

Current State of Career Education in Japan and Parents' Cognitions

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I. Introduction

Today, career education for students attending schools is showing a major expansion in Japan, and government ministries and agencies are promoting a variety of programs for this purpose.

For example, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is promoting the National Movement for Enhancing Young People's Ability to Live as Independent and Active Members of Society, and is appealing to the public at large about the need to promote career development of young people who have not yet started in life. In this movement, the ministry is carrying out activities to help students acquire, while still in school, the ability to think about their lives, to communicate, and to deepen their understanding about what it means to work. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is promoting "career education" in schools and is carrying out a national program called the "Career Start Week," which gives junior high school students five or more days of experience in a workplace. Furthermore, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry is promoting the Career Education Project in various parts of the country by drawing on the resources of private organizations. The project utilizes non-profit organizations and other regional resources in providing novel career education.

An important characteristic of career education policies at the school level in Japan is an emphasis on cooperation with various related organizations outside schools, rather than limit the activities within schools. As symbolized by the opportunities given to junior high school students to learn from their experience in workplaces, career education in Japan is being carried out with the cooperation of various related organizations outside schools, such as firms and employers' associations in the regional community, public employment security offices and other public agencies, and non-profit organizations. The orientation towards promoting career education within society as a whole through the cooperation of schools and various organizations outside schools is a prominent feature of career education in Japan today.

One of the reasons that career education in Japan became oriented towards cooperation with various related organizations was the significant change in the environment surrounding young people's careers in and after the 1990s.

In the past, it was possible in Japan to provide career guidance services to the majority of students by providing intensive career guidance to help students make a career choice at the time of graduation. Therefore, resources for career guidance (staff, budgets, and energy) could be concentrated on a single point of career choice of students at the time of graduation, and it was sufficient to provide thorough guidance in a school to allow students nearing graduation to choose their careers. This was also a rational way in which to provide career guidance equitably and widely to students attending school.

Today, however, young people's careers in Japan have become much more unclear compared with the past. As a result, it is no longer sufficient to provide career guidance to help students make a career choice at the time of graduation. This is because even if they make a career choice and graduate from school, they would not necessarily continue to work at a single place of employment. For example, some young people transfer to another job soon after working for one firm or take up an unstable job working as a *freeter* or become a NEET. Others may decide to go back to school to study. The careers of young people in Japan after graduating from school have become extremely diversified. To begin with, as careers after graduation have become unclear, it is becoming difficult for students to make a career choice at the time of graduation. Subsequently, rather than simply provide "career guidance" in which the school intervened in helping students make a career choice at the time of graduation, the emphasis on career education for students in schools shifted to "career education," in which schools educated students to be able to develop their own careers even after graduation.

Within the change from "career guidance" to "career education," it was no longer sufficient to provide in-school career guidance for students. This is because students not only need to make a career choice at the time of graduation, but they also need to think broadly about their future careers and professional life in general. For this purpose, it was considered important in Japanese career education for students to have opportunities to see the actual workplaces and meet workers. A part of the reason for this was that it was considered generally in the Japanese society that the gap between study in schools and work outside schools had widened too much. Therefore, it was

considered in Japanese career education that by giving students opportunities to see the actual workplaces, the gap between study in schools and work in workplaces could be narrowed. This inevitably resulted in cooperation between schools and various other organizations, and career education that could not be carried out by a school alone was explored. The various undertakings by Japanese ministries and agencies, mentioned at the beginning of this paper, are some of the examples of this. Today, the idea that since career education is an issue that should be addressed by schools, it should be considered within the framework of school education is becoming outdated in Japan.

In this transition from “career guidance” to “career education” in Japan, we would like, in this paper, to focus particularly on the role of parents. In considering career education in Japan, why do parents hold the key? Why do we need to focus on parents? There are three reasons as shown below.

Firstly, today, parents are involved in school’s career education in a variety of ways. For example, schools alone cannot realize workplace experience for junior high school students. It requires the involvement of many adults in the regional community. In these cases, parents are involved in a number of roles. Obviously, in the homes, they are involved with their children as fathers and mothers. In the workplace, they, as working people, accept students in their workplaces and play the role of giving students workplace experience. Parents who are not directly involved in giving workplace experience are, as members of the regional community, widely involved with other people’s children and young people in general. As this example of workplace experience for junior high school students shows, parents are involved in a number of roles. In other words, parents today are an important player playing a number of roles in career education.

