.

Section Summary. Mr. Suzuki's understandings of the success elements of School A practice were based on his knowledge of the local context. The local context appears to be similar to some extent to that of international research which reports the impact of neoliberal priorities on further exclusion of children. Mr. Suzuki's comprehension of enabling elements for all children's meaningful schooling in regular classrooms concentrated on the children's sense of security through established human connections. His leadership learning identified teachers' sense of security and teacher agency as the core elements for successful practice to sustain the culture of School A. The school culture which allowed a negotiation of the traditional power relationship brought about an increased school capacity to meet the diverse needs of the children.

Research Question 2

- How did the practitioner implement an inclusive education approach in school B and how were his practices perceived by the two teachers?

The current research findings suggest that it was a value-based transformational leadership model that Mr. Suzuki implemented in School B. Although the knowledge he had constructed through his School A experiences played a central role, the implementation of the leadership practice in School B was dissimilar to that in School A because School B staff were not familiar with the inclusive education approach. This section will explore, in relation to international research findings, Mr. Suzuki's implementation of his approach in this school which had retained characteristics of conventional practice. The two main themes are value-based transformational leadership, and opening up the school.

Two School B teachers' perceptions of Mr. Suzuki's practice will be integrated into each section.

Value-Led Transformational Leadership

Articulation of School Vision. Mr. Suzuki's articulation of the school vision showed his commitment to work on transforming the school culture towards a child-centred one with a humane approach as an underlying value. In other words, he aimed to create a foundation of shared values, instead of modifying the physical arrangement of the support classroom or imposing a framework of an 'inclusive education'. As a result, several staff who agreed that this would be a better way to approach children and education started implementing their agentic actions which aligned with the school vision. There is a consensus in the international literature which asserts that an articulation of school's values and vision are crucial in achieving a school transformation. From the viewpoint where inclusion is about challenging the existing social norms and conventions (Agbenyega & Sharma, 2014; Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Higham & Booth, 2018; Swann et al., 2012). In addition, empirical research suggests the potential of such leadership practice to empower teachers to make transformative choices (Swann et al., 2012). Together, Mr. Suzuki' leadership practice aligns with the value-based leadership suggested in international literature.

Centralisation of Children's interests. The central theme of Mr. Suzuki's School B practice was 'children to be the subject (of conversations)'. Along with the other objectives he articulated, this highlights the underlying values of humanity (Macmurray, 1964, 2012). The centrality of humanity and prioritization of children's interests in education is also suggested by Dewey (1910 as cited in Pring, 2012). This underlying value also aligns with that of Ainscow and his colleagues' (2006) conceptualization of inclusion as a principled approach to education and society.

The two teachers commented that this concept of a humane approach 'naturally settled into their educational beliefs'. This could be supported by existing research findings where teachers tend to successfully negotiate their professional identity when their teaching practice is grounded in pedagogical beliefs based on a humane approach (Lasky, 2005; Vähäsantanen, 2015).

Mr Noda also talked about how this practice was internalised in his ways of thinking and in the general school practice through his perceptions of the conventional practice displayed by a teacher who was unfamiliar with Mr Suzuki's practice. Ainscow (2005) argues that an enabling factor for inclusive practice involves a process of communal meaning negotiation among the staff who are engaged in the achievement of the shared school vision. In addition, an empirical study reports that the leader's value-based support and inspiration for teachers brought about their internalisation of the school vision, resulting in successful school transformation (Swann et al., 2012). It could also be said that Mr Suzuki's leadership practice had provided a level of transformational impact on School B practice.

Humane Approach to Teacher Support. Another aspect of Mr. Suzuki's practice Mr. Yamada mentioned was human connections. Mr. Yamada's comment displays his sense of trust towards Mr. Suzuki and subsequent sense of security at work. Also, he perceived a secure atmosphere in the staffroom, which was created through the human connections among the staff which Mr. Suzuki indirectly established. This suggests that Mr. Suzuki's practice was perceived to have a level of success in supporting the staffs' sense of security.

Transformational Leadership: Fostering Agency. Mr. Suzuki focused on raising the staffs' level of consciousness that they had the agency to create a school for everyone to feel secure. He did this by his delegation of tasks and responsibility. Since this was dissimilar to the practices most teachers had experienced, Mr. Suzuki consciously encouraged staff's autonomous actions. This shows an alignment with a transformational leadership model where leaders actively inspire and motivate staff to shift the organisational practice. This has been suggested as one of the crucial factors for the creation of an inclusive community of practice (Agbenyega & Sharma, 2014; Gumus et al., 2018; Higham & Booth, 2018).

