Connecting the world's Children through Communication: Effects of the Letter Exchange Program on Mental Health in Japanese High School Students

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Effects of the Letter Exchange Program on Mental Health in Japanese High School Students

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1. BACKGROUND

◆ Mental Health might be improved by Cultural Exchange.
◆ Various programs aim to create Global Friendship in Japan. However,
◆ Evidence is not available in Japan.
◆ High cost makes limitations of current programs.
  ✓ Surface communication like entertainment
  ✓ Few participants is included
  ✓ and Expensive!!

...Can we do more effective, cheaper program?

Breakthrough: Letter Exchange Program
✓ Closer communication
✓ More participants can be included
✓ and Inexpensive!!

2. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study is
to evaluate Letter Exchange Program.
3. METHOD to EVALUATION

High School Students

**22 Participants**
- M=5, F=17
- Age=16.68
- Response rate = 75.86%
  - from 14 schools

**22 Non-participants**
- M=5, F=17
- Age=16.91
- Random sampling matched with hope to join from 3 schools

**Pre-TEST** (July)
- Self-Esteem
- Self-Efficacy
- QOL
- Depression

**Post-TEST** (Sep.- Oct.)
- Self-Esteem
- Self-Efficacy
- QOL
- Depression

Day 1
- <Lecture>
- <Activities>
- <Send the letter>

Day 2, 3
- <Receive the letter>
- <Discussion>
- <Presentation>
4. RESULT

In participants,

- Mental Health (QOL, Self-Efficacy) was improved!
- The belief “I Can Contribute to the World” was increased.
- Satisfaction with living environment was increased.

**Table 1 Effects of the Letter Exchange Program on Mental Health**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Non-participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre  Post</td>
<td>Pre  Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QOL</td>
<td>Mean  Mean</td>
<td>p         Mean  Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical</td>
<td>3.62  3.56</td>
<td>n.s.  3.38  3.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mental</td>
<td>3.39  3.48</td>
<td>n.s.  3.35  3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social</td>
<td>3.59  3.71</td>
<td>n.s.  3.53  3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>environment</strong></td>
<td>3.59  3.90</td>
<td><strong>&lt;.01</strong>  3.33  3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whole</td>
<td>3.45  4.00</td>
<td><strong>&lt;.01</strong>  3.33  3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>41.91  40.82</td>
<td>n.s.  42.00  41.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>6.73  7.55</td>
<td>n.s.  7.45  8.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>initiative</td>
<td>3.14  3.32</td>
<td>n.s.  3.73  4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anxiety</td>
<td>1.64  1.82</td>
<td>n.s.  2.14  2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>competence</strong></td>
<td>1.95  2.41</td>
<td><strong>&lt;.01</strong>  1.59  1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>31.36  31.68</td>
<td>n.s.  29.09  31.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* N of QOL[whole] in Non-participants=24

Letter Exchange Program contributed to Mental Health and Global Friendship.

**Fig 1 Significant differences of Subjects’ pre- & post-test**

http://exchange.kuronowish.com/