



The Influence of External Factors on Children's Academic Performance Under High Educational Expectations by Both Parents and Children

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Abstract. This study used data from the China Education Panel Survey (CEPS) for the 2014–2015 school year with eighth-grade students as the survey respondents. And use descriptive statistics and OLS regression analysis to analyze the effects of other factors on children's academic performance when both parents and children are at high educational expectations. The results show: (1) The higher confidence parents have in their children's future, the children have better academic performance. (2) The higher pressure children experience from their parents' educational expectations, students would have worse their academic performance. (3) The higher level of parental requirements for children's academic performance, the higher scores students would obtain. (4) The higher frequency of parents having dinner with their children, the higher academic performance student could reach. (5) The higher frequency of parents going out with their children to visit museums, zoos, science museums, etc., the academic performances of their children would be lower. (6) The higher frequency of parents going out with their children to movies, shows, sports games, etc. has no significant effect on students' academic performance.

Keywords: Academic performance · educational expectation · parent · children

1 Introduction

Essentially, the aim of family education and training is to meet the parental expectation of education. Chinese parents have traditionally had high expectations for their children's academic performance because of the traditional cultural psychology of success and brilliance. Academics have long been concerned about the link between parents' expectations for their children's education and their development. China has ordained the "Family Education Promotion Law," which signifies that family education has shifted from being a family matter to a state one. China places a lot of attention on family education. In order to promote children's healthy development from the viewpoint of family education, family educators will have a substantial role to perform in the future. In order to lessen the amount of schoolwork and extracurricular training kids must complete, China has also implemented a "double reduction policy." The law has a significant

impact on homeschooling and motivates teachers and parents to reflect on their practices. In addition, given that the proportion of parents with higher education has greatly increased in the current era compared to the past, they frequently have their own opinions on how to nurture their children. These factors inevitably drive parents' educational expectations to diverge. Obtaining high marks on college admission examinations is the primary stride toward a prosperous destiny and a rise in social class, and intellectual accomplishment is a prime objective for most Chinese parents when it comes to their children's learning. A record 4.57 million people in China applied for master's degrees in 2022, setting a new high (Zhang, 2022) [1]. The originality of this study is to evaluate the variables that may affect children's academic achievement in this sort of household, including the parents' degree of confidence in their children's prospects, the degree of pressure the children experience regarding their parents' educational expectations, the parents' requirements for their children's achievement, and the regularity of events such as dinner, exhibition visits, and movie expeditions with the parents, employing data from the China Education Panel Survey (CEPS).

2 Literature Review

The causes, nature, and implications of parents' educational expectations have been explored by previous academics. High parental expectations for their children's education are seen by some studies to be caused by examination-focused education, employment pressure, social comparison psychology, and parents' individual educational expectations. The high expectations of Chinese parents are a result of traditional cultural psychology. Parents frequently set unrealistically high educational standards for their children, which is a result of the cultural psychology at play as well as the reality of this kind of educational expectation. The literature that is pertinent to this study falls under various broad categories: studies on the significance of academic accomplishment and studies on the determinants that affect academic performance.

3 Significance of Academic Accomplishment

Chinese cultures place a high priority on family harmony and hierarchy, which are key ideas in Confucianism. These qualities influence how someone makes decisions about their education. The family system shares the clear and highly structured hierarchy of the educational system, which is based on Confucianism. The teaching of Confucius spelled out the hierarchy in clear terms: "Let the prince be a prince, the minister be a minister, the parent be a father, and the son be a son" (Kao, 2006) [2]. There is a clear understanding of each person's role and duties. According to a study, Chinese parents are heavily impacted by Chinese traditional culture, and this influences how much importance they place on their children's academic performance (Leung and Shek, 2011) [3]. Researchers who evaluated the educational aspirations of Zhuang teenagers who were only kids discovered that under China's one-child policy, parents' aspirations, kids' aspirations, and academic success were all greater than they were for kids raised in families with many children (Li et al., 2020) [4]. Chen (2022) reported that the "double reduction" policy, which was implemented in China in 2021, minimized the amount of

homework and off-campus learning for students but also elevated the academic anxiety of many parents [5]. Children's academic success has been a contentious topic in society and an important aspect of domestic life in China because of Confucian culture, national policies, and enduring social norms.