Secondly, as a result of the above, parents’ views on career education are more likely to have a significant effect on the contents of career education. If, for instance, parents have a positive view on career education, they would participate actively in career education. If, on the other hand, they are not enthusiastic about career education, they would not involve themselves actively in it. In other words, parents’ views about career education have a direct bearing on the contents of career education. In this paper, in particular, we presumed that career education is affected significantly by how parents see the future conditions of society. For example, we can expect parents who think

employment of young people will continue to be an issue in future society to be enthusiastic about career education for their children's future and occupation. On the other hand, parents who think the issue of employment of young people is an issue of society as a whole may see career education only as a stopgap measure and call for a more radical solution to the problem. Parents who see the social issue of the widening dispersion of incomes as a more serious problem may consider the issue of career education from a different angle. How parents think about the future of their children will probably determine the basic thinking that supports career education.

Thirdly, while it is possible to make the above argument, there have been few studies that consider parents' cognition of future social conditions within the context of career education. For example, how do parents generally perceive the future social conditions? How does that cognition differ between fathers and mothers, by age, and by educational background? What relation is there between that cognition and household income? In this chapter, we consider parents' cognitions about future social conditions from a number of angles in order to provide materials with which to think about future career education.

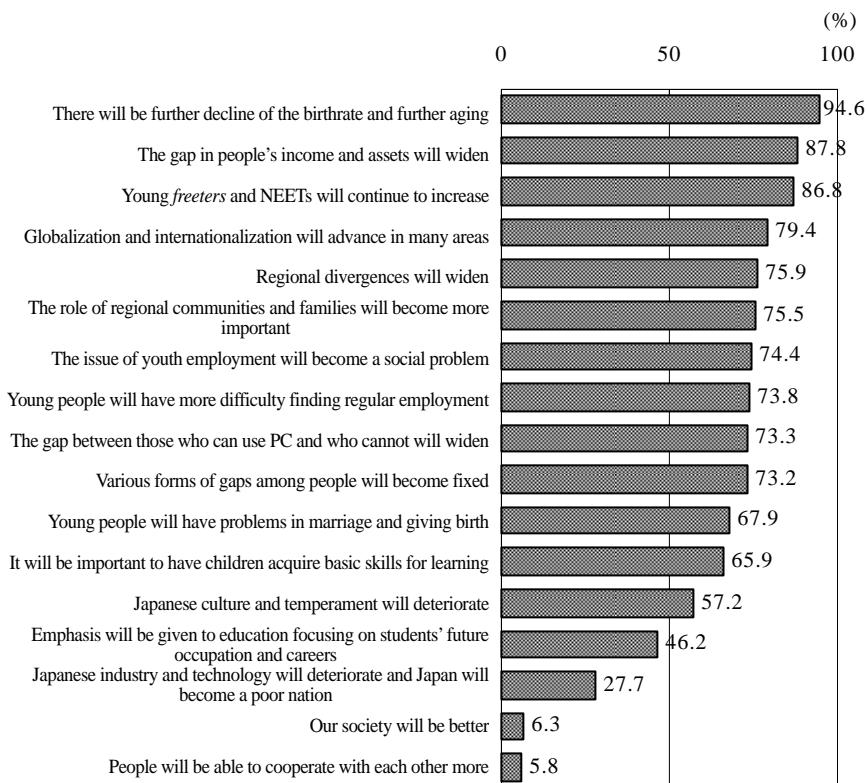
Based on the above understanding of the issues concerned, we examined the relation between parents' cognition about future social conditions and their views on career education. A survey was conducted between January and February 2007. We sampled the same number of people for each sex and age group from among a research firm's adult monitors who had children, and sent them a questionnaire sheet by mail. Specifically, we sampled 200 subjects in each of the 6 cells formed by sex (men and women) and age groups (30s, 40s and 50s) and conducted the survey. Finally, 1,500 questionnaire sheets were sent, against which the responses were 1,372, at the response rate of 91.5%.

II. Parents' Cognition about the Future Social Conditions

Figure 1 shows the results obtained by asking parents about their cognition of future social conditions. The table illustrates the percentage of parents who answered, "Agree" and "More or less agree."

We can see from the table that the answers that were shared by the largest percentage of parents as regards their cognition on future social conditions in general was "There will be further decline in the birthrate and further aging"

Figure 1. Parents' cognition about future social conditions in general
(Percentage of those who said “Agree” or “More or less agree”)



(94.6%), followed by “The gap in people’s income and assets will widen” (87.8%). The large majority of parents shared in the cognition that there would be further decline in the birthrate and further aging and that there would be widening dispersion of income and assets.

More than 70% of parents also said, “Agree” or “More or less agree,” to “Young *freeters* and NEETs will continue to increase” (86.8%), “Globalization and internationalization will advance in many areas” (79.4%), “Regional divergences will widen” (75.9%), “The role of regional communities and families will become more important” (75.5%), “The issue of youth employment will become a social problem” (74.4%), “Young people will have more difficulty finding regular employment” (73.8%), “The gap between those

who can use PC and who cannot will widen" (73.3%), and "Various forms of gaps among people will become fixed" (73.2%). This shows that the large majority of parents were (i) concerned about the future of youth employment, (ii) they saw the advancement of globalization and internationalization and the issue of regional divergences, digital divide, and various other forms of gaps as being behind the issue of youth employment, and (iii) they saw that the role of regional communities and families would become more important in the future.

