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AUTHOR Thomas, Laura K.; Chambliss, Catherine
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ABSTRACT

As Americans interact more and more with the Japanese on a national level, it will become increasingly imperative that the intricacies of Japanese culture and how it differs from American culture are understood. The primary goal of this research is to determine the differences between Japanese and American respondents' attitudes toward women and maternal employment. Generational and gender differences in both countries are also addressed. Six hypotheses are evaluated to assess the effects of nationality, generation, and sex on attitudes toward women and on attitudes about maternal employment. Japanese (N=89) and American (N=50) psychology students and their parents participated. The "Attitudes toward Women Scale" and the "Beliefs about the Consequences of Maternal Employment for Children" scale were employed. Demographic data was gathered from both students and parents. The completed questionnaire, involving both scales and demographic data in separate versions for parents and children, was translated by a native Japanese speaker. ANOVA results are presented in tables, for the scales; main and interaction effects are discussed and related to cultural differences. (Contains 23 references.) (EMK)

# Educating Students about Cultural Differences in Attitudes toward Women: Comparing American and Japanese College Students and their Parents

Laura K. Thomas

Catherine Chambliss, Ph.D.

Ursinus College

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Increasing interest in cross-cultural studies and indigenous psychologies has been prompted by growing international communication and economic interdependence. A variety of psychological differences across countries has been reported in the literature. (Shokouhi-Behnam & Chambliss, 1996). As we as a nation interact more and more with Japan, it will become increasingly imperative that we understand the intricacies of that culture and how it differs from our own. The primary goal of this research is to determine the differences between Japanese and American respondents' attitudes toward women and maternal employment, using the 25-item version of the Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS, Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1973) and the Beliefs About the Consequences of Maternal Employment for Children (BACMEC, Greenberger et al, 1988). Secondarily, generational and gender difference in both countries will be addressed.

Gibbons, Stiles, and Shkodriani (1991) focused on various nationalities and how their attitudes toward gender and familial roles differed. A second purpose of this study was to discover more about the Attitudes toward Women Scale for Adolescents (AWSA), which was derived from the Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS) which is used in the present study. The subjects were international students attending two schools in the Netherlands, whose countries of origin were separated into two groups clustered on the basis of proximity and similarity of cultural norms. Group 1 included countries with greater cultural emphasis on individualism; they tended have a higher gross national product. Group 2 contained more collectivist countries.

Since Group 1 included the US, and Group 2 included Japan, the results of the Gibbons et al study are relevant here. Adolescents from countries in Group 2 responded more traditionally on measures assessing the rights and roles of girls and boys in education, sports, and dating, and referring to adult roles in parenting and housework than adolescents from Group1. In both groups, significant sex differences were found: girls responded less traditionally than boys. The subjects with the most traditional views were boys from Group 2 countries. The study found that adolescents' attitudes reflect cultural values in general. It also found that adolescents in the US who held traditional gender roles reported greater involvement with their families. This suggests the possibility that closer relationships to the family may lead to more traditional values. Thus, countries like Japan with a very high sense of family would also show more traditionality of values than the US.

Even though the Gibbons et al study focused on adolescents, children's interests have been shown to be affected by the traditionality of their mother's occupation as well as by other factors (Barak et al., 1991). In Japan, the women most likely to be employed are those of middle age, in rural surroundings, with less educated husbands on the periphery of the work force. The wives of the classic "Salaryman" seem to be less likely to work outside the home (Naoi & Schooler, 1990). In fact, in recent years there has been a rise in the number of Salarymen and an increasing number of Professional Housewives in Japan (Management and Coordination Agency, 1994). Since the traditionality of mother's lifestyle in Japan is actually increasing, their children's attitudes might be expected to be becoming similarly more traditionally sex typed. The first hypothesis of

the present study is that overall, Japanese subjects will respond more traditionally on the Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS) than their American counterparts.

The second hypothesis is that college students from both countries will respond in a more egalitarian way than their parents. Over time, students have become more egalitarian (Spence & Hahn, 1997). Age has always significantly predicted sex-role, attitudes with older persons reporting more traditional attitudes (Spence & Hahn, 1997; McHugh & Frieze, 1997; Twenge, 1997). If the current findings are consistent with these previous studies, the college students should respond more liberally than their parents.

