

The Trends of Composition Content of Publications as Seen through an Analysis of Title of Books Published in Japan Regarding *Hikikomori* (Withdrawal from Society): The Relationship between *Hikikomori* and *Futoukou* (School Non-Attendance)

日本国内で出版されたひきこもりに関する書籍タイトルの分析からみた書籍の内容の傾向
：ひきこもりと不登校の関係性

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これまで出版されてきた「ひきこもり」に関する書籍が、どのようなテーマで語られてきたかを整理することは、今後のひきこもり対策を考える際に有益となると考えた。そこで、本稿では、書籍のタイトルを一般的な市販の書籍と、政府刊行物のような公的な書籍とに分けてテキストマイニングを用いて分析し、テーマの傾向を探った。その結果を不登校に関する書籍タイトルの分析を行った八尋・キッド(2020)と比較すると、ひきこもりに関する書籍は、市販された書籍、公的に出版された書籍の区別なく、「ひきこもりと不登校の関係性は強い」という視点から書かれる傾向にあることがわかった。実際、ひきこもりと不登校の連続性に着目した見解の存在は大きい。一方で、ひきこもりを不登校とは切り離して考えるべきであるという見解もある。ひきこもり対策が十分効果的に機能しているとは言えない現状を鑑みた場合、「これまでのひきこもり対策は、ひきこもり支援よりも歴史のある不登校支援の方法論を安易に適用させようとしすぎて効果が見られないのではないか」という新たな視点に立つこともできるかもしれない。今後、この視点からの研究を進めていきたい。(キーワード) ひきこもり (withdrawal from society)、書籍タイトル (title of books)、テーマ (themes)

1 Introduction

Hikikomori (withdrawal from society) is the phenomenon that describes a condition where a person avoids participation in society and remains almost completely at home continuously for six months or more. According to Saito (1998), it has become widely acknowledged in general society in Japan. Regarding *hikikomori*, the most trusted definition, as drafted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare Scientific Research Fund Subsidy Mental Health Scientific Research Project (2010), is as follows:

It is a phenomenon that describes a condition where a person, as a result of various factors, avoids societal participation (attending school, including compulsory education; employment, including part-time employment; companionship outside of the household; etc.) and in

principle remains almost completely at home continuously for six months or more (although it is acceptable to leave the house if one does not interact with others). Furthermore, *hikikomori* is, as a general rule, a non-psychotic phenomenon with a clear distinction from *hikikomori* conditions based on positive or negative symptoms of schizophrenia. However, attention should be paid to the fact that the possibility is not low that schizophrenia may be included prior to diagnosis.

Hikikomori originally was part of a non-psychotic group, but recently it is thought that it includes cases with a background of psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia. For example, as established by Maeno (2021), general dystonia, mood disorders, neurosis, and personality disorders are representative of *hikikomori*'s relation to mental disorders. Saito (op. cit.) also states that by reaching a state of *hikikomori*, there are cases

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where secondary mental disorders have developed.

In Japan, it is said that there are 541,000 people between the ages of 15 and 39 (Cabinet Office, 2016) and 613,000 people between the ages of 40 and 65 (Cabinet Office, 2019) who are in a *hikikomori* state (Table 1). Also, as Hamasaki (2021) indicates, *hikikomori* is not solely a Japanese phenomenon, but with the progress in research centering on Europe and the USA, it is now a globalized issue.

Table 1 Estimated Number of People in Japan Considered to be *Hikikomori*

Age Group	Estimated No. of People	Report Name
15~39 y.o.	541,000	Cabinet Office (2016) "A Research Report Concerning Young People's Lifestyles"
40~64 y.o.	613,000	Cabinet Office (2019) "An Investigation Concerning Living Conditions"

Regarding this situation, organizing what themes are being discussed in the numerous books that have been published regarding *hikikomori* can be informative material when considering future *hikikomori* support projects. The titles of publications clearly indicate what knowledge and information can be gained from reading them. This paper aims to utilize that characteristic to analyze the titles of publications written about the *hikikomori* phenomenon and investigate trends in those titles.

