



A Study on the Effect of Japanese Parents' Participation in School Management System

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Abstract. By examining the evolution and development of the Japanese parental participation in the school management system and its implementation effect, the characteristics of the Japanese parental participation in the school management system and the problems in practice are analyzed in detail. The study found that Japan has made continuous efforts to formulate and improve the laws and regulations related to parent participation in school management, safeguarding the rights of parents and clarifying the scope and responsibilities of parents participating in school management, laying a solid foundation for the sustainable development of parent participation in school management. According to the latest parent questionnaire survey, although the main way for Japanese parents to participate in school management is Parent Teacher Association (PTA), parents actually want to participate in more ways. At present, the Japanese parent participation model is gradually developing from home-school cooperation to a three-party collaborative education model of schools, parents, and communities, and the three-party mutual supervision and self-evaluation mechanism is constantly being improved.

Keywords: school management · parental participation · home-school cooperation · PTA

1 Introduction

Parent participation means that parents actively participate in the learning activities or educational process of schools and local social organizations for the sake of their children's learning and growth. From the point of view of a child's growth period, from birth to adolescence, the school and the family share the responsibility for education. In addition, from the perspective of the place where education is carried out, it is necessary not only to pay attention to the educational activities carried out by the school, but also to the educational process carried out by the family and the local society. Over the years, many studies have pointed out that parental involvement has a positive impact on the development of children and youth's cognition, emotion, sociality, academic achievement, and adaptation to school life [1–5].

The awareness of the importance of parental participation is gradually increasing, and parental participation in school management has also attracted social attention. Parental participation in school management is an important measure for home-school

cooperation to carry out educational activities and to try to strengthen and improve school education management. In order to promote the effective participation of parents in school management, it is necessary to continuously improve relevant laws and systems. Countries have been working hard to promote parental participation in the school management system, and have adopted a variety of parental participation methods [6]. This study will specifically introduce and analyze the experience of Japanese parents participating in the school management system, and discuss the actual effect of participating in school management from the perspective of parental evaluation, thus provide an effective reference for improving the relevant system in our country.

2 Overview of Japanese Parental Participation in School Management System

2.1 The Development Process of Japanese Parents' Participation in the School Management System

Since the introduction of the modern school system in Japan during the Meiji period, the construction and maintenance of schools at all levels were financed by local residents in principle. The school funds were insufficient at that time. Therefore, in order to reduce the financial burden of school operation, many civic group which are composed of parents and district residents. These organizations mainly provide financial support to schools and are basically not involved in educational activities.

In the early Showa period, due to the impact of the war, the group activities of parents were temporarily suspended. After World War II, the educational mission sent by the United States published the first report of the U.S. educational mission in Japan. In the "Administrative Measures for Primary and Secondary School Education", it is specifically pointed out that "in order to improve the welfare of students and improve educational programs, the education director of the Education Committee is obliged to encourage the establishment of PTA", indirectly proposes the PTA concept, and emphasized its importance [7]. The initial PTA was not formed spontaneously, but was semi-mandatory under the proposal of the Supreme Commander of the United Nations. In the short time after that, PTA were quickly established in schools across Japan. In addition, various non-governmental parent organizations were soon established. For example, the "Japan Child Protection Association" was established in 1952; the "Mothers and Female Teachers Association" was found in 1953 etc.

Although the parent organization was established for the purpose of revitalizing education, in fact, in the process of development, its role is mainly to provide material assistance to schools. In 1967, the Tokyo Minister of Education issued an official document to each district board of education on "Setting the Standard for Compulsory Education School Operation Fees and Eliminating the Private Burden by Public Funds", which alleviated the parents' involvement in school management by PTA. There have also been voices questioning the PTA in the society. In 1969, the Hyogo prefectural education group proposed the disbandment and adaptation of the PTA [8]. However, the main channel for parental participation is still PTA. In addition to the PTA, many schools have established various parent organizations. In 1989, Tokyo established the

first school support association. Since then, many schools have also established support associations, scholarship associations and other parent associations.

Entering the 21st century, Japanese parents have more opportunities to directly participate in school management decisions and educational activities. For instance, the school councilor system established in 2000 and the school operation council system established in 2004 explicitly require parents to directly participate in school operations. It clearly requires parents to participate in specific educational activities and after-school activities of the school [9]. The purpose of this series of measures is to enable more groups to participate in the existing school management and education activities centered on teachers and staff, to achieve mutual cooperation, and to promote the joint management of schools and the construction of “open schools”.

2.2 Relevant Laws on Parental Participation in School Management System in Japan

Japanese parental participation system and laws are first and foremost based on the “Basic Law of Education”. It is clearly stated that “schools, families, community residents and other relevant personnel must recognize their respective roles and responsibilities for education, and strive for mutual cooperation”. In addition, in the development of the Japanese parental participation system, the government has also promulgated many related bills. For example, the “School Education Law” specifically requires primary schools to actively provide information on school educational activities and other school operations in order to promote contact and cooperation with parents, community residents and other relevant persons. The “Local Education Administration Law” stipulates that members of local public organizations should include parents. In order to effectively supervise the implementation of PTA activities, the “PTA Youth Education Group Mutual Aid Law” was specially established in 2010. The continuous improvement of relevant laws has promoted the implementation and development of parents’ participation in the school management system.

