

# ПОРІВНЯЛЬНА ПЕДАГОГІКА

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING THE EXPERIENCE OF JAPAN IN IMPLEMENTING THE NEW UKRAINIAN SCHOOL REFORM

**Abstract.** Due to the fact that the school system in Ukraine having been undergoing an extensive reform, an inseparable part of schooling—value education—is the issue of special concern; the experience of a successful performer in this field attracts particular attention. Top educational performers, particularly those from Japan, can provide such experience. The case of Japan’s holistic schooling is very close to the new practice-based vector of schooling in Ukraine. Varied teaching approaches and wide-ranging learning resources, working in tandem with the representatives of other cultures, native speakers like ALT (ALT stands for Assistant Language Teacher) have much in common with practices applied in top-scoring, private Ukrainian schools (financially well supported), which are extremely lacking in average state schools, especially rural ones. Taking into account the urgency of ensuring educational equity, this research explores the context that delivers Japanese schools success. The study employs a descriptive comparison method, supplemented with national policy and school practices analysis. Some data was gained in a series of interviews with Japanese parents and professionals at all levels. The result of this paper provides teaching staff with recommendations that will facilitate students’ value awareness and contribute to better quality schooling nationwide.

**Keywords:** the “New Ukrainian School” reform, moral education, school system, state schools, school management, value education.

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## ЩОДО ВАЖЛИВОСТІ ВИВЧЕННЯ ДОСВІДУ ЯПОНІЇ В РЕАЛІЗАЦІЇ РЕФОРМИ «НОВА УКРАЇНСЬКА ШКОЛА»

**Анотація.** Система шкільної освіти в Україні переживає сьогодні серйозне реформування, особливої уваги у зв’язку з цим потребує найважливіший її складник – ціннісне виховання, у

реалізації якого може допомогти успішний досвід Японії. Загалом вектор освітньої реформи в Україні близький до освітньої практики сучасної Японії. Підходи до організації навчання, різноманітні освітні ресурси, залучення представників інших культур, носіїв мови, зокрема АЛТ («помічник вчителя мови») в Японії мають багато спільного з практикою кращих, зокрема приватних шкіл, чого часто не вистачає школам державним, особливо сільським в Україні. Зважаючи на нагальність забезпечення рівності в освіті, це дослідження вивчає контекст, що забезпечує успіх японської школи з метою використання його в практиці шкільної освіти в Україні.

**Ключові слова:** реформа «Нова українська школа», моральне виховання, система освіти, державні школи, шкільне управління, ціннісне виховання.

## Introduction

Citizenship education, character education, moral education, and value education are a few terms used in different education systems to denote similar practices incorporated into schooling. In Ukraine this term is de jure “*vyhovannia*”. Its meaning centers around the ethical mission of school “to help individuals develop as responsible and caring persons and live as participating society members” (Halstead, Taylor, 1996, p. 8)

Although education approaches on value education are highly variable (homeroom class, elective or core subject; various forms of its implementation), its current understanding tends to coincide worldwide. Value education is considered as a holistic system based on shared values and attitudes, personal characteristics and competences students are supposed to be equipped with.

## Ukrainian context

Since Ukraine’s independence in 1991, the main goal of education reforms has been national education system modernization, its sustainable functioning. Either external (integration, globalization), or internal (economic, historical, demographic, social, political, and pedagogical) factors were the driving force to make educational amendments. At the same time, as S. Sysoieva (2013, p. 47) points out, compared to other countries which faced similar challenges (economic restructuring, population ageing, social solidarity weakening, etc.), education system in Ukraine was not able to modernize gradually. The failure was due to excessive fundamental changes (transition from command-authoritarian to a market economy, from one-party political system to multi party democratic government) that caused instability in economics and politics. This, in turn, resulted in education reforms blurriness and goals accumulation (ibid).

Launched in 2016, the «*Nova Ukrainська Shkola*» (the New Ukrainian School) represents the most tangible school reform since 1991. It targets its changes at competence-based education, student-centered learning, pedagogy of partnership, school autonomy, equity, and just funding. Among the priority tasks is renewed education content on values and Ukrainian identity shaping (MON 2016, p. 5).