2 Method

2-1 Extraction of Target Publication Titles

The inquiry into publication information was conducted using the National Diet Library Search. Through this search engine site, information was obtained about publications concerning *hikikomori* from sources including the National Diet Library, nationwide public libraries, university libraries, specialized libraries, and academic research institutes. The reason for this is that, for the purpose of grasping an overview of the trends of book contents, using this search engine is extremely convenient and efficient. Using *hikikomori* as a search keyword, data on publication information was collected. After removing all newspaper articles, papers, and magazines

from the obtained data and extracting only books, there was a total of 583 instances of book data.

In addition, this data included both general commercial publications and official publications such as government publications issued by the nation or prefectures, so the collected data was sorted into those two categories. This was done because, although it has recently become possible to purchase official publications through the internet, each prefecture only had one shop that sold those publications before the spread of the internet, making them difficult to obtain for general readers. Even now, it is difficult for general readers to both purchase and read those publications, unless one is a specialist. Therefore, in order to compare trends in books for general readers and books for readers in professional circles, the data was first separated into those two categories before conducting an analysis. As a result, of all of the publication data obtained using *hikikomori* as a search keyword, there were 382 commercial publications and 201 official publications.

2-2 Method of Analysis

As a result of the National Diet Library database search, 583 instances of publication data were extracted. This data not only included the book titles but also the names of the authors and publishing companies. However, as this extra information was not an important factor in purely researching the trends of published content, it was eliminated from the study. Then, secondary data was created from collecting only the book titles. This secondary data gathered solely from book titles was then analyzed using KH Coder3 (Higuchi, 2020), free software for text mining. Text mining is work done to extract useful information from large quantities of text data using morphological analysis.

3 Results and Observations

3-1 Words and Phrases Selected for Titles of Books Using *Hikikomori* as a Keyword

First, a quantitative analysis was conducted on the commercial publications included within the book titles that have *hikikomori* as a keyword. Through this analysis, results were obtained to clarify what words and phrases tend to be selected for the titles of books concerning *hikikomori* that are read by general readers. The analysis was conducted across three categories: verbs, nouns, and サ変名詞 (verbs formed by adding する to nouns). In each category, 50 words extracted from the data were organized by frequency of occurrence. The results can be seen in Table 2.

Next, an analysis of titles of official publications was conducted using the same method. The results can be seen in

Table 3.

As a result of a search of the National Diet Library database, we found that the use of the word *hikikomori* in book titles begins with a 1991 government publication. This overlaps with the start of a welfare project called ひきこもりと不登校児童福祉対策モデル事業 [*Hikikomori* and *Futoukou* Children Welfare Measures Model Project] in 1991 by the then-Ministry of Health and Welfare. From 2005, this project was expansively succeeded by ひきこもり等児童福祉対策事業の実施について [Regarding the Implementation of the Hikikomori and Other Child Welfare Measures Project] (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2005). Also, commercial publications regarding the topic began to be sold in 1992, and with Saito's (op. cit.) work becoming a best-seller, stable publication numbers have been maintained since.

3-2 Trends in Words and Phrases Selected for Titles of Commercial Publications

Among the words used in commercial publication titles, words with a positive or constructive image, such as する (do), できる (can do), 生きる (live), 見つける (find), 抜け出す (get out of, escape from), 乗り越える (overcome), 旅立つ (depart, begin a trip), and やり直す (start over), stand out. Also, in the nouns, there are words such as 不登校 (school non-attendance), いじめ (bullying), and ニート (NEET, Not in Education, Employment or Training) that concern social problems, along with words such as 当事者 (parties concerned), 社会 (society, community), 家族 (family), 親 (parents), and 若者 (youth) that indicate the actual person in the *hikikomori* situation as well as the people and environment around them, which stand out. For example, since we know that the family of the person in a *hikikomori* situation also feels great anxiety and distress (Funakoshi, et al., 2015), the trend is not only toward publications for the *hikikomori* individual, but rather toward publications for their family to read. In the *sahen meishi* category, one notices words such as 支援 (support), 実践 (practice), アプローチ (approach), 記録 (record, document), and 研究 (research) which create an image of actual coping methods, along with words such as 解決 (resolution), 理解 (understanding, comprehension), 回復 (recovery), and 自立 (self-reliance, independence) which bring up an image of trying to improve the *hikikomori* situation.