In his comment about his School B leadership practice, Mr. Suzuki emphasized the use of the phrase 'each of us' instead of 'all of us' to create a school. By this, he meant

the importance of the staffs' strong sense of agency where each one of them felt that 'I' am making this school. This was a sense which was unfamiliar to most teachers at School B. International research suggests that teachers' sense of power to influence positive organisational outcomes tends to decrease in the culture where their agentic actions are not supported (Chen, 2016; Eteläpelto & Lahti, 2008; Latta, 2005). Mr. Suzuki's emphasis on teacher agency in the current study supports this by showing a teaching culture where teachers sense of agency had been diminished.

With the purpose of creating a staff culture with enhanced teacher agency in School B, Mr. Suzuki focused on the delegation of tasks with the underlying value of a humane approach. He felt that this resulted in an increased number of staff bringing innovative ideas to school activities. An implication is the potential of leadership practice to bring about successful transformation through enhanced teacher agency. One of the key elements could be a culture where each staff member is affirmed as an individual and their voices and actions acknowledged.

Opening Up the School

One of the first strategies Mr. Suzuki implemented to bring a secure environment for children in School B was opening up the school. This was aimed to remove the barriers (Ainscow et al, 2006; Slee, 2019), brought about by the closed arrangement of the classroom. Mr. Suzuki perceived that the closed classroom was a place where some children could feel insecure, and also teachers could become over protective.

The two participant teachers commented that this strategy created a culture where teachers felt safe to ask for help. Another gain the two teachers recognised with this strategy was the underlying idea that all staff could take care of all children. The two teachers perceived that Mr. Suzuki's approach had provided more space for children who struggled with learning in the classroom.

In addition, Mr. Suzuki also attempted to involve parents and the community in School B's practice. Through an increase in conversations with the parents, Mr. Suzuki saw positive changes in the parents' ways of thinking about creating a school

together. Existing literature suggests an involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making is one of the crucial factors for successful school transformation towards a more inclusive one (Agbenyega & Sharma, 2014; Booth & Ainscow, 2007; Slee, 2019). Although it was not yet the stage to involve the parents in major decision making at the time of the interview, it could be said that the direction he was heading in is positively supported by the current international literature.

Section Summary

To summarise, Mr. Suzuki implemented his approach at School B with an aim to create a school where all children could regularly attend and receive meaningful learning. The strategies used were removing barriers which may have restricted secure schooling for all children, and an articulation of a clear vision with an underlying focus on humanity. His approach appears to align with Ainscow and his colleagues' (2006) conceptualization of inclusion as a principled approach, with a focus on all children. Together with the two teachers' positive perceptions of this practice, the current findings may provide a practical example of inclusive education as "everyone's business" (Slee, 2019).

Research Question 3

- From the Principal's perspective:

  o What influence does their teaching culture have on the implementation of an inclusive education approach?

  o What influence does the personnel appointment system in Japan have on the implementation of an inclusive education approach?

Teaching Culture and Personnel System

From the participants' comment, it was seen that their teaching culture and personnel system were interrelated to some extent.

Participant teachers described a culture in which they were able to work according to their pedagogical standpoint. One of the attributes to this could be the personnel system where teachers were regularly relocated to different schools with different management which could impose different value systems. With their understanding and experiences in this system, teachers tended to take a relatively neutral position to each school's visions. This is dissimilar to where teachers are employed by individual schools and teachers' work performance, and the management's evaluation of it, may influence securing employment. This is often seen in the global school reform context (Ball, 2003).

Other features of their teaching culture identified through the participants' comments was a culture where communal actions tended to be prioritised over that of individuals, and people's dispositions of being hard on themselves in relation to socially imposed norms which could have resulted in modest, protective attitudes towards their work in the school community.

Together with the conventional practice which was implemented in many local schools as described by the participant teachers, an implementation of inclusive education approaches or transformation of the school culture is assumed to involve a certain level of difficulty.

The Practitioner's Perceptions

Despite such background conditions, Mr. Suzuki's perceptions towards the implementation of his approach were relatively positive. One aspect identified was his acceptance of a system where there was little that the local practitioners could do to influence it. Another aspect identified was that this was the social reality in which he had established his pedagogical beliefs; therefore, he had little desire to explore

alternative systems. In addition, an encouraging notion was that he had experienced the School A practice within this system.

