Immigrant Children's Schooling and Family Processes in Japan: Trends, Challenges, and Implications

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> I experienced bullying at school in Japan. One day when I was a fourth grader, I was walking in a hallway. Suddenly, a boy bumped into me on purpose and said, "*gaijin*" (foreigner)! I was confused because I thought that I was Japanese. That is probably why my parents decided to send me to an international school in Japan. *Mika*, a girl with a Japanese mother and an American father

In an interview asking about school experiences in Japan, Mika shared with me her painful memories of being harassed by her peers. Mika was born in the USA, but moved to Japan when she was young and grew up there. She was raised by a Japanese mother, spoke perfect Japanese, and acted like a Japanese. However, in the eyes of her Japanese peers, she was not Japanese, but rather a *gaijin*, meaning a person from an outside world. Being called *gaijin* is not unique to Mika, but rather a common experience among students with a non-Japanese parent, especially immigrants, in Japan. Ethnographic studies have presented immigrant students' reports of being pointed out, teased, or excluded as *gaijin* by their peers at Japanese schools as a painful but common experience (Takenoshita 2005). In a society like Japan where homogeneity is emphasized through common heritage, language, and customs, students may seize on the uniqueness of immigrant students (Kojima 2006; Ota 2000; Shimizu 2006). In such social and cultural contexts, immigrant children's school lives and educational experiences can be challenging.

The goal of this chapter is to provide an overview of immigrant children's educational experiences and family processes in Japan. In this introduction, I discuss theories related to acculturation and explain how a Japanese case can contribute to the studies of immigrant children's development and education. In the next section, I provide brief demographic and descriptive information about immigrants and immigrant students in Japan. In the third section, I examine trends and issues related to immigrant children's educational experiences such as low school attendance and limited academic attainment through reviews and presentations of data collected through the Japanese government and local communities. Because I found that low

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school enrollment and limited academic attainment are the major educational issues unique to immigrant children, I also point out factors that explain these issues based on my reviews. In the following section, I present family processes, such as elements that facilitate or hinder immigrant students' school experiences and academic development, across diverse immigrant ethnic groups based on my literature reviews of empirical studies. In extensive reviews of ethnographic studies, I found ethnic and cultural variations in immigrant parents' beliefs about and attitudes toward education and the role of family SES regarding parent involvement in their children's education. Thus, I have focused on these two themes. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of available public data and empirical studies, suggestions for future studies, and recommendations for educational practices.

Contributions of a Japanese Case

In the theory of acculturation, a host country's integration ideology and pluralistic climate as well as immigrants' interactions in the host country are likely to affect their acculturation orientation (Berry 1997; Bourhis et al. 1997; Yağmur and van de Vijver 2011). According to the theory, a more pluralistic climate and multicultural ideology lead to immigrants' stronger orientation toward a mainstream identity and language, but the opposite is predicted in nations with "ethnist ideology," which places pressure on immigrants to adopt the public values of the host nation. In an ethnist nation that emphasizes monoculturalism and monolingualism among people in the nation, immigrants are likely to demonstrate ethnic and cultural separation from the mainstream culture and society (Berry 1997; Bourhis et al. 1997). In a recent study that examined Turkish immigrants in four nations with different policies and climates regarding multicultural and multilingual issues, Yağmur and Van de Vijver (2011) found patterns to support this theory. In Germany, with the least pluralistic climate, Turkish immigrants demonstrated lower levels of mainstream identification and higher levels of ethnic orientation than immigrants in more pluralistic societies, such as Australia.

