



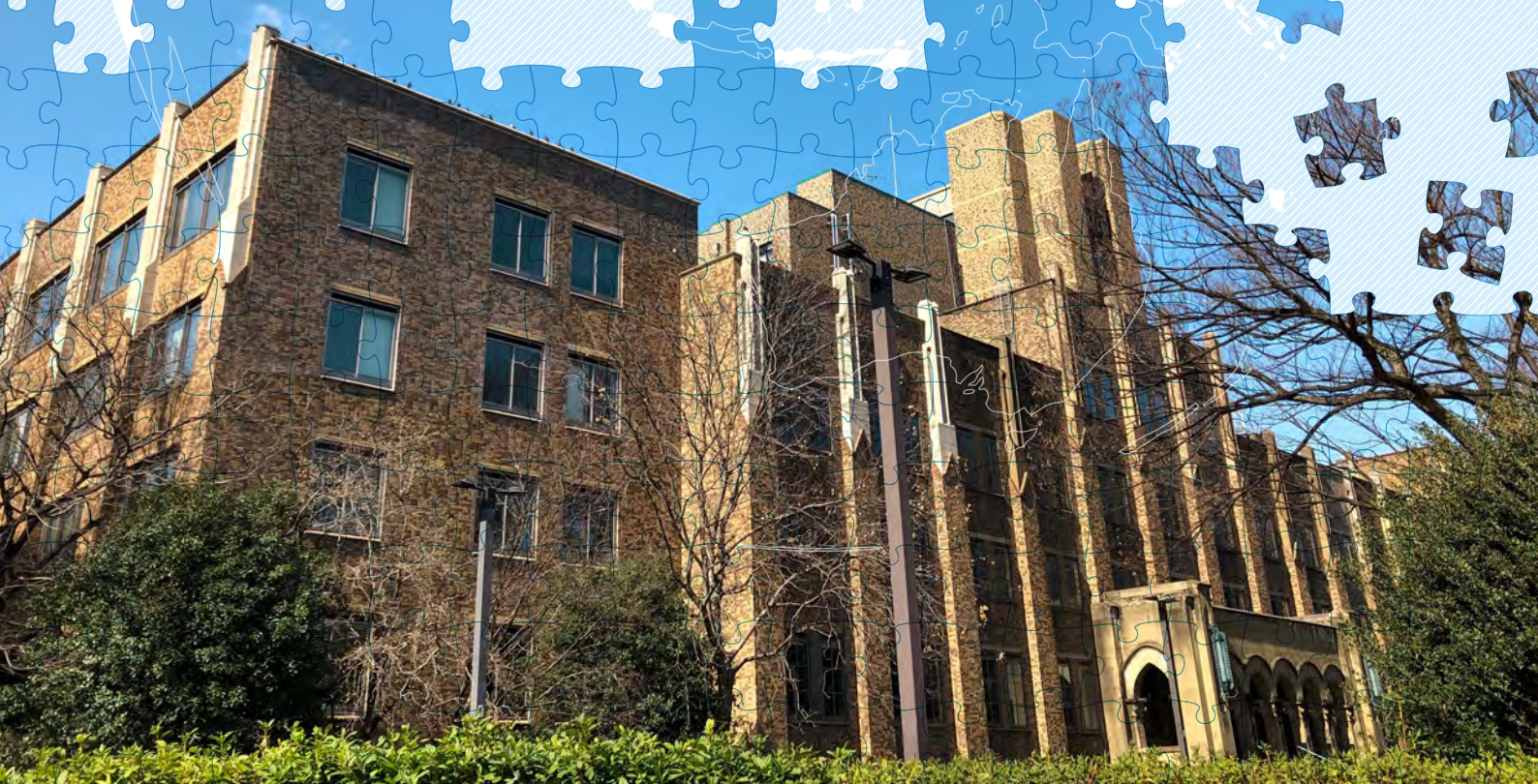
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CSRDA Discussion Paper

Family Educational Attitudes and Children's Learning Attitudes



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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between the learning attitudes of middle and high school students and their parents' educational attitudes using the 2018 Japanese Longitudinal Study of Children and Parents (the Social Science Japan Data Archive, Center for Social Research and Data Archives, Institute of Social Science, The University of Tokyo). The results reveal that parents' attitudes toward their children have a positive effect on their children's learning awareness, as do parents' investment in the future and high expectations as well as their English and practical skills. In particular, investment in the future and high expectations affect children's learning awareness in high-pressure situations.

