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Phenomenological research on *shitsuke*, Japanese disciplinary action used in school and its impact on students

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Discipline is taught in school, home and in the society in order to follow the expected social etiquette all over the world. This research focuses on the discipline taught in schools in Japan, so called *shitsuke*. Every student experiences *shitsuke* in schools one way or another and the impact on them can be seen even after many years. Educators’ understanding of the impact of disciplinary actions is essential both in terms of classroom management and the future of the students’ life. Lack of discipline and corporal punishment are long discussed issues in the field of education and still need to be investigated.

The aim of this research is to find out the uniqueness of disciplinary actions used in Japanese schools and the impact of those from the students’ perspectives. The research begins with defining the discipline from both Japanese and western perspectives. In order to discuss today’s disciplinary actions used in schools as a phenomenon, Japanese cultural and historical background such as Confucianism influences are underlain. Having defined what the discipline used in school is, different types of theories related to the discipline is discussed. This research mainly utilises the operant conditioning (reward and punishment) model from Skinner’s learning theory to investigate how the discipline is applied in schools to motivate and modify the pupils’ behaviours. Other than Skinner, Canter’s, Kounin’s and Gordon’s models are also explored in order to aid the insight for this research. While most of the theories used rely on Western studies, Confucius and Japanese Bushido add Asian perspectives to the context.

Data for this research is collected from five Japanese students in Finland using semi-structured interviews. The interviews are carried out in Japanese language to ensure that the participants are able to convey their experience and thoughts as much and as clearly as possible. The content analysis is used to analyse the interview data, then the contents are translated into English.

Despite the possible loss of meaning in the translation and the low number of participants, this research revealed the general understanding of *shitsuke* among Japanese students is reasonably similar and they consider it as a type of education. The disciplinary actions play important role to shape Japanese collectivism culture, and as much as the students dislike being punished it is crucial to be taught. Skinner’s reward and punishment model for controlling the behaviour is also confirmed by all the participants. Further research on this topic is highly recommended to investigate discipline use in different school systems in Japan and its effect on the students. Further, it would be of great interest to see and document eventual changes in disciplinarian practices in Japanese educational institutions.

**Keywords:** classroom management, discipline, Japan, phenomenology, reward and punishment, shitsuke
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Structure and the aim of the research

This research begins with defining discipline and exploring the roots of discipline in Japanese context using literature to give some background knowledge on how discipline is valued in Japan. It is vital for this research to review how the discipline is shaped in Japan in order to grasp the idea of today’s discipline use in school within Japanese culture.

Next, variety of study models on discipline use in school are presented to form a theoretical framework. The theorists are mainly from western countries. In addition, Japanese laws related to education, school policy and officially published reports will be examined in connection to the discipline use. With the theoretical framework being established, individual interviews with Japanese students are conducted to collect empirical data. The collected data is analysed using thematic content analysis.

Finally, all the findings are discussed and followed by evaluation of validity and reliability, and suggestions for future researches.

The main research questions are the following.

1. What is Japanese discipline, shi-tsu-ke?
2. How do students in Japan experience shitsuke in schools?
3. What impacts does the shitsuke in school bring to those students in Japan?
The aim of this research is to explore the personal experience related to discipline from Japanese students’ point of view and examine what types of disciplinary actions are taken and how they affected on the students.

1.2. Benefits

Researchers on Japanese culture and education have been done in many levels yet discipline does not seem to be the core of those researches. This research focuses on the school discipline used in Japan to illustrate its effects on the students using phenomenology. Despite the research development in areas of discipline, it is not the major subject for the teacher education at university (Perry & Taylor, 1982, pp. 416-419). By conducting this research, it expands the knowledge in the area of research and possibly contribute to the future teacher education programmes.

According to Wray, having a certain level of discipline in classroom can promote respect towards teacher and overall academic achievement. At the same time he warns that the lack of discipline can lead to a failure as a whole class. (Wray, 1999, p. 14) This research can help teachers to understand the discipline use and its consequences better and enhance their classroom management quality. I believe that pupils will get the final benefit as having better learning environment. The benefit is not only for the educators, but also for the administrative level as well. PTA, policy makers and board of education can take advantage of the research to recognise and understand the importance of discipline use and implement suitable and modern guidelines. In addition, by analysing students’ experiences I can deepen my understanding of the discipline effect to improve my own classroom management.
2. JAPANESE EDUCATION AS RESEARCH CONTEXT

In this chapter, different definitions of discipline are examined from both western and Japanese perspective. Historical roots of discipline in Japan and modern usage of discipline in schools are explored as the foundation of the research. Modern laws including the currently in used are introduced as well as cases of discipline and reports regarding abuse.

2.1. Defining discipline and classroom management

In English, the word discipline is defined as “the practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behaviour, using punishment to correct disobedience”, according to Oxford dictionary. The word discipline originated from Latin word discipulus; meaning a student, a pupil. (Oxford University Press, 2018). Discipline can be used anywhere in different forms such as at home, school and work. Teachers discipline students in school to correct the misbehaviours. As Gnagey argues that whether it is misbehaviour depends on the appropriateness of the conduct in a certain environment rather than the characteristics of conduct itself. For example, while an English teacher considers student doing maths homework in her class as misbehaviour, maths teacher might think it is fine to do English homework in her maths class. A misbehaviour does not mean the same to all other teachers as each environment and appropriateness differ. (Gnagey, 1968, p. 5).

Discipline is often translated into a Japanese word shi-tsu-ke (躾). Japanese dictionary explains that the word shitsuke used to mean to put things together or baste fabric to tailor a dress. Samurai culture then took the word as their terminology to teach samurai etiquette in order to mature children. And to distinguish the meaning from basting fabric, in 13th to 17th century,
samurai culture made up a unique letter for this word combining two words next to each other 身 and 美 which came from China (literary: body and beautiful) (Sugimoto, 2005). This suggests that the shitsuke among samurai culture developed itself from the Japanese culture without interference of foreign culture.

Today discipline means that adult to teach rules, social etiquette and courtesy to children and make sure they follow the rules in order to protect them from the danger and recognise things to do and not to do (Shōgakukan Japanese dictionary editorial department, 2001). The Japanese educational sociology dictionary defines shitsuke as above, then mentions three traits that are unique to Japanese culture. The first point is that people put emphasis on mastering the performance presented by the actual actions, because while the outer surface is being made, inner side shall be self-built. Secondary, while shitsuke is not clearly specified and presented with logics, it is expected to be learnt and acquired from accumulation of experiences in the actual life. Thirdly, when it comes to perform shitsuke on children, it is essential that people in the society to teach the manners to children beside parents. (The Japan Society of Educational Sociology, 1986). Matsuda defines shitsuke as an act performed by adults around a child so that he can acquire the necessary actions in conducting a social life. The social life includes broad contents ranging from basic lifestyle habits to etiquette, distinction of good and evil. (Matsuda, 2011, p. 96).

Therefore, Japanese word shitsuke includes the social expectation which goes back in history. The only western definition that fits shitsuke is a German word “die Zucht”. While there is a word “Disziplin” as for English discipline, Zucht refers intention and energy on the behaviours, and training on the character especially during the youth. It is something that is taught strictly during the childhood to form personality in the way which is accepted in the society accompanied by physical punishment. (Grimm & Grimm, 1854, p. 260). In a sense, shitsuke and Zucht are the teaching of self-discipline. There is a slight difference in the nuance and expectation between discipline and shitsuke used in Japanese context. In this research the discipline with punishment and teaching self-discipline in Japanese context are referred to shitsuke.
Similarly, classroom management “refers to actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction (arranging the physical environment, establishing rules and procedures, maintaining students’ attention to lessons and engagement in activities)” (Brophy, 2006, p. 17). Classroom management is not discipline (shitsuke) in school itself, but discipline is part of the classroom management. While discipline focuses only on behaviour control, classroom management puts emphasis on preventing that misbehaviours from happening by teaching procedures. “Japanese teachers reported that they trained children in procedures and physical skills, such as arranging desk contents, preparing study materials for the next class, sitting and standing with good posture, and using the bathroom and other school facilities. Some of these procedures seem potentially useful in reducing disruption and transition time between activities.” (Lewis, 1988, p. 169). Both discipline and classroom management emphasises the importance of creating a good learning environment for the students. “In Japan, the homeroom teacher’s classroom management strategy is one of the main ways of influencing student guidance” (Ito, 2011, p. 44).

2.2. Historical background on shitsuke in Japan

Discipline practiced in Japan has strong connexion with Japanese culture itself, thus as for this research it is essential to point out historical background knowledge in order to understand shitsuke in Japanese context. As introduced in the previous chapter, practice of shitsuke was formed among samurai family. In Japanese history, roots of the shitsuke can be seen in a concept of Bushido (武士道); literary means the way of warriors in Japanese.

