

The Mediating Effect of Parental Role Modelling on Children's Academic Achievement Under the Confucian Cultural Background in Family Education

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Abstract – Involvement from parents has long been recognized as something important for kids' school success. However, how being involved actually helps kids get good grades isn't always clear, and this can be very true for places like East Asia or China. In some cases, frequent monitoring, pressure, and too much assistance can also affect the academic success of students. This article believes that what is missing is parental role modelling. In terms of the background of Confucian culture, it is more than just watching over your child's studies, this is also a kind of morality where parents educate mainly by being good themselves, their actions, and how they act every day. Taking advantage of Confucian family education thought, social cognition theory, as well as the recent works about parenting style, parental involvement and academic success, self-regulation learning, and emotional adjustment, it is stated in this article that Confucian family values have an effect on children's academic performance by means of parental modelling. In particular, if parents exhibit diligence, self-control, valuing education, emotional control, and being consistent with morals, then children will tend to internalize educational value, have better confidence in their studies, can learn well, and continue in difficult situations. On the contrary when parent involvement is very controlling and not much exemplifying it can lead to anxiety, dependence or resistance. In the paper, it was concluded that Parental Role Modelling is the main mediating pathway by which Confucian family education transforms culture into educational achievement.

Keywords – Parental role modelling, Confucian culture, Family education, Academic achievement, Academic self-efficacy

I. INTRODUCTION

Children's academic success depends on more than just their own abilities and schooling resources; it is influenced by the quality of family education as well. In the international literature, parental participation is normally linked with improved academic success, but it can be of different size and direction depending on what kind of participation as well as age of the child and its social surroundings (Castro et al., 2015; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Şengonul, 2022). The meta-analysis has proved that support at home, encouragement, parents' educational expectations and communication can be advantageous in order to achieve higher success. But too much monitoring, control or timing of intervention does not lead to maximum positivity (Castro et al., 2015; Hill & Tyson, 2009). Inconsistency is especially important when it comes to Chinese and Confucian places where academic success isn't just about you; it's also connected with doing the right thing for your family, going up many generations, and being a good son or daughter.

In China's family education, parents are not just managers of homework or providers of study materials. And the parent too is an ethical exemplar. Confucian family education places great importance on *xiushen qijia*, meaning "self-cultivation and governing one's family." It views family education as a process where self-cultivation comes before instructing (Wang, 2017). This tradition is education by more than just teaching, it is habit, it is emotion, and it is example. Model demonstration is regarded as one of the usual ways of Confucian family education besides step-by-step teaching, reasoning, and thinking over it (Wang, 2017). So, from classic to current discourses about Chinese family upbringing show that a family's impact isn't just by how much parents interfere, it's also by which aspects of the kids' lives the parents display.

This view can account for something puzzling in modern education literature. If it is beneficial for parents to be involved, then how come more involvement doesn't lead to better achievement? A likely answer to this would be that involvement's most robustly positive effect happens when it comes with a credible parent example. That is, kids don't just do as their parents tell them to do; instead, they do as makes sense given what their parents require of them and how their parents behave. If parents ask for efforts but do not make any efforts themselves, if they emphasize self-discipline but show emotional fluctuation, or if they value learning but ignore their own reading and improvement, the message will lose its effectiveness. On the contrary, when children see their parents read, persist, regulate emotions, honor promises, respect teachers & learning, educational expectation turns from pressure to be educate to personal aspiration.

Therefore, it can be argued in this article that parental role modelling acts as mediator between the Confucian culture of family education with the academic achievements of children. It's an argument about ideas, not data. It synthesizes all literatures that were related with Confucian Family Education, Parental Involvement, Parenting Style and Academic Self-Efficacy as well as Students' adjustment. The paper has 3 aims. Firstly, it tells us why the significance of parental role modelling in Confucian culture is. Second is to explain why simply doing it all by your parent is not effective. The third is about the mediating path for parental role modelling to improve the academic performance of children via the increase in their academic self-efficacy, Self-regulated learning, emotional control, and educational value orientation.

II. CONFUCIAN FAMILY EDUCATION AND THE MORAL STATUS OF PARENTAL EXAMPLE

In Confucian thought, the family is foundational for both people and society. In Wang's (2017) broad exploration on Confucian family education thought, it was explained that in Confucianism, it treated regulating the family as the beginning of one's life, focusing on the wholeness of the person, family, society, and country. A family is not just a private living place. It's the first moral society where kids get taught how to handle authority, affection, duty, order, and self-cultivation. Confucian family education stresses on the importance of ming renlun (clarifying people's roles) and tries to cultivate good qualities like diligence, harmony, humility, loyalty, filial piety, devotion etc. (Wang, 2017) So family education in this model is closely linked with character formation.