As Bourhis and colleagues (1997) specifically pointed out, Japan, along with Germany and Israel, has an ethnist ideology. Japanese citizenship laws reflect the strong value of kinship based on blood ties, and Japanese policies have emphasized social harmony through the use of common language and cultural practices, often by excluding cultural minority groups (Gordon et al. 2010; Tsuneyoshi et al. 2011). In Japan's educational system, immigrant children are treated as *gaijin*, or foreigners, whose school attendance is not mandatory, as it is for Japanese students (Ota and Tsubotani 2005; Sakuma 2005).[1] Such legal arrangements and cultural climate are likely to influence educational attitudes and orientations toward Japanese schools among immigrant children and families. Immigrants' marginal status as

[1] In this chapter, I use the term, immigrant children, for children whose parents came to Japan for various reasons such as migrant workers and refugees. As I note later, a significant number of migrant workers who originally planned to stay in Japan as temporary workers continue to reside in Japan for a long-term.

gaijin can also affect Japanese students' views about immigrant students and their interactions with them. Japan's educational system strongly reflects ethnist ideology as it emphasizes uniformity and homogeneity with an aim of providing equal educational opportunities to students regardless of their backgrounds (Cummings 1980; Nabeshima 2010). Unlike the decentralized educational system in some other countries such as the USA, the educational system in Japan is centrally administered and teachers are trained to use similar instructional styles to teach the same national curricula (Holloway and Yamamoto 2003). Assurance of uniformity across schools under the central curricula may pressure immigrant children to assimilate and may increase their acculturative stress.

To date, immigrant children's experiences in Japan have not received much attention in immigrant studies, especially in the field of psychology and child development. The use of Japan as a case can bring unique insights to immigrant studies in comparative contexts. While Japan's political and social climate toward immigrants is similar to that in Germany (Bourhis et al. 1997; Yamanaka 2008), Japan does not belong to the same category as other significant host countries for foreign labor such as Germany, as Bartram (2000) argued. The Japanese case is unique owing to the country's extremely low ratio of foreign residents (1.7% in 2009), only a few decades of experience with growing unskilled foreign migrant workers, and a high ratio of recent immigrants who are Japanese descendants from South America (Bartram 2000; Chung 2010; Tsuneyoshi 2011). Japan's immigration policy has demonstrated a strong emphasis on protecting monolingualism and monoculturalism in the nation as it limited acceptance of unskilled migrant workers to Japanese descendants. This immigration arrangement provides a comparative context to examine unique acculturation processes among immigrants who have the same blood ties but distinctive cultural and linguistic backgrounds and immigrants without blood ties from Indochina and Asia. As their cultural backgrounds and migrant histories differ, their orientation to schools in Japan is likely to differ across ethnic groups. Variations in immigrant parents' beliefs and attitudes toward their children's education found in this study suggest that immigrants' interactions with Japanese schools are not similar but distinct, even in the same nation with an ethnist climate.

Studies on diverse immigrant students' experiences in Japan are relatively new even in Japanese-language scholarship, as publications in this field mainly started and increased in the 2000s (Miyajima and Ota 2005; Ota 2000; Shimizu and Shimizu 2001). There still is a lack of systematic empirical studies assessing students' language orientation and acculturation. Therefore, my reviews were mainly based on reviews of public data collected by cities, government, and empirical studies, mostly ethnographic studies conducted by sociologists and anthropologists. Increasing numbers of scholars have studied immigrant students and their families in Japan over the last decade, and more attention has been paid to immigrant issues within the country. I bring the insights of these studies, mainly developed in Japanese academics, into English-language scholarship, as the potential to inform questions regarding educational experiences as well as acculturation processes of immigrant children.

Table 1 The total number of registered foreign nationals and their nationalities from 1987 to 2010. [The majority of foreign nationals from Korea are prewar immigrants and their noncitizen descendents called *zainichi*, Korean-Japanese (Chung 2010)]

Year	Total number	Korea	China	Brazil	Philippines	Peru	USA	Others
1987	884,025	673,787	95,477	2,250	25,017	615	30,836	56,043
1991	1,218,891	693,050	171,071	119,333	61,837	26,281	42,498	104,821
1995	1,362,371	666,376	222,991	176,440	74,297	36,269	43,198	142,800
1999	1,556,113	636,548	294,201	224,299	115,685	42,773	42,802	199,805
2003	1,915,030	613,791	462,396	274,700	185,237	53,649	47,836	277,421
2007	2,152,973	593,489	606,889	316,967	202,592	59,696	51,851	321,489
2010	2,134,151	565,986	687,156	230,552	210,181	54,636	50,667	334,970