On the other hand, the percentage of parents who shared in the view that "Our society will be better" (6.3%) or "People will be able to cooperate with each other more" (5.8%) was less than 10%, which indicates that parents had a very bleak view about future social conditions.

III. Differences in Parents' Cognition about Future Society by Parents' Attributes

1. Difference by Sex and Age

We examined the differences in parents' cognition about the future society in general by sex and age (Table 1). The results showed that there were statistically significant differences generally between the sexes. Specifically, the percentage of those who thought, "The gap in people's income and assets will widen," "Regional divergences will widen," "Globalization and internationalization will advance in many areas," and "People will be able to cooperate with each other more," was higher among men. On the other hand, the percentage of those who thought, "The gap between those who can use PC and who cannot will widen," "Young people will have more difficulty finding regular employment," and "Young people will have problems in marriage and giving birth," were higher among women. The differences between men and women, however, appeared to narrow with older age groups. The percentage of those who thought, "Young *freeters* and NEETs will continue to increase" was particularly high among women in their 40s. The percentage of those who thought, "Young people will have more difficulty finding regular employment" and "Young people will have problems in marriage and giving birth," were also generally higher among women.

In sum, it can be said that men, as fathers, were concerned about widening divergences in society, whereas women, as mothers, were concerned about the

Table 1. Difference in the cognition of the future society in general by sex and age (Percentage of those who said "Agree" or "More or less agree")

	30s Male (N=235)	30s Female (N=216)	40s Male (N=233)	40s Female (N=227)	50s Male (N=234)	50s Female (N=227)	sig.
The gap in people's income and assets will widen	89.7%	83.7%	88.8%	84.0%	91.8%	88.0%	*
Regional divergences will widen	79.6%	62.8%	81.5%	76.5%	85.7%	68.3%	**
The gap between those who can use PC and who cannot will widen	71.4%	79.5%	68.2%	66.1%	77.7%	77.3%	**
Japanese industry and technology will deteriorate and Japan will become a poor nation	27.7%	22.8%	28.8%	24.6%	30.9%	30.8%	
Japanese culture and temperament will deteriorate	58.5%	55.6%	56.2%	52.4%	59.9%	60.0%	
Globalization and internationalization will advance in many areas	80.0%	74.0%	83.3%	76.4%	81.5%	80.9%	**
Our society will be better	9.0%	6.5%	7.3%	5.4%	5.6%	3.6%	
There will be further decline of the birthrate and further aging	92.8%	95.8%	95.3%	94.2%	94.8%	95.1%	
Various forms of gaps among people will become fixed	71.1%	70.7%	73.8%	76.0%	75.1%	72.6%	
People will be able to cooperate with each other more	9.8%	4.7%	8.2%	5.3%	3.4%	3.6%	*
The role of regional communities and families will become more important	72.2%	78.6%	69.5%	78.2%	75.1%	80.0%	
Emphasis will be given to education focusing on students' future occupation and careers	48.9%	42.8%	44.2%	47.8%	43.5%	50.0%	
It will be important to have children acquire basic skills for learning	61.3%	59.3%	60.9%	63.3%	75.4%	74.7%	
Young <i>freeters</i> and NEETs will continue to increase	84.7%	85.1%	85.0%	92.0%	88.4%	85.8%	*
Young people will have more difficulty finding regular employment	64.3%	79.1%	71.7%	78.8%	73.3%	76.8%	**
The issue of youth employment will become a social problem	68.1%	75.3%	74.2%	73.9%	74.6%	80.9%	
Young people will have problems in marriage and giving birth	60.0%	67.4%	63.8%	69.9%	66.8%	80.0%	**

** p<.01 * p<.05

issue of youth employment and furthermore about the issue of marriage and birth. We can see that fathers and mothers see different aspects of the future society.

2. Difference by Educational Background

We examined the difference in parents' cognition about the future society in general by educational background (Table 2). The results showed that those with higher educational attainment generally shared in the view that disparities

Table 2. Difference in the cognition of the future society in general by educational background (Percentage of those who said “Agree” or “More or less agree”)