It has been internationally reported that inclusive practice is not about a special division of an educational system, but a concept which should be embodied in the general schooling system using available resources in their own context (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Black-Hawkins, 2010; Miles & Singal, 2010; Slee, 2019; UNESCO, 1994, 2006). Mr Suzuki's standpoint appears to align with this. Furthermore, among the international contexts where inclusive education visions tend to be seen as impossible because of the scarcity of empirical research (Göransson & Nilholm; 2014), the current research findings may add a significant information to existing knowledge in the field of inclusive education.

In addition, Mr. Suzuki emphasized the importance of the establishment of a human connection with staff, and the importance of enhancing their sense of security to motivate the teachers to be positive and even excited about working at the school. His understanding of possible enablers for the creation of a school where everyone regularly attends are the interrelated elements of human connections based on respect and care for others, the children's and adults' sense of security, staff motivation, and teacher agency.

Implications

This research initially aimed to explore perceptions of a teacher who experienced inclusive education and how it could be framed within existing international knowledge. However, a limitation was realized in this objectively positioned 'top-down' approach to the current research. The meaningfulness of the participants' words could not always be conveyed without a level of understanding and delineation of their contextual background.

From this standpoint, the current research attempted to investigate the participants' practice by taking the participants' words and their background contexts as the starting point, and carefully searching for alignment between them and concepts of inclusive education as reported in international literature.

Implications for Research Practice

On the basis of a social constructionism research paradigm, the following are some implications for research practices.

- A practice which embodies the concept of inclusive education can be developed locally through a school value system and their own meaning making
- Research methodology which allows a careful delineation of participants' social reality and meaning making may be useful to research local inclusive practices

Key Elements for Inclusive Practice

With Mr Suzuki's understanding of School A practice and his following approach at School B which focused on human connections based on respect and care for others, key elements for a transformation of practice include:

- A humane approach as an aim in education
- A centralisation of children's interests
- A sense of security for children and teachers
- Teacher agency

A Methodology to Achieve Inclusion

The participants' comment suggests the education system generally in Japan could be perceived as restrictive. However, School A practice was established within this context which shows that inclusive education is possible even within a seemingly

restrictive environment. Furthermore, Mr Suzuki was positive and motivated to achieve it in another school within a similar context. An encouraging implication is:

- Inclusive education is possible, particularly when everyone makes it their business.

Limitations

This was my first attempt at doing research, and at interviewing teachers. It is a small study and the findings are not intended to be generalisable to all schools. I have tried to represent the unique experiences of one principal and a small number of teachers as they explored inclusion. A wider view of the practitioners' social reality and meaning making could be obtained through further relationship building with them and the ongoing revision of questions to align with themes raised by the teachers.

While this study did not set out to evaluate, rather to investigate perspectives, the snowballing technique used in this study may have skewed the data to be complementary of the principal.

In regard to translation, it should be noted that a more nuanced expressions were explored in my English translation since word-for-word translation would not always convey the meanings of the participants' voices. This is assumed to be a limitation of research which involves more than one language, where the translation skills together with the level of understanding of the local socio-cultural context may influence the quality as well as the validity of the results.

Conclusion

The current research endeavoured to investigate a practitioner's perception of an inclusive education approach. Examination of research findings was informed by a social constructionism research paradigm where people's knowledge is assumed to be formed through their interactions with others and their environment. A researcher stance which is inclined to subjectivism was taken to elucidate their social reality and local meaning making.

Mr Suzuki initially understood School A practice as an 'alternative' approach to education. A careful elucidation of this meaning making revealed that the practice had a level of consistency with one of the contemporary understandings about inclusive education. Therefore, it could be said that Mr Suzuki's experience in School A was an inclusive education approach.   His experience continuously challenged his pedagogical beliefs. His inclusive beliefs were constructed based on his understanding of local contexts, with his meaning negotiation being supported by the former principal, staff and children. He identified a core success factor of this educational practice as the teachers' and children's sense of security and the teachers sense of agency.

Mr Suzuki's implementation of his approach at School B also embodied the concept of inclusive education, although the approaches he used were unique to his Japanese education context. His practice was perceived by the two School B teachers as 'naturally settled into their educational beliefs', and that the school practice had been changing positively. The essence was their continual effort to identify and adjust their practice to all children's needs, regardless of any disabling categorization. Together with the positive perceptions by the two School B teachers, this implies that the current research findings add further to international understanding of inclusive education as everyone's business.