Adapted from "Heisei 22nen genzai ni okeru gaikokujin tourokusha toukei ni tsuite [Statistics of foreign national registrants in 2010]," by Ministry of Justice 2011, http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukantourokusyatoukei110603.html

Increasing Numbers of Immigrants and Diversifying Schools

For a long time, Japan was the only advanced industrialized nation that did not rely on unskilled migrant workers (Bartram 2000). With strong emphasis on maintaining ethnic homogeneity and social harmony, the government had long closed the door to unskilled workers from foreign countries. Immigration had been open only to highly or moderately qualified foreign workers. However, decreasing numbers of younger people and shortages of unskilled labor within the country led the government to open the door to migrant workers from abroad (Bartram 2000; Chung 2010). Since the late 1970s, increasing number of refugees from Indochina as well as female workers from Asian countries such as Philippine and Thailand who were hired to work in nightclubs has migrated to Japan (Bartram 2000; Tsuneyoshi et al. 2011). In 1990, Japan implemented its revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and opened the door for Japanese descendants, up to the third generation, as migrant workers. With this revision of the immigration law, the Japanese government provided the status of "permanent residence" (*teijyuusha*), which has no work restrictions, to Japanese descendants in foreign countries. After this change, significant numbers of Japanese descendants from South America voluntarily came to Japan to work as unskilled laborers in factories and small industries (Table 1). The number of registered foreign nationals increased from about 1,220,000 in 1991 to 2,150,000 in 2007. Among them, foreign nationals from Brazil and China demonstrated a significant increase for the last two decades (Ministry of Justice 2011a). Originally, most families from South America perceived themselves as sojourners, temporary workers, unlike refugees who have tried to establish permanent residence in Japan (Shimizu 2006). However, without any job security in their country of origin or a plan to go back, significant number of South Americans

Table 2 The number of foreign nationals who attend public schools and foreign-national students who require Japanese instruction

Year	Foreign nationals in public schools[a]	Foreign nationals requiring Japanese instruction (ratio)
1991	81,969	5,463 (6.7)
1993	84,211	10,450 (12.4)
1995	82,638	11,806 (14.3)
1997	83,177	17,296 (20.8)
1999	80,353	18,585 (23.1)
2001	74,622	19,250 (25.8)
2003	70,902	19,042 (26.9)
2005	69,817	20,692 (29.6)
2007	72,751	25,411 (34.9)
2010	74,214	28,511 (38.4)

Adapted from "Gaikokujin no kodomo no shuugaku jyoukyou tou ni kansuru kekka ni tsuite [Results of surveys about foreign-national children's school attendance]," by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology, 2010, http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/clarinet/genjyou/1295897.htm

[a] Public schools include elementary school, middle school, high school, and special education schools

have stayed for the long term, more than 10 years in many cases (Ishikawa 2005; Kojima 2006). According to a local survey conducted in 2000, 45.5 % of foreign nationals in Hamamatsu-city, with large numbers of migrant workers from South America, had lived in Japan for 7 years or longer (Ishikawa 2005).

The rise of immigrants after Japan's economic growth, so-called "newcomers," brought diversity to Japanese schools with students from multiple national, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. Even though registered foreign-national children comprised only 1 % of the total school-aged children compared to about 10 % in Germany and 20 % in the USA, approximately 18 % of public schools had at least one foreign-national student who required extra Japanese language instruction in 2010 (Keller-Lally 2009; Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) 2010a; Ministry of Justice 2011b; Shields and Behrman 2004).

The revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act reflected Japan's strong ethnist ideology, which emphasized blood ties and monoculturalism. The Japanese government expected that Japanese descendants would have maintained cultural values and practices shared in Japan and that limiting immigration to Japanese descendants would help the society maintain its cultural and social cohesion to some extent (Chung 2010; Yamanaka 2008). Unpredicted were the distinctive cultural and linguistic backgrounds of this immigrant group. A significant number of newcomer immigrant children, including Japanese descendants from South America, do not speak Japanese, nor are they accustomed to Japanese cultural customs (Kojima 2006; Ota and Tsubotani 2005). As shown in Table 2, there are increasing numbers of foreign-national students in public schools who need extra

Japanese language instruction. The greatest number of students who were in need of Japanese language instruction spoke Portuguese, followed by Chinese (MEXT 2007a). Thus, diversifying schools with children of immigrant parents brought unexpected challenges to teachers, educators, and policy makers in Japan (Kojima 2006; Okubo 2010; Ota 2000; Ninomiya 2002; Takenoshita 2005).

Immigrant Students' Educational Issues

Unequal Educational Opportunities? School Enrollment and Academic Attainment

Diversifying schools in Japan brought the attention of scholars, practitioners, and gradually policy makers to educational issues unique to immigrant children (Ninomiya 2002; Ota and Tsubotani 2005). The first and most serious issue associated with immigrant children is their low rate of school enrollment. According to local and national surveys conducted in select cities, significant number of school-aged immigrant children do not attend a primary or middle school. According to an estimate in Toyota-city, where the head office of Toyota automobile company is located and a high ratio of immigrants from South America reside, 12 % of school-aged children were not enrolled in any school in 2001 (Ota and Tsubotani 2005). The estimate was calculated by subtracting the number of school-aged foreign-national children who were registered for a Japanese school or an ethnic school from the total number registered in the community. As Ota and Tsubotani (2005) pointed out, this calculation may not capture foreign nationals who did not report their move to a different city.

As media and scholars brought this issue to the public's attention, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) conducted the first survey in 2006 to estimate school enrollment among foreign-national children in one prefecture and 11 cities, all of which had a relatively high ratio of immigrant workers. The school enrollment rate was calculated based on reports from cities and visits or surveys to individual households with a foreign-national parent. According to this survey, approximately 81 % of foreign-national school-aged children attended a Japanese school or an ethnic school. However, 1.1 % of foreign-national school-aged children did not attend any school, and there was no information reported for 17.5 % (MEXT 2007a). In a national survey conducted in 2010 in 29 select cities, the percentage of foreign-national children who did not attend any school was 0.7 % on average, ranging from 0 to 5.4 % depending on the city, but there was no information for 21.5 % (MEXT 2010b). Even though these surveys do not demonstrate the details of ethnic groups in students' school enrollment, low school enrollment is typically identified as an issue related to children from South America. The MEXT was aware of this pattern and issued its "Urgent Support Plan for Foreign-National Children in Japan," with a special section focusing on Brazilian children, in 2009 (MEXT 2009).

The second educational issue is an academic gap between immigrant and Japanese students. Immigrant children's academic struggles and low academic achievement have also raised attention (MEXT 2009). By analyzing 2000 census data, Oomagari and colleagues (2011) estimated that less than 50% of 16-year-old Brazilian and Filipino children who had lived in Japan for more than 5 years pursued a high school education. Attendance at high school among these ethnic groups dropped to less than 40% at age 17. In a country where more than 98% of students pursue high school education, these numbers represent a large educational gap between immigrant and Japanese students (Tamaki and Sakamoto 2012). On the other hand, approximately 80% of Chinese and more than 90% of Korean students pursued high school education in 2000 (Oomagari et al. 2011), suggesting varying levels of academic achievement depending on students' ethnic background. Tamaki and Sakamoto (2012) obtained approximately 90% response rate by collecting surveys from 141 foreign-national students in 56 public middle schools in Tochigi prefecture, and examined the rate of high-school enrollment depending on their linguistic backgrounds. They found that only 59% of Portuguese-speaking middle school seniors, compared with more than 90% of Chinese-speaking students, attended high school after graduating from middle school.

