

Secondary School Pupils' Achievements for Success in University Admissions: How a British secondary school evaluates pupils to expand their career path?

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Abstract: University admissions are vital issues for secondary schools both in the United Kingdom and Japan; however, the qualifications for applicants are disparate in the two countries. Universities in the United Kingdom require applicants' academic performance as well as various achievements that relate to their chosen courses, while Japanese universities place great importance on entrance examination marks. This disparity in university admissions naturally contributes to the different types of secondary school education. This paper, whose author was born and raised in Japan, focuses on a British independent secondary school's evaluation method. The research clarifies the school evaluates a wide range of academic and non-academic activities through multiple open means which is in explicit contrast with Japanese schools' closed evaluation methods. In addition, by interviewing Japanese pupils who have experienced both Japanese and British education demonstrates the effectiveness of the British visible appreciation leading pupils to successful academic career paths.

Keywords: academic performance, achievements, extra-curricular activities, evaluation, independent school, personal statement, reference, secondary school, UCAS, UK

1. Introduction

In the United Kingdom, choosing universities for those who wish for their own future success is of paramount importance. Applicants for entrance to universities or colleges start with sending their applications to the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). UCAS is an organisation that processes applications for full-time undergraduate courses. On the UCAS form, an applicant must provide information on the results and predicted results of internationally recognised qualification awarded in specified subjects, and documents which demonstrate the applicant's academic or wider qualifications, personality, achievements, and life experience relevant to his/her proposed course. Highly competitive universities also require an individual lengthy interview.

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In Japan, university admission decisions largely depend on entrance examination marks. Universities do not consider the results of past academic records, reference from teachers, achievements and activities beyond the classroom to be very important. Interviews are not very significant factor as well, and the ratio of the faculties of all universities which have oral examination is less than half (MEXT, 2016).

Consequently it can be said that universities in the United Kingdom seek applicants who have spent enough time and effort to attain the academic grades, abilities, and skills to build a well-rounded character in order to study their chosen courses, while Japanese universities put greater emphasis on the applicant's paper-based examination marks.

The disparity in university admission methods between the United Kingdom and Japan naturally results in different types of secondary school education. Employed by British independent, secondary Harrow School, the author has observed that the school offers infinite opportunities to enhance the pupils' academic ability as well as involvement in extra-curricular activities. Having been born and educated in Japan, the author has especially marvelled how the school praises pupils for their efforts and achievements, more precisely, the way of demonstrating appreciation; the diversified targets of appreciation; and the frequency of appreciation. The way Harrow appreciates pupils is visible, recognisable and lasts for a long period. The areas appreciated by Harrow are varied; not only academic subjects, but also sports, music, drama, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), etc. And Harrow commends pupils' efforts frequently and very highly.

Japanese schools do not praise an individual pupils' achievements and ability often. If they do so, the method is mostly invisible and lasts for only a short period. Japanese schools' evaluation targets are usually certain groups such as sports teams or entire classes.

Harrow's pupils have been successful in university admissions. 11% secured the Oxford and Cambridge offers in 2016 and most go on to the universities in the Russell Group, which is consisted of the 24 leading universities in the United Kingdom. About 10% matriculated at American universities including Ivy League schools. The success could be attributed to their endeavors coupled with the school's measures to develop the pupils' qualifications which satisfy what British universities require. One of the measures is an effective appreciation of the pupils' performance and achievements to enhance their incentive.

There are a couple of Japanese pupils who earlier attended school in Japan but chose to study in the United Kingdom and became pupils at Harrow. They should have the reason why they decided to pursue an academic career path there, and they should know the difference of evaluation method between the two countries.

Based on the author's observation and interviews with the Japanese pupils at Harrow, this paper examines their views on the British evaluation method in all-round education. The research clarifies the manner in which Harrow appreciates its pupils to motivate academic learning as well as

extra-curricular activities, which lead to more fruitful applications for university admissions compared to Japanese secondary schools.

It is hoped that the results of this study will contribute to reconsideration of the effectiveness of evaluation of pupils who aim to maximise their potentials in order to enjoy future educational and career opportunities.

