Gendered Expectations:
Family Norms of Higher Education for Boys and Girls in Taiwan

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Introduction

Families are important agents of social stratification, transmitting socioeconomic advantages and disadvantages from one generation to the next. Recent research across a wide range of societies has demonstrated that children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to attain more schooling than lower counterparts (Shavit and Blossfeld 1993), and hence enjoy the labor market benefits afforded by advanced schooling (Shavit and Muller 1998). Sociological explanations for the association between family background and educational attainment generally refer to the importance of parental influence. There are several ways that parents may exert influences upon children’s educational attainment, including (1) setting specific goals for children to achieve, (2) serving as role models of achievement, and (3) providing intellectual, social, cultural, and financial resources for children to make the grade. The roles played by parents in providing opportunities, encouragement, and support for children to achieve higher educational goals are encoded in a family’s attainment norm.

It is generally believed that the significant impact of parents’ socioeconomic status upon their children’s education will be reflected in the high aspirations and expectations of the more advantaged for the education of their own children. For instance, the Wisconsin model of status attainment developed by Sewell and his colleagues used social and psychological variables related to school experience and aspiration to explain the effects of family background and measured ability on educational attainment (Sewell,
Haller, and Portes 1969; Sewell, Haller, and Ohlendorf 1970; Sewell, Hauser, and Wolf 1980; Hauser, Tsai, and Sewell 1983). The Wisconsin model posits that socioeconomic background and ability affect aspirations for schooling by way of their realization in school performance and in social support from significant others (Hauser 1993:294-5). And the Wisconsin data suggest that the tendency for academically talented high school graduates from lower socioeconomic background not to enter higher education is due to a lack of psychological and financial support for social mobility on the part of their families (Campbell 1983).

While status-attainment theory singles out the salient effects of socialization, resource-constraint theories emphasize the structural factors that affect attainment, irrespective of individual merit. For instance, according to Kerckhoff (1976), people in different strata tend to have different expectations of their chances of educational success because perceptions of opportunity structures are evaluated according to relative direct costs. Along this line, Boudon argues that in most countries, education must be financed by family resources which include not only direct costs such as tuition fees, but also forgone earnings. According to Boudon’s (1974) economic constraint thesis, once a minimum level of mean educational attainment has been established in a society, then a demand for education is created. This demand becomes self-perpetuating as increasingly educated parents expect greater amounts of education for their children.\footnote{In a critical review of Boudon’s (1974) study, Hauser (1976) maintains that it is naive to believe that the distribution of schooling is determined endogenously by young people’s desire for higher education. There is a demand and supply for schooling, just as there is for labor. The transformation of the labor force is thus an important causal force in raising the overall level of education in the United States.}

By contrast to the economic constraint thesis, class reproduction theories (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Collins 1979) highlight the importance of cultural capital that is transmitted by families and rewarded by schools and labor markets. Cultural capital
usually refers to the socialization into highbrow cultural activities. According to Bourdieu (1973), in a time of the rapid expansion of higher education, cultural capital arises as a new ascriptive force in the process of status attainment. Nevertheless, habitus is the mechanism behind the effect of cultural capital. Bourdieu (1984) conceives of habitus as a system of shared disposition that is shaped by one’s social class background and generates perception, appreciation, and action. Assuming that the most advantaged individuals in society end up with the highest level of education and ambition, reproduction theories postulate persistent inequality of educational opportunity (that is, the dependence of educational attainment on social origins) over time.

A more radical version of reproduction theory was proposed by Raftery and Hout (1990) in their thesis of “maximally maintained inequality” (MMI). MMI predicts that if demand for a given level of education is saturate for the upper classes, then the association between social origin and education is weakened. According to Hout, Raftery, and Bell (1993: 26), MMI emerges from the rational choices of parents and students, because parents in advantaged circumstances and students from advantaged background are interested in the substantive goal of maximizing their own education, rather than in the derivative goal of maintaining class cleavages.

To summarize the preceding discussion, theorists of educational stratification – despite differences in conceptualization and measurements of social inequality – often suggest that in an era of secularly rising average years of schooling, parents desire and expect that their children would go at least as far as they themselves in school. In addition, people who are advantaged in the process and outcome of educational attainment tend to set higher educational goals for their children than will others. As a newly industrialized society, Taiwan represents an interesting case to test these guiding hypotheses proposed in the literature, because Taiwan has experienced not only rapid economic growth but also
steady educational expansion over the past decades. Besides, the social and economic forces of educational expansion and income growth have exerted profound influences upon Taiwan’s family structure and family life (Thornton and Lin 1994; Yi 1995).