Introduction

Previous studies have shown that families' (especially parents') educational attitudes are attributable to social class and other factors (Lareau 2011, Honda 2004, Matsuoka 2019). Aramaki (2016) noted that parents' social class affects their children's academic achievement and career path through their educational expectations. The actual child-rearing methods (i.e., discipline) that result from parents' educational expectations tend to increase children's learning time (Nakamuro et al. 2013) and academic achievement (Kataoka 2001). Furthermore, the higher parents' educational aspirations are, the higher the educational aspirations of their children are in general (Uzuki 2004, Katase 2005, Fujiwara 2009).

However, the educational aspirations of parents for their children have rarely been examined in terms of how receptive children are to these aspirations and how aware of them they are. Funabashi highlights the importance of the child-centered aspect (Funabashi 1999). In modern times, cases of "educational abuse" have been reported in which children suffer strong psychological stress due to their parents' educational attitudes (Furusho and Isozaki 2015, Ishii 2023). It is necessary to examine how children learn while accounting for the educational awareness of their parents. This is the research question of this paper.

Research Question

How do parental educational attitudes affect children's attitudes toward

learning?

Analytical Framework

This paper examines the impact of the transmission of a parental emphasis on educational values on children's attitudes toward learning. Previous research has shown that parents' hopes and aspirations for their children's educational attainment (educational aspirations) influence their educational investment and the way they interact with their children, which in turn affects the children's grades and educational attainment (Sewell et al. 1970). In a domestic study, Kataoka (2009) noted that parents who choose to apply to private schools transmit to their children the modern value orientation of "good school, good company." To address the influence of parents' attitudes and actions on their children, Kataoka (2009) uses Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus in his theory of reproduction. Habitus refers to the mental structure that directs behavior and is an everyday habit or disposition that is influenced by various experiences that are beyond the individual's innate nature (Bourdieu 1979=1990, Kataoka 2019). Therefore, this paper applies the habitus theory and examines how the accumulated educational values emphasized by parents are transmitted to children's learning attitudes under the influence of factors such as the child's upbringing.

Of course, there may also be influence from children to parents; parents may expect

their children to continue to college because of their children's high grades (Nakazawa 2009, Tobishima 2020). However, the analysis in this paper focuses on the family as having the greatest impact on children's attitudes toward education and learning.

Analysis Method

(1) Overview of Analysis Data

The data used were obtained from the "Japanese Longitudinal Study of Children and Parents" conducted by the Social Science Japan Data Archive, Center for Social Research and Data Archives, Institute of Social Science, The University of Tokyo.

This was a panel survey of children in grades 1 through 12 and their parents, who were registered with the Benesse Institute of Education throughout Japan. The survey followed the same individuals. This study used the Parent–Child Survey Wave 4, which was conducted from July to September 2018. This part of the survey included 5915 valid responses from children (junior high and high school students) and 5831 responses from parents.

(2) Creation of variables related to children's learning attitudes

In the Child Questionnaire of the Parent–Child Survey, children were asked to respond to the five items in Table 1 on a four-point scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," starting with the question "How much do the following apply to your reasons for

studying?"