2. Background and methodology of the study

2.1 The United Kingdom university admission method

University applicants provide information on themselves to the universities through UCAS. Documents that applicants submit to UCAS must have four pieces of data. The first is the results of the national standardised qualifying examinations such as General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), which applicants must take by the end of their compulsory education, namely key stage 4 (year 11). The second is the predicted results of a national standardised qualifying examination such as GCE-Advance levels, which applicants should take by the end of key stage 5 (year 13). The third is a written reference, which is usually from their teachers. The fourth is a personal statement. The length of the reference and the personal statement are limited to 4,000 characters respectively.

The first two pieces of data are solely based on public examination marks. The results indicate the subjects applicants have taken and how well they have performed. The latter two show applicants' academic achievements, the motivation to apply, personalities, interests, and relative work experience.

As for the reference, UCAS lists items a referee must include. The primary items are applicants' academic performance; motivation and commitment of their chosen subjects and courses. Undoubtedly the academic factors are vitally important, especially for internationally-recognised universities such as Oxford and Cambridge. However, the pupils' achievements, work experience, and extra-curricular activities that relate to their chosen subjects and courses are followed by the academic factors. Hence these elements are of parallel importance.

The personal statement is often viewed as the key element of a candidate's UCAS application (Richardson, 2016, p.110). UCAS first asked applicants to demonstrate their reasons to apply for certain subjects and their suitability of the subjects. After that it recommends mentioning extra-curricular activities such as clubs or societies; work experience or volunteering; and award-winning experience. UCAS emphasises these activities are "great ways to prepare for higher education" and "they could be ideal things to mention in one's personal statement (UCAS HP)." From this remark, it can again be said that the information other than academic data is as crucial as academic data.

2. 2 The Japanese university admission method

Since the end of World War II when the Japanese education was drastically changed under the Basic Education Act, both state and independent schools from the elementary to the tertiary levels have implemented a unified, egalitarian education system (Horio, 1999, pp.80-81). As a result, Japanese citizens achieved the high enrollment rate to enter high school, which is 97% (MEXT), and higher education institution, which is 80% (Cabinet Office).

Japanese universities use three admissions methods. The most popular is the general entrance examination, which is used by 56.6% of higher education institutions (MEXT, 2016). It consists of a paper-based examination and a report compiled by teachers. Applicants take the entrance examinations of assigned subjects at the time, day, and place designated by each university. Some also require essay examinations and/or interviews. This method values highly applicants' marks on the paper-based examination which takes one or two days. The second popular method is the entrance examination by school commendation based on the pupils' past grades. This method is 34.4% of all admissions (ibid). Occasionally pupils take an essay examination and/or interview as a supplementary measure. The third popular method is admission based on self-recommendation, or admission-office-managed entrance examination (AO entrance examination), a relatively new method adopted at the end of the twentieth century by 8.8% of the colleges and universities (ibid). This method is somewhat similar to the admission process in the United Kingdom. It enables pupils to appeal their motives, abilities, and skills they gained inside and outside the classroom in the statement. They also have an essay examination and/or interview.

More than 90% of Japanese universities place little emphasis on applicants' non-academic records, and more than half select the applicants largely on the entrance examination marks on limited subjects. Japanese secondary schools may be discouraged from appreciating pupils' engagement in day-to-day school work, to say nothing of the wide range of activities, by the universities' attitudes toward the selection of successful applicants.

2. 3 Previous studies

Much research on Britain's independent schools has been conducted. Two scholars have written about independent schools' visualised evaluation system. Ikeda (1949, p.38) revealed that some schools engrave the excellent academic achievers' names on the school halls, and Walford (1996, p.49) described the schools' proficiency-dependent teaching. Yet, it is difficult to find a report that presents in-depth, systematic research on British independent secondary schools' positive evaluation method. It also seems there is no record of what Japanese pupils think about the British open evaluation system compared to the Japanese closed evaluation system and how the British way of evaluation affects pupils.

2. 4 Introduction to Harrow School

Located on the outskirts of London, Harrow School is a British independent, privately-funded secondary school founded in the late 16th century. It is a male-only full-boarding school with about 800 boys aged 13 (Year 9) to 18 (Year 13), each year group having about 160 pupils. Around 80% of the pupils are British nationals, but the ratio of other nationalities is expanding, especially from China, Russia and CIS countries. Among its graduates are many talented men in academic, political, the arts, and sports fields.

