

# **A Study on the Relationship Between Parents' Expectations and Junior Middle School Students' Academic Test Scores -- Taking English as an Example**

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## **Abstract**

In the currently prevalent “rat race” phenomenon, which is particularly acute in the field of education. When it comes to discussing the factors underlying the changes in middle school students' English academic achievements, numerous researchers have put forward their viewpoints from different perspectives. This paper summarizes four crucial dimensions that impact middle school students' English achievements and conducts a six-week teaching experiment based on these dimensions. Through the analysis of questionnaire surveys, interviews, and experimental comparisons, it is discovered that the factors influencing students' English achievements, ranked in order of importance from high to low, are: family rearing style, communication and emotional support between parents and children, parents' expectations, and family culture and values. However, while parental expectations have a direct and positive impact on adolescent children, they rank third among the major factors and have a relatively low impact. On the other hand, in the context of family rearing methods that are not suitable for children's development at this stage and incorrect family communication and emotional support, parents' expectations have indirect negative effects.

## **Key words**

Family Cultivation; Parental Expectations; Middle School Students; English Acquisition; Academic Achievement

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## **1. Introduction**

The topic of education in China can be regarded as enduring and highly topical, as education serves as an inexhaustible driving force for the development of a country and a nation. In recent years, scholars have been deeply engaged in various educational fields and are committed to contributing their unique value to educational development. A significant number of studies have indicated that the efforts of Chinese parents in their children's education, also known as the degree of “intense competition,” far exceed those of countries in Europe and the United States, occupying the top position globally (Chen et al., 2021, A). In the matter of children's education, Chinese parents have employed countless “unconventional measures.” They rent or purchase school district houses at high prices to save time for their children to commute to school; some quit their jobs to become stay-at-home parents and thoroughly immerse themselves in their children's study and life. Additionally, a large amount of data reveals that there is a positive correlation between children's grades and parents' life satisfaction. An improvement in children's grades or rankings will also enhance parents' life

satisfaction (Cao et al., 2018). Conversely, studies on the influence of factors such as family culture, values, communication between parents and children, and stress on children's grades all demonstrate a direct or indirect impact on children's grades. However, there are few examples in the study of emotion's influence on students. Most studies focus on the influence of teachers' emotional support, teachers' or parents' pressure on the comprehensive scores of children, high school or college students, or in subjects like mathematics or Chinese. There are relatively few studies on the single subject of English for teenagers. Regarding the English subject, many researchers, teachers, and students are dedicated to improving the teaching mechanism for enhancing the English scores of junior high school students.

Therefore, in light of the above shortcomings, the author designed relevant experiments based on a middle school classroom following the five-four-education-system in Shandong Province. Questionnaire surveys, interview methods, and experimental comparative analysis were employed to explore the relationship between parents' expected emotions and junior middle school students' English subject achievements under the expectation theory. Relevant solutions were provided to anticipate the future development of research in this field. This research and this article fill the gap in this field and offer constructive suggestions for the development of junior high school students' education.

## 2. Literature Review

In China, parents are inclined to devote their entire lives to the education of their children, and this is most obviously and directly reflected in their children's academic performance. As time passes, this phenomenon has gradually spread throughout East Asia, triggering an educational upsurge (Chen et al., 2021, B). In China, many parents go to great lengths to send their children to after-school tutoring institutions or hire private one-on-one tutors, hoping that their children will achieve academic honors in school. Researchers in the Shanghai area conducted a study called "Being a Good Dad." In the context of social changes and changes in traditional concepts, the identity and responsibilities of fathers are also gradually evolving. Wu Tong pointed out that with the popularization of the concept of gender equality and the awareness of women's rights and interests, men have internalized the transformation and identification of their gender roles. More importantly, men need to constantly reflect on and rebuild the identity of "father" so that male subjectivity can be demonstrated and understand "why one should be a father" and "how to be a good father" (Wu, 2024). Why do parents invest in their children's education? Data shows that students' academic performance has a direct impact on their life satisfaction. Once parents receive positive feedback, they will increase their investment in their children's education, forming a positive cycle. This also reveals the reason for the long-term lag in education compared to relatively backward regions (Zhou & Ma, 2023). From the perspective of the subject-object dependency model of parents, researchers have analyzed that the emotional state of the mother will directly affect the educational environment of the entire family, while the father will not. At the same time, the father's active participation has a great positive impact on family stability and education (Han, 2023). In other words, parents' emotional stability and a harmonious family atmosphere are closely related to their children's academic performance.

