

Research on Values as Important Components of Peace

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Abstract: The aim of this research was to clarify the basic values for peace education. In this research, we consulted a study on values that was conducted in 2003 in Australia and investigated values among Japanese primary and junior school students and adults, so as to make clear whether common values exist between Japan and Australia. The results were as follows. Firstly, each country has values that are particular to it and rooted in its cultural and religious backgrounds. Our research found that Japan and Australia share multiple values. Secondly, although countries share values, the actual content of those values differs depending on the country. It will be desirable to foster common values by using diverse methods that are suited to the circumstances of particular countries. Having conducted the present comparative research on the two countries Japan and Australia, we believe that it will be possible to further clarify common values by carrying out the same surveys on multiple countries with differing cultural and religious backgrounds. Thereby, the educational contents and methods for constructing peaceful societies could also be clarified. This might constitute a step towards the building of world peace through education.

Key words: moral education, values education, common values, peace education

Introduction

The aim of this research was to clarify the basic values for peace education. There are various values in the world. It is necessary for us to respect each other in order to establish a peaceful world. Is it possible to have common values transcending the many differences among all the various countries? To clarify this issue, we conducted comparative research on Australia and Japan. The subjects were students and parents. We give the results of this research and offer some suggestions that may be fruitful for peace education.

In order to build a peaceful world in the present globalizing age, people of different countries must have values that they can respect in common. Since values are determined by cultural and religious backgrounds and the like factors, different countries are likely to have differing values. Yet, assuming that there are values that transcend cultural and religious differences and are common to human beings, educating students about those values in individual countries is likely to be effective in constructing a peaceful world.

In view of this, the purpose of the present research was to make clear whether there exist values that are common

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for countries with differing cultural and religious backgrounds. PSE (Personal and Social Education) is practised in the U.K. (Primary National Strategy, Department for Education and Skills, 2005), and Character Education in the U.S.A(Nucci, 1989). In Australia, values education is carried out (www.valueseducation.edu). In Japan, a program is under development whereby content items will be determined for values, which students are to internalise and act out (Suzuki, Morikawa & Edama, 2008, Suzuki & Morikawa, 2008, pp. 39-47, Hiroshima Municipal-Board-of-Education, 2010).

Of these, we decided to study and compare Japan and Australia, as countries that engage in education concerning values. In this research, we consulted a study on values that was conducted in 2003 in Australia and investigated values among Japanese primary and junior school students and adults, so as to make clear whether common values exist between Japan and Australia. There has been almost no international comparative research of this kind. If common values are shown by this research to exist between countries with differing cultural and religious backgrounds, it may contribute greatly to constructing world peace.

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to make clear whether common values exist between Japan and Australia, through reference to a study on values that was conducted in Australia and investigation of values among Japanese primary school pupils, junior school students and adults. Thereby, we hoped to show that there were indeed values which were common to countries with differing cultural and religious backgrounds, and thus that there existed internationally common values that could be a key to international peace.

Method

Referring to a study on values education that had been conducted in Australia (www.valueseducation.edu), we carried out Preparatory Survey 1 on values in order to create a questionnaire for Japan. We then carried out Preparatory Survey 2 in order to determine the phrasing for the explanations of values, so that the mental images concerning values would be the same for the surveys to be conducted on primary school pupils, junior school students and adults. From the results, we created a questionnaire on values, which we used to carry out Preparatory Survey 3 to verify that the primary school pupils would be able to understand the questions. On the basis of the foregoing Preparatory Surveys, we created a questionnaire for the research. In this paper, we discuss the results for Question 1, which formed a part of the questionnaire.

Timing of questionnaire: February to March 2012.

Subjects: 675 pupils at four primary schools, 370 students at four junior high schools, and 244 parents/guardians, for a total of 1,289 subjects. The primary and junior high schools selected were in urban, rural and seaside areas, and care was taken to standardise differences in their physical environments. The adults were the parents/guardians from one of the primary schools.