Harrow is also categorised as a public school, which in the United Kingdom is an unofficial category for a group of independent schools. The main distinguishing features of which, are their several hundred-year-old history, unique traditions and expensive tuitions. Harrow's annual fee including boarding is over £35,000.

Most Harrow pupils go on to tertiary educational institutions. They have a variety of choices from the world's top universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, and Ivy League institutions in the United States to military academies. A couple of pupils choose to become professional athletes every year.

2. 5 Limitations of the research

There are a number of limitations of this research. Firstly, Harrow only exemplifies an independent school, and might not represent the characteristics of state schools. In the United Kingdom, as the ratio of independent schools is only 7%, this paper can only show an example of one tiny group in total number of British schools. However, pupils who go to independent schools made up 40% of those at Oxford and Cambridge. Research also reveals that 54% of chief executives; 51% of top physicians; 32% of United Kingdom medallists at the Rio Olympics 2016 (Labram, 2016, p.11); 75% of senior judges; and 71% of top Queen's Counsel (a senior barrister appointed on the recommendation of the Lord Chancellor) are privately educated (The Times). Therefore, it is worth examining how a private school produces quality pupils who matriculate at prestigious academic institutions; play important roles in society; or become elite athletes.

It should be taken into consideration that Harrow is only for boys and a full-boarding school. The results of research focusing upon co-educational or girls-only schools and day schools would be different. Recently more and more single-sex schools have turned into coeducational ones and the number of full-boarding schools is decreasing. Even so, the United Kingdom has a centuries-long history of single-sex education, and a full-boarding school is also one of the very traditional British school types which has comprised the backbone of British education. The benefit of a single-sex and full-boarding school's education cannot be diminished.

Since there were only three pupils interviewed, their opinions may not reflect the views on Japanese pupils who attend British independent schools. The interviewees enrolled in Japanese elementary schools but did not attend Japanese secondary schools, thus they are not able to compare a British secondary school with a Japanese one.

Notwithstanding, there are only a small number of pupils who have studied at reputable British independent secondary schools, and among them the number who experienced Japanese elementary school life is even more limited. Additionally, since the interviewees are currently attending the school, their opinion is more plausible than the ones of alumni who tend to rely on memory. All things considered, even though the opinions are from only three pupils, it is worth listening to what they had to say.

Harrow employs visible evaluation methods for both rewards and punishments, however, this paper focuses only on rewards.

3. Variation of the visible evaluation method

3.1 The pupil handbook called the Bill Book

One of the most visualised valuation of the pupils' achievements are shown in a small handbook called the Bill Book, in which is printed the term's calendar as well as the names of all pupils, teachers, and support staff.

Japanese secondary schools also have pupil handbooks which show the schools' policies, histories and calendar. The difference between Japanese schools' handbooks and the Bill book is that the Bill Book indicates the names of boys who have received any kind of appraisals, while Japanese school handbooks do not. This difference may be because Japanese schools normally try to put pupils in an equal position, or try to view all the pupils the same. The most surprising fact from a Japanese perspective is that those who receive scholarship are listed in the Bill Book. The reason being that a scholarship is commonly thought to be financial support for those who are in need of tuition assistance in Japanese secondary schools, so that Japanese schools think that announcing information on scholarship may hurt the recipients. At Harrow a scholarship will be provided as full or partial financial support, but in any case it will be given exclusively to pupils who excel in areas specified by the school, that is a scholarship is an extremely honorific symbol. There are six kinds of scholarships: academic, music, art, outstanding talent, army and all round. Outstanding talent includes drama, ICT, and sports. The chance to be a scholar comes only a few times in the five-year curriculum. The first is when pupils have good marks on entrance examinations, and others are when they have good marks in GCSE or they make major contributions to enhance the school fame.

The number of scholarship recipients is not fixed. Out of 160 in each year group, the approximate number is 5 to 10 in academics, 5 to 15 in music, art, and outstanding talent respectively. As for army and all round scholarship recipients, there are 3 to 5 in the whole school.