Their teaching culture and personnel system were unique and seemed to be restricting. However, Mr Suzuki had a positive attitude towards achieving a school transformation within the given environment and achieved success.

An encouraging implication is:

Inclusive education is possible.

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Appendix one: Project information sheet in English language

Inclusive education approaches in a local context: A practitioner's experience in two elementary schools in Japan

Information Sheet

Researcher Introduction

My name is Akiko Nozue and I am a postgraduate student at Massey University in New Zealand. As part of the Master of Education (Inclusive Education) programme, I am undertaking a small research study that investigates school leadership that promotes inclusive practice. My interest in this field of study comes from my own experiences of working as a teacher in schools in Japan and New Zealand.

Project Description and Invitation

This proposed project is a qualitative study that aims to explore a practitioner's experience of inclusive practice in two elementary schools in Japan.

The aim of this study is to explore how the implementation of inclusive education was experienced by the practitioner as the deputy principal of a school and how this experience contributed to the implementation of inclusive education in a school for which he is now the principal. I am also interested in finding out what teachers in this practitioner's school think about inclusive education, and how the principal's approach has influenced their thinking and practice.

I would like to begin interviewing in late May of 2019 and would like to invite you to participate in this research. Please carefully read the information that follows explaining the project before making decision about participation. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form which shows that you understand the study and have chosen to participate.

Participant Identification and Recruitment

You are receiving information regarding this project because you have expressed preliminary interest in being involved.

Project Procedures

The practitioner's interview:

This interview will be a semi-structured chat about your experience of inclusive practice in the two schools. Focus will be placed on how your beliefs and understanding of inclusive education has been constructed and developed.

It is anticipated that this interview will take up to a maximum of 90 minutes of your time, depending on how much information you would like to share.

The interviews will take place at your school at a time that is convenient to you.

What you have to say is important to me and I don't want to forget any of it; for that reason, I would like your permission to record the interview (I will discuss audio or video recording when we meet).

The two teachers' interview:

I will interview each participant individually. This interview will be a semi-structured chat about your perceptions of the practitioner's inclusive practice

It is anticipated that this interview will take up to a maximum of 60 minutes of your time, depending on how much information you would like to share.

The interviews will take place at your school at a time that is convenient to you.

What you have to say is important to me and I don't want to forget any of it; for that reason, I would like your permission to record the interview (I will discuss audio or video recording when we meet).

The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. All information is treated confidentially and no names of people or places, nor any identifying information will be used in the final thesis. If you use any personal details such as name or identify places such as schools in the interview, I will ensure that this information is removed from the typed transcripts. While every effort will be made to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher cannot absolutely guarantee that participants' identities will remain completely confidential once the research findings have been disseminated. There is always a small risk that someone may identify participants, it is important to know that complete anonymity and confidentiality cannot be promised in this regard.

This writing may be used in conference presentations or in academic publications.

The interview transcripts will be made available to you for editing.

Data Management

All data collected will be stored securely on an encrypted external hard-drive only accessible to the researcher and her supervisors. At the end of the project, any information collected will be stored securely for five years for further writing about the project with my supervisors, and destroyed as per the requirement of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

•   Decline to answer any particular question;

•   Withdraw from the study any time before June 20th, 2019;

•   Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;

•   Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;

•   Be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded;

•   Ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview, or terminate an interview if you wish, without any disadvantage to you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and consider participation in this study.

Project Contacts

If you have any further questions please contact:

Researcher: Akiko Nozue

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Yours sincerely,

Akiko Nozue

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix two: Project information sheet in Japanese language

研究参加者の方への説明文書

この研究について

タイトル

地元の文脈におけるインクルーシブ教育アプローチ：ある教育者の日本の小学校 2 校での経験

研究者の自己紹介

野末明子と申します。ニュージーランドにあるマッセー大学の大学院で学生をしています。教育学研究科（インクルーシブ教育専攻）の修士課程の一環で、インクルーシブ教育を促進するリーダーシップについての小規模の研究を行ってます。私のこの分野への興味は日本及びニュージーランドにおいて教師として働いた自身の経験からきています。

研究の目的と研究への参加招待

この研究は、ある教育者のインクルーシブ教育に関する経験を探求することを目的とする質的（定性的）研究で、学校長及び教職員の先生方数名のインタビューが主な情報源となります。