In this paper, I explore Taiwan’s family norms of higher education for boys and girls by paying special attention to the interplay between socioeconomic status and gender in relation to educational expectations. In addition, I look at what aspects of familial characteristics may encourage (or discourage) psychological investments in offspring’s education. Using data derived from 1999-2000 surveys of Panel Study on Family Dynamics (PSFD), I apply both linear and logistic regression models to examine the determinants of parents’ educational expectations for sons and daughters, respectively. The educational expectations reported by parents for sons and daughters are not only social psychological variables but variables of social stratification, as they take their hierarchical form from Taiwan's highly stratified educational structure. Besides, they may involve a gender status that advantages men over women in educational attainment as well as in other socioeconomic arrangements. Before turning to an empirical analysis of the formation of educational expectations, I first sketch the major features of Taiwan’s educational systems and social selection.

**School Transitions in Taiwan**

A sequence of school transitions -- from compulsory education (9 years), to secondary education (12 years), and on to higher education (at least 14 years) -- corresponds to the major institutional divisions in Taiwan's educational system. While secondary education includes senior high schools and senior vocational schools, higher education covers junior colleges, colleges, universities, and graduate schools. Transitions beyond compulsory education are controlled by rigid entrance examination systems. As
academic performance is the single criterion for allocating which students attend preferred schools, higher education in Taiwan employs a highly competitive system based on examination merit for student recruitment. However, selection based on merit does not necessarily indicate equality in educational opportunity.

Excess demand for post compulsory education has caused early social selection in schools to arise as a key component in Taiwan's educational stratification process. There are significant inequalities of opportunity in attaining post-compulsory education, with the strongest constraints being those associated with class, gender, and ethnicity (Broaded 1997; Hsieh 1987, 1992; Tsai and Chiu 1993a; Yang 1994). Since 1968, compulsory education has been extended from six to nine years. Studies of school transitions (Tsai and Chiu 1993b; Tsai, Gates, and Chiu 1994) demonstrated that after the extension of compulsory education, the transition from junior high to post-compulsory school appeared to be most selective, upgrading the most significant inequality in access to education – by social origin – to that level. Although girls and boys in more recent cohorts received a more equal education than those in earlier cohorts, the class and ethnic group of the more educated children differed markedly from those of the less educated children, with girls of “Taiwanese” origin losing out to daughters of more privileged fathers.

Recently, Mare and Cheng (1998) formulated new models for school transitions and compared differences between the United States and Taiwan, using Taiwanese data collected in 1989. Their findings indicate that gender inequalities in levels of educational attainment are small in the United States and overall differences in the education distributions of men and women have disappeared. By contrast, in Taiwan inequalities in how girls and women are treated in the family and in ultimate educational attainment remain large. These societal differences do not affect the linear effects of parents’ schooling on the school progression of their offspring, but they do appear in how the two
societies implement the norm that children match or surpass their parents’ attainment.

It has been argued that schooling of male and female children in Taiwan should be viewed as two distinct family choices (Greenhalgh 1985; Parish and Willis 1993; Tsai, Gates, and Chiu 1994). Given traditional patterns of intragenerational exchanges within families, parents are assumed to have stronger economic and psychological incentives to invest in sons’ rather than daughters’ higher education. Indeed and in fact, earlier studies (e.g., Hsieh 1998; Tsai 1999) have found a clear tendency in Taiwan for the adult population to prefer education for boys over education for girls. However, the questions asked in earlier social surveys usually refer to “What is the minimum level of education that you think a boy/girl should receive?” While we have learned much about the levels of schooling adults in Taiwan consider appropriate in general for the boys and girls in the younger generation, we are less knowledgeable about parents’ perceptions of educational opportunity for their own children.

Data, Variables, and Descriptive Statistics

The data for this study are drawn from the first-wave surveys of PSFD carried out in Taiwan during the period of 1999-2000. The sample analyzed here pertains to 1,333 primary respondents (646 men and 687 women) born in 1946 –1963 who provided information on the variables considered. When interviewed, these respondents – who are the “parents” in this analysis – were married with 2.65 children (1.38 sons and 1.28 daughters) on average.