The third hypothesis is that women will respond more liberally than men. Sex of the respondent has been significantly associated with attitudes (Spence & Hahn, 1997; McHugh & Frieze, 1997; Twenge, 1997). In regards to the Japanese cohort, Matsui (1989) found, using a short form of the AWS, that Japanese men held more traditional values than did the women. Women might be expected to hold more egalitarian views because they have more to gain socially, economically, and personally from the adoption of these attitudes. In fact, after exploring twenty-five years of research involving the AWS, Twenge (1997) found that women's scores became steadily more liberal without any slowdown, and gender differences were found at every point in time. As women become more and more prominent in the world, their scores suggest that their attitudes reflect this changed position in societies. This tendency for females to espouse more egalitarian attitudes is expected to be found in the current study.

General attitudes toward women have an obvious impact on the expected role of women in the economic realm. Negative beliefs about women's capabilities can constrain their opportunities to contribute in the world of work, while positive attitudes can free

them to be equally productive. American and Japanese attitudes about the traditional division of labor between men and women differ substantially. The International Social Survey Programme by the University of Koln, Germany (1994), found that 43.8% of Japanese men and 35.4% of Japanese women agreed in response to the statement, "A man's job is to earn money and a woman's job is to look after the home." In contrast, only 27.2% of American men and 23.1% of American women agreed.

The male-female wage differential is smaller in countries where husbands help with the housework. Japan was rated the lowest of the countries surveyed in female wage as a percentage of male wages. Japan also ranked lowest in husbands' degree of cooperation in housework. The United States ranked much higher on both of these indicators (Ministry of Labor, 1994; U.S. Department of Commerce, 1994).

Another manifestation of a culture's ideas about the economic role of women are its attitudes toward maternal employment. Traditionally, Japanese women have not been employed after marriage (Naoi & Schooler, 1990). Ten to fifteen years after marriage, Japanese women typically reenter the work force in a part-time position with lower pay. Due to these patterns, most companies assign women to clerical or administrative positions, regardless of college major or ability. Also, many Japanese women lose the opportunity to advance to a higher position as a result of temporarily withdrawing from the workplace (Matsui et al, 1991). This fosters Japanese women's tendency to make career less of a priority which in turn perpetuates the centrality of children to their lives by avoiding the creation of an alternative source of self-esteem and satisfaction. Japanese mothers' relationships with their children are considered extremely important. In contrast, in the U.S. 59.8% of females over the age of sixteen currently participate in the work

force (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1998). In America, the most dramatic change in women's labor force activity has occurred among married women with children at home (Greenberger et al, 1988). It is hypothesized that the Japanese cohort will perceive more costs and fewer benefits of maternal employment, as measured by the BACMEC, than the American cohort.

Due to the fact that more women have been working in America than in Japan, the college students in America will have been more exposed to maternal employment. Because of this exposure they are expected to perceive more benefits and fewer costs than the Japanese students. It is anticipated that the American students will not perceive that they themselves have been harmed by their mothers working. This is a subset of the fourth hypothesis, which is that Americans on the whole will perceive greater benefits and fewer costs of maternal employment than the Japanese.

Hypothesis five is that age will be significantly related to perception of both the Costs and Benefits subscales of the BACMEC. Across countries, younger people are expected to perceive greater benefits and fewer costs than their parents. According to Greenberger et al (1988), cost scores on the BACMEC increased with age, and benefits scores declined with age. Younger people perceived more benefits and fewer costs of maternal employment. The younger cohort of this study consists of college students that are currently preparing for their careers. It is reasonable to assume that because they are expending so much time and energy on their education that they will continue their careers along with any family plans.