Although so far the reform has had visible effects (revised curriculum, new textbooks, and modernized school facilities), the overall quality of value education and school life management from school to school differs. In the context of extracurricular activities, summer break (3 months) reveal to be quite a problem for families whose children cannot be enrolled in school summer camp (in Ukrainian state schools, the priority access is for students from large families, orphans, children of ATO military (ATO is for anti-terrorist operation in eastern Ukraine), or whose low income can’t afford high-cost private camps. Among additional reasons why current schooling in Ukraine needs to draw more public attention is as follows: 1. being incorporated into various disciplines (“Arts”, “Health Basics” etc.) value education is regarded by most of parents and students as minor to academic disciplines; 2. school health program in Ukrainian state school demands more attention; 3. the lack of

real learning environments in and outside of school that helps students explore the world, stimulates students to choose career path consciously limits education to drilling; 4. despite a number of strategies, programs, and conceptions on value education since 1991, including “National value education program for children and young adolescents” (Resolution, 2004) and developed on this basis “Value education guidelines for Ukraine secondary school students of 1 – 11 grades” (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2011), there is no specific value education program for all schools to follow. Similar refers to yet insufficient value education resourcefulness provided by Ukraine Ministry of Education and Science in contrast to excellent training material, exam preparation support.

Regarding Japanese school excellence in holistic schooling (also in “teaching students to respect their elders, to do everything properly, to be orderly” (OECD 2010, p. 151), learning from it can become an impetus for understanding the existing and hidden opportunities of Ukrainian state school.

### **Research method**

Recent publications have shown that the interest in Japanese schooling has not waned over the years. The Finnish, Egyptian, and Norwegian scholars, as well as scholars from other countries, have joined the American research community, which was the first to spark the world’s interest in the subject of Japanese culture and education. Valuable information on Japanese millennial and schooling has been drawn from historical, sociological, ethnographic publications of past and present P. Cave, R. Goodman, C. Lewis, K. Lewis, G. Letendre, N. Nae, T. Rohlen, R. Fukuzava, T. Toivonen, R. Tsuneyoshi, M. White, etc. In addition, data shared by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have significantly eased Japanese school system examination and juxtaposed it with the Ukrainian school model.

The primary method used in this study is descriptive comparison, supplemented with national policy and school practice analysis. Valuable information on Japanese millennial, education, and schooling has been drawn from video observation, blogs, and documentation on Japanese schooling. Some data was gained in a series of interviews with Japanese parents and professionals at all levels.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### ***School system in Japan and Ukraine: a comparative profile***

A comparison of the historiography of school education in Japan and Ukraine allows us to state some universal features in the two education systems. Here, we refer to the changes that have occurred throughout the history of both systems, particularly their current emphasis on value and competence-based education. Both systems are similar in their commitment to democratic values; both are stipulated by national legislation and regional integration policies. Both education systems are characterized by relatively centralized authority: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan and Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine regulate state educational policy, set a school curriculum, guidelines, delegate management responsibilities at the regional, local, and school levels.

At the same time, the distinction between the two school systems is in their sustainability. In Japan, the school structure, contrary to Ukraine, has remained unchanged for a long time. Since postwar times, the 12-year school model has comprised a 6-year primary, 3-year junior high, and 3-year high school. Since Ukraine’s independence in 1991, the school structure has undergone several changes. 2014 saw the reintroduction of the 12-year

general secondary education structure, comprising a 4-year primary school, 5-year basic secondary, and 3-year high secondary (specialization) schools.

Compulsory education in Japan lasts 9 years. Until high school level, it is single-track by nature—there is no curriculum differentiation. High school entrants can choose a particular program to study. Most students enroll in an academic program (*futsu-ka*), whereas other students choose a vocational (*senmon gakka*), or integrated program (*sogo gakka*) to study (Japan Forum, 2001).

In Ukraine, compulsory education is a twelve-year period. Students typically differentiate themselves at the high school level, but they can also do so earlier through specialized classes or schools that offer advanced learning in specific disciplines. The specializations cover such fields as science, applied studies, arts, and sports (Zahorodn'ia, 2018).

In Japan, the school year begins in April. The total duration of learning is 230 days (3 semesters). Ukrainian students traditionally start school in autumn (September). 180 days are divided into 2 semesters, or *de facto* 4 quarters.

Another distinctive feature of Japanese schooling is a low percentage of private sector funding at the obligatory level (only 0.65% of primary schools and 3% of secondary schools in Japan are private) (Saito, 2011); a greater ratio of male teachers at school than in Ukraine; primary, secondary, and high schools have separate functions; and an attitude toward school paraphernalia. In Japan, the significance of school symbols, anthem, rules for students, and school uniform is emphasized. In a regular Ukrainian school, the significance of school symbols, anthem, rules for students, and school uniform is highly dependent on specific school regulations.