The driving factors behind English subject scores are also diverse. Many expert teacher teams are committed to the reform of English classroom teaching. Especially with the rise of artificial intelligence, some researchers have proposed four application scenarios of artificial intelligence in English classrooms<sup>9</sup>. Zhang Yonglin studied the impact of school differences on students' academic achievement in a county in Jiangsu Province. The results showed that the source of students, teachers, the level of school teaching management, and the socioeconomic and cultural status of families had a significant impact on educational equity and academic achievement (Zhang, 2023). In the classroom, if teachers can effectively mobilize students' participation enthusiasm, they can improve their learning motivation, interest, methods, and strategies, and enhance the learning effect (Hu, 2023). Conversely, if these three aspects improve, student engagement will increase accordingly. Some scholars have suggested that the use of unit process assessment can stimulate students' interest in English learning, thereby improving their learning motivation and English subject performance (He et al., 2023; Han, 2023).

Looking at the current external research results, experts and scholars have conducted in-depth analyses of the influence of cultural differences in places like Japan on children's academic performance, including the influence of different cultural backgrounds in urban and rural areas on parents' academic performance. In the

urban environment, parents with higher education pay more attention to the cultivation of their children's comprehensive qualities, such as respecting and supporting their children's personal choices and maintaining active communication with their children. Compared to rural parents, they are more inclined to regulate their children's behavior (Köster et al., 2022). In addition, family income inequality is also a key factor leading to fluctuations in children's academic performance. Income inequality will lead to many social problems such as violence, distrust, and health issues (Workman, 2023). Similarly, income inequality has a huge negative impact on children with lower academic performance. As mentioned above, poverty leads to a reduction in family investment in education, thus forming a vicious circle of education. In particular, the researchers noted that parental expectations and criticism had a significant positive weighting effect on social norm perfectionism. Using a cross-period meta-analysis, it was found that between 1989 and 2019, the average level of expectations and censure from parents of college students showed a linear increase. With increased competition, the prevalence of individualism, the prevalence of economic inequality, and the pressure to perform well in schools and universities becoming the social context, although the growth of parental expectations and accusations cannot clearly explain the rise in perfectionism, they certainly provide the most plausible inferences to the phenomenon (Curran & Hill, 2022).

To sum up, there is currently no direct research conclusion and clear theoretical support on how parents' expectations affect middle school students' English achievements. Therefore, the experimental research of this project and its paper will aim to fill this gap in the field.

### 3. Research Design and Method

#### 3.1 Research Question, Object and Method

Based on previous studies, this paper has summarized the family education factors that influence children's achievements. By integrating EMBU questionnaires and compiling relevant questions, a questionnaire on the "Relationship between Parents' Expectations and Junior Middle School Students' English Subject Achievement" has been constructed<sup>2</sup>. This questionnaire encompasses five dimensions: basic information, family education style, family communication and emotional support, family culture and values, and future family rearing attitude. In total, there are 37 questions. The detailed questionnaire dimensions are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1. Questionnaire Dimensions*

| The First Dimension                           | The Second Dimension   |
|---|--|
| Basic Information                             | Identity, age, educational background  |
| Education Mode in Family                      | The education of children in learning, social, psychological, emotional, reward and punishment   |
| Communication and Emotional Support in Family | Children's emotional expression, parents' positive and negative emotional expression, emotional communication to children's English learning |
| Family Culture and Values in Family           | English learning emphasis, English learning educational goals, English learning expectations   |
| Family Parenting Attitudes in the Future      | Family emotion regulation, family communication improvement, English subject training methods, other subject training plans                  |

To deeply analyze the impact of parents' expectations on junior middle school students' English subject achievement, the author designed four interview questions. A total of eight parents of middle school students who participated in the experiment were interviewed. Simultaneously, a total of eight parents from other provinces also participated in the interview. The main interview questions are as follows, and the interview dimensions are shown in Table 2.

*Table 2. Interview Dimensions*

| The First Dimension | The Second Dimension |
|---------------------|----------------------|
|---------------------|----------------------|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Education Mode in Family                      | Parent-to-child family education (focusing on English subject learning as an example)                                  |
| Communication and Emotional Support in Family | The influence of parent-child communication and emotion on English subject achievement at different stages             |
| Family Culture and Values in Family           | Family attitude towards English subject  |
| Family Parenting Attitudes in the Future      | In the future, how can English and other subjects be connected with family education and improve the current situation |

- 1) Do you have higher expectations for your children's education than the results of this stage?
- 2) Will the impact of your children's grades on your emotions be reflected in the next stage of students' learning? How do grades change?
- 3) What is the atmosphere and overall attitude of the family towards English learning? How does the whole change lead to the change of English scores?
- 4) In the future, how will you improve home education and school education to promote the academic progress of your children?