A standout point about Confucian family training is that it stresses how ethical the trainer needs to be. Wang (2017) mentions that in Confucian writings, it is constantly said that if you wish to "rectify the family," then you need first to "rectify yourself." Children and spouses are taught through the house rules, rituals, argumentation, and guidance given by their parents as well as the example set by seniors. Model demonstration is no trivial matter, it's a crystallization of practical wisdom in Confucian education. Li (1998) also states that as the child is living near about everyday with his/her parent(s), and start learning things by imitating, so before getting own set of judgment, starts using repeating what parents say or do. So it is in the sense that family education is affected by the child copying his parent's dispositions - good and bad.

It holds especially true with a Confucian cultural background since authority within the family is considered morally so. It is presumed that parents have to lead, yet this leading can only be legitimate if it comes with self-control, persistence, and self-cultivation. The Confucianist family education is against over-permissive neglect as well, yet it doesn't equate educating with coercing. Wang (2017) stresses the idea that combining knowing love with knowing teaching is also a Confucian belief. That is to say, it should always come along with proper instruction. And thus, the parental educator should have an evident mixture of care and moral discipline. This cultural logic makes parent's role modelling have very powerful influence to society.

And it still matters today as modern China talks about how to educate a family. Zhan (2020) believed that family education is still the primary form of education and an important foundation for school and society's education; in the current era of Chinese family education discourse, emphasis on the concept of family, family instructions, and family values can be seen. Although the circumstances of society have changed greatly, still, there is a high expectation for parents to teach through their words and deeds. In ordinary family life, it is manifested in things like "parent is the first teacher for their child," "a good example is better than any teaching." These are not just catchphrases; they reflect a continuing cultural idea: when it comes to educating a kid, nothing can be done without parents being something.

For my current argument, this is the key thing to remember: it means that Confucian family education gives a culture in which parents do things that matter very much and

in which children will feel they must do too. And it won't magically make good things happen. Can support for rearing and can strengthen authoritarianism but if they think that all their education is about getting a high mark then it could also increase pressure. It is what matters about the performance of Confucian values. When they are carried out by self-cultivation and good example, it will reinforce the constructive aspects of family education. Commanded when carried out with no example, it would make for compliance without true belief.

III. IS DIRECT PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT HAVING MIXED RESULT ON KIDS' SCHOOLWORK?

Modern parenting research is a good beginning but it doesn't really explain how families educate. Parental involvement on average has to do with having more successful academics. Castro et al., 2015, found a general positive link between Parental involvement and Academic achievement; also Şengönül, 2022 found that Reading with children, having big hopes for your kid, talking about school stuff, and helping out at home in learning tend to help with their success at school. Sara et al. (2026) have similarly found out that certain home-based activities like having discussions about school results, eating dinners together, and motivating children to do well on their exams are linked with Cambodian secondary students' scores on tests.

But this good pattern is not even. Hill and Tyson (2009) found out that the appropriate developmental form of involvement was better for adolescents than direct homework control. Guo et al., 2017, they have also found out from the data taken from an upper elementary school sample which shows that after controlling for all variables there exists no relationship between parental educational involvement on the success of the child. Instead, it was due to the interaction between the educational aspiration of children and their academic self-efficacy. When students' self-efficacy was high and aspirations were also high, Parental involvement (negatively) predicted Students achievement; When students' self-efficacy were high but aspirations were low, Parental involvement(positively) predicted Students achievement; when student's self-efficacy is less than 0.574, it does not matter whether the parent is involved or not. It means the involvement has some sort of meaning based off how a child is psychologically interpreting it.

Others are more cautious as well: Sara et al., (2026) also noted that very frequently discussing future educational plans is negatively related to academic achievement, which implies that there are some kinds of repeated academic talk that can feel like a burden instead of support. Ding (2023) looked at 1,588 kids in light of the "double reduction" guideline and found out that both control and care parenting kinds had good connections with learning stress, yet control was stronger. Importantly parenting style affects Learning anxiety via indirect means by way of achievement and emotional cognition as well as the importance of the path between parenting style, emotional cognition and learning anxiety. Zhao et al. (2022) used a large sample of Beijing junior high school students and found that parental rejection had a negative relationship with academic achievement, but

emotional warmth had a positive correlation with it. The mental health part also got in there, meaning it made things even more helpful from emotional warmth, but bad for rejection.