The dependent variables are educational expectations for sons and daughters respectively, which are drawn from the same question: “As Taiwan’s educational opportunities stand now, how far in school do you think kids growing up in families like yours will get at least?” The percentage distribution of responses to this question is given
in Table 1. For the linear models, the seven response categories of educational expectations are recorded as follows: “compulsory education” (9 years); “senior high school” (12 years); “senior vocational school” (12 years)”; “junior college” (14 years”); “university” (16 years); “master degree” (18 years); “Ph.D.” (20 years). For the logistic regression models, expectations are dichotomized to compare those who expected to have a specific level of higher education in question with those who did not.

(Table 1 about here)

Inspection of Table 1 reveals that the respondents held egalitarian attitudes toward sons’ and daughters’ education, except a few cases expected master or doctoral degrees for sons rather than for daughters. The finding that almost no gap exists between boys and girls in parental educational expectations is surprising and different from the conclusions of earlier studies mentioned above. Nowadays, only a small proportion (about 3%) of parents is satisfied with the nine years of compulsory education for their children. Most of the variation in educational aspirations occurs at the transition from secondary to higher education, especially to university education, which is the crucial threshold in the formation of educational expectations for the next generation.

In addition to demographic variables such as gender and age, I explore five types of factors that may explain differences in educational expectations of higher education for children: (1) attainments of family members; (2) family resources, (3) family ISEI, (4) family types, and (5) familial values. In the following, I discuss measurements and descriptive statistics of each factor, and suggest how its relevance to educational expectations may vary for sons and daughters.

With respect to family attainments, I consider the educational attainments of the respondent, spouse, and the most educated child in the family. The variables involving educational attainment are measured in two ways: interval scaling in years of schooling
and discrete sorting into three categories: junior high school and lower; senior high/vocational school; college and higher. Cultural reproduction theories suggest that the most advantaged in society end up the most educated and the most ambitious (e.g., Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Willis 1977). If this is indeed a universal phenomenon, we would anticipate those at the top of educational hierarchies to express a higher level of educational expectations for offspring. As a matter of fact, in Figure 1 we can see a clear and close relationship between educational attainment and educational expectations: the higher the level of education, the greater the desire of parents for their children’s education, irrespective of the sex of children. This pattern holds for both male and female respondents (shown in Figure 2).

(Figures 1 and 2 about here)

As marriage constitutes a major part of one’s interaction with the opposite sex in daily life, there is a possibility that a person’s expectations of educational success for children is not only influenced by one's own educational experience, but also shaped by spouse’s educational attainment. Besides, perceptions of educational opportunity are a reflection of the real situation to some extent. Therefore, parents’ educational expectations are likely to be estimated by using the children’s educational performances as an important reference. Using information provided by the respondent on children’s education (up to six children), I identify the highest level of children’s education in each family. Because children in the same family may attained equal levels of education, I do not include the demographic characteristics (age and sex) of the most educated child in the regression analysis.

Meanwhile, household income is an important indicator of family economic resources. Household income is calculated by pooling together the monthly income in thousand-yuan of the respondent and his/her spouse. I exclude from the analysis a few
cases whose reported household income is zero, and truncate income per person at 210 thousand-yuan (that is, household income at 420 thousand-yuan). Studies have shown that the higher the income of the family, the greater the desire of parents for their education; this income effect is especially important for daughters’ education (Stromquist 1989: 152). In the analysis sample, there are positive relationships between household income and educational expectations for sons and daughters, with correlation coefficients being .220 and .258, respectively.

Another way that resources may constrain parental educational expectations is through the number of children in the family. It is anticipated that when other things being equal, large numbers of children would dilute family economic resources, leading to lower educational expectations for children due to family budget constraints. For example, Parish and Willis (1993) argued that when confronted by scarce resources, Taiwan’s parents in the past were forced to favor sons, who provided the family’s long-term security. The findings of Parish and Willis indicate that with respect to educational attainment, the early born children in large families did poorly, and particularly poorly if they were female.