	Graduate of university/gr aduate school (N=474)	Graduate of junior/ vocational college (N=353)	Graduate of junior/ senior high school (N=544)	sig.
The gap in people's income and assets will widen	91.1%	89.7%	83.5%	*
Regional divergences will widen	83.5%	72.5%	71.5%	**
The gap between those who can use PC and who cannot will widen	72.5%	74.9%	73.0%	
Japanese industry and technology will deteriorate and Japan will become a poor nation	25.6%	27.1%	29.6%	*
Japanese culture and temperament will deteriorate	56.1%	55.7%	58.9%	
Globalization and internationalization will advance in many areas	84.0%	78.2%	76.2%	**
Our society will be better	7.2%	4.9%	6.3%	
There will be further decline of the birthrate and further aging	96.2%	95.1%	93.0%	
Various forms of gaps among people will become fixed	77.2%	75.6%	68.2%	**
People will be able to cooperate with each other more	7.2%	4.9%	5.4%	
The role of regional communities and families will become more important	75.2%	78.9%	73.6%	
Emphasis will be given to education focusing on students' future occupation and careers	42.5%	46.3%	49.4%	*
It will be important to have children acquire basic skills for learning	66.6%	67.1%	64.3%	
Young <i>freeters</i> and NEETs will continue to increase	83.9%	88.9%	88.0%	
Young people will have more difficulty finding regular employment	65.3%	78.3%	78.4%	**
The issue of youth employment will become a social problem	70.2%	76.3%	76.9%	**
Young people will have problems in marriage and giving birth	66.4%	70.3%	67.7%	*

** p<.01 * p<.05

would further widen, as a large percentage of them thought, “The gap in people's income and assets will widen,” “Regional divergences will widen,” “Globalization and internationalization will advance in many areas,” and “Various forms of gaps among people will become fixed.” On the other hand, the percentage of those who thought, “Japanese industry and technology will deteriorate and Japan will become a poor nation,” “Emphasis will be given to education focusing on students' future occupation and careers,” “Young people

will have more difficulty finding regular employment," and "The issue of youth employment will become a social problem" was higher among parents whose educational attainment was graduation from junior or senior high school. From the above results, it can be surmised that parents who graduated from a university or graduate school were generally interested in issues related to society at large such as widening dispersion, whereas parents whose educational attainment was graduation from junior or senior high school was generally interested in the issue of employment.

3. Relation with Annual Household Income

To examine the relation between parents' cognition about the future society in general and annual household income, we obtained the rank correlation coefficient (Table 3). From the table, we can see that annual income was related closely to the views, "Regional divergences will widen," "Japanese industry and technology will deteriorate and Japan will become a poor nation," "Globalization and internationalization will advance in many areas," "Our society will be better," "There will be further decline of the birthrate and further aging," and "Young people will have more difficulty finding regular employment." The higher the parents' annual incomes, the stronger the cognition that divergences would widen as a result of globalization, internationalization, the declining birthrate, and aging. At the same time, parents with higher annual incomes were not pessimistic about the Japanese industry and technology and believed that future society would be better than today's. On the other hand, the lower the parents' annual income, the stronger the concern about the issue of youth employment.

IV. Principal Component Analysis of Parents' Cognition of Future Social Conditions

From parents' cognition of the future social conditions we examined above, we can surmise that there are a number of systematic associations of parents' cognition. Therefore, we conducted a principal component analysis and reduced parents' cognition of the future conditions into a number of components.

Table 4 shows the results of the principal component analysis. When we interpreted the data based around the large categories of questions of the

Table 3. Relation between the cognition of the future society in general and annual household income (rank correlation coefficient)

	Correlation coefficient with annual household income	sig.
The gap in people's income and assets will widen	.050	
Regional divergences will widen	.096	**
The gap between those who can use PC and who cannot will widen	-.003	
Japanese industry and technology will deteriorate and Japan will become a poor nation	-.068	*
Japanese culture and temperament will deteriorate	.018	
Globalization and internationalization will advance in many areas	.116	**
Our society will be better	.083	**
There will be further decline of the birthrate and further aging	.059	*
Various forms of gaps among people will become fixed	.049	
People will be able to cooperate with each other more	-.004	
The role of regional communities and families will become more important	.012	
Emphasis will be given to education focusing on students' future occupation and careers	-.028	
It will be important to have children acquire basic skills for learning	.045	
Young <i>freeters</i> and NEETs will continue to increase	.023	
Young people will have more difficulty finding regular employment	-.077	**
The issue of youth employment will become a social problem	-.029	
Young people will have problems in marriage and giving birth	.003	

** p<.01 * p<.05

values that represent each principal component (the values are shown in bold in shaded cells), it appeared that parents' cognition of the future social conditions could be reduced to four principal components of "Concern about youth employment," "Concern about widening disparities," "Concern about society in general," and "Expectations about school education."