### 3.2 Experimental Design

Based on a middle school in Shandong Province, the author has designed a student-centered English teaching model incorporating applied unit process assessment. For four randomly selected classes from grades one to four, a six-week curriculum explanation (comprising four units) was implemented. The English teaching textbook for the May fourth system was selected, and mock test papers were prepared according to the standards of the senior high school entrance examination. Practice exams are held every two weeks.

## 4. Data Analysis

For this survey, a total of 350 valid questionnaires were collected. After excluding the dimension of basic information, the questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS 25.0. The reliability coefficient of Cronbach's alpha for this questionnaire is 0.977, and the validity coefficient of KMO is 0.967. Consequently, the questionnaire design and results possess high reliability and validity and are highly referable.

### 4.1 Questionnaire Data Analysis

#### 4.1.1 Basic Information

The regional distribution of the questionnaire respondents is displayed in Figure 1. And the ratio of the children's guardians, their children's grades, and their achievements are shown in Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4 respectively. The teaching experiment was conducted in four randomly selected junior high school classes. The total number of people in each experimental class and the number of randomly selected key observation objects are shown in Table 3.

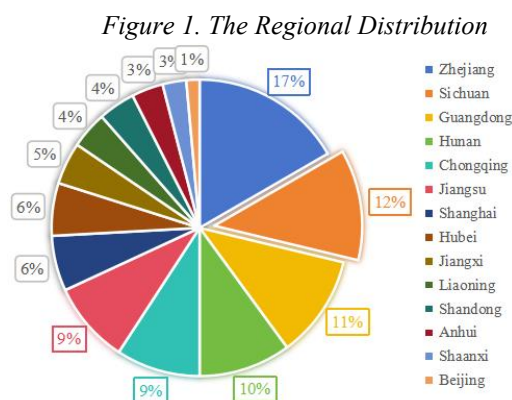


Figure 2. The Ratio of the Children's Guardian

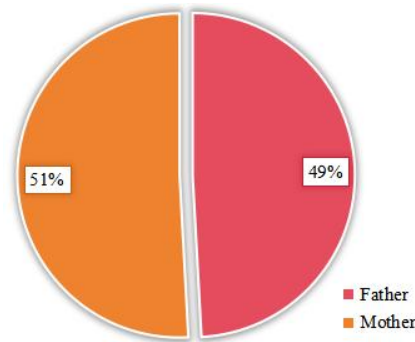


Figure 3. The Ration of Children's Grades

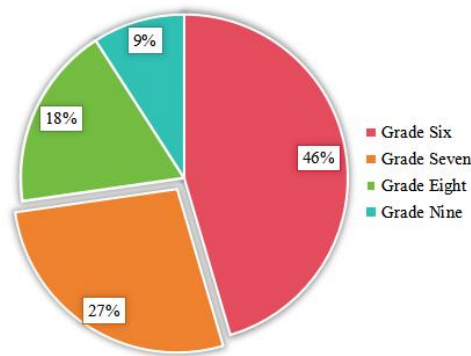
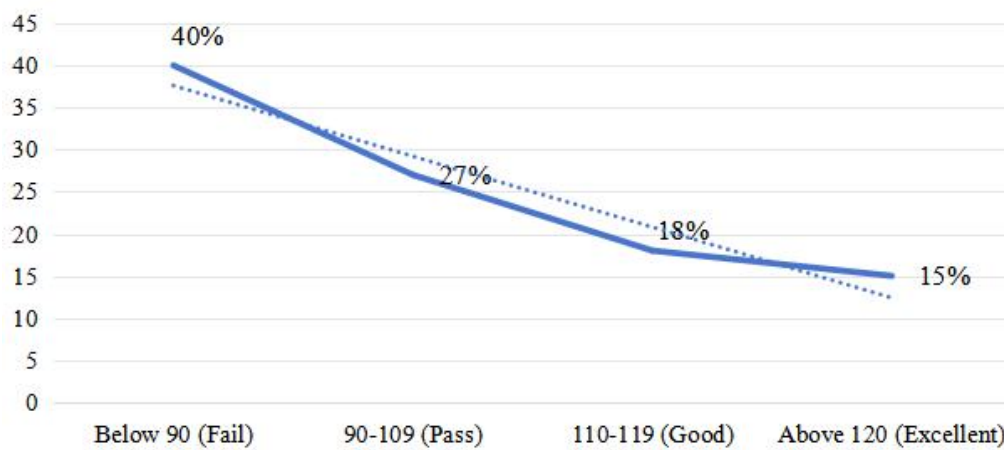