And these show us that we can't think of parent engagement as having a straight-line in. More is not always more. More intervention does not mean it is better. Educational cultures formed from the sense of responsibility parents have towards their children will see frequent parental involvement in two different ways: It can be felt like being there for a good friend, but also like being watched, not trusted, or pushed around. The same overt behaviour—ask about schools, track grades, set expectations—can mean very different things psychologically based on tone/timing/historical context/child self-efficacy. That's why it tends to be hit-or-miss when we're directly involved.

Confucianism makes sense of it from a Confucian perspective. Family Education isn't for the sake of external control. It works if kids believe what parents expect of them is morally right and makes sense in their relationship. When the parents' words are not based on their own examples, participation will be empty or coercive. Then the child gets it as pressure. But when words and examples are in line, involvement is more apt to be seen as advice based on shared family values. And this move away from pressuring people to legitimacy is when parental role modelling starts to matter.

IV. PARENTAL ROLE MODELLING AS A MISSING MEDIATOR

Parental role modelling: it is a sort of effect caused by parents' observable behaviour, habit, emotion, commitment to values, way of managing themselves towards their children due to frequent observation and imitation. It could be expressed behaviour demonstration, like reading books at home and being patient with hard tasks; it can also be implied behaviour modelling through routine conduct, such as controlling one's emotions when stressed, punctuality, honesty, honor of learning, discipline in using time. Parental modelling in consumer behaviour research separates it into three kinds: Verbal Modelling, Behavioural Modelling and Indirect Modelling and that parent can model later behaviour through various ways of socialization (Fauziah & Yuliati, 2017). Although it is about food choice instead of academics, but the children learning by watching parents repeat over and over is very related to how families teach kids.

Chinese people also think modelling is very important in family education: Li (1998) maintains that parents' habits are key as children pick up and adopt the things they see over and over. Yang (2010) extends it to regard parents, teachers and peers as the most immediate examples, but points out that parental example is especially inevitable due to the fact that they live together with their children daily. In the family the child was not hearing solo performances. The child lives in a moral atmosphere made by the parents. It affects what kinds of effort seems okay, what kinds of efforts are respectable, and what failure means.

Under the influence of Confucian culture, it can also be reinforced with the idea of parental self-cultivation. It does not only model achievement-oriented behaviours but also what it means to learn. When learning is framed as something that can be pursued for life in order to improve

oneself, be humble, and disciplined, the child will probably take it upon themselves to study. If learning was merely performed as pressure for an external reward, the child will do it but feel nothing about studying. So parents as role model convert invisible culture into something which can be felt with eyes.

V. SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY AND INTERNALIZATION MECHANISM

Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura is an effective explanation for how parental role model can influence academic achievement. So here they do not just learn by being reinforced directly but also by watching others, having experiences second hand and feeling good at things themselves. People come to think some behaviours are worth doing and that they can do them too, in part by seeing what the important others do. Children have parents as the most influential models since they are the people who are emotionally significant, close by, and always around.

Parental role model affects the first influence on educational values. What children think matter is by what parents keep on doing. A parent who reads, reflects, finishes the work seriously, views education as inherently worthy of pursuit can communicate that it is worth putting ongoing effort into. Parents who blame everyone else, give up easily and see education as an achievement separate from personal discipline will teach very differently. Since Confucian family culture makes diligence and betterment virtuous, it is especially powerful in the form of what parents do. Educational expectations thus are not just words being spoken; they get included in what the child already views as good or bad.

Second, parent's own behaviour affects the child's academic self-efficacy. Academic self-efficacy is the confidence a person has that they are able to arrange and carry out actions in order to meet the demands of school. It's probably the best predictor of how well you'll do academically. The positive connection between academic self-efficacy and academic achievement, Academic support relation condition affecting Academic is part of it through the effect of self-efficacy. I & Zhao (2021)'s Meta plane equation structuring modelled this. Also like what Wu & Fu (2024) found out from their met - analysis about self -efficacy concerning the mediational role of learning engagement for achievement goal directions-->academic success. Li & Jiang (2023) found that academic achievement was also able to predict positively on the academic self-efficacy of primary school students again but this time learning stress and self-esteem were meditated. These indicate there's a sort of give-and-take loop between believing you can do well and doing well in school.

Parental role model can enter the loop by showing examples of it being possible to keep working for a long time, regulate oneself, and stay emotionally composed. When kids watch their parents dealing calmly with setbacks, organizing stuff, reading every day, and being confident instead of panicking, they get a good example of how to deal with problems. The model doesn't transfer just the particular subject knowledge by itself. It gives an impression of being capable-in-action. Since they are parent's significant others, it would be more persuasive because of modelled behaviour.