Table 1. Children's Learning Attitudes (Descriptive Statistics)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Sum		Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Sum		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N		N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	
I'm happy to learn new things	7th grade	178	17.7%	391	38.9%	327	32.5%	110	10.9%	1006	I don't want to be scolded by teachers or parents	7th grade	150	14.9%	374	37.2%	295	29.3%	187	18.6%	1006
	8th grade	161	16.4%	386	39.4%	319	32.6%	114	11.6%	980		8th grade	138	14.1%	375	38.3%	310	31.7%	155	15.8%	978
	9th grade	144	14.4%	383	38.4%	341	34.2%	130	13.0%	998		9th grade	132	13.2%	360	36.0%	330	33.0%	178	17.8%	1000
	10th grade	128	13.0%	384	39.0%	353	35.8%	120	12.2%	985		10th grade	127	12.9%	328	33.3%	362	36.8%	167	17.0%	984
	11th grade	108	11.2%	364	37.8%	351	36.4%	141	14.6%	964		11th grade	86	8.9%	309	32.1%	367	38.1%	200	20.8%	962
	12th grade	144	14.7%	381	38.8%	342	34.8%	115	11.7%	982		12th grade	67	6.8%	271	27.7%	385	39.3%	257	26.2%	980
	Sum	863	14.6%	2289	38.7%	2033	34.4%	730	12.3%	5915		Sum	700	11.8%	2017	34.1%	2049	34.7%	1144	19.4%	5910
I don't want to lose to my friends	7th grade	249	24.8%	367	36.5%	269	26.7%	121	12.0%	1006	I want to have the job I want in the future.	7th grade	321	31.9%	348	34.6%	233	23.2%	104	10.3%	1006
	8th grade	245	25.0%	365	37.2%	265	27.0%	105	10.7%	980		8th grade	283	28.9%	353	36.1%	245	25.1%	97	9.9%	978
	9th grade	241	24.1%	364	36.4%	265	26.5%	129	12.9%	999		9th grade	290	29.0%	346	34.6%	263	26.3%	100	10.0%	999
	10th grade	207	21.0%	379	38.5%	280	28.4%	119	12.1%	985		10th grade	340	34.5%	387	39.3%	185	18.8%	73	7.4%	985
	11th grade	161	16.7%	365	37.9%	306	31.8%	131	13.6%	963		11th grade	301	31.2%	402	41.7%	190	19.7%	71	7.4%	964
	12th grade	168	17.2%	367	37.5%	306	31.3%	138	14.1%	979		12th grade	328	33.4%	405	41.2%	171	17.4%	78	7.9%	982
	Sum	1271	21.5%	2207	37.3%	1691	28.6%	743	12.6%	5912		Sum	1863	31.5%	2241	37.9%	1287	21.8%	523	8.8%	5914
I want to go to the (high school or) college of my choice	7th grade	344	34.2%	399	39.7%	183	18.2%	80	8.0%	1006											
	8th grade	374	38.2%	410	41.9%	133	13.6%	61	6.2%	978											
	9th grade	460	46.0%	373	37.3%	116	11.6%	50	5.0%	999											
	10th grade	343	34.8%	384	38.9%	170	17.2%	89	9.0%	986											
	11th grade	360	37.4%	398	41.3%	125	13.0%	80	8.3%	963											
	12th grade	457	46.5%	331	33.7%	92	9.4%	103	10.5%	983											
	Sum	2338	39.5%	2295	38.8%	819	13.8%	463	7.8%	5915											

(3) Creation of variables related to parents' educational attitudes

In the Parental Questionnaire of the Parent–Child Study, parents were asked, "How much do the following apply to your child's education?" The parents answered the 12 items in Table 2 on a 4-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (Table 2). A principal component analysis of these responses revealed four principal components with eigenvalues of 1 or greater that had a clear structure and explained 59% of the total variance (Table 3).