The term Bushido was first used in the 17th century during Edo period. It is a philosophical set of ethical codes for samurai warriors together with variety of irreplaceable concepts for living as a samurai warrior (Ikegami, 1995, p. 279). Namely, politeness, honour, loyalty, rectitude, courage, and discipline are taught in samurai families generation to generation. These codes are
unwritten and inherited verbally and by actions. Despite we do not have the samurai warriors any longer today, many of these codes are still alive and heavily influencing today’s Japanese culture. Nitobe’s study on Bushido unveils that the freedom of expression was severely limited for the samurai warriors in the 17th century.

“The discipline of fortitude on the one hand, inculcating endurance without a groan, and the teaching of politeness on the other, requiring us not to mar the pleasure or serenity of another by manifestations of our own sorrow or pain.” (Nitobe, 1908, p. 28).

This sort of discipline can be seen even today as it is considered unwise to be over talkative in Japan, and people refrain from speaking up due to the fear of destroying the harmony in the society not because they are simply shy.

Concept like bushido can be very complicated, however, this type of discipline has been every corner of the world in all ages as Hartley claims. In the European culture, being well disciplined is vital to be labelled as a gentleman. Hartley suggests in his book that the Chivalry should be the European candidate for Bushido (Hartley, 1860, p. 34). Although the concept of chivalry does not describe the actual reality of Middle-Age, it shares certain amount of philosophical ideas with Bushido as a goal to aim. Bulfinch describes that “chivalry, which framed an ideal of the heroic character, combining invincible strength and valour, justice, modesty, loyalty to superiors, courtesy to equals, compassion to weakness, and devotedness to the Church; an ideal which, if never met with in real life, was acknowledged by all as the highest model for emulation” (Bulfinch, 1863, p. 1). Vale also claims that “chivalry was often no more, and no less, than the sentiment of honour in its medieval guise” (Vale, 1981, p. 1). As Miller compares Bushido to Chivalry, Bushido is more expressive form of just a horsemanship itself (Miller, 1853, p. 2).

Nitobe describes some of the concepts of Bushido were not only limited to the members of samurai families, and all the member of each society shared them commonly. For example, self-control was one of the very basic principal of Bushido required on everyone in the 17th century. Strong characters are often portrayed as emotionless in Japanese culture even today as it was a common knowledge that showing man’s emotion on his face is considered unmanly.
This type of highly valued self-control is the foundation of today’s self-discipline practice in Japan, which is handed down in families and by sword masters. (Nitobe, 1908).

2.3. Modern practice of shitsuke in schools

Ota explains that just before the formal public education system was implemented, shitsuke meant the whole process of educating children to adults in each communal level (Ota, 1975, pp. 59-60). Which means the shitsuke was not just a part of education, but education itself. In 1872, educational system order took place in the law and modern public schooling system from western cultures was implemented nationwide. Due to the formation of new system, all of the terakoya (private educational institutions) and han school (educational institute for samurai) were abolished and public schools took over, moreover, destroyed the educational function of the communal body. As discipline education among the ethnic society was forced to change forms, some parts of the responsibility were shifted to public schools. (National Institute for Educational Policy Research, 2016). Discipline taught by the community and neighbours was then taught by teachers in schools.

In the 20th century after the First World War, formal education in Japan had a huge role to indoctrinate citizens with imperial ideology to increase the national security. Discipline used in school became militarised as the Ministry of Education issued “National Spiritual Mobilisation Policy” in 1937, schools started military drills (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999, p. 25). By 1940 indoctrination intensified as military intervened Ministry of Education and demanded to include basic military science and drills in the curricula. As the relationship between military and school became closer, middle schools employed ex-army officers and students were trained with use of real weapons (Morris-Suzuki, 1984, p. 29). The military drill and discipline including use of real weapons became compulsory in 1941 from elementary to university level of the education (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999, p. 25). Discipline education based on the military concept can be seen even today in public schools.
In Japanese public education today, there are numbers of remnants that military education carried out to discipline children in 20th century. To cultivate the sense of collective behaviour, and joint and several liability, strict discipline based on collectivism is taught throughout the compulsory education. Lessons in the school begins and ends after a set of formal greeting in Japan. When the teacher commands on pupils: *kiritsu* (on your feet), pupils stand up, followed by *kiwotsuke* (attention), which is correspondence to attention, then *rei* (bow), and *chakuseki* to sit down. Basic military drill commands are practiced everyday such as formation and marching during physical education and when the students are moving to the different classroom in a formation. Annual school excursion includes long distance walking with all the gear which is also to enrich the physical of the students and practice the collectivism. (Ministry of Education, 1998). In this context, the *shitsuke* refers these school rules, activities and cultures.

2.4. Japanese law related to disciplinary action and corporal punishment

Too often the *shitsuke* in school takes a shape of corporal punishment. In this chapter, Japanese law related to the discipline in school are examined.

131 countries prohibit corporal punishment in schools by their law today (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2018, p. 1). Japan banned corporal punishment in schools by law in 1879, as one of the very first countries in the world to legally implement the prohibition. Reasons behind the prohibition might be that the possible use of excess corporal punishment prior to the promulgation of the law.

“Do not inflict corporal punishment on student in school” (Great Council of State, 1879). Prohibition of corporal punishment has been mentioned in many laws related to school and education as the new ones are formed over the time. Elementary School Order states that
“principal and teachers may take disciplinary action when deemed educationally necessary, however, inflicting corporal punishment is prohibited” (Minister of Education, 1900, p. 300).

Japanese Fundamental Law of Education encourages teachers to implement discipline in their education as stated in the Basic Act of Education, Article 6. “In order to fulfil the objectives of education, the schools referred to in the preceding paragraph shall provide a structured education, in an organized way that is suited to the mental and physical development of the persons receiving that education. In this, education must be provided in a way that instils respect for the discipline necessary to manage school life in the persons receiving that education, and that emphasizes them strengthening their own motivation to learn.” (Ministry of Justice, 2006).

School Education Act Article 11 states that principal and teachers can apply disciplinary action to the students according to the minister of education when deemed necessary for the educational purpose. However, the corporal punishment cannot be inflicted. (Ministry of Justice, 2017).

According to various regulations and laws listed above, the government strictly prohibits the use of corporal punishment. The consequences for teachers who use corporal punishment are severe as shown in the chapter 3.8. However, the law leaves room for teachers to exercise appropriate discipline so that classroom management can be carried out.

Ministry of Education clarified on the disciplinary act and prohibition of the corporal punishment as below. Corporal punishment is prohibited and under any circumstances should anyone inflict corporal punishment on pupils as an instruction tool. Corporal punishment is a criminal offense, moreover, it gives severely negative impact on children’s both physical and psychological growth leading abasement of teachers and schools in general. Whether the disciplinary actions applied by a teacher is classified as corporal punishment should be decided comprehensively considering age, health, psychological development, environmental factor such as time and place, and disciplinary action itself. Instead of the subjective view of the teacher who applied disciplinary action or the parents, each case must be reviewed objectively with all the circumstantial conditions. (Ministry of Education, 2013).
2.5. Example cases of disciplinary action and corporal punishment

Ministry of education published a paper regarding difference between disciplinary action and corporal punishment as a reference for teachers and parents. According to the publication, corporal punishment is categorised in two groups. One that directly inflict physical damage on the body and another which causes physical suffering.

Case examples of corporal punishment and accept disciplinary actions (Ministry of Education, 2013)

Actions that infringe on the body of student

- Stomping on a student who took a dangerous action during physical education lesson.
- Slapping cheeks of students who took rebellious behaviour after instructing about the attitude in the class.
- After instructing student who walks around in the class to sit down, the student did not listen and kept disturbing the lesson, the teacher decided to pinch the cheek of the student and forced to the seat.
- Teacher pulled the arm of a student who was instructed to attend student guidance but ignored. The student shook it off and tried to go home so the teacher hit the head of student by palm.
- During the lunch time, student misbehaved and did not listen to the teacher’s instruction to stop. Teacher then threw a pencil at the student.

Actions that cause physical suffering

- During the detention, a student requested to go to the bathroom but the teacher did not allow it.
- Teacher detained a student who did not finish the lunch in the classroom even after the lunch time and did not allow the student to get out of the classroom.
- Teacher instructed a student who forgot his/her homework to sit in the back of the classroom in uncomfortable position. The student claimed discomfort and pain but the teacher ignored it.
Accepted disciplinary actions as *shitsuke*

- Detaining a student after school.
- Instructing a student to stand up during the lesson.
- Imposing a learning task and cleaning activities.
- Assigning more school duties.
- A student came to the physical education lesson late and did not attend the practice. The teacher did not let the student play in the game.

To sum up, Japanese laws prohibit corporal punishment in schools while allowing teachers to apply *shitsuke* to students within the considerable range and under the appropriate circumstances. It is not possible to simply assert whether disciplinary action or corporal punishment without detailed context of the situation and development of the student.

In addition, these regulations and curriculums are making it difficult for teachers to implement a proper discipline with confidence. Ministry of Education had raised an issue in the today’s school curriculum to enrich the humanity that it has been affecting teachers in the classrooms. They claimed that there is a “possibility that teachers over-valued the autonomy of their pupils resulting in their hesitance to discipline some children (Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau, 2011).” Despite these, the number of cases have been reported related to corporal punishment as discussed in chapter 3.8.