Children who take these models inside of themselves will be children who believe they can also get at the disciplined academic effort. In that sense it is a role model before, below, and above more obvious forms of parent participation.

VI. ROLE MODELLING, SELF-REGULATION, CONTROL OF EMOTIONS

Third, it is connected by way of parents' modelling for their children's self-regulated learning and emotion control. One's success in academia is dependent not only upon their intellect, but also upon planning ability, persistence, delaying gratification, withstanding frustration, and being able to manage one's attention and emotions while studying. They have to do with what the students are seeing happening all around them, too.

Recently, the Chinese evidence points out that education has some self-regulatory process. Yang et al., (2026) found that the parents, teachers autonomy support affected both the primary & secondary students' cognitive control through the intermediary of their self-regulation of learning and emotion regulation. Although that one looked at autonomy support versus not role-modelling this, it still makes a lot of sense, family influences how well we do academically partly because when families model good self-regulation behaviour it can boost our confidence around regulating our emotions as well. Role modelling is one way for this to be learned. The kids who watched calm parents solving problems, the measured disappointments, the disciplined time and goal management, they got some solid examples to learn from on how to deal with themselves.

And this is how we know why controlling parents often cause anxiety. Ding (2023) found parenting style influence learning anxiety especially by means of emotion cognition. If parents make achievements into a constant source of friction without showing how to manage emotions healthily, children will see study as something scary instead of an obstacle. Zho uet al. (2022) also show emotional warmth is good and rejection bad, mental health affects this association strength. The implication of this sentence is that emotions are not separate from studying. It's one piece of it. It's role-modelling that makes the difference, teaching children how they should feel about trying, going wrong and being judged. When parents are composed, persevere, and have real standards they are helping with academics. They model panic, irritability, or contempt and then they undermine it.

So role modelling is different than but intertwined with how one parent. Warm, authoritative parenting will probably make the good models look even better to kids. The harsh parenting might still show some kind of discipline, but the lesson learned could be out of fear or on the defensive instead. And this explains one way that the same level of academic engagement can look very different from family to family. We must read the visible behaviour as part of the overall model way of being.

VII. ROLE MODELLING IS CULTURAL CAPITAL IN THE FAMILY

Parental role modelling also transmits family culture, which is a kind of achievement. In terms of research about socioeconomic status and family education, it shows that

parents' education, occupation, expectation, parenting belief could affect families' educational behaviour. The child's family socio-economic status and also its parents' belief regarding which approach is ideal for raising children according to them, has been shown through utilization of the CFPS dataset by Zhao (2024). Higher education's make people more apt to pick the Authoritative style, and it does so based on occupation as well: It was found in previous research that there is a positive correlation between family's socioeconomic status and learning engagement. Academic self-efficacy completely mediates the effect of the family's socioeconomic status on student engagement (Shi et al, 2013). Şengonul (2022) came to the same conclusion: socioeconomic status conditions what families get out of being involved as parents, partly via different cultural capital.

Confucian framework doesn't think that cultural capital is just for money or education. It has embodied habits like way of speaking, discipline, reverence toward study, emotional restraint, daily practice involving books and ideas. And these are exactly the sorts that kids take in on watching their parents. Parents who don't even tutor their kids in school can still create an atmosphere at home that's so normalized for kids to be focused and able to delay gratification and be achievement oriented. Contrariwise, when parents say one thing about education yet live lives that are disorganized, undisciplined and unintellectually oriented, then their passing on of educative values becomes fainter.

This point is crucial in explaining how it is not enough just to have parents' expectations. It is found in research that higher parental expectation will result in more success, but it can be stressful or empty if the parental expectations are not supported by a family process. Parental involvement literature has the most robust relationship when it comes to parents aspirations and expectations (Şengönül, 2022). But Guo et al., 2017 found that expectations interact with self-efficacy in a very complicated way. Role modelling helps us see why: When expectations become real because they're part of a family kids can watch and believe in. Without embodiment they are demands. As a result, role modelling is how family cultural values get turned into students' dispositions and then from there into performance.

VIII. CONCEPTUAL MEDIATION MODEL

Based on the above discussion, a concept mediation model can be constructed. Independent background conditions are Confucian family culture which stresses on cultivation of oneself, setting a good example to others, hard work, family duty, and respect towards education. Mediator is parental role model and is understood to be the child's continuous observation of parent's behaviour which embody such values in daily life. The child's school performance is the dependent variable. The mediator and achievement have some middle psychological paths in between: academic self-efficacy, self-control during learning process, emotion management and internalized view on education.