4 Factors Influencing Academic Achievement

Filial piety, which was influenced by Confucianism, is a highly regarded quality in Chinese families. In Chinese history, it has existed for more than two millennia. In every way, parents are crucial to their children's education. Wu et al. (2021) discovered a strong correlation between children's scholastic involvement and the extent to which parent and child educational aspirations corresponded. When both parents and children exhibit significant academic expectations and ambitions, as opposed to when parents have limited aspirations, but children have significant aspirations, the children are more dedicated to learning [6]. Yue (2014) observed that parents who are employed as educators and entrepreneurs, being highly educated, implementing democratic education, or in two-parent households, all had a great impact on secondary school students' ability to accomplish higher academic goals [7]. Li and Hu (2021) concluded that although children's academic proficiency in middle school did not always improve with increased parental engagement, it was correlated with an equivalent improvement in parental engagement in elementary school students' education. Children's academic achievement was also supposed to be enhanced by pleasant parent-child bonding [8]. Household values of adversity and an optimistic attitude toward existence are two elements of belief structures that are crucial for fostering family resilience. The former focuses on how household individuals understand and comprehend difficulty, whereas the latter conveys the family's optimistic, forward-looking approach to overcoming difficulties. In light of these viewpoints, it is important to consider two aspects of parental beliefs, namely those regarding adversity and those that are specifically relevant to the children (Leung et al., 2016) [9].

Parental expectation has remained one of the greatest important factors influencing children's academic and behavioral aptitude concerning parent-specific ideas about children (Davis-Kean et al., 2005) [10]. This is particularly important for Chinese people because studies have shown that Chinese parents place a significant value on their children's education. The association between overparenting and adolescent welfare is influenced by the gender of the parents. Paternal overparenting may have a greater negative impact on teenagers' self-perceptions and perceptions of their strengths since fathers are more active and achievement-oriented in children (Leung, 2017) [11].

Causation explanations for children's performance and failure are additional parental child-specific concept that affects teens' growth and achievement. Parents' emotional reactions, parental techniques, and participation in their kids' activities are all directly impacted by causal attributions, and these factors in turn have an impact on how adolescents develop. Chinese culture places a high value on effort, as seen by the idea that hard work will always pay off and that being diligent is a way to make up for being dull and that hard work will always pay off. In Chinese belief systems, it is important to note how parents often attribute a child's achievement or failure to exertion (Leung et al., 2016) [9].

Regarding parental control, numerous characteristics of the belief are inherent and reflected in Chinese society (Shek, 2007). Firstly, parenting is infused with elements of psychological control. The child should respect the parents and submit to them in all circumstances. Secondly, the child should possess a high moral standard and keep the family's reputation honorable. Thirdly, Chinese parenting practices adhere to tight guidelines and demanding standards to instill expectations and demands in the child [12]. Leung et al. (2016) asserted that emotional and behavioral control are integrated into Chinese culture to exert parental control [9]. Parenting efficacy is influenced by family characteristics such as the parent-child relationship (Gable et al. 1992) [13]. According to Shek (1998), parent-child conflict is generally characterized as differences between parents and children that impede parent-child relationships and are linked to teenagers' inferior psychological welfare [14]. Parent-child conflict creates an emotional environment that may influence how parental actions may affect adolescent development (Steinberg, 2001) [15]. Excessive parent-child conflict makes teenagers view parents more adversely, which may have an impact on their wellness. Contrarily, adolescents who have positive relationships with their parents are more responsive to parenting, which may substantially improve their welfare. The conflict between parents and children thereby reduces the positive impacts of parenting on teenagers' welfare (Leung, 2017) [11].