Meanwhile, Tsai, Gates, and Chiu (1994:249-250) suggested that within the existing patriarchal system, a young woman’s attainment of higher education often conveyed her family’s prestige, rather than her family’s investment in an earner of a higher income. It is anticipated that expectations of higher education for daughters are more closely tied to the socioeconomic status of the family than those for sons. I construct a variable indicating family position in social stratification, namely family ISEI, which is the higher occupational status of husband and wife. Occupational status is measured from 0 to 100 on the scale of International Socioeconomic Index (ISEI) developed by Ganzeboom, De Graaf, and Treiman (1992).
On the other hand, characteristics of traditional Chinese family cultures are the patrilineal family system and male dominance, with the greatest emphasis on familial values. According to Wolf (1972:14), unlike the American family in which parents are expected to put the need of their children above all else, the Chinese family in Taiwan places the weight of obligation on the child. A boy is forever in his parents’ debt, owing them obedience and the most comfortable old age his income can provide, whereas a girl is supposed to marry out like “spilled water”. Greenhalgh (1985) contended that differences between sons and daughters in obligations to their parents, and terms of fulfillment of these obligations, gave rise to systematic differences between the sexes on educational as well as socioeconomic resources in Taiwan.

In the present analysis, I consider several variables related to family types and familial values. I use dummy variable to distinguish those respondents whose marriage was arranged by family members or relatives from the other respondents. Arranged marriage, still not uncommon, was the Taiwan norm until World War II. In the analysis sample, 20% of the marriage was arranged. In addition, family types are dichotomized to compare those who lived with any parents or parents-in-law (27% of the analysis sample) with those who live with none of the elderly (73%).

Finally, familial values and sex role attitudes are all measured on interval scales running from 1 (not important) to 5 (absolutely important). There are two measures of the respondent’s attitudes toward filial piety: (1) the importance for married sons to live with parents; (2) the importance for children to provide parents comfortable old age. On the other hand, traditional sex role attitudes are indicated by the extent to which the respondent approved the husband’s role as provider and the wife’s role as homemaker. It is anticipated that parents who emphasized the importance of filial piety tended to expect more schooling for sons, whereas parents whose sex role attitudes remained traditional
tended to discriminate against daughters’ education.

**Results**

**Educational attainments and expectations across three generations**

People's perceptions of the level of schooling that is sufficient are likely to be conditioned by macro level forces such as the level of social and economic development and the historical expansion of school enrollments. Taiwan has made remarkable economic progress since the end of World War II, and attained a relatively equitable distribution of income in the midst of rapid economic growth during the 1970s. As a result of rapid economic prosperity and educational expansion over the past decades, most families in Taiwan have experienced significant upward educational mobility between generations.

To be more precise, both men and women born in post-war cohorts covered by the PSFD data have attained higher levels of education than did their parents. As shown in Table 2, the average years of schooling completed by the male and female sample of this study are 10.9 years and 9.3 years, respectively. The gender gap in educational attainment is statistically significant at the significance level of \( \alpha = .05 \). Despite gender disparity in educational attainment, the mean level of education attained by the analysis sample – regardless of their sex – is much higher than the average schooling of their fathers (about 5.2 years), and more than three times of their mothers’ average level of schooling (about 2.9 years).

(Table 2 about here)

On the other hand, there are significant differences between the male and female respondents in the educational attainment of the most educated child in the family, probably due to gender differentials in the formation of family. In Taiwan, the mean age
of brides at first marriage is generally smaller than that of grooms. In the analysis sample, women got married earlier (at the age of 23, on average) than did men of the same birth cohorts (at the age of 27). As a result of earlier marriage and consequently earlier childbirth for women, the mean level of education attained by the most educated child of the female sample (12.17 years of schooling) is significantly higher than that of the male sample (10.66 years). It is interesting to note that among children of the respondents – both men and women alike – differences between most educated sons and daughters in the average years of schooling is negligible (see Table 2). OLS regressions predicting years of schooling attained by the most educated child in the family are presented in Appendix Table A1. Besides gender gap, age differences in children’s years of schooling are also very significant, and so are the positive effects of household income, when educational attainment of the parents are held constant.

Meanwhile, consistent with the preceding discussion, the better educated generations – both men and women – demand greater amounts of education for their children – irrespective of the sex of children – than for themselves. To be more precise, people in birth cohorts of 1946-1963 expect that their children would attain more schooling than did themselves, with average levels of educational expectations for sons and daughters being over 15 years (see Table 2). Besides, there are no statistically significant differences between the male and female sample in the mean level of educational expectations for children – either for sons or for daughters. Compared to the corresponding figures reported in Goyette and Xie (1999), Taiwan’s mean level of parental educational expectations is close to that of White parents (15.4 years), but lower than that of Chinese parents (17.3 years) in the United States.