この研究は、A 小学校でのインクルーシブ教育の実践がその教育者によって当時教頭としてどのように経験され、この経験がどのように校長としての B 小学校においてのインクルーシブ実践に貢献したかを探求することを目的とします。更に、この B 小学校においての実践が同校の教職員にどのように受けとめられ、これが教職員の教育理念や実践にどのように影響したかという点にも興味があります。

5 月末にインタビューを執り行いたいと考えており、先生を研究への参加に招待させていただきたいと考えております。下記の情報をよくお読みいただいたうえでこの研究に参加することに同意していただける場合は、別紙の「研究参加への同意書」に署名をお願いすることになります。

参加者の決定

この説明文書は先生が事前に研究参加への興味を示されたということで提示させていただいています。

研究の手順

学校長のインタビュー：

インタビューは研究者が用意した中核となる質問をもとに学校長の２校での経験を語っていただく談話形式のものです。質問の焦点は、学校長のインクルーシブ教育への信念や理解がどのように構築されたかという点に置かれます。

所要時間は学校長が提供してくださる情報の量次第で前後するとおもわれますが、最大 90 分を予定しています。

インタビューは B 小学校において、学校長のご都合のいい日時に執り行います。

インタビューでの談話はこの研究にとってとても大切な情報となります。そのため、インタビューを記録する許可をいただきたく考えております（音声もしくは動画での記録について、面会時に相談させていただきます）。

教職員のインタビュー：

インタビューは個別に行われます。インタビューは研究者が用意した中核となる質問をもとに、学校長の教育実践についての先生のお考えを語っていただく談話形式のものです。

所要時間は先生が提供してくださる情報の量次第で前後するとおもわれますが、最大 60 分を予定しています。

インタビューは B 小学校において、各先生のご都合のいい日時に執り行います。

インタビューでの談話はこの研究にとってとても大切な情報となります。そのため、インタビューを記録する許可をいただきたく考えております（音声もしくは動画での記録について、面会時に相談させていただきます）。

全てのインタビューは記録され、文字起こしされます。すべての情報は匿名で扱われ、個人及び場所が特定される情報が論文に掲載されることはありません。もし特定の個人情報がインタビュー中に公表されても、文字起こしの段階で削除されます。個人情報保護のためのあらゆる努力がなされる一方、一度論文が公表されると完全な守秘義務が保証できない可能性がありま

す。この観点から何らかの形で参加者が特定されるわずかな危険が常にあることを認識しておく必要があります。

この論文は学会発表や学術誌への掲載などに使用される可能性があります。

文字起こしされたインタビューの内容は確認及び編集のために閲覧が可能にされます。

情報の管理

インタビューの記録は担当教官である Dr Jude MacArthur によって、研究担当者及び担当教官のみがアクセス可能な状態で暗号化された外付けハードドライブ上に保管されます。情報はこの担当教官のもとで論文を書くために今後 5 年間保管されます。5 年の保存期間の後に担当教官が、マッセー大学の Human Ethics Committee により提示される規格に基づいてハードドライブから情報を削除します。

参加者の権利

この研究への参加は任意です。参加希望を表明した場合でも以下の権利があります。その権利を行使したために不利益を被ることはありません。

- 特定の質問への回答拒否
- 2019 年 6 月 20 日までの同意の撤回
- 調査のあらゆる段階において研究についての疑問点があれば質問する
- 研究者に許可を与えない限り名前の公表をしないということへの理解を示した情報の提供
- 研究の総合的な考察の閲覧
- インタビュー中のあらゆる段階において記録用レコーダーを切る要請をする、もしくはインタビューの途中で終了を希望する

この説明文書を読み研究への参加を考慮するための時間を割いてくださりありがとうございました。

問い合わせ先

この研究に関して質問のある場合は下記にご連絡ください。

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敬具

野末明子

この研究は共同研究者により倫理上低リスクであると評価されました。結果として大学の倫理審査委員会の審査はされていません。この書類に記載されている研究者が研究倫理に関して責任を負います。

この研究の運営に関して懸念されることがあり、研究者以外に問題を提起することを希望される場合は Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz. にご連絡ください。

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
TE KURA O TE MATĀURANGA

Inclusive education approaches in a local context: A practitioner's experience in two elementary schools in Japan

Participant Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree / do not agree to the interview being sound / video recorded.

I wish / do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the information sheet.