In the following sections of this paper, we examine parents' cognition of the future social conditions in the survey from four angles of "concern about the future of youth," "concern about widening disparities," "concern about society in general," and "expectations on school education." Therefore, based on the principal component analysis of Table 4, we calculate the principal component scores and use them in the analysis below. The principal component scores are adjusted so that the average value is 0 and standard deviation is 1. They can easily show differences in sizes in relation to the

Table 4. Principal component analysis of parents' cognition of future social conditions

	Concern about youth employment	Concern about widening disparities	Concern about society in general	Expectations about school education
The gap in people's income and assets will widen	.073	.692	.263	.026
Regional divergences will widen	-.024	.684	.206	.139
The gap between those who can use PC and who cannot will widen	.059	.418	.027	.151
Japanese industry and technology will deteriorate and Japan will become a poor nation	.118	.008	.667	.221
Japanese culture and temperament will deteriorate	.132	.114	.607	.179
Globalization and internationalization will advance in many areas	.072	.508	-.179	.025
Our society will be better	-.104	-.060	-.765	.056
There will be further decline of the birthrate and further aging	.200	.557	.105	-.178
Various forms of gaps among people will become fixed	.136	.625	.308	.102
People will be able to cooperate with each other more	-.079	-.130	-.676	.126
The role of regional communities and families will become more important	.156	.379	-.236	.107
Emphasis will be given to education focusing on students' future occupation and careers	.133	.092	.039	.804
It will be important to have children acquire basic skills for learning	.103	.146	.080	.777
Young <i>freeters</i> and NEETs will continue to increase	.752	.180	.048	-.016
Young people will have more difficulty finding regular employment	.856	.033	.102	.073
The issue of youth employment will become a social problem	.834	.089	.136	.124
Young people will have problems in marriage and giving birth	.585	.180	.146	.144
Explained variance	14.8%	13.9%	13.1%	8.8%

average value.

V. Effect that the Cognition of the Future Social Conditions Has on Parents' Views about Career Education

We examine below how the four aspects of parents' cognition of future social conditions shown in Table 4 (concern about the future of youth, concern about widening disparities, concern about society in general, and expectations on school education) influence their views about career education.

We conduct regression analysis in which parents' attributes are adjusted. This is because it is considered that parents' attributes, such as whether they are a father or mother, their age, educational background, household income, and whether they are a regular employee or not also influence their views about career education. We also perform the regression analysis by adjusting for the differences in their children (i.e. they are in a primary school or not yet in school, they are in a junior/senior high school, they are in a university, or they are an adult), because it is considered that parents' view on career education differs depending on their children's attributes.

1. Effects on Parents' Views about "Career Education in Schools"

The results of the survey showed that the top three items on which parents placed emphasis on as regards career education in schools were "Instruction that will make children think about the meaning of study and work," "Instruction that will help children understand their individuality and aptitude," and "Education to help children acquire morals and manners necessary as members of society." "Tours of workplaces and learning through workplace experience" was also considered important by more than 70% of the respondents. We performed a logistic regression analysis with parents' expectations on these four types of education (have expectations on to have no expectations on) as explained variables and parents' cognition of the future social conditions, their attributes, and their children's attributes as explanatory variables.

Table 5 shows the results of the logistic regression analysis. We can see from the table that parents' cognition of the future social conditions did not have a strong influence on "Instruction that will make children think about the meaning of study and work" or "Instruction that will help children understand their individuality and aptitude." For these two types of instruction, the question of whether or not the "child was in junior/senior high school" had an effect. In other words, parents appeared to realize the importance of these two types of instruction when their children came to an age where they needed to think realistically about their future careers. As for "Instruction that will make children think about the meaning of study and work," parents who had "a child in a university" also had high expectations on this type of instruction for the same reason. Parents who had lower annual household income also had higher expectations on "Instruction that will make children think about the meaning

**Table 5. Factors that influence parents' views about
“career education in schools”**

	Instruction that will make children think about the meaning of study and work			Instruction that will help children understand their individuality and aptitude			Education to help children acquire morals and manners necessary as members of society			Tours of workplaces and learning through workplace experience		
	B	Exp(B)	sig.	B	Exp(B)	sig.	B	Exp(B)	sig.	B	Exp(B)	sig.
Father (vs. mother)	0.33	1.38		0.05	1.05		0.07	1.07		0.14	1.15	
Age	0.05	1.06		0.00	1.00		-0.13	0.88	*	-0.19	0.83	**
Educational background (vs. university graduate)												
Junior/vocational college graduate	-0.04	0.96		0.05	1.05		0.38	1.47	*	0.29	1.33	
Junior/senior high school graduate	-0.12	0.88		0.02	1.02		0.27	1.31		0.12	1.13	
Annual income	-0.07	0.94	**	-0.03	0.97		-0.04	0.96		-0.05	0.95	*
Regular employee (vs. non-regular employee)	-0.09	0.92		0.29	1.34		0.37	1.44		-0.12	0.89	
Concern about youth employment	-0.01	0.99		0.09	1.09		0.00	1.00		0.14	1.15	*
Concern about widening disparities	0.01	1.01		0.00	1.00		-0.04	0.96		0.08	1.08	
Concern about society in general	-0.04	0.96		-0.08	0.92		0.02	1.02		-0.19	0.83	**
Expectations on school education	0.11	1.11		0.02	1.02		0.16	1.18	**	-0.07	0.93	
Child is a boy	0.07	1.08		-0.13	0.88		0.30	1.36	*	0.00	1.00	
Child is a girl	-0.13	0.88		0.00	1.00		-0.06	0.94		-0.05	0.95	
Child in primary school or not yet in school	-0.09	0.92		0.13	1.13		-0.07	0.94		-0.18	0.83	
Child in junior/senior high school	0.34	1.41	*	0.30	1.35	*	0.44	1.55	**	0.19	1.21	
Child in university	0.35	1.41	*	0.20	1.22		0.24	1.27		0.03	1.03	
Child is an adult	0.03	1.03		0.06	1.06		-0.61	0.54	**	-0.10	0.90	
Constant	-0.09	0.92		-0.32	0.73		-0.19	0.83		1.56	4.77	