### 2.6. Reports on the abuse

According to the Ministry of Education’s annual report on human resources administration statistics, 3953 teachers were reprimanded including suspension, retention, pay cut, and remonstration due to the corporal punishment in 2013 (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 1). This
significant number went down to 654 in 2016, though ideally there should be no corporal punishment at all (Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 1). Despite the laws in place mentioned in the previous chapter, evidently corporal punishment is still practised significantly enough for some teachers to be suspended from the work. This type of news can cause significant damages to the teachers and schools’ reputation and trust towards the education system as a whole. Some extreme teachers’ corporal punishment under the name of shitsuke had led the students to even suicidal cases (The Japan Times, 2017). Report like this reassures the importance of considering each student’s needs and appropriateness when discipline is to be applied.

2.7. Tendencies in Asian education

Japan is one of the countries that belong to Sino-sphere, the countries historically influenced by Chinese culture. These countries use or once used the common Chinese writing system and share the cultures derived from Confucianism and others. (Okajima, 2006). Confucianism had a huge influence on Bushido as well, as Nitobe describes in his book, “As to strictly ethical doctrines, the teachings of Confucius were the most prolific source of Bushido” (BUSHIDO The Soul Of Japan, 1908, p. 18). Nitobe adds “Next to Confucius, Mencius exercised an immense authority over Bushido. His forcible and often quite democratic theories were exceedingly taking to sympathetic natures, and they were even thought dangerous to, and subversive of, the existing social order, hence his works were for a long time under censure. Still, the words of this master mind found permanent lodgment in the heart of the samurai.” (1908, pp. 18-19). The Chinese culture influence on Bushido’s foundation is quite noticeable. Bouldin refers Bushido as Japanised Confucianism. “…the Japanese found in Confucianism the teachings that fitted their case and they with alacrity appropriated them to their own use” (Japanese Ethics, 1921, p. 68).

On the other hand, Professor Morishima at London School of Economics argues that Japanese Confucianism differs from Chinese Confucianism. “The neglect of benevolence in this fashion,
and the emphasis placed on loyalty must be regarded as characteristics peculiar to Japanese Confucianism” (Morishima, 1982, p. 6). According to him, Chinese Confucianism stresses benevolence and individuality, while Japanese Confucianism promotes loyalty and social collectivism (1982, p. 6). While Japanese culture including Bushido shares ideology of Confucianism with others such as Chinese and number of Asian cultures, those distinct features contrasts Japanese one from others.

Focusing on educational system, since the late nineteenth century China tried to modernise their education with the education of Japan as a model. The Japanese influence in the period lasted up to 1911 (Cui, 2015, p. 83). In addition, “from continental European influence in the period from 1912 to the early 1920s, followed by American influences, introduced at the time of Dewey’s visit in 1919 and expressed in the reform legislation of 1922, including a structural pattern (6–3–3–4) which has persisted till the present” (Hayhoe, 2014, p. 314). Therefore Japan and China share cultural and educational system in many ways including American influences.

In Hong Kong, “teachers are used to borrowing ideas from the three schools of Chinese philosophy – Legalism, Daoism and Confucianism” (Hue & Li, 2008, p. 23). Hue and Li explains that one of the Chinese approach to the classroom management used among the Hong Kong teachers is the “building a punishment-and-reward system. It is assumed that these consequences influence student behaviour in line with the established behavioural principles…” (Classroom Management : Creating a Positive Learning Environment, 2008, p. 25). It suggests that not only in Hong Kong, but also teachers in China applies the punishment-and-reward system in their basis of lessons.

Parents’ expectation in Asian countries also shares similarity in the field of education as their demand is abundant due to Confucianism influence. For example, “the Japanese and South Koreans place a high value on education and respect the educated. This stems from the Confucist [sic] roots.” (EU, 2010, p. 213). As a result, parents in the Asian countries “regard education as critical for their children’s future. Thus, Asian parents find it difficult to be satisfied with moderate levels of performances by their children or schools.” (Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Kauchak, & Gibson, 1994, p. 325).
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, existing researches on discipline use in school are presented. Over the years, a number of studies have been conducted on school discipline all over the world. Researches on humanities and cultures are often done in the researchers’ mother tongue rather than in English. Holm explains that it is typical for non-Anglophone cultures, especially for Asian cultures to conduct researches and publish them in non-English material. Thus the researches in psychology and culture tend to be Western oriented. (Holm, 2005, p. 116). This is a valid point thinking of the current study; despite doing research on Japanese educational practices, western theorists offer appropriate perspectives, complemented here with some Asian thoughts and observations.

3.1. Skinner’s reward and punishment model

In Skinner’s Learning Theory, he argues that people’s behaviours are always constantly conditioned by external factors in any environment (1995). Any action taken or non-taken by human being is a result of external factors in the environment. This assumption leads to how external forces in the environment can discipline people’s behaviours.

Skinner points out that the behaviours followed by positive consequences tend to increase in occurrences and behaviours followed by no reward tend to be eradicated (Phillips, 1998, p. 13). He addresses the behaviour modification such as punishment as extinction. The reinforcement stimuli can be given as social, activity, graphic and tangible. For example, words such as “good job”, “well done”, and smiling can strengthen the behaviour as social reinforcement. Free time and party can strengthen the behaviour as activity reinforcement. Check mark, stamps, stars can be used as graphical reinforcement. And snacks and award can be given as tangible
reinforcement. In addition, removing the unpleasant consequences can strengthen the behaviour. On the other hand, behaviours can be modified with unpleasant consequences including removal of the pleasant consequences. The chart 1 below shows the modified version of a chart by Licht and Hull (Presenting Psychology, 2016, p. 201).

Table 1  Examples of positive and negative types of reward vs punishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reinforcement (reward)</th>
<th>Behaviour modification (punishment)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Adding pleasant stimuli</td>
<td>Adding unpleasant stimuli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Extend recess time</td>
<td>• Give extra homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Removal of unpleasant stimuli</td>
<td>Removal of pleasant stimuli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Exemption from cleaning duty</td>
<td>• Deny access to the computer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The learner’s motivation comes from within and the external reinforcement such as reward and punishment (Skinner B., 1950, p. 196). And as people seek for freedom from the unpleasant situation, people learn to avoid the punishment that is not even presented yet. Skinner calls this discipline “operant behaviour”, which people learn to act independently based on positive and negative consequences as the reinforcement. The reward and punishment model is not necessary for children’s motivation for learning though it is thought as basis of classroom management in many schools. In fact the reinforcement as the classroom management should be unnecessary.

He also warns that when the bad behaviour is punished by negative reinforcement, it is possible to reoccur later in more aggressive form. Tuckman analyses that educators who have experienced corporal punishment might prefer to practice corporal punishment in their career (Tuckman, 1992, p. 61). Even the teacher manages to control the classroom with strong discipline with punishment and fear, however, those students might grow up into psychologically oppressed and turn violently to the weaker people. Unfortunately this idea of carrot and stick strategy is still widely used even at homes in many countries. From students’
point of view, as soon as the controller disappears, there is no enforcement of the rules anymore because it is only an ad hoc basis.

Skinner does not believe in the internal causes for motivation, instead his theory is solely based on external environment as the source of behaviour. The opinion on the sources of behavioural change divides developmental theorists and Skinner and it brought number of critiques on his attitude towards condemning that all the behaviours are conditioned by only the environment, excluding the inner factors such as feelings, spontaneous actions, and thoughts. (Crain, 2005, p. 196). For example, Kohlberg argued that a baby girl drops a block and hears a sound. She then repeats it as the sound becomes reinforcement. However, this reinforcement will soon become useless as the girl may lose interests or start doing something else which is more interesting for her. (Kohlberg, 1969). Gesell argues in his maturational theory that children’s development is directed from within, by the action of the genes. Gesell called this process maturation. (Gesell & Ilg, 1943, p. 41). He believed that “children can stand, walk, talk and so on from inner maturational promptings” (Crain, 2005, p. 196). Indeed the reinforcement seems to be inconsistent with the time and growth of the subject, and there may be other factors which drive people to act and behave in certain ways.

Despite all the critiques and causality of behaviours, this research will mainly use this reward and punishment model to investigate how the discipline is practiced in schools and the experience of Japanese students. Skinner’s theory is focused on external conditioning and the influence on subject’s behaviour, which is exactly how the Japanese school teachers seem to use discipline to manage classrooms. Instead of focusing on how students develop motivation towards certain behaviours, this research is designed so that it focuses on the external conditioning itself, therefore, Skinner’s theory is used in this research.
3.2. Canters’ assertive-teacher model

Canters present their “assertive discipline” model in their book (Canter & Canter, 1992). In this model teacher deals with the child’s misbehaviour at the time of the incidence by clearly communicating. The disapproval of the misbehaviour is then followed by demanding what the teacher wants child to do (Duke & Meckel, 1980, p. 11). The main difference from other type of discipline models is that the assertive discipline puts emphasis on learners’ right to learn rather than controlling the classroom. Thus, positive and optimistic encouragements are recommended. Canters classify teachers in three different types: hostile teachers, non-assertive teachers, and assertive teachers.