Procedure: The questionnaire was sent to each of the schools and used to conduct a collective survey on each class. The surveys were administered by the class teachers. In the primary schools, the class teachers read out the questions and filled in the responses. In the junior high schools, the students were given time to fill in their own responses. The adults filled in, at their own leisure, questionnaire forms brought home by their children, and later submitted the completed questionnaires to the school.

Issues: We took as a basis the questionnaire that was used in the study on values conducted in Australia, and partially revised this questionnaire so that it would be suitable for the Japanese pupils, students and adults, in accordance with the results of the Preparatory Surveys (Suzuki, Nagase, Fujihashi, Imanaga, Edama, Miyasato, Matsuda, Mukugi, & Morikawa, 2011). We first of all conducted Preparatory Survey 1, which allowed free statements as responses, in order to clarify what words come up in Japanese people's minds when they hear the word "values". This survey was conducted on primary school pupils, junior school students, university students, and adults. The questions posed were the four following:

- 1) What are the things that are "valuable" for you? Give any number of examples of the material things, and of the abstract things (concepts), that you think are "valuable".
- 2) Have you ever heard anyone use the word "values", either in real life or in films, television and so forth?
- 3) Have you ever used the word "values" yourself?
- 4) What kinds of things come up in your mind when you hear the word "values"?

The free statements were categorized using the KJ method and homologized through consultation among multiple researchers. It was decided to add to the Australian questionnaire the seven values that were selected in common as the highest-ranking, namely: respect for life, love of family, love of school, trust, friendship, striving, and money. Then, in order to render the contents of these values more easily understandable to primary school pupils, we conducted Preparatory Survey 2, which had sixth-year primary school pupils and university students respond to questions with free statements so as to examine the differences in the words that they used. The results of Preparatory Survey 2 showed that the primary school pupils did not distinguish between justice and fairness, and so justice was removed from the items and fairness was adopted as the value option. Finally we wrote explanations of the values and added them to the questionnaire so that the primary school pupils and adults would be able to understand the contents of the values. The 34 values adopted as the options are set forth below, together with their explanations (Table 1).

Table 1 *Value Options and Explanations*

No.	Value	Explanation
1	freedom	being able to do the things that you want to
2	spiritual values	things that you hold dear in your heart
3	empathy	understanding how other people feel
4	happiness	feeling happy and that things are pleasant
5	respect for life	holding life in high value
6	democratic values	all people having the same rights to lead their lives
7	love	caring deeply for another person
8	aesthetic values	things that many people find beautiful
9	honesty	to be earnest and have a sincere heart
10	responsibility	doing completely the things that people rely on you to do
11	peace	when all people are friends and live with ease of mind
12	respect	respecting the people around you
13	love of school	liking your school

14	striving	working hard towards a goal
15	fairness	what is right from anyone's point of view
16	inclusiveness	accepting many different kinds of things
17	compassion	thinking of people's feelings when you act
18	conservation of natural environment	keeping nature like it is now, as far as possible
19	wisdom	knowing the difference between what is right and wrong to do
20	trust	believing other people
21	economic values	having your own money and being able to live on it
22	service to others	doing something for other people
23	courage	facing up to things that are unpleasant or scary
24	money	what you buy things with
25	excellence	being much better at something than other people
26	patience	ability not to run away from unpleasant things
27	religious values	things that are valued by individual religions
28	tolerance	broad-mindedness to accept opinions different from your own
29	love of family	liking your family
30	humility	being modest
31	competitiveness	wanting to win and not being willing to lose
32	friendship	ties to friends
33	equality	everyone being the same, without differences
34	honor	taking pride in things

The instruction was: "Out of the following 34 items, choose 10 that you think are important for us to live in society, and put a circle (○) round the numbers for those items". Responses with less than 10 items were also accepted. The subjects were also asked to write free statements about any values other than those listed.

Results and Discussion

First of all we counted the numbers of primary school pupils, of junior high school students, and of adults, who selected each of the 34 value items, and calculated the percentages accounted for by those numbers. Then we totaled up the primary school pupils, junior high school students and adults who selected each of the items and calculated such numbers as overall percentages.

