연변 조선족 아동의 학교적응에 대한 생태학적 접근*

School Adjustment of Korean-Chinese Chidren: Ecological Factors in Yanbian*

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ABSTRACT

The subjects of this study were 258 Korean-Chinese parent-child dyads of an elementary school in Yanbian Province, northeastern China. Research questions covered relationships among children's school adjustment and ecological factors, significance of factors within ecological levels, and direct and indirect effects in causal relationships. Results showed significant effects within each ecological level. Achievement motivation of the individual system, home environment and social support of the microsystem, and mother's job satisfaction in the exosystem had significant relationships with children's school adjustment. Mother's education and job satisfaction influenced school adjustment through home environment; the causal relationship between social support and school adjustment was mediated by achievement motivation. Personal and general factors from each ecological level were more significant than ethnic related factors in explaining children's school adjustment.

Key Words : 학교적응(school adjustment), 생태학적 접근(ecological approach), 연변 아동(Korean-Chinese children in Yanbian).

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I. INTRODUCTION

Korean emigration to foreign countries is continuously and extensively growing. Children of Korean immigrants in foreign countries confront various challenges within a culture and social system different from that of Korea, and may have difficulties with their psychological and social adjustment. Immigrants go through acculturation and adjustment into mainstream culture differently depending on race, culture, and social system (Aycan & Kanungo, 1998; Lin & Fu, 1990; Falbo, T., Doh, H., Lee, R., & Park, S, 2000), and acculturation of Korean immigrants occurs differently in western society and Asian society (Falbo et al, 2000). Yanbian province in China, in that sense, is a unique area where Korean-Chinese immigrants preserve Korean traditional culture and language while adjusting to Chinese society as a mainstream culture. As a minority group, an important area of inquiry with regard to understanding Korean culture and preserving ethnic identity as Koreans is the education of children, which will influence children's development throughout lifetime. It is worth studying Korean-Chinese children's adjustment and acculturation in Yanbian province which may lead them to make different psychological adjustments at school.

Although some studies of Korean-Chinese children have been conducted, a multiple level ecological approach has not often been applied to examining predictors of school adjustment in Korean-Chinese children. This paper will consider two emphases of Human Ecological Systems

theory: One is the interaction between children and their environment, and the other is the multiple system levels of the environment(Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The microsystem consists of face-to-face activities as well as roles and interpersonal relationships which a person experiences. The exosystem is made up of settings that influence a person indirectly even though the person is not directly present in the settings. The macrosystem, in which the other systems are embedded, is the largest system.

Although some studies of Korean-Chinese residents of Yanbian have been conducted regarding acculturation(Park, Kim, & Doh, 2000) and child-rearing(Cho, Lee, & Yoon, 1993), there is still a lack of research on children's psychological and social adjustment in the school environment in Yanbian. As children grow and enter school, the importance of school adjustment in child development grows bigger(Kim, 1987).

School adjustment in this study is defined as having positive emotions and attitudes toward school, based on the work of Rhee, Kim, and Oh(2001) and Belsky, Lerner, and Spanier(1984) who defined it as harmony a child may have with the school environment. That is, school adjustment is well achieved when children show intimate and positive attitude toward school.

Research has identified a range of ecological factors related to children's school environment. These factors span most of the systems in the children's ecology including exo-, micro-, and individual systems. Specifically, Korean-Chinese children in Yanbian may face ecological factors of cultural, ethnic, and immigrant issues as well

as general ecological factors. Although some studies were conducted on Korean-Chinese residents of Yanbian, few were interested in studying their ethnic and immigrant issues on multiple ecological levels. This study will investigate the factors related to ethnic and immigrant issues which are meaningful to Korean-Chinese children because of their link to Chinese culture and society, as well as other general factors which are applicable to all children regardless of ethnic background. In the exosystem, mother's education and mothers' job satisfaction for exosystem will be identified as the general ecological factors affecting school adjustment. In the microsystem, general ecological factors such as home environment and social support, and the influence of cultural and immigrant issues such as parents' perception of the importance of Chinese language education will be investigated as predictors of school adjustment. Not only general ecological factors such as achievement motivation, but also ethnicallyrelated ecological factors such as ethnic identity will be identified as predictors of school adjustment in the individual system.