It is further hypothesized that there will be a significant sex effect for both the Benefits and the Costs subscales, with women perceiving more benefits and fewer costs

of maternal employment for children. Sex has often been found to be a significant factor when using the BACMEC, or in any discussion of the effects of women's working on children (Greenberger et al, 1988; Hyde & McKinley, 1993; Willets-Bloom & Nock, 1994; Bridges & Orza, 1993; Bridges & Etaugh, 1995). Women who work outside the home have been found to have higher self-esteem and life-style satisfaction (Kleinplatz et al, 1992). This may reduce their tendency to see maternal employment as harmful, in part in order to rationalize what is optimal for them. Greenberger and O'Neil (1992) took the position that fathers of employed mothers may perceive more problems with their children because of the increased role fathers must play because their wives are working. This increased role may produce more tension and may breed less tolerance for children's misbehavior. Thus, fathers might be expected to perceive more costs and fewer benefits than the mothers. Females have more to gain if maternal employment is viewed in a positive light. Females' desire to combine both work and family responsibilities may motivate them to perceive that maternal employment is beneficial or at least not harmful for their children (or the children that they wish to have one day.) Males, on the other hand, are not usually saddled with the expectation to stay home with the family, the belief that children require one non-employed parent is less burdensome for them. Therefore, it may be easier for men to perceive maternal employment as costly. The final hypothesis is that females are expected to perceive maternal employment as being associated with more benefits and fewer costs than men.

Previous research on Japanese and American college students by Luck, Bang, and Chambliss (1994) found both nationality and sex differences in attitudes towards maternal employment. The present study represents an extension of this work.

## Hypotheses

1. There will be a main effect for nationality on the Attitude toward Women Scale, with the Japanese responding more traditionally than the American cohort.

2. There will be a main effect for generation. College students are expected to respond in a more egalitarian fashion on the AWS than their parents.

3. There will be a main effect for sex on the AWS. Men are expected to respond in a less egalitarian manner than women.

4. There will be a main effect for nationality on the Beliefs About the Consequences of Maternal Employment for Children. The Japanese respondents are expected to perceive more costs and fewer benefits than the American respondents.

5. There will be a main effect for generation. College students are expected to perceive more benefits and fewer costs of maternal employment than their parents.

6. There will be a main effect for sex with women perceiving more benefits and fewer costs in regards to maternal employment than men.

## Methods

### Participants

Forty-four male (mean age 19.6) and forty-five female (mean age 19.7) Japanese college students from an Introduction to Language class participated. Due to the nature of the class, all majors were represented. Through these students, thirty-five male (mean age 51.2) and thirty-six female (mean age 47.6) parents answered the questionnaire. From an introductory psychology class, twenty-one male (mean age 18.9) and twenty-nine female (mean age 18.8) American college students were involved. Fourteen male (mean age 47.9) and thirteen female (mean age 44.3) parents of the students responded. The Japanese subjects were not given compensation for their participation. American

students received one point extra credit for their own completed questionnaires and another point if their parents completed the questionnaire.

Measures

The questionnaire consisted of the 25-item version of the Attitude toward Women Scale (AWS; Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1973) and the 24-item Beliefs About the Consequences of Maternal Employment for Children (BACMEC; Greenberger et al, 1988). The 25-item version of the AWS was found to be a valid measure of feminist attitudes (Kilpatrick & Smith, 1974). An analyses of both students and parent samples indicated that scores on the 25-itme form are almost perfectly correlated with scores of the full set of 55 items (Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1973). The factor structure of the AWS has essentially remained unchanged since its construction in 1973. Current research notes a marked negative skew for the distribution toward the egalitarian extreme, especially in women. This is indicative of a possible ceiling effect for women, but it is less marked in men. However, there is sufficient within-group variability for the scale to retain its utility (Spence & Hahn, 1997).

Greenberger et al (1988) found in an examination of the reliability coefficients that the BACMEC scale is internally consistent. The Costs subscale correlations ranged from .88 to .94, and the Benefits subscale correlations ranged from .83 to .91. They found the BACMEC scores are predictive of the views of a broad spectrum of individuals concerning the appropriate timing of women's work, and in the case of women respondents, reflect their own investment in the labor force. The two subscales were shown to be highly reliable and also demonstrated good convergent, divergent, and concurrent validity. Hyde and McKinley (1993) also found the BACMEC to have

excellent internal consistency reliability and both construct and discriminant validity. Bridges and Orza's (1993) findings also support the validity of the BACMEC.

The questionnaire also contained a page of questions assessing various demographic information. There were different pages depending on whether the subject was in the student group or the parent group. The demographic questions were basically the same, only reworded for age and life differences.

Procedure

The questionnaire was assembled in English and then translated by a native speaker into Japanese. For the Japanese cohort, the questionnaires were handed out in an Introduction to Language class, chosen because it contained students of most majors. Students also received parent questionnaires to take to their legal guardians. The questionnaires were then collected in a week's time.

Much the same procedure was followed for the American cohort. However, the class the students were enrolled in was an introductory Psychology class. The students completed the questionnaire in class and then, if agreeable, took the questionnaires home to their legal guardians over Easter and Spring Break.

After stripping any identifying information in order to assure anonymity, the questionnaires were scored and entered, along with the demographic information.

## Results

Using the AWS (Spence and Helmreich), scores from the positive scale was subtracted from the negative scale and a constant was added to compute the total AWS score. A higher score denotes a more egalitarian attitude toward women. Similarly,

summary scores on the BACMEC Benefits and Costs subscales were calculated by totaling the appropriate items for each participant.

Nationality (American versus Japanese), Generation (Young Adult Students versus Parents), and Sex (Male versus Female) effects were evaluated by performing a 2 x 2 x 2 ANOVA on the total AWS score. Significant main effects were found for generation and sex ($p<.03$ and $p<.001$, respectively). There was also a main effect for nationality ($p<.001$). However, there were no significant interactions. The group held the most liberal attitudes toward women were the American female parents. And in support of the hypotheses, the group that held the most traditional views were Japanese male parents (See Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1 and Table 2 about here

2 x 2 x 2 (Nationality, Generation, Sex) ANOVA were performed on the two BACMEC subscales (Benefits and Costs). Significant main effects were found for generation and sex on the Benefits subscale ($p<.03$ and $p<.01$, respectively). Young adult students perceived greater benefits than parents. In addition, females perceived childcare as more beneficial for children than males. However, there was no significant effect of nationality. There was a significant Nationality by Generation interaction effect ($p<.04$) indicated that American students evaluated childcare more positively than their parents and both Japanese groups (See Table 3 and Table 4).

Table 3 and Table 4 about here

On the Costs subscale, several main and interaction effects were significant. Japanese respondents perceived higher costs than their American counterparts ($p<.03$) and males rated costs higher than females ($p<.001$). American students rated costs lower than the other three groups. Male American parents rated costs highest, and differed most from their own daughters. There was no significant main effect of generation. There was a significant Nationality by Generation interaction ($p<.003$). There was also a significant Nationality by Generation by Sex three-way interaction with males, parents, and the Japanese perceiving the greatest costs (See Table 5 and Table 6).

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Table 5 and Table 6 about here

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## Discussion

The majority of the hypotheses are supported by the data. There are significant main effects for nationality, generation, and sex were found on the AWS scale, and significant main effects for generation and sex were found on the Benefits subscale of the BACMEC. On the BACMEC Costs subscale there were significant main effects for nationality and sex. These findings support the idea that the Japanese on the whole hold more traditional views of women and maternal employment than do the Americans. The notion that maternal employment may be hazardous to children is still largely supported in Japan. Thus, problems may be incurred in Japan as their economic situation changes, requiring greater participation of women in the work force. Female Japanese college students may be waiting longer to get married and may decide not to bear children if it

means their careers may be delayed or even terminated. This may lead to problems due to the change in population structure, leaving a much smaller percentage of working adults to take care of the aging population.

College students are more liberal in their attitudes than their parents, and women are more liberal than men. Similar generation effects have been found in a number of studies (Spence & Hahn, 1997; McHugh & Frieze, 1997; Twenge, 1997; Greenberger et al, 1988). Many authors have also observed consistent effects of sex on attitudes toward women and maternal employment (Spence & Hahn, 1997; McHugh & Frieze, 1997; Twenge, 1997; Greenberger et al, 1988; Hyde & McKinley, 1993; Willets-Bloom & Nock, 1994; Bridges & Orza, 1993; Bridges & Etaugh 1995). There are obvious personal advantages of equality for women. Men may be more satisfied with the status quo.

The significant nationality by generation interaction effects on both the subscales of the BACMEC indicate that the effect of nationality depends on the effect of generation. The American cohort perceives significantly more benefits and fewer costs when the Americans are college students. This may be due to the exposure of the American college students to the maternal employment of their own mothers. They have had more exposure than both their own parents and both of the Japanese groups. The average American college student's perception may have been colored by this childhood experience with both parents working, leading them to see more benefits and fewer costs of maternal employment than any other groups. This may also account for the three-way interaction between sex, generation, and nationality on the Costs subscale. The personal experience plus the added sex effect may lead female American college students to perceive the fewest costs.

There are several limitations incurred in the present study. The sample size was small and should be increased in future studies so that different factors could be examined in greater detail. If the sample size of the college student cohort was increased, this would permit a separate analysis on students' beliefs about women and maternal employment of those whose mothers were employed versus students whose mothers were not employed outside the home. This would be a worthwhile extension of his study.

The sample size of the American parents group should also be increased. The return rate for this cohort was the lowest of all the groups. Time did not allow for an increase in sample size but an extension of this work should include a larger sample.

Another factor that may have skewed the results is the traditionality of the location in Japan from which the subjects were drawn. The Japanese college students were from a university in Sendai, which has traditionally been an agricultural community. If the students had been from Tokyo or a more metropolitan area, then the results might not have shown such a marked traditional Japanese way of thinking.

Although most of the hypotheses were supported, an extension of this study might permit a more in-depth investigation of the issues presented here. The data did not reveal many surprises, other than that the highest score on the Costs subscale belonged to American fathers, which has implications for the up and coming female generation of this country. However, the results do indicate the continuing effect of both sex and generation on attitudes toward women and maternal employment. Most importantly, the results also indicate a significant difference in attitudes between the Japanese and Americans. Understanding this and related differences may facilitate more effective international communication and collaboration.

TABLE 1

Three-way (Nationality, Generation, and Sex) ANOVA for Attitudes toward Women Scores

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Noncent. Parameter | Observed Power[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 6558.178[b] | 7 | 936.883 | 9.947 | .000 | 69.627 | 1.000 |
| Intercept | 1000135 | 1 | 1000135 | 10618.254 | .000 | 10618.254 | 1.000 |
| GENERAT | 456.241 | 1 | 456.241 | 4.844 | .029 | 4.844 | .592 |
| NATIONAL | 2589.409 | 1 | 2589.409 | 27.491 | .000 | 27.491 | .999 |
| SEX | 2529.121 | 1 | 2529.121 | 26.851 | .000 | 26.851 | .999 |
| GENERAT * NATIONAL | 65.320 | 1 | 65.320 | .693 | .406 | .693 | .132 |
| GENERAT * SEX | 220.863 | 1 | 220.863 | 2.345 | .127 | 2.345 | .332 |
| NATIONAL * SEX | 18.515 | 1 | 18.515 | .197 | .658 | .197 | .073 |
| GENERAT * NATIONAL * SEX | 113.992 | 1 | 113.992 | 1.210 | .272 | 1.210 | .195 |
| Error | 21569.536 | 229 | 94.190 | | | | |
| Total | 1224433 | 237 | | | | | |
| Corrected Total | 28127.714 | 236 | | | | | |

a. Computed using alpha = .05

b. R Squared = .233 (Adjusted R Squared = .210)

TABLE 2

Attitudes towards Women Scores for Nationality, Generation, and Sex Groups

| | American | | | Japanese | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | n | M | SD | n | M | SD |
| College Students | | | | | | |
| male | 21 | 74.5 | 7.5 | 44 | 67.4 | 12.3 |
| female | 29 | 78.7 | 7.2 | 45 | 73.5 | 6.97 |
| Parent | | | | | | |
| male | 14 | 68.9 | 10.2 | 35 | 62.6 | 12.7 |
| female | 29 | 80.5 | 6.6 | 36 | 69.8 | 9.3 |

TABLE 3

Three-way (Nationality, Generation, and Sex) ANOVA for BACMEC Benefits Subscale

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Noncent. Parameter | Observed Power[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 1672.686[b] | 7 | 238.955 | 2.665 | .011 | 18.655 | .896 |
| Intercept | 424264.3 | 1 | 424264.3 | 4731.617 | .000 | 4731.617 | 1.000 |
| GENERAT | 475.153 | 1 | 475.153 | 5.299 | .022 | 5.299 | .630 |
| NATIONAL | 25.597 | 1 | 25.597 | .285 | .594 | .285 | .083 |
| SEX | 707.261 | 1 | 707.261 | 7.888 | .005 | 7.888 | .799 |
| GENERAT * NATIONAL | 430.008 | 1 | 430.008 | 4.796 | .030 | 4.796 | .587 |
| GENERAT * SEX | 29.982 | 1 | 29.982 | .334 | .564 | .334 | .089 |
| NATIONAL * SEX | 21.740 | 1 | 21.740 | .242 | .623 | .242 | .078 |
| GENERAT * NATIONAL * SEX | 93.453 | 1 | 93.453 | 1.042 | .308 | 1.042 | .174 |
| Error | 20533.470 | 229 | 89.666 | | | | |
| Total | 548187.0 | 237 | | | | | |
| Corrected Total | 22206.156 | 236 | | | | | |

a. Computed using alpha = .05

b. R Squared = .075 (Adjusted R Squared = .047)

TABLE 4

BACMEC Benefits Subscale Scores for Nationality, Generation, and Sex Groups

| | American | | | Japanese | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | n | M | SD | n | M | SD |
| College Students | | | | | | |
| male | 21 | 49.2 | 11.7 | 44 | 44.7 | 9.4 |
| female | 29 | 51.5 | 10.0 | 45 | 48.5 | 9.3 |
| Parent | | | | | | |
| male | 14 | 40.9 | 10.7 | 35 | 45.2 | 9.2 |
| female | 13 | 47.5 | 11.4 | 36 | 47.7 | 7.97 |

TABLE 5

Three-way (Nationality, Generation, and Sex) ANOVA for BACMEC Costs Subscale

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Noncent. Parameter | Observed Power[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 3488.705[b] | 7 | 498.386 | 5.233 | .000 | 36.632 | .998 |
| Intercept | 243261.4 | 1 | 243261.4 | 2554.282 | .000 | 2554.282 | 1.000 |
| GENERAT | 192.396 | 1 | 192.396 | 2.020 | .157 | 2.020 | .293 |
| NATIONAL | 482.845 | 1 | 482.845 | 5.070 | .025 | 5.070 | .611 |
| SEX | 1204.101 | 1 | 1204.101 | 12.643 | .000 | 12.643 | .943 |
| GENERAT * NATIONAL | 894.107 | 1 | 894.107 | 9.388 | .002 | 9.388 | .862 |
| GENERAT * SEX | 102.385 | 1 | 102.385 | 1.075 | .301 | 1.075 | .178 |
| NATIONAL * SEX | 10.052 | 1 | 10.052 | .106 | .746 | .106 | .062 |
| GENERAT * NATIONAL * SEX | 374.775 | 1 | 374.775 | 3.935 | .048 | 3.935 | .506 |
| Error | 21809.202 | 229 | 95.237 | | | | |
| Total | 329505.0 | 237 | | | | | |
| Corrected Total | 25297.907 | 236 | | | | | |

a. Computed using alpha = .05

b. R Squared = .138 (Adjusted R Squared = .112)

TABLE 6

BACMEC Cost Subscale Scores for Nationality, Generation, and Sex Groups

| | American | | | Japanese | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | n | M | SD | n | M | SD |
| College Students | | | | | | |
| male | 21 | 31.4 | 10.2 | 44 | 41.2 | 8.5 |
| female | 29 | 30.2 | 10.5 | 45 | 35.3 | 8.1 |
| Parent | | | | | | |
| male | 14 | 41.9 | 11.4 | 35 | 37.5 | 11.7 |
| female | 13 | 32.2 | 11.97 | 36 | 34.3 | 8.5 |

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Organization/Address: Dept. of Psychology, Ursinus College, Collegeville, PA 19426

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