Table 2: Parents' Educational Attitudes (Descriptive Statistics)

	I want my child's grades to improve so that they can enter a good university		I want to spend money on my child's education, even if it is a bit excessive		I try to keep up with the general trend in terms of education and advancement of my children		We think about discipline and education of our children as a couple		My child needs strict discipline and education		I want my child to experience a variety of things while they are still young	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Strongly Agree	1388	23.8	909	15.6	459	7.9	980	16.9	590	10.1	2172	37.3
Agree	2589	44.4	3087	53.0	2528	43.4	2653	45.7	2854	49	3299	56.6
Disagree	1467	25.2	1635	28.1	2465	42.3	1519	26.2	2115	36.3	330	5.7
Strongly Disagree	382	6.6	196	3.4	373	6.4	653	11.2	269	4.6	27	0.5
Sum	5826	100	5827	100	5825	100	5805	100	5828	100	5828	100

	I am worried about whether my child will be independent when they grow up		I want my child to be active in the world in the future		I want my child to acquire various skills (thinking, judgment, expression, etc.) other than		I want my child to acquire English skills that can be used in real situations		I want my child to acquire qualifications and certificates that will be useful in entrance		I am not sure how to respond to changes in education	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Strongly Agree	887	15.2	377	6.5	2519	43.2	1759	30.2	687	11.8	619	10.6
Agree	2148	36.8	1406	24.2	3023	51.9	2933	50.3	1848	31.7	2874	49.3
Disagree	2395	41.1	3098	53.2	260	4.5	976	16.7	2267	38.9	2010	34.5
Strongly Disagree	401	6.9	939	16.1	25	0.4	161	2.8	1028	17.6	322	5.5
Sum	5831	100	5820	100	5827	100	5829	100	5830	100	5825	100

Table 3. Parents' Educational Attitudes (Principal Component Analysis)

	I	II	III	IV
I want my child's grades to improve so that they can enter a good university	0.788	0.108	0.098	0.047
I want to spend money on my child's education, even if it is a bit excessive	0.734	0.146	0.043	0.127
I try to keep up with the general trend in terms of education and advancement of my children	0.764	0.011	0.107	0.227
I want my child to acquire qualifications and certificates that will be useful in entrance examinations	0.498	0.235	-0.027	0.041
I want my child to experience a variety of things while they are still young	0.012	0.694	0.049	0.272
I want my child to be active in the world in the future	0.374	0.563	-0.052	-0.021
I want my child to acquire various skills (thinking, judgment, expression, etc.) other than knowledge	0.025	0.774	0.096	0.088
I want my child to acquire English skills that can be used in real situations	0.392	0.697	0.028	-0.058
I am worried about whether my child will be independent when they grow up	-0.057	-0.032	0.841	0.104
I am not sure how to respond to changes in education	0.211	0.136	0.755	-0.053
We think about discipline and education of our children as a couple	0.080	0.111	-0.096	0.815
My child needs strict discipline and education	0.237	0.091	0.174	0.715
Eigenvalue	2.395	2.011	1.355	1.346
Contribution ratio	19.962	16.762	11.295	11.213

The first principal component can be interpreted as awareness of parents' willingness to make positive investments and efforts, such as improving grades and acquiring qualifications and certificates. Parents' systematic investment in their children's future and high expectations for their children's education are apparent in their attempts to provide the best education for their children and to send them to excellent universities. The first principal component is defined as "parents' educational attitudes: investment in the future and high expectations."

The second principal component is parents' attitudes toward providing their children with a wide range of experiences, expecting their children to be internationally active in the future, and striving to help their children develop a variety of skills and competencies in addition to knowledge as well as developing practical English skills. Parents expect their children not only to acquire knowledge but also to develop skills such as thinking, judgment, and expression through diverse experiences and to play an active role in the global arena in the future. The second principal component is "parents' educational attitudes: English and practical skills."

The third principal component is anxiety about children's future independence and hesitation about how to appropriately respond to changes in education. Parents are concerned and anxious about their children's ability to be independent when they become adults; at the same time, they are confused about how to cope with changes in the modern educational environment. The third principal component is "parents' educational attitudes: anxiety and confusion about

education.”

The fourth principal component is that couples think of child-rearing as a cooperative effort and believe that strict discipline and education are sometimes necessary for their children.

The fourth principal component is "parents' educational attitudes: married couple parenting and strict discipline".

(4) Creation of other variables

For socioeconomic status (SES), we created SES variables based on fathers' education, mothers' education, and household income following the procedure in Tarumi (2014).