Other than scholars, names of pupils who received honorary status at the school are written in the Bill Book. There are three kinds of such groups. The first are called school monitors. School monitors are chosen principally by the head master and boarding-house masters. The chief criteria to become a school monitor are being a good role model for younger pupils through his personal qualities; conduct and appearance; academic work; and/or extra-curricular involvement. There are 20 to 24 school monitors, and they work as representatives of the school and guide the younger pupils. Becoming a monitor is said to be important for Oxford and Cambridge applicants, which may add more value to be a monitor.

The second are the captains of the major sports activities such as rugby, football, and crickets, the third meritorious pupils in music, art, and drama. About ten are nominated as a member of this artists group by the head master and teachers in charge.

In each boarding-house, a head of house and a deputy head of house are nominated by a house master from senior having notable leadership. The names of heads and deputy heads of houses are written in the Bill Book.

Names of heads of societies of which there are more eighty are also written in the Bill Book. These include subject-oriented societies such as the classical and financial societies to diverse interest-oriented ones such as the chess and motorsports societies.

Since the Bill Book is renewed and distributed to all the pupils, parents and staff every term, the information on the pupils who gained certain appreciation comes to everybody's attention.

3. 2 School uniforms

Harrow's uniforms are visually appealing. There is strict regulation of the uniform, pupils are not free to wear anything but the designated uniform. However, the privilege of wearing special uniforms and garments to some senior pupils who have achieved distinction in a certain field is permitted.

School monitors can at all times wear a hat and a tie especially designed for them and coloured sweaters in winter time when other pupils wear plain navy ones. At the school's important events, they wear black bow ties while other pupils wear regular black ties.

Captains of major sports, and pupils with excellent artistic talents are awarded special ties and waistcoats as well.

Some senior pupils who contribute the boarding-house activities such as sports matches; music contests; debate competitions between houses; and house drama have the right to have regimental ties with the house colours.

Pupils having leading roles in societies are granted by the teachers in charge the right to wear the societies' original ties.

If a pupil achieves a good record at an annual running and swimming race, he is given the right to wear the special regimental tie.

Pupils who are given special ties are able to wear them at designated times. There are two school uniform shops around Harrow. At places near the entrances to both, a variety of ties are hung in the display racks. It is not unusual to see younger pupils who stop in front of the shops and gaze longingly at the special ties.

3. 3 Class formation according to the pupil achievements

A pupil's ability is shown in the formation of classes according to his individual level of academic achievement. Basic subjects and classes of selective subjects are divided by pupil proficiency. The average number in a class is 12. The number of class levels is about 9 to 10 in mandatory subjects such as English and mathematics, about 4 in selective subjects such as modern languages. Sports classes are divided into levels according to pupils' abilities.

In Japan, mixed-ability class formation is commonly observed. Some schools incorporate the divided class formation according to individual pupil levels of academic achievements; however, this formation is introduced in only limited subjects such as arithmetic or mathematics and English. Even though there is divided class formation, the classes are not divided into different levels. The ordinary number of pupils in a class at secondary schools is 31 to 40.

Harrow has more than thirty kinds of sports activities, and invites the professional coaches for major sports. The school also brings proficient musicians to teach diverse music instruments and chorus. Art lessons are taught by regular teachers as well as visiting, experienced professional artists. Thus Harrow encourages pupils to become involved in the cultivation of artistic sentiments under the tutelage of professionals by using the noticable evaluation methods.

In Japanese schools, it is rare to invite teachers and coaches from outside in any academic lesson or extra-curricular activity. Club activities are often voluntarily supported by the schools' alumni.

3. 4 School assembly and speech day

Harrow has an assembly every Monday morning during which an individual pupil or groups who attain any success internationally, nationally or regionally are mentioned by the head master. For example, pupils awarded International and national Math/Science/Linguistic Olympiads and so on. The good results of interschool matches or sports competitions, music, and art are also mentioned.

At an annual speech day, which is equivalent to a Japanese graduation ceremony, varied pupil awards are presented. Pupils who receive prizes have the honour of being present with their families.

When the ceremony starts in the school hall, the head master solemnly calls the names of the prize winners one by one, then the winners stand on the stage and receive the prizes accompanied by applause. The winners and their families are very proud of the rewards.