In the exosystem, previous research showed some significant relationships between general ecological factors and school adjustment. Mothers' education, representing family socio-economic status, was reported to be significant predictor. It was found that family socio-economic status is related to child development(Kim, 1997). Children from lower socio-economic status are less likely to have a family environment which can help children's school adjustment. Mothers' job satisfaction also explained children's adjustment(Kim & Ji, 2000).

Children of mothers who are satisfied with their job may have a more independent and achievement-oriented attitude. Mothers with a job spend less time with their children, but try to compensate for this by having higher quality interaction(Chin, 1994), and mothers satisfied with their job may have less stress and be more eager to adopt a role which may positively influence their children's school adjustment. Belsky(1984) focused on mother's attitude toward their job rather than their having a job itself in explaining child development. He proposed that when mothers are satisfied with their job and so have better interaction with their children, children can obtain positive developmental results.

As for the factors in the microsystem, many studies found that peer support is related to children's school adjustment. Supportive peer relationships increase positive attitudes toward school while conflict with peers increases negative attitudes toward school(Hwang, 1998; Kim, 2000). It was argued that a supportive peer relationship itself helps children to overcome challenges in the school (Ladd, 1996) which may lead them to like school(Rhee, Kim, & Oh, 2001). According to Rhee, Kim, and Oh(2001), children with satisfactory and intimate friendships showed more positive attitudes toward school and classmates. That is, children's attitudes toward school were more positive when they were supported by peers socially and emotionally. Moon and Sim(2001) found that positive friendship quality and friendship satisfaction are related to school adjustment. Berndt and Keefe1995) also supported the positive relationship between intimate friendship and school adjustment. Children who have intimate relationships with their teacher were found to have positive attitudes toward the school environment(Birch & Ladd, 1997). It was also indicated by Lee and Chung (1999) that student-teacher relationships were directly related to school adjustment.

Home environment provided by parents, including physical environment for child education at home, has also been reported to have a relationship with positive parenting which may lead children to better adjustment (Benasich & Brooks-Gunn, 1996). That is, children who experience a desirable home environment have parents with positive parenting and better childrearing knowledge which provide children with more opportunities for school adjustment.

As a microsystem factor related to an ethnic issue, parents' perception of the importance of Chinese language education appears to have dual aspects. On one hand, Korean culture and Chinese culture are both Asian culture. Under the influence of Asian values, it is predictable that Korean-Chinese parents emphasize academic achievement to their children. It was reported by Okagaki and Frensch(1998) that Asian-American parents, when compared to other ethnic groups, showed higher expectations for children's school achievement, especially academic achievement. Chao(1996) also found that Chinese immigrants, when compared to European and American mothers, more strenuously emphasize academic achievement to their children. This Asian value may lead Korean-Chinese parents to more strongly perceive the importance of Chinese language education. On the other hand, Korean Chinese parents have a different ecological background than both Korean and Chinese people because they reside in Yanbian province, where Korean culture and language is preserved within Chinese society. This may let Korean-Chinese parents perceive the importance of Chinese language education more strongly because they are living in China, where Chinese is used, or less strongly because they stay in the Yanbian area, where Korean is used.

As a factor on the individual level, ethnic identity is reported to be related to positive development. McMahon and Watts(2002) found that ethnic identity was associated with positive feelings about health-related outcomes, such as active coping strategies and fewer aggressive behaviors which are important components of school adjustment.

As many studies have focused on the relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance as a measure of school adjustment (Accordino, Accordino, & Slaney, 2000; Nolen, 2003; Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998) and less studies have shown interest in emotion and attitude toward school, it is necessary to investigate the relationship between achievement motivation and school adjust- ment in the aspect of emotion and attitude.

Based on these previous studies, this study will investigate how ecological factors influence Korean-Chinese children's school adjustment.

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1) Are there significant relationships between Korean- Chinese children's school adjustment and ecological factors?

- 2) Which factors from various ecological levels have significant influence on Korean-Chinese children's school adjustment?
- 3) Are there any causal relationships among school adjustment and ecological factors including direct and indirect effect?