Signature:

Date:

Full Name -Printed:

Appendix four: Consent forms in Japanese language

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
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TE KURA O TE MATĀURANGA

研究参加への同意書

研究タイトル

地元の文脈におけるインクルーシブ教育アプローチ：ある教育者の日本の小学校２校での経験

私は「研究参加者の方への説明文書」を読み、研究内容について説明を受けました。これまでの疑問点などは解消され、また今後も疑問な点はいつでも質問できるということを理解しています。

インタビュー内容を　音声 / 動画　にて記録することに　同意します / 同意しません。

インタビューのレコーディングの返還を　希望します / 希望しません。

「研究参加者の方への説明文書」に提示された研究に参加することに同意します。

署名 (signature)：

日付 (date)：

氏名 (full name – printed)：

Appendix five: Interview Schedules in English language

Inclusive education approaches in a local context: A practitioner's experience in two elementary schools in Japan

The practitioner's interview (semi-structured interview)

1. About yourself
   - Teaching career
   - Teaching experience
   - Number of schools you have worked so far
2. About School A
   - Can you please describe what kind or type of school it was?
   - How different was the school from other schools/what aspects of School A were different from other schools?
   - Can you please describe general Japanese schools? (System, culture)
   - Was there an impact on your pedagogical beliefs?
   - What aspect of your past experiences and knowledge influenced your construction of the new pedagogical beliefs?
3. About School B
   - Overall, how did you feel about this school? / What kind or type of school do you perceive it is?
   - What element do you implement among what you have learnt at School A?
   - What are the elements you have not implemented yet although you are wishing to or aiming to implement when possible?
   - Through your experience in School B, has there been an influence on your pedagogical beliefs? (Changes, reinforcement)
   - How do you currently approach the children who are considered to require an additional support?
4. Personnel system and teaching culture
   - Can you please describe the personnel system and the overall structure of it?
   - What do you think about the impact of the current personnel system on each teacher's construction of their pedagogical beliefs and practice?
   - Can you please describe the Japanese teaching culture?
   - How do you feel about implementing your teaching and school management approach in such a culture?
5. About your pedagogical beliefs
   - Can you please describe your teacher figure? Such as 'this is what a teacher should be'.
   - How does the concept of 'education for all students/children' align with your pedagogical beliefs?
6. About your implementation
   - How has the staff been responding to your approach?

The two teachers' interview (semi-structured interview)

1. About yourself
   - Teaching career
   - Teaching experiences
   - Number of schools you have worked so far
2. About School B
   - Overall, how did you feel about this school? / What kind or type of school do you perceive it is?
   - How do you currently approach the children who are considered to require an additional support?
3. Personnel system and teaching culture
   - What do you think about the impact of the current personnel system on each teacher's construction of their pedagogical beliefs and practice?
4. About your pedagogical beliefs
   - Can you please describe your teacher figure? Such as this is what a teacher should be.
   - How does the concept of 'education for all students/children' align with your pedagogical beliefs?
5. About Mr Suzuki's implementation
   - What are the aspects that are similar to other schools from your perceptions? Also, what are the aspects that are different from other schools?
   - What are your perceptions of other School B teachers' response to Mr Suzuki's implementation?

Appendix six: Interview Schedules in Japanese language

地元の文脈におけるインクルーシブ教育アプローチ：ある教育者の日本の小学校 2 校での経験

校長先生へのインタビュー

1．先生について

- 教員歴
- 教員経験
- 学校数
- ご出身地など

2．A 小学校について

- どんな学校ですか？
- 他校とどういったところが違いますか？
- 一般的な日本の学校を描写すると？（システム・文化）
- 先生の教育観に影響がありましたか？
- 過去のどういった経験や知識が先生の新しい教育観の構築に影響したと思いますか？

3．B 小学校について

- 一般的にどのような学校だと感じられますか？
- A 小学校で学ばれた内容で実践された内容は？
- 実践したいと思っているけれどもまだ実践していない内容は？
- B 小学校での取り組みのご自身の教育観への影響は？（変化？補強？）
- 特別支援の必要な生徒には現在どのように対応されていますか？

4．教職人事のシステムと職員文化

- 教員人事のシステムの概要を説明してもらえますか？
- 現在の教職人事のシステムが各先生の教育観の形成や教育実践に与える影響についてどう思われますか？
- 日本の教師文化を描写してください。
- その教師文化の中で市場先生の学校経営を実践

5．教育観について

- 先生がもっておられる教師像についてお話いただけますか？－教師とはこうあるべき、など
- 'すべての生徒への教育'という概念はどのように先生の教育観と重なりますか？