What also differs is the two school systems approach to accountability. In Ukraine, the system still adheres to administrative control, which involves primarily school principals' decisions about which teacher to hire. Japanese schooling places emphasis on collegial forms of teaching staff accountability (Schleicher, 2018, p. 116), which is regarded as the means of the teacher's personal responsibility increase. The teachers transfer and appointment system widespread in Japan, makes it easier for local governments and schools to balance teaching staff (e.g., by gender, age) and allows them to ensure education services of equal quality (NIER, 2017, p. 2).

According to the global competitiveness index, in 2019, Japan ranked 6th (The Global Competitiveness Report, 2019). Economic growth indicators determine Japan's financial capacity to invest in national education system development. However, being among the top education providers (Singapore, China, Norway, Great Britain), affluent Japan saves expenditures on expensive school infrastructure and textbooks; the education process is carried out in a large class, allowing spending on relatively high teachers (Schleicher, 2018). According to the same competitiveness parameter in 2019, Ukraine ranked 85th (The Global Competitiveness Report, 2019), spending much less on education than in previous years (8.2% in 2009). Analysts attribute the tendency to reduce education sector funding in Ukraine to its unjustified allocation in conditions of weak institutions and unequal class size (Eurosvita, 2016).

In the context of reforms, both education systems coordinate their activities with regional policy. The European direction of education system development in Ukraine is due to the need to modernize the national system from the standpoint of its compliance with European standards. Another reason is the intention of Ukraine to participate in the regional economics on equal terms. Education and science are considered by the EU as a region with a population of over 508 million (167 million of which are children and youth) (The EU in brief, 2020; The European Union, 2020), as a factor of economic stability. The EU defines its core values as respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom,

democracy, equality, and law supremacy. In the context of education, until 2020 the EU strategy pursues “to make a lifelong education and mobility a reality, to improve the quality and efficiency of education, to promote equality, social cohesion and active citizenship, to enhance creativity and innovation, and, namely, entrepreneurship at all levels of education” (European policy cooperation, 2020). A paramount feature of the current EU education policy is the transition from its recommendatory nature to standards unification. As an example of this is the list of EU key competencies new Ukraine education policy took into account in revised “The Law On Education” (2017), the concept of “The New Ukrainian School” (2016) reform.

Like Ukraine, Japan is guided by the economic interests of its region, in particular Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), which covers the third of the world’s population area (2.9 billion people, including 580 million children and youth) (2019). APEC defines its values as community, openness, respect, and excellence. By 2030, APEC (2017) aims to create a strong and cohesive educational community characterized by means of high-quality education, including inclusivity. It is assumed that under such conditions the contribution to sustainable economic growth, social welfare, and employment of APEC citizens will be done.

In addition to Asia, Japan focuses on the European vector of development. The EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement, validated on February 1, 2019 (the EU has invested more than €58 billion in goods and €28 billion in services to Japan), is indicative of the country’s intention to establish long-term ties with the EU (Hrabovska, 2018). Japan also cooperates with UNESCO and OECD. In particular, the country participates in the OECD and PISA analytical reviews which, in turn, are used by Japanese educational policymakers as litmus for system efficiency. In collaboration with UNESCO, Japan currently is implementing a school project on education for sustainable development.

Social background in both countries undoubtedly has a decisive influence on the upbringing and well-being of the new generation. Even though there are schools in Ukraine that educate and teach just as effectively as those in Japan, «the imprint of prolonged political, national, cultural, and social pressure led to forming in many Ukrainians such negative traits as atrophied national feelings» (Makhniy, 2011, p. 92), resulting in a lack of national cohesion. The school climate, or more accurately, the lack of support for school values, reflects this. The situation is complicated, in particular by the teaching profession low status, the lack of a clear strategy of value education contents, the Ukrainian individualism found at all levels of society, and not at least by the Russian-Ukrainian war in Donbas. Traditionally, rural schools in Ukraine are on the periphery of quality as compared to urban institutions in terms of infrastructure, resources, and educational services quality.