Table 4 shows the relationship between SES and parental educational attitudes.

Table 4: Parents' Educational Attitudes and SES (Mean Comparison)

		I want my child's grades to improve so that they can enter a good university	I want to spend money on my child's education, even if it is a bit excessive	I try to keep up with the general trend in terms of education and advancement of my children	We think about discipline and education of our children as a couple	My child needs strict discipline and education	I want my child to experience a variety of things while they are still young
LowestSES	Average	2.527	2.526	2.337	2.612	2.588	3.266
	N	567	569	569	567	568	567
LowerMiddleSES	Average	2.687	2.681	2.484	2.738	2.647	3.329
	N	588	589	587	588	589	589
UpperMiddleSES	Average	3.012	2.890	2.626	2.785	2.688	3.348
	N	610	608	610	609	609	609
HighestSES	Average	3.220	3.017	2.746	2.949	2.805	3.447
	N	472	472	472	472	472	472
	Average	2.8476	2.769	2.5407	2.7634	2.6765	3.3433
	N	2237	2238	2238	2236	2238	2237
		I am worried about whether my child will be independent when they grow up	I want my child to be active in the world in the future	I want my child to acquire various skills (thinking, judgment, expression, etc.) other than knowledge	I want my child to acquire English skills that can be used in real situations	I want my child to acquire qualifications and certificates that will be useful in entrance examinations	I am not sure how to respond to changes in education
LowestSES	Average	2.663	2.030	3.308	2.910	2.132	2.677
	N	569	568	569	568	568	567
LowerMiddleSES	Average	2.591	2.112	3.417	3.093	2.267	2.660
	N	589	589	588	589	589	589
UpperMiddleSES	Average	2.613	2.204	3.421	3.153	2.423	2.720
	N	610	607	608	610	610	610
HighestSES	Average	2.534	2.470	3.530	3.371	2.527	2.641
	N	472	472	472	472	471	471
	Average	2.6031	2.1919	3.4139	3.1215	2.3298	2.6768
	N	2240	2236	2237	2239	2238	2237

Table 4 shows that the higher the level of SES, the greater the mean value of many items is. As indicated in previous studies, a greater amount of hierarchy leads to a higher level of educational awareness (Lareau 2011, Honda 2004, Aramaki 2016, Matsuoka 2019). However, "parents' educational attitudes: anxiety and confusion about education," as discussed in the previous section, includes educational attitudes such as, "I am worried about whether my child will be independent when he or she grows up" and "I am not sure how to respond to changes in

education.” These attitudes are more likely to be held by parents in the middle or lower deciles of the hierarchy.

Academic performance: In the children's questionnaire, respondents were asked, "What is your current grade in your grade?" The total score was calculated as follows: lowest=1, lower middle=2, approximately middle=3, upper middle=4, and highest middle=5 (minimum = 5, maximum = 25).

For learning time, the children's questionnaire asked respondents, "How much time do you usually spend learning in a day (on days when school is in session)? Please exclude the time spent at school. If it varies from day to day, please tell us the average time." For the item "Studying other than homework (excluding tutoring time)" the response options were "more than 4 hours/4 hours/3 hours/2 hours/1 hour/30 minutes/15 minutes/10 minutes/5 minutes/never." The scores were as follows: more than 4 hours = 270, 4 hours = 240, 3 hours = 180, 2 hours = 120, 1 hour = 60, 30 minutes = 30, 15 minutes = 15, 10 minutes = 10, 5 minutes = 5, and never = 0.

With regard to the preferred stage of schooling: the children's questionnaire asked the respondents, "Which school do you want to go to in the future?" The respondents' options were "up to junior high school/up to high school/up to technical college (college of technology)/up to vocational school/up to junior college/up to university (four years or six years)/up to graduate school/other/have not decided yet." Each variable was converted into years of education and

scored as follows: up to junior high school = 9, up to high school = 12, up to technical college (college of technology) = 14, up to vocational school = 14, up to junior college (junior college) = 14, up to university (4- or 6-year program) = 16, up to graduate school = 18.