Figure 4. The Ratio of Children's Academic Test Score



#### 4.1.2 Education Mode in Family

In terms of general concern and worry, more than three-quarters of parents (ranging from 74.29% to 78.86%) selected “medium likelihood” (i.e., 3 out of 5) on multiple test questions. This indicates that parents are generally concerned and worried, especially in “worrying excessively about what their children are doing” (78.86%) and “requiring their children to explain their activities outside the home in detail to their parents” (75.43%).

Regarding motivation and support, 44 percent of parents do not express positive praise for their children and are almost less likely to offer substantial encouragement and comfort when a bad situation occurs. This suggests that in most Chinese families, parents generally do not attempt to provide positive incentives and support to help their children grow and cope with challenges. This is also in line with the views of Cecilia Sin-Sze Cheung and Eva M. Pomerantz, who argue that Chinese parents often promote child development in a repressive and restrictive manner.

In terms of restraint and intervention, a relatively high proportion of respondents chose “medium likelihood (i.e., 3 points)” and “high likelihood (i.e., 4 points or more)” for the two questions “Parents prohibit their children from doing some activities that other children can do out of fear that their children may be in danger” and “intervene in anything their children do.” This shows that some parents have excessive restraint and intervention in their children's growth.

When it comes to diverse parenting styles, 70% of parents are less likely to ensure that their children's adolescent life is more meaningful and colorful, which may imply that parents are insufficient in providing diverse and rich life experiences. At the same time, it also indirectly reflects that the expectations of such parents are still inclined towards their children's academic achievements while ignoring their extracurricular life.

In terms of strict discipline, nearly half of the parents are highly likely to have strong opinions about what their children should and should not do and insist that they achieve their goals, further highlighting the strict discipline parents impose on their children's development.

In general, the problems in this dimension fully reveal the parents' attention to the study of adolescent students and the family rearing mode. Most parents still adopt the repressive education mode, that is, they always take parents as the center in the education and growth process of their children and carry out excessive interference and control. At the same time, it also reflects that Chinese parents have high academic expectations for their children who are studying in middle school.

### **4.1.3 Communication and Emotional Support in Family**

The average score for all questions in this dimension is between 2.5 and 2.7, which indicates that most parents are more than moderately likely to communicate with and support their children emotionally during the family education process. The overall trend is optimistic. This shows that respondents generally believe that emotional support and communication in the family environment can have a positive impact on their children's English learning. Especially for the questions related to family communication, emotional support, and children's English learning, the scores are relatively high, indicating that respondents generally agree that there is a positive correlation between these factors.

Regarding the question of whether parents practice positive communication methods and give their children affirmation and encouragement, the score is slightly lower (2.53 - 2.58), but it still tends to be positive. This may suggest that even if parents are aware of this, they may face some challenges or deficiencies in practice.

Looking at this dimension from an overall perspective, nearly half of parents have a medium-low to medium-high likelihood of providing family communication and emotional support for their children. This implies that parents have a more balanced perspective in assessing the impact of these factors. This further confirms that family communication and emotional support play an important role in children's English learning, but they are not decisive factors. Or there may be ideal deviations in the practice process or there may be room for some improvements.

### **4.1.4 Family Culture and Values in Family**

The average score of matrix scale questions in this dimension is generally between 2.5 and 2.7, which fully indicates that most of the options are in a middle-ground position. That is, families have a high degree of recognition in aspects such as the importance of English learning, educational values, and English learning traditions.

Regarding the importance families attach to English learning, the average score of these questions is about 2.6. This reveals that families' performance in cultural inheritance and planning of English learning is

relatively ordinary, and there is no clear traditional planning. Among these issues, only 40% of parents attach great importance to the cultivation of English in current and future family education, paying more attention to the future development of English as an important skill. This reveals from the side that the vast majority of families believe that English learning has a certain importance, but the degree of attention is not particularly high.

In terms of family education values, such as having high expectations for children's English learning and parents emphasizing the importance of English by example, the average score is above 2.6. More than 60% of parents have expectations for their children's English learning and reinforce the importance of English learning through their own behavior.