Ranking of the values selected by the primary school pupils

With the primary school pupils, the ranking of the values was, in descending order of selection percentage: peace,

respect for life, striving, friendship, compassion, happiness, love of family, love, responsibility, courage, wisdom, trust, patience, freedom, empathy, conservation of the natural environment, money, democratic values, service to others, honesty, competitiveness, equality, economic values, spiritual values, honour, tolerance, fairness, respect, love of school, inclusiveness, excellence, humility, aesthetic values, religious values (Figure 1).

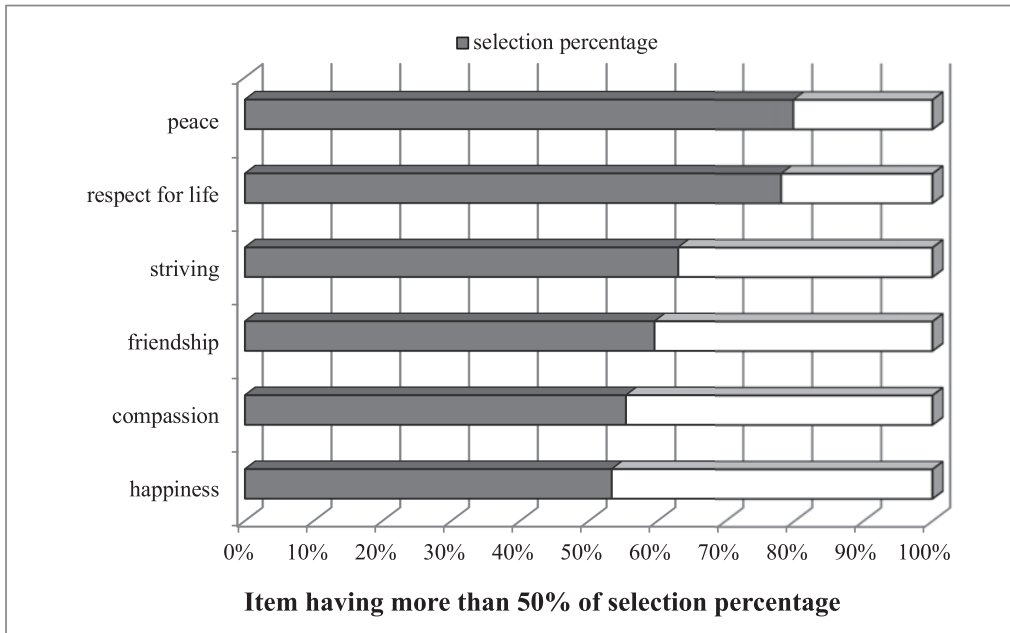


Figure 1 Ranking of the values selected by the primary school pupils

Ranking of the values selected by the junior high school students

With the junior high school students, the ranking of the values was, in descending order of selection percentage: peace, respect for life, happiness, compassion, striving, friendship, freedom, responsibility, trust, love, empathy, patience, equality, wisdom, money, courage, tolerance, love of family, competitiveness, honesty, democratic values, economic values, respect, conservation of the natural environment, honour, service to others, spiritual values, fairness, inclusiveness, humility, excellence, love of school, aesthetic values, religious values (Figure 2).