Hostile teachers: show strong disapproval to students because they feel that maintaining order in the classroom is the absolute. And they think showing the authoritarian attitude is necessary and accept no exception of the rules. They use strong words to order students what to do, what not to do. Students might feel that the teacher does not like them.

Non-assertive teachers: have inconsistent magnitude of the discipline and fail to teach the expectation to students in the classroom. Students are confused because the teacher’s attitude towards the misbehaviour changes over time and they fail to understand the expectations. Frustrated teachers tend to snap and come down harshly on students.

Assertive teachers: consistently express the expectation to the class. Rather than telling what to do or what not to do, they explain how to behave in order to learn better. They are not harsh on students and always consider each student’s needs and encourage them.

An experiment held at graduate school of education, University of Western Australia by Nicholls and Houghton showed that the primary school teachers can be trained to use assertive
discipline and significant changes in the result in students’ behaviour were recorded (Nicholls & Houghton, 1995, p. 206).

### 3.3. Kounin’s model

Kounin uses the reward and punishment model to describe both the learner and educator’s behaviours. Similar to Skinner’s findings, Kounin found that the rewarded behaviour increased and the punished behaviour decreased. He explains that the disciplinary action in the classroom can affect other pupils who witness it. He calls this phenomenon “ripple effect” (Kounin & Gump, The Ripple Effect in Discipline, 1958, p. 158). His research shows that the pupils can react to witnessing disciplinary action in different ways such as conformance, non-conformance or result in behaviour disruption. He mentioned that in these cases pupils get confused and become worried for the behaviours they have been doing. (1958, pp. 159-160). Although he did not mention about pupils being scared or use of fear for the ripple effect, it is only reasonable to believe that fear factor would play the same role to cause ripple effect.

Kounin also mentions that the personality of the teacher is not as important as the planning the lesson to reduce the misbehaviours in order to keep students engaged in learning activities (Kounin, 1970). This statement encourages all the teachers whose personalities are different to work on their lesson planning rather than how to interact with the pupils. At this point, it becomes obvious that Kounin, being an old school theorist, counts on lesson plans and frontal teaching, rather than free interaction in the classroom. Whether this is still valid in today’s Japanese education, is a question that relates intimately to the ideas of the practice of shitsuke.
3.4. Gordon’s self-discipline suggestion

Gordon claims that the good classroom management comes from learners’ self-discipline and not the external reinforcement. According to him, reward and punishment model is too common and lacks the fundamental goal in education (Gordon, 1989, pp. 34-40). His self-discipline suggestion denies the power-relationship between the teacher and the student. That is because students often forget the behaviour and learning itself, then focus on earning the reward and avoiding the punishment. He points out that even using only the reward to modify the students’ behaviour, there is a danger that not earning a reward might be perceived as a punishment (Gordon, 1989, p. 41). This seems to correspond to Skinner’s “removal of pleasant stimuli”, which he considers as a punishment. As we can see, Gordon’s views originate from a later period (latter half of the 1980s) demonstrating some more modern development in classroom management.

3.5. Other studies

It cannot be ignored that many studies have shown that the inconsistent discipline, harsh physical discipline and lack of warm educational relationship between children and adults will highly likely lead to antisocial behaviours (Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1990, p. 1679). This suggests that the students of Canters’ non-assertive model teachers would be likely to encourage the misbehaving children to develop characteristics of antisocial behaviours in their future. While constant and steady discipline is required, having too harsh discipline can also cause children in the later life to turn violent as Tuckman mentioned (Tuckman, 1992, p. 177). Violence towards peer and romantic partners are often seen on people with very harsh discipline in their childhoods (Pettit, Lansford, Malone, Dodge, & Bates, 2010, p. 191). Discipline can be utilised in the classroom as a first aid, however, misuse of the discipline will create such personalities
that are harmful. Further, a research shows that aggressive children could grow up to even more aggressive adolescences if harsh discipline is used on them (Sheehan & Watson, 2008, p. 246).
4. METHODOLOGY

Everyone experiences and perceives discipline used in school differently in different environment and situation, thus each experience is made unique. Qualitative research will be utilised for this research to find out different ways of experiencing discipline in schools in Japan. Creswell defines the qualitative research as “an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data.” (Creswell, 2014, p. 32). Rather than quantitative research where large number of sample is required and generalised result, specific and personal experience is examined on this research.

4.1. Phenomenology

This research utilises phenomenology to approach the individual lived experience. Creswell explains that “a phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 57). According to the Mariwilda Padilla-Díaz, there are three types of phenomenology, and the one this research utilises is descriptive or hermeneutical phenomenology. “It refers to the study of personal experience and requires a description or interpretation of the meanings of phenomena experienced by participants in an investigation (Padilla-Díaz, 2015, p. 103)”. “Phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 58); this is presented in the research context and theoretical framework. After gathering data from carefully chosen participants who all share the same phenomenon, how they experienced is analysed.
Moustakas claims the researchers must first “set aside prejudgments regarding the phenomenon being investigated” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 22). It is known as a concept of epoché, “the everyday understandings, judgments, and knowings are set aside, and phenomena are revisited, freshly, naively, in a wide open sense, from the vantage point of a pure or transcendental ego” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). It is an essential process during this research as “this suspension of judgment is a mechanism which ensures objectivity during the process of data analysis in a qualitative research” (Padilla-Diaz, 2015, p. 102).

4.2. **Researcher’s position**

I believe it is necessary to introduce myself to clarify where my value and view come from as the researcher of this thesis. I was born and raised in the central Tokyo, the biggest city in the world. As much as my childhood and basis of my morality origins belong to Japan, my adolescence belongs to Canada where I had spent three years of high school life. After the graduation from high school, I went to teach primary, middle and high school students in a private academy. As I built my teaching career, it became obvious that I had to pursue higher education in order to develop myself with more knowledge of pedagogy towards more professional teacher. Reputation of Finnish education was booming in Japan in the 2000s and I found myself studying in this attractive country Finland to expand my understandings and skills (Sakane, 2011). After living in Finland for seven years, my most recent influence factor is definitely the Finnish society and its culture. My personality and perspective are heavily influenced by Japanese, North American and European culture. As a Japanese living abroad, I have observed the Japanese culture from foreign perspectives for many years. Therefore, I conduct this research with multiple perspectives with Asian, North American and European cultures as an international person with a hope for better education in the future.
4.3. **Data collection**

The main data for this research was collected through face-to-face semi-structured interview with Japanese students who study higher education in Finland. According to; as cited in (Padilla-Díaz, 2015, p. 104), interview is the most appropriate data collection method. She adds that according to Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) and Marshall & Rossman (2010), the interview should be open or semi-structured. “These two types of interviews allow the researcher to address the phenomenon profoundly, providing a space of aperture for the informants to express their experiences in detail, approaching reality as faithfully as possible. The detailed descriptions or interpretations brought by the participant in the profound-phenomenological interview should be as representative of experienced reality as possible.” (Padilla-Díaz, 2015, p. 104).

The interview was conducted individually and the language used during the interview was in Japanese. This is because all of the informants are not used to English enough to express their experiences in detailed fashion without losing any important essence and nuance. In addition, some researches have suggested that “it is only natural for Japanese people in Japan to speak Japanese to each other” (Rohrer, 2011, p. 68). The interviewees were advised to share and express their experience as freely and much as possible. Interviews were conducted in a soundproof room located inside University of Oulu to protect the privacy and give interviewees a comfortable place where they could talk about their experience without worrying about eavesdropping. The conversation was recorded on the smartphone and the laptop and between 30 to 45 minutes were spent on each interview.
4.4. Data sample group

Altogether 3 female and 2 male, total of 5 participants were chosen for the data collection are chosen among Japanese students in Oulu. To avoid specificity of the participants due to the low volume of Japanese students at the University of Oulu, students’ affiliation is not published. Students’ major subjects are in culinary, education, engineering and philology. The convenience of carrying out the research locally is part of the justification for contacting students at the University of Oulu. In addition, being an international student helps them to have wider perspectives to view their own culture more objectively (Oxford Royale Academy, 2014). Creswell advises on choosing the participants as that “the participants in the study need to be carefully chosen to be individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon in question, so that the researcher, in the end, can forge a common understanding” (Creswell, 2007, p. 62). Therefore, all the participants are the age of twenties who have experienced schooling in the same educational policy era.

4.5. Semi-structured interviews

The interviewees were briefed about the research topic prior to the main interview and the research consent form was signed before proceeding further. Interview questions were semi-structured and adjusted to correspond with the theoretical framework. The approach the topic as openly as possibly, the questions were not shared with the participants beforehand to make the interview as natural a conversation as possible.