This is the summary of the model:

Confucian family education values - > parents' demonstration behaviour - > students 'academic self-efficacy /self-regulation/control/emotional learning educational values - > academic success

And the model also has some boundary conditions. How parents behave will make the model either look good or bad. Authoritative warmth probably would make it more positive, rejection and over-control could probably contort role modelling. Socioeconomic status sets up the resources by way of which role modelling happens, yet it doesn't dispose of the significance of modelling in resource-scarce ones. Indeed, it can be said that good parent participation and educational direction may be even more helpful to poor kids if it reduces education risks as shown by Şengönül (2022). Also it matters what developmental stage: what is right for childhood can be wrong for adolescence, with non-controlling forms of example becoming more important.

This mediation model adds 2 things to the literature. First, explain why family education in Confucian settings can't just be understood through the amount of parental academic intervention. Second, to give us a culture of big values going to little student's results. The background of Confucian has no magical and uniform effect on success. By way of the embodied doings of parents that children take in, interpret, and take on.

IX. IMPLICATIONS FOR FAMILY EDUCATION PRACTICE

If parents' own roles are an important way that this mediation happens, then educating kids shouldn't just be about watching them and pressuring them to do well academically. Parents also need help knowing how to watch over kids as well as how to become attractive examples of learners and self-regulators. This has some practical meanings.

Firstly, the family education should focus on parents' self-cultivation. In Confucian culture, just telling your parents to care about you isn't enough. Encourage parents to show regular reading, discipline, emotional composure, respect towards teachers, and positive response to difficulty. So, they make the house a place where doing well is rewarded but not through constant coercion.

Second, school treat cooperation between school and family as a kind of alignment of educational values, not simply the call for parents to do more. Although Epstein's framework is still helpful in organizing family-school collaboration, it does not mean that any effort will do. Instead, it is up to school to show parents how to be supportive means showing, modelling, studying habits, emotional well-being, and solving problems on your own at home.

Third, calibrate the expectations of parents. Confucian family education has always regarded the cultivation of character over mere preparation for the exam itself. When they are detached from that larger moral purpose, then they can feel like conditional acceptances to children. Role-modelling view expects parents to couple their expectations by what can be seen of patience, constancy, real effort.

Fourth, future family education policy of China should give more emphasis to being an example. Today's talk much about parenting knowledge, digital skills, teaching advice – all important. But the deeper question is do the parents embody what it is that they want their children to become? So, speaking, parental modelling is not something that can

be added as a choice to family education; rather it is one of the most important ways.

X. LIMITATIONS AND WHAT'S AHEAD

This is a conceptual paper; it requires being proven true. Future studies should view parental role modelling as something different from other forms of parent involvement and consider it in terms by itself. Researchers may further break down behavioural, verbal and indirect modelling and see which is the best for everything from school self-efficacy, self-regulation, achievement over time. Longitudinal designs would be very helpful here as it is a matter of role model and could have a reciprocal process over time.

Future work should look at different Confucian influenced environments, and find some variation within China itself. It's the background of Confucianism that is not uniform; it has been interacting with urbanization, classes, families, digital media and even changing education policies. Moreover, the role modelling of fathers and mothers will also be different, and it depends on whether they are boys or girls, their personality, and how old their children are. Lastly, it's important that we clarify the interaction between parent role modelling and teacher support because what they do as families and at school affect student efficacy and achievement.

XI. CONCLUSION

We can't fully grasp the connection between family education and kids' academic success just by looking at how much parents are involved. Parental involvement does have positive effects, yet they can be unstable as children do not merely react to what their parents do to them; rather, they also react to who the parent is before them. Under the influence of Confucian culture, it has more significance. In Confucian family education, parents' cultivation of themselves, being credible and educating by example are all very important. So these traditions imply that modelling by parents isn't some trivial part of family education; it's one of the main ways it happens.

The author in this paper argues that parental role modelling is the mediator between Confucian family education and academic success through children who then develop educational value, academic self-efficacy, self-regulation learning and emotional control. When parents' expectations are supported by evident diligence, self-control, emotional steadiness and reverence for study, then children will be able to turn family education into lasting academic drive and achievement. If the expectation is not supported by an example, family education can turn to pressure and cause anxiety and opposition. Therefore, the best way to educate a child in such an environment is not by controlling the child, but by controlling the parent.

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