R²=0.076(p<.001) R²=0.021(n.s.) R²=0.076(p<.001) R²=0.075(p<.001)

of study and work.”

As for “Education to help children acquire morals and manners necessary as members of society,” parents with higher “expectations on school education” considered such education to be important. Albeit partially, parents’ cognition of the future social conditions had an effect on this kind of education. There were, however, other elements that had an effect on “Education to help children acquire morals and manners necessary as members of society.” From the table, expectations on this type of education were high among parents who were junior/vocational college graduates as regards their educational background, parents whose child was a boy, and parents whose child was in a junior/senior high school. On the contrary, parents who were older and parents whose child was an adult had low expectations on this type of education. Generally speaking, it is assumed that parents with a mid-level educational

attainment and with a boy in a junior/senior high school expected school education to provide education to help their children acquire morals and manners for them to live as members of society.

As for “Tours of workplaces and learning through workplace experience,” expectations on such education were high among parents who had strong “concern for young people” and low among parents who had strong “concern about society in general.” It can be interpreted that parents who had concerns about the future of young people had expectations on tours of workplaces and learning through workplace experience, whereas parents who were concerned about society in general considered such education to be useless. In addition, parents who were older and parents who had higher annual income had low expectations of this type of education.

2. Effects on Parents’ Views about “Abilities They Want Their Children to Acquire in Schools”

The survey also asked the respondents about abilities they wanted their children to acquire in schools. The results showed that the top three abilities were “Basic aptitude such as reading and writing” (27.3%), “Abilities to communicate” (33.4%), and “Abilities to be concerned about others” (33.0%). We conducted a logistic regression analysis with whether or not respondents considered each of these abilities as important as explained variables and parents’ cognition of the future social conditions, their attributes, and their children’s attributes as explanatory variables.

Table 6 shows the results of the logistic regression analysis. Whether parents wanted their children to acquire “basic aptitude such as reading and writing” in schools was influenced by “Concern about society in general” and “Expectations on school education.” In each case, the greater the concern or expectations, the more parents wanted their children to acquire such basic aptitude in schools. Other factors, however, also had an effect on whether parents considered “basic aptitude such as reading and writing” as important. The results of the regression analysis show that generally older parents, parents with higher annual income, and parents who had a child in a junior/senior high school considered such basic aptitude as important. On the other hand, parents who were junior/vocational college graduates or junior/senior high school graduates and parents whose child was a girl did not see “basic aptitude such as reading and writing” as particularly important.

Table 6. Factors that influence parents' views about "abilities they want their children to acquire in schools"

	Basic aptitude such as reading and writing			Abilities to communicate			Abilities to be concerned about others		
	B	Exp(B)	sig.	B	Exp(B)	sig.	B	Exp(B)	sig.
Father (vs. mother)	0.03	1.03		-0.27	0.76		-0.09	0.91	
Age	0.15	1.17 *		-0.18	0.84 **		0.05	1.05	
Educational background (vs. university graduate)									
Junior/vocational college graduate	-0.45	0.64 **		-0.44	0.65 **		0.23	1.26	
Junior/senior high school graduate	-0.36	0.69 *		-0.37	0.69 *		0.30	1.35	
Annual income	0.05	1.05 *		0.04	1.04		-0.01	0.99	
Regular employee (vs. non-regular employee)	-0.19	0.83		0.54	1.72 *		-0.04	0.96	
Concern about youth employment	0.02	1.02		-0.01	0.99		0.03	1.03	
Concern about widening disparities	0.04	1.04		0.00	1.00		-0.14	0.87 *	
Concern about society in general	0.15	1.16 *		-0.15	0.86 *		-0.05	0.95	
Expectations on school education	0.19	1.21 **		-0.06	0.95		0.00	1.00	
Child is a boy	-0.11	0.89		-0.11	0.89		0.04	1.04	
Child is a girl	-0.47	0.63 **		0.08	1.08		-0.23	0.79	
Child in primary school or not yet in school	0.02	1.02		-0.02	0.98		0.02	1.02	
Child in junior/senior high school	0.35	1.42 *		-0.09	0.91		0.25	1.29	
Child in university	0.03	1.03		-0.05	0.96		0.18	1.20	
Child is an adult	0.29	1.34		0.02	1.02		-0.13	0.88	
Constant	-1.93	0.14		-0.23	0.80		-1.11	0.33	
					$R^2=0.057\ (p<.001)$		$R^2=0.071\ (p<.001)$		$R^2=0.008\ (p<.05)$