Questions regarding recognition of discipline

- What is your own definition for shitsuke?
- Is there a proper shitsuke? If so, what is it?
Questions regarding experience of discipline

- How was the discipline maintained in your school? Reward and punishment model? Corporal punishment?
- Have you experienced disciplinary action yourself? How did you feel about it? (Year, time, place, disciplinary act, reason)
- Have you witnessed your classmate disciplined? How did you feel about it? (Year, time, place, disciplinary act, reason)

Other questions regarding the impact of shitsuke

- What did you think of the teachers in general and those who disciplined you?
- How have the disciplinary actions affected on your learning motivation? How is your academic achievement? Do you respect teachers?
- Do you exercise any type of discipline by yourself?
- How would you discipline your students if you were a teacher?

First and second questions are to see the variations in definition of shitsuke among the students. This helps the interviewer and the interviewee to identify and agree on the topic of the discussion as well. Third to fifth questions are to explore the experience of the students in Japan and examine the impact. Sixth to ninth questions examine further impacts of the shitsuke on the students. As Agee states “good qualitative questions are usually developed or refined in all stages of a reflexive and interactive inquiry journey” (Agee, 2009, p. 432), questions were often revised and formed as the interview proceeded.

The interview was audio recorded on the smartphone and laptop during the interview to keep track of the conversation. The audio data was then transcribed on the computer into text file using audio transcribe software Express Scribe. The text file was later printed out on paper then highlighted using different colours based on theme codes.
4.6. Thematic-Content analysis

There are number of researchers who have written about thematic content analysis, out of which modified version of Tesch’s (1990, pp. 142-145) and Braun & Clarke’s (2006, p. 87) recommendations are applied for this research during the analysis. The researcher is required to be familiarised with the data and theories to see if any of the theory is applicable.

Steps for developing an organising system for unstructured qualitative data (Tesch, 1990, pp. 142-145).

1. Begin with the first data available, read it carefully and acquire a background information and the whole idea.
2. Pick the most interesting or the shortest data and pay attention to the topic, not the content. Write down notes of the topic identified on the margin of the data (work on the copy not the original data).
3. Make a list of topics once the stage 2 has been completed for several times. Compare all the topics and cluster all the similar topics together, then name them. Group them in major topics, unique topics, and the leftovers.
4. Go back to the data and work with the major and unique topics. Abbreviated codes help to recognise the correspondence in the data as new topics might be discovered. At this stage, if anything cannot be coded, researcher must decide whether it is relevant to the research.
5. Find most descriptive wording for the topics, this helps to organise the system.
6. Refine the wording for each categories and make sure there is no duplicates.
7. Assemble the data corresponding to the categories into one place and perform preliminary analysis. This time researcher must pay attention to the actual contents.
8. If necessary go back to the stage 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Familiarizing yourself</strong></td>
<td>Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with your data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 Generating initial codes</strong></td>
<td>Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Searching for themes</strong></td>
<td>Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4 Reviewing themes</strong></td>
<td>Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5 Defining and naming themes</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 Producing the report</strong></td>
<td>The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many hours were invested on transcribing the audio data which consists of nearly four hours and the transcribed text only had piled up over fifty pages. During the transcribing, listening to the audio data was helpful to retain the key points and structure themes as text was produced. To tackle this vast amount of information and produce accurate result, both of the parts of guidelines mentioned above are utilised. The modification made is the added sub-themes to the main themes found.

The summarised theories were read over and over for the familiarisation in the beginning of the analysis of this research. In addition to that, research questions were also written down on a piece of paper to help the analysis. It is advised by Auerbach and Silverstein that to have one
sheet of paper summarising the theoretical framework, research questions, key words and themes placed next to the script to help focus on the task during the analysis (2003, p. 44). The audio data was listened several times more to relive the moments of the interview again and capture the participants’ expressions and feelings. This procedure helped to highlight the text data simultaneously. Using different colours, key themes such as behaviour modification and reinforcement were highlighted. The text data was printed on paper during the analysis. It enables to jump one document to another quickly and look at different pages at the same time.

As many key words and sentences were selected and gathered, they were categorised into the sub-themes. Creswell suggests that it is important to keep in mind questions such as “what strikes you?” while doing analysis (Creswell, Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design, 2007, p. 153). These steps of picking topics and sorting into themes or sub-themes were repeated twice in order to organise the categories. The findings are discussed in the following chapters.
5. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this chapter, findings based on the individual interviews with the participants are presented. Each interviewee’s experience is analysed separately and the common themes are identified later.

All the interviewees came in slightly nervous and very formal frame of mind presumably because the detailed subject of the interview was not told to the participants beforehand. As we started chatting just prior to start the interview, they all became more relaxed and talkative. It was a part of very important procedures of the interview as questions to be asked in informal manner to imitate the normal conversation situation. Fox explains the importance of building a relaxed mood prior to the interview and it is going to affect the quality of data collected (Fox, 2009, p. 25). In the chapter of analysis, participants are referred as female students F1, F2 and F3 and male students M1 and M2. At the same time, role and purpose of the shitsuke are investigated and categorised in sub-theme chapters, and expanded below under their corresponding sub-theme chapters (5.1.1, 5.1.2 and 5.1.3).

Table 3 Main themes and sub-themes found on data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Prevention</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Adaption</td>
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<td>Enhancement</td>
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<td>Personal experience</td>
<td>Behaviour modification</td>
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<td>Strict rules</td>
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<td>Witness</td>
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<td>Learning motivation</td>
<td>Irrelevant</td>
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<td>Reoccurrences</td>
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</table>
5.1. Defining shitsuke

Participants are asked to define general meanings of shitsuke using their own words. Some of the students expressed shitsuke as a form of education in school. In this chapter, definition of the shitsuke is formulated based on the participant’ opinions and conceptions.

“You have to be quiet during the lesson, (...) teacher tells you to you be quiet or sit down. Not only in school because it should be a common sense, to listen to adults telling a child what to do. But school is special because there are lessons with other children.” (M1)

“(...) especially in middle school. Do this! Do that! It is because you would seem uneducated in the society, unless you do things properly.” (F3)

Both male participants addressed the required obedience and silence in the classroom in order to conduct a lesson as the definition of shitsuke. F2, F3 and M2 explained shitsuke referring to a form of education that is taught in schools. These three participants expressed the sense of belongingness to the society as an important part of shitsuke. This sense of belongingness, or the part of collectivism is taught in schools, suggesting that the school is responsible for teaching pupils how to behave in the society. At this point, the general expectations of these participants on school and teacher is that the school is required to teach the collective behaviours though shitsuke. It is also clear that they compare themselves to the others to measure the appropriateness, and how other people measure the appropriateness instead of the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ of the behaviour itself.

“(...) especially in middle school. Do this! Do that! It is because you would seem uneducated in the society, unless you do things properly.” (F3)
That’s shitsuke. For example, a teacher catches student running out of the classroom and get angry with him. That’s shitsuke. It can happen to individuals and also to everyone in the classroom. It’s to put you back to the rail if something derails.” (F1)

A female participant F1’s understanding and explanation of shitsuke was based on the instruction given to the students to correct the misbehaviours as well. She addressed the teachers at school parallel to the parents at home when it comes to a discipline provider, considering teachers as authority figure as parents at home. She also pointed out that shitsuke does not apply only on one person that is making it necessary, but also to the others in the classroom who witness it.

5.1.1. Shitsuke as a prevention of disturbing other people

These are quite similar to the definition of the discipline used in the dictionaries as presented in chapter 2.1. However, these definitions suggests that there is an external force which requires the person to be disciplined. In other words, shitsuke is done on the child because of the greater demands from others, or the demands from others are expected. For example, a teacher takes certain measures in order to silence the child who is disrupting the lesson. By eliminating the problem, the rest of the class can go on with the lesson. Enforcement of shitsuke is seen inevitable on this stage.

“Shitsuke is necessary. It’s a must. For example, you must warn children not to cause trouble to people around them. Do not make noise. Do not run around. You must tell them. Things clearly unaccepted, public drawbacks. Things that can embarrass people accompanied by must be told not to do.” (F1)

“Shitsuke reminds me of cats and dogs, like teaching them the toilet location and not to bark. It’s not much different from human children, is it? Being quiet during the lesson and raise hand before going to a bathroom, do not go without permission. Dogs and human children are alike when I think of shitsuke. Dog owners would be troubled if their dog defecated without arbitrary so are the human parents.” (M1)

“(…) unless we teach the children clearly, they might make people around unintentionally uncomfortable.” (F2)
“We live in communities, no one lives alone. I think there are ways to eat so that it makes people uncomfortable. Actions that makes people uncomfortable or hurt, we should keep some rules about them. (...). For example, eating noodles on the busy metro train, perhaps it’s accepted, but I’m sure there are people who care about the scent. To think about others is necessary that’s why shitsuke is important. Just like this, I need to have a good reason for shitsuke. Another example, having a snack on the metro train, and let’s say there is a child on board. If he sees me eating, he will want it too. I would not understand why if someone tells me just don’t eat on the metro train.” (F5)

Most of the participants seemed to agree that self-control is very essential to learn and acquire in youth. This indicates that the part of Bushido spirits is passed down to this generation. It is the general understanding of the Japanese people that they prioritise public interests over their own individual interest. It is also noticeable that they stress about their public image.