Harrow always encourages pupils to participate in internal and external competitions. Results of pupil achievements are visualised at this presentation. There are more than two hundred fifty pupil prizes in total; about thirty-five for first year pupils, about forty-five for second and the third year pupils, about fifty for fourth year pupils and seventy-five for fifth year pupils. Some prizes are given to multiple pupils, and a few receive more than seven to eight prizes. The sources of prizes are diverse. Some are provided by public organisations such as the Crest Award for pupils who have demonstrated the ability to accomplish projects, and the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze/Silver/Gold awards for those who have self-improvement exercises mainly through adventurous activities. Some are from the school itself or celebrities of school alumni such as the Terence Rattigan Prize for a pupil who is outstanding in drama and the Sir Winston Churchill English Composition Prize; and the Sir Percival Marling Prize for Design Technology. The others are from companies, educational funds, charitable organisations, and benefactors. The school publishes the booklet which records the prize winners, and distributes it to all the pupils and their parents. The record is visualised.

In Japan, schools do not often recognise individual pupil achievements in morning assembly. If they do, those recognised may be clubs or teams. Individual evaluation normally only appears in a grade report directly handed to each pupil and the parents from the school at the end of each term. At a graduation ceremony, a head master normally calls only one or two pupils with excellent academic grades among the graduates.

3.5 School periodicals and homepage

High achievers appear in Harrow's publication. There is an 8-page weekly school newspaper in which the recent major events are presented. Pupils are able to submit their articles to this paper. Many are written about society activities. Articles also represent the pupils who gave lectures to societies, made educational trip, etc. There are in the paper a corner to introduce pupil achievements. For example, the 17 September 2016 issue introduced a senior who was commended his Chemistry essay in an authoritative essay competition, two juniors who gained the distinction in Grade 6 piano, and two juniors who were invited to the England Under-18 rugby camp.

Harrow's biennial public relations magazine is the compilation of the recent years' achievements by pupils and alumni. These are too numerous to list; almost 90% of the 150-magazine contains colour photographs and articles on the pupil activities and accomplishments. The photographs and name lists of monitors, major sports captains, distinguished musicians/artists/drama performers, and names of prize winners at the recent speech day appear in this book.

Harrow's homepage, which is updated frequently, also contains much information on pupils' achievements in academic and non-academic fields.

Japanese school periodicals also advertise pupils' achievements; however, they are mostly directed at club activities or graduates who entered renowned universities. Most articles are introductions to school events, head teachers' essays, and administrative information.

4. Interview results with Japanese pupils about the British evaluation system

4.1 Background to the interviewees

To examine the reaction of the evaluation methods discussed in the previous section, three Japanese boys at Harrow were interviewed individually in Japanese language in January 2015. They studied Japanese with the author for a year prior to the interview date. Each interview session did not have a time limit, and lasted 30 to 45 minutes. The interview took place in a classroom where the regularly had private Japanese lessons. As the author was a teacher at Harrow, it is possible they would not convey their feeling freely; however, since the author had not been in a position of management at the school, the pupils probably were bothered little by the author's job title.

The pupils, herein referred to A, B, and C, were born in Japan to Japanese parents. As of the interview date, A was 15 years old and belonged to Year 11; B was 16 years old and belonged to Year 11; and C was 14 years old and belonged to Year 10. A had been assigned to the top sets in all subjects. B and C were also assigned to the sets of highest to second-highest levels in most of the subjects, although there were a few sets of middle to lower levels. The three boys lived in different boarding houses and did not have much time to talk each other in daily life.

Until the age of 9 or 10, they attended private elementary schools under the Japanese School Education Act, and then transferred to English preparatory schools called "prep schools," which are private schools preparing pupils for preeminent secondary schools. A and C moved to England due to their fathers' business. Both boys could choose to enter a Japanese elementary school there; however, they chose prep schools. B when in kindergarten lived in England and was familiar with English culture, asked his parents to permit to send him attend an English prep school. When the three boys came to England, none of them could speak English satisfactorily and had a difficult time. In spite of this hardship, they gradually adapted to their new lives and favoured the prep schools because of the small-classes. The average number of pupils in each class was about 15, less than half the size of Japanese classes. They also preferred individual guidance given by the schools and teachers. Each boy who learned in a different prep school decided to take the difficult selective examinations of the British independent secondary schools, which have similar educational system to the prep schools.