In terms of grade, the children's questionnaire included the question, "Tell us about yourself," which was answered with the children's grade. The sections were scored as follows: 4th grade = 4, 5th grade = 5, 6th grade = 6, 7th grade = 7, 8th grade = 8, 9th grade = 9, 10th grade = 10, 11th grade = 11, 12th grade = 12.

With regard to gender, we created a dummy for male (male = 1, female = 0).

For the children's number of siblings, the parent questionnaire asked the respondents, "Please tell us about all of your children." The number of children (including those living together or living separately) was used as the answer to this question.

Results and Discussion

To clarify the research question regarding children's attitudes toward learning and parents' attitudes toward education, multiple regression analysis was conducted using the four terms of children's attitudes toward learning as the dependent variables (Table 4). For the independent variables, we used the principal component scores created in the previous section for parental educational attitudes: investment in the future and high expectations, English and

practical skills, anxiety and confusion about education, and married couple parenting and strict discipline.

Table 5. Determinants of children's attitudes toward learning (multiple regression analysis)

	I'm happy to learn new things		I don't want to lose to my friends		I want to go to the (high school or) college of my choice		I don't want to be scolded by teachers or parents		I want to have the job I want in the future.	
	β	p	β	p	β	p	β	p	β	p
Grade	-0.070 **		-0.028		0.084 ***		-0.065 *		-0.071 **	
Male	0.029		-0.031		-0.084 ***		-0.012		-0.095 ***	
Number of siblings	-0.040		0.025		-0.025 ***		-0.028		-0.030	
SES	-0.043		-0.046 +		-0.037		-0.025		-0.041	
Academic Performance	0.198 ***		0.303 ***		0.179 ***		-0.056 *		0.073 **	
Learning time	0.089 ***		0.057 *		0.122 ***		0.025		0.111 ***	
Preferred stage of schooling	0.065 *		0.025		0.125 ***		-0.022		0.075 **	
Parental Educational Attitudes										
Investment in future and high expectations	0.086 **		0.111 ***		0.087 ***		0.122 ***		0.072 **	
English and practical skills	0.100 ***		0.039 +		0.060 *		-0.030		0.098 ***	
Anxiety and confusion about education	-0.045		-0.009		-0.001		0.124 ***		-0.021	
Married couple parenting and strict discipline	0.040 -		0.022		0.039 +		0.080 **		0.058 *	
N	1661		1661		1659		1660		1660	
AdjustedR2	0.110		0.134		0.134		0.039		0.066	
F	19.570		24.346		24.244		7.127		11.613	
P	***		***		***		***		***	

First, an important finding is that even after controlling for SES, differences in children's attitudes toward learning were observed depending on their parents' educational attitudes. The SES variable only had a significant negative effect on the item "I don't want to lose to my friends." The lower the respondent's SES was, the greater this awareness was. SES did not have a direct effect on the attitudes of children, indicating that it was reflected through the parents' educational attitudes.

Each child's educational awareness was subsequently examined. All four parental educational attitudes were statistically significant with respect to the item "I am happy to learn

new things." Of these, "English and practical skills" had the greatest impact on children's awareness. It is suggested that the practice of acquiring practical skills, which exposes children to a wide range of experiences, can lead to an increase in children's intellectual curiosity. However, parents' anxiety and confusion about education had negative effects on their children's awareness. Parental anxiety about education may reduce children's intellectual curiosity.

Next, a significant positive effect was found for the item "I don't want to lose out to my friends" with respect to "investment in the future and high expectations" and "English and practical skills." The habitus used as the analytical framework included the competitive habitus, which represents the importance of winning and the skill of recovering from defeat (Kataoka 2009). It is suggested that high parental expectations and opportunities to provide skills in practice contribute to transmitting a competitive habitus to children, leading to a high level of competitiveness.

