

Short Report of UKRI-JSPS Funded Bilateral Project

The JSPS Bilateral Project scheme promotes international scientific exchanges with a particular focus on engaging young researchers in an international collaboration. In this project, my primary collaborator in Japan was Prof. Satoru Saito from Kyoto University. He and I have worked together previously, but we applied for this grant to start a new project with post-doc researchers Dr Kaichi Yanaoka (now at Osaka Kyoiku University) and Dr Félice van't Wout (now at Exeter University). We collectively developed the application and were fortunate to receive an award of £21,450 for a period of two years for a project titled 'Acquisition and development of strategic skill knowledge for executive function in adults and children'.

We intended to collect behavioral data through a series of in-person studies. Additionally, the Japanese researchers planned to visit the UK for face-to-face discussions. However, the Covid-19 pandemic led to a dramatic change in plans. We instead conducted our studies online and developed a regular and effective pattern of online team meetings. Building on these discussions, we conducted multiple online experiments to examine how adults and school-aged children learn and transfer their engagement of different cognitive control strategies. Our findings have clarified the situations in which control strategies can and cannot be transferred across different tasks, with implications for educational approaches and for our understanding of adults' ability to operate effectively in changing work environments. We have submitted multiple papers to scientific journals and are currently applying for additional JSPS funding to further develop this work.

Although our project therefore required considerable adaptation to account for the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, it still produced a set of important findings. It has allowed us to develop our collective expertise, which will greatly facilitate future international collaborative research by all involved, and particularly the younger members of the team.



Top left – Professor Satoru Saito (Kyoto University)

Top right – Professor Chris Jarrold (University of Bristol)

Bottom left – Dr Kaichi Yanaoka (Osaka Kyoiku University)

Bottom right – Dr Félice van 't Wout (University of Exeter)