This trend is extremely similar to the trend in titles of commercial publications concerning *futoukou* (Yahiro and Kidd, 2020). For example, among verbs used in titles of commercial publications concerning *futoukou*, the words できる (can do), 生きる (live), and 乗り越える (overcome) also

occupy the top positions. Additionally, among nouns in those same book titles, words about social issues such as いじめ (bullying) and ひきこもり (withdrawal from society), as well as words that indicate the actual person in the *futoukou* situation as well as the people and environment around them, such as 親 (parents), 学校 (school), 社会 (society, community), 教師 (teacher, instructor), 生徒 (student), and 居場所 (place where one belongs), show up on the list. Among the *sahen meishi*, in addition to words such as 支援 (support), 対応 (response), サポート (support), and 実践 (practice) which create an image of actual coping methods, you will also find words such as 解決 (resolution), 理解 (understanding, comprehension), and 自立 (self-reliance, independence), which bring up an image of trying to improve the *futoukou* situation. This creates an impression, as it were, that all that was done with the book titles was to exchange *futoukou* for *hikikomori*.

On the other hand, there are words in the titles of commercial publications concerning *hikikomori* such as ニート (NEET, Not in Education, Employment or Training) (*1), 長期 (long term, long time), 8050(*2), and ピアサポート (peer support) (*3) that are not seen in titles of commercial publications concerning *futoukou*. The appearance of these words can be thought of as occurring because although *futoukou* is a phenomenon that can only be experienced until approximately age 18, it is possible for *hikikomori* to continue without age limitations. Consequently, because *hikikomori* is a condition centering on adults, it is easy to establish a peer support system that is difficult for *futoukou* students to realize with each other. Conversely, フリースクール (free school, alternative school), a word seen in *futoukou*-related book titles, is a word for children.

3-3 Trends in Words and Phrases Selected for Titles of Official Publications

In titles for official publications concerning *hikikomori*, the words 研究 (research), 報告 (report), 調査 (study, survey), プログラム (program), 実践 (practice), and 開発 (development) stand out. This is also the same trend as with publications concerning *futoukou*. You can understand that there are many publications written from the perspective of professionals who want to support the people in *hikikomori* situations, such as people working in the welfare profession who want to develop a *hikikomori* countermeasure program while demonstrating the effects of coping methods they have worked out after scientifically ascertaining the actual conditions of *hikikomori*. You can also understand this from the fact that there are more than a few books for training professionals with words like ピアサポーター (peer supporter), 養成 (training, education), and

機関 (organization, institution) in the titles. Also, in contrast with the fact that many books concerning futoukou had the word 進路 (future path) in their titles, books concerning *hikikomori* have replaced that word with 就労 (working, employment). You can see that compared to the options children in futoukou situations have for their future paths, people in *hikikomori* situations only have the option of finding employment left. Furthermore, the phrase 長期高年齢 (long-term older age) is in the titles of official publications. It is extremely difficult to get out of a long-term *hikikomori* condition and find employment. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has announced 就職氷河期世代活躍支援プラン [Employment Ice Age Generation Action Support Plan], and the Japanese government has announced 就職氷河期世代支援プログラム [Employment Ice Age Generation Support Program], and people in *hikikomori* situations are the targets for both of these programs (Utsunomiya, 2021).

3-4 Future *Hikikomori* Support from the Perspective of the Relationship between *Hikikomori* and Futoukou

The overview conducted in the previous sections shows that publications concerning *hikikomori*, whether commercial or official, perceive the relationship between *hikikomori* and futoukou as intimate. Namely, the mainstream view is that many children in futoukou situations will plunge into *hikikomori* situations in the future.

Saito (op. cit.) states that many young people in *hikikomori* situations had experiences futoukou in the past, and he contended that *hikikomori* and futoukou have a deep relationship. In point of fact, for example, Nishiogi Gakuin, a cram school that is putting efforts into study support for children in futoukou situations, estimates that 30% of people in *hikikomori* situations have experienced futoukou. They have focused on the connection between *hikikomori* and futoukou, providing educational guidance to children with the included purpose of avoiding *hikikomori* situations in the future.