5.1.2. Shitsuke as a skill to adapt to the collectivism in Japan

All the participants mentioned more or less of relationships with collectivism behind the modern Japanese culture where they prioritise group activities over the individuals. It illuminates the common understanding of Japanese; the collective behaviours are essential to conduct their normal social life. It is something that is taught by teachers in schools and practised. Enforcement of shitsuke is recommended for the child’s future sake, however it does not sound totally necessary on this ground.

“Some type of shitsuke is taught in schools because it’s not possible to teach at home. Cooperativeness and collective behaviour can be learnt only in schools.” (F1)

“Just like military, shoe locker, backpack locker, and toolbox are to put in designated locations in order to act as a group” (M1)

“...to prevent deviating considerably from other people’s circle in the future life. (...). Because everyone is doing it, so should you. Such an idea is underlying the shitsuke in my opinion. But, because everyone is doing it: this does not necessarily mean it is always correct, right? But, (...) that’s how it goes anyway.” (M2)

As participants expressed, collectivism is an essential factor for living in Japanese culture. A male participant M2 explained, ‘one has to do what everyone else is doing’. Being different or
doing different thing can be corrected at the school. “The nail that sticks out gets hammered down”, a Japanese proverb which means standing out would be criticised. It suggests that the school has the responsibility to foster collectivism in order to survive in Japanese society.

5.1.3. Shitsuke as a skill to standout in the society as an elite

As discussed in the previous chapters, being different from others is undesirable as it can be unacceptable in the Japanese society. However, standing out by having an exceptionally good manner is considered a way of success at the same time. This requires strong internal will to practise as it is not officially demanded unless one would like to strive. One must see the importance of the social etiquette in order to practise and acquire the shitsuke. A female participant points at shitsuke from her aesthetic view as below.

“Eventually everyone will be out working in the society, and how people judge you no matter what. For that sake, do this and do that. (…). To be seen as a proper person when I get a job and work in the public and society. Proper person has a good manner. Social etiquette for example, when you take a bow, angle of the bow needs to be beautifully perfect. Umm, for the table manner, hold chopsticks beautifully and body posture needs to be proper. Fastening up to the top button of your shirt, such things are necessary to be seen as a proper person and succeed.” (F3)

Overall, shitsuke proposes a meaning of education to adapt Japanese society. By controlling the behaviour, it enables students to fit in the society and such task is only possible at schools. Japanese culture in general requires a respects towards other people’s comfort and shitsuke is taught to achieve it. While it is necessary to keep the harmony in the society, shitsuke also enables person to standout in the society as a well-educated person.
5.2. Personal experience of shitsuke

In this chapter, cases of participants’ own experience of encountering shitsuke are analysed based on the types of shitsuke. They are categorised into 3 sub-themes of strict rules and Skinner’s model; punishment and reward.

5.2.1. Punishment as behaviour modification

“I was often picked by the teacher as a bad example. I often raised hand and spoke up in the class, so my teacher probably thought it’s easy to pick me. Once my teacher found that I was doing other subject’s homework, because the lesson was so easy and I finished my task already. My teacher got angry and took my homework away and showed everyone in the class, even though there were some others who were also doing other tasks.” (F1)

When asked: ‘How did that make you feel?’ the interviewee explains

“I thought like, what?! Why only me? I think teacher thought I wouldn’t be hurt or something. It’s so unfair those quiet girls can use mobile phone during the class and they didn’t get anything. It is me who was doing other subject’s work, indeed, I admit it, but I finished my task already and like, who cares? It made me very rebellious!” (F1)

This participant felt unjust about the sanction and the punishment applied prevented her from doing other subject’s work during the class. Despite the teacher’s objective to conduct a lesson and remove disturbance, its consequence was giving the student unreasonable impression without any understanding. The decision made on the student’s action was based on teacher’s subjective opinion, and it is difficult for the student to understand why she was punished. As Gnagey claimed (1968, p. 5), her action could have regarded appropriate or inappropriate depending on the teacher. The inconsistency of discipline between different teachers is undesirable and it will confuse and cause more stress on students. The female participant then continued on telling as below.
“Well, also the rules of the school uniform was strict, we had uniform checks time to time. Especially skirt and tie. When the skirt seemed short, teacher made us stand on the knees on the floor to see if the hem of the skirt touches on the floor or not. And the teacher did it in front of everyone in the class. It shouldn’t be taking place here (...) a bit embarrassing.” (F1)

These episodes described by F1 are positive behaviour modifications, which add negative consequences to modify the pupil’s behaviour. Both of the experience shared the feelings of embarrassment as the consequence of misbehaviour. The strong uniform regulation is also observable. This might be related to the aesthetics described in 5.1.3 by F3. While it is a school’s uniform rule, it is designed to help students so that they dress properly and habituate it in the future.

“Basically my teacher gave only punishments to us (...). Basically punishing the ones who disobey the rules. I have been sent to the principal’s office many times, mostly just for the mischief. I cannot remember those things well probably because I didn’t want to remember them. I was scared.” (M1)

This male participant M1 addressed fear of the punishment. The negative experience was so severe which possibly caused him to block some of the memories. From teacher’s perspective, the teacher was only carrying out the lesson and keeping the order of the class.

“When I was in the middle school, I brought snacks into school against the school rule. My teacher found it later and he told me to write a reflection essay on why I should not bring snacks to school. I thought like, did I do such a bad thing? Did I hurt anyone?” (F3)

As seen above, punishment is used to modify the misbehaviour of children. When the decision is made to give punishment for the misbehaviour, it should be reasonable. Overall, all the participants recalled punishment experience much easier than reward experience. It suggests that negative impression such as fear is associated with shitsuke. Fortunately, none of these participants experienced corporal punishment.

“(…) and there was no reward. Never. When we stayed quiet he didn’t say ‘Oh you are good.’ No one would say ‘Oh you went to bathroom alone, good job.’ I was often punished so I don’t remember receiving any kind of reward.” (M1)
“I was never praised. All the kind of shitsuke, social manner and expression, they are nothing special. Because it is natural thing to do, those people who don’t do are noticed and scolded. Basically people who are doing right are ignored. Because everyone else is doing it and no one is complaining, it’s not just me who’s working hard.” (F3)

As the result of excess use of positive behaviour modification, participants M1 and F3 claimed that they have not been given any positive reinforcement. To add that, lack of positive reinforcement can function as a negative reinforcement, which can sometimes be experience as punishment. This will suppress any effort for the good behaviours as the students end up being punished.

5.2.2. Reinforcement of good behaviours

“We could earn points. We had homework every day and when we did more work than required, a point was added. At the end, sum of the points were added as part of our report card. Those who did more work got the point and those who forgot their homework were given additional homework, like twice as yesterday. As a punishment.” (F1)

The hard work of the students are recorded and reflected on their grades. This provides positive reinforcement in a form of graphic. Pupils see the point given and it reinforces the behaviour such as doing additional homework. Missing homework and receiving an additional homework is a good example of positive behaviour modification. Pupils who strive for better grade and better academic path in the future would prefer to keep up their good records. It requires self-discipline as one must self-encourage to strive.

“We each had our own encyclopaedia which we wrote things researched to gain knowledge, mostly things we were curious about. The teacher let us present it to the class time to time. It gave me a sense of superiority. I was happy to be approved by so many people” (F2)

“Our school had a daily classroom duty and different student is assigned every day. The person on duty picks one person in the class who worked hard on the day and present it at the end of the day. For example ‘Today I saw so and so cleaning the
staircase’ and such. So everyone was trying hard to get picked and get praises at the end of the day. I was so happy to be picked.” (M2)

These two participants shared how their teachers used positive reinforcements to motivate both the academic and the extra curricula activities. By letting the pupils give reinforcements to others, it enables to re-recognise how much good behaviours are worth. However, this motivation would vanish once the positive reinforcements disappear. When the pupils advance to the next school where the same system does not exist, the motivation would also cease to exist.

5.2.3. Strictly defined rules

“My physical education teacher did not allow us to wear long sleeve shirt or pants in the winter outside. Even though we had long jersey, we had to wear short one. He said, ‘You are young and if you move you will get warm!’ He was so harsh and scary.” (F2)

This case might almost be classified as a corporal punishment if the physical suffering was severe enough. It can also be seen as a pedagogical method to raise stronger children who can survive in the cold climate. Nevertheless, this Spartan method is outdated and student should not be scared of the teacher or the freezing cold weather as a learning environment.

“Use of honorific speech was trained thoroughly. Especially towards teachers and senior people. Including my upperclassmen. They were very, very strict (...) from the first year. They taught us how to address them and use variation of keigo properly (Japanese respectful languages). (...) Of course we had to teach the same to our lowerclassmen.” (F3)

Existence of rigid hierarchical relationship among different grade of students in schools is evident, as the honorific speech is required when speaking of or to senior student or teachers in school. Shitsuke is taught not only by the teachers but also by the senior students as well. As the junior students advance grade, they demonstrate and teach shitsuke which is taught by the previous year’s senior students. Considering the harsh instructions being passed down one generation after another, the harsh shitsuke keeps reoccurring drabbing the freshmen year after year.
5.3. Witnessing shitsuke and its impact

In this chapter, impact of witnessing shitsuke actions on others is investigated. Participants are asked if they have witnessed shitsuke actions on others.

