

The difficulties in School Life and Study of Students Who Transferred from Japan to an International Elementary School in China

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Abstract: The purpose of this study will focus on the school life of two sisters who transferred from Japan to a China elementary school, to clarify the difficulties in school life and study of students who transferred from Japan to an international elementary school in China. The study will clarify how their surroundings' support the children to integrate to the new environment of studying and living. Japan has a numbers of research study about students transferred from other countries and have obtained a number of results, it has been taking actions to help international students to integrate into new school settings. However, author found China has few research on it. Thus, in this study, interviews will be conducted with two sisters who transferred from Japan to an international elementary school in China. This study will obtain the information of how the surrounds of two sisters such as teachers, classmates and parents help them to tackle the problems of studying and living they face in the new schools.

Keywords: elementary school, integrate, oversea, school life, transfer student

Introduction

According to Sato (2019), one of the problems for the students from oversea is to get to use the culture of Japanese school life. He cited that student have trouble when they attend the schools in Japan. For instant, students from oversea in Japanese school have to face the different lifestyle of school, such as cleaning, having lunch, *uwabaki* which asked students to remove shoes when they enter school buildings and wear a pair of indoor shoes that school has prepared at a specific area, and gym clothes. In addition, students from oversea must learn the norms and rules of the new school. Hayashizaki (2015) mentioned students from oversea in elementary schools have problems on understanding the subject contents because academic language is more difficult, meanwhile, students' educated experiences make them integrate to their new schools hardly, the number of teachers and volunteers with proficiency of multicultural education are not enough. For example, when the international students can't be able to integrate or adapt to the new school culture, Kojima (2001) said "some of the Japanese teacher stipulates that there is no way to help because they are not Japanese. Those teachers always think and deal with things in a self-centered manner".

On the other hand, Ozawa (2016) clarified for the children from oversea to obtain the academic language, establish learning habits and be able to seriously work on the subject, the primary factor is obtaining the basic academic ability. It has been suggested that the basic academic ability in mother tongue is also effective for learning a second language, and it is important to acquire basic academic ability in either mother tongue or the second language. Ishii (2016) mentioned that it was essential for teacher to have a cross-cultural perspective and attitude, and for cooperation between teachers in school to help students from oversea obtain Japanese skill.

Since the number of students from oversea increase rapidly in the past decade, the Japanese government has established a seir of policy to help them in schools. Ministry of education, culture, sports, science, and technology in Japan (2014) has set up a "special curriculum" to support the study and school life of the students from oversea. In 2021, the Ministry announced the action to support students from oversea included dispatch Japanese language instructors and native speaker supporters, using ICT, and provide comprehensive support for high school students.

Qi (2021) mentioned one of the problems for the children of oversea Chinese is Chinese language problem. To help those children to promote their Chinese skills, in many cases, they would be asked to enroll the grade which lower than their age equivalent. This action makes the children of oversea Chinese stressful. This study found multicultural education has been paying attention on and developing recently. Meanwhile, the school which my participants are attending does not have any policy to help students from oversea to integrate into schools. On the other hand, this study found there are few studies published in China related to this topic on dealing with students from oversea who are not native speakers of Chinese. Therefore, this study would focus on the school life of two sisters and sought to clarify their learning and living experiences at the China elementary school, and how their surroundings and parents

support them to tackle the problems and integrate to school. In other words, we will investigate how their surroundings and parents help them to tackle the problems of studying and living that face in the new schools.

Research Design & Methods

Qualitative research will be utilized during this research. To understand participants more deeply, interview with participants is an efficient method to collect data (Rubin,1995). Thus, in this study, researcher will conduct semi - constructed interview with two sisters and their mothers to collect the data, clarifying what two sisters have experienced during their transfer from Japan to China elementary school and how their surroundings and parents specifically support them.

The participants of this study are two sisters and their mother. Two sisters were born in Japan. Their father is Japanese, mother is Chinese. They attended the same public elementary school in Japan until November 2020. The elder child M was 4th grade, and the younger one L was 3rd grade. In November,2020, they moved to China with their mother and their father stay in Japan. In March 2021, they enrolled to an international elementary school in 4th and 3rd grade. Nowadays, in 2022, they are in 5th and 4th grade. In this September, they will be 6th and 5th grade students. The mother is working at a company in China and father keep contracting with them 5 times a week by using video calling. Research have conducted an interview with their mother in May 2022 and utilized KJ methods to clarified how the surroundings of two sisters help them to integrate and adapt to the new school environments. According to Scupin (1997), KJ Method was created by a Japanese ethnologist, Jiro Kawakita. It includes four steps 1) label making, 2) label grouping, 3) chart-making, 4) written or verbal explanation.

Meanwhile, researcher keep contracting with the M to obtain information of her new school life. Because the child was nervous when we were talking by the video, we changed a way to communicate. We utilized a Chinese SNS called *WeChat*, by using the chatting function, we keep communicating during May 2022.