Whether parents wanted their children to acquire "abilities to communicate" in schools was influenced by "Concern about society in general." Parents with strong concern about society in general placed less emphasis on abilities to communicate. It can be assumed from this result that parents who are concerned about society in general think that having their children acquire abilities to communicate will not necessarily solve the problem. Regular employees gave emphasis to "abilities to communicate" more so than non-regular employees. Older parents and parents who were junior/vocational college graduates or junior/senior high school graduates, however, did not place particular emphasis on "abilities to communicate."

Whether parents wanted their children to acquire "abilities to be concerned about others" in schools was influenced by "Concern about widening disparities." The effect, however, was negative: parents who had strong

concern about widening disparities did not want their children to acquire the “abilities to be concerned about others.” It can be interpreted that parents who were interested in the issue of widening divergences think that having their children acquire the “abilities to be concerned about others” in schools will not directly lead to solving the problem and therefore they do not consider such abilities as particularly important.

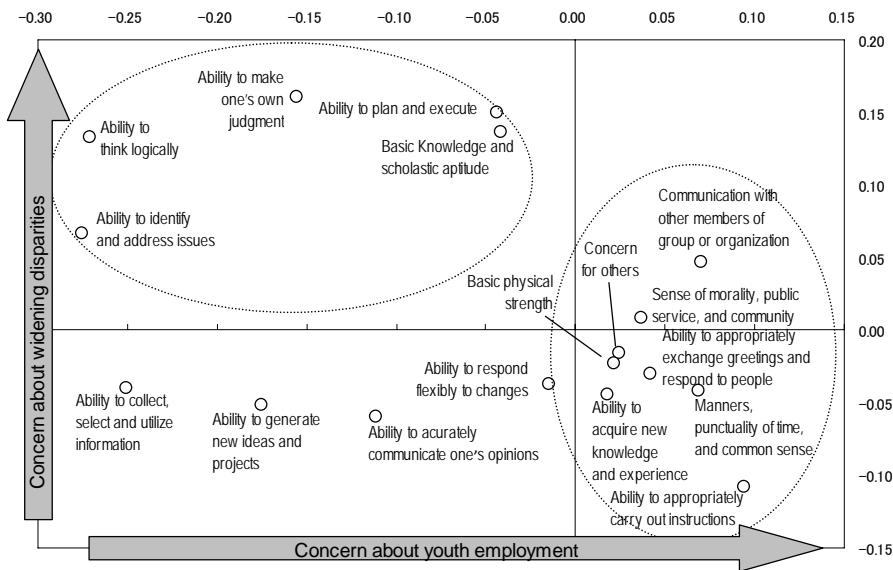
VI. Relation between Parents’ Cognition of the Future Social Conditions and Abilities They Think Are Desirable in New Recruits

The survey also asked parents the abilities they thought were desirable in young new recruits. Therefore, we lastly conducted an analysis on the relation between the desired abilities of young people as members of society and parents’ cognition about the future social conditions. The results are indicated in a diagram. In Figure 2, we used data on the abilities that parents thought were desirable in young new recruits to obtain the average values of the principal component scores of “Concern about youth employment” (x-axis) and “Concern about widening disparities” (y-axis), and plotted the average values on a two-dimensional plane. For example, in Figure 2, the principal component score of parents who replied that “ability to make one’s own judgment” was a desired ability of young people as members of society was relatively low as concerns “Concern about youth employment” and relatively high as concerns “Concern about widening disparities.”

From this figure, we can see that, as a general trend, there were a group of abilities that parents with strong “Concern about youth employment” thought were desirable and another group of abilities that parents with strong “Concern about widening disparities” thought were desirable.