“When some students came in the classroom from their sports club activity, my teacher became very angry. The school time table is fixed and the lesson couldn’t be extended. The teacher ordered students who came in late to stay standing during the class. The whole class sensed the bad mood and it was very uncomfortable." (F1)

“We have often been told to close our legs while sitting on the seat. Because they are girls. And also to tie their hair. Because it’s sloppy. Grooming was so important in my school. I thought I wouldn’t do that, I mean, act or dress like them, because they always get in trouble. I didn’t want to get in trouble like them. Why is it so bad to sit with legs opened? I didn’t understand it though." (F3)

Although it’s a slightly nasty way of saying, that’s what makes that teacher angry. Rather than not to do this and that, I analysed the teacher as the person, someone that gets triggered by certain action. As each person has different points where they get angry, this teacher would get angry if I did this. That’s how I was looking at the other classmates. Instead of the immoral ity of action itself, I was concerned with not doing it in front of that particular teacher. Because I was scared of being hit by the teacher, I had to be careful with each teacher’s personality.” (M1)

As they answered, punishment was much more memorable than reward. As female participant F1 answered, showing shitsuke to others can even make learning environment a lot worse with negative atmosphere. In this case strongly negative ripple effect is seen in this case. Instead of spot effect, the whole class suffered for the rest of the lesson. Joint and several responsibility in the classroom works so that one person’s mistake is everyone’s mistake in the classroom. By spreading out the responsibility and sharing with others, it gives out the sense of unity and solidarity.

Participant F3 showed the ripple effect functioned as teacher intended. The ripple effect of shitsuke has convinced her not to misbehave. Her reaction is classified as conformance
according to Kounin’s (1958) model. However, the participant did not fully understand the reason for the punishment at that time. Situation like this where the witness may not fully be aware of the context of the incident can lead to confusion.

Male participant M1’s experience suggested his teacher was not assertive. Association of the teacher with the fear and punishment which has been given to other students was illustrated stronger than the importance of learning self-discipline. He focused more on avoiding punishment than doing things right. Although the school is a learning place, it should not be fearful. By giving behaviour modification publicly, it causes ripple effect to the whole classroom, which may once again be a sign of cultural collectivism in Japanese society.

5.4. Relationship with learning motivation

In this chapter, participants’ relationship between shitsuke experience and academic motivation is analysed. Based on the interview, some participants expressed the academic motivation as the driving force of training self-discipline, while others mentioned that it had no effect. Analysis is done after having the answers divided into two sub-themes.

5.4.1. Relevant to the academic motivations

In addition to the experience described in 5.2.2, F1 added her self-discipline motivation driven by academic factors.

“First I get scolded, so the next time I won’t do it. Because that’s the correct behaviour. And time after time it becomes natural. Then doing things correctly becomes normalised. And I get evaluated and approved by others. I accumulate this experience that the
teacher was right. For something that helps me to earn more academic points, I feel more motivated. It’s like a reward, I am not losing anything. If I don’t get evaluated or approved, I feel very sad. I had time, studying was beneficial for me and I was evaluated as much as I worked, that motivated me” (F1)

“I didn’t understand the reasoning of the shitsuke back then. There was no meaning for me, but I wanted to have a good report card so I can get a recommendation letter to advance to high school and university. I thought I could get the recommendation if I had a good shitsuke. That’s the reason why I tried hard. My grade didn’t change at all. Maybe other classmates’ influence on me to keep up the attitude and good behaviours.” (F3)

These two female participants F1 and F3 explained their academic goal had huge influence on their motivation with their shitsuke. Advancing to the next stage of education is critical for Japanese students when it comes to job hunting. Uehara explains that companies compare universities of the students when recruiting applicants from universities (Uehara, 2016). The severity shows that “it is also common for students who fail to win a place at their chosen universities to spend another year studying so they can try again. They are called rōnin, the name once given to samurai without masters.” (Nippon.com, 2015). Shitsuke’s root, samurai culture’s influence can be seen even in the process of academic field in Japan as well. This explains the relationship between shitsuke and supporting students’ future career choices. Although two participants’ experiences are different, it is fair to say that shitsuke can motivate students learn willingly and good behaviours can lead to better academic report, as in the female student’s case (F1). It may also be that being a ‘good girl’ she never really challenged the teachers or the school rules.

5.4.2. Irrelevant to the academic motivations

“At that time, maybe that punishment motivated me to study a little. But thing I was told bothered me much more and I couldn’t focus on the studies. My grade was not bad either.” (M2)
“Basically scared. Scared of doing something and get scolded. I was often told ‘don’t do this’ and ‘don’t do that’ so nothing motivated me in term of academics. It was purely the fear. When I made mistakes in the mother tongue class, I had to redo some of the work, but I didn’t make mistake on purpose, you know? I was only forced to obey the order from my teacher, so I just did. I didn’t want to study hard, studying was not a desire, it was just an obligation for me.” (M1)

As these two male participants expressed, shitsuke does not necessarily or automatically contribute to the learning motivation all of the time. Both of the participants expressed the stress regarding shitsuke related to learning. Especially M1’s experience shows that he was not motivated at all, he was merely doing his task out of the fear. He stated that he did not have desire to learn, and that shitsuke did not help to produce any desire to learn. Instead, he felt that the learning tasks were imposed on him as a penalty, which suggests the shitsuke did not amplify the motivation itself.

5.5. Reoccurrence of the negative experience

Participants are asked to explain how they would give their ideal form of shitsuke to their hypothetical misbehaving students to examine the possible reoccurrence of punishment behaviour as discussed in chapter 3.1.

“I wouldn’t do the same thing. I’d like to be liked by my students if I were a teacher. I would still make certain amount of the rules such as right things are right and wrong things are wrong, which prevent children from doing whatever they want. But I don’t think I’d be as strict as my previous teachers.” (F1)

“Let’s say my student misbehaves, then I would first talk alone with the student. If I scolded him/her in front of everyone he/she might get rebellious, and embarrassment could spur and get more excited. I’ve seen many times that punishing in front of
everyone does not help. Especially my classmates were bloody-minded. It happened in my class quite often.” (F2)

“In my case, it was the fear which made me obey. But when an adorable teacher was teaching me, I was inspired and she made me want to be like her. She had very beautiful gesture and posture, I would also like to show it rather than ordering what to do. Perhaps I would also show bad and good examples, and let the students choose which way they want to be. Because if I forced them unilaterally, as soon as I stopped forcing the rules on them, they would forget or throw away the concept.” (F3)

Regardless of the magnitude of tough shitsuke experienced, all the female participants explained their shitsuke strategy by reflecting on their own experience and stated that they wouldn’t let anyone experience the similar sever types of shitsuke. As they talked, they seemed to have a clear vision and reasoning of how to practise shitsuke on the children.

“I might speak loud but I wouldn’t shout at them. Firstly, the misbehaviour, I mean when I thought the student misbehaved, I would think why the student took such action. Instead of shouting, I have to find out the reason. I think that way student can also reflect and think by him/herself. I think that’s better.” (M2)

A male participant M2 explained his ideal shitsuke strategy as above. He did not experience much of punishment in the school, instead he strived for rewards as a student. As he explains, the model corresponds to the Canters’ (1992) assertive-teacher. In fact, he appeared like a good candidate for a teacher during the interview.

“Countermeasure wouldn’t work. Perhaps I would threaten them in advance, going out of the classroom and such. I should let them feel a bit scared. This person might be real bad or something, be very unpredictable. As a technique to control people, you know? Once they look down on me, they would act as they please.” (M1)

Only one participant (M1) from this group had expressed that he would apply harsh discipline. As Skinner (1953, p. 378) and Tuckman (1992, p. 61) suggested the negative experience such as severe punishment might be presenting itself in more aggressive forms.
6. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, conclusion and evaluation of the research is stated followed by future research suggestions. In addition to the actual findings on the previous chapter, summary connected to the research questions are discussed.

6.1. Final remarks

This research aimed to explore the personal experience of Japanese students related to disciplinary actions at school from students’ perspective. Three research questions are formulated in the first chapter. 1) What is Japanese discipline, shi-tsu-ke? 2) How do students in Japan experience discipline in schools? 3) What impacts does the shitsuke in school bring to those students in Japan?

Based on the literature and findings from the analysis of interview data, ‘discipline’ does not fully capture the pragmatic meaning of shitsuke. The participants of this research seemed to understand the definition of shitsuke in school as a part of education which contributes to correct misbehaviours in the classroom. The shitsuke taught at school is a unique type of education that is taught mainly in the collective environment. As shitsuke seen as a part of Bushido spirits is passed down to today’s generation, it suggests that the part of Confucianism is also influencing and shaping the Japanese culture today.