In terms of traditional English learning, questions were raised about whether they would respond to the current social trend, such as whether they would send their children to cram schools, whether they would buy a large number of English teaching materials for their children, and whether they would focus only on English grades. The data reveals that parents hold a neutral attitude towards such questions. The average score of 2.53 - 2.57 (average 2.5) is only 0.03 - 0.07 higher, indicating that parents encourage their children to participate in additional English learning activities to some extent, but their performance in this aspect is relatively poor. At the same time, parents have gradually abandoned the concept of "grade-only". Although academic achievement is regarded as an important evaluation indicator, it is not the only criterion.

#### **4.1.5 Family Parenting Attitudes in the Future**

Do parents' expectations continue to promote their future children's English learning? However, the data revealed that 50% of parents hold the view that excessive expectations may have a negative impact on their children's studies, such as causing mental stress and anxiety. In addition, 60% to 74% of parents held the view that in future children's English learning, parents' expectations should be regarded as a key factor to stimulate learning motivation, cultivate self-confidence, enhance interest in English learning, and shape independent motivation and exploration spirit. However, it also shows from another aspect that parents' excessive expectations may weaken their children's learning initiative and spirit of exploration. Therefore, parents should care about their children's mental health and learning autonomy while expecting their children to get excellent grades, so as to help their children develop in an all-round way.

The influence of parents' high expectations on junior middle school students' English test results is diverse and complex. As a result, up to 90% of parents pay more attention to the growth and progress of their future children in the learning process, emotional support, and mental health, and also pay attention to the development of their comprehensive quality and ability. However, the degree of involvement in developing good learning habits and adopting appropriate learning methods, as well as expanding English application scenarios and skills is relatively low. This shows that parents pay more attention to their children's overall development and mental health in the learning process rather than just focusing on the merits of English test scores.

At the same time, taking into account the lack of family communication, emotional support, and child care in the above analysis, 77% of parents recognized that expectations should be based on clear learning goals and plans for their children and expressed a willingness to actively communicate with their children, respect their ideas and perspectives, and discuss and develop goals with their children. In addition, children are encouraged to express their feelings and needs and are provided with positive feedback and support.

In the future, the way parents communicate with junior high school students should be more inclined to respect their children's thoughts and opinions, set clear learning goals and plans, listen to their children's opinions and explore solutions together, and encourage their children to express their feelings and needs. At the same time, appropriate attention should also be given to providing positive feedback and support to the child.

## **4.2 Interview Data Analysis**

In order to protect the personal information of the interviewees, the author coded the information of the parents who participated in this interview. The details are seen in Table 3.

*Table 3. The Code of Personal Information of the Interviewees*

| Information of Students and Parents Who Participated in this Experiment |  | Information of Students and Parents Who did not Participate in this Experiment |                                    |     |
|---|--|--|------------------------------------|-----|
| Students at School (IS)   | Parents of Students at School (IF, IM) | Other Students (OS)  | Parents of Other Students (OF, OM) |     |
| IS1   | IF1                                    | OS1  | OF1                                |     |
| IS2   | IF2                                    | OS2  |                                    | OM2 |
| IS3   | IM3                                    | OS3  | OF3                                |     |
| IS4   | IM4                                    | OS4  | OF4                                |     |
| IS5   | IF5                                    | OS5  | OF5                                |     |
| IS6   | IM6                                    | OS6  |                                    | OM6 |
| IS7   | IF7                                    | OS7  | OF7                                |     |
| IS8   | IM8                                    | OS8  |                                    | OM8 |

#### 4.2.1 Parents' Family Education for Children

What parents do not have expectations for their children? The answer is simply a slight difference in the concentration of expectations. IF2, IF5, OF1, OF4, IM6, OM2, and OM8 indicate that these parents are very strict in the education of their children. Their personal education experience is relatively insufficient, and they tend to expect their children to achieve academic achievements, which is also a return for their years of effort. The better the excellent level of their children, the more they expect. In contrast, IF1 and OM6 have such a concept: although the education of their children is rigorous but not harsh. They also have expectations for their children, but this expectation is more far-reaching, not just at the immediate level of achievement. "Our family education environment is relatively relaxed. Neither too prominent nor too far behind. The content of the current curriculum is enough to master. Short-term results cannot affect the future (IF7, OF7, IM3, and IM4)." A pleasant and comfortable environment is not an excuse for "negative escape." IM8, OF3, and OF5 believe that parents' expectations of their children are not rapid progress but gradual progress. They require children to progress, but it is impractical to jump from the end to the first place in a short period of time. We must pay attention to children's phased ability to improve.