In the following analysis, I first use OLS regression models to explain variations in years of schooling expected by the respondents for their sons and daughters, respectively.
A note has to be made here. A preliminary analysis shows that social origins (as indicated by parental education of the respondent) exert significant influences upon the respondent’s educational expectations for children (see Model 1 in Appendix Table A2). Nevertheless, the significant influences of grandparents’ schooling disappear when educational attainments of the respondent and his/her spouse are held constant (see Model 2 in Appendix Table A2). In other words, the effects of schooling attained by “family of origin” are largely mediated by the schooling attained by “family of procreation”. There are no direct effects of grandparents’ education on educational expectations of the parent for grandchildren, with one exception. The only exception pertains to the lagged effect of mother’s schooling on female respondents’ educational expectations for sons. But, this significant effect of mother’s schooling disappears when other explanatory variables such as family resources are included in the model (not shown in the table). Therefore, the characteristics of family of origin are not included in the next analysis.

**Formation of Educational Expectations: Linear Regression**

Table 3a presents ordinary-least squares (OLS) regression coefficients for two models of educational expectations for sons and daughters, respectively, among the total analysis sample. With years of schooling expected for sons as dependent variable, Model 1 includes only measures of sex, age, years of schooling of family members, household income, and the number of children in the family. Model 2 is a parallel analysis of educational expectations for daughters.

(Table 3a about here)

As we can see in Table 3a, all the independent variables included in the short regressions exert significant influences upon educational expectations for daughters, whereas the effects of gender and household income on educational expectations for sons
are not statistically significant. Besides these two differences, the patterns of the
determination of educational expectations for sons and daughters are similar. Not only are
the coefficients of educational attainment and number of children in the anticipated
direction, but they are statistically significant. In addition, the older the people, the higher
the level of education expected for both sons and daughters.

In the previous session, we found that men and women did not significantly differ in
the mean level of educational expectations. Here, we learned a different story from the
OLS estimates of the coefficients involving the sex of respondents. As we can see in
Table 3a, When age, family attainment, and family resources are held constant, the male
respondents tended to express a lower level of educational expectations for daughters
(coeffi. = -0.298) than did the female respondents. However, the disparity between the
male and female respondents in educational expectations for daughters disappears, when
variables concerning family ISEI, family types and familial values are included in the long
regressions (see Models 3 and 4 in Table 3a).

Comparisons across short and long regressions reveal that variables related to family
types or familial values do not help explain variations in educational expectations for
children to a satisfactory degree, except two incidents. First, living with the elderly raises
the level of educational expectations for sons (coeffi. = 0.353). And second, traditional
sex role attitudes hinder the level of educational expectations for daughters (coeffi. =
-.131). These two findings are interesting, and hence I continue to check if there are
significant differences in the effects of these two variables between the male and female
respondents. The estimated gender-specific coefficients are reported in Table 3b.

(Table 3b about here)

Table 3b presents OLS regressions for the male and female sample, separately.
Inspection of the table reveals that living with the elderly does not exert significant
impacts upon educational expectations for sons among the male respondents, nor among the female respondents. Similarly, the negative influence of traditional sex role attitudes upon expectations for daughters does not appear in the gender-specific regressions. Instead, we can see negative effects of traditional sex role attitudes and arranged marriage in regression for expectations for sons among the female respondents. In other words, when other things being equal, traditional sex role attitudes significantly retard women’s educational expectations for sons (coeffi. = -0.165), but not for daughters. This finding is not anticipated, as we would expect significant influences of sex role attitudes upon educational expectations for daughters, rather than for sons. Meanwhile, the level of education expected for sons by those women whose marriage was arranged is lower than that of other women by 0.444 years of schooling. In the female sample, the zero-order correlation between traditional sex role attitudes and arranged marriage is r = .085. These two variables are not highly correlated.