In Japan, despite the drastic changes since the defeat in World War II, there is a strong consensus on societal values. Traditionally, harmony in interpersonal relationships, the predominance of group interest over the individual, has a high social value. The masculinity of Japanese society, which is by Hofstede manifested in the desire of the Japanese to be successful, work for the result is already observed in school (team competition) (Rossides, 2020, p. 7). The Japanese parents’ contribution to effective schooling, especially mothers, who spend significant amount of time on school responsibilities is explained by traditional division of family roles in Japan. Extra hours after work are one of the reasons why a Japanese woman has no place in the world of Japanese male business. Despite the rise of emancipation, after the marriage most Japanese women become housewives or part-time workers. In Ukraine, due to low living standards and wages, both fathers and mothers usually work to support the family.

Both education systems have faced a demographic problem, which has a logical connection with small-sized school closures. In terms of birth rate, Ukraine ranks 190th, Japan 223rd (CIA, 2020). Unlike Ukraine, which is only about solving problems, Abenomics (Shinzo Abe's government policy) is already simplifying immigration rules, considering how technology can protect the population, and mobilizing the country's forces through education, immunizing the new generation with qualities and experience they may need in the future.

### ***Reflection on facilitation approach***

To teach students skills needed for achieving goals, living and working (Schleicher 2018, p. 32) Japanese schools focus on such dimensions as instilling morality, managing students' engagement, and school – home – community collaboration.

Compared to Ukrainian schools, moral education in Japanese schools is taught as a core discipline. Moreover, its content is a touch stone that subordinates curricular and extracurricular activities. The Fundamental law, the curriculum, teacher's guidance on moral education, a series of moral education textbooks, and additional material on Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan site set opportunities for school values unification nationwide. Logically sequenced through 1 – 9 grades the content is arranged around four topics relating to oneself (autonomous living, self-discipline, freedom and responsibility, moderation, ambition to improve oneself, self-improvement, aspiration and courage, self-control and strong will, pursuit of truth, creativity), other people (consideration for others, gratitude, friendship, reliance and trust, mutual understanding), group and society (observance of laws, civic virtue, fairness, social justice, participation, public spirit, love of family, enrichment of family life, respect for tradition and culture, love of the country and local area, understanding other countries and peace), nature and sublime objects (reverence for life, care for nature, reverence for the sublime, life enjoy) (Naito, 1990, p. 29). Unchanged since the 1960s, with time the content is supplemented by concepts needed for school graduates to adapt in global world (creativity, independence, competences). Some amendments are intended to reflect social challenges affecting youth well-being (yutori, zest for living). Current vision of schooling under the “zest for living” concept focuses on the 21<sup>st</sup> century competences which include: (i) independence and autonomous action, bonds building, responsibility for building a sustainable future; (ii) basic literacy (literacy, numeracy, and information/communication technology literacy, manners and morals for ICT), (iii) thinking ability (finding and solving problems, creativity, critical thinking, logical thinking, metacognition, and adaptive learning skills) (Kimura & Tatsuno 2017, p. 4, 5).

The following example illustrates how Japanese students are taught to consider each other. Having worked in groups beforehand, on class open day, 6th graders prepared a lecture on how people with special needs are treated in Japan. Students reported about tactile tiles, special signs that help blind people find their way, talked about guide dogs, and demonstrated a Braille alphabet and their names written on a special machine. There was also a role-play on how a hard-of-hearing person can communicate with a bus driver. Students didn't forget to involve their parents in the simulation with a real wheelchair.

What is important is that moral education in Japanese schools is not limited by class discussions or desired deeds illustrations. It is facilitated by school-community communication, as well as native speakers involvement, who share with students their experiences and skills. In Japan, this category of educators is called “kokoro no sensei” which literally means “teachers of the heart.” Due to the school system facing students difficulty in learning English (low scores on international tests in English), school cooperation with

other culture representatives, overseas students known as Assistant Language Teachers, is seen as a necessity.

Compared to most state schools in Ukraine, school life in Japan is organized in a way that requires all students to participate in so-called special activities (*tokkatsu*) which is a part of the curriculum (Tsuneyoshi et al., 2012). Class activities, school events, student leadership, and clubs are four general groups of special activities aimed at cultivating in students skills and manners essential in daily life in an enjoyable and cooperative way. Typical class activities include doing chores in a group: a class day-leader, for instance, is responsible for roll call, announcements, and keeping the class journal. Meanwhile, other students are in charge of more specific tasks like blackboard cleaning, class newspaper editing, and health promotion activities (Japan Forum, 2019). The absence of janitors in Japanese schools makes students obligated to clean. Students sweep, mop, wipe the classrooms, hallways, toilets making respect work of each other. In elementary school, G. Benjamin (1998, p. 34) notes, it seems to be like a game.