6．先生の実践について

- 職員の反応はどうでしたか？

先生方へのインタビュー

１．先生について

- 教員歴
- 教員経験
- 学校数
- ご出身地など

２．B 小学校について

- 一般的にどのような学校だと感じられますか？
- 特別支援の必要な生徒にはどのように対応されていますか？

３．教職人事のシステムと教育観

- 現在の教職人事のシステムが各先生の教育観の形成や教育実践に与える影響についてどう思われますか？

４．教育観について

- 先生がもっておられる教師像についてお話いただけますか？－教師とはこうあるべき、など
- 'すべての生徒への教育'という概念はどのように先生の教育観と重なりますか？

５．鈴木先生（仮名）の実践について

- この学校と他の学校を見比べた時に、どういった部分が同じでどういった部分が違うと感じられますか？
- 鈴木先生（仮名）の実践は他の教職員の皆さんからどのように受け止められているようにおもわれますか？

Appendix seven: Transcript release forms in English language

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
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TE KURA O TE MATĀURANGA

Inclusive education approaches in a local context: A practitioner's experience in two elementary schools in Japan

Authority for the release of transcripts

I confirm that I have the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature:

Date:

Full Name -Printed:

Appendix eight: Transcript release forms in Japanese language

文字起こしされたインタビュー内容の公開許可

研究タイトル

地元の文脈におけるインクルーシブ教育アプローチ：ある教育者の日本の小学校２校での経験

私が参加したインタビューの文字起こしを読み、修正する機会が与えられたことを確認します。

この文字起こしされたインタビュー内容もしくはその抜粋が、この研究から派生する報告書や出版物に使用されることに同意します。

署名 (signature)：

日付 (date)：

氏名 (full name – printed)：

Appendix nine: Massey University Human Ethics Committee approval letter

Date: 12 March 2019

Dear Akiko Nozue

Re: Ethics Notification - 4000020888 - The role of the principal in promoting inclusive practice: A case study of an elementary school in Japan

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

If situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your ethical analysis, please contact a Research Ethics Administrator.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:
"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director - Ethics, telephone 06 3569099 ext 85271, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz."

Please note, if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again, answering "yes" to the publication question to provide more information for one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

Human Ethics Low Risk notification

Professor Craig Johnson
Chair. Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and Director (Research Ethics)

Examples of analysis

This unit aims to provide some details about how the themes were identified from the interview transcripts. The themes, which are the enablers identified through this research study, are humane approach, centrality of children's interests, sense of security and teacher agency. The data was initially analysed from the original Japanese transcripts, and then translated in English.

Since the data analysis of the current research has been informed by the social constructionism paradigm, the analysis involves an investigation into the structural conditions.

Theme: Humane approach

Definition: An approach which centralises human relations based on respect and care for others

When to use: Use when practitioners recount the approach which centralised humanity, especially when it is contrasted to their conventional practice where functional relationships are usually seen.

Examples from data:

やっぱり後藤さん（仮名）は、姿に現してくれた 。こうあるべきみたいな。・・・その前に大人はどうあるべきか。子どもの前でどうあるべきか。もっといったら人としてどうしたらいいか（頷く）。
What I was taught by Ms Goto was... she exemplified how we should be (as a teacher). ... Before that, how an adult should be. How an adult should be before a child. Furthermore, what we should do as a human [nodding to himself] (Mr.S).

（真逆ですよ。）はい。人をみているし、頼りになるし、去年も担任のときにいろいろとトラブルがあって、なんか相談したりもしましたし。... 最後管理職が何とかしてくれるっていうのが、なにかあっても。... まあ、助けてくださるような雰囲気の。
(His approach is complete opposite to the conventional practices.) Yes, he is about people. He is dependable. Last year there were a few troubles with my classroom management, and I asked for advice several times... there is a secure feeling that, ... at the end of the day, the management will help us cope with any trouble (Mr. Y).

Theme: Centrality of children's interests

Definition: A practice which brings children as the subject of the conversation

When to use: Use when practitioners talk about their practice where children's learning and well-being are centralised, especially in contrast to their conventional practice where other

elements such as teacher performances and children's academic achievement would come to the fore.