With regard to the item "I want to go to the high school or college of my choice," the three parental educational expectations, with the exception of "anxiety and confusion about education," had significant positive effects. Given that parents' and children's educational expectations often coincide according to previous studies (Katase 2005, Fujiwara 2009), it is possible that parents' high educational expectations for their children are transferred to their children's learning attitudes through their investment in their children's education and providing

them with practical experience.

With regard to the item "I don't want to be scolded by teachers or parents," "investment in the future and high expectations," "anxiety and confusion about education," and "married couple parenting and strict discipline" had significant positive effects. Characteristically, among the five models, only the variable "anxiety and perplexity about education" had a nonnegative but positive effect. Furthermore, it exceeded the value of "investment in the future and high expectations." This suggests that parents' anxiety about education puts pressure on their children to avoid being scolded.

Finally, for the item "I want to have the job I want in the future," three variables were positively significant (with the exception of "anxiety and confusion about education"), and "English and practical skills" had the greatest impact. This suggests that providing children with a wide range of experiences and awareness of the need to develop practical English skills can help children imagine the kind of career they want to have.

Summary

Using the Japanese Longitudinal Study of Children and Parents conducted by the Social Science Japan Data Archive, Center for Social Research and Data Archives, Institute of Social Science, The University of Tokyo, this study examined the research question "**How do parental**

educational attitudes affect children's attitudes toward learning?" The following is a summary of the findings of this paper.

First, SES has little direct influence on children's educational awareness and is fostered through the mediation of parents' educational awareness. Second, parenting attitudes that encourage children to have a wide range of experiences and acquire practical skills for the future are effective at stimulating children's intellectual curiosity (i.e., "I am happy to learn new things"). Third, the competitive spirit of the statement "I don't want to lose to my friends" is transmitted to children through high parental expectations and opportunities to provide practical skills, such as the importance of winning and recovering from defeat. Fourth, with regard to the statement "I want to go to the high school or college of my choice," parents' high educational expectations for their children, through educational methods, contribute to children's increased awareness of learning. Fifth, for the item "I don't want to be scolded by teachers or parents," parents' anxiety about education puts pressure on their children not to be scolded. Sixth, with regard to the item "I want to have the job I want in the future," the results suggest that providing children with a wide range of experiences and awareness of the need to develop practical English language skills can help them imagine the kind of job they want to have.

In this paper, we designed the research question by pointing out that the "child-centered" aspect of parents' educational awareness toward their children is lacking. However, we

found that parents' "investment in the future and high expectations" and "English and practical skills" had significant positive effects on children's learning awareness, as did the concepts "I am happy to learn new things," "I do not want to lose to my friends," "I want to go to the high school or university of my choice," and "I want to have the job I want in the future." Therefore, parental awareness can have a favorable effect on children's learning attitudes.

However, "investment in the future and high expectations" has a positive effect on children's learning attitude, in contrast to the statement "I don't want to be scolded by teachers and parents." Previous studies have shown that strong parental expectations can lead to psychological maladjustment (stress, academic anxiety, etc.) in children (Crystal et al. 1994) and that "the expectations of parents to always aim upward in a competitive society" are stressors for children (Kawamura 2003). Several studies have found negative effects from parental expectations. In this paper, we show that even after controlling for SES, a high level of parental educational awareness fosters a sense of learning in their children. Therefore, it is conceivable that in any family, high educational expectations may cause children to feel pressured to learn.

Finally, we address the remaining research questions. In this paper, variables related to parents' educational awareness and children's learning awareness were created from a limited number of items through secondary analysis. However, it remains unclear whether these variables capture the entirety of the attitudes of both parents and children. Furthermore, considering that

general educational awareness related to each of the items was used to create the variables and was felt by most parents and children, the respondents' level of awareness of the variables may not be clear. Therefore, it is important to supplement the results with qualitative research.

In addition, it is common for most discipline to be fostered through the pattern educational attitudes → discipline → child attitudes. Therefore, there is a lack of clarity regarding the relationship between parents' and children's awareness. This issue should be addressed in the future.

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