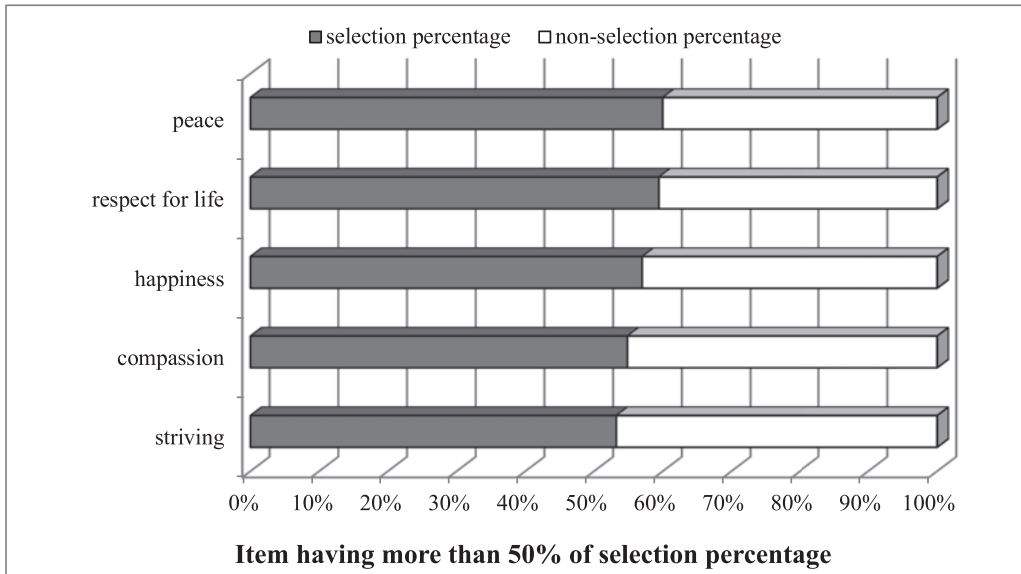


Figure 2 Ranking of the values selected by the junior high school students

Ranking of the values selected by the adults

With the adults, the ranking of the values was, in descending order of selection percentage: compassion, respect for life, peace, happiness, love, love of family, wisdom, responsibility, patience, striving, economic values, freedom, tolerance, honesty, friendship, trust, empathy, inclusiveness, spiritual values, respect, money, courage, conservation of the natural environment, service to others, democratic values, equality, humility, competitiveness, fairness, honour, aesthetic values, religious values, love of school, excellence (Figure 3).

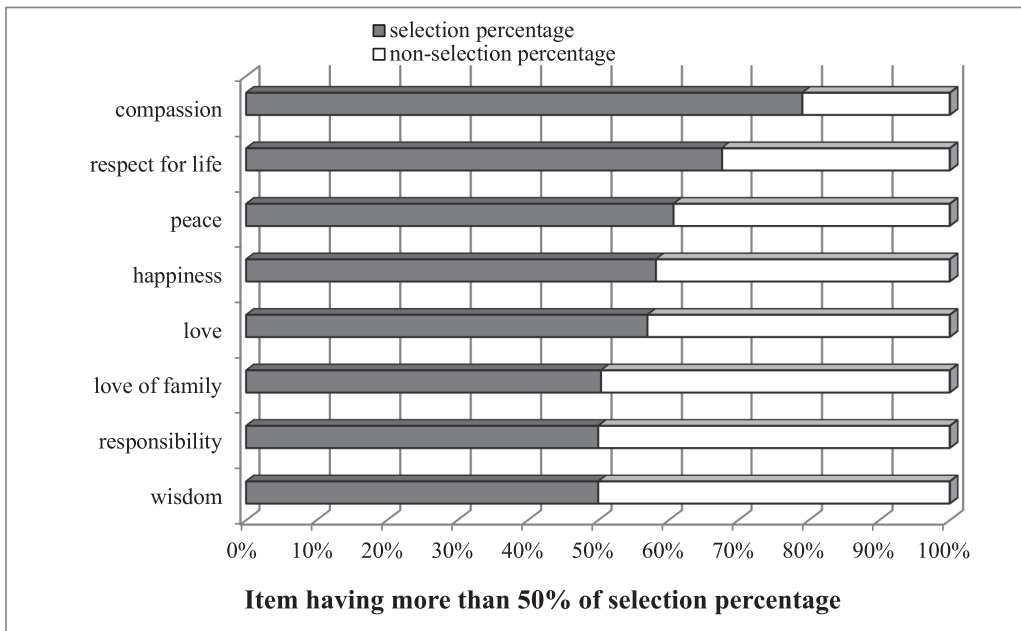


Figure 3 Ranking of the values selected by the adult

The primary school pupils, junior high school students and adults all ranked peace, respect for life, striving, compassion, love, responsibility and happiness within the top ten values. Friendship and striving were ranked within the top ten values by the primary school pupils and junior high school students. Love of family was ranked within the top ten values by the primary school pupils and the adults. Trust and freedom were ranked within the top ten values by the junior high school students only. Wisdom and patience were ranked within the top ten values by the adults only.