It is also important to point out the types of high schools attended by immigrant students. In Japan, high schools are highly stratified depending on academic rankings, and students are required to take an entrance examination to attend a high school. The entrance examination, which is usually based on written tests rather than orals, could be challenging for immigrant students whose native language is not Japanese (Ninomiya 2002; Tamaki and Sakamoto 2012). Immigrant students tend to be enrolled in high schools with lower academic rankings. Gordon (2010) noted that when Brazilian immigrant students enter high school, they tend to attend one of the lowest ranked schools, which hardly prepares them for a middle-class job or higher education.

The gap in school enrollment and academic achievement between immigrant and Japanese students suggests unequal educational processes in Japanese schools where equal educational opportunities are emphasized. In a country where academic attainment is highly associated with future income and status (Hamanaka and Kariya 2000), immigrant children's overall lower academic achievement suggests significant disadvantages associated with immigrant groups. Then, what factors hinder immigrant children's school enrollment and academic achievement? In the next section, I describe elements that may affect immigrant children's academic processes.

Elements Explaining Immigrant Children's Educational Issues

The legal arrangement surrounding education is an important element affecting immigrant parents' decisions to send their children to schools in Japan (Ota and Tsubotani 2005). Nine-year compulsory education is not mandatory for children

with a foreign-national parent, so immigrant parents are required to submit an application to the local educational board to request their children's school enrollment. In most cases, immigrant students' enrollment is approved, but these legal and administrative processes can be challenging and discouraging to immigrant parents who work long hours, do not speak Japanese, and are not familiar with the Japanese educational system. Furthermore, because the local offices do not send any notice to immigrant families, some immigrant parents may be unaware of their responsibility to send their children to public schools. In a survey conducted by the MEXT in 2009, 39 % of the foreign-national parents whose school-aged children were not enrolled in any type of school did not know what they had to do to send their children to a public school (MEXT 2009).

Even though the legal arrangement plays a critical role in immigrant students' school enrollment, it does not explain low academic achievement among certain ethnic groups. Reviews of national surveys and ethnographic studies suggest that structural and school factors also hinder immigrant children's educational processes and academic development.

Emphasizing Egalitarianism and Neglecting Diverse Needs

In cross-cultural studies conducted in the 1980s and 1990s, the Japanese school was highlighted as a successful model of egalitarian education that helped to boost students' overall academic performance (Cummings 1980; Stevenson and Stigler 1992). However, recent studies have demonstrated that emphasis on equality and egalitarian education could be particularly disadvantageous to minority children, including immigrant children (Gordon et al. 2010; Tsuneyoshi et al. 2011). Nabeshima (2010) pointed out that historically Japanese education has been particularly insensitive to the education of minority students. Under equal educational opportunities, policy makers and practitioners have believed that individuals' effort and ability determine their educational future and have paid little attention to disadvantages associated with their backgrounds and opportunity structure (Morita 2007). The goal of providing equal educational opportunities to all children can create "intolerance toward diversity" (Nabeshima 2010, p. 128) and ignore the special needs of immigrant children and families.

Learning school subjects using a second language is also one of the major challenges facing immigrant children. Monolingual curricula and a lack of sufficient language assistance in Japanese schools are likely to cause academic difficulties for children with different linguistic backgrounds. Japanese schools and teachers are aware of this issue and have tried to help these children with extra Japanese instruction or language assistance. According to a national survey, about 83.5 % of foreign-national students who were in need of Japanese language instruction received extra or special language assistance (MEXT 2007a). However, how schools and teachers evaluate immigrant students' Japanese language proficiency is not clear because there is no standard procedure for such evaluation. When immigrant students can

communicate in Japanese, teachers are likely to treat them as knowing enough Japanese to learn and provide no further assistance. After observing immigrant students in classrooms, Ota (2005) found that significant numbers of immigrant children who could converse in Japanese did not have sufficient Japanese language skills to learn academic subjects.