II. METHODS

1. Participants

The participants were 258 Korean-Chinese 4th grade children and their 46 fathers, 145 mothers, and 67 caregivers (including grandmothers) residing in Yanbian, China. Children and one of the child's parents or other caregivers responded the questionnaire. Korean-Chinese children consist of 123 boys (47.7%) and 135 girls (52.3%). More than 58% of Korean-Chinese fathers were between age 36 and 40, and the average of fathers' age was 39.32. Over 41% of mothers were under age 35 and the average of mothers's age was 36.60.

The characteristics of participants are displayed in <Table 1>.

Table 1. Characteristics of participants. (N=258)

Variables	Groups	
Children's sex	Boys	123(47.7%)
Cinidren's sex	Girls	135(52.3%)
A. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.	Under 35	23(8.9%)
Father's age	36~40	150(58.2%)
rainer's age	Girls 135(52.3%) Under 35 23(8.9%) 36~40 150(58.2%) Over 41 61(23.6%) missing 24(9.3%) Under 35 108(41.9%) 36~40 103(39.9%)	61(23.6%)
	missing	24(9.3%)
	Under 35	108(41.9%)
Mother's age	36~40	103(39.9%)
	Over 41	28(10.8%)
	missing	19(7.4%)

2. Measures

1) School Adjustment

School adjustment was defined in this study as emotional attitude toward school, that is, how children feel about school. Participants responded five items used by Yoon(1994). Higher scores indicate better adjustment at school. Cronbach's alpha for the scale is .66.

2) Mother's education

An item measured mother's education, Participants were able to choose from five response categories from 1(elementary school) to 5(college). Higher scores indicate higher educational level.

3) Mother's job satisfaction

An item was used to ask how much mothers were satisfied with their job. Higher scores indicate that mothers are more satisfied with their job.

4) Home environment

Home environment in this study was defined as allocation of home physical environment for child education and wellbeing including enough room or books for a child. It was operated by asking four items out of HOME developed by Cradwell and Bradley(1984) and translated into Korean by Lee(1985). Higher scores indicate better home environment. KR-20 reliability produced by Lee (1985) was .87.

5) Parents' perception of the importance of Chinese language education An item was used to measure how important parents consider Chinese language education is. Higher scores indicate that Korean-Chinese parents perceive Chinese language education more important.

6) Social support

Social support in this study was defined as peer support and teachers' support in school environment. Four items were used to measure peer support and teacher support based on social support scale used by Ku(2000). Participants responded to a 4-point scale. Higher scores indicate greater social support. Cronbach's alpha for the scale is .68.

Achievement Motivation

The definition of achievement motivation included aspiration level and upward mobility. Five items from Herman's A Questionnaire Measure of Achievement Motivation(Herman, 1970) were used in a 4-point scale. Higher scores indicate greater achievement motivation. Cronbach's alpha for the scale is .51.

8) Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity was defined as who participants think they are, Korean-Chinese or Chinese. An item were used to measure ethnic identity and it has been recoded into a dummy variable, to be used in Regression analyses.

Procedure

The data was collected from an elementary school for Korean-Chinese children located in Yenkil, China, on March, 2003. Most students in this school use Korean as their first language.

Questionnaire was written in Korean and distributed to the Korean-Chinese children, parents, and caregivers, and total 258 child-parent(or caregiver) pairs were used in the analyses.

4. Analysis

The collected data was analyzed by using SPSS program

- Pearson's correlation coefficients were produced to examine the relationships among several ecological factors from exo-, micro-, and individual system and school adjustment of Korean-Chinese children in Yanbian.
- To examine the causal relationships including direct and indirect effects among school adjustment and ecological factors, regression analyses and a path analysis were conducted.

III. RESULTS

Correlations among factors of three ecological levels including mother's education, mother's job satisfaction, home environment, parents' perception of the importance of Chinese language education, social support, achievement motivation, and ethnic identity in Korean-Chinese children in Yanbian are presented in <Table 2>. Home environment showed significant and positive correlation to mother's education(r=.22, p<.01) and mother's job satisfaction(r=.37, p<.01). Parents' perception of the importance of Chinese language education is also significantly correlated to mothers' education (r=.21, p<.01). Children with more social support showed higher achievement motivation(r=.44,

Table 2. Correlations among school adjustment and ecological factors.

(N=258)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. mother's education								· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
2. mother's job satisfaction	.10							
3. home environment	.22**	.37**						
4. parents' perception of the importance of Chinese language education	.21**	03	.09					
5. social support	.07	.05	.07	.11				
6. achievement motivation	03	.02	02	02	.44**			
7. ethnic identity	.04	14	03	08	.02	.04		
8. school adjustment	.10	.15*	.19**	.04	.42**	.42**	09	

^{*}p<.05 **p<.01

p<.01). School adjustment is found to be significantly and positively correlated to mother's job satisfaction(r=.15, p<.05), home environment (r=.19, p<.01), social support(r=.42, p<.01), and achievement motivation(r=.42, p<.01). Interestingly, factors of different ecological levels are correlated to each other, while factors within same ecological levels are not correlated to each other. For example, home environment of the microsystem and mother's

education of the exosystem are significantly related to each other while other factors in the microsystem including parents' perception of the importance of Chinese language education and social support are not significantly related to physical environment which belongs to the microsystem.

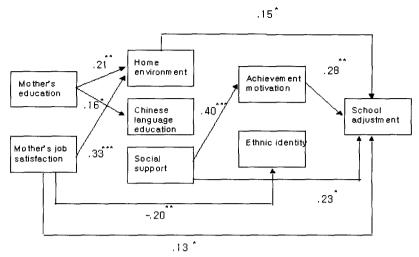
As shown in Table 3, mother's education(β =.21, p<.01) and mother's job satisfaction(β =.33, p<.001) are significant predictors of home environment.

Table 3. Regression Analyses for school adjustment of Korean-Chinese children.

(N=258)

	Dependent variables Independent	home environment	Chinese language education	social support	achievement motivation	ethnic identity	school adjustment
	variables	β	β	β	β	β	β
F	mothers' education	.21**	.16*	.01	09	.07	.01
Exo-system	mothers' job satisfaction	.33***	04	.05	.07	20**	.13*
	home environment				03	.00	.15*
Micro-system	Chinese language education				02	12	03
	social support				.40***	.01	.23*
Individual austan	achievement motivation						.28**
Individual-systen	ethnic identity						05
R ²		.17	.02	.00	.17	.05	.25
F		9.61***	2.56	.29	6.75***	1.73	7.00***

^{*}p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.01



*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Picture 1. Path analysis for school adjustment of Korean-Chinese children.

Mother's education(β =.16, p<.05) significantly predicts parental perception of the importance of Chinese language education. Social support(β =.40, p<.001) is the predictor of achievement motivation. Mother's job satisfaction(β =-.20, p<.05) predicts ethnic identity. Achievement motivation(β =.28, p<.01) was the strongest predictor of school adjustment, followed by social support(β =.23, p<.01), home environment(β =.15, p<.05), and mother's job satisfaction(β =.13, p<.05). The model explains 25% of the variance in Korean-Chinese children's school adjustment.

The result of the path analysis to examine the causal relationship among ecological factors and school adjustment has been presented in picture
1>. The coefficients displayed in picture 1 for the significant relationships are the beta coefficients on the basis of regression analyses presented in table 3. The ecological factors which influence school adjustment directly were mothers' job satisfaction, home environment, social support, and

achievement motivation. Mothers' education, mothers' job satisfaction, and social support were factors which influence school adjustment indirectly.

Causal effects are reported in <Table 4> which presents direct and indirect effect of ecological factors on school adjustment. First, among factors from the exosystem, mothers' education had indirect effect on school adjustment through home environment(β =.03) as well as direct effect on home environment(β =.21) and parents' perception of the importance of Chinese language education (β =.16). Mothers' job satisfaction had both direct (β =.13) and indirect effect(β =.05) on school adjustment. Mothers' job satisfaction also had direct effect on home environment(β =.33) and ethnic identity(β =-.20).

Second, among factors of the microsystem, home environment had direct effect(β=.15) on school adjustment, while parents' perception of the importance of Chinese language education had neither direct nor indirect effect on school adjustment.

Table 4. Causal effects on school adjustment of Korean-Chinese children.

(N=258)

Dependent variables	Independent variables	direct	indirect	Total
1	mother's education	.21		.21
home environment	mother's job satisfaction	.33		.33
parent's perception of	mother's education	.16		.16
Chinese education	mother's job satisfaction		***	
social support	mother's education		*==	
	mother's job satisfaction			
achievement motivation	mother's education			
	mother's job satisfaction			
	home environment			
	parents' perception of Chinese education			
	social support	.40		.40
	mother's education		***	*
	mother's job satisfaction	20		20
ethnic identity	home environment			
	parents' perception of Chinese education			
	social support			
school adjustment	mother's education	***	.03	.03
	mother's job satisfaction	.13	.05	.18
	home environment	.15	-~+	.15
	parents' perception of Chinese education			
	social support	.23	.11	.34
	achievement motivation	.28		.28
	ethnic identity			*

Social support revealed both direct(β =.23) and indirect effect(β =.11) on school adjustment, and also had direct effect(β =.40) on achievement motivation.

Third, achievement motivation of the individual system had direct effect(β =.28) on school adjustment and interestingly, ethnic identity had no significant effect on school adjustment.

IV. DISCUSSION

This study was conducted with the aim of providing information about the impact of ecological factors from diverse levels on children's school adjustment by examining Korean-Chinese children in Yanbian. Yanbian in China is a unique area where Korean-Chinese families are preserving Korean traditional culture and language while they are still residing within Chinese culture.

Major results, summarized and discussed, are as follows;

First, some factors from each ecological level are related to school adjustment. From the exosystem, mother's job satisfaction was necessary for Korean-Chinese children's school adjustment. This result supports previous conclusions of Belsky(1984)'s study describing the relationship between mother's job satisfaction and positive child development. Since family members are interacting with each

other, mothers' satisfaction may have an effect on children's adjustment which is consistent with Kim and Ji (2000)'s explanation.

Mother's education was also crucial for school adjustment. As in previous research(Kim, 1997), upper family socio-economic status represented by mother's higher education may provide a better family environment for children's school adjustment.

Home environment looked upon from the microsystem perspective largely predicted school adjustment. The result of this study revealed that a family environment that assists school education, through such measures as providing books, directly influences children's school adjustment.

Social support also has a significant effect on school adjustment. As proposed by previous studies, support from peers(Rhee, Kim, & Oh, 2001; Hwang, 1998) and the quality of relationship with teachers(Birch & Ladd, 1997) predicted children's school adjustment. Since school adjustment in this study was defined especially as emotional adjustment rather than academic success, social support from peers and teachers were highly regarded factors in children's adjustment to school.

From the individual system perspective, achievement motivation was a significant predictor. Children with high achievement motivation may want to get along well with peers or teachers and be successful in school. This result of the study proved that children's achievement motivation is related to school adjustment not only in an academic performance aspect but also in an emotional aspect.

Second, factors from different levels of the

ecological system are related to each other. Factors from the exosystem predicts factors from the microsystem and the individual system, and factors from the microsystem predicts factors from the individual system.

For instance, mothers' education is significantly influences home environment and parents' perception of the importance of Chinese language education. This indicates that a higher socioeconomic status lets family invest more in the home environment in order to help children's education, and have more interest in children's Chinese language education. Mother's job satisfaction predicted home environment and ethnic identity of children. When mothers are satisfied with their jobs, their psychological wellbeing permits them to have more interest in providing a better family environment for child education, which is consistent with the result of Kim and Ji's study(2000). It is interesting that when mothers are satisfied with their jobs, ethnic identity is closer to Korean-Chinese. It implies that mother's job satisfaction gives more opportunities to feel positively about Korean-Chinese culture and to feel closer to Korean-Chinese society. Social support is also linked to achievement motivation which indicates that children are encouraged to achieve highly when they are supported by friends and teachers.

Third, the result of the path analysis showed that the most significant ecological factor for school adjustment is achievement motivation, followed by mothers' job satisfaction, home environment, and social support. In addition, it was found that some factors had not only a direct

effect on school adjustment but also an indirect effect through other factors at other ecological levels. For instance, the influence of mothers' education and mothers' job satisfaction on school adjustment was mediated by home environment. That is, socio-economic status represented by mothers' education has an indirect effect on school adjustment through better home environment rather than having direct effect on school adjustment. In the case of social support, it showed an indirect effect on school adjustment by influencing achievement motivation as well as directly effecting school adjustment. School adjustment as defined by this study is more likely to be emotionally oriented rather than academically oriented thus social support by peers and teachers has directly influenced children's emotional adjustment at school. Meanwhile, social support also has an indirect effect on school adjustment through achievement motivation. It implies that social support by peers and teachers can encourage children to have higher achievement motivation and achievement motivation helps children to have positive attitudes toward school.

Interestingly, mothers' education had an influence on parents' perception of the importance of Chinese language education while parents' perception of the importance of Chinese language education had no significant influence on children's achievement motivation or school adjustment. This may imply that parents perceive the importance of Chinese language education for children's social life in Chinese society, but their perception does not transfer to children's school adjustment since participants in this study attend Korean-Chinese

schools where most classes use Korean and all school works is done in Korean. That is, Chinese language education is not very critical in school for Korean-Chinese children in Yanbian province even though it is necessary for life outside the school.

Fourth, more personal and general factors, rather than ethnically related factors from all ecological levels were found to be more significant in explaining children's school adjustment. For instance, ethnic identity was not a significant predictor of children's school adjustment, contradicting the results of the study of McMahon and Watts (2002) which examined African-American adolescents and found the importance of ethnic identity. One of the reasons for the inconsistency between the results of this study and those of previous studies might be that the previous studies were done of subjects in adolescence, adolescents which is an important period for the formation of ethnic identity. Participants in this study are in their childhood. Another reason might be that unlike African-American adolescents, Korean-Chinese children in China are not distinguishable by their appearance which weakens the issue of ethnic identity. The other reason could be that participants in this study attend a Korean-Chinese school in Yanbian where most peers, teachers, and neighbors are Korean-Chinese, and so have few chances to confront ethnic issues. Those reasons may let Korean-Chinese children be less vulnerable to the effects of ethnic identity in their school adjustment.

The result of this study suggests that various ecological factors have influences on children's school adjustment and the effects of those factors on school adjustment are mediated by other factors from different ecological levels. In addition, more personal and general factors rather than ethnic related factors were more significantly effective for predicting Korean-Chinese children's school adjustment.

A limitation of this study involves the issue of measurement. Ethnic identity was measured by asking whether participants consider themselves Korean-Chinese or Chinese and this item might be some- what inappropriate since all participants were legally Chinese and living in China. However, this study defined ethnic identity as participants' perception of who they are, and was conducted under the assumption that it is more meaningful how participants may perceive their ethnic identity than participants's legal status.

The second limitation is that the result of this study cannot be generalized to all Korean-Chinese children because it investigated only Korean-Chinese children residing in Yanbian province. Future research on more diverse areas of China is essential to developing more accurate conclusions, and it is necessary to study how Korean-Chinese children adjust to Chinese schools in China. It is also required to design a future study comparing Korean and Korean-Chinese children, as well as Chinese and Korean-Chinese children. However, this study makes an important contribution to the future cross-cultural study of children of Korean immigrants. This study provides scholars and practitioners with a better understanding of Korean-Chinese children's school adjustment in today's environment, which lacks ecologically centered research on Korean-Chinese children.

요 약

본 연구의 목적은 연변 조선족 아동의 학교적 응과 관련된 변수를 생태학적인 접근으로 분석 하는 것이었다. 자료는 연변 지역의 소학교로부 터 258명의 조선족 아동과 부모가 응답한 질문 지를 통해 수집되었다. 우선 개인체계, 미시체 계, 중간체계에 속한 7개의 변수들이 아동의 학 교적응에 미치는 영향력은 어떠한지 살펴보았 으며, 다음으로 각 생태학적 체계에 속한 변수 들을 매개로 한 학교적응의 인과관계는 어떠한 지를 살펴보았다. 상관분석, 회귀분석, 경로분석 을 사용한 자료분석 결과, 아동의 성취동기(개 인체계), 가정의 물리적 환경과 사회적 지지(미 시체계), 어머니의 직업만족도(중간체계)가 높 을수록 아동의 학교적응이 잘 이루어지고 있음 이 나타났다. 또한 어머니의 교육수준과 어머니 의 직업만족도는 가정의 물리적 환경을 매개로 하여, 사회적 지지는 아동의 성취동기를 매개로 하여 아동의 학교적응에 간접적으로 영향을 미 치고 있음을 발견하였다. 아울러, 중국 연변이 라는 거시체계에 속한 아동의 학교적응에 있어 지역특수성으로 인한 영향보다는 개인적이고 일반적인 변수의 영향이 더 유의하게 작용하고 있음이 시사되었다.

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