Examples form data:

（やっぱりこう、クラスじゃなくて、）ばーって暴れてて飛び出したら違う先生がばーっていったり、話聞いてあげてたり、全然学年とかクラス関係なく。でそこに保護者もおったり地域の人がおったり。なんじゃこれはって。でも、あ、これなんやなって。これで子どもがすくわれるんやって。
(in the end, not about the classrooms but,) when a child acted up and ran out of the classroom, a teacher from another classroom ran after the child and listened to him or her, regardless of the syndicate or classroom. Then there were parents and volunteers from the community in the scene, you know. I thought at first, 'what on earth is this?' But I felt in the meantime that, 'this is it'. 'This is how all children are saved from the psychological pressure' (Mr. S).

校長先生はいつも「子どもを主語にしようや」って。
Mr. Suzuki always says, 'let's put the children in the centre of the conversation' (Mr. N).

Theme: Sense of security (children)

Definition: Children's feeling of secureness at school

When to use: Use when practitioners mention the concept of children feeling safe especially from the psychological pressure posed by their education system that might have caused an exclusionary practice

Examples from data:

いろんな大人が周りにいて、その子達その子たちをみんなが認めてるから安心してこれるんやなって。あ、これが結果やねんや。だから、うわー、こんなんでけへん、こんなん違うわとはおもわなかったです。びっくりはもちろんしましたよ。でも、あ、子どもが安心してるわ。これやんな。
A variety of adults surrounded the children and all the adults accepted every single child as they were; therefore, all children could come to school feeling safe.... So...of course I was totally surprised and challenged. But, I thought, 'yes, in this school, children are feeling secure. So, this is it' (Mr. S).

（やっぱりこう、クラスじゃなくて 、）ばーって暴れてて飛び出したら違う先生がばーっていったり、話聞いてあげてたり、全然学年とかクラス関係なく。でそこに保護者もおったり地域の人がおったり 。なんじゃこれはって。でも、あ、これなんやなって。これで子どもがすくわれるんやって。
(After all, not about the classroom, but,) when a child acted up and ran out of the classroom, a teacher from another classroom ran after the child and listened to him or her, regardless of the syndicate or classroom. Then there were parents and volunteers from the community in the scene, you know. I thought at first, 'what on earth is this?' But I felt in the meantime that, 'this is it'. 'This is how all children are saved from the psychological pressure' (Mr. S).

Theme: Sense of security (teachers)

Definition: Teachers' feeling of secureness at work

When to use: Use when practitioners state the concept of teachers' feeling of security, especially by the removal of the stress which is usually posed in their conventional practice.

Examples from data:

そう。そうです。はい。なんでも言い合える。うん。安心できる。だから大人も安心できるのが A 小やった。だから子どもが安心してこれる。大人ぎすぎすしていて子ども安心しないでしょ 。
Yes, you are right. Yes. (The space where) anything can be communicated. Yes. (We all) can sense that this is a safe place. So, I would say that it was the environment where adults were able to be themselves safely. Therefore, children were also be able to come to school feeling secure. Children wouldn't feel secure when adults were producing awkward atmosphere, would they? (Mr. S)

（真逆ですよ。）はい。人をみているし、頼りになるし、去年も担任のときにいろいろとトラブルがあって、なんか相談したりもしましたし。・・・最後管理職が何とかしてくれるっていうのが、なにかあっても。・・・まあ、助けてくださるような雰囲気の。
Yes, he is about people. He is dependable. Last year there were a few troubles with my classroom management, and I asked for advice several times... there is a secure feeling that, at the end of the day, the management will help us cope with any trouble (Mr. Y).

Theme: Teacher agency

Definition: Teachers' sense and ability to be an agent to create a school

When to use: Use when participants discuss the concept of their sense of ownership and agency

Examples from data:

でも O 小教職員のいいところっていうのは、やっぱり当事者意識をみんながもってるんですよね。自分が作るって、この学校はって。もってるから、いろんなことがあっても、自分ひとりではもちろんやらへんし、みんなと協力しながら、みんなで知恵出し合いながら、その目の前の壁をどんどん乗り越えていった。でそん中に一緒になってやっているっていうだけで、校長やカラなんか特別のことをしたというわけではなく
The beauty of School A teaching staff was that they all have the sense of ownership. (It was) the sense that 'I am the one who is making this school'. Since they had such a sense, despite difficulties, they of course wouldn't do things on their own, but by cooperating with all the other staff and sharing their knowledge and experiences, continued overcoming the barriers which we confronted each time. Therefore, (my

principalship at School A was about) working in such a collaborative practice with them, which means that it was not that I did something special because I was the principal (Mr. S).