Results

Based on the information obtained from the mother of two sisters, I realized that the two sisters have got used to their new school life. They can communicate with people in Chinese fluently, reading skill, writing skill, and listening skill has been improving. Even though they have some problems such as the shortage of vocabulary which make their articles can't be vividly, they are now able to write and read in Chinese. They have obtained the basic skills of Chinese language. Family, teacher, school, and classmates have play important characters on supporting them to integrate and adapt to the new school life. Figure 1 was created to shows the surroundings of two sisters based on the information I obtained from the mother.

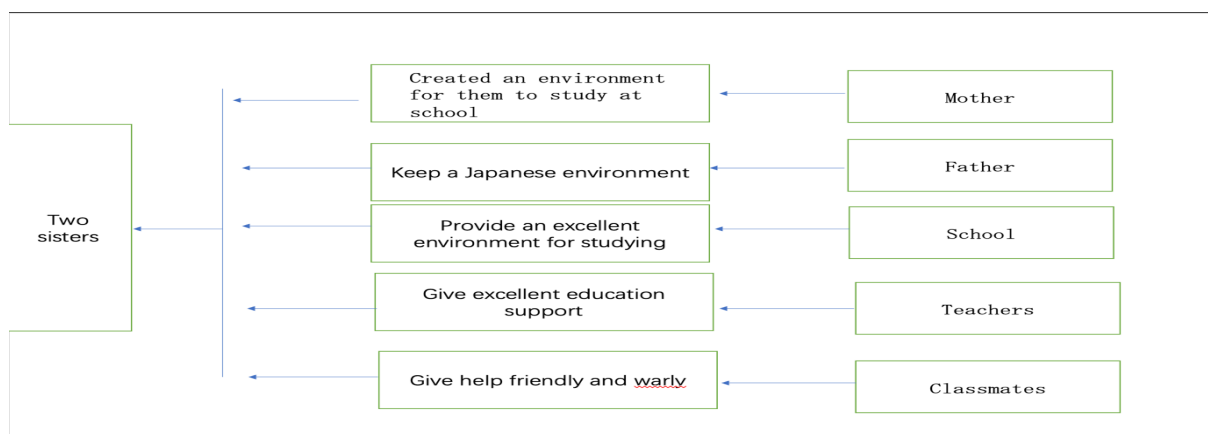


Figure 1 The surroundings of two sisters

Based on the information from M, researcher created a figure2 showing the things that she experienced during transferred from Japan to an international elementary school in China. Figure2 shows the problems that M experienced in her new school life and the support she got from her surroundings. For instant, the change of the school settings such as the change of relationship between students and instructors, different style of instruction, and the number of homework, tests. Meanwhile, classmates, parents, and the child herself play important role on integrating to new school life.

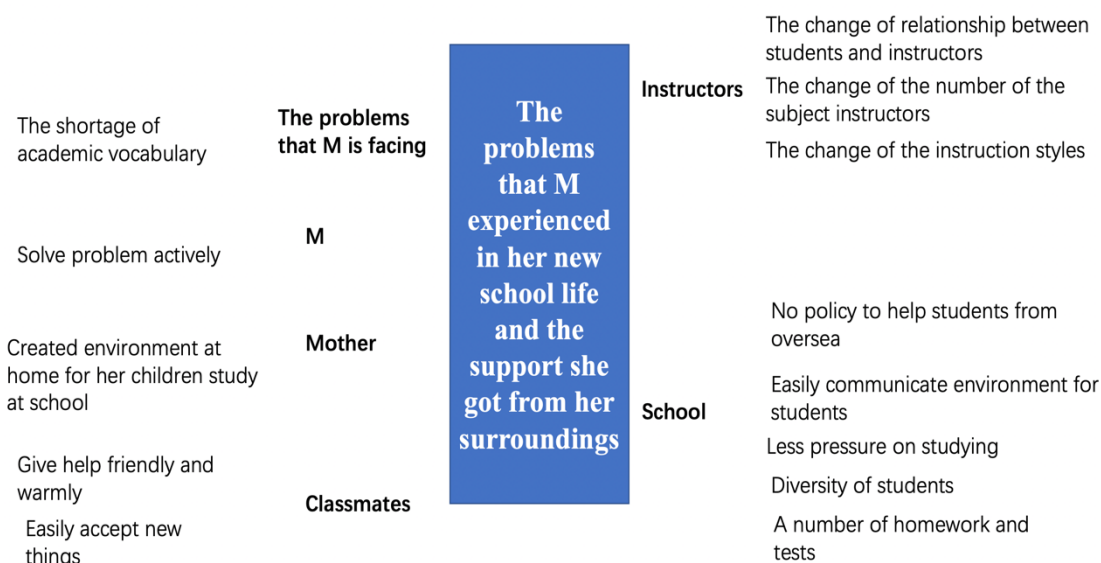


Figure 2 the problems that M experienced in her new school life and the support she got from her surroundings

However, my question such as the things happened on the two sisters on their study, how do they study, how they make friends, what problems they met, how they come over the problems, such as questions are still not clear. Thus, to the next step of this research, a semi-constructive interview will be conducted with M and analyze the data of the elder child base on the time axis, explaining the processing of the child integrate to the new school and finding the change of support as the situation of the child changed.

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