However, there is also the view that *hikikomori* and futoukou should be considered separately. For example, Morita (2003) reports in a follow-up study about children in futoukou situations that when those children reached adulthood, 80% found employment or went on to further education. Also, a study by the Cabinet Office (2010) showed that futoukou was a direct factor in only 12% of people in *hikikomori* situations. On the other hand, after becoming adults, failing to find a job or being unable to adapt to their workplace and quitting was a factor for about 44% of people in *hikikomori* situations, while sickness was a factor for about 22%. Based on the above reasons, there are more than a few opinions that futoukou and

hikikomori are separate concepts, and should be considered separately (for example, NHK, 2016).

The study in this report has shown that the trend in publications concerning *hikikomori* is to discuss it in connection with futoukou. Even if one supports the approach that *hikikomori* and futoukou must be considered separately, isn't it still possible to view this issue from the perspective that perhaps the reason a conclusive method for *hikikomori* support has not emerged yet is because, instead of a new methodology for *hikikomori* support, the historic methodology for futoukou support has been too easily applied to *hikikomori* support, leading to failures? In other words, if we view this situation from the approach that we need to discover original *hikikomori* countermeasures for support methods for people in *hikikomori* situations, do we not need to search for new methodology? We plan on proceeding with our research from this perspective.

Notes

- *1) The Cabinet Office; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare; and Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications define ニート (NEET, Not in Education, Employment or Training) as a person between the ages of 15 and 34 who is a member of the non-working population who is neither doing housework nor attending school, namely, a young unemployed person (Cabinet Office, 2008). Accordingly, some people in *hikikomori* situations have an overlapping relationship with NEETs.
- *2) Parents in their 80s living in the same household as their children in their 50s, and additionally continuing to provide financial support to their children has become a problem in recent years. This is called the "8050 Problem". It is a term that refers to the issues that middle and old age people in *hikikomori* situations and their families have.
- *3) There are many cases where support for people with worries is done by professionals taking the lead in their care, but with peer support, the support system is a self-help one where people with the same worries and problems come together and care for each other. As Yoshino (2017) states, for peer support, the definition of the support system, the methods for training supporters, and their utilization methods differ with each local government, showing that it is still an undefined system.

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Table 2 List of Frequently Used Words and Phrases in Titles of Commercial Publications Regarding Hikikomori (Withdrawal from Society)