As a result, parents' expectations vary in emphasis due to a variety of internal and external factors. According to the personal information disclosed by IF2, IF5, OF1, OF4, IM6, OM2, and OM8, the parents of this group have the highest education of junior college and the lowest education of third grade in primary school. Subject to the difference in knowledge level, they cannot control the depth of expectations for their children, which is easy to cause psychological problems caused by excessive expectations. As mentioned above, there is also a risk that too low expectations lead to insufficient incentives and difficult to give positive feedback. For the rest of the group, their expectations appear rational, and they adopt scientific, reasonable, and rigorous methods and attitudes towards family education.

#### 4.2.2 Influence of Parent-Child Communication and Emotions on English subject achievement

According to the questionnaire, most parents and children can maintain good communication to a certain extent, although they still face various challenges and difficulties. At this stage, middle school students are in the stage of adolescent psychological development. Students at this stage have greater emotional fluctuations and may even have a tendency to close themselves off. As a result, the possibility for parents to maintain normal communication with their children is correspondingly affected. In terms of whether they respect their children's emotions, when their children are willing to open up to their parents, they will give positive feedback, such as emotional support and emotional care. When they find that their children are emotionally disturbed, they will follow their children's hearts. Compared with most parents in China who blindly insist



that their opinions are correct (IF5, OF1, IM6, and OM8), some parents force their children to choose what they think is the right path (IF2, OF4, and OM2) with an all-for-you mentality.

The parents of the respondents were asked to recall their experiences with their children at a certain stage, such as the children's emotional stability at a certain stage and whether communication between family members was better and how their English scores were. IF1 recalled that when their child first entered school in September 2023, they obviously felt the freshness of their child and scored 105 (out of 150) in the first monthly exam. The scores of the subsequent tests were also relatively stable, but with the increase of the course load, the child felt tired and their scores gradually declined. At the end of the half year, the child's heart is extremely uneasy, and the final grade is a failure. IF7 and OF5 also indicated that their own children have the same condition. However, OF7 recalled that after their child entered adolescence, communication became less and less, but their child's grades were stable and excellent, and they are now worried about their child's mental health. IF2, OF4, and OM2 hold the opposite attitude and view, so they always emphasize in the interview process that their children cannot communicate normally, they are irritable, easy to quarrel, and even damage property, and they also feel helpless about their children's performance.

Parents' good communication and positive emotional support have a significant impact on their children's English achievement, but they are not the decisive factors. In adolescence, due to the large emotional fluctuations of children, internal causes are obvious, and external causes (the positive influence of the family) are relatively weak. The final English performance varies from person to person. Overall, however, more than half of parents showed a positive change in their children's grades when they moderately adjusted their expectations. In addition to the above examples, parents ignoring the inner needs of their adolescent children and paying too much attention to expectations can lead to failing grades. In addition, if parents respect their children's personality development and adopt a natural way of education, their children's grades will remain excellent. On the contrary, excessive parental interference in their children's thoughts will exacerbate the rebellious psychology of adolescence and form a vicious circle of family communication. Therefore, parental emotional support is an indirect rather than a direct factor in such cases.

#### **4.2.3 Family Attitudes towards English subjects**

The 16 families from diverse sources all showed that they attach importance to their children's academic field and attach great importance to English education. English, as one of the basic subjects, is one of the main factors that attract parents' attention. Families such as IF1, IF7, IM3, OF3, and OM6 pay more attention to the practicability of English and regard it as a mother-tongue skill, which is crucial to its ability to play a role in future life. The single score cannot be used as the basis for evaluating whether the mastery of this subject or language. Other families believe that under the current exam-oriented education system, the level of achievement is the most direct reflection of personal ability.

There are obviously two different ways for families to educate their children in English. Among them, most families prefer after-school tutoring and private one-to-one teaching. They not only pay attention to students' English performance but also pay attention to the cultivation of children's practical skills such as oral and writing. The other part of the parents choose to let their children practice a large number of questions, using the "sea of questions tactics" only for high scores.

Parents of OF3 and OM6 recall that after focusing on the all-round development of their children's English skills, their children's achievement levels were stable. Even if there were occasional ups and downs, there was no large increase or decrease. In contrast, parents of IF2, OF2, and OM8 report that they buy a lot of practice questions for their children, but their children's grades fluctuate. Once they enter a new learning phase, it becomes more difficult for them to achieve high grades and often requires a lot of practice to improve. This phenomenon is similar to that described by parents of IF5, OF1, OF4, and IM6, who enroll their children in after-school tutoring classes and see their children's grades drop significantly once they are out of the tutoring environment. In general, in this interview, the author did not find any parents mentioned that their children missed classes or objected to taking part in after-school tutoring. Family environment is undoubtedly an important external force to stimulate children's enthusiasm for English learning and promote the progress of English achievement.