Shitsuke in school is mostly used to correct and control the students’ behaviours in the classroom by giving punishment for students’ misbehaviours in order to conduct the lesson smoothly. While shitsuke in school can be interpreted as a tool to enhance the educational
environment such as classroom, *shitsuke* itself is an education as well. It fosters group behaviour and cooperativeness with others that are essential part of the collectivism. Eysenck categorises keywords such as ‘related’, ‘belong’, ‘duty’, ‘harmony’, ‘advice’, ‘context’, ‘hierarchy’, ‘group’, for the characteristics of collectivism (Eysenck, 2014, p. 12). All the participants expressed belongingness, hierarchy, and group in their words during the interview, which suggests the foundation of the collectivism is associated with *shitsuke* itself.

It also seems *shitsuke* is used to impose the gender expectation for the collectives of males and females. One way of the social expectation towards female students is whether the student has acquired *shitsuke* enough to follow the appropriate dress code. While all the female participants expressed that they would not practise harsh *shitsuke* which they experienced to pupils or children, one of the male participant (M1) differed. As Sheehan and Watson (2008, p. 246) suggested, this male participant’s (M1) harsh discipline experience might influenced him to grow up to aggressive person.

Regardless of the teachers’ intention, strict instructions and punishment give out impression of fear to the students and it is generally disliked by the students very much. Part of the Japanese culture’s foundation, collectivism seems to be cultivated through the harsh *shitsuke* education. Some type of *shitsuke* is only possible to attain through the education at school with other peers. Japanese school teachers are expected to handle such responsibility since the Japanese society is shifting towards nuclear family and lack of communal support. In addition to the fear, a peer pressure is another factor that results in students experiencing *shitsuke*. In accordance to the collective, one has to perform tasks just like others while being different may be the reason for being punished. The constant paranoia of ‘am I behaving ok?’ or ‘do I look out of place?’ would follow them as the collective pressure gets hold of you. It is fascinating to understand that despite all these negative feedbacks, all the participants believe that *shitsuke* is necessary. Hence, one cannot help wondering if they have truly internalised the dogma of *shitsuke*.

Through this research, most of the participants expressed their stress and fear associated with *shitsuke*; especially the stress was visible on their facial expression even in the interview situation. It is not possible to generalise that the *shitsuke* simply gives out negative impression.
However, chances to feel extremely challenged during learning such strict demanding rules in schools is quite high. Because of the high expectations from the society, the teachers are also expected to tailor the pupils to be ready to perform the social manners in public. *Shitsuke*, like the German version of *Zucht* has characteristics of fear and punishment, thus the strictness and fearfulness were expected.

The Skinner’s model has some limitations as participant M1 mentioned “*Countermeasure wouldn’t work*”. As soon as the reinforcement and behaviour modification cease to influence the behaviour, the behaviour itself will continue to be conditioned by the new environment though it is not possible to maintain the same level of discipline. Perhaps it is the social norms which makes the *shitsuke* sustainable even after leaving the school. Another disadvantage of Skinner’s model that surfaced during this research is that the emerging vicious circle of the reward and punishment model. Academically and socially talented pupils are reinforced and rewarded more often whereas the opposite of them are punished and ignored. This relationship will cause the gap between two types of pupils, which tends to widen even more.

Skinner’s model works in the imminent environment to modify or reinforce the behaviours. However, as schools are formal education institution, it carries certain responsibility to shape pupils into young adults. Experiencing excessive fear and oppression during such period can save the classroom for momentary, but the influence on personality and individuality is significant and difficult to predict as it can be destructive. Therefore the educators must think twice how to shape the pupils and their futures instead of just finding ways to manage the imminent classroom situation before practising severe type of *shitsuke*.

It is possible that the Japanese society shifts towards individualism in the future. The collectivism behind *shitsuke* can be anachronism in any time. The way *shitsuke* is practised today to teach collectivism just like marching in step with the peers may not be suitable anymore. School should respect and develop the individuality of each pupil as the individualism can be valued more in the future and in other places.
6.2. Validity and ethical issues

There are several implications that should be questioned about the data for this research. The data is collected from Japanese students via individual interviews, which were carried out in Japanese language. The qualitative research is valid only when the meaning in the interpretation of the participants’ experience and the meaning in the findings are as close as possible (Polkinghorne, 2007). The transcribed text data is translated from Japanese to English by the researcher himself, which means that the whole interpretation depended on the researcher’s understanding. As the translation is an interpretation itself, meaning can be lost during the process (Nes, Abma, Jonsson, & Deeg, 2010, p. 313). As for the countermeasure, translated scripts are double checked with the participants to verify the accuracy of each interpretation. A classic assumption of the interpretation is that the participants are honest and providing truthful information (Goes & Simon, 2013, p. 1). It takes enormous amount of time and work to validate each story provided by the participants, thus their stories are assumed as authentic.

The target group of the interview is selected based on the geographical location of the researcher, Finland. This applies a filter that only those Japanese students who came to study in Finland could provide the data for this particular study. Age group of the interviewee was twenties. The result might have differed if the age group was younger, and definitely if they were older as they would look back to their youth in a more mature ways. The same age group was purposefully selected to minimise the difference in shitsuke related experience due to the different policies in the national laws. Hence the different school curricula might have resulted in different stories.

For this research, all the participants went to public schools in various regions in Japan both urban and rural areas. Since Japanese school system has both public and private sectors and each type of the schools attract different type of students, the result might be significantly different if the data was collected from people who went to private schools or mixture of both of them. However, there is a limitation of access to the Japanese people when conducting a research in Finland due to the small population size.
Various ethical thoughts are taken into account throughout this research in order to ensure the fairness of the research and care the participants. Most of the points are covered with a consent form participants had signed which clearly explains that they were free to not answer the questions if they did not wish to. They could stop the interview if they did not wish to continue. Also the participants were allowed to correct things they had said by mistake or something they did not wish to be published. All the participants are given chance to read the thesis before publishing to make sure that they are happy with the anonymity and accuracy of the whole interpretation. The only concern surfaced due to the fact that the interview reminded the participants about some negative episodes in the past. As one of the participant shared their experience, the participant seemed quite unhappy about the event which took many years ago. Despite several suggestions to take a break, the interview continued till the end. It was more severe than was expected, which made it difficult to carry on the conversation. See appendix 1 for the consent form.

6.3. Future research ideas

This research can be developed furthermore by increasing the number of research subject to collect more data. Separate researches on private and public schools may indicate that there are different educational practices in different type of schools. Even among the private schools, different policy on shitsuke such as strictness, techniques, and methods are expected thus different impact on the pupils. All in all, research enables to understand the different impact affected by different educational system structures and policies. It helps to understand what kind of schooling system would best benefit the students and the teachers in general but in Japanese society in particular. Understanding the long term effects of shitsuke is essential for teachers considering hundreds of pupils are affected throughout just one teacher’s career.
Furthermore, interviewing school principals, active teachers, and universities responsible for teacher education programmes would provide more evidence of the *shitsuke* education in Japan and help to understand the educators’ mind-set. The universities’ teacher education programmes can develop better training for teacher students. Policy makers such as board of education and ministry of education can implement better policies based on the findings. This research is not limited to Japanese education, in fact this research can be carried out in other countries as well to determine what kind of effect the disciplinary actions in school are causing. Aside from the effectiveness of *shitsuke* in the classroom, the long term impact on the students should be respected. That effects can indicate whether the *shitsuke* should be applied in the same way in the future schools or is there something that must change. In order to sustainably develop the education system and maintain the level of education outcomes, continuing such studies is vital.

It is worth mentioning that during the analysis, several non-directly related questions surfaced. Questions such as how the students learn under pressure, and practical facts on the learning process when learning tasks are forced. Having been a Japanese pupil attending Japanese schools and now graduating from a Finnish university, carrying out this research has really offered me an intriguing experience and helped me see the formal education system in my native country from a wider perspective.
7. REFERENCES


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8. APPENDIX

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Research title  Shitsuke, Japanese disciplinary action used in school and the impact on students
Researcher    Ken Wakaume, Faculty of Education (University of Oulu)
Research participant NAME OF THE PARTICIPANT

The individual interview takes place at (PLACE, WHEN).

- You have a right to stop the interview any time you want. You may refuse to answer questions that you don’t wish to answer. You may change the answer at any point during the interview.
- If you feel uncomfortable, you may interrupt the question and stop the conversation at any time.
- Interview is expected to take about half an hour, however, it may last longer.
- Your name, affiliation, age, will not be associated with your shared experience.
- Your participation to this interview is undisclosed and not to be shared with anyone else.
- This interview is audio-recorded digitally to the computer and smartphone in order to analyse. The recorded audio will be kept only on the researcher’s personal computer for the duration of one (1) year from the date of interview. Access to the data is strictly limited to the researcher-self only.
- This interview data is not used for any other researches.
- You may ask the researcher to review the analysis before publication of the research.

Please check one of the following.

- [ ] I agree to the terms above and participate this research.
- [ ] I do not agree to the terms above and do not participate this research.

Signature of the researcher __________________________  Date and place __________________________

Signature of the participant __________________________  Date and place __________________________

Contact the researcher at: __________________________ @ __________________________

Appendix 1. Interview consent form