Verbs in Commercial Publications		Nouns in Commercial Publications		Sahen Meishi (verbs formed by adding suru to nouns) in Commercial Publications	
Verbs	Frequency	Nouns	Frequency	Sahen Meishi	Frequency
する (do)	41	ひきこもり (withdrawal from society)	342	支援 (support)	49
できる (can do)	14	不登校 (school non-attendance)	91	実践 (practice)	22
生きる (live)	13	子ども (child, children)	51	援助 (support, help)	16
なる (come to do / be)	12	心 (heart, mind, spirit)	33	解決 (resolution)	12
救う (save)	9	家族 (family)	31	理解 (understanding, comprehension)	11
語る (talk about)	7	親 (parents)	24	発達 (development)	10
繋ぐ (connect, link)	6	社会 (society, community)	22	関係 (connection, relationship)	9
見つける (find)	6	若者 (youth)	21	就職 (finding employment)	9
考える (think)	6	いじめ (bullying)	19	アプローチ (approach)	8
抜け出す (get out of, escape from)	6	ニート (NEET, not in education, employment or training)	18	記録 (record, document)	8
開く (open)	5	家庭 (family, home, household)	15	拒否 (denial, rejection)	8
教える (teach)	5	障がい (barrier, disability)	15	対応 (response)	8
乗り越える (overcome)	5	心理 (psychology, state of mind)	15	教育 (education)	7
起こる (happen, occur)	4	精神 (mind, spirit)	15	研究 (research)	7
作る (make)	4	問題 (problem, issue)	15	脱出 (escape)	7
治す (cure, heal)	4	暴力 (violence)	14	分析 (analysis)	7
治る (get better, recover)	4	人 (person)	12	依存 (dependence, reliance)	6
出る (appear, go out)	4	地域 (region, area)	10	回復 (recovery)	6
旅立つ (depart, begin a trip)	3	当事者 (parties concerned)	10	経験 (experience)	6
踏み出す (advance, take a step)	3	カウンセリング (counseling)	9	自立 (self-reliance, independence)	6
やり直す (start over)	3	マニュアル (manual)	9	中退 (dropping out)	6
分かる (understand)	3	今 (now)	9	活動 (activity)	5
育てる (raise)	3	物語 (story, tale)	9	子育て (raising a child)	5
輝く (shine)	3	方法 (method)	9	相談 (consultation, counsel)	5
見える (look, appear)	3	臨床 (medical practice)	9	報告 (report)	5
向き合う (face)	3	8050	8	サポート (support)	4
行く (go)	3	人間 (human being, person)	8	学習 (learning)	4
始める (begin)	3	旅立ち (departure)	8	虐待 (abuse)	4
探す (search)	3	子 (child)	7	再生 (regeneration, reclamation, rebuilding)	4
知る (know)	3	思春期 (puberty, adolescence)	7	自殺 (suicide)	4
悩む (be troubled)	3	親子 (parent and child)	7	生活 (life, daily life)	4
変わる (change)	6	母 (mother)	7	対処 (handling, countermeasure)	4
高める (raise, boost, improve)	2	療法 (treatment, therapy)	7	排除 (removal, exclusion)	4
立ち直る (recover, bounce back)	3	Q&A	6	病気 (sickness, disease)	4
生き抜く (survive, endure)	2	ピアサポート (peer support)	6	ガイド (guide)	3
待つ (wait)	2	現場 (setting, location)	6	プログラム (program)	3
送る (send, see off)	2	成年 (youth, young people)	6	救出 (rescue)	3
防ぐ (prevent)	2	日本 (Japan)	6	孤立 (isolation, helplessness)	3
治す (repair)	2	高校 (high school)	5	工夫 (device, plan)	3
育つ (grow)	2	時代 (era, period, the times)	5	差別 (discrimination)	3
引く (pull)	2	自分 (oneself)	5	出発 (departure)	3
開ける (open)	2	処方箋 (prescription)	5	認知 (recognition)	3
寄り添う (get close to, draw near)	2	精神療法 (mental treatment, psychotherapy)	5	サイン (sign)	2
救い出す (rescue)	2	長期 (long term, long time)	5	解説 (explanation, commentary)	2
救える (can save)	2	非行 (misconduct, delinquency)	5	開発 (development)	2
言う (say)	2	病 (illness, disease)	5	希望 (hope, wish)	2
向ける (turn toward, direct)	2	理論 (theory)	5	構築 (organization, construction, structure)	2
取り戻す (get back)	2	うつ (depression)	4	行動 (action)	2
思う (think, believe, feel)	2	ステップ (step)	4	指導 (guidance, leadership)	2
止まる (stop)	2	ソーシャルワーク (social work)	4	治療 (treatment, medical treatment)	2

Table 3 List of Frequently Used Words and Phrases in Titles of Official Publications Regarding Hikikomori
(Withdrawal from Society)