#### 4.2.4 Views and Attitudes on Family Education In the future

During the in-depth development of the interview, the aforementioned parents with educational background constraints also began to change and optimize their family educational environment. Moving forward, communication is crucial, emotional support is essential, and adolescence is a critical time to maintain stable expectations for children. Most parents are still committed to the overall physical and mental development of their children and to maintaining long-term expectations.

In the future education strategy, we should fully respect children's unique ideas and suggestions and stimulate children's self-potential. Parents are their best supporters. Therefore, the child's learning program and objectives should be based on the child's specific situation, and the parents' suggestions and considerations should be reflected in the interaction with the child rather than as a standard. In addition, we should also recognize that a child is a growing individual. Temporary academic achievement is not enough to determine their future success, let alone their moral character. In today's society, with the rapid development of society, children in adolescence need more emotional support and expectations at the psychological level. Therefore, parents should pay more attention to children's psychological growth and change the focus of expectations.

Nowadays, home-school cooperation has been widely advocated. Parents have set up parent committees on their own. Middle schools in some areas have opened their doors for parents to attend classes, allowing parents to deeply participate in their children's learning process. Not only that, parents have gradually appeared in school sports meetings, art festivals and other activities. Education is not limited to schools but requires the joint efforts of many fields such as family and society to achieve results.

#### 4.3 Comparative analysis of sample performance data

The three test results of randomly selected samples in the experimental class are shown in Table 4. According to the results feedback, 42 students showed improvement, accounting for 78% of the total. Among them, 20 students' scores were stable with a fluctuation range of  $\pm 5$  points. Two students, or 3.7% of the total, saw their grades drop.

Table 4. The Experimental Classroom Results Feedback

| The Experimental Classroom Results Feedback in a Five-Four-Education-System Middle School in Shandong Province |                   |                |          |                    |                |          |                   |                |          |
|--|-------------------|----------------|----------|--------------------|----------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|----------|
| Grades   | The First Results |                |          | The Second Results |                |          | The Third Results |                |          |
|  | MEAN              | Number of Case | SD       | MEAN               | Number of Case | SD       | MEAN              | Number of Case | SD       |
| Six  | 75.1667           | 18             | 13.81389 | 68.0278            | 18             | 18.28409 | 84.1667           | 18             | 14.01470 |
| Seven  | 89.6071           | 14             | 11.16516 | 99.3928            | 14             | 15.77508 | 105.5000          | 14             | 9.08083  |
| Eight  | 76.8235           | 17             | 11.76587 | 78.2941            | 17             | 19.23787 | 80.7941           | 17             | 16.89587 |
| Nine   | 67.6000           | 15             | 18.70466 | 78.8333            | 15             | 10.63127 | 81.9333           | 15             | 10.19255 |
| Total Case   | 64                |                |          |                    |                |          |                   |                |          |

During the experiment, the parents of the above students were communicated with three times. When students' scores improved, parents of students with scores in the 80 to 90 range had more demanding expectations for the next test. They often said things like "On the basis of this test, I hope the next test can improve by five or ten points" or "The next attempt to break the 100 mark." On the contrary, such parents ignore the inherent requirements of the exam. The first exam covers all the material in Unit 1 and Section A of Unit 2. The second exam is Section A from Unit 1 to Unit 3. Vocabulary, grammar, writing and other links require students to further improve. In short, students are required to have a more comprehensive comprehensive quality. In the process of communicating with parents, the author will also give such parents

emotional support. Even if the grades fluctuate, as long as the children's grades remain stable, perform normally, and match the ability requirements of the stage, parents can still maintain expectations for their children.

Parents of students with scores in the 40 to 70 range will help their children analyze the questions in the exam paper after their children have negative emotions and even make study plans on behalf of their children that cannot be realized. It can be seen that parents' expectations have become a stumbling block in their children's English learning.

For the parents of students with scores above 100, they have deeper expectations for their children. They believe that when their children reach the excellent level, it means they have the ability to master the course. Of course, in this case, these children will not refuse their parents' expectations. Parents will work with their children to develop an English learning plan and find out what the weaknesses are. When it comes to the need for tutoring or other learning support, the individual wishes of the child are fully respected.

Among such students, a parent of a seventh-grade student drew the author's attention. Even though his child's English has already reached the excellent level, he forces his child to attend a remedial class, claiming that it will make them even better. However, from the observation of the course performance, the student's participation in the class is low. But when he is given random class assignments and questions, he is able to handle them easily, and his assignments are correct nearly 95% of the time. However, the student does not show any emotional fluctuations in the classroom learning. It is impossible to judge whether he is happy or sad through facial expressions. It seems that everything in the outside world has nothing to do with him, and he just completes the tasks assigned by the teacher or parents mechanically. After further interviews, it was found that the student rarely communicates with his parents at home. But his academic performance is excellent. He never participates in extracurricular activities except for studying, and he rarely goes out at home. His parents acquiesce in this and think it is a normal phenomenon. From this case, it cannot be ruled out that the student may have psychological problems. At the same time, the student's good grades may largely come from the parents' expectations and excessive efforts. In this case, parents' expectations are to some extent transformed into a burden for their children's learning, but also the motivation for learning.

## **5. Results and Discussion**

### **5.1 Results**

Comprehensive questionnaire survey, in-depth interview results, and student performance feedback data show that approximately 78% of families' family education modes have directly and positively promoted their children's English learning performance. These families usually have good communication strategies, and parents provide their children with positive emotional support. At the same time, parents' expectations of their children's academic performance can also have obvious and positive effects on their children's English learning. However, we also found that about 22% of families had no direct positive impact on their children's English learning. Parents in these families may be deficient in communicating and providing emotional support to their children, and their expectations have a negative effect on their children's English learning.

Taking into account all these factors, parental expectations are listed as the third most important reason, which means that although parental expectations do have a positive impact on middle school students' English scores, the impact is not strong. Meanwhile, the author found that when students make progress, their parents' expectations will increase accordingly, thereby enhancing their parents' attention to their children's English education. However, for those students who have reached their current level of ability, such as those stuck at the plateaus of 110–118, 50–60, and 80–89 points, their English scores are relatively stable. For example, because their ability is limited by their current stage, the influence of parental expectations on their scores can be virtually ignored.

Adolescence is a special life stage. Children are facing a lot of physical and psychological upheaval and need to get more care and support. However, the education models of some families do not truly respond to the special needs of this stage, which may lead to a series of problems. For example, parents' expectations may have a negative impact on their children's English learning. Therefore, for these families, they need to

re-examine their own education models and find appropriate ways to help their children adapt to the upheaval of adolescence so as to improve their English learning.

## 5.2 Discussion

Parents are advised to broaden their knowledge, deepen their academic research, and avoid becoming complacent. Mastering general knowledge such as communication skills and emotional management has an important influence on the communication process with children. According to the above analysis, parents' own educational background and cultural differences will directly affect the daily operation of family relations and then have an indirect impact on their children's academic performance.

On the other hand, for students in adolescence, attention should be paid to their mental health. In both academic performance and physical and mental health development, parents need to allocate a reasonable amount of energy. Especially during adolescence, excessive parental care may have a negative impact on children. Only by maintaining good physical and mental health can a solid foundation be laid for future academic performance (Silva et al., 2020).

Reasonable expectations should be set. Through comprehensive analysis, we find that the influence of parents' expectations on children's English achievement exists, but the intensity is not significant. Therefore, parents should appropriately place expectations on their children. Excessive high or low expectations are not advocated. The stage of expectation setting may be more reasonable. However, excessive expectations and emotional investment may directly lead to psychological problems such as anxiety and depression in children.

## 6. Conclusion

This experiment also faces the challenge of regional limitations. The school selects samples from the region of China where Confucian culture is most deeply influenced and where the competition for entrance examinations for master's students, civil service examinations, and preparation examinations is fiercest. Therefore, students in such areas have strong autonomy and initiative in academic performance, which is influenced by both individual factors and the external environment. Secondly, all regions are based on parents' recollection statements, which inevitably contains misleading information. So, it is necessary to conduct similar experiments in schools across the country to verify the authenticity of the results.

In the in-depth interview, the questionnaires filled out by the interviewees showed a conservative attitude. Some parents were too idealistic or underestimated the actual family education situation. From the content of the exchanges, differences are clear. For example, when filling out questionnaires, parents said they used a scientific approach to education. But in the interview, their behavioral defects were revealed, such as corporal punishment, emotional fluctuations, and communication difficulties. For further research, we recommend a field trip to look at the specific situation of the family.

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## **Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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