From the fact that freedom, trust and other values that are necessary for forming a democratic society are viewed as important by the junior high school students, it can be inferred that the period of junior high school is an effective one for encouraging self-awareness as a member of society. Also, peace, respect for life, and compassion were selected by more than 50% of each of the groups - primary school pupils, junior high school students and adults. From this it can be inferred that these are recognized as common values in Japan.

Ranking of the values selected by the groups overall

Next, we summed up the overall totals, made a ranking of the overall selection percentages, and examined the values that were common overall (Figure 4).

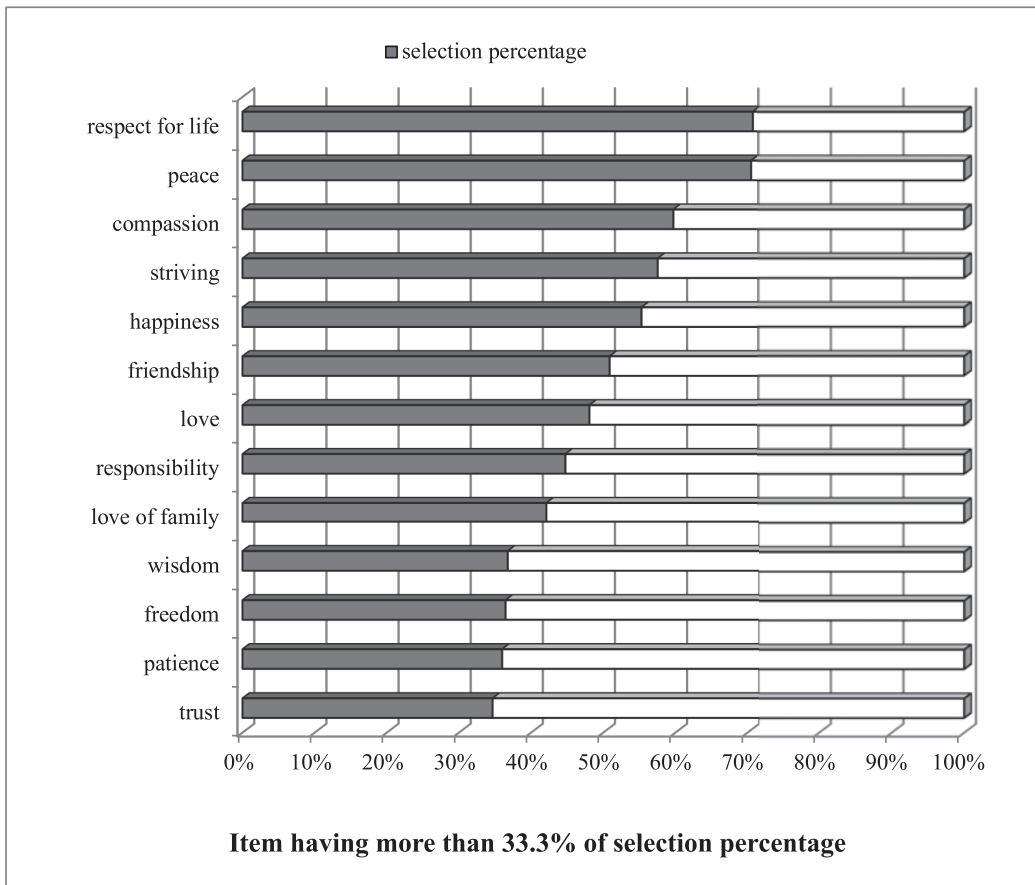


Figure 4 Ranking of the values selected by the groups overall

Using as criterion an overall selection percentage of over 33.3% - since the percentages in this range were representative across all three age groups - we extracted the values that were highly rated regardless of age. In

descending order of selection percentage, these were the following 13 values: respect for life, peace, compassion, striving, happiness, friendship, love, responsibility, love of family, wisdom, freedom, patience, and trust. All these 13 values were ranked within the top by at least one of the age groups (Table 2). Respect for life, peace, and compassion placed top in the overall rankings.