4. 2 Questions and answers at the interview

4. 2. 1 Class formation according to pupils' achievements

The interviewees were first asked what they thought about class formation according to each pupil's academic achievements, which is seldom seen in Japan. "I am satisfied with it, and won't be satisfied with mixed level class," All three boys answered similarly. "Whatever my class level is, I feel better because I can share the moderate competitive atmosphere with the classmates who are about the same level with me," "Enjoyable," "I am able to judge my ability objectively and avoid overestimating or underestimating myself," "the classes are lively with active exchange of views." B explained why the class would become lively. "The number of the pupils in a class is small, that makes us comfortable unlike in Japan where a class has about 30 to 40 pupils. Not only this, because the classmates are the same level with me, there is little possibility that my opinion becomes far beyond their level so that I am kept away from classmates. There is also little possibility that my opinion is far below their level so that I am made fun of."

A, who was ranked highest in his Japanese school, talked about the advantage of the proficiency-based class formation. "When I announced I was moving to England from Japan at school, the classmate, who was ranked second, said to me, 'you are leaving, then I can be the No. 1 in the class.' He said this half-seriously and half-jokingly. At Harrow we regard classmates as rivals who challenge each other. There won't be anybody who will be glad of my leaving."

The next question was if they felt superior when in a class of high level. All boys answered "I can't say I do not feel it at all; however, I know my position is fluid because some classmates are making more efforts than I am. The class is always full of moderate rivalry. Even though I am at a higher set, it does not mean I can stay there forever."

Following the question on feelings of superiority, they were asked if they felt inferior compared to high achievers. They all confessed "I feel subtle inferiority but only occasionally. Rather than feeling inferior, I simply feel admiration of achievers." B said "It is not an inferior feeling, but when the class level drops, I start to feel I have to try hard next time."

They were then asked if they became an object of jealousy for pupils of lower sets, or they have been told disagreeable things. All three said "No." The author brought up the Japanese issue that pupils with good grades would be called 'swat' and made a laughing stock, and asked if it happened at Harrow. All three said "No." A added the reason why. "Even a pupil with excellent grades is not always studying. Apart from academic subjects, they have to manage the task of compulsory activities such as sports, music, art, and community service. In the daily boarding life, they need to spend considerable time for house-to-house competition of music, sports etc. They may be also involved in periodical theatrical performances. Some of them prefer to go to lectures of prominent figures which are held often after school. Some of them like to participate in extended projects. In

this way, those with good grades are managing their limited time effectively and concentrating on their studies. Everybody knows; therefore, most of pupils respect top performers.”

In response of the question if pupils with good grades look down on pupils with bad grades, two boys answered “No,” and one boy answered “No, at least superficially.” All said “I recognise that pupils who do not have good grades merely do not spend time studying, or place little importance on learning. They choose to be negligent, and these attitudes naturally result in the bad grades. I therefore do not really care what they receive.” C gave several reasons why pupils in higher sets do not look down on pupils in the lower ones. “A pupil in the top level of class sometimes belongs to a lower level of football class. Nobody can belong to the best level in all subjects and activities. It is natural that one person has both advantage and disadvantage, and if he belongs to a lower level of set, it does not mean he has little talent. A pupil with lower academic grades could shine in sports and arts. Because the school provides a large variation of choice of sports and music instruments, a pupil’s talent can blossom in a certain area when he is not good at academic subjects. Even he cannot attain the very good level in non-academic fields, he can at least find his favorites to devote himself.” All three boys told “With these reasons, pupils with lower grades do not easily become timid.”

As for sports class formation according to the pupils’ ability, all boys, again, think favorably. B said “In upper level classes, the aim is to nurture professional or semi-professional players. On the other hand in lower level classes, the aim is to make pupils know the enjoyment of sports even if they are poor athletes. I can play sports comfortably with the same level of peers. A skillful player in a certain sport has started training in his early years, and he has also made a continuous effort. It is natural for me not to be able to surpass this kind of person. The body structure such as height and muscular strength is also different from each ethnic group. Accordingly, the sports class formation depending on the pupils’ proficiency is appropriate.”

4. 2. 2 Visible evaluation in the uniform and publication

The boys were asked what they think about the differentiation of school uniforms, which is seldom seen in Japan.