3 Analysis of the Effect of Japanese Parents’ Participation in School Management

The Benesse Educational Research and Development Institute has conducted a “Parents’ Awareness Survey on School Education” among Japanese primary and secondary school parents every five years on average since 2004. This long-term large-scale questionnaire survey has well reflected the actual effect of parental participation in school management in Japanese primary and secondary schools in the past ten years from the perspective of parental evaluation.

The latest statistics show that the proportion of parents who are satisfied with their children’s school has continued to increase from 73.1% in 2004 to 83.8% in 2018 [10]. On the whole, while the parental participation system and laws have been continuously improved, parents’ satisfaction with the school has also increased accordingly, and has now reached the highest level in history. This reflects the effective participation of Japanese parents in school management in recent years. For example, with regard to

"communicating the school's educational policies and guidance to parents", the number of satisfied parents of primary school students increased by 15.1%, and the number of parents of middle school students increased by 12.8%; about "teacher's enthusiasm for education", the number of satisfied parents of primary school students increased by 12.1%, and parents of middle school students increased by 16.5%. This not only represents the affirmation of the work of the school and the teachers by parents, but also fully shows that the parents have close contact and communication with the school and the teachers, and have a good understanding of the situation of the school and the teachers.

In addition, in the future, the proportion of parents who hope that the school will "communicate to parents about their children's school attendance", "allow parents to ask questions and consult at any time", and "communicate the school's educational policy to parents" has been as high as about 90% in the past 14 years since 2004. This shows that the parents have long been eager to communicate with the school in a timely manner, and generally very concerned to school education management. In contrast, the proportion of parents who want to "improve the system for parents to support educational activities" and "can freely visit schools at any time" is slowly decreasing, only 60% of the total number of parents. The parents who wanted "a committee of parent representatives to decide the school's educational policy" was about 37.2%. It can be seen that although parents pay close attention to school operation and management, their attitude to the actual participation is not very positive. In particular, when it comes to school affairs, which has certain responsibilities, such as deciding school policies, parents are clearly showing a negative attitude.

This survey also includes the important content of parents' participation in the actual school management. The most answered option by parents is "PTA officer". It shows that about 25.3% of primary school parents and 20.5% of middle school parents participate in school management through PTA. This was followed by 23.3% of primary school parents and 11.8% of middle school parents participating in the "tour to protect children's safety". The proportion of parents who participated in the activities such as "deciding school policies" and "supporting school education" was very small. It can be seen that in the actual affairs related to school management, most of the parents participate in "volunteer activities", and only a small number of parents are involved in the core management of school decision-making and operation. It is worth noting that with regard to choosing "school activities that are willing to participate", the proportion of parents who choose various activities, such as "school decision-making, education and management" is about 10%–20%. It can be seen that although the current popular option is on volunteer activities, parents also want to participate in more diverse activities in the future.

4 Conclusions

From the actual experience of Japanese parents participating in school management, it can be found that the continuous improvement of relevant systems and laws has promoted the actual participation of parents. Especially since the beginning of the 21st century, with the implementation of various reforms of the parent participation system, parents' satisfaction with the school has been significantly improved. Although the culture of

parents participating in educational activities as the main body of social education has not been fully popularized, compared with the past, the awareness of participation of parents is increasing, and their specific activities involved in school management are also developing in a diversified direction. The “Basic Law of Education”, “School Education Law”, “PTA · Youth Education Group Mutual Aid Law” and other relevant laws not only safeguard the rights of parents, but also clarify the scope and responsibilities of parents’ participation in school management. The establishment of systems such as the school operation council system and the “after-school children’s plan” has become a norm that specifically guides parents to participate in school management. Therefore, in order to enable parents to participate in the sustainable development of school management, it is necessary to continuously improve the relevant laws and systems as a basis.

In addition, creating more opportunities for parents to actually participate in school management will help cultivate parents’ awareness of educational subjectivity and further improve the effect of parents’ participation in school management. At present, the main way for Japanese parents to participate in school management is PTA. The actual survey shows that parents prefer to participate in all-round by participating in actual classrooms, reading activities, after-school tutoring and evaluation committees of school activities. The interaction between schools and parents not only affects family education, but also plays an important role in school education. Therefore, it is necessary to create more opportunities for parents to become the main body of school education and give full play to the role of parents in school education.

At present, the reform of Japanese parental participation in school management system is still in progress, and the parental participation model is gradually shifting from the “bilateral” structure of “parent-school” to the “multilateral” structure of “parent-school-community”. That is, the way Japanese parents participate in school management is not limited to the school, but further extends to the community. Parents work with the community to participate in school education. The Japanese parental participation in the school system and its related laws fully embody the concept of collaborative education. Schools, parents, and communities are building a new collaborative education model, and constantly improving the supervision and self-evaluation mechanism among the three parties. Although this school management model involving the participation of three parties has not yet been fully popularized, it is possible to foresee a new direction for the reform of the school management system in the future. The development of parents’ participation in school management system is gradually becoming mature in China, and it will also face various challenges. The school management system will be improved by constantly innovating the mode of parent participation.

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