Table 2 *Top 13 values selected*

Ranking	Value name	%	Ranking	Value name	%
1	respect for life	70.8	8	responsibility	44.8
2	peace	70.5	9	love of family	42.1
3	compassion	59.7	10	wisdom	36.8
4	striving	57.6	11	freedom	36.5
5	happiness	55.3	12	patience	36.0
6	friendship	50.9	13	trust	34.7
7	love	48.1			

Comparison with the Australian results

According to the results of the 2003 study carried out in Australia, nine values were selected (www.valueseducation.edu). These were: Care and Compassion, Doing Your Best, Fair Go, Freedom, Honesty and Trustworthiness, Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, and Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion. Although a simple comparison is not possible due to the differing cultural backgrounds, the Australian “Care and Compassion” relates to the Japanese “compassion”, “love” and “love of family”. “Doing Your Best” relates to “striving” and “patience”. “Integrity”, “Honesty and Trustworthiness” relates to “trust” and “friendship”. “Understanding”, “Tolerance and Inclusion” relates to “peace”. As regards “freedom” and “responsibility”, the same words were selected in both countries. Values that were selected with a high percentage in Japan but a low percentage in Australia were “respect for life” and “happiness”. Those selected with a high percentage in Australia but a low percentage in Japan were “Fair Go” and “Respect”. From these facts it can be seen that there are some values that are shared by Japan and Australia, and that there are others that differ (Table 3). These facts can be represented schematically as in the Figure 5.

Table 3 *Values that appear to be shared by Japan and Australia*

Japan	Australia
Peace	Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion

Compassion, Love, Love of Family,	Care and Compassion
Trust, Friendship	Integrity, Honesty and Trustworthiness
Striving, Patience	Doing Your Best
Responsibility	Responsibility
Freedom	Freedom

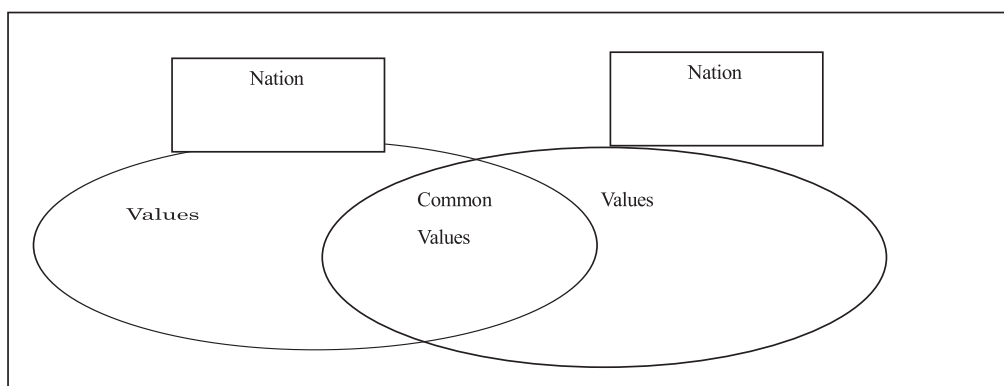


Figure 5 *Values particular to and values common to the countries*

Conclusion

The results of our research suggest the following.

Firstly, each country has values that are particular to it and rooted in its cultural and religious backgrounds, but at the same time there are values that countries share despite differing in their cultural and religious backgrounds. Our research found that Japan and Australia share multiple values, as set forth in Table 3.

Secondly, although countries share values, the actual content of those values differs depending on the country. As seen in Table 3, the value expressed as “Peace” for Japan is given as “Understanding”, “Tolerance and Inclusion” for Australia. Also, it is predicted that although the same words such as “Responsibility” and “Freedom” are used, their actual content will differ. This suggests that although one may speak of “inculcating common values”, this should not consist of teaching exactly the same content by the same method; rather, it will be desirable to foster common values by using diverse methods that are suited to the circumstances of particular countries.

Having conducted the present comparative research on the two countries Japan and Australia, we believe that it will be possible to further clarify common values by carrying out the same surveys on multiple countries with differing cultural and religious backgrounds. Thereby, the educational contents and methods for constructing peaceful societies could also be clarified. This might constitute a step towards the building of world peace through education.

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