Like in Ukraine, but more diverse in terms of activities and quantity of involved students, Japanese schools engage students on holidays. Additionally to reading lists, summer assignments can also refer to writing a diary, watching plants grow, raising a rhinoceros beetle, visiting clubs or extra lessons for A-achieving/low-achieving students, doing a research project, and practicing musical instruments. Junior high and high school students usually have fewer assignments due to entrance exam preparation and attending private *juku*. At the same time, visiting clubs remains obligatory.

Besides students' busy year-round schedule, Japanese schools set more rigid control over students' health than it happens in most state Ukrainian schools. As evidence for that, there is an increased number of digestive disorders and obesity among Ukrainian students (Deren et al., 2018). School lunch in Ukraine is optional, and it lasts 15 minutes. One can eat at a school canteen or bring and eat their food in the classroom. The availability of snacks and sweets in school shops quite often tempts students to eat them. Despite annual health checks, thematic lessons on lifestyle-related diseases, homeroom teacher's hours, and subjects learning (*I'm Exploring the World, I'm in the World, Health Basics*), chaotic eating remains one of the main causes of digestive illnesses in Ukrainian students. Other negative factors that add to Ukrainian students' poor health are: poor hygiene, lack of afterschool sport program (some schools have double shift schedule), underestimation of extra-curricular sports value by school staff; low motivation for PE among young adolescents etc. (Shutko 2014, p. 159).

Contrary to Ukraine, school health program receives a significant attention in Japan. It comprises health education (classroom teachers, nurse teachers are responsible for health guidance), health management (includes environmental safety, improving the environment, sanitation inspections, annual health checks, the provision of students' guidance on lifestyle issues both in and outside school), and public health organization activities conducted to ensure the effectiveness of all school health management and health education activities (JICA, p. 220). Similarly to Ukraine, every school in Japan employs a school nurse (*yogo teacher*) assigned as a member of teaching staff (Ojio 2015 p. 6). Besides conducting routine procedures, *yogo teacher* is also responsible for students' emotional sustenance and behavioral health (Iwasaki, Watanabe, Tamura 2017, p. 124), which in Japanese society is associated with the issues of *hikimori*, non-attendants, child abuse etc.

Additionally, in Japan, school lunch targets to enrich students' lives with cheerful social interaction and guide students to a proper understanding of food production, distribution, and consumption. (JICA, p. 222). School lunch lasts an hour and is treated as a fully fledged discipline. Within this time, 1st–6th graders are expected to do quite a lot (middle and high

school students bring lunchboxes (obento): put tables together, wash hands, do greetings, eat lunch in their classroom, return dishes, and wash milk/juice cartons for recycling, brush teeth, clean the room, and have a brief recess). Despite snacks and sweets being forbidden to bring to school, such an approach is not designed to put restrictions but to encourage conscious eating habits through active learning. To provide students with appropriate knowledge and attitudes on healthy diets, Japanese schools arrange school visits to local farms; students deepen their cooking skills in home economics; both, as a report and recommendations to follow, school provides parents with the school lunch menu month forward. One more technique for students' dietary encouragement is the introduction of ethnic cuisine into school menu once or twice a week, for example, Korean or Italian (Harlan, 2013).

Compared to Ukraine, physical training in Japanese schools extends beyond PE lessons. It is also about swimming classes between June and September and afterschool clubs. Supplementary sports propaganda in Japan is radio gymnastics Taiso (founded in 1928 with a break during World War II) and the beloved Sports Day (undokai) which is celebrated on the same day or at least in the same week nationwide. On this day the entire school splits into two teams: white and red hats; the latter team changes hat colors by turning them inside out. After cheerleaders' appeal to both teams wishing good luck, students compete in different races (short-distance, obstacle races, relays, and tied feet), rope jumping, demonstrate calisthenics, have fun rolling a giant ball, and throw small ones into the high basket. Among students' favourite competitions are tug-of-war and traditional "kibasen" battles—when a rider on students' shoulders has to remove the opponent's hat. Parents and teachers participate too. Eating together at a bento picnic lunch afterwards and common feelings of being a winner add more appeal to the event (CULCON 2003; Japan Forum, 2019).