Parents with strong “concern about youth employment” thought that abilities required within each place of work, such as “Communication with other members of group or organization,” “Manners, punctuality of time, and common sense,” “Ability to appropriately carry out instructions,” and “Ability to appropriately exchange greetings and respond to people,” as particularly important. In particular, they considered specific skills for getting along well with other members of group or organization, such as communication skills, common sense, and ability to take instructions and exchange greetings, as important. On the other hand, parents with strong “concern about widening

Figure 2. Relation between cognition of the future social conditions and desired abilities of young people as members of society



“disparities” regarded more abstract abilities, such as “Ability to make one’s own judgment,” “Ability to plan and execute,” “Ability to think logically,” “Basic knowledge and scholastic aptitude,” and “Ability to identify and address issues,” as more important. In particular, they considered judgment, planning, logic, basic scholastic aptitude, and ability to solve problems, which could be applied to situations beyond an individual’s place of work, as important.

The difference between these two groups of abilities is the difference between specific interpersonal skills within individual workplaces and abstract, conceptual skills transcending a particular workplace. The plotted diagram also shows that behind each of these skills is concern for youth employment or for widening disparities. It is assumed that behind the relation between parents’ cognition of the future social conditions and abilities they see as desirable in young people as members of society is their view on where to place a focus on as regards the future social conditions and what kind of abilities are required if a particular focus was to be placed on those social conditions.

VII. Implications of This Paper

The finding of this paper can be summarized as below.

Firstly, as for future social conditions, parents had common views on the declining birthrate, aging, widening of divergences, globalization and internationalization, and had a bleak view on the future. There was also strong concern for the issue of youth employment that the problems of *freeters* and NEETs symbolized.

Secondly, cognition of the future social conditions differed by sex, age, educational background, and annual household income. Generally, male parents (fathers), parents who were graduates of a university or graduate school, and parents with high annual household income had strong concern for widening disparities, whereas female parents (mothers), parents who were graduates of a junior/senior high school, and parents with low annual household income had strong concern about the issue of youth employment.

Thirdly, it was indicated from the survey that parents' cognition of the future social conditions could be grouped into four aspects of "concern about youth employment," "concern about widening disparities," "concern about society in general," and "expectations on school education."

Fourthly, the results of the regression analysis, particularly results related to the future social conditions, can be summed as follows: (i) parents with strong "concern about youth employment" had high expectations on learning through workplace experience. (ii) Parents with strong "concern about widening disparities" also had high expectations on learning through workplace experience, but it was parents with little concern about widening divergences who were more inclined about having their children acquire abilities to be concerned about others. (iii) Parents with strong "concern about society in general" had low expectations on learning through workplace experience and were inclined about having their children acquire basic scholastic aptitude rather than abilities to communicate. (iv) Parents with strong "expectations on school education" were inclined towards having their children acquire morals and manners necessary as members of society as well as basic scholastic aptitude.

Fifthly, there was a general pattern as regards the relation between parents' cognition of the future social conditions and abilities they see as desirable in young people as members of society. Parents who had strong concern about

youth employment hoped that young people would, as members of society, acquire specific interpersonal skills in individual workplaces. On the other hand, parents who had strong concern about widening disparities expected young members of society to have abstract, conceptual skills transcending individual workplaces.

To sum up the above findings, fathers, parents who were graduates of a university or graduate school, and parents with high income had strong concern about widening disparities. Parents concerned about widening disparities also had high expectations on abstract abilities such as basic scholastic aptitude and ability to make one's own judgment, to plan and execute, to think logically, and to solve problems. On the other hand, mothers, parents who were graduates of a junior/senior high school, and parents with low income had strong concern about youth employment. Parents concerned about youth employment also had high expectations on more specific interpersonal skills such as communication skills, manners and common sense, and abilities to appropriately exchange greetings and execute instructions. There was a contrast between the two groups.

This contrast can be considered as a symbolic contrast between the father who works as a white-collar worker and the mother who works as a homemaker and part-timer. The differences between the stereotypical father and mother are also clearly linked with differences in their views about what kind of abilities young people should have as members of society. These differences in their views about young people's abilities broadly defined the context in which parents thought about career education. These differences also had an effect on acceptance of learning through workplace experience and on the details of various other career education projects. We believe that we were able to show how the differences in parents' views about vocational abilities influenced career education.

In this survey, however, it was observed that parents with a child about to take a school entrance exam and older parents generally gave emphasis to basic scholastic aptitude such as reading and writing and tended to think little of workplace experience, which is central to career education in Japan. We can see that parents' needs for basic scholastic aptitude such as reading and writing remain strong.

Parents' views about career education differ depending on which of the three abilities, namely, abstract abilities such as ability to make one's own

judgment, interpersonal skills symbolized by communication skills, and basic scholastic aptitude such as reading and writing, parents consider as important. The major finding of this survey is that there are potentially a number of ways in which parents think and feel about career education.

In its broadest meaning of the term, career education should encompass the different values that firms, schools, families, and regional communities have. In this light, it would be important for future career education policy in Japan to plan career education in ways that it would integrate various views that parents have. It is also important to approach career education not only as an educational issue, but also as a labor issue. We will need to continue to think about career education from the labor policy standpoint.