In Chinese households, parental commitment and sacrifice are regarded as key components of children's development (Chao and Kaeochinda, 2010) [16]. The family investment model and the findings from a qualitative study of Chinese parents and children. These include contending for financial resources, dedicating time to a child's education, adjusting one's daily routine, forgoing one's lifestyle and desires, and disguising one's problems (Leung and Shek, 2011) [3].

Although parents sacrifice for their children's growth, teenagers may not fully understand maternal sacrifice due to divergent perspectives on how resources should be distributed (Leung and Shek, 2016) [17]. Evidence suggests that moms felt greater sacrifice than adolescents did, and mother-child discrepancy of perceived parental sacrifices correlated negatively with adolescents' motivation for academic accomplishment (Leung and Shek, 2016) [17]. Instead, in low-income Chinese households, teenagers' perceptions of parental sacrifice had a favorable impact on their motivation for success and general well-being. Therefore, it is proposed that teenagers who "get" their parents' commitment and sacrifice might honor them by working hard and acting morally upright (Leung, 2020) [18].

According to cultural-ecological approaches, parental beliefs impact parenting conduct, which in turn affects teenage growth. LeVine (1988) demonstrated precisely how cultural socialization objectives affect parental choices [19]. While some interactional objectives are universal (e.g., protecting children from harm, improving children 's well-being), others are ethnically precise (e.g., cultivating familism piousness toward their parents, boosting the family's prestige), expressing cultural values that are connected to expectations of a family as well as their children (Leung, 2020) [18].

In the modern period, parents work to improve family resources for raising their kids and prioritize the growth of the children as the family's main objective, also known as utilitarian familism (Lau, 1982) [20].

5 Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: High parental confidence in the child's future has a considerable favorable impact on the child's academic achievement, even after accounting for other characteristics and the extent to which parents' and children's educational expectations correspond.

Hypothesis 2: High levels of stress encountered by children concerning their parents' educational expectations had a significant negative impact on children's academic performance, even after controlling for other factors and the extent to which parents' and children's educational expectations correspond.

Hypothesis 3: High parental requirements on student achievement have a considerable favorable impact on children's academic performance, even after accounting for other factors and the extent to which parents' and children's educational aspirations correspond.

Hypothesis 4: The high frequency with which parents eat dinner with their kids has a considerable favorable impact on their academic performance, even after accounting for other variables such as how closely parents' and kids' educational expectations match.

Hypothesis 5: The high frequency with which parents and kids attend museums, zoos, and science museums together has a significant favorable impact on kids' academic achievement, even after controlling for other variables such as how closely parents' and children's educational aspirations correspond.

Hypothesis 6: There is a considerable favorable impact of highly frequent outings with parents and kids to visit movies, plays, sporting events, etc. on kids' academic performance, even after adjusting for other characteristics and how closely parents' and children's educational expectations match.

6 Methodology

This study will use data from the China Education Panel Survey (CEPS) for the 2014–2015 school year with eighth grade students as the survey respondents. The survey will apply a multi-layer sampling method to randomly select 28 county-level units in China, and it is expected that a total of 112 schools with 438 classes in these units will be selected as the sample to fill out the questionnaire. After eliminating those with missing values and screening out those whose parents' and children's educational expectations were “undergraduate”, “graduate” or “doctoral”, total 5342 samples will be left to be included in this study.