An educational structure that emphasizes monoculturalism and monolingualism in Japanese schools is likely to create acculturative pressure on foreign-national students, and that may lead to these students' school disorientation. In a national survey conducted in 2007, 20 % of the foreign-national parents with unschooled children listed not understanding the Japanese language or school subjects, and 9 % listed different customs and cultural practices as reasons for their children's not attending school in Japan.

Peer Harassment and School Adjustment

In addition to cultural and linguistic gaps, peer relations, including bullying (7 %) and having no friends (5 %), also appeared as a reason for foreign-national children not attending school in Japan.[2] *Ijime*, translated as bullying, is a serious issue that may cause immigrant children's aversion to Japanese schools (Takenoshita 2005). The MEXT defines *ijime* as an act in which children experience psychological pain by receiving a physical or psychological attack from peers or a group of people inside or outside of schools (MEXT 2007b). *Ijime* has been perceived as one of the most serious social and school issues surrounding children in Japan. Immigrant children are especially likely to become a target of bullying and harassment at school because of their unique racial, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds.

Takenoshita (2005) examined interview reports of 142 foreign-national students in the Kanagawa and Aichi prefectures and found that the majority reported being teased, harassed, or pointed out as a "foreigner" by their peers. In-depth interviews with immigrant students conducted by other researchers also revealed painful experiences of immigrant children being teased or excluded by their classmates owing to their insufficient language abilities, academic challenges, and different cultural backgrounds (Morita 2007; Shimizu and Shimizu 2001). *Ijime* toward immigrant children is often combined with discrimination. A common report of *ijime* by immigrant children is being pointed out as "*gaijin*" (foreigners) and "not Japanese." Even if children of immigrant families are born and raised in Japan, they are considered *gaijin* owing to their distinct cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Shimizu and Shimizu 2001; Takenoshita 2005). In Japan, people can acquire the Japanese nationality from their parents or naturalization, but not based on their birth. Thus, children of immigrant families do not acquire citizenship even when they are born and grow up in Japan. These legal arrangements are likely to highlight "non-Japanese"

[2] Other reasons included a lack of financial resource (16 %) and families' plans to go back to their countries (10 %).

characteristics among immigrant children and create a border between children of immigrant families and native Japanese children. *Ijime* toward immigrant children reflects strong peer pressure to assimilate to Japanese culture through everyday life at school. Through interviews with immigrant students, Shimizu and Shimizu (2001) found that *ijime* affects some immigrant children such that they develop negative images about their ethnicity and avoid attending school.

Immigrant parents tend to be aware of widespread issues of *ijime* in Japan, and some decide to send their children to an ethnic school such as a Brazilian or Korean school (Kojima 2006). In urban cities such as Tokyo or Osaka, there also are international schools, which mostly accept non-Japanese students. However, most immigrant children do not even have this option because of a lack of ethnic schools in the local community and the high tuition of those schools. In fact, only 20% of foreign-national children attend an ethnic or international school (Huafen and Yasumoto 2011; MEXT 2007a). These options are especially unavailable to unskilled immigrant families whose financial resources are limited.

In this section, I have described major elements that explain immigrant children's low school attendance and low academic achievement by focusing on the educational structures and climate in Japan, the host nation. These issues are likely to affect immigrant students' and families' decisions about schooling, their level of interaction with individuals at Japanese schools, and their acculturation orientation. On the other hand, immigrant families' cultural backgrounds and migrant history also powerfully affect their children's educational processes. In the next section, I focus on family processes.

Immigrant Family Stories and Academic Support

Immigrant families bring cultural norms related to children's education from their countries of origin, but also negotiate or maintain these norms by interacting and assessing norms and practices in the host country. Such family contexts and interactions powerfully affect immigrