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A Comparison of the Contributions of Japanese and English-Canadian Parents to their Children's Education

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Abstract

Education reforms throughout much of Canada reflect growing awareness of the role parents can play in an effective system. Though the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement is well established, how much time and money parents contribute to their children's education was largely unknown. To determine this for a sample of English-Canadian parents and to learn by comparison with a Japanese sample, 48 English-Canadian parents and 115 Japanese parents of children in grade 5 completed a survey on their contributions of time and money. They were also asked about their perceptions of the roles of home and school, aspirations for their children and motivations for spending their time and money in this way. While no significant differences were found in the total amount of money parents spent, there were many significant differences in how they spent it. Regarding time, English-Canadian parents spent more on almost every measure. Contrary to expectations, these findings raise many questions about previous research and prevailing attitudes regarding Japanese and English-Canadian parent involvement in education.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Education systems throughout North America are under assault. Once fully confident that North American students were getting the best public education possible, parents, employers and even educators are no longer so confident in face of the evidence. International comparisons of the effectiveness of public education have consistently shown that Japanese students, as well as other Asians, outperform those in Canada on mathematics and science, increasingly important skills in our high technology age (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 1995 as cited in Education Quality and Accountability Office of Ontario, 1997). One noted observer of Japanese society has remarked that, through the efforts of both society in general and educators in particular, Japanese children grow up to be highly diligent, loyal workers, able to work effectively in groups and possessing a level of literacy and numeracy far above our own (Duke, 1986). It has been suggested that one result of this effective education has been a tremendous boost to the Japanese economy, allowing Japan to grow rapidly from the ruins of World War II to become a strong challenger to the U.S.A. (Konishi, 1989).

With recognition of the challenge, much research has been conducted to determine the role of education in Japan's phenomenal success. That research, to a great extent, has focussed on what happens at school. Many North Americans are now aware of the high expectations in Japanese schools, of the significance of entrance exams and of the role of cram school in further pushing students to new educational heights. They are also aware of the influence of Japanese cultural attributes which encourage children and adults to persevere, seek harmony and follow authority. However, there is relatively little attention given to the direct contributions of Japanese parents to the formal education of their children.

Likewise in Canada, while educators assert the importance of parents' contributions

to a successful education system, systematic inquiry into this aspect of education has been minimal. In view of the paucity of such research in Canada, and in acknowledgement of the parallel socio-cultural situations of many Canadians and Americans in contrast to the marked historical and sociocultural uniqueness of Japan, I have drawn from the research on the contributions of parents in the United States. The research described in this study will help fill this void in Canadian literature. More importantly, this study allows Canadian educators to better understand the extent of the role of parents in education. By comparing this role with that of the Japanese, educators can gain a new perspective with which to better evaluate the variety and level of contributions from English Canadian parents.

To compare the contributions of English Canadian and Japanese parents to their children's education, a survey was completed requesting information on the time and money expended by both samples of parents. The two samples were also compared on their perceptions of the roles of home and school, aspirations for their children and motivations for expending their time and money. Finally, to triangulate school-related data from the parent surveys, as well as to describe ways in which the schools encourage parent involvement, the teachers of participating classes were interviewed.

Prior to a detailed description of the study, Chapter 1 provides necessary background information on parent involvement research to date and of the North American and Japanese educational contexts. Based on and following these summaries are the conceptual framework and research questions of the present study. Chapters 2 and 3 cover the background of the sample, the methodology and the results. Finally, Chapters 4 and 5 interpret the numerous findings, specify limitations of the study and provide suggestions for future research of this kind.

Chapter 1
Background to the Study

1. The Benefits of Parent Involvement in Education

Much research has supported the consensus that parents have a profound effect on the potential of their children to succeed in school. In A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement, Henderson and Berla (1995) provide summaries of 66 studies offering evidence of the value of parent support, at home and at school, at all levels of socioeconomic status and in a wide range of ethnic groups. Two years earlier, Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez and Bloom (1993) published The Home Environment & School Learning: Promoting Parental Involvement in the Education of Children, a work reviewing over 300 studies on home-school relations. If not recognised by all involved in education, the importance of these relations is at least well established by research.

According to Joyce Epstein (1987), parent involvement includes four aspects:

1) meeting the basic obligations of food, clothing, shelter, health, safety, school supplies, time and space, and developing proper manners, behaviour, respect for authority, responsibility and self-confidence;

2) maintaining school-home communication;

3) parent involvement at school, either by volunteering or working for the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA);

4) involvement at home by contributing to children's learning.

The relationship between providing basics such as food, clothing and shelter and children's scholastic achievement is obvious. Though not all children receive these basics, it is widely agreed that all should. The remaining three aspects, despite being important contributors to student achievement, are less widely recognised as such.

These three cover most of the contributions measured in our study. To clarify their role, research establishing their importance is described below.

School-home communication typically takes the form of parent-teacher interviews, phone calls, notes and casual chats during pick-up and drop-off time. In exceptional cases, parents and teachers also meet to discuss or participate in special programmes or initiatives of the school. Parent-teacher interviews, while mandated in modern schools, offer a minimal amount of communication as they tend to be formal and highly restricted in length and frequency. Length and frequency of phone calls, notes and casual chats, however, are unmandated, determined instead by the teachers and parents involved. As such, levels of parent involvement vary widely from teacher to teacher.

A study conducted by David Armor and others (1976; as described in Henderson & Berla, 1996) found that a high level of parent-teacher contact was significantly related to the reading achievement of sixth-graders from predominantly low-income minority groups. Comer (1988) also established the importance of parent-teacher contact with low-income children, finding that attendance and achievement rose and discipline problems dropped when parents and teachers worked collaboratively to improve the school's effectiveness. Among mainstream students, Coleman and Hoffer (1987) found that parent involvement and student achievement were higher in private and Catholic schools than in otherwise comparable public schools. Based on this, the authors speculated that the difference in student performance is due to an enhanced parent-school relationship that arises when the school reflects the parents' will. Finally, parents attending school functions, another potential source of parent-teacher contact, was also found to correlate significantly with student achievement (Benson, Medrich & Buckley, 1980).

Epstein's second aspect of parent involvement–volunteering–brings obvious

benefits to the school. In addition to these, volunteering encourages parents and teachers to work as team members and allows parents to learn more about their children's instructional programme. This knowledge of the programme has been found to be significantly beyond that of non-involved parents, even after grade level, race and parent education are removed as factors (Epstein, 1986). According to research done by Benson et al. (1980), who surveyed 764 sixth grade students and their parents, parent involvement in the form of volunteering and attending school functions is associated with student achievement. When controls were used to factor out socioeconomic status (SES), however, the association between parent involvement and achievement remained strong only for the low SES children. The authors concluded that parent involvement seems to decrease the proportion of low achievers more than increase the proportion of high achievers.

Apart from school-home communication and volunteering, many studies have looked at more general ways in which schools encourage parent contributions and in which parent involvement contributes to the school's purpose. Epstein (1991) found that teacher leadership in preparing learning activities for parents and children resulted in a significant positive increase in children's reading achievement. Gordon (1979), following a review of parent involvement research, determined that the more comprehensive and long-lasting the involvement, the greater the benefits in terms of both student achievement and the enhanced quality of schools. After a similar review of research, Leler (1987) found that parent involvement is most effective when approaches give parents a variety of roles, and particularly where at least one role involves decision-making.

Other research has focussed on the benefits of parent involvement beyond student achievement. Reynolds (1989 as summarised in Henderson & Berla, 1995) found that parent involvement has a significant direct effect on the socio-emotional maturity of

students, on their readiness to learn and on their ability to complete work, follow rules and work well with others. Supporting Reynold's results, Sattes (1985 as summarised in Henderson & Berla, 1995), after reviewing more than 30 studies, found that parent involvement enhances the parents' attitudes which are most related to student achievement. These attitudes also serve to improve attendance, motivation, self-concept and good behaviour in children.

Clarifying the fourth aspect of Epstein's definition of parent involvement, Bloom (1981) proposed a comprehensive model of home processes which contribute to children's school learning. This model consists of the following categories:

1) work habits of the family, including the degree of structure and routine, as well as encouragement of educational activities over others;

2) academic guidance and support;

3) stimulation to explore and discuss ideas and events, including the family's choice of hobbies and other activities;

4) language environment, relating to the sophistication of the language used at home and the opportunities provided for correct speech;

5) academic aspirations and expectations, including the monitoring of and assistance with their child's progress at school.

As described below, studies in both Western and non-Western societies have measured these variables and found them to strongly relate to measures of scholastic achievement (Kellaghan et al., 1993).

Exploring the work habits of families and parents' academic guidance and support of their children, numerous studies have found that high achieving students tend to have parents who manage their child's progress. In a study of 41 eighth-graders, mothers of the stronger students had more knowledge of their child's schooling, had more contact with the school, and helped prepare their children for higher education

by arranging for such things as college preparatory courses (Baker & Stevenson, 1986). Similarly, Clark (1983) found that parents of high achieving students frequently engaged their children in dialogue, strongly encouraged academics, established clear and consistent limits, monitored how their children used their time and had warm and nurturing relations. Labelling this style of parenting "authoritative", Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts and Fraleigh (1987) also found it to correlate with high grades. Finally, Caplan, Choy and Whitmore (1992) explored the role of parents in the success of a group of Vietnamese, Laotian and Chinese-Vietnamese children who, despite having emigrated to the United States an average of three-and-a-half years earlier, were already performing above the national average on the California Achievement Test. The authors attributed the students' success to their families' strong values about education and home lives that were exceptionally supportive of learning.

Not surprisingly, Bloom's third category–stimulating children to explore and discuss ideas and events–is also well established as a factor related to student achievement. A comparison of low- and high-achieving non-Anglo third-graders in Los Angeles (Clark, 1993) showed that high-achievers had parents who set high standards and were more involved in home learning activities. Benson, Buckley and Medrich (1980) found that when parents spent time with their children in educational activities, either at home or at school, their children achieved more at school. Some researchers have gone so far as to say that the "home curriculum" provided by parents has twice as much power, and in some cases ten times as much, as the socioeconomic status of the family in predicting student achievement (Graue, Weinstein and Walberg, 1983 as cited in Walberg, 1984). This "home curriculum" includes informed parent/child conversations, the encouragement and discussion of reading, watching television as a family while analysing programmes, expressed interest in children's personal and academic growth, and the deferral of immediate gratification in the common pursuit of

long-term goals.

Bloom's fourth category reveals the importance of the home's language environment. Earlier, the importance of frequent dialogue was established. Beyond this frequency, however, research has found that when parents model and encourage the use of complex levels and styles of language and thought, student achievement tends to be higher (Kellaghan et al., 1993).

Finally, Bloom's fifth category covers the role of parents' academic aspirations and expectations in scholastic achievement. In one study demonstrating the role of such aspirations, researchers from Sydney, Australia randomly selected 242 families with a child in the final year of elementary school (Keeves, 1975). Mothers and fathers were interviewed to determine their attitudes toward their child's education, their ambitions for their child's future education and occupation, and their hopes and aspirations for themselves. Over the course of the next school year, the students were tested in mathematics and science. For both subjects, parents' attitudes were found to make a statistically significant contribution to their child's achievement on the tests. Presumably, high expectations provide children with a goal. The goal, in turn, provides the pressure necessary to push the children to new academic heights.

The above categories of parent involvement, as determined by both Epstein and Bloom, guided the preparation of the survey for the present study. Parents were asked to describe the levels of teacher-home communication and of their involvement at school. They were also asked to describe the extent of their involvement in their child's learning at home, including how they spent their time with their child and what their academic aspirations and expectations were. Unlike most parent involvement research, however, the purpose of this study was not to correlate these contributions to achievement. Instead, the goals of this study were to quantify, in detail, the contributions of two samples of parents, make the amounts known and compare them

with each other. As demonstrated by the following summaries of the educational contexts of North America and Japan, it is expected that the information provided will not only fill a gap in parent involvement research but, due to the cross-cultural comparison, may even contribute to a broader understanding of the potential ways in which parents can contribute.

2. Education in North America - A Brief Overview

2.1 Cultural and Sociological Context of Education in North America

Historically, until quite recently, most children's education throughout the world took place informally within the home or village (Coleman, 1987). With the home as a centre of economic activity, children worked alongside men and women, learning by participating in the household's diverse productive activities, such as farming and trades for boys and household maintenance for girls. With the rise of industrialisation and urbanisation, however, work in Europe and North America became increasingly specialised and education, as opposed to land, became the means to future security.

At this time, a new model of the family emerged in North America, one which promoted differentiated roles for men, women and children (Pence, 1987). In this new 'Victorian' model, men were assigned the role of bread-winners while women were homemakers and children dependents. Though children were now economically of little immediate value, parents came to put much more care into their children's upbringing (Zelizer, 1985). While mothers maintained responsibility for the cultivation of morality in children, mass schooling grew as a means of most efficiently and effectively preparing children for work in professions or business (Gaffield, 1994; Modell and Goodman, 1990). In this way, education through participation in one's local economic activities declined.

Initially, the pedagogy practised at these schools was inconsistent in content and

quality. Facilities were often substandard, teachers unqualified, and discipline maintained through harsh corporal punishment (Sugg, 1978). By the mid-nineteenth century, however, mass schooling was reconsidered for its potential role in the "moralization of democracy" (Sugg, 1978). Following a backlash against the harsh Calvinist conception of "man as sinner", a new Americanised Christianity gained popularity across the continent which saw man as fundamentally good, though in need of benevolent nurturance. Horace Mann, a leading promoter of educational reform at the time, argued that such nurturance was best undertaken by women, both at home and, more importantly, in schools (Sugg, 1978). Following a "pedagogy of love", teachers were to occupy themselves more with instilling appropriate thought and behaviour than with the academic achievement of their charges, believing that this was the only way in which all members of society would voluntarily, indeed joyously, fulfil their Christian duty. While slow to take effect, this guiding philosophy found favour among leading educators across the United States and Canada and later became the framework for the progressive education movement, child-centred teaching, and the concern with self-esteem over academic rigour which have characterised modern education in both countries.

While the schools and home lives of children have gone through various transformations over the past centuries, the relationship between the home and school for most students has typically remained distant (Gaffield, 1994; Walberg, 1984). Despite Mann's recognition of the mother as teacher, parents have been expected to leave the formal education of their children to the school. Home- and-school associations have been restricted to nonacademic issues and homework has often been limited so as to not interfere with family life (Gaffield, 1994; Coleman and Husen, 1985)[1] . Presumably, if parents had been highly dissatisfied with the quality of their

[1] Ontario has recently introduced parent councils which allow parents to play an advisory role in all aspects of formal education. These councils have no decision-makng power on academic issues, however.

children's education they would have insisted on being more involved. However, unlike their Chinese and Japanese counterparts, cross-cultural research from the mid-1970s shows that such dissatisfaction rarely existed (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992)[2].

2.1a North American Heterogeneity: A Caution about Generalisations

In any study of North American education, flexibility must be allowed for general descriptions. Any society which values individualism and which is composed of so many different cultural groups will consist of a great variety of exceptions to the pattern described above. Further, certain sociological characteristics of North America are undisputed. Many children in North America come from homes beleaguered by poverty, social isolation, divorce, physical and substance abuse and emotional neglect. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1990 as cited in Hoffman, 1992), 13.5% of the American population is below the official poverty level. In Canada, 16.6% of the population and 19.1% of children are below the poverty level (National Council of Welfare, 1994). Almost 14% of Canadian children under 15 live in single-parent homes (Kerr, Larrivee & Greenhalgh, 1994). With such instability, it is not surprising to learn that violent crime rates for juveniles have gone up 124% since 1986 (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1995). It is likely that the parents of many of these children are not meeting even their basic obligations.

Despite the heterogeneity of North American society, it is generally agreed that our society has placed tremendous importance on the development of the individual and, while this philosophy has made for many remarkable individuals, it can also be said to have been at a cost for some children. Parents who are either unable or unwilling to sacrifice time devoted to careers and personal interests are less able to be involved in

[2] This study found that 91% of American mothers with children in the fifth grade felt that their child's school was doing a good to excellent job; only around 40% of Japanese and Chinese mothers felt the same.

their children's education. In addition, aggregate evidence strongly suggests that many American and Canadian parents do not play as large a role in their children's education as they would if, for example, schools made a greater effort to attract parent assistance (Epstein, 1986; Walberg, 1984). Such leadership from schools has no historical precedent and has only recently emerged in some schools in response to societal pressure for educational reform.

2.2 Public and Private Monetary Costs of Canadian Education

Though there is great variation in the amount of money used by school boards and the means by which that money is raised, there are some common characteristics of school funding. First, funding for public schools tends to come almost entirely from taxation. It is common for federal and provincial governments to fund certain programmes and services by themselves. In Canada, the federal government contributes to schools for Indian and Inuit students and offers financial support to special language related programmes (Jefferson, 1989). The provincial governments either provide the rest of the required funds or assist boards which are not able to raise adequate funds within their local community from property taxes. In all, the level of expenditure reaches approximately $5,400 Cdn per student (External Affairs and International Trade Canada, 1990).

From community to community and province to province there is considerable fluctuation in the amount of money families pay for schooling through taxation. In no case, however, do parents pay directly for their children's public education. There are no tuition fees, students are not required to buy textbooks nor pay for transportation to and from school, many schools provide school supplies, almost no public schools require a uniform, and most extra-curricular activities and field trips are publicly funded. Some schools arrange for extended trips at the end of the school year, and

parents who wish their children to go are asked to help pay for their children's expenses. In addition, small amounts of financial support often come from fund-raising activities organised by parents and students.

In contrast to the vast majority of students in Canada who go to public schools, some go to private schools where parents pay a substantial amount for their children's tuition. Annual fees among Canadian private day schools can range from $3,000 to $12,000. In the case of boarding schools, costs are much higher because of the need to cover housing arrangements. In Canada, however, only about 5% of elementary and secondary students go to private schools (Statistics Canada, 1996a).

Scant research could be found which described the amount Canadian parents paid in supplementing their children's education, either through private tutors, prep schools, purchasing of study aids, desks, computers and the like. Statistics Canada (1992), in a survey of household expenditures, found that Canadian families spent on average $430 per year on education, covering tuition for anything from nursery schools to post-secondary institutions, the cost of textbooks and fees for other lessons and educational services. In all likelihood, there is a limited cohort of parents who go to great expense to supplement their children's formal education. In Canada, however, there is no competition for public school placement and minimal competition for college and university. Until recently, relatively few workbooks or games which focus on academic learning were available for private sale; little attention is given to providing a proper desk until the later elementary school years (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992); and tutoring is something typically resorted to only if a child is in danger of failing a course. In fact, it seems quite likely that data are scarce on these parental contributions because, at least until quite recently, parents were generally not expected to financially supplement their children's formal education.

2.3 Nonmonetary Support of Canadian and American Parents

There is great diversity in the home lives of North American children. Many come from financially and emotionally stable families, where parents meet their basic obligations, maintain communication with the school and get involved in their children's education to some extent. In fact, a survey of nearly 1300 parents of first-, third- and fifth-graders from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds revealed that over 97% provided their children with the necessary school supplies at home and 90% ensured that their children have a regular place to study at home (Epstein, 1986). The same study, however, found that more than one-third of parents had no conference with the teacher during the year and that almost two-thirds never talked with the teacher by phone. Over two-thirds of parents were "never involved" with school and only 4% were "very involved". While more than 85% of parents spent 15 minutes or more helping their children with homework if asked by the teacher to do so, fewer than one-quarter of teachers gave such directions. Though more of such research is required, this study showed that many parents wish to be involved in learning activities at home but that, without the guidance of the teacher, relatively few engage in such activities.

3. Japanese Education

3.1 Cultural and Sociological Context of Japanese Education

Since the fifth century when Confucianism first arrived in Japan, the family has been recognised as the central component of the Japanese social system. Here children learned the value of loyalty and service to others. Here the mother's main responsibility was childrearing, with the most fundamental part of that being the children's education. Here acting in self-interest was aggressively discouraged. Instead, it was believed and duly inculcated that the greatest good came from a strict hierarchy where all accepted their roles, where education was highly valued and

where all were self-disciplined and worked in service to others. It was a philosophy that complemented and reinforced the Japanese culture, having among its benefits the promotion of harmony and the minimisation of social conflict (White, 1987).

This Confucian tradition has long served the needs of Japanese parents who traditionally have depended much more heavily on their children than their Western counterparts (Walberg, 1984). Though parents rarely needed their children to be income earners, interdependence in Japanese families has meant that the success of one member reflects well on all members. Conversely, the failure of one is shared by all. A further benefit of the Confucian philosophy for Japanese parents may be found in the traditional reliance they have had on their children in their old age. While Western governments took over responsibility for social welfare, the Japanese government left it, to a great extent, as a responsibility of the family. In this way, the success of children translated into rewards for parents. While this reliance on children has diminished in recent years, grandparents living with their children's families remain a more prevalent phenomenon in Japan than in Canada (Befu, 1986).

3.1a Rise of the Japanese Exam System

Prior to the Meiji Restoration in the mid-nineteenth century, Japan was kept harmonious thanks to this Confucian ideology, the rigid hierarchy of a feudal society and self-imposed isolation from the revolutions occurring in other parts of the world. In 1853, however, Japan's isolation and national security were brought to an abrupt end under the threat of American battleships. Driven to serve the nation and encouraged by the belief that through education this technological challenge could be met, everyone from the Emperor down engaged in an effort to catch up with the West.

It was immediately recognised that a strong country would depend on intelligent leadership. Until that time, appointments to positions of power in the government were

based on the subjective whims of those already in power. In a society in which loyalty to one's family and immediate community was profoundly inculcated, the element of subjectivity left those in power vulnerable to extreme pressure to appoint members from within their group. This method of appointment often resulted in poor leadership. Finally, recognising that this was no longer acceptable, it was decided that access to power would be granted on the basis of merit, objectively measured by exams (Duke, 1986; Hendry, 1987). From those beginnings, the exam system in Japan has come to determine the future of virtually all academically-oriented students. Fully aware of its significance, these students, with the support of their parents and teachers, engage in a tremendous effort to maximise merit as measured by entrance exams.

To develop merit, one must believe that one is capable. Indeed, there is a remarkably strong belief among the majority of Japanese that all normal Japanese children can reach high academic goals (White, 1987). Achievement is due to effort much more than ability. Based on this belief that most Japanese are equal in potential, and recognising the fact that much of their future lives depends on their performance in the entrance exam competition, pupils who wish to follow the academic stream beyond junior high school are spurred on by the belief that only intensive preparation will allow them to beat their competitors[3]. For many children, this preparation includes large expenditures of money and time on the part of the parents.

[3] In 1992, 74.1% of all high school students were in the academic stream (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 1994). The percentage of junior high school students trying to gain admission to an academic high school may be higher than the percentage of those who actually succeed, though teachers and parents try to determine the likelihood of success in advance. Students who are not likely to pass academic entrance exams can attend high schools which specialise in industries such as agriculture, fishing, business and home economics.

3.2 Public and Private Monetary Costs of Japanese Education[4]

As in Canada, most of the funding for Japanese public schools, especially from elementary to high school, is provided by the government, with per student expenditure reaching $7875Cdn in 1990 for elementary education and $8450 Cdn for secondary education (Japanese Ministry of Education, Science and Culture,1994)[5]. It is a centrally managed system which achieves relative equality in kind and quality of education throughout the country. Being embedded within a much more competitive educational environment, however, education in Japan is an expensive endeavour for parents. Both public and private schools charge fees[6] . In addition to these expenses, most Japanese children attend cram schools to supplement day schooling in preparation for high school or university entrance exams. To top this off, there is a large industry in study aids. Workbooks, practice exams, educational games, drill cards and exceptionally efficient desks[7] are everywhere to be found, bought by those seeking that extra edge. As children up to high school graduation are typically not allowed to accept a part-time job, according to school rules, all of these expenses fall on the parents.

Private day schools and tutoring schools proliferate in Japan, especially in the

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[4] To provide context for the financial comparisons, the United Nations Development Program established that the 1995 purchasing power parities (PPP) of Canada and Japan, adjusted for local cost of living, are identical at $6231. Based on the author's personal experience, it seems reasonable that the PPPs for Canada and Japan are comparable. However, there is much variability in the cost of goods and services from community to community in both countries.

To further add to the context for financial comparisons, as a percentage of its total public expenditure, in 1991 Canada spent 14.5% on education (Statistics Canada, 1996b); in Japan in 1991, this amount was 16.5% (Ministry of Science, Education and Culture, 1994).

[5] Canadian equivalents were reached by multiplying the Japanese amount by 0.01145, the average exchange rate with Japan for 1997 ($1 = 87.33 yen). All conversions throughout the report are calculated the same way.

[6] Public schools charge fees for such things as the Parent-Teachers' Association, trips, lunch programme and a gym uniform. Costs for these vary widely from school to school. According to the Japanese Ministry of Education (1994), parents pay, on average, $621 to elementary schools.

[7] Many desks come installed with their own lights and alarm clocks, have shelves and drawer space, come with their own academic games and are decorated with favourite cartoon characters. Older children, however, tend to prefer more traditional desks.

larger cities. Over 85% of children attend kindergarten for one to three years before entering grade one (Lynn, 1988). Over 75% of these children go to private kindergartens where 66% of revenue comes from fees charged to the parents. Among regular day schools, however, 99.5% of elementary students go to state primary schools. By junior high, this figure drops slightly to 97%. By high school, private schools once again account for a large percentage of educational institutions. About 30% of schools are private, and in cities like Tokyo, as many as 60% are private. Here, fees as of 1994 averaged at ¥596,000, equivalent to about $6,820 (Japanese Ministry of Education, 1994 as cited in Asahi Shimbun, 1996). In addition to private day schools, at some point in their education most Japanese attend *juku* and *yobiko*, private schools attended in the evenings, weekends and holidays. Both supplement the academic curriculum of day schools, providing remedial help to those experiencing difficulty or pushing ahead those who find the public school curriculum too slow. A study conducted in 1985 found that the national averages of academic *juku* attendance started at 6.2% for grade one students and rose steadily to 47.3 % for those in grade nine (Monbusho, 1985 as cited in Leestma, August, George, & Peak, 1987). Though this attendance rate trails off to some extent at the high school level, high school *yobiko* remain a flourishing industry. The annual costs of *jukus* and *yobiko* vary widely. In 1986, average costs ranged from ¥49,000 to ¥84,000 (equivalent to $560 to $960 Cdn; Public Information Bureau, 1987). Overall, the 1976 level of expenditures by Japanese parents for *juku* and *yobiko* amounted to about 200 billion yen ($2.29 billion Cdn; Rohlen, 1980).

There is some evidence that expenditures differ based on the socioeconomic status of students' families. Stevenson and Baker (1992) found that students from wealthier families and families in which the parents have attained higher levels of education are more likely to invest in shadow education, referring to educational activities which

occur outside of formal schooling and serve to enhance school performance. This effect of socioeconomic status was only moderate, however, suggesting a widespread willingness of parents to commit resources to education. Students with better grades, students in the academic stream of high school, and students living in urban areas were also factors associated with increased use of shadow education (Stevenson & Baker, 1992).

3.3 Nonmonetary Support of Japanese Parents

Suzanne Vogel aptly described the career of urban middle class Japanese women as that of the "professional housewife" (1978). Apart from meeting the basic obligations of sound nutrition, safety and emotional security, mothers are expected to nurture a sense of interdependency, instil desired character traits and monitor their children's education.

Comparative research has found that Japanese mothers contribute indirectly to their children's education in a number of interesting ways. Parental ambition is high, with over 80% of parents wanting children to go to college (Rohlen, 1980). Parents are also characterised by their optimism and profound belief that effort, more than ability, is necessary to achieve a goal. Though aware of the significance of the entrance exams, children are not encouraged to be concerned with their future, being reminded again and again that all will turn out fine as long as they persevere (White, 1987). Children are also shielded from the worries of the real world, not being expected or encouraged by either family or school to be informed of what is happening around them. While the competition of entrance exams is undoubtedly stressful, being sheltered from other problems allows them to devote their energy to that for which they are solely responsible and which they alone must face - their education.

Parents in Japan are more likely than American parents to ensure that their child

has an appropriate place to study, despite the fact that space is highly limited in Japanese homes. A recent sample found that 98% of parents in Sendai, Japan had already bought their fifth graders a desk while only 63% of Minneapolis parents had done the same (Stevenson and Stigler, 1992).

Further, communication between mothers and teachers seems to be more frequent than in North America. For mothers with children in preschool, PTA and other mothers' meetings take place usually twice a month (Leestma, August, George & Peak, 1987). At the elementary school level, teachers are expected to visit the home of each of their charges once a year. Also during the year, mothers are expected to come and observe their children in class and attend seminars of child development given by the teacher[8]. Though as many as 40% of mothers today are working, often in an effort to help pay education costs, most of these mothers work part-time so that they can continue to meet the demands of being mothers of students (Leetsma et al., 1987).

As with Canadian and American families, not all Japanese families meet the level of contribution described above. There is divorce in Japan, though only 6% of families are headed by a single parent (Leestma et al., 1987). There is poverty, but relative to Canada and the United States, little. With effectively 96% of eligible workers employed and strong family and community networks providing for the needy, it is not surprising that over 90% of the Japanese consider themselves to be middle class (Buckley, 1990; Prime Minister's Office, 1980 as cited in Rohlen, 1980)[9]. In addition, though many parents are free to determine what they consider best for their child and while many stand for individualism, childhood freedom and creativity, most recognise that these principles are valuable only to the extent that they do not interfere with future opportunities (Rohlen, 1980). In this way, parents from different socioeconomic groups

[8] This statement is based on personal observation. No recent research on parent visits to schools could be found.

[9] According to the Japanese Economic Planning Agency (1999), the unemployment rate in Japan as of December, 1998 was 4.3%.

who maintain different philosophies of childrearing tend to fit the pattern described above.

Both a consequence of and contributor to the relative homogeneity described above, social capital is a final means of support that is arguably in greater abundance in Japan. Coleman (1987) defines social capital in the raising of children as "the norms, the social networks, and the relationships between adults and children that are of value for the child's growing up"(p.36) . In practice, Coleman describes the example of Asian parents buying two copies of school textbooks, one for their child and one for the mother who intends to help her child succeed in school. Relevant social networks include not only the family but also the community at large. While on the wane, conditions for social capital are still in relative abundance in Japan: a centralised school system ensuring common experiences; a relatively homogeneous population; a culture which imposes more structure than any Western society; the esteem granted to social interdependence and harmony; and the greater presence of extended families. All these conditions encourage children to adopt and uphold community standards. Under such conditions, children tend to assume their community's aspirations and learn how to use their community's resources. They form strong personal attachments and become willing to make certain efforts as part of a greater cause.

In summary, information from academic and government research suggests that Japanese parents contribute more time and money to their children's formal education than their Canadian counterparts. A public education system which requires parents to pay fees and purchase school supplies and uniforms represents only the start of Japanese parents' costs. A demanding curriculum; the critical role of exams; the strong link between academic success and future security; and a private sector eager to help students maximize their academic potential all help explain why parents are willing to

invest additional time and money in their children's education.

Enhancing the impact of the above conditions, the relative homogeneity of the Japanese experience and the belief in equality of ability means that the competition is especially intense and children need their parents' help, financial and otherwise, in preparing themselves. Finally, these conditions are couched in a society with a long history of respect for formal education–where the exam system has been deeply entrenched for many generations and, while often scorned, is accepted; where children's success reflects on their parents; and where mothers are expected to make their children's education their top priority. Taken together, it is expected that these many factors make education in Japan a more time-consuming, expensive endeavour for parents than that of Canada.

4. Justification and Conceptual Framework of the Proposed Research

Comparison of the contributions of Japanese, Canadian and American parents to their children's formal education, as described in the previous discussion, reveals some striking differences. More importantly, however, it reveals a great gap in our understanding of many of these contributions. Not only has no research systematically compared Japanese with either Canadian or American parents on their contributions to education, but in addition, relatively little research has been carried out on parents' costs of education, especially those of a nonmonetary nature. Determining these costs allows all interested parties to better understand the role parents play in education. This information might also provide some parents with new ideas for contributions. Finally, through comparison with Japan, Canadian educators can potentially learn of new ways to encourage parent involvement.

The purpose of the proposed study, therefore, is to elicit comparative evidence of these private contributions of a sample of Japanese and Canadian parents as well as

to examine the degree to which different parental perceptions, aspirations and motivations account for the contributions found. Figure 1 illustrates the elements of such a comparison.

Figure 1. Schema of the Comparisons

*The text in bold describes the primary comparison. The text in regular type describes secondary comparisons which will be made to provide context for the direct and indirect costs.

The contributions of parents to their children's education are found within a structure of assorted costs for education (see Figure 2). Public costs, met by the state, are of two kinds. Direct costs are the funds government provides for public education, covering the costs of infrastructure, supplies and salaries for staff through taxation. Indirect costs include all possible opportunity costs of investment in education over investment in other government programmes.

Complementing the public costs of education are the private costs borne by individuals in order to obtain education. Like public costs, private costs are either direct or indirect in nature. Direct costs include tuition and tutoring fees as well as the cost of books and school supplies. Indirect costs borne by parents include the time spent volunteering at school, helping with homework, attending parent-teacher meetings and engaging in educational activities with their children. Indirect costs also include the opportunity costs of the parents' investment in their children's education over other pursuits. These private costs to education, both direct and indirect, remain to be systematically explored by comparative education research and, with the exception of opportunity costs, will be the focus of this study.

Participants in this study were the parents and teachers of two groups of public school grade five students–one in Osaka, Japan and one in the Ottawa-Carleton region of Ontario, Canada. Parents completed a survey asking about their contributions of time and money to their child's education both at school and in extra-curricular activities. They were also asked about their educational aspirations for their child, perceptions of the roles of home and school and motivations for spending their money on their child's education. In total, the survey measured 63 discrete variables for contributions and attitudes. The students' teachers were interviewed in order to triangulate the data received from the parents and to better describe ways in which the schools encourage parent involvment.

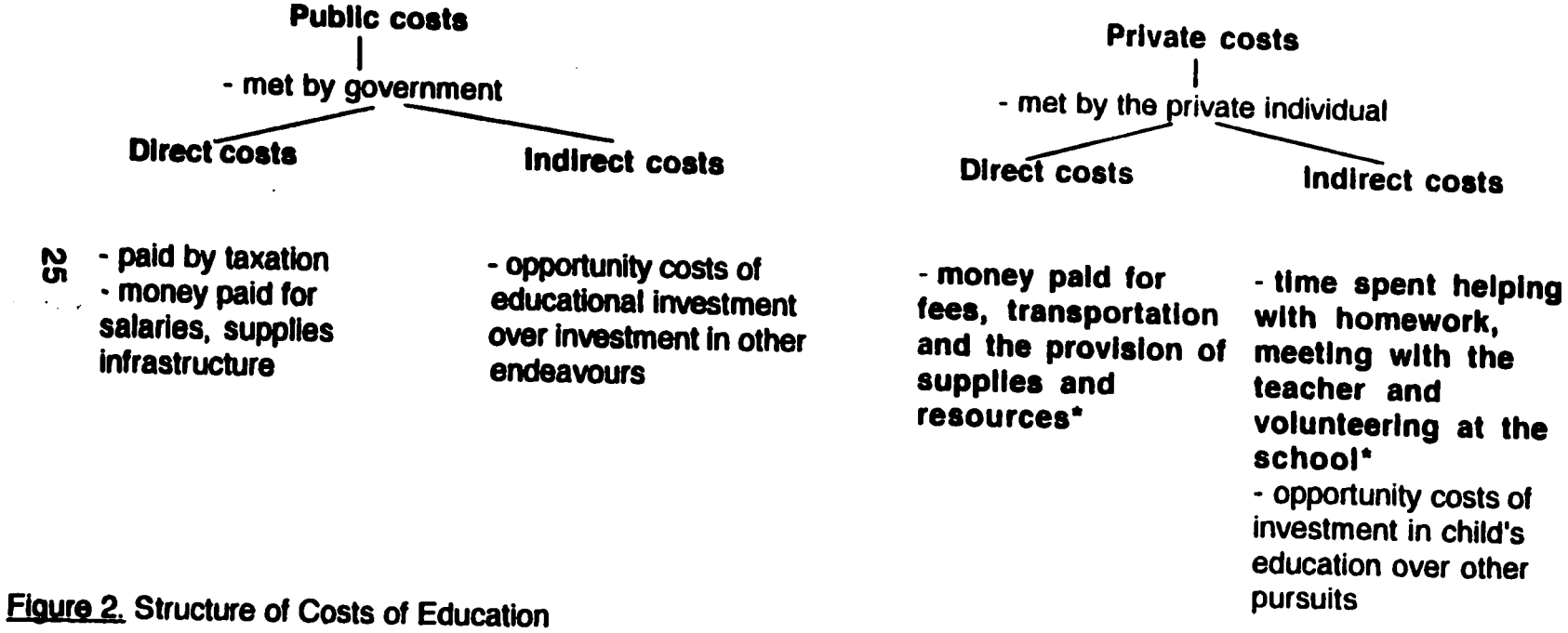

Figure 2. Structure of Costs of Education

*The text in bold reflects the parent contributions which are the main bases of comparison of this study.

Providing the necessary context for the comparisons, Chapter 2 includes descriptions of pertinent attributes of the two participating cities, school boards and schools. It also includes a description of the kinds of involvement available to the two groups of parents, not only through the school but also in the private sector and, informally, in the home. This information came primarily from municipal and board documents, as well as the teacher interviews and informal talks with the principals.

It should be noted that a limitation in the design of this study stems from the chosen sample sizes and defining characteristics. While efforts were made to choose schools which were representative of a larger number with similar attributes, there is no evidence that we were successful in doing so. Further, no effort was made to describe parent involvement in schools with different demographic profiles from the ones we chose. As a result, our ability to generalise the findings is restricted. Other limitations which became obvious during data analysis are described in Chapter 3.

5. Research Questions

The research questions address all the elements of the comparison described in the conceptual framework. Specifically, they are:

1) How much time and money do a sample of Canadian parents contribute to their children's education?

2) How much time and money do a sample of Japanese parents contribute to their children's education?

3) What are the similarities and differences between the Canadian and Japanese samples on these measures of time and money contributed?

4) What are the similarities and differences between the Canadian and Japanese samples regarding their perceptions of the roles of home and school, aspirations for their children, their motivations for expending time and money and

family demographic information?

5) Drawing on the comparison of perceptions, aspirations and motivations, as well as previous research on Canadian and Japanese historical, socio-cultural and educational contexts, what can account for the differences in contributions between the two samples of parents?

Chapter 2
Research Design and Methodology

Data for the study were collected through a questionnaire, completed by participating parents, and through semi-structured interviews with the participating teachers. Relevant background and contextual information on the population was collected from publications of the two participating boards and their municipal governments. Due to financial and logistical limitations, parents were not interviewed. Instead, the questionnaire represented the most efficient way to obtain the vast amount of primarily quantitative information that was sought.

The study was carried out in three stages. The first stage involved the identification of the Canadian and Japanese participants. Descriptions of the samples and their corresponding populations, in addition to the procedures followed in selecting them, are provided in section 1 below. Materials used to collect data, including the questionnaire, letter of consent and interview questions, are described in section 2. Finally, the procedures followed in distributing the questionnaires and interviewing the teachers, stages 2 and 3 of the study, are explained in the third section of this chapter.

1. The Sample and Population

In the first stage of the study, 137 Canadian and 150 Japanese parents of grade-five students were selected to participate. While all grades are worthy of study, focus was only on the parents of grade five students for two reasons. First, these parents have a sufficient history of their children in school to have established patterns of contribution. They were expected, therefore, to be able to fill out the questionnaire with relative ease. Second, it is preferable to survey the Japanese sample before parents become enmeshed in the demands for high school and university entrance exam

preparation. By as early as grade six, the differences in the Canadian and Japanese populations would likely become especially great simply because their conditions are so different. Such a comparison is believed to be of less value than one under more mutually comparable contexts.

Primarily for financial reasons, it was necessary to choose sample sizes which were smaller than would be required to confidently reflect a majority of the parents in the two participating countries. To partially address this limitation, efforts were made to identify samples which were likely to be representative of at least a larger cohort of parents. While not so onerous a task in the relatively homogeneous country of Japan, such a task was difficult in multicultural Canada and, despite best efforts, will limit generalisation of the research results.

With this restriction in mind, grade five classes were chosen from the former Carleton Board of Education in the Ottawa-Carleton region in Ontario and the Hirakata Board of Education in Osaka, Japan. These two boards were chosen in part for their logistical ease and in part for their somewhat similar situations. Specifically, both serve suburbs of large urban areas and both have an abundance of schools populated chiefly by middle-class families who represent the mainstream culture and speak the countries' official languages at home. For the Carleton Board of Education sample, it was required that approximately half of the students were in French immersion and the other half in regular English classes. This was in order to reflect the proportions of the two streams of the greater student population of the board. Not being asked in the questionnaire, it is not known what proportion of actual respondents had children in each of the two streams.

1.1 The Cities

The English-Canadian families lived in the city of Nepean, Ontario. Nepean is a

suburb of Canada's capital of Ottawa. In 1996, Nepean had a population of just over 117,000 and, according to the census of 1991, 90% of these residents spoke English at home (City of Nepean Planning Department, 1997). A community of primarily middle and upper-middle class families, the same census showed that 79% of families earned more than $40,000 per year, with over 40% earning $70,000 or more. The majority of residents who have completed post-secondary education specialised in commerce, management and business administration (23%); engineering and applied science technology and trades (16%); and social sciences (12%).

The Japanese participants came from Hirakata City, a suburb of Japan's second largest city, Osaka. As of 1997, it had a population of 403,000, of whom more than 91% were of Japanese origin and spoke Japanese at home. While no information was available on inhabitants' earnings, almost 65% were employed in the tertiary industries of sales, finance, insurance and services; 32.8% in mining, construction or manufacturing; and 0.7% in primary industries such as agriculture, forestry and fishing.

1.2 The School Boards

1.2a The Carleton Board of Education

Over the course of this study, the board in which the participating Canadian school finds itself changed from the Carleton Board of Education, serving primarily the Ontario suburbs of Ottawa, to the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, serving the entire region of Ottawa-Carleton. To reflect the board at the time of data collection, information and statistics from the former Carleton Board of Education are provided.

As of September, 1997, the Carleton Board was serving approximately 45,000 students. Of these, over 64% were enrolled in elementary schools (grades 1-8); 34% in secondary schools (grades 9-"Ontario Academic Credit", equalling five more years of public schooling); and less than 1% in adult day programmes (Carleton Board of

Education, 1997). In addition to the provincial curriculum, the Carleton board offered English-as-a-second-language programmes to 4% of its students; special education programmes to 12%; and French immersion programmes to 39% of its elementary school students. Though most schools within the board offer the same core curriculum, exceptions include one vocational high school, two schools for students with developmental disabilities and three alternative schools which provide the curriculum in a non-traditional manner. The board oversees 65 elementary schools and 15 secondary schools with a total of just over 3900 staff.

While public school boards are accountable to the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, until recently boards throughout the province enjoyed a fair degree of autonomy in preparing their curricula and budgets. Though recent changes have made the Ontario system more centralised, each board is still run by a Board of Trustees elected by the general population in the school's jurisdiction. In 1997, the Carleton Board of Education had 14 trustees. Advising the board is the executive council, which includes the Director of Education, the Chief Financial Officer, Superintendents of Schools, and Superintendents of School Operations, Educational Services and Personnel. In addition to their participation in the election of trustees, the general public can address the board during regular board or committee meetings.

The 1997 budget for the Carleton board was $332,032,000. While now funded in a different manner, in 1997, 58.6% of revenue came from local taxpayers and 30.5% from provincial grants. Other sources of revenue include such things as tuition fees (charged to students who live in another school board's jurisdiction) and the sale of sites. In 1996, the average education tax paid to the Carleton Board by a household was $1688. Of this amount, 72% goes toward instruction, 9.5% to facilities, 5.2 % to transportation and remaining amounts to instructional support, multi-year financing and administration. According to the 1993 record of revenue and expenses, the per

pupil cost of elementary students in the Carleton Board of Education was $7,124.

A 1993 survey of the families served by the board shows that the average household income was $66,438; that 14% of families were headed by a single parent; that 3.3% of families spoke languages other than English or French at home; and that 5.3% of families were immigrants (Carleton Board of Education, 1993). In 1993, a board-wide attitudinal survey of parents and students was conducted. Among the parent respondents with children in grades 4-6, 73% believed there is good communication between teachers and parents; 85% believed the values and beliefs encouraged by the school are similar to the families' values; 86% believe the school encourages parents to become directly involved in school affairs; 89% said new families were made to feel welcome; and 82% believed they made an effort to know what is going on in the school (Carleton Board of Education, 1992).

1.2b The Hirakata Board of Education

Contrary to the focussed mandate of the Carleton Board of Education, the Hirakata board in Japan is responsible for a much broader range of educational institutions. In addition to the kindergarten (ages 3-5), elementary (grades 1-6) and junior high schools (grades 7-9), the school board oversees 9 librairies, 5 community centres, a civic centre, an art centre, a sports centre, 2 youth centres, an education and culture centre and school lunch kitchens with a staff of almost 2,700. In the 70 elementary and junior high schools, the board serves almost 40,000 students. Among the schools, there are none with specialised programmes. For mainstream students up to grade nine, all Japanese children except those with severe developmental handicaps, follow the same course of study, at the same pace, at their local school. Meeting the needs of the 285 students with severe physical or behavioral challenges, the board runs 62 "schools" with specially trained personnel and class sizes as small as two students per

class.The city's public high schools, as well as schools for the blind, deaf and otherwise handicapped, prefectural museums, librairies and other cultural and educational institutions are administered by the prefectural board of education.

Municipal boards of education, such as that for the city of Hirakata, are directed by a board consisting of three to five members (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 1994). These members are appointed by the mayor and have terms lasting four years. The superintendent of the board, responsible for ensuring high standards and the implementation of policy, is chosen from among the board members. As part of a more centralised system than that of Ontario, municipal boards report to their prefectural board of education and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. For their part, the prefectural board and the ministry are responsible for establishing standards and offering guidance, advice and substantial financial assistance.

Revenue for public schools comes from all three levels of educational administration: the municipal and prefectural governments which collect taxes for this purpose; and the National Treasury. National subsidies and prefectural funds pay the salaries of teachers from grades 1-9. They also help the municipal government pay for the construction of school buildings, instructional materials and the promotion of social and physical education. Total contributions by the National Treasury and the prefecture covered 64% of the costs of elementary schools in 1990 (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 1994). Money is distributed to each school according to its size, the number of classrooms and the requirements of the curriculum offered. In 1990, the cost of education per elementary student was $7879 (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 1994).

While public funds pay for all the essential costs of public schooling, parents are responsible for some personal expenses for their children, covering such things as school lunches, school supplies and gym clothes. Parents and other members of the

community may also help pay for equipment such as televisions, maps and gym equipment, either through fundraising events or the direct solicitation of money.

1.3 Procedure for Selecting Samples

As described previously, efforts were made to choose samples which were comparable on certain demographic measures and somewhat representative of a larger group of parents in their corresponding countries. It was decided that the majority of the families should be middle-class; they should speak the countries' official languages at home (in the Carleton Board sample, it was expected that the majority would speak English at home); they should live according to the mainstream culture; and, for the Carleton board sample, approximately half of the students should be in the French Immersion stream and the other half in the English stream. Within the limits of the above criteria, two schools were chosen. Before contacting schools in the Carleton Board, the research proposal was submitted to and subsequently approved by the Ottawa-Carleton Research Advisory Committee. Following this, Linda Clarke, Research Associate at the Carleton Board of Education, provided a list of three schools which could be asked to participate. Of the three, one agreed. Henceforth, this school is identified as Maple Leaf Elementary[10].

For the Japanese sample, a more informal and personal process was required. Unlike in the Ottawa-Carleton region, Japanese school boards do not have committees designed to oversee research conducted by non-board personnel. Instead, researchers are expected to address schools directly and receive permission only from the principal and participating teachers. Permission is usually granted to those who have a relationship with the school. As an outsider with no such relationship with an elementary school, this researcher relied on the assistance of a

[10] Both the Canadian and Japanese schools have been given pseudonyms.

former teaching colleague in Japan, Mitsuhiro Terao, a high school teacher working in the city of Hirakata, and his school principal. Both chose Cherry Blossom Elementary as the school they would be most comfortable approaching. It is a feeder school to their high school and, as such, the two schools have enjoyed a long relationship. Subsequently, the principal and teachers of Cherry Blossom Elementary were approached and all agreed to participate. Though the choice of school was not made by the researcher, assurances were given that the school and community met the requirements of being typical and part of the mainstream, middle-class Japanese society.

1.4 The two participating schools

Offering programmes from kindergarten to grade five, Maple Leaf Elementary had a student population of almost 900 and a staff of about 50 in 1997. Approximately 55% of the students were enrolled in the English programme, in which all classes but that of French used English as the language of instruction. The remaining 45% were in the French immersion programme, in which the students study in both English and French. The school's five grade five classes participated in the study. Their sizes ranged from 24 students in the French immersion classes to as many as 31 in the English programme. All the teachers agreed that the majority of their students were of "average" ability, basing their judgements solely on their personal experience with numerous different classes and schools. As much as one-third of two classes was of below-average ability; in four classes, about 10% were above average. Most of the school's students speak primarily English at home. A small percentage speak a second or third language at home.

A relatively new school in a young neighborhood, Maple Leaf Elementary offers networked computers, a computer lab, a double gymnasium with stage, and a library.

In compliance with the Common Curriculum prescribed for all elementary schools in the province, the subjects followed by all students are organised into four categories: Mathematics, Science and Technology; Languages, including English and French; Personal and Social Studies, including history, geography, physical and health education, business studies, family studies and guidance; and Arts, including visual arts, drama, music and dance. For students requiring extra assistance, a resource centre, special education classes and visiting Special Services personnel, including a psychologist, speech/language pathologist, social worker, teacher of the hearing impaired and an occupational therapist, are available. Among the extra-curricular activities are numerous sports activities, including soccer, skiing, volleyball and track-and-field, as well as clubs such as dance, art, cooking, technology and chess.

The Japanese school Cherry Blossom Elementary had a total of 800 students in 1997. It offers the standard national curriculum that is provided to all Japanese elementary school children, excluding only those with severe developmental disabilities. Specifically, students have classes in mathematics, Japanese, social studies, science, music, art, homemaking, physical education, moral education and 70 minutes a week of special activities, such as clubs and committees. On the school grounds are a gym/auditorium, library, pool, garden, a nurse's office and special rooms for science, art, music and home economics. A nurse works at the school. For counselling and special education assistance, students, teachers and parents can go to the board's Education and Culture Center.

1.5 The Parents

1.5a The English-Canadian Parents

To determine the comparability of the two samples on certain demographic measures, Part F of the questionnaire asked for general information about the

families[11]. Among the English-Canadian parents who completed and returned the questionnaire, 80% of the respondents were mothers of the children in grade five, 18% were fathers and 2% were guardians other than the mother or father. Regarding marital status, 88% of the respondents were married, 10 % were divorced or separated and the remaining 2% were widowed. Regarding the number of children in the family, 60% of the families had two children, 27% had three, 10% had just one and the remaining had four. Of the chilldren in the grade five class whose parents responded, 47% were male and 53% were female. All the families spoke English at home. Thirty percent also spoke a second language.

With regard to the household income of the English-Canadian respondents, all but one family had an income of $30,000 or more. Most had incomes of $60,000 or more. Concerning the parents' highest level of education, 42% of the Canadian mothers graduated from community college or trade, technical or vocational school; 31% had at least one university degree; and 21% completed up to senior high school. Among the Canadian fathers, 39% graduated from community college or trade, technical or vocational school; 46% had at least an undergraduate degree; and 11% completed up to senior high school. Regarding employment, 14.6% of Canadian mothers listed their main occupation as caring for their family while 73% said they worked for pay or profit in addition to caring for their families. Among the fathers, 6.7% reported that their main employment was caring for their family while 89% reported that they worked for pay or profit and cared for their families. Finally, with regard to household possessions, a large majority of families had music in the form of compact discs, albums or cassettes (98%), a stereo system (92%), a television (100%), a video-cassette recorder (100%), musical instruments (78%), a personal computer (90%), a desk for their child's own use (82%) and a set of encyclopedias (63%).

[11] A complete description of the questionnaire follows in section 2 of this chapter.

1.5b The Japanese Parents

Among the Japanese parents who completed and returned the questionnaire, 81% of the respondents were mothers of the children in grade five, 9% were fathers and 2% were guardians other than the mother or father[12] . While not allowed by the school principal to ask the parents about their marital status, the Japanese teachers guessed that 8% of their students came from single-parent families. Regarding the number of children in the family, 44% of the families had two children, 35% had three, 9% had one and 4% had four. Of the children whose parents responded, 52% were male and 42% were female. All families spoke Japanese at home.

Like the question on marital status, we were not allowed to ask the Japanese parents about their household income and their education and type of employment. According to the Japanese teachers, however, around 10% of their students' families were considered "rich", 10-20% were considered "poor" and the remainder were in-between the two extremes. The Japanese teachers were unable to guess the highest level of education for their students' parents. Regarding employment, the teachers believed that most of the parents were office workers and less than 5% had their own business. With regard to mothers' employment, the teachers guessed that 70-80% of the mothers worked, with about 20% of them working full-time and 60% working part-time.

1.6 Comparison of the kinds of parent involvement available to both samples

1.6a The Canadian parents

According to the teachers participating in the study, staff try to involve parents in their children's education in a number of ways (see Table 1). In September, parents

[12] Where percentages do not add up to 100%, the percentage of parents remaining did not respond to the question.

Table 1

Comparing Occasions on which Japanese and English-Canadian Parents Were Expected by Teachers to Participate in a School Activity

Reason for Invitation	Number of times and % in attendance for: Cherry Blossom Elem.	Maple Leaf Elem.
"Meet the Teacher" at school / Presentation of Curriculum	0	1 / year 100% of parents
Home visit by teacher	1 / year 100% of parents	0
Private Parent-Teacher Meeting	2 / year 100% of parents	2 / year 100% 1 / year 33% 2 / year
Class Observation	2 / year 80-90% of parents	1 / year 10-30% of parents
Group Meeting with Teacher Following Class Observation	2 / year 70-80% of parents	0
Participation in School Activities / Attendance at School Events	3 / year - Sports Festival - Party Day - Curry-making Day 80-90% of parents	3 / year - Christmas Concert - Spring Choir Concert - Science Fair 90-100% of parents

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are invited to the school to meet the teachers, learn about the curriculum and visit their children's classrooms. At the end of the first term, all parents are expected to come to a parent-teacher interview. At the end of the second term, about one-third of parents come for another interview, usually to discuss children having exceptional difficulties. A Christmas concert, Science Fair, Music Night and class observation near the end of

the year provide more opportunities for parents to visit the school. Parents and teachers also keep in touch via the phone and, when children don't complete their homework, "homework slips".

Volunteerism is another way in which parents are encouraged to participate in their children's schooling. There are many ways in which parents can volunteer their time. Some assist with supervision during field trips. Others help the teacher in the classroom, both with the regular programme and with special activities such as making gingerbread houses. Rarely, parents help with photocopying; teachers prefer to have them help in the classroom. Finally, as required by the provincial ministry, Maple Leaf Elementary has a Parents' Council which meets monthly. With a minimum of nine members, the majority of whom are parents or guardians, the Parents' Council acts as an advisory group, assisting both the school's principal and, where appropriate, the school board on issues related to education. While the council's mandate is much broadened from that of its predecessor, the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), according to the school's principal, it still functions in much the same way as before. Here, parents assist in large part with fundraising, arranging speakers and seminars for parents, school-parent and school-community communication and organising special events. If desired, the council may also provide input on such things as school budget priorities, the development, implementation and review of Board policies, and the hiring criteria for principals followed by the Board and administration. Information regarding the activities of the Parents' Council, as well as those of the school in general, is shared with all parents through a monthly newsletter prepared by the principal.

Parents can also contribute to the informal and formal learning of their children outside the school context. As summarised in Chapter 1, encouraging and participating in extra-curricular activities, reading together, discussing issues and

visiting museums are just a few of the ways in which parents can add to their children's learning. In addition to these are the tutoring and learning resource industries that have grown steadily in urban centres in recent years. Though parents typically do not contribute their time to private tutoring schools, they certainly must contribute by paying fees and buying supplies. Also newly in demand by some, learning resources are now many and varied, including software and board games as well as the traditional workbooks. Parents may or may not spend time working on these with their children. But, once again, they contribute by paying for them.

Finally, parents and other members of the community can get involved in the Carleton Board of Education. Most significantly, they can involve themselves by participating in the election of school board trustees, either as a candidate, a candidate's volunteer, or simply as an elector. Expected to represent the population at large, trustees are elected by their local community, paid as part-time employees and come from any background. In addition, parents can attend board meetings and address the board on any issues they wish to raise.

1.6b The Japanese parents

Like their Canadian counterparts, the Japanese parents have numerous opportunities to meet with their child's teachers (see Table 1, page 38). Unlike the Canadian sample, however, the first meeting often takes place in the child's home. At the beginning of each school year, teachers visit the homes of each one of their students. Subsequent meetings are at Cherry Blossom Elementary. Parent-teacher interviews take place twice a year, and all parents are expected to come to both meetings. Class observation is offered twice a year, followed by a meeting between the teacher and all parents who came to observe. Sports Day, Party Day and the day when curry is made for camp are more opportunities for parents to visit the school.

According to the teachers participating in this study, it is rare for parents to visit the school uninvited. Similarly, though all parents have teachers' home phone numbers, they rarely call. Teachers also rarely call the parents, and usually only when a child is in trouble. Finally, parents generally do not volunteer in the classroom and on field trips. At most, parents may take turns being crossing guards a few times a month.

Being an active member of the PTA is the primary way in which Japanese parents can involve themselves in their children's formal education. According to the Japanese definition, each parent is automatically a member of the PTA of their child's school. Those who wish to be active may try to join a steering committee. At Cherry Blossom Elementary, in 1997, 24 parents were on the steering committee. Like the Parent Council at Maple Leaf Elementary, parents on the steering committee help arrange special events, invite speakers and issue newsletters. Unlike its Canadian counterpart, however, this steering committee does not engage in fundraising activities for the school. Another difference is that the steering committee organises numerous social activities for parents and teachers. These activities might include hikes and attending concerts together. They also include adult education classes which are taught by other parents or the school's teachers. Typically learning various crafts, the primary purpose of these classes is to provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to meet in a different and more casual context, thereby encouraging deeper social bonds.

Further, like their Canadian parents, Japanese parents can contribute to their children's learning outside the school environment. Reading together, discussing issues, visiting museums and the like are equally possible for the Japanese sample of parents. Also like Canadian parents, but to an extreme, parents in Japan can access a private tutoring and learning resource industry of monumental proportions. Though parents are unlikely to get involved in the private tutoring schools, and may or may not share the educational resources with their children, many parents pay substantial

funds to these industries.

Finally, unlike in Ontario, Japanese parents have no role at their local school board. There is no local election of officials, so no opportunity to be elected or an elector. There is also no regular forum in which parents may address the board members.

2. Materials Used for Data Collection

2.1 The Questionnaire

The most significant instrument for data collection was the parent questionnaire (see Appendix A). This questionnaire was first written in English, then translated by a professional translator. It was checked for linguistic equivalency and cultural appropriateness by two Japanese who are fully fluent in English. Finally, the clarity of the English and Japanese questionnaires was further checked in a field test.

A letter attached to the questionnaire informed the parents that their identity and that of their child would remain anonymous and gave the name and phone number of the researcher as well as that of the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Education Ethics Committee. The letter also requested that the questionnaire be completed within one week. Finally, in the case of the Japanese sample, it was requested that the questionnaire be returned to the participating school. In the case of the English-Canadian sample, parents were asked to return the questionnaire in the stamped, self-addressed envelope included in the package.

The questionnaire consists of six parts with a total of 43 questions[13] . Following a brief introduction is a list of general instructions. Here parents are told to answer only according to contributions made for their grade five child, not for all their children if they happen to have more. In addition, while answers are to reflect the contributions of

[13] The Japanese questionnaire had fewer questions. This is because the principal did not allow us to ask certain questions which he deemed either unnecessary or socially inappropriate. The questions that were not included are specified in Appendix A.

all parents and care-givers of the grade five child, it is requested that the care-giver responsible for the child most of the time be the one to complete the questionnaire.

The private, monetary contributions of parents to their child's school are measured in Part A of the questionnaire. This part covers amounts of money which either the public school requires parents to pay or which parents voluntarily pay to help finance school activities. A list of instructions for this section explains how parents are to reach appropriate amounts. The amounts are to reflect total dollars or yen paid, including taxes, over the past 365 days, for goods and services relating to their child's formal education. To facilitate the task, it is requested that amounts be rounded off to the nearest $10.00 or ¥1000. This section covers costs of Parent Council / PTA fees, school supplies, school trips, transportation and tuition (if applicable), and fees and supplies for extra-curricular activities of the school, such as sports teams and clubs.

Part B covers the non-school educational monetary costs of the parents. It includes costs which were not required by the public school and do not help fund school activities. These expenditures would have been undertaken to enhance the child's education and are either academic or extra-curricular in nature. Tutoring, the purchasing of home educational resources and costs for non-school camps, clubs and sports are covered here. Computers are identified as a purchase to be included if bought within the previous year and if the grade five child uses it for educational purposes. If included, respondents are to estimate the percentage of time their child uses the computer for such purposes. For data analysis, the amount recorded for computers will be the total amount paid multiplied by this percentage.

The non-monetary contribution of time to their child's school is measured in Part C. Parents are requested to indicate the length of time, either by filling in a blank or by choosing from a limited selection, which best reflects this contribution to the child's formal education. Questions cover time spent helping with homework, volunteering at

the school and transporting their child to and from school. Questions also cover the number of times per year and the amount of time spent meeting with the teacher, observing class, participating in school activities and attending school events.

Part D measures the contribution of time to non-school educational activities. Reading together, visiting museums, volunteering with extra-curricular activities and transporting their child to and from such activities are covered in this section. Parents are requested to choose the length of time, from a limited selection, which reflects their contribution in these ways.

Part E provides a measure of certain attitudes of the parents which are relevant to their child's education and, as such, provides indications of the family context for the contributions described in Parts A-D. Two questions ask the parents to rank in importance the academic, social, physical and moral roles of education provided by the school and themselves. Two further questions ask about the importance of grades and how far the parents wish their child to go in education. A final question asks parents to provide reasons why they contribute the amounts of time and money described in the previous sections.

Part F, the final section, is a request for general information on the family. The information provided was used to determine the extent to which the Canadian and Japanese families are comparable on certain demographic variables. While no great differences were expected, if found, they would suggest that differences in the data might be due more to these variables than to general cultural differences. Due to differing cultural norms, questions of income, marital status, parents' education and employment were not allowed in the Japanese survey. Instead, the Japanese teachers gave us an indication of these characteristics except parents' education.

2.2 Materials Used During Teacher Interviews

Prior to conducting the interviews, all participating teachers were given a letter of consent (see Appendix B) to read and, if deemed acceptable, to sign. The letter includes an introduction to the purpose of the study and notifies the teachers that participation is voluntary and that identities would remain confidential. Conforming to requirements of the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, the researcher's phone number and that of the Secretariat of the Ethics Committee were also included.

Questions asked during the teacher interviews are listed in Appendix C. In particular, teachers were asked to describe the kind and amount of contributions which parents made to the school, covering occasions such as parent-teacher interviews, special events and volunteering. In addition, teachers were asked to give a general assessment of their students' abilities at school, measured on a 3-point Likert scale from below average to above average ability. The interviews were recorded on a tape recorder.

3. Procedure

As already mentioned, this study was carried out in three stages. The first stage involved the identification of participants; the second, distribution of the questionnaire; and the third, interviews with the teachers. The author of this report is responsible for the design, preparation and supervision of the study, as well as the field work conducted in Ottawa-Carleton and the final written report. Field work conducted in Japan, however, was carried out by Maki Morisaki. Originally from Japan and a former student of the University of Ottawa, Ms. Morisaki has an undergraduate degree in policy analysis from the distinguished Keio University near Tokyo, has taught English in Japan and is currently working there as a translator. Her help was required not only

for her Japanese language ability but also for her capacity to deal in a culturally appropriate way with the participating school. Her comments on findings, based on her personal knowledge and experience in Japan, have also been invaluable. Apart from some minor differences, the methodology followed in Japan was the same as that followed in Canada. To ensure that such was the case, we were in regular contact via e-mail and the telephone. In addition, work required of her and remuneration for her services was specified in a written contract.

The procedure followed in stage 1–identifying participants–is explained in section 1.3 above. Stage 2–distribution of the questionnaires–was carried out at the two participating schools. During a brief visit to the participating classes, students were introduced to the research and the questionnaires were handed out. It was explained that they were to be given to their parents that evening. In the case of the English-Canadian sample, students were also told that if their parents agreed to participate, they were expected to return the completed questionnaires by mail within the next couple weeks. For this purpose, these students were also given a stamped, self-addressed envelope. In the case of the Japanese sample, children were asked to return the questionnaires in a sealed envelope to the school within the same time frame. The school then mailed all the completed questionaires together to Ms. Morisaki in a stamped, self-addressed package. There was no further contact with the students or their parents during the course of the study. When data had been collected and preliminary analysis completed, all the grade five parents and teachers as well as both principals received a brief report of the findings.

The third stage of the study involved interviews of approximately 30 minutes duration with the ten teachers involved in the study. The interviews took place over the noon-hour break on the day that questionnaires were handed out to the students. Prior to the interviews, all teachers were given the list of questions to be covered at that

time. Also prior to the interviews, all teachers read the letter describing the purpose of the interview and all signed the attached consent form. Before concluding the interviews, teachers were asked if there were any other ways, not previously covered, in which the school encouraged parent involvement. Information provided during the interviews was recorded on paper and on a tape recorder.

These semi-structured interviews served to triangulate some of the data received through the parent questionnaires and allowed for the description of the kinds and amount of parent involvement encouraged by the school provided in section 1.6 above. Since teachers were asked factual questions and were not expected to divulge opinions, attitudes or confidential information, they were interviewed in groups of two to five at a time. Apart from the brief report given to them at the conclusion of the study, there was no further contact with the teachers.

While all efforts were made to ensure that this study would be as sound and thorough as possible, some shortcomings of the survey and the methodology were made obvious during the analysis of the results. These are described in Chapters 3 and 5.

Chapter 3

Research Findings: A Comparison of Japanese and English-Canadian Parents' Contributions to their Children's Education

The response rates were 77% for the Japanese sample and 35% for the Canadian sample. Amounts in Japanese yen were converted to Canadian dollars by multiplying the yen by the 1997 exchange rate (0.01145). Following this, the data were summarised with descriptive statistics.

Based on an examination of the descriptive statistics, it was decided that normality could not be assumed for the sampling distributions. As a result, relationships and differences among the variables were analysed through the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis H and chi-square tests. The independent variable is the sample group, being either Canadian or Japanese, and is therefore categorical. The dependent variables are either responses to individual questions or sub-groups of related questions in the questionnaire. Thirty-three variables are numerical; forty-nine are categorical. For relevant numerical variables, Pearson Chi-Square tests were also conducted to see if there was a difference between our two subject groups in the percentage of respondents who contributed any amount of time or money on the given variable. An alpha level of 0.05 was used for all statistical tests. However, given the large number of tests, variables with p-values close to .05 should be replicated to verify the stability of the findings in this study. The number of cases in each category and/or the mean rank for all chi-square tests can be found in Appendix D.

In exploring the differences found, forthcoming explanations will often refer to the relative homogeneity of Japanese society. It is emphasised here that this homogeneity exists only in relation to the societies with which Japan is being compared. Describing Japanese society as relatively homogeneous is not meant to minimise the diversity

within it based on personality, economic status, education and other such factors.

1. Monetary contributions to the schools

The first section of the survey measured the private, monetary contribution parents made to their child's public school. While there was no significant difference in the total school costs ($\underline{H}$ (1) = .29, $\underline{p}$ = .59; see Figure 3 and Table 2), there were significant differences on certain expenditures which were used to make up the total contribution. Japanese parents spent significantly more on PTA fees ($\underline{H}$ (1) = 162, $\underline{p} < .01$), school trips ($\underline{H}$ (1) = 118.14, $\underline{p} < .01$), school supplies ($\underline{H}$ (1) = 6.61, $\underline{p}$ = .01) and other school costs ($\underline{H}$ (1) = 134.11, $\underline{p} < .01$). All of these costs except school supplies were fixed either by the school administration or by the PTA. Canadian parents spent more on fundraisers ($\underline{H}$ (1) = 119.18, $\underline{p} < .01$), transportation ($\underline{H}$ (1) = 36.37, $\underline{p} < .01$) and extra-curricular school activities ($\underline{H}$ (1) = 47.98, $\underline{p} < .01$). Regarding the cost of school supplies, significantly more Canadian parents spent some money (Pearson Chi-Square (1) = 11.37, $p < .01$), though Japanese parents spent greater amounts on average. In this case, 76% of Japanese parents bought school supplies; 98% of the Canadian parents did the same. While the schools place similar demands on parents' finances, Cherry Blossom Elementary is characterised by fixing most of the amounts required. There were no fixed amounts for the Canadian parents and, thus, fairly large variability within the Canadian sample on all measures.

2. Non-school education costs

Total non-school education costs, the second section of the survey, included expenditures for both academic and extra-curricular activities as well as costs of home educational resources such as computers, furnishings for homework and educational games and books (see Table 3). There was no significant difference between the total

amounts for the two groups (H (1) = 1.15, p = .28). Looking at how the parents spent their money, however, shows that the two groups spent it in different ways.

Looking at academic activities first, this section includes the fees as well as the cost of supplies and transportation for activities such as tutoring, kumon classes and science camps. Despite a large difference in the means–the Japanese being $650, the Canadian being $118–the difference was not significant (H (1) = 3.54, p = .06). This is likely due to the extremely high variability within both groups and the fact that more than 60% of parents in both groups spent no money whatsoever on academic activities. Further, ten percent of the Japanese cases and twenty-four percent of the Canadian cases were outliers (see Figures 4a and b for boxplots of the data). Finally, there was no significant difference in the number of parents paying non-school academic fees (H (1) 2.79, p = .10).

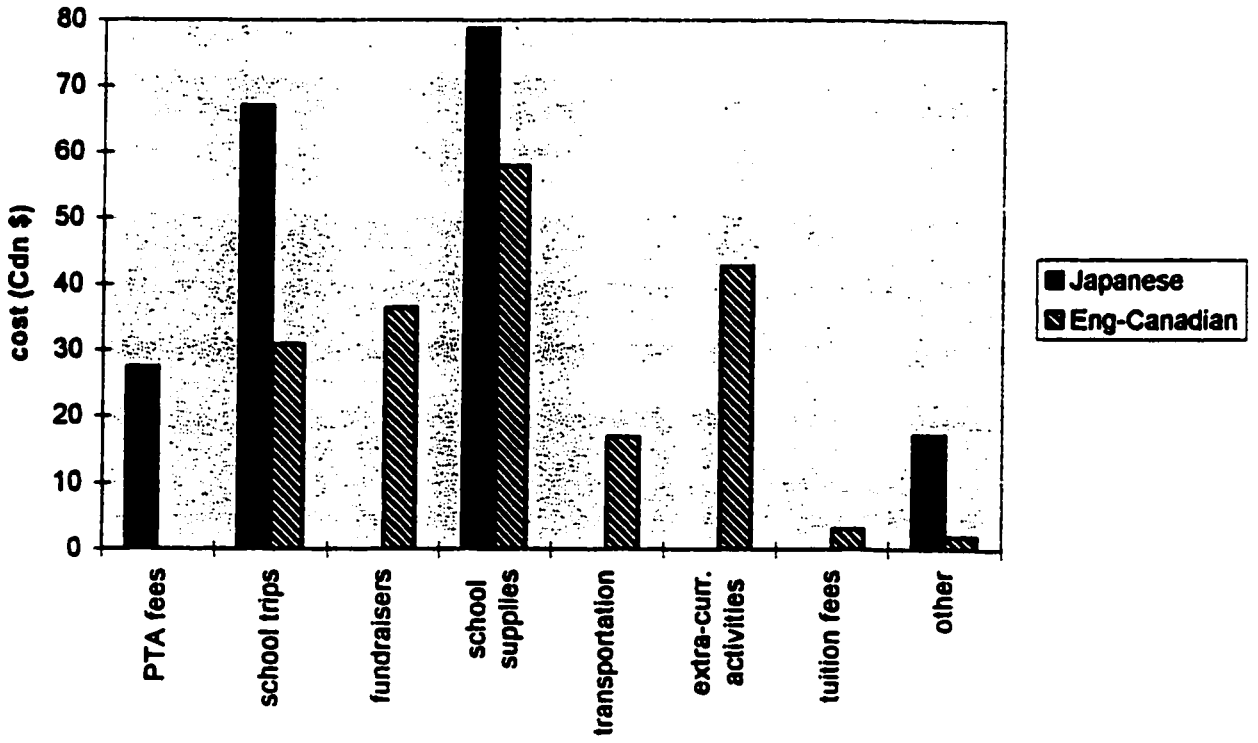

Figure 3. Money Japanese and English-Canadian parents contributed to their child's school.

Table 2

Money Japanese and English-Canadian Parents Contributed to their Child's School

Cost Description	Japanese parents Mean (S.D.)	English-Canadian parents Mean (S.D.)
P.T.A./School Council fees*	$27.48 ($0)	$0 ($0)
school trips*	$67.14 ($0)	$30.82 ($29.13)
fundraisers*	$0 ($0)	$36.46 ($32.34)
school supplies*	$78.70 ($155.72)	$57.92 ($35.96)
school uniform	$0 ($0)	$0 ($0)
transportation*	$0 ($0)	$16.88 ($35.44)
fees and other costs for extra-curricular activities*	$0 ($0)	$42.71 ($90.69)
tuition fees	$0 ($0)	$3.13 ($21.65)
other costs*	$17.18 ($0)	$1.91 ($9.24)
Total[a] school costs	**$185.02 ($151.49)**	**$189.14 ($128.00)**

Note. * $p \leq 0.05$

[a] Small differences between the totals and the sum of the costs as listed are due to rounding error.

Table 3

Non-school monetary costs of Japanese and English-Canadian Parents

Cost Description	Japanese parents Mean (S.D.)	English-Canadian parents Mean (S.D.)
Academic activities:		
fees*	$607.48 ($1,139.13)	$105.21 ($224.80)
books and supplies	$23.14 ($70.89)	$7.66 ($20.13)
transportation*	$10.06 ($47.18)	$11.28 ($32.34)
Total non-school academic costs	**$650.28 ($1180.46)**	**$118.37 ($249.76)**
Extra-curricular activities:		
fees*	$564.51 ($766.30)	$992.00 ($1479.83)
equipment and supplies*	$63.82 ($229.81)	$158.89 ($254.08)
transportation*	$10.82 ($44.81)	$81.11 ($110.17)
Total non-school extra-curricular activities*	**$639.15 ($854.56)**	**$1232.00 ($1749.14)**
Home resources:		
educational resources*	$115.46 ($255.69)	$96.49 ($109.84)
computer*	$6.30 ($65.80)	$152.05 ($353.06)
furnishings	$83.14 ($245.54)	$22.66 ($68.54)
other costs*	$16.02 ($95.83)	$34.89 ($149.11)
Total costs for home resources*	**$220.91 ($391.64)**	**$296.14 ($428.43)**
Total non-school educational costs	**$1500.74 ($1549.19)**	**$1561.93 ($1682.94)**

Note. * $p \leq 0.05$

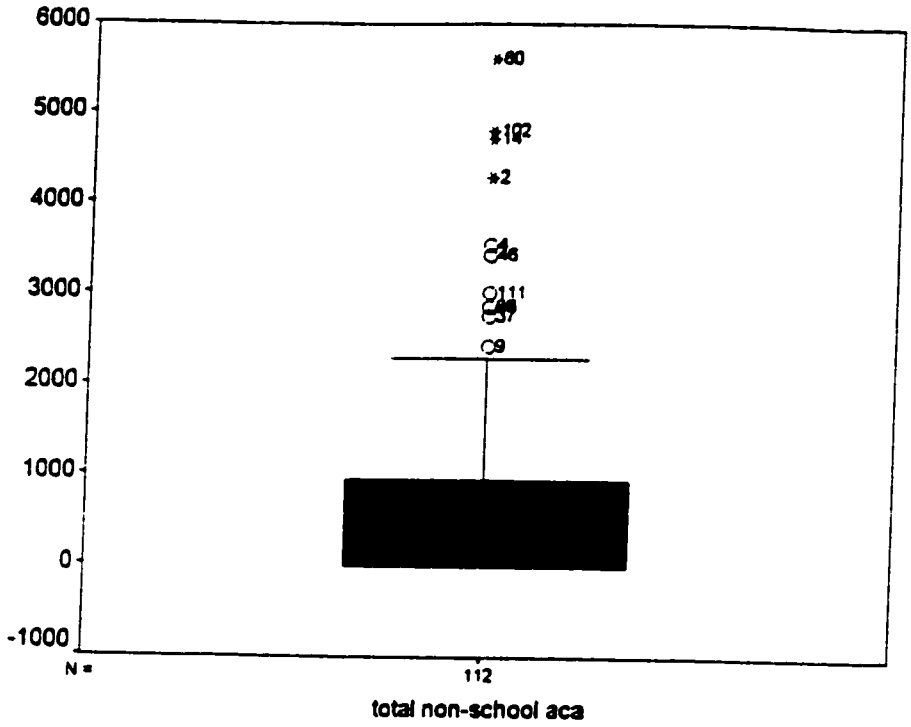

Figure 4a. Boxplot of the total non-school academic costs of the Japanese sample.

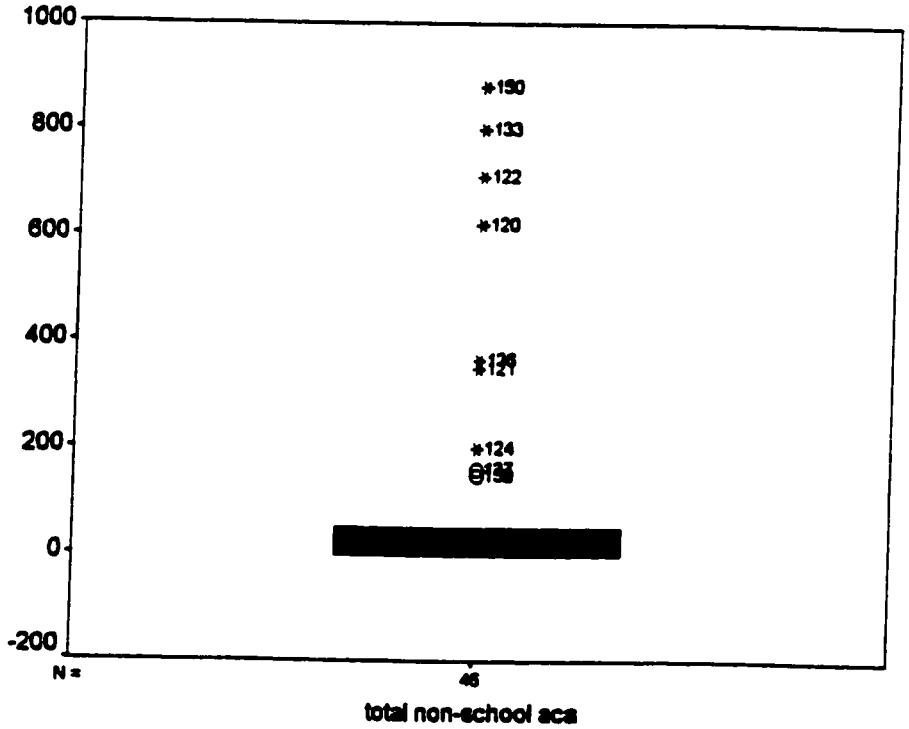

Figure 4b. Boxplot of the total non-school academic costs for the English-Canadian sample.

It should be noted, however, that when comparing just the fees for academic activities (that is, not including supplies and transportation) there was a significant difference; Japanese parents paid more (H (1) = 5.12, p = .02). Interestingly, there was also a significant difference when comparing the costs for transportation alone; this time, Canadian parents paid slightly more (H (1) = 5.06, p = .03).

The difference in transportation costs likely reflects the fact that many, if not most, parents in Ottawa drive their children to activities. In Canadian suburbs, public transportation, usually buses, is often too time-consuming and difficult to access. On the contrary, the density of Japanese cities is such that public train networks represent convenient and inexpensive means of transportation within cities and beyond.

Though a significant difference in the total costs for academic activities was expected, with Japanese parents paying more, it is not a complete surprise that only a qualified difference was found, and that such a great percentage of Japanese parents paid nothing for these activities. The children, after all, are only in grade five. While some Japanese parents push their children from a very young age, most children do not face any academic competition until grade 10 when they write high school entrance exams. Preparation for these exams usually does not start until grades seven and eight. In fact, it was, in part, to avoid the cram school rush that we decided to survey parents of grade five students.

Regarding costs for extra-curricular activities, a significant difference was found (H (1) = 12.95, p < .01). Canadian parents spent on average $1232. For Japanese parents this figure was $639. Also a significant difference, while 34% of Japanese parents said they paid nothing for extra-curricular activities, only 2% of Canadian parents said the same (H (1) = 17.24, p < .01). The range of costs was also much greater in Canada; up to $10,100 here as opposed to $4809 in Japan. Mean amounts paid for fees (H (1) = 9.90, p < .01), equipment (H (1) = 14.73, p < .01) and

transportation to and from extra-curricular activities (H (1) = 62.8, $p < .01$) were all significantly higher for the Canadian sample.

The final section on monetary costs requests amounts parents paid for educational resources for the home. This section includes any academic-oriented workbooks, games, software, dictionaries, computers, furnishings for school work and any other non-school educational costs not specifically listed previously. Comparing the total amounts paid shows that the Canadian parents spent significantly more than the Japanese parents (H (1) = 8.54, $p < .01$). Comparing responses to individual questions, however, the high total amount for Canadian parents is due chiefly to the fact that significantly more Canadian parents (41% versus 1%; H (1) = 46.10, $p < .01$) spent, on average, significantly more on computers ($152 versus $6; H (1) = 44.96, $p < .01$)). Instead of computers, Japanese parents spent significantly more on resources such as academic-oriented workbooks and games (H (1) = 9.64, $p < .01$). Comparing the percentage of parents spending money on these resources, however, significantly more Canadian parents spent their money in this way (H (1) = 12.19, $p < .01$). Specifically, 79% and 49% of the Canadian and Japanese respondents, respectively, recorded that they spent some amount on these home resources.

The spending patterns of non-school educational costs for the two samples supports our hypothesis that Canadian parents would spend more on extra-curricular activities. Historically, North American parents expected academics to be the primary focus of the school. Instead, parents have assumed much responsibility for encouraging their children's social, aesthetic and physical development. Music lessons as well as memberships in community groups, clubs and sports leagues, most of which are outside the domain of the elementary school, have met the various non-academic needs of most North American children for generations (see discussions in Kujoth, 1975; LeClair, 1992). While some of these activities may be partially supported

by public funding or charitable donations, most still require members to pay fees, equip themselves with necessary supplies, and arrange for their own transportation to and from the activity.

Though the Japanese parents paid significantly less for extra-curricular activities, it should be noted that most of the Japanese children were involved in at least one activity, with baseball, swimming, piano and calligraphy being especially popular. The relatively small amount paid for extra-curricular activities by Japanese parents could mean many things. It may simply reflect lower fees and related costs, though looking at the raw data reveals that fees range from very low to very high. It is also possible that some or all the Japanese children were involved in extra-curricular activities that, if free of charge, parents would not have listed. Finally, there is an interesting third possible interpretation for the relatively low amounts paid. In Japan, the school is expected to play a much broader role than primarily encouraging children's academic development. A review of the literature suggests that the social and physical development of children are also significant school priorities (Benjamin, 1997; Leestma et al., 1987; White, 1987). While Canadians have heard of the longer school day and year in Japan, few are aware that much of this extra time at school is spent in activities with social and physical development as their sole purpose. In fact, two hours and 25 minutes of each full day is devoted to free play, individual preparation time, transition time between subjects, daily school cleaning and the serving and eating of lunch (Benjamin, 1997). An extra hour each week is devoted to clubs and/or committee work, where fifth and sixth graders participate in such groups as student council or broadcasting, library or sports' committees. Finally, on top of this, a significant amount of class time is devoted to preparing for and participating in an annual marathon, sports day, culture day, trips and more.

For most of the above activities, children from grade one on are taught to take over

leadership of the class from the teacher and take responsibility for much of the learning, both academic and otherwise, that happens in the classroom. According to Benjamin (1997), thanks to these skills supply teachers are often not used in a teacher's absence. Unless a teacher is away for many weeks, children, even from grade one, are expected to run the class themselves, with only the occasional visit from another teacher to assign work. Labelled "Special Activities", researchers with the U.S. Department of Education, recognised that these activities which equip the children with exceptional social skills are similar to what we would call extra-curricular activities in North America (Leestma et al., 1987). They also noted, however, that these activities are more closely integrated with the curriculum, usually involve all students, and are more explicitly directed toward character development than their counterparts in North America. Such activities, most of which are almost entirely planned and directed by students, are deemed so important that they are expected to take place in every school in the nation. Ultimately, with so much time spent at school, Japanese children have relatively little time left for non-school extra-curricular activities. Interestingly, however, with the more holistic programme offered at the school, it may also be that Japanese children have less need for non-school extra-curricular activities.

3. Time contributed to the school and school-related activities

The third section of the survey measured the time parents spent engaged in school-related activities. It included questions covering the amount of time helping with homework, volunteering at school and transporting their child to and from school (see Figure 5 and Table 4a). It also covered the number of times and the amount of time spent meeting with the teacher, observing class, participating in school activities, and attending school concerts (see Figure 6 and Tables 4b and 4c). Overall, there was a

significant difference between the two samples, with the Japanese mean being 88.47 hours per year and the Canadian mean being 226 hours per year (H (1) = 53.11, p < .01; see Table 4d). This difference is primarily due to the great amount of time the English-Canadian parents spent helping with homework and the fact that Japanese parents do not volunteer or spend much time transporting their child to and from school. There was no difference between the two samples on the total amount of time spent meeting with the teacher, observing class, participating in school activities and attending school concerts (H (1) = 2.075, p = .15).

Specifically, the Canadian parents spent significantly more time than the Japanese parents on the following measures:

1) helping child with homework (H (1) = 72.52, p < .01);

2) volunteering at child's school (H (1) = 25.88, p < .01);

3) transporting child to and from school (H (1) = 13.34, p < .01);

4) attending school concerts (H (1) - 87.09, p < .01).

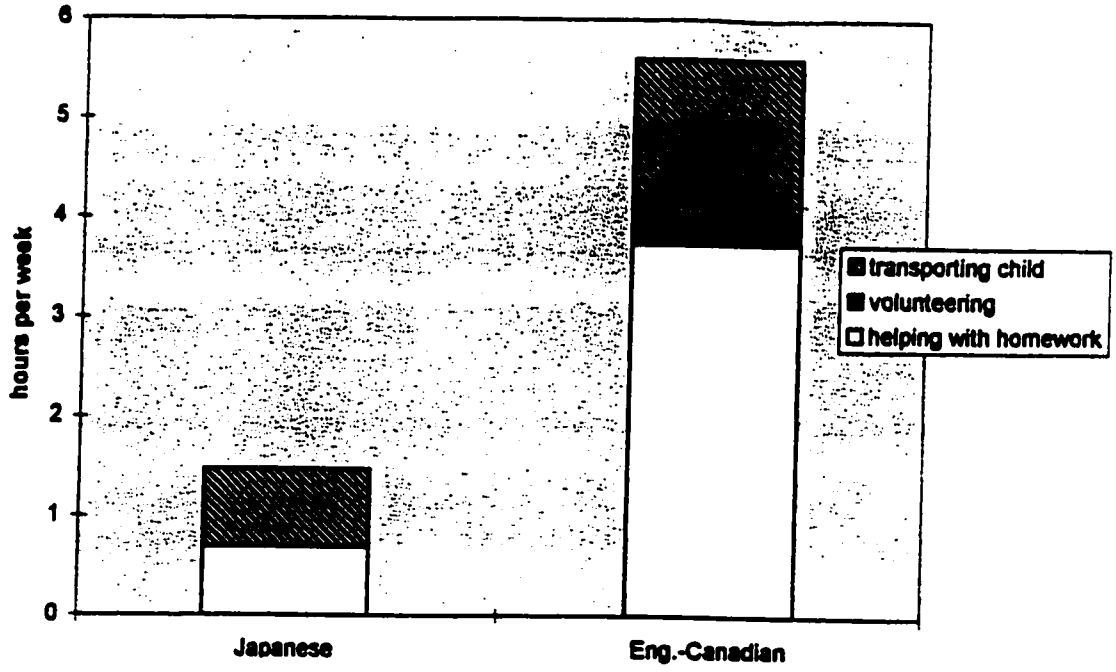

Figure 5. Time Japanese and English-Canadian parents spent transporting their child to and from school, volunteering at school and helping their child with homework.

Tables 4a-d

Hours contributed to the school by Japanese and English-Canadian Parents

4a) Hours spent helping with homework, volunteering at school and transporting child to and from school each week

Use of time	Japanese parents Mean (S.D.)	English-Canadian parents Mean (S.D.)
helping with homework*	0.69 hrs (0.96 hrs)	3.75 hrs (3.09 hrs)
volunteering*	0 hrs (0 hrs)	0.29 hrs (0.71hrs)
transporting child to and from school*	0.79 hrs (5.13 hrs)	1.56 hrs (7.28 hrs)
Total hrs/week*	**1.50 hrs (5.37 hrs)**	**5.66 hrs (7.59 hrs)**
Total hrs/school year	**66 hrs**	**220.74 hrs**

4b) Total hours Japanese parents spent meeting with teacher, observing class, participating in activities and attending concerts (standard deviation in brackets)

Use of time	Number of times	Amount of time	Total mins/yr
meeting with teacher	2.45 (1.15)	23.83 mins (17.09)	65.84 (71.40)
observing class	3.03 (1.25)	57.16 mins (35.88)	183.43 (140.50)
participating in school activities	1.93 (1.53)	273.33 mins (113.08)	534.04 (581.73)
attending concerts	0.21 (0.58)	6.86 mins (22.82)	9.71 (37.69)
Total	**7.60 times/yr[14] (3.02)**		**786.57 mins/yr (660.30)** **13.11 hrs/yr**

[14] Totals in Tables 4a-d reflect the most accurate calculations. Differences between the totals and the sum of the means are due to rounding error and the fact that variables with missing values are excluded from the calculation of the total.

Tables 4a-d (cont'd)

4c) Total hours Canadian parents spent meeting with teacher, observing class, participating in activities and attending concerts (standard deviation in brackets)

Use of time	Number of times	Amount of time	Total mins/yr
meeting with teacher	4.17 (4.70)	19.23 mins (6.05)	71.40 (55.33)
observing class	0.81 (0.92)	25.21 mins (27.66)	34.78 (42.64)
participating in school activities	2.34 (2.53)	105.79 mins (129.39)	366.96 (543.22)
attending school concerts	2.69 (1.43)	91.02 mins (93.31)	290.87 (457.56)
Total	**9.93 times/yr (6.69)**		**773.29 mins/yr (961.87) 12.89 hrs/yr**

4d) Total time spent helping with homework, volunteering at school, transporting child to and from school, meeting with the teacher, observing class, participating in school activities and attending concerts*

Japanese parents = **88.47 hrs per year**

English-Canadian parents = **225.97 hrs per year**

Note. * $p \leq 0.05$

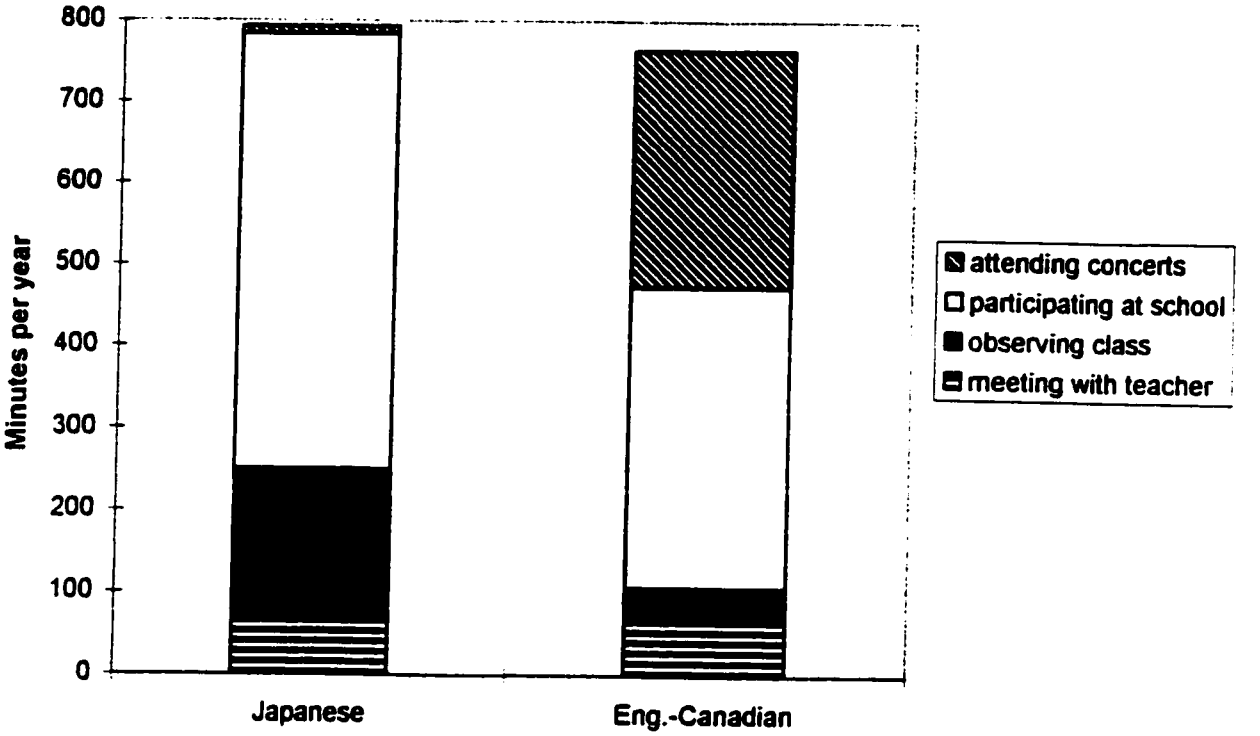

Figure 6. Time Japanese and English-Canadian parents spent attending concerts, participating in school activities, observing class and meeting with the teacher

Canadian parents also met significantly more often with their child's teachers(H (1) = 5.38, p = .02). On the other hand, the Japanese parents spent significantly more time observing class (H (1) = 68.49, p < .01) and participating in school activities (H (1) = 11.07, p < .01).

Comparisons of the numbers of parents contributing their time followed a similar pattern to the amounts described above. Significantly more Canadian parents spent some time helping their child with homework (98% versus 82%; H (1) - 10.02, p < .01) and attending school concerts (96% versus 16%; H (1) = 89.30, p < .01). Significantly more Japanese parents attended at least one class observation (98% versus 53%; H (1) = 50.58, p < .01) and participated in school activities (97% versus 66%; H (1) = 29.47, p < .01). Finally, there was no significant difference between the numbers of parents who attended at least one school meeting (H (1) = 1.79, p = .18).

Among the Japanese parents, this figure was 96%; for the Canadian parents, 100%.

Finding that, overall, the Japanese parents were less involved in school-related activities seems to run counter to the notion, presented in many accounts, that Japanese parents are extensively involved in their children's education. While most parents do as much as the school asks–attending parent-teacher meetings, school events and class observation–there does not seem to be much evidence that they do more than that. The Canadian parents not only did what the school asked but also talked with the teachers by phone and arranged for meetings with the teacher beyond the established biannual meetings. Most of the Canadian teachers also took the initiative of keeping in touch with all parents by phone, to discuss not only problems but also progress.

There are many explanations for the Japanese parents' relatively small involvement as measured in our study. Volunteering at school in Japan is generally not done; when children have problems with homework, they tend to seek help at their *juku* or cram school, not at home; school concerts also do not seem to be the regular events that they are in Canada; and, in Japan, extra meetings between teachers and parents tend to be rare and exclusively for children with behaviour problems. Instead, parents who are concerned with their child's academic progress are more likely to talk with their child's cram school teachers than with their school teachers.

According to North American parent involvement research and many school administrators, parent volunteers are a valuable and much appreciated resource. From that perspective, it is curious that volunteerism is not encouraged in Japanese schools, restricted only to membership in the PTA steering committee and the position of crossing guard. A deeper understanding of the different roles that parents and teachers are expected to play, however, reveals how problematic parents in the classroom would be (Benjamin, 1997). From birth, mothers and children are expected

to develop a deeply intense, interdependent bond described as *amae* (White, 1987; Doi, 1973). Instead of encouraging young children to become independent, as is common in North America, Japanese mothers envelope their children in unconditional love and, by North American standards, notable indulgence. The children come to rely on this unrestricted nurturing and, theoretically at least, behave well and work hard in order to maintain it. In Japan, *amae* is commonly believed to be a source of high motivation (White, 1987). This motivation proves to be of fundamental importance in the demanding years beyond elementary school.

Such indulgence, however, has no place in school. In fact, a primary goal of kindergartens and a secondary goal of elementary schools is to teach children to be effective, cooperative members of a group, not indulged individuals (Leestma et al., 1987). Expectations for good behaviour are high and, though rarely used today, stern discipline and even corporal punishment are more common at school than home. Introducing pampering mothers into such an environment would do nothing but negate a school's efforts. In fact, according to the way the education system is structured, by fostering *amae* at home and not bringing it to school, mothers are doing the best thing possible for their children's education.

There are other possible reasons for the lower involvement of Japanese parents in school-related activities. Some Japanese parents may wish to minimise pressure at home because of the exorbitant pressure that children inevitably face at school in the years approaching entrance exams. Lower involvement could also reflect the greater social role of Japanese schools; while important, such a role may provoke less concern and parents could more comfortably stand aside. Finally, lower involvement could also represent a fear of disrupting harmony. While growing numbers of English-Canadian parents have expressed a desire to gain more control in their children's education, and for some this control includes greater involvement, it goes against the

mainstream Japanese culture to desire individual control. Instead, schools are recognised to be the responsibility of its personnel, parents are the grateful recipients of the schools' benevolent care of their children, and harmony, a highly-valued state in Japan, reigns over parent-school relations (Coulmas, 1993).

Though it appears that Japanese parents of grade-five students are much less involved in their children's education than their English-Canadian counterparts, it should be noted that Japanese parents observed class more often and for much longer than their Canadian counterparts, differing, apparently, by a factor of eight to one. Class observation has a long tradition in Japan. Such a tradition does not exist in much of Canada, however, and has only recently been introduced in some elementary schools in the Ottawa-Carleton region. It is so new, in fact, that references to it could not be found in parent involvement research conducted within North America. Japanese parents also spent significantly more time participating in school activities such as Party Day, Sports' Day and making curry for camp. For all of these activities, and most notably for curry-making, parents are actively engaged with their children. This stands in contrast to the more passive involvement required by Canadian parents when attending school concerts.

Three matters may diminish the precision of some of the above data. First, the survey did not directly ask Japanese parents about the amount of time they spent helping their children with their summer homework. Since the Japanese school year begins in April, the summer holiday occurs after the first term of school. It is customary for all teachers in Japan from grades one to twelve to give very substantial amounts of homework to be finished over the six-week holiday. It often includes the completion of entire books of exercises, reading and writing assignments and a number of projects. Benjamin (1997) describes how these assignments were especially demanding on mothers; in the absence of the teacher, mothers are solely responsible for the

necessary coaxing and assisting. It may be that, had we directly asked about this, the total time Japanese parents spent helping their children may have been significantly higher.

A second complication with our data is the possible intrusion of *tatemae* in the Japanese responses. Deeply embedded in Japanese culture is a concern for saving face and maintaining harmony in social relations. In awkward situations, it is the norm that Japanese adults will say what they think the listener wants to hear or what they feel must be said in order to maintain a smooth surface (Zimmerman, 1985). Such role-playing is highly codified in Japan and, despite what is actually said, experienced listeners can recognise the *tatemae* and interpret the speaker's true meaning, or *honne*. Asking Japanese parents about the amount of time spent helping their children with homework might be the kind of question which encourages *tatemae*. There is a negative stereotype of the "education mama" who becomes too involved in her children's education. In order to appear less worried about their children, some of our respondents may have underestimated the amount of time spent helping with homework.

The third concern arises when comparing parents' responses regarding time spent visiting the school with the information provided by the teachers. Questions 25 and 26 were our primary means of triangulating the information given by parents. In these questions, parents were asked how many times in the last twelve months they visited the school to meet with the teacher, attend class observation, participate in school activities and attend school concerts. Subsequently, they were asked how much time they spent during each of these visits. Teachers, in a private interview, were asked to describe each occasion on which parents were invited to the school and how long each occasion lasted. They were also asked to approximate the percentage of parents who attended each time (see Table 1, page 39). For both samples, comparing the

number of times spent observing class shows that parents and teachers are at odds. In Japan, the teachers said that there are only two occasions on which parents are invited to observe the class. On each occasion, approximately 80-90% of parents attend. However, according to the parents, the mean number of visits was slightly more than 3. In fact, more than 8% of respondents said they observed class five or more times. This likely reflects some confusion with the question; possibly, parents counted other visits to the classroom, such as curry-making day, as a day where they also were able to observe the class. The teachers certainly gave no indication that parents arranged for extra class observation time.

A greater concern lies with the Canadian responses regarding class observation. According to the teachers, one day in May is set aside for class observation and anywhere from 10 to 30% of parents attend. However, 53% of our sample said they observed class at least once. It should be noted that, at the time of the official class observation, our sample's students would have been in grade four. It could be that grade four parents typically attend class observation in greater numbers than those of grade five students. Or, like the Japanese sample, the discrepancy between the teachers and parents may simply mean the parents were confused by the question. However, it could also be that the sample of grade five parents is unrepresentative of all the grade five parents at the school. With a response rate of only 35%, this last interpretation is quite plausible. If, in fact, the more-involved parents in Maple Leaf Elementary are over-represented in the sample, our ability to generalise the results is more limited than originally anticipated.

4. Time contributed to non-school activities

Time dedicated to non-school activities was measured categorically, not numerically. Significant differences, in which it appears that the English-Canadian

parents spent more time, were found on the following measures:

1) reading with their child (Chi-square (1*) = 24.64, p < .01);

2) having informed conversations with their child (Chi-square (3*) = 31.66, p = .00);

3) working with educational books and games with their child (Chi-square (1*) = 23.02, p < .01);

4) eating dinner together (Chi- square (2*) = 21.16, p < .01);

5) participating in the extra-curricular activities of their child (Chi-square (4*) = 32.31, p < .01);

6) transporting their child to and from both academic and extra-curricular activities and (Chi-square (1*) = 4.51, p = .03);

7) taking their child to museums and other learning centres (Chi-square (2*) = 50.13, p < .01; see Tables 5a-c).

(* - Time categories were modified from those on the survey so that no cells in the chi-square test had an expected count less than five.)

There was no difference between the amount of time Canadian and Japanese parents spent doing hobbies with their child (Chi-square (5) = 5.74, p = .33). On no measure did the Japanese parents spend more time than their Canadian counterparts.

These data indicate that Japanese parents of grade five students, relative to the Canadian sample, provide little of the "home curriculum" which has been found to be a valuable component of parent involvement. It could be that Japanese mothers spend time with their grade five children engaged in activities not measured in our study, some of which could be educational. It could also be, however, that the relative difference between English-Canadian and Japanese parents is due to the differing demands placed on them. In fact, understanding the time pressures faced by most Japanese reveals how little time mothers and their elementary school children could spend together. It can be presumed that fathers are busy working six days a week, out

Tables 5a-c

5a) Time Spent with Child Dedicated to Non-School Activities (percent of responses)

	none	up to 1 hr	1-2 hrs	2-3 hrs	3-4 hrs	> 4 hrs
1. Reading with child*						
Japanese	63	28	3	0	0	1
Eng.-Canadian	**22**	**45**	**14**	**2**	**8**	**2**
2. Working with educational books*						
Japanese	40	44	4	1	1	2
Eng.-Canadian	**8**	**51**	**27**	**10**	**0**	**4**
3. Eating dinner*						
Japanese	4	37	13	2	10	33
Eng.-Canadian	**2**	**2**	**12**	**8**	**14**	**61**
4. Extra-curr. activities*						
Japanese	50	21	9	4	2	6
Eng.-Canadian	**12**	**20**	**22**	**10**	**8**	**25**
5. Transporting child to extra-curr activities*						
Japanese	60	17	4	2	2	2
Eng.-Canadian	**8**	**43**	**29**	**8**	**2**	**6**
6. Transporting child to academic activities*						
Japanese	76	12	2	0	0	1
Eng.-Canadian	**55**	**25**	**12**	**0**	**0**	**2**
7. Doing hobbies						
Japanese	20	37	13	5	4	10
Eng.-Canadian	**12**	**37**	**29**	**6**	**6**	**8**

Tables 5a-c (cont'd)

5b) Time Spent with Child Having Informed Conversations (percent of responses)

	none	up to 2 hrs	2-4 hrs	4-6 hrs	6-8 hrs	> 8 hrs
Time Having Informed Conversations*						
Japanese	8	57	16	5	3	4
Eng.-Canadian	**0**	**22**	**37**	**20**	**6**	**14**

5c) Number of Times Going to Museums and Amount of Time Spent There (percent of responses)

	Japanese	Eng.-Canadian
Times going to museums, music halls, theatres and other learning centres*		
none	48	4
1-2 times/yr	28	20
3-4 times/yr	10	41
5-6 times/yr	4	12
7 or more times/yr	4	22
Time spent at museums, music halls, theatres and other learning centres*		
less than 1 hour	6	6
1-2 hours	23	20
3-4 hours	16	57
more than 4 hours	2	12

Note. * denotes $p < 0.05$; in all cases of significant differences, the Eng.-Canadian parents were found to spend more time with their child than the Japanese parents

of the house often until late at night. Running the household is entirely the responsibility of mothers; in fact, they are expected to "keep the house running perfectly" (Imamura, 1991). Grocery shopping is often done on a daily basis, ensuring ingredients are fresh and varied. Lunch boxes, individually prepared to appeal to each child and sometimes husbands, are elaborate meals, consisting of rice and four to six other items and decorated with such things as flowers, leaves or seeds placed in a design (Benjamin, 1997). Small washing machines mean that laundry must be done often; clothes are usually hung outside to dry; futons must go out to air dry each day, weather permitting; children are not burdened with household chores as this would distract them from their studies; and many mothers work either part- or full-time in order to help pay for the house or for supplementary education for their children. Considering school children's busy schedules, where they are in school at least 220 days a year, most days from 8:30 a.m. to 3:40 p.m., with substantial homework assigned for evenings and holidays, it is easy to see why Japanese mothers and children spend less time together than their Canadian counterparts. While Canadian parents also have households to run and jobs to keep, fathers are typically at home more and help out with the childrearing and housework more, children have more time outside of school, and parents are better able to save time with chores in order to spend more with their children.

3. Perceptions and aspirations regarding the education of their child

The next section of the survey asked questions which offer some clues as to why parents contributed the amounts they did. Like in earlier sections, the data challenged many of our expectations.

The first question in part E asked parents to rank in importance the development of the four following skills at home: academic, social, physical and moral (see Table 6a).

Tables 6a-b

Japanese and English-Canadian Parents' perceptions of the roles of home and school

6a) Mean rank of academic, moral, physical and social development as priorities at home, listed in order from highest to lowest priority:

Japan	Canada
moral (1.46)*	moral (1.19)
physical (2.10)*	academic (2.81)
social (3.00)	physical (2.93)
academic (3.38)*	social (3.07)

6b) Mean rank of academic, moral, physical and social development as priorities at school, listed in order from highest to lowest priority:

Japan	Canada
academic (2.09)*	academic (1.15)
social (2.28)*	social (2.76)
moral (2.53)*	moral (2.98)
physical (3.07)	physical (3.09)

Note. The smaller the value, the higher the ranking; 1 is highest possible ranking, 4 is lowest possible ranking.

* $p \leq 0.05$

Morality-based skills were considered most important by both the Japanese and Canadian parents. Comparisons of the average ranks, however, significantly more Canadian parents ranked this as a higher priority at home than Japanese parents (H (1) = 9.11, $p < .01$). Second in importance for the Japanese parents and third for the Canadian parents was their child's physical development. This was ranked higher by significantly more Japanese parents than Canadian parents (H (1) = 18.42, $p < .01$). On the other hand, second in importance for Canadian parents but least important for the Japanese parents was academics. Significantly more Canadian parents found academics a higher priority than Japanese parents (H (1) = 14.12, $p < .01$). Finally, least important for the Canadian parents and third most important for Japanese parents was the development of social skills. The difference between the two groups on this measure was not significant, however (H (1) = .31, $p = .58$).

The second question in part E asked parents to rank the same skills in importance at school instead of home (see Table 6b). Not surprisingly, academics was considered the most important priority of schools by both groups of parents. However, significantly more Canadian parents considered academics a higher priority than Japanese parents (H (1) = 30.16, $p < .01$). In addition, the standard deviation for the Canadian responses was half that of the Japanese, indicating more homogeneity among the Canadian parents on this measure than among the Japanese parents. Second in importance for both groups was the development of social skills. Significantly more Japanese parents ranked this as a higher priority than Canadian parents, however (H (1) = 7.08, $p = .01$). Moral development was third most important for both samples of parents but again, significantly more Japanese parents considered this a higher priority than Canadian parents (H (1) = 5.22, $p = .02$). Finally, physical development was considered the least important priority for schools. There was no significant difference between the average ranks of the two samples on this measure (H (1) =

.32, $p = .57$).

These responses suggest that the Canadian parents are significantly more concerned with the academic development of their children than the Japanese parents. Not only is academics considered a more important priority for the school, it is also considered a higher priority at home, second only to their children's moral development. While not surprising that both samples found academics a high priority at school, the finding that Canadian parents considered it a higher priority than Japanese parents appears contrary to the assertions in most literature on parent involvement in Japan. Much has been made of the priority education takes in the Japanese home. The data in this study suggest that, in fact, academic education may not be much of a priority relative to at least one sample of English-Canadian parents. Instead, the Japanese parents gave significantly higher ranks than the Canadian sample to the social and moral development at school. These results lend support to the earlier finding that Japanese parents spend less money and time contributing to their children's extra-curricular activities. As explained previously, it is well documented that such activities, which develop skills other than academics, are a significant priority for Japanese schools. Unlike in Canada, they are not left to be arranged primarily by parents.

The following two questions asked parents about their expectations regarding their child's educational achievement. The first of the two asked parents to indicate how important it was to them that their child have good grades in school (see Figure 7). In our study, 98% of Canadian parents said good grades in school were either important or very important. On the contrary, only 37.9% of the Japanese parents considered grades important or very important. Fifty-two per cent considered good grades only somewhat important and 6.5% considered them not important at all. The differences in

the two distributions were significant (Chi-square (2) = 59.05, $p < .01$)[15].

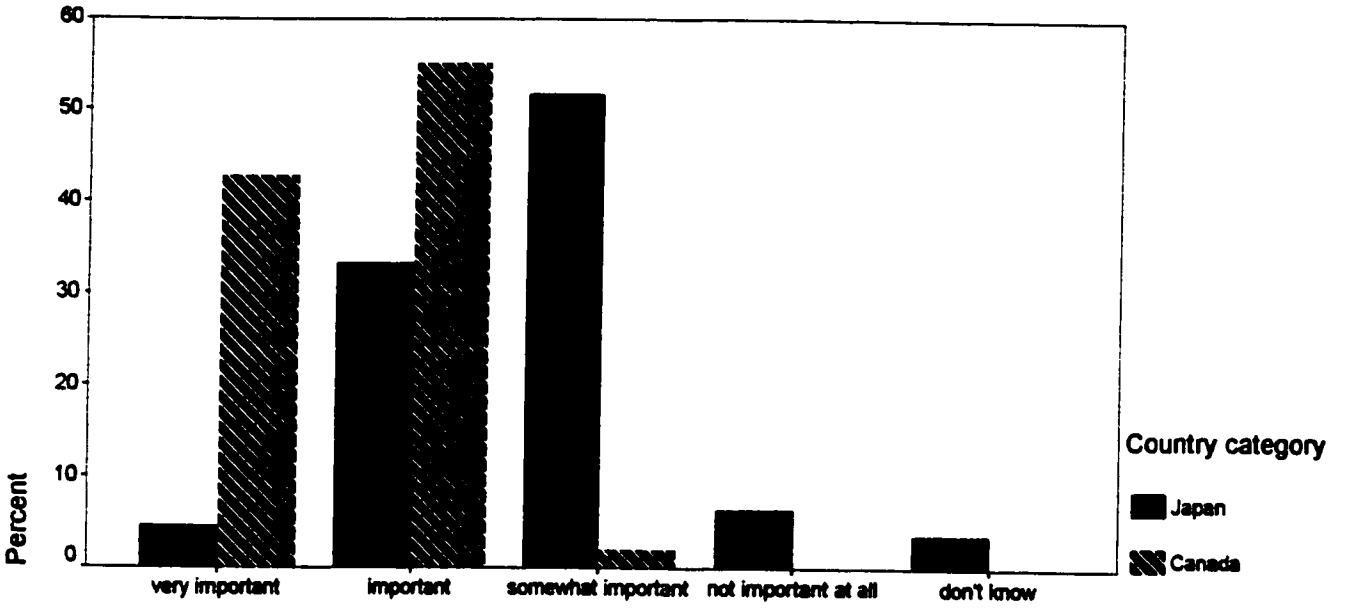

Figure 7. Importance of good grades in school according to Japanese and English-Canadian parents.

Considering Japanese students' success on international tests, it was a surprise to find a significant difference in which it appears that Canadian parents considered grades significantly more important than Japanese parents. It is likely, however, that this result reflects the fact that, in Japan, school grades have almost no pertinence in students' efforts to achieve access to higher education. Entrance exams remain the most significant hurdle to overcome. In fact, elementary schools do not use number or letter grades. For report cards, teachers simply check if students can do certain tasks and indicate their ability by saying either "He / She can" or "Let's keep persevering". Students move from one grade to the next automatically; report cards have no bearing on this. And while public schools help children acquire a solid academic foundation, in most cases it is cram schools, more than public schools, that are responsible for

[15] The categories from the survey were modified when calculating the Chi-square statistic so that no cells had an expected count of less than 5.

preparing children for entrance exams.

Next, parents were asked about how far they hope their child will go in school (see Figure 8). Almost 96% of Canadian parents hoped their child would go to university. Two percent said community college or technical school and two percent did not know. Among the Japanese parents, however, only 32.7% hoped their child would go to university. Twenty-eight percent hoped their child would just complete high school; twenty-six percent hoped their child would go to community or technical school or a trade school; the remaining 13% chose "other". The difference was significant (Chi-square (2) = 54.02, $p < .01$)[16].

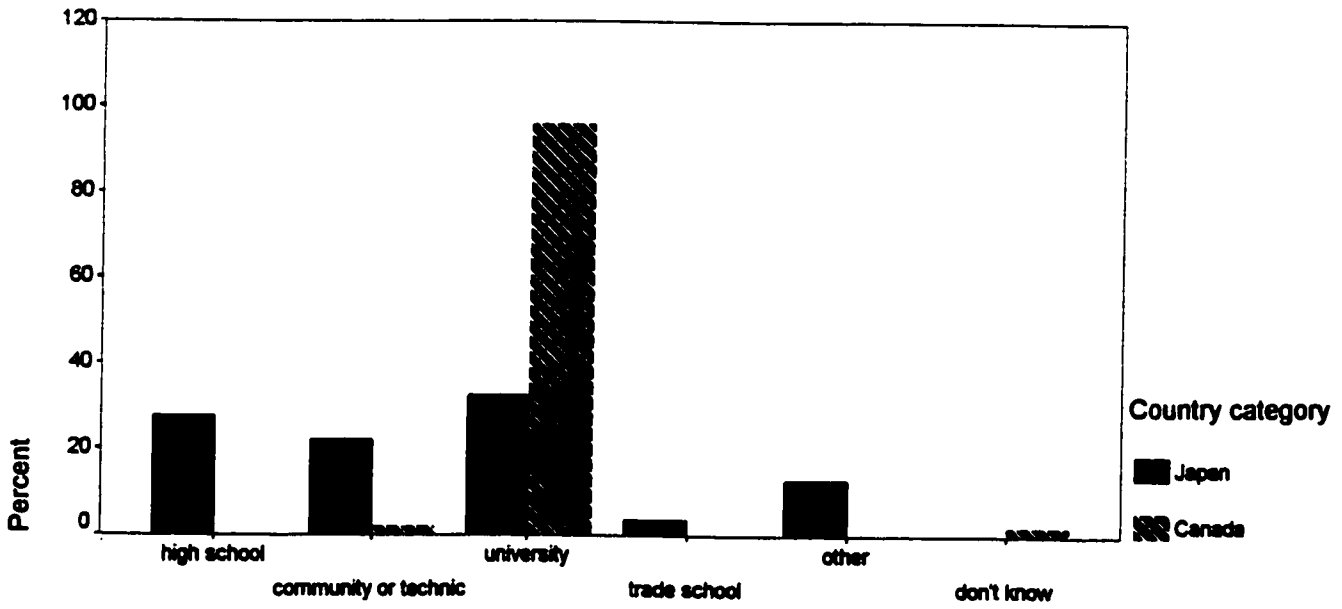

Figure 8. Japanese and English-Canadian parents' expectations regarding their child's educational achievement.

The striking contrast between the two samples on this measure has two possible explanations. It may be that our two sample populations were not as comparable demographically as originally thought. Though both come from the suburbs of large

[16] The categories from the survey were modified when calculating the Chi-square statistic so that no cells had an expected count of less than 5.

urban areas and most parents are employed in offices, we have no information on the level of education of the Japanese parents and have no detailed information on the kind of work they do. The Japanese sample of parents live in an older part of the Osaka prefecture and it has been suggested by one Japanese colleague that the responses of these parents would likely differ from those of parents in newer developments. This colleague thought that parents in newer developments, like those in the Canadian sample, would be more involved in their children's education.

Another explanation for at least part of the difference in expectations lies in the differing expectations for boys and girls in Japan. All data in this study underwent a cross-tabulation with sex of the child and country of origin. This was the only question for which sex of the child had a significant effect (Chi-square (4) = 11.80, p = .02). Forty-four percent of Japanese parents' of boys hoped their child would go to university. Only 17.4% of Japanese parents of girls had similar hopes. Sixty-five percent of Japanese parents of girls hoped their child would either finish high school or go to a two-year college. Only 39% of Japanese parents of boys had similar hopes. No such difference was found among the Canadian parents. While Japanese universities are accessible to all qualifying students, regardless of sex, cultural factors have tended to limit the enrolment of females in universities. National figures of enrolment, in which 70% of university students are male and 92% of junior college students are female (Japanese Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 1994), are consistent with our findings. Clearly, the lower expectations for girls help explain part of the large difference between the Japanese and Canadian parents.

The final question in part E asked parents to rank, in order of importance, the reasons why they contributed the amounts of time described previously. They were given five potential reasons plus the option of "Other", where they could write their own reason if not already in the list. There were two significant differences: "Because it is

my responsibility as a parent" was ranked higher by Canadian parents (Chi-square (4) = 16.24, $p < .01$)[17]; and "Because my child desires it" was ranked higher by Japanese parents (Chi-square (4) = 20.12, $p < .01$).

Interestingly, the data and differences seem to reveal aspects of the two cultures from where our samples came. Forty-six percent of Canadian parents said the most important reason for their contribution was "because it is necessary for a good education and future success." As second-most important, 60% chose, "because it is my responsibility as a parent"; a further 20% chose, "because it is necessary for a good education and future success." It appears a substantial number of parents feel that, ultimately, responsibility for the education of one's children lies with the parents. The parents feel they know what is necessary for a good education and future success, and they have taken responsibility for ensuring their children obtain it. In fact, given the importance of responsibility and self-sufficiency in Western thinking, this stance is not surprising. Being able and free to make informed choices and being morally and legally responsible for those choices are the underpinnings of Western democratic society.

Among the Japanese parents, 34% said that the most important reason for their contributions was that their "child desires it.". It is plausible that this relatively high percentage reflects the presence of *amae* among Japanese parents. Among other respondents, 33% said the most important reason was to ensure a good education and future success. As second-most important, 33% contributed to ensure a good education and future success and 28% said that it was their responsibility as parents. While these reasons are the same as those given by the Canadian sample, they were either given less importance or were given by fewer respondents in the Japanese sample. As with other questions, *tatemae* may explain some of this difference. It could

[17] Two cells (20%) had an expected count less than 5. This reduces confidence in the obtained statistic. In addition, the Mann-Whitney U test revealed no signficant difference ($U = 1449$, $p = .58$).

be that a greater number of parents contributed because of their sense of responsibility or because they felt it was important for future success, refraining from choosing those answers because they felt they should answer differently. Alternatively, it could be that these answers reflect a society where personal responsibility and self-sufficiency, in the Western sense, have no traditional basis (Coulmas, 1993). Instead, social networks in Japan mean that people are more used to collective than individual responsibility. In Japan, interdependence is more the norm; individual roles are more clearly defined and part of an integrated process; and parents do not feel they need to take sole responsibility for ensuring their children receive a good education. The Japanese education system relies on all participants fulfilling their roles. Mothers are to raise happy, healthy children steeped in *amae*; children are to focus on their education; and society is to provide support and rewards. When these roles are filled, it is presumed that teachers are free to do their jobs effectively. Indeed, it is likely that these components play a substantial role in the widespread academic success of Japanese students.

Chapter 4

Interpretation and Discussion of Research Findings

One purpose of this study was to simply document the amount of time and money samples of English-Canadian and Japanese parents contribute to their children's education. Describing this involvement in unprecedented breadth, this study allows a more thorough understanding of the role parents play in the education systems of the two nations.

The second purpose of the study was to compare the samples of English-Canadian and Japanese parents on the amounts of time and money contributed. Our main hypothesis was that Japanese parents would contribute more time and money than English-Canadian parents. This hypothesis was based on personal experience living and teaching in Japan, from extensive reading on Japanese education and culture, and from the fact that Japanese students are so successful academically. In some dramatic ways, however, much of the data in this study does not support this hypothesis. Instead of finding Japanese parents as models of parent involvement, we found that the Canadian parents spent as much money and much more time contributing to their child's education. We found that the Canadian parents considered good grades more important and expected their child to reach higher levels of post-secondary education than their Japanese counterparts. The Canadian parents met with their child's teachers more often, helped their child with homework more often and spent much more time with their child engaged in educational activities not directly related to school work. We even found that the Canadian parents considered academics a higher priority than Japanese parents, not only at school, but also at home.

Not so surprisingly, we found that Japanese parents spent more money on fees for academic activities as well as on home educational resources. Japanese parents also spent much more time observing their children in class and participating in school activities. Further, the finding that Japanese parents spent less time and money on extra-curricular activities was expected, as was the greater priority of social and moral development given to the Japanese school.

The following discussion will summarise factors which seem to determine the differences we found in the level and kind of involvement between Japanese and English-Canadian parents. Also discussed in this chapter will be likely reasons why some of our data are so at odds with previous research and prevailing attitudes.

1. Summary of factors determining differences in level and kind of parent involvement among Japanese and English-Canadian parents

Our two samples come from vastly different societies. Despite both countries being first-world nations and sharing the superficial similarities which that status confers, their histories, cultures, geographies and assumptions remain widely divergent. As such, there are numerous factors which help to explain the differences in contributions between our two samples. Drawing from current literature, there are four likely explanations.

Most obvious is the likely difference in time pressures faced by the two samples. On most measures, the Canadian sample spent more time contributing to their children's education than the Japanese sample. As already described in Chapter 3, most Japanese mothers, fathers and children have more demanding schedules than would be the norm in English-Canadian families. Japanese fathers can usually contribute very little to child care and housework. Japanese children are in school more days, more hours per day and have much more homework during school sessions and

holidays than most English-Canadian children. Allowing fathers and children to focus single-mindedly on their duties, Japanese mothers take on the burden of housework and childrearing alone, and, despite this, are expected by society to do all to a very high standard (Imamura, 1991; Benjamin, 1997).

A second factor explaining the disparity between our two samples appears to be the apparent difference in the significance of the public school as a provider of academic education. Previous research on Japanese education has revealed the social and moral roles that Japanese public schools are expected to fulfil. While academics are also important, our findings suggest that, relative to the expectations of English-Canadian parents, academics are less of a priority to the Japanese parents. While surprising at first, such an attitude is not detrimental to their child's preparation for the "examination hell" which awaits. Relative to Canada, the path to a career is quite prescribed in Japan. All, including children, understand what must be done to eventually secure desirable employment and all, if sometimes reluctantly, follow the requisite steps for achieving that end. While some parents are so concerned with academics that they enrol their toddlers in preschool *juku*, most feel that such a preoccupation at this age is unnecessary. Instead, they wait until the junior high school years to enrol their children in *juku* , when high school entrance exams are imminent. It seems that Japanese parents know that their children will work hard and learn as much as is reasonable in their teenage years and, thus, need not worry as much about academics prior to that.

The third factor, related to the second, may be the Japanese parents' reluctance to put pressure on their young children regarding school work, knowing that, in due time, their children will be under extreme pressure to reach their academic potential. For students with career aspirations, or even those who seek mates with good career

prospects, as may be the case with some young females (Singleton, 1967[18]), getting into a good academic high school is critical. Once in such a high school, one's chances of getting into a good university are greater. And once in a good university, one's prospects for rewarding employment are at their best. Such life-defining consequences are a heavy burden for junior high school students. It seems possible that many Japanese parents avoid getting too involved so that their young children can enjoy as many "pressure-free" years as possible.

In Ontario, on the contrary, there has been a resurgence of parent interest in and concern with their children's academic development. Widespread public expression of this concern coincided with the economic recession of the early 1990s and with a greater understanding of how Ontario students compared with those of other countries on subjects like math and science. With the recession, many parents were either newly laid off work or were forced to work under the incessant threat of lay-off. And during this recession, more than any before it, the competition which became so fierce was now global instead of national or provincial. Many Canadians felt insecure and many parents became determined to ensure that their children received all the education they needed to succeed in this environment. On the basis of parental pressure, Ontario's Ministry of Education and Training has introduced sweeping changes in the school system over the past six years. Among other reforms, a common curriculum has now been introduced throughout the province and is available to parents; there is a standard report card format which is designed to be easy to understand; province-wide testing in mathematics and language now takes place in grades three, six and ten; and the former PTAs, now called parent councils, have been given a broader mandate to include advising the principal, school board and Ministry on all issues including curriculum and criteria for hiring practices. Giving parents an even stronger voice, the

[18] While the reference regarding young female's marriage interests is over 30 years old, I found similar attitudes among certain female high school students while working in Japan in 1990-92.

Ontario Parent Council, overseeing and encouraging activities of the local councils, also provides parents' perspectives on issues directly to the Ministry of Education, Science and Training. More than ever, Ontario schools are newly accountable to parents. Unlike Japanese parents, many in Ontario felt they needed to be more aware of what their children were learning. It is likely that the exceptional involvement of parents at school puts some pressure on the children of those parents, arguably positive pressure encouraging children to behave their best and work hard. This is the pressure that Japanese parents do not seem to desire for their children. Among many Ontario parents, however, the perception seems to be that if parent involvement means additional pressure for their children, then so be it.

The final factor lies in the differing perceptions of roles and responsibilities between the two samples. In Japan, parents and children recognise that they are an integral part of a system and society that has deep roots, defined roles and high expectations. Mothers are expected to run their houses "perfectly" and raise their children bathed in *amae* and free to focus on their education. Most strive to do this. This contributes to the homogeneity of Japanese society and, thereby, enhances the harmony which is much esteemed. Doing what others do not, such as contacting teachers regarding their children's school work, or arranging for extra meetings or class observation, while allowed, would disrupt the harmony. As a result, most would not feel comfortable doing so.

Unlike Japan, multicultural Western societies are less likely to impose universal expectations for behaviour. It is recognised that some parents are comfortable taking initiative and expect a very personalised relationship with their children's school. Others are less interested and participate minimally. Still others come from cultures where they are uncomfortable making special requests of their children's school personnel, but would if language and culture barriers were broken. And, ultimately,

these heterogeneous populations in Western societies find themselves in lands where the tradition of democracy places personal control and initiative among the highest of virtues. Given such fundamental differences in demographics and cultural assumptions, it is not surprising to see that it was the Canadian parents, rather than the Japanese, who went above and beyond expectations with time spent on school-related activities.

2. Understanding the discord between the data and the expectations

Though no previous study has systematically explored the differences in Japanese and English-Canadian parents in terms of contributions to their children's education, for the numerous reasons given in the introduction, we expected that the Japanese parents, overall, would make greater contributions of time and money to their children's schooling. We also expected more Japanese parents than English-Canadian parents to hold attitudes which were consistent with high student achievement. Regarding the English-Canadian parents, it was expected that they would contribute more time and money to their children's extra-curricular activities.

In the end, Japanese parents did pay more money for non-school academic fees and educational resources for home use. As well, English-Canadian parents spent more time and money on extra-curricular activities. However, on measures of time contributed to the school and school-related activities and on measures of attitude, the data did not confirm our expectations. The basis of these misleading expectations and reasons for the discrepancy between them and the data are worthy of exploration.

Our expectations were supported in four ways:

1) First, while the author was working in Japan, it was learned that class observation, home visits and other meetings between parents and teachers, all of which are both uncommon in Canada and in addition to the more traditional parent-

teacher meetings, were the norm in Japan. This suggested that Japanese parents spent more time involved with their children's school.

2) Japanese children greatly outscore English-Canadian students on international tests of math and science. While overly simplistic to assume this is solely due to greater parent involvement, their high academic performance would be consistent with parent involvement research which shows a positive correlation between achievement and parent involvement.

3) Personal experience in the public elementary school system in Ottawa-Carleton revealed that, with some notable exceptions, most parents were not especially involved at the school. In fact, relationships between teachers and parents were often more uncomfortable, even antagonistic, than cooperative. By design in most schools, there are no days set aside for class observation, no home visits by teachers and no special parent participation days. Encouraging this poor relationship, the significance of parent involvement was never made clear during teacher training. And, as briefly summarised in the introduction, this personal experience appears consistent with literature which describes the evolution of education in North America.

4) Finally, literature on the role of parents in Japanese education leaves one with the understanding that mothers are a pivotal part of the system's success (Simons, 1991; Dickensheets, 1996; Benjamin, 1997). With that in mind, and with no research to suggest otherwise, it is easy to presume that Japanese mothers contribute to their children's achievement in the same ways that have been found to be beneficial in North American studies on parent involvement.

2.1 Why no difference was found in total amount of time spent meeting with the teacher, observing class, participating in school activities and attending school concerts

Regarding meeting the teacher, it remains true that parents in Japan are given more

official opportunities to do so. The year begins similarly with both samples meeting their child's teacher in September. However, the two samples differ on almost every other invitation to school. While almost all Japanese parents attend class observation two times each year, such an opportunity is rare in Canada and, though offered once a year at our participating Canadian school, only 10-30% of parents tend to attend. Regarding parent-teacher meetings, while offered twice at both schools, at our Canadian school the teachers ask only about one-third of parents to attend the second meeting. Finally, while there are two formal group meetings between the Japanese parents and teachers, there is only one such meeting at the Canadian school, taking place during the "Meet the Teacher" night in September.

Having said the above, why was no significant difference found between our two samples on the amount of time spent meeting with the teacher, observing class, participating in activities and attending concerts? Primarily, it seems that the Canadian sample was much more likely to take initiative in arranging extra meetings with the teacher. According to the Canadian teachers, two-thirds of parents would have only two scheduled opportunities to meet with the teacher, once during "Meet the Teacher" night and once again at a Parent-Teacher meeting. One-third would have three scheduled meetings. However, according to data for the English-Canadian sample, the average number of meetings was more than four. The Canadian teachers did say that their school's parents were in regular contact with them and that extra meetings did take place.

While encouraging to see such extensive contact between the Canadian teachers and parents, it is important to note that the Japanese school takes greater responsibility for arranging meetings with the parents. All occasions on which the Japanese parents and teachers meet are part of the school policy and, due to the centralised nature of the system, one can expect a comparable situation throughout

the entire country. In contrast, the Canadian school left responsibility with the parents and teachers to take the initiative in setting up enough meetings to approach the number offered Japanese parents. And this was despite the fact that the number of parent-teacher meetings reflected board policy and, in terms of class observation, went beyond what was both required and available at many schools. Since extra meetings are not required, one wonders how widespread these efforts are, especially when parent-teacher relations are impeded by such challenges as personality conflicts and language and cultural barriers. In a heterogeneous country like Canada, one can expect these challenges in abundance.

2.2 Why the higher academic performance of Japanese students did not coincide with higher parent involvement and supporting attitudes

Another reason why we expected the Japanese parents to be more involved in their children's education was because of the excellent performance of Japanese children on international tests of math and science. It could be that our particular sample of Japanese students was rather weak academically. In this case, their academic performance would correlate with their parents relatively low involvement and aspirations. This seems quite unlikely, however. According to people within and outside the school community, the Japanese school was typical. Because of the relative homogeneity of the country's population, centralised system of education and even distribution of funds, there is little reason to expect that our school had an unusually high number of low achievers.

Instead, it seems that Japanese parents of grade five students are not exceptionally involved in their children's education, at least not relative to the sample of Canadian parents. In fact, our results affirm that parent involvement, while no doubt a contributing factor to student achievement, is but one of several other factors and is not a

necessary condition for academic success. So, why do Japanese students meet such high academic standards with apparently little parent involvement? Though not measured in our study, some possible reasons are presented here to provoke further inquiry.

First, Japanese students likely reach higher academic standards than their Canadian counterparts because of the higher demands placed on them. It has already been mentioned that Japanese students are in school much longer than those in Canada. Japanese students also receive much more homework, during both the school year and holidays. Further, one distinguished researcher has suggested that the Japanese way of teaching is more effective than that typically found in the United States (Inagaki, 1986). He asserts that teaching plans are more detailed, and classes more focussed and involving effective group interaction. And though the following can reflect differences in culture as much as teaching strategies, Stevenson, Stigler and Lee (1986) found that samples of Japanese students in grades one and five spent more time paying attention to their teacher than their counterparts in the United States. They also found that the Japanese students engaged in inappropriate activities much less often. While much can be said about both the strengths and weaknesses of the Japanese school system, it is hard to deny that it has played a role in the exceptional achievement of Japanese children.

A second factor is likely the difference in levels of external motivation impressed upon the students, even those at elementary schools. As previously said, in Japan there is an exceptionally strong link between the course of one's education and one's chances for securing good employment. The path to a good post-secondary institution and a secure future is unidimensional and thus easily understood by all, even the young. In effect, Japanese children do not need parent involvement in their education in order to appreciate the importance of academics. One might also argue that another

motivator for Japanese students is the intense competition they face in their "examination hell". Students prepare to beat their competitors in exams which are imminent and, for most, inevitable and life-defining. Such critical, highly motivating events are not characteristic of education in Canada.

A third reason for Japanese students' success is likely the sophisticated support network built around each one. Support comes from society-at-large when newspapers and television newscasts report on the fateful exams. There is support in the flourishing cram school industry, full of instructors ready to help. There is support at home when mothers assume all household responsibilities, thus allowing their children to focus solely on their academics. Finally, there is support from the social capital which is arguably more copious in Japan. Japanese children face an enormous challenge which, if it could be avoided at no peril, most probably would. But there is no avoiding it. Therefore, with their support network in place, an exceptional number of students face the challenge head on.

The above factors help explain Japan's success on international tests of math and science. While their presence has undoubtedly brought some benefit to Japan, some of the above factors have also come at an enormous cost, one which few countries would be willing to pay. Among other problems, the intense competition has been blamed for widespread school phobia and the restricted career paths mean that many capable young adults have their potential unduly curtailed. Further, the rote learning which characterises much of junior and senior high school has been said to be responsible for producing too many people who are unable to think independently and creatively (Leestma et al., 1987). It is important to understand why Japan enjoys certain successes in the education of its youth. It is also important to determine which of the contributing factors are relevant and desirable to Canada. Curriculum design and pedagogy, especially at the elementary level, are such factors worth exploration.

The other factors mentioned above, however, should be recognised as either unadaptable or unacceptable given their negative consequences.

2.3 Why the data did not support personal experience regarding parent involvement in Ottawa-Carleton schools

Once again, sampling error can explain the high involvement of our English-Canadian parents when expectations were to the contrary. It could be that our school had parents who were exceptionally involved and was thus, possibly, quite unrepresentative of other English-Canadian parents. In fact, by offering class observation and keeping in very frequent contact with parents, some of the credit for the high involvement must go to the school principal and teachers. It certainly could be that this school is a model of parent participation. Alternatively, as suggested in the results, it could be that the exceptionally involved parents were over-represented in those who returned their surveys. However, there is no evidence which suggests that the above sampling issues explain most of the involvement measured in our study. As such, other reasons for the discord between our expectations and the level of involvement of our English-Canadian sample must be considered.

The past decade has seen sweeping reforms throughout the developed world and in the education systems of many provinces in Canada, including that of Ontario. As already suggested, this trend of reform was fuelled in Ontario by the recent economic recession which left many Ontarians insecure about employment. Both the government and the public became acutely aware that a stronger and more accountable education system must become a high priority (Begin & Caplan, 1994). At the same time, a general tendency of the education reform sweeping the developed world was to include greater parent involvement.

In this context, provincial governments since the mid-1980s have taken many steps

to provide a system which is more open to parents' enquiries and input. Outside of the school system, there are reports that more parents are enrolling their children in supplementary courses to improve their academic standing, much like what Japanese parents do to prepare their children for entrance exams. While tutoring has long been available, the rise of brand-name learning centres such as Sylvan and Oxford throughout urban centres is a new phenomenon. Another difference is that these learning centres serve not only students who need remedial help; they also teach students whose parents want them to achieve goals beyond those of their day schools. Mitchell (1998) describes how many parents in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta are purchasing these extra academic classes because they believe their children need extra opportunities to excel. They are unsatisfied with report cards that say their children are performing at grade level and concerned that schools do not provide enough of an academic foundation. Another reason for all the structured programmes, however, is the need for supervision of their children during the summer holidays. When both parents work or the family is led by a single working parent, child care during the two-month break must be arranged. For many, science, reading and computer camps meet all needs.

Most of the personal experience which fuelled early expectations of low parent involvement in Ontario schools took place before the above-mentioned reforms and before parents became organised and publicly vocal in their concerns about the education system. If our highly-involved English-Canadian parents are, in fact, representative of a growing trend, it remains to be seen just how widespread this trend is. It might even be important to start looking for potential negative consequences of such high involvement. North American research to date has chiefly explored and promoted its positive impact. While enhanced academic achievement is a worthy goal for educators and parents alike, it is important to know if its single-minded pursuit

comes at an unacceptable cost. According to Mitchell (1998), educators, psychologists and other professionals are seeing children who cannot cope with the demands placed on them. One psychologist describes his practice as full of small children who cannot stop crying, "burned out by grade 3". Others suggest that children are crippled by the excessive programming of their lives and suffer from the lack of spontaneity and creativity which characterise many Japanese children. Ultimately, if a new phenomenon is taking hold, researchers must be quick to describe its prevalence and and potential ramifications. It could be that high parent involvement is not the panacea that research to date suggests it to be.

2.4 Why the Japanese parents did not meet the levels of involvement expected following a review of North American research and commentaries regarding Japanese education

Few articles and books on Japanese education neglect to mention the pivotal role of Japanese mothers in their children's schooling (Leestma et al., 1987; White, 1987; Dickensheets, 1996). Mothers provide an extensive home curriculum to their preschoolers. They do all chores so that their children can focus on their studies. If they work outside the home, it is usually to help cover supplementary education costs. One researcher has even said that Japanese mothers are a key contributor to Japan's economic miracle, responsible for "maintaining the social and educational foundation that has been so vital in the nation's half-century of economic achievement " (Dickensheets, 1996).

Following this literature review, one could easily expect that Japanese parents would be classified as highly involved parents. What our study found, however, is that Japan's definition of good involvement appears markedly different from our own. Using criteria which have been found to be valid indicators of parent involvement in North American samples, the Japanese parents were relatively little involved. This

serves as a resounding reminder that criteria established in one culture may have little relevance when applied in another. As already proposed earlier in this chapter, it appears that positive parent involvement in Japan has a very different nature from that expected in Canada. In Japan, parents must be careful not to put excessive pressure on their children because of the intense pressure which is already an inherent part of the education system. And by doing as expected by the school and no more, parents are careful to maximise harmony and homogeneity in relations with the school. Outside of the school, on the other hand, they are free to do more than expected by enrolling their children in private *juku.*

This particular discrepancy between expectations and findings also raises the issue of qualitative versus quantitative comparative research in the social sciences. Over the last thirty years, there has been growing interest in Japan among North Americans, with much research and writing published on all aspects of the nation. Most of what has been published has been primarily qualitative in nature. Personal and case study accounts of the Japanese school, the daily lives of schoolchildren and the demands placed on mothers abound. The relatively few quantitative studies on Japanese education tend to focus on very specific aspects of the system, such as achievement or particular aspects of teaching styles. All these studies have contributed to our understanding of Japanese education. However, it is possible that the tone of many of the qualitative accounts would have been different if a greater number of more general quantitative studies, or primarily quantitative studies, had taken place first.

The survey prepared for this study could be used throughout the country to provide basic but fundamental data on parent involvement in Japan. As far as we are aware, it is the first such study to be as systematic and broad-based as it is on this topic, and has, at last, provided a framework within which the qualitative writing can be better interpreted. Much of the writing to date on Japanese education has been done without

such a framework. It is possible that its absence has allowed not only readers but also authors to overlook what is, in its entirety, a substantially different model of parent involvement. Positive parent involvement in Japan appears to have many fundamental differences from that which is promoted in North America, an assertion which has not been made before in North American research. This framework now stands ready to be built upon and tested by both qualitative and quantitative research alike.

Chapter 5

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

This study was successful in uncovering numerous surprising distinctions to parent involvement in Japan. It was also able to reveal that, at least in certain subgroups of English-Canadian parents, involvement in education both in and out of the school appears substantial. However, as mentioned in Chapter 3, there are some limitations to the study. For the benefit of future research related to this study, these limitations are repeated below and, where valuable, suggestions are given for how they can be overcome.

First and foremost, this study is limited in its applicability because of the small and narrowly defined samples. Much has been said of the relative homogeneity of Japanese society but it remains presumptuous to assume that the parents of one suburban elementary school represent a majority of Japanese parents. If presumptuous in Japan, such an assumption would be preposterous in Canada. Samples from all geographic and demographic sectors in both countries would allow the comprehensive comparison which is due.

The second limitation, almost as pervasive as the first, is the possible infiltration of *tatemae* in some of the Japanese responses. As previously defined, *tatemae* is the Japanese custom of saying what one thinks the other expects or would like to hear. Regularly used in Japan, the Japanese are very adept at recognising it and deciphering a speaker's true meaning. Because no steps were taken in this study to identify its presence, we do not know if it was used and, if so, for what questions and to what extent. One would expect that all respondents would have felt free to respond according to their true feelings in an anonymous survey. However, triangulating the results with personal interviews of parents, where the interviewer is Japanese and

able to recognise *tatemae*, would provide greater assurance of the integrity of the data.

A third way to improve the study would be to conduct follow-up interviews with the teachers and sub-groups of the parents after analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires. As made clear in Chapters 3 and 4, much of the data appeared contrary to expectations. The explanations provided herein originated primarily in the informed opinions of the researchers and a former Japanese colleague. These opinions led to a literature search to determine the likelihood that they reflected opinions of others. Ideally, the explanations should have originated from the teachers and parents themselves. It is possible that their explanations would differ from those offered.

The remaining three limitations reside in the survey. Regarding extra-curricular activities, parents should have been asked to list all activities of their child, even if free of charge. Also, one question should have directly asked parents to record how much time they spent over school holidays helping their child with homework. It is possible that the total amount of time Japanese parents contribute would have been significantly higher were this question directly asked. Such a question might also reveal more involvement among the English-Canadian parents. Finally, a greater effort may have been required to ensure that all possible dimensions of parent involvement in Japan were covered in the survey. It should not have been assumed that criteria for parent involvement established in one continent would apply in another continent.

Suggestions for Future Research

Much research has explored the many dimensions of parent involvement in education. In the course of preparing for this study, it appeared that this research focussed primarily on measuring outcomes, such as student achievement and the socio-psychological benefits, of controlled "inputs" of involvement, be they helping

children with homework or sitting on a school board. Little quantitative data could be found in the academic literature which described, in its true breadth, kinds and levels of typical involvement. Though parent involvement has become a topic of great public interest, there was no readily available source where one could get a reasonably thorough and unbiased picture of the level of involvement present in any jurisdiction in North America.

As a result, this study is an attempt to help fill this void in the literature. However, our samples were small and demographically very limited. Larger studies, studies which compare Canada with countries other than Japan, as well as studies which compare different demographic groups within Canada's borders, would allow us to be infinitely more informed regarding the status of parent involvement in Canada and would, no doubt, allow different jurisdictions to learn from each other. This research might also reveal if a certain cohort of parents are involved to an unhealthy extent, as suggested in the news media. And if such is the case, it becomes the responsibility of parent-involvement researchers and advocates to both investigate any negative consequences and offer their findings to the current discourse on parent involvement.

Another interesting topic of research would explore the benefits of a strong emphasis on social development in the elementary school programme. Though there is no question that Canadian children also develop social skills at school, this development appears to happen in a more random, situation-specific way. On the contrary, in Japan, social development is a significant part of the grand programme design, and is, therefore, planned for and orchestrated by teachers to bring about desired attitudes and behaviours. Japan's methods and the skills its teachers strive to instill may or may not be applicable in Canada. To what extent is any school system capable of shaping social development? Would Canadian students benefit by elementary schools which placed a greater priority on social development? And given

Canada's pluralistic nature, is it both possible and appropriate for Canadian public schools to develop specific social skills in all students? Answers to such questions are as political as they are factual. However, this is an intriguing aspect of the Japanese system which, more than other aspects, may have value and applicability here and elsewhere.

Finally, other studies might want to explore the value of class observation by parents and their active participation in school activities, as opposed to simply attending school events as members of an audience. It is possible that these kinds of involvement could improve parent-teacher relations in our own classrooms.

Conclusion

While Ontario has followed the wave of parent involvement reform washing over much of the developed world, some fundamental information has been missing. Accomplishing one goal, this study offers a glimpse at how parent involvement transpires in one of Ontario's schools and in one in Japan. The glimpse, though small, is revealing and will hopefully encourage further research along similar lines.

Another anticipated goal of this study was to learn something of significance from the Japanese example. With the exceptions of class observation and participation in school activities, the parents of Maple Leaf Elementary demonstrated superior examples of parent involvement. It appears we have little to learn from Japan on those other measures. However, one lesson remains. Administrators should reflect deeply on the fact that Japanese schools take more responsibility for maintaining regular contact with all parents. While our English-Canadian school made impressive efforts to maintain contact, these efforts were primarily due to the personal initiative of parents and teachers. Without a doubt, much involvement is welcomed and allowed for in Ontario schools. However, the fault of current strategies might be that, while much is welcomed, little is required of parents. If parents and teachers do not take initiative, it is too easy for many parents to be too little involved. And most likely, the parents who are not involved are the ones we most need to have involved, those whose children require the extra support that would come with extensive involvement.

A 1997 report prepared by the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, titled Parents as Partners in Schooling, remarked that, in Canada, "there is a considerable gap between proposals for action and the realisation of widespread and consistent co-operation between parents and school." (p.65) Widespread and consistent co-operation Japan has. That is what we need. For until all parents are regularly involved and in meaningful contact with their children's schools, there are

students who are not being sufficiently served by their school system.

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Appendix A

The Questionnaire

February 23, 1998

Dear Parents/Guardians

The attached questionnaire is part of a study comparing the amount of time and money English-speaking Canadian parents and Japanese parents contribute to their children's education. This project has been approved by the Ottawa-Carleton Research Advisory Committee and by the principal of your child's school.

Parents can contribute to their children's learning in many ways. Little research, however, has explored how parents use time and money to enhance this learning. As such, the principal aim of this study is to measure the extent of such contributions. Conducted as a Master's thesis under the authorisation of the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, the study will describe the contributions of a sample of 100 parents in the Carleton Board of Education. Your child's class is among the classes chosen for this study.

To participate, please complete the attached questionnaire within one week of receiving it. When completed, return it by mail in the envelope provided. Even if you do not complete the questionnaire, please return it.

Participation in this project is voluntary. You are free to skip any questions you do not wish to answer and you may withdraw at any time without negative consequences to you or your child. Your child's only role is to bring the questionnaire to you. Please note that your identity and that of your child is and will remain **anonymous**.

In appreciation of your support, a summary of the study's results will be provided to you within one year.

It should take about 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. There will be no further requests for participation. If you have any questions about the study, please call me at 596-1843. Any information requests or complaints about the ethical conduct of the study may be addressed to the Secretariat of the Ethics Committee at 562-5800, ext.4057.

Sincerely,

Andrea Fanjoy
Researcher

Questionnaire

Please read all instructions carefully.
General Instructions:

* Answers are to reflect estimated contributions of time and money made **for your grade five child only**. If your answer is "0" or "none", please write or choose that answer. If you do not wish to answer a particular question, please write nothing and go to the next question.

* Answers are to reflect the estimated contributions of all parents or guardians of your grade five child (i.e. mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, foster parents etc.). as well as other adults who share in caring for your child (grandparents, babysitters, nannies etc.). The questionnaire should be completed by the parent or guardian most involved in the child's education and most aware of the child's activities at home and elsewhere.

* Include all expenditures, purchases and activities that, in your opinion, are done to enhance your child's education.

* **Do not include** among purchases the basic necessities such as food, shelter and clothing or purchases of toys or services with no direct connection to your child's education.

Instructions for Parts A and B:

* All expenditures should include taxes and any other additional charges related to the purchase of the goods and services.

* If goods or services are bought at a discount, give the price paid,not the regular price.

* Include purchases of new and used goods. If a purchase involved a trade-in, report the amount after trade-in. For items purchased on an instalment plan, report total amount paid per year.

* Amounts can be rounded off to the nearest $10.00.

* **Include all goods and services purchased since February 23rd, 1997.**

* **Do not include items bought in years previous to the past year**, even if they are still being used for academic purposes by your child (such as computers etc.).

* Expenditures are not to be counted twice.

Part A - Contributions of money to your child's school

This part covers amounts of money which either your child's public school **requires** you to pay or which you voluntarily give to help finance school activities. Money given to the school council, to fundraisers, for school trips or for school supplies such as paper, binders, notebooks and calculators (**only if required by the school**) belong in this part.

* Please write "0" if you spend no money on the stated goods or service. Write nothing if you do not wish to answer the question.

Questions for Part A:

To the best of your knowledge, how much money did you spend on the following in the past year:

1. School Council fees? $_____

2. school trips? $_____

3. school fundraisers? $_____

4. school supplies (e.g. binders, notebooks, paper etc.)? $_____

5. school uniform (if applicable)? $_____

6. transportation for your child to and from school (e.g. for taxis, buses or gas consumption)? $_____

7. fees and other costs for extra-curricular activities (equipment and supplies for clubs, sports teams etc.)? $_____

8. tuition fees (if applicable)? $_____

9. other school costs? Please specify below:

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

In the Japanese survey, only question 4 was included. Answers to other questions were given by the principal and teachers.

Part B - Non-school educational costs

This part covers costs which were **not required by your child's public school** and **do not help fund school activities**. Instead, it includes expenditures which you chose to pay in order to enhance your child's education and are either **academic** or **extra-curricular** in nature. The purchasing of educational resources for the home, payment for tutoring and costs for clubs and camps belong in this part.

* Please write "0" if you spend no money on the stated goods or service. Write nothing if you do not wish to answer the question.

Questions for Part B:

Academic - Tutoring:

10. tutoring fees? $_____

11. books and supplies required by tutoring? $_____

12. transportation to and from tutoring? $_____

Academic - Other non-school academic[19] activities:

13. fees for other non-school academic activities (computer / science camps, language classes etc.)? Please specify below:

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

14. equipment and supplies for other non-school academic activities? $_____

15. transportation to and from non-school academic activities? $_____

In the Japanese survey, questions 13, 14 and 15 were not included. The Japanese respondents used questions 10-12 to record costs for all non-school academic activities.

[19] Non-school academic activities include activities which further your child's knowledge of core subjects such as math, languages, science, history, geography and computers. They **do not** include classes in music, sports, fine arts or the performing arts.

Extra-curricular - Costs for non-academic goods and services:

16. fees for non-school, non-academic extra-curricular activities (sports, music lessons, summer camps, Brownies, Cubs etc.)? Please specify below:

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

17. equipment and supplies for non-school extra-curricular activities? $_____

18. transportation to and from non-school extra-curricular activities? $_____

Academic or extra-curricular - Home resources:

19. educational resources (academic-oriented workbooks, games and software, dictionaries etc.)? $_____

20. computer (include only if used by your grade 5 child for educational purposes)? $_____

* if the computer was bought in the last year, give the percent of total time of computer use that is used by your grade 5 child for educational purposes _____%

21. furnishings for school work (desk, study lamp etc.)? $_____

22. Other non-school educational costs (please specify below):

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

Part C - Contributions of Time to the School

Part C covers the amount of time parents spend either at their child's **school** or involved in **school-related activities**. It includes, for example, time spent helping with homework and meeting with your child's teacher. It **does not** include time spent in activities of your own choosing, either academic or extra-curricular in nature, such as reading with your child, visiting museums and volunteering in your child's extra-curricular activities.

Instructions for Part C and D:

* For each question, please circle the response which best reflects the total time you (ie. all adults providing care for your grade 5 child) have committed.

* Please write "0" if you spend no time on the stated goods or service. Write nothing if you do not wish to answer the question.

* The symbol ' > ' means 'more than'. For example, ' > 4hrs ' means ' more than four hours '.

Questions for Part C:

23. How often do you check or provide help with your child's homework (please circle one)?

never or rarely	once a week
less than once a month	a few times a week
once a month	daily
a few times a month	don't know

24. In an average week, how many **hours** do you spend doing the following:

a. helping your grade 5 child with homework (by explaining, assisting, checking etc.)? _____

b. volunteering at your grade 5 child's school (PTA, class or office helper etc.)? _____

c. transporting your child to and from school? _____

In the Japanese survey, 24b was not included after the principal informed us that parents do not volunteer at the school.

25. On average, how many **times in the last twelve months** did you visit the school for the following reasons[20] :

meeting with the teacher _____

class observation _____

participation in school activities _____

attendance of school concerts / events _____

26. If you had one or more visits in question 25, on average, how long did each visit last?

meeting with the teacher _____ mins

class observation _____ mins

participation in school activities _____ mins

attendance of school concerts / events _____ mins

27. On average, how much time do you spend **each month** communicating with the teacher and / or school (either by phone, fax, mail etc.) regarding your child?

none 5 min-30 min 30 min-1 hr 1 hr-1 hr 30 min 1 hr 30 min-2 hr > 2 hrs

[20] Please note that meetings with the teacher and class observations are to be counted as separate visits, even if they happen on the same day.

Part D - Contributions of Time to Non-School Activities

Part D covers the amount of time parents spend contributing to their child's education apart from the demands of the regular school programme. It includes, for example, time spent reading together, having informed conversations, helping with extra-curricular activities and transporting your child to and from such activities.

Questions for Part D:

28. In an average week, how much time do you spend:

a. teaching your child beyond the school programme in the following ways:

i) reading together

none up to 1 hr 1 hr 5 min-2 hrs 2 hr 5 min-3 hrs 3 hr 5 min- 4 hrs > 4 hr

ii) having informed conversations (including such conversations at meal times and while watching television)

none up to 2 hrs 2 hr 5 min-4 hrs 4 hr 5 min-6 hrs 6 hr 5 min-8 hrs > 8 hrs

iii) working with educational books and playing educational games

none up to 1 hr 1 hr 5 min-2 hrs 2 hr 5 min-3 hrs 3 hr 5 min-4 hr > 4 hrs

iv) doing hobbies together

none up to 1 hr 1 hr 5 min-2 hrs 2 hr 5 min-3 hrs 3 hr 5 min-4 hr > 4 hrs

v) eating dinner together

none up to 1 hr 1 hr 5 min-2 hrs 2 hr 5 min-3 hrs 3 hr 5 min-4 hr > 4 hrs

vi) other (please specify) _____

none up to 1 hr 1 hr 5 min-2 hrs 2 hr 5 min-3 hrs 3 hr 5 min-4 hr > 4 hrs

b. helping and / or participating in the extra-curricular activities of your child (e.g. sports, music lessons, clubs etc.)?

none up to 1 hr 1 hr 5 min-2 hr 2 hr 5 min-3 hr 3 hr 5 min-4 hr > 4 hrs

c. transporting your child to and from tutoring and other non-school **academic** activities (e.g. academic camps, clubs, classes)?

none up to 1 hr 1 hr 5 min-2 hr 2 hr 5 min-3 hr 3 hr 5 min-4 hr > 4 hrs

d. transporting your child to and from extra-curricular activities not carried out at the school (e.g. sports, music lessons, clubs etc.)?

none up to 1 hr 1 hr 5 min-2 hr 2 hr 5 min-3 hr 3 hr 5 min-4 hr > 4 hrs

29. a) In the past year, did you take your child to a museum, theatre, music hall or other learning centre? Please circle one.

yes no (If "no", go to question 30)

b) If you answered "yes" above, how many times in the past year did you take your child to a museum theatre, music hall or other learning centre?

1-2 3-4 5-6 > 6

c) On average, how long would each visit counted above last?

up to 1 hr 1 hr 5 min-2 hr 2 hr 5 min-3 hr 3 hr 5 min-4 hr > 4 hrs

Part E - Roles in Educating Your Child

Questions for Part E:

30. How do you rate in importance the development of the following kinds of skills in your child **at home** (that is, which skills are most importantly developed by you, the parents)? Please **rank** in importance, from 1 to 4, the four kinds of skills listed after each question. Use each number only once.

* Most important = 1; Least important = 4

_____ academic

_____ social

_____ physical (health and strength)

_____ moral (values, manners, character etc.)

31. How do you rate in importance the development of the following kinds of skills in your child **at school** (that is, which skills are most importantly developed by teaching staff)? Please **rank** in importance, from 1 to 4, the four kinds of skills listed after each question. Use each number only once.

* Most important = 1; Least important = 4

_____ academic

_____ social

_____ physical (health and strength)

_____ moral (values, manners, character etc.)

32. How important is it to you that your child have good grades in school? Please circle the response which best reflects your view.

very important

important

somewhat important

not important at all

don't know

33. How far do you hope your child will go in school? Please circle one response.

secondary or high school

community or technical college

university

trade school

other (please specify_____)

don't know

34. Why do you contribute the amounts of time and money described in Parts A-D above? Please choose four responses from those listed below which most describe your situation and rank them in order of importance to you. Use each number only once.

* Most important = 1; Least important = 4

* If an important reason is not included, please use 'f' to describe this reason and number it according to its importance.

_____ a) because the school requires it

_____ b) because it is necessary for a good education and future success

_____ c) because it is expected in my community

_____ d) because my child desires it

_____ e) because it is my responsibility as a parent

_____ f) other (please specify) _____)

Part F - General Information

Instructions for Part F:

* Please circle one answer for each question except where otherwise indicated.

Questions for Part F:

35. Sex of the child in grade five: male female

36. Your relationship to the child in grade five:
mother father other (please specify):_____

37. Number of children 18 years old or under in the family:

1 2 3 4 more than 4

38. Marital status of parent (s) / legal guardian (s) in child's chief place of residence:

now married	widowed
common-law	separated
living with a partner	divorced
single (never married)	

39. Languages spoken fluently by the child's parents or guardians (please circle all that apply):

English

French

Other (please specify_____)

40. The following items have a potential role in your child's education. Please indicate which of the following can be found in your child's home. Mark an 'X' beside those items which you have.

( ) a television set

( ) a stereo system

( ) a video-cassette player / recorder (VCR)

( ) a personal computer

( ) one or more musical instruments

( ) a set of encyclopedias

( ) one or more dictionaries

( ) compact discs, albums or music cassettes

( ) a desk for your child's own use

41) Total household before-tax income (include incomes of all earners financially contributing to child's care; also includes any bonuses or special allowances):

0-$30,000 $30,000-$60,000 $60,000-$90,000 $90,000-$120,000 >$120,000

42. Highest level of formal education achieved by child's parents / guardians (please circle one for each parent / guardian):

Mother / Female guardian	Father / Male guardian
Junior high school	Junior high school
Senior high school	Senior high school
Trade, technical or vocational school	Trade, technical or vocational school
Community college, cegep	Community college, cegep
Undergraduate degree or teacher's college	Undergraduate degree or teacher's college
Master's degree	Master's degree
Degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry	Degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry
Earned doctorate	Earned doctorate
Other (please specify_____)	Other (please specify_____ _____)

43. Employment status of both parents / guardians who are primary care-givers of the child (please circle all that apply):

Mother / Female guardian	Father / Male guardian
Caring for family	Caring for family
Working for pay or profit	Working for pay or profit
Going to school	Going to school
Recovering from illness / on disability	Recovering from illness / on disability
Looking for work	Looking for work
Retired	Retired
Other (please specify: _____)	Other (please specify: _____)

In the Japanese survey, questions 38, 39, 41, 42 and 43 were not included.

Appendix B

Teachers' Consent Letter and Form

Dear Teacher

You are being asked to participate in a study on the amount of time and money English Canadian parents contribute to their children's education. This project has been approved by the Ottawa-Carleton Research Advisory Committee and by your principal.

Parents can contribute to their children's learning in many ways. Little research, however, has explored how parents use time and money to enhance this learning. As such, the principal aim of this study is to measure the extent of such contributions. Conducted for the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, the study will describe the contributions of a sample of 100 parents in the Carleton Board of Education. Your class is among the classes chosen for this study.

Participation in this project is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. With your consent, you will be asked about parent involvement in your class and at your school. You will also be asked to assess the general academic achievement of your students from far below to far above average. Please note that your identity and that of your students is and will remain **confidential**. What you say during the course of the interview will be known only by the researcher.

To participate, please complete the consent form below. The second copy of the consent form may be detached and kept for your reference.

In appreciation of your support, a summary of the study's results will be provided to you within one year.

It should take around 30 minutes to complete the interview. There will be no further requests for participation. If you have any questions about the study, please call me at 596-1843. Any information requests or complaints about the ethical conduct of the study may be addressed to the Secretariat of the Ethics Committee at 562-5800, ext.4057.

Sincerely

Andrea Fanjoy
Researcher

Consent Form

The information collected is confidential and protected under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1989.

I have read and understood the request for my participation in the study of "Parents' Contributions of Time and Money to their Children's Education".

_____ I agree to participate.

_____ I do not agree to participate.

Signature of Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C

Interview Questions for the Teachers

General:

How many students in your class? Boys? Girls?

A. Parent involvement in the class and at the school:

1) How many times a year are parents invited to the school?
2) On what occasions are parents invited to the school?
3) How many parents tend to come when invited? Who comes - mother or father?
4) How long do they stay when invited?
5) On what other occasions do parents come to the school? your classroom?
6) What kind of volunteer work can parents do at the school? in your classroom?
7) Do parents phone you? If so, why? How many? How long do you talk? Do they have your home phone number?
8) How often do you contact parents? Why do you call?
9) How else do you communicate with the parents?
10) How many of your students' parents have you met? How many have you at least talked with? Are there any with whom you have had no contact?
11) What is the school council reponsible for? How does one become a member of the council? How many members are there?

B. Student achievement

The teacher will be asked to assess the overall academic ability of the class from far below to far above average. (percentages at various levels)

Appendix D

Kruskal-Wallis and Chi-square Data

Variable	Country	N	Mean Rank
rank of social skills in importance at home	Japan	105	72.84
	Canada	42	76.9
rank of social skills in importance at school	Japan	101	67.96
	Canada	46	87.26
cost of school supplies	Japan	107	72.03
	Canada	48	91.31
total minutes spent attending school concerts	Japan	106	57.24
	Canada	46	120.89
total costs for home resources	Japan	109	70.48
	Canada	44	93.15
total minutes spent meeting with teacher	Japan	107	73.34
	Canada	47	86.98
total non-school academic costs	Japan	112	83.38
	Canada	46	70.04
non-school academic fee total	Japan	109	83.09
	Canada	47	67.85
non-school academic supply total	Japan	109	79.96
	Canada	47	75.12
non-school academic transportation total	Japan	109	75.69
	Canada	47	85.02
total non-school educational costs	Japan	109	73.17
	Canada	41	81.71
total non-school extra-curricular costs	Japan	109	69.25
	Canada	45	97.48
total minutes spent observing class	Japan	106	96.67
	Canada	47	32.64
total minutes spent participating in school activities	Japan	90	77.12
	Canada	47	53.46
total financial contributions to the school	Japan	115	80.71
	Canada	48	85.08
total hours - homework, volunteering and transporting	Japan	104	55.69
	Canada	46	120.29
total mins spent in school-related activities	Japan	80	44.83
	Canada	43	93.95
total mins - meet teacher, obs. class, partic. & concerts	Japan	87	69.95
	Canada	45	59.83
hours transporting child to and from school	Japan	107	71.12
	Canada	47	92.03
cost of transportation to and from school	Japan	115	75
	Canada	48	98.77
cost of school trips	Japan	115	102
	Canada	47	31.34
tuition fees	Japan	115	81.5
	Canada	48	83.2
cost of school uniforms	Japan	115	82
	Canada	48	82
hours volunteering at school	Japan	115	76.5
	Canada	47	93.73
fees and other costs for extra-curr. activities	Japan	115	73
	Canada	48	103.56

Variable	Country	N	Mean Rank
rank of academics in importance at home	Japan	107	82.7
	Canada	42	55.39
rank of academics in importance at school	Japan	103	87.29
	Canada	47	49.67
computer	Japan	109	68.26
	Canada	44	98.66
times attending school concerts	Japan	109	57.25
	Canada	48	128.4
minutes spent attending school concerts	Japan	103	54.81
	Canada	46	120.22
money given to school fundraisers	Japan	115	62.5
	Canada	48	128.72
cost of furnishings for school work	Japan	109	77.98
	Canada	47	79.7
hours helping with homework	Japan	104	55.99
	Canada	48	120.95
minutes meeting with the teacher	Japan	109	79.67
	Canada	48	77.49
times meeting with the teacher	Japan	108	72.8
	Canada	47	89.96
rank of moral dvpt in importance at home	Japan	107	81.06
	Canada	43	61.66
rank of moral dvpt in importance at school	Japan	100	68.71
	Canada	47	85.27
fees for non-school extra-curr. activities	Japan	109	70.29
	Canada	45	94.97
supplies for non-school extra-curr. activities	Japan	109	69.23
	Canada	45	97.52
transportation to non-school e-c activities	Japan	109	62.69
	Canada	45	113.37
times of class observation	Japan	108	97.65
	Canada	47	32.85
minutes in class observation	Japan	109	93.07
	Canada	48	47.04
other school costs	Japan	115	103
	Canada	47	28.89
other non-school educational costs	Japan	109	75.91
	Canada	47	84.51
times participating in school activities	Japan	107	78.08
	Canada	47	76.17
total times in school activities	Japan	106	72.8
	Canada	47	86.48
minutes participating in school activities	Japan	93	87.2
	Canada	48	39.61
rank of physical dvpt in importance at school	Japan	101	75.26
	Canada	46	71.23
rank of physical dvpt in importance at home	Japan	105	64.8
	Canada	42	97
PTA fees	Japan	115	106
	Canada	48	24.5
cost of educational resources for home use	Japan	109	71.41
	Canada	47	94.94

Variable	Country	N	#cases / category
how far child will go in school*child's sex* country	Japan	105	high school = m15, f14
			college = m8, f16
			university = m26, f8
			trade school = m3, f1
			other = m7, f7
	Canada	49	college = m0, f1
			university = m23, f24
			don't know = m0, f1
			yes = 54
trips to museums, theatres etc.	Japan	109	no = 55
			yes = 47
	Canada	49	no = 2
time spent having informed conversations	Japan	107	0-2 hrs = 75
			2-4 hrs = 18
			4-6 hrs = 6
			> 6 hrs = 8
	Canada	49	0-2 hrs = 11
			2-4 hrs = 18
			4-6 hrs = 16
			> 6 hrs = 18
time spent communicating with teacher	Japan	98	none = 39
			5-30 mins = 44
			> 30 mins = 15
	Canada	49	none = 6
			5-30 mins = 33
			> 30 mins = 10
time spent eating dinner together	Japan	114	0-2 hrs = 63
			2-4 hrs = 13
			> 4 hrs = 38
	Canada	49	0-2 hrs = 8
			2-4 hrs = 11
			> 4 hrs = 30
time spent in extra-curr. activities of child	Japan	105	none = 57
			up to 1 hr = 24
			1-2 hrs = 10
			2-3 hrs = 5
			> 3 hrs = 9
	Canada	48	none = 6
			up to 1 hr = 10
			1-2 hrs = 11
			2-3 hrs = 5
			> 3 hrs = 16
time working with educational books and games	Japan	106	0-1 hr = 97
			> 1 hr = 9
	Canada	49	0-1 hr = 29
			> 1 hr = 20
importance of good grades in school	Japan	104	very imp = 5
			imp = 36
			somewhat imp = 63
	Canada	49	very imp = 21
			imp = 27
			somewhat imp = 1

Variable	Country	N	# cases / category
how often help with homework	Japan	111	few times/month or less = 46
			once - few times/week = 50
			daily = 15
	Canada	49	few times/month or less = 0
			once-few times / week = 14
			daily = 35
time spent at museums, theatres etc.	Japan	53	0-2 hrs = 33
			> 2 hrs = 20
	Canada	47	0-2 hrs = 13
			> 2 hrs = 34
# times went to museums, theatres etc.	Japan	53	1-2 = 32
			3-4 = 12
			> 4 = 9
	Canada	47	1-2 =10
			3-4 = 20
			> 4 = 17
time spent reading with child	Japan	108	none = 72
			some = 36
	Canada	47	none = 11
			some = 36
time transporting from non-school academic act.	Japan	104	none = 87
			some = 17
	Canada	48	none = 28
			some = 20
because school requires it - rank	Japan	78	1 = 1
			2 = 6
			3 = 13
			4 = 19
			excluded = 39
	Canada	45	1 = 1
			2 = 3
			3 = 11
			4 = 15
			excluded = 15
because necessary for good education/success	Japan	79	1 = 26
			2 = 26
			3 = 10
			4 = 6
			excluded = 11
	Canada	48	1 = 21
			2 = 9
			3 = 8
			4 = 6
			excluded = 2

Variable	Country	N	# cases / category
because expected in my community	Japan	78	1 = 0
			2 = 2
			3 = 7
			4 = 10
			excluded = 59
	Canada	45	1 = 1
			2 = 0
			3 = 2
			4 = 4
			excluded = 38
because my child desires it	Japan	79	1 = 27
			2 = 16
			3 = 9
			4 = 9
			excluded = 18
	Canada	45	1 = 7
			2 = 5
			3 = 18
			4 = 10
			excluded = 5
because it is my responsibility as a parent	Japan	80	1 = 22
			2 = 21
			3 = 22
			4 = 5
			excluded = 10
	Canada	45	1 = 9
			2 = 27
			3 = 5
			4 = 3
			excluded = 1