Another differences in the patterns of determination of educational expectations between male and female respondents pertain to the effects of children’s education and number of children. As we can see in Table 3b, a man’s educational expectations for children – regardless of the sex of children – are not significantly influenced by the years of schooling that have already been attained by his children. By contrast, in the female sample, educational expectations for children are significantly shaped by children’s current educational attainment. Meanwhile, the negative effect of the number of children on educational expectations for children remain significant in all regressions, except in the case of women’s expectations for daughters. In fact, only age and variables involving educational attainments of family members exert significant impacts upon women’s expectations for daughters.
Expectations of Higher Education: Multinomial Logistic Regression

In this session, I use multinomial logistic regressions to explain whether or not the respondent expects higher education for his/her sons and daughters, respectively. I focus on the contrasts between those who expected secondary education (12 years) with those who expected junior-college education (14 years) and those who expected at least university education (16 years +). Junior colleges and universities represent two tracks for students to enter after the completion of secondary education. I exclude from the analysis a few cases that were satisfied with the nine years of compulsory education. The explanatory variables considered here are the same as those included in the long OLS regressions reported in the previous session.

(Tables 4a and 4b about here)

First of all, with respect to educational expectations for sons, the estimated coefficients for multinomial logistic regressions among the total analysis sample are presented in Table 4a. Table 4b reports the corresponding results among the male and female respondents, separately. Inspection of Table 4a reveals that men and women do not significant differ from each other in the odds of expecting higher education -- be it junior-college education or university education and higher -- in contrast with the expectations of secondary education.

Besides, as we can see in Table 4a, the contrast between those who expected junior-college education for sons and those who limited their expectations at the 12 years of secondary education can be explained by the differential educational attainments among the respondents. To be more precise, those respondents who attained secondary education (12 years) are more likely than others to expect junior-college education (14 years) for their sons. This finding indicates that parents in Taiwan expect their sons to attain a higher level of education than did they themselves. Meanwhile, if any children in
the family already attained some college education, then the parents are more likely than others to express desire for sons’ higher education.

When contrasting expectations of university education and higher (16 years +) with expectations of 12 years education, many determinants considered in the present analysis significantly explain the demand for university education. As anticipated, the higher the level of parents’ socioeconomic achievement (education and income), the greater the desire for university education for their sons, whereas the number of children in the family exerts a negative impact upon expectations of university education (coefficient = -0.278). Meanwhile, the idea that married sons should live with parents helps to promote one’s expectations of university education for one’s own sons (coefficient = 0.163). In other words, people who preferred extended families over nuclear families expressed more interested in son’s university education than did others.

While the main effects of gender in the odds of expecting higher education for sons are not statistically significant (see Table 4a), there are significant interaction effects between the sex of respondents and other determinants of educational expectations such as socioeconomic achievements. For instance, as shown in Table 4b, contrasting the expectations of 12 years education, the increase in household income significantly raises a man’s expectations of higher education, with logit coefficients of 0.012 and 0.014 for expecting junior-college and university education, respectively. By contrast, women’s expectations of higher education for sons are not influenced by how much money their family has. Instead, women’s expectations for sons’ university education are negatively influenced by the number of children and what type of marriage they have. As we can see in Table 4b, the larger the number of children in the family, the lower the odds of women’s expectations of son’s university education (coefficient = -.311. Meanwhile, there are differences in the effects of arranged marriage between the female and male
respondents. While it is women whose marriage was arranged are less likely than other women to expect son’s university education (coeffi. = -0.641), it is men whose marriage was arranged are more likely than other men to expect junior-college education for their sons (coeffi. = 0.806).

(Tables 4c and 4d about here)

On the other hand, regarding educational expectations for daughters, Tables 4c and 4d presents the estimated coefficients for multinomial logistic regressions for the pooled sample and for the gender-specific sample, respectively. Comparing these results with those findings reported earlier, we learn that the patterns of determination of educational expectations for daughters are similar to those for sons, with two major differences. First, the tendency for respondents who attained secondary education (12 years) to expect junior-college education for sons can not be applied to the case of expectations for daughters. And second, the idea that married sons should live with parents, albeit important for the formation of educational expectations for sons, is irrelevant to the expectations of university education for daughters.

Finally, inspection of the results reported in Table 4d, where regressions are run for the male and female respondents separately, reveals that economic factor is important in determining men’s expectations of higher education for daughters, whereas the effects of household income are negligible among women. Meanwhile, whether or not a man expects university education for daughters is largely determined by how many children he has. The larger the number of the children a man has, the lower the odds of his expectation of university education for daughters (coeffi. = -.373).