As for the school monitors uniform, all boys answered “It is a good custom. The monitors are good role models who we like to be. They inspire younger pupils.” B mentioned “I am not very interested in being selected as a monitor. However, I appreciate that each monitor has been making effort for a long time. The differentiation of the uniform could be the rewards for their diligence. School monitors are the persons who younger pupils admire highly. The junior boys think the school monitors’ different outfit is smart.”

Then they responded to the inquiry about other school uniform differentiation. Once more, all boys reached agreement on the notion. “The special ties became a great motive to get involved in extra activities. We have been attracted to them since we started the school life.”

Pupil A added a few comments. "I am used to the uniform differentiation for achievers because my prep school had the same system. Achievers had special ties, badges etc. I feel nothing special with this system."

Lastly, they were asked what they thought of the Bill Book - the pupils' handbook, and school periodicals which list pupils' special titles such as school monitors, heads of boarding-houses and societies. "I have not thought of it." The boys attitudes indicated that they wondered why the interviewer would ask such a question. For them, open commendation by the school became so natural that they do not think about it, even though this system is rare in Japan, where they had their first education.

5. Conclusions and the prospect

Because all the Japanese boys appreciated the British open evaluation system far more than the Japanese closed one, the answers of the interviewees were quite surprising for the author, who was educated in the closed Japanese system. They live in different houses and have little time to talk to each other due to the tight schedule. They were also interviewed privately. Even though, their answers were almost the same.

There were no negative views toward the class formation according to the pupils' proficiency. They seem to feel the advantage that they are able to judge their own ability properly. They also think class formation results in good rivalry and enhances their motivation.

They demonstrated that they do not feel superior nor inferior; their feelings resulted from the unconcealed evaluation. They would rather feel they have more objective eyes. They sometimes have mild superior feelings when they belong to upper level of sets or when they are awarded. They, however, never overestimate themselves because there is always moderate competition in the class. They know that there are fields or skills at which they are not good. Whereas, inferior feelings also cannot arise easily for two main reasons. First of all, they always see achievers using time effectively to engage in many things including study in the busy boarding life. The Japanese boys feel the achievers deserve the appraisal. Thus the three felt respect rather than feel inferior to them. Second of all, pupils are able to find their fields of expertise or their favorite fields easier because Harrow provides wide range of academic subjects and activities, and they can maximise their own character and ability to a certain field.

It also became clear that diligent with good grades are not ridiculed. The reason is the same as that their not feeling inferior. That is to say, they have witnessed the achievers' excellent time management. In Japan, there is a tendency that hardworking pupils are teased so that they try to conceal their efforts. There are few pupils who dislike hard workers in Harrow.

The three boys expressed the favorable views on differentiation of the uniform for the senior achievers because it will motivate the juniors. They also disclosed that they take it for granted that the school publicises the achievers' names in the school magazines, homepage etc.

What we can conclude from the interview of the three is that Harrow's evaluation system facilitates a pupil estimating their performance and ability accurately by comparison with peers, thereby fostering the capacity for judgements on diverse values and developing awareness of personal aptitude.

As stated at the outset, the efficacy of this paper is limited because the number of interviewees was only three boys whose family backgrounds are very gifted spiritually and financially. However, they have been educated in an environment which contrasts with Japan. In other words, they are exposed to an environment where a school educates pupils by visibly evaluating their efforts and abilities.

As of January 2017, two years after the interview, Pupil A has been offered a place as a medical student at University of Oxford, Pupil B has been offered a place at Durham University, and Pupil C is regarded as a prominent candidate for University of Cambridge. All three are flourishing under the circumstances has given them, and they are making headway to fulfilling their dreams and ambitions. A plethora of educational advantages mentioned by the three may encourage view afresh the existing Japanese educational method, which seemingly hesitates to evaluate pupils visibly.

Japan will face major reform in university admissions in 2020. The new admissions will presumably assess the applicants' diverse abilities more than conventional ones. At the same time, admissions based on self-recommendation, or AO entrance examination which intakes part of British admission process, is gaining popularity in Japan. British secondary schools' evaluation methods would provide Japanese secondary schools with many practical tips when they reconsider how to educate pupils to suit the admissions of future Japanese universities as well as overseas universities which may require more comprehensive assessment of the applicants.

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