By contrast to the competitive learning style in Ukrainian schools, Japanese schools rely on students' equity, regardless of talents and abilities. The particular emphasis is done on students' efforts and motivation that sufficiently adds to a student-friendly environment. Mistakes are taken as everyone's useful experience or a hint for those who fall behind to be more persistent. To provide support in case of students' poor performance, some schools implement a rewriting "policy" until a student gets progress. Such an approach K. Lewis describes as the power of Japanese "yet": you do not understand that... yet, or you cannot cope with it... yet (Lewis K., 2017). Besides persistence, Japanese school emphasizes the urgency of students' reflection (hansei) determining it as a path to maturity (Keith 2011, p. 198). Teachers use all possible activities to teach students to reflect, from writing reflexive essays and engaging in moral dilemma discussions to task planning.

Besides setting control over students' health, Japanese school places high value on the emotional dimension through team camaraderie. As M. Arimoto notes (2019), it is believed that the stronger the bond, the more efficiently students become well-rounded (zenjinteki) to reproduce similar communities around them (p. 151). Although it seems for entertainment, school events like festivals, school overnight trips, and choral contests are designed around specific educational objective to consolidate students in sharing common values. What differs all the events is students' work style. Sports day and choral contest, for instance, are similar in teamwork, whereas cultural festival is focused primarily on students' individual creativity and talents (Cave 2016, p. 12). Infused into the curriculum, field trips are another inspirational means to boost school spirit. Elementary school field trips often include tours to nearby farms, factories, museums, parks, zoos, and processing plants. In the middle and high school, among the most popular students' travel destinations are historical landmarks (Mystudyabroad, 2016).

Another vital issue given much attention in Japanese schooling and what is definitely worth considering in Ukraine state school practice is integrated approach implementation.



In Japanese schools it is represented, namely, in Integrated Studies period which introduction in curriculum in 2002 largely helped shift educators’ focus from students’ instruction and control onto students’ autonomy development and fostering interpersonal relationships (Cave 2016, p. 57). Currently, the period is used as a platform for Education for Sustainable Development program implementation, which much corresponds to students’ competence development and local community consideration (Singer, Gannon, Nogucci, Mochizuki, 2016 p. 70). The period of Integrated Studies is designed on schools teaching materials in liberated way (experiments, presentations, discussions, games, workshops, field trips, hands-on activities, cooperative learning, discovery lesson can be applied). Each school is required to use available local resources, in particular, in such fields as culture, environment, history. The example of Integrated Studies in the fourth grade is students’ study tour to Traditional Craft Center. Another example is junior high school students’ participation in volunteer activities – students collected aluminum cans to convert them into money and buy a wheel chair for local nursing home (Asian Ed topics, 2013).

Like everywhere in contemporary top education systems, Japanese schools popularize science through collaboration with different institutions. The example of such work is Science dialogue program aimed to deepen Japanese students’ understanding of science importance and innovative thinking benefits. Students interact with overseas scholars who give lectures in English on the subject of their researches (JSPS, 2019).

Last but not least, when it comes to any school system’s strength, it is important to mention parents’ contribution. Compared to Ukraine, the roles Japanese schools delegate to parents are much broader. Firstly, parents act as decision-makers in PTA. They are more than teachers to decide on funds allocations; they discuss students’ issues on a municipal/prefectural level. Secondly, Japanese parents are involved as volunteers. It is a common school practice to gather parents’ data bank (names and talents) to apply for when certain events/classes are arranged. A homeroom teacher, for instance, can ask for parents’ assistance while cooking or sewing classes (home economics) Integrated Studies; in elementary school parents are welcomed prior to the first class to tell/read stories (Jabar 2010, p.33). In elementary school, parents patrol the area. Thirdly, parents partner with teachers to help children accumulate skills and knowledge, monitor their activities (including summer too), performance, and attitudes (career path too). Finally, the school arranges seminars for Japanese parents, involving them as learners.

## **Conclusion**

It is worth praising a school that implements practically oriented education, preparing mature, independent young people with their identity awareness. It is undeniable that, either in Japan or Ukraine, as elsewhere in the world, there do exist responsible schools that contribute much to students’ potential growth. The key issues are located in education system sustainability, its facilitating power, and the educational equity it provides.

The lessons that could be drawn from Japanese schooling are certainly precious regarding the clear, sustainable moral education contents, variety of approaches, and learning environments for teaching students about values and practicing them. What is also worth considering is the Japanese school attitude toward wholesome child growth, school health programs, and «school-parents-community» communication, which obviously needs pivotal changes in state schools in Ukraine.

Taking into account the ongoing education reform in Ukraine and a number of barriers that harden its progress, familiarizing Ukrainian teachers with effective national and the world’s best schooling practices, Japan in particular, remains relevant.

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