7 Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics (Table 1) and OLS regression analysis (Table 2) will be conducted using Stata15 to investigate the effects of other factors on children's academic performance when both parents and children are at high educational expectations.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of measuring variables (self-owner)

| Measuring Variables | Mean | SD | Min | Max | Obs |
|---|----------|----------|-----|-----|-------|
| Total of students' raw scores in English, Mathematics, and Chinese in the fall 2014 midterm exam | 256.5718 | 62.74352 | 28 | 440 | 5,342 |
| High confidence of parents in their children's future ('Fairly Confidence' and 'Very Confidence') | .8989143 | .3014704 | 0 | 1 | 5,342 |
| High pressure children experience from their parents' educational expectations ('Fairly high pressure' and 'Very high pressure') | .2967054 | .4568483 | 0 | 1 | 5,342 |
| High parental requirements for children's academic achievement ('Medium to high' and 'Top 5 in class') | .856608 | .350505 | 0 | 1 | 5,342 |
| High frequency of parents having dinner with their children('once a week' and 'more than once a week') | .882441 | .3221153 | 0 | 1 | 5,342 |
| High frequency of parents going out with their children to visit museums, zoos, science museums, etc. ('once a week' and 'more than once a week') | .0413703 | .1991637 | 0 | 1 | 5,342 |
| High frequency of parents going out with their children to movies, shows, sports games, etc.('once a week' and 'more than once a week') | .0608386 | .2390565 | 0 | 1 | 5,342 |

Table 2. OLS regression analysis of the effects of other factors on children's academic performance when both parents and children are at high educational expectation (self-owner)

| | |
|---|--|
| | Total of students' raw scores in English, Mathematics, and Chinese in the fall 2014 midterm exam |
| | Model 1 |
| High confidence of parents in their children's future('Fairly Confidence' and 'Very Confidence') | 28.59284 ** |
| Std.Err. | (2.760221) |
| High pressure children experience from their parents' educational expectations('Fairly high pressure' and 'Very high pressure') | − 16.05893** |
| Std.Err. | (1.813816) |
| High parental requirements for children's academic achievement ('Medium to high' and 'Top 5 in class') | 37.74695** |

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

| | Total of students' raw scores in English, Mathematics, and Chinese in the fall 2014 midterm exam |
|---|--|
| Std.Err. | (2.337432) |
| High frequency of parents having dinner with their children('once a week' and 'more than once a week') | 14.04501** |
| Std.Err. | (2.546146) |
| High frequency of parents going out with their children to visit museums, zoos, science museums, etc. ('once a week' and 'more than once a week') | −13.5171* |
| Std.Err. | (4.449737) |
| High frequency of parents going out with their children to movies, shows, sports games, etc.('once a week' and 'more than once a week') | −3.035913 |
| Std.Err. | (3.716338) |
| <i>cons</i> | 191.6497** |
| Std.Err. | (3.917097) |
| R ² | 0.0957 |
| Obs | 5342 |

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

8 Discussion

The educational expectations of parents working have emphasized the intellectual course of diligent study, admission to an ascendant university, employment, and a good life, reflecting the orientation of instrumental rationality and pragmatism. The Pygmalion effect, which states that the higher the expectations for the child, the better the performance, was brought up by the majority of researchers when discussing the importance of parents' educational aspirations. Children will improve faster and develop better to stand out in the group if their parents instill in them proper "expectations". According to a prior study, students will experience more negative feelings the more pessimistic their parents are about the prospects of their children (He and Li, 2020) [21]. Western socialization emphasizes an individualistic approach based on independence and individual competency, while Chinese socialization emphasizes a collectivist perspective based on familism and interdependence (Yeh and Yang, 1997) [22]. Whenever parents share their unfavorable opinions about their children with them, the children often concur and assimilate these opinions, which creates significant barriers for the children in their quest for positive self-consciousness (Forward, 2009) [23]. Consequently, the majority of kids place a lot of value on how their parents conduct and perceive themselves. Parents' skepticism of their children's capabilities is exhibited when they do not have sufficient

confidence in them or are concerned about their prospects frequently. If children accept what their parents believe, it will cause them to doubt themselves more often, which will leave them devoid of self-assurance and drive to overcome challenges in their education, careers, and personal activities.