Verbs in Official Publications		Nouns in Official Publications		Sahen Meishi (verbs formed by adding suru to nouns) in Official Publications	
Verbs	Frequency	Nouns	Frequency	Sahen Meishi	Frequency
する (do)	38	ひきこもり (withdrawal from society)	194	支援 (support)	111
向ける (turn toward, direct)	14	事業 (project, undertaking)	68	研究 (research)	67
経る (go through, experience)	8	不登校 (school non-attendance)	42	報告 (report)	57
続く (continue)	7	家族 (family)	39	自立 (self-reliance, independence)	38
悩む (be troubled)	7	地域 (region, area)	35	調査 (study, survey)	35
考える (think)	6	社会 (society, community)	32	相談 (consultation, counsel)	20
抱える (hold, have, carry)	5	青少年 (young adult, youth)	32	就労 (working, employment)	15
ひきこもる (withdraw from society)	4	ガイドブック, ハンドブック (guidebook, handbook)	29	プログラム (program)	14
支える (support)	4	若者 (youth)	27	養成 (training, education)	14
取り組む (work at, work on)	4	子ども (child, children)	26	ガイド, 案内 (guidance)	13
目指す (aim for)	4	福祉 (welfare)	23	実践 (practice)	13
通す (pass, allow to pass)	3	機関 (organization, institution)	17	対応 (response)	12
なる (come to do / be)	3	精神 (mind, spirit)	17	開発 (development)	11
始める (begin)	3	長期高齢 (long-term older age)	15	活動 (activity)	11
見守る (observe, watch over)	3	状況, 状態 (circumstances, state, condition)	14	体験 (experience)	11
もたらす (induce, cause)	3	効果 (effect, effectiveness)	13	助成 (assisting, aid)	10
求める (want, ask for)	3	ピアサポーター, ピアサポート (peer supporter, peer support)	12	援助 (support, help)	9
困る (get upset, have difficulty)	3	ニート (NEET, not in education, employment or training)	11	補助 (assistance, support)	8
踏み出す (advance, take a step)	3	保健 (health)	11	理解 (understanding, comprehension)	8
抜け出す (get out of, escape from)	3	保健所 (public health center)	10	指導 (guidance)	7
歩む (walk)	3	実態 (actual condition)	10	実施 (execution, implementation)	7
置く (put, place)	2	主体 (subject, main part)	10	発達 (development)	7
繋がる (connect)	2	当事者 (parties concerned)	10	活用 (utilization)	6
取り戻す (regain, recover)	2	問題 (problem, issue)	10	関係 (connection, relationship)	6
見る (see, look at)	2	心 (heart, mind, spirit)	9	構築 (organization, construction, structure)	6
基づく (be based on)	2	居場所 (place where one belongs)	9	生活 (life, daily life)	6
寄り添う (get close to, draw near)	2	発達障がい (developmental disorder)	8	対策 (countermeasure, step)	6
育てる (raise)	2	医療 (medical treatment)	7	解決 (resolution)	5
語る (talk about)	2	行政 (government, administration)	7	回復 (recovery)	5
使う (use)	2	体制 (structure, organization, system)	7	学習 (learning)	5
溢れる (overflow)	1	思春期 (puberty, adolescence)	7	研修 (study and training)	5
行く (go)	1	事例 (example)	7	推進 (promotion)	5
いる (exist)	1	親 (parents)	7	連携 (association, cooperation)	5
変える (change)	1	健康 (health, fitness)	6	アプローチ (approach)	4
下がる (come down, drop, fall)	1	ガイドライン (guideline)	5	共生 (coexistence)	4
強いる (force, compel)	1	サポーター (supporter)	5	教育 (education)	4
できる (can do)	1	ステップ (step)	5	困窮 (poverty, difficulty)	4
待つ (wait)	1	ネットワーク (network)	5	参加 (participation)	4
学ぶ (learn)	1	在り方 (state, ideal state)	5	予防 (prevention)	4
活かす (utilize, make the most of)	1	療法 (treatment, therapy)	5	介入 (intervention)	3
関わる (be concerned with, affect)	1	NPO	4	改善 (improvement)	3
深める (deepen)	1	アプローチ (approach)	4	記録 (record, document)	3
捉える (comprehend, perceive)	1	いじめ (bullying)	4	拒否 (denial, rejection)	3
探る (investigate, look into)	1	カウンセリング (counseling)	4	矯正 (reform, correction)	3
働く (work)	1	人権 (human rights, personal rights)	4	啓発 (education, public awareness)	3
動く (move)	1	対人 (interpersonal)	4	経験 (experience)	3
伴う (accompany, follow)	1	独り, 孤独 (loneliness, solitude)	4	検討 (investigation, discussion)	3
防ぐ (prevent)	1	モデル (model)	4	孤立 (isolation, helplessness)	3
癒す (heal, cure)	1	リーチアウト (reach-out, outreach)	4	行動 (act, behavior)	3
発つ (start out)	1	臨床 (medical practice)	4	子育て (raising a child)	3