**Expectations of Post-University Education: Conditional Logistic Regression**

In the last part of the analysis, I use logistic regression models to explain whether or
not the respondent desires for more advance education for children, conditional on his/her expectations of university education at the minimum. The analysis sample is thus restricted to those who expected at least university education. Tables 5a and 5b represent the results for expectations for sons and daughters among the pooled and gender-specific sample, respectively.

(Tables 5a and 5b about here)

Inspection of the estimated coefficients reported in Tables 5a reveals the salience of spouse’s educational attainment in accounting for variations in desire for sons’ graduate school education. The effects of spouse’s higher education upon educational expectation for sons are particularly important among the female respondents. Besides, how far the most educated child in the family goes in school is a crucial factor in determining whether or not the parent expects post-university education for sons. This is true for both male and female respondents.

On the other hand, generally speaking, those parents whose marriage was arranged are less likely to expect their sons to enter graduate schools than others (coeffi. = -.537; see Model 1 in Table 5a). Meanwhile, the idea that married sons should live with parents helps promote the parents’ expectations of master or/and doctoral degrees for there own sons (coeffi. = .135). The effects of these two variables upon expectations of graduate school education for sons are not statistically significant in the regressions run for male and female respondents, separately (see Models 2 and 3 in Table 5a).

Similar to the case of expectations of post-university education for sons, spouse’s educational attainment is important in the determination of expectations of graduate school education for daughters among the female respondents, but not among the male respondents. Besides, positive attitudes toward extended family (i.e., familial values regarding married sons living with parents) also serve as an important determinant in
accounting for variations in educational expectations for daughters (coeffi. = 0.178; see Model 1 in Table 5b). This effect is significant among the male respondents (coeffi. = 0.287; see Model 2 in Table 5b), but it is not significant among the female respondents.

In addition, there are some differences between daughters and sons in the patterns of determination of educational expectations. For example, while the effects of age on expectations of advanced education for sons are not significant among men and women alike (see Table 5a), they are statistically significant in the case of expectations for daughters among women, but not among men (see Table 5b). In other words, the older the female respondent, the higher the odds of expecting a master or doctoral degree for her daughters (coeffi. = 0.100). Finally, the idea that children should provide parents comfortable old age stimulates women’s expectations of graduate school education for daughters (coeffi. = 0.392). These findings are not exactly what were anticipated, as we would expect that the concepts of filial piety are closely tied to expectations for sons, rather than expectations for daughters.

Conclusion

Throughout the paper, I am inclined to argue that people who are advantaged in the outcomes of educational attainment will set higher educational goals for the next generation to strive for than do others. Accordingly, I anticipated to find men, highly educated people, and those who occupy a higher position in the social stratification to have higher educational expectations for sons and daughters than do others. My anticipations are partly supported by the findings.

To be more precise, the present analyses suggest six main conclusions. First, most families in Taiwan have experienced profound educational mobility across generations since the end of World War II. Second, when the better educated post-war generations
born during the period of 1946-1963 became parents, they desired and expected that their
children would go further in school than did they themselves. Third, there is a tendency
for these parents – both males and females – to hold egalitarian attitudes toward education
for sons and daughters. Fourth, as anticipated, educational attainments of members in the
family are important determinants of educational expectations for the next generation.
Fifth, results of linear regressions indicate that living with the elderly raises the level of
educational expectations for sons, while traditional sex role attitudes hinder parents from
holding educational expectations for higher education for daughters. And sixth, results of
logistic regressions show that the higher the parents’ socioeconomic achievement
(educational attainment and income), the greater the desire for university education for
their children, irrespective of the sex of children.

While most of the results are in agreement with the substantive hypotheses of this
paper, there are some findings that are contradictory and worthy of mention. First of all,
earlier studies have repeatedly found that in Taiwan lower educational goals were set for
girls in the past. Nevertheless, results of the present analysis indicate that nowadays,
parents tend to have equal preferences for the higher education of their sons and
daughters, implying a more equal distribution in educational opportunity between the two
sexes in the future. Second, although it is men who are advantaged in the distribution of
educational opportunities, there are no significant differences between the male and
female respondents in the level of educational expectations for the next generation. And
third, to my disappointment, the variable of family ISEI does not explain a significant
portion of parents’ educational expectations for children. Better measurements of family
position in social stratification should be used in the revision of this paper.
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