When students are under too much academic pressure, it can easily lead to unpleasant emotions such as anxiety and melancholy. It can also have a poor impact on their academic performance, volition control, and sleep quality academic burnout and even harmful behavioral inclinations such as self-harm and suicide might result from extreme academic pressure (Zhu and Wang, 2009) [24]. It is clear that too much academic pressure has a detrimental impact on kids' physical and mental health. The pressure imposed on elementary school and college students by their academics has received greater attention in recent years (Li et al., 2019) [25]. According to certain studies, high school students' academic achievement might deteriorate if they encountered more anxiety. Since they are anxious about falling short of their parents' and teachers' expectations if they receive unsatisfactory results, students who experience anxiety as being high and who are not learning effectively will be more nervous when taking tests. As a result, they often experience greater study anxiety than learners with little perceived pressure (Peng, 2020) [26]. According to a different study, children who performed poorly in school have the greatest academic pressure, while students who performed well experience less of it. This is because children with low academic standing have additional academic challenges, which leads them to fear assessments and their parents' criticism of their results, making it harder for them to boost their results and creating a vicious pattern (Mao, 2021) [27].

According to a study, children perform better academically when their parents are more demanding and attentive to their needs. Since authoritative parenting approaches are characterized by high requirements and responsiveness, and since they frequently embrace and support their children while maintaining high requirements of them, authoritative parental styles are associated with children obtaining the best results on examinations (Zhang and Qin, 2019) [28]. Therefore, it is evident that setting reasonable parental requirements for children can enable them to develop better academic self-discipline, which will make it simpler for them to obtain top results.

Parents who contend with education anxiety might find it difficult to control their expectations for their children. They can concern about providing their children the educational facilities they need for their growth and about whether they're doing well enough academically to live up to their own expectations. Parents' concern mostly centers around their children's academic performance, even if learning is the students' primary task (Chang et al., 2014) [29]. For instance, parents may be concerned about their kids' motivation, routines, and academic achievement. In addition, parents' negative emotions were linked to a decline in effective parenting and an increase in ineffective parenting (Dallaire et al., 2006) [5, 3.0]. Therefore, these worries are counterproductive to children's education and may put even more pressure on them to learn, which would lead to academic burnout (Cheng, 2019) [31]. According to a study, if parents and their progeny would be having dinner together frequently, the students are more likely to get higher grades because of the closer connection and higher attention to each other. When students can control their attention and behavior in a way that promotes learning, they are

demonstrating self-control in their academic prospects. When engaged in other things, however, both of them would be quickly sidetracked and may find it quite challenging to concentrate on conversing with one another. Additionally, these activities could not be relevant to the examination material, thus whether parents and children engage in other activities collectively has a marginally better or completely negative effect on the educational achievement of the children.

9 Conclusions

The academic aptitude of children is significantly improved by parents who have high degrees of confidence in their children's prospects; the brighter the parents' prospective outlook, the greater the children's academic achievement, which corroborates Hypothesis 1.

The academic achievement of students is significantly impacted by the amount of pressure they are under from their parents' expectations in terms of their education, that is, the more pressure kids are under, the lower their grades will be, which is congruent with both hypothesis 2 as well as various study findings.

Excessive parental requirements for their kids' academic success have a major positive impact on how well pupils perform in school; the larger the degree of parental requirements, the more the grades kids will earn, which is consistent with hypothesis 3 and some research findings, parents who have high requirements for their kids' intellectual achievement have a considerable favorable impact on those students' academic achievement.

The academic aptitude of students is significantly improved when parents have dinners with their offspring regularly; the more frequency, the higher the educational achievement the student may obtain, which is consistent with Hypothesis 4.

The academic achievement of students is significantly impacted by parents taking their kids out frequently to visit museums, zoos, science museums, and other attractions. The more often parents take their kids out to visit museums, zoos, science museums, and other attractions, the worse the academic performances of their kids will be, which is incongruous with Hypothesis 5.

There is no discernible impact on students' academic achievement when parents take their children out frequently to movies, plays, and sporting events, which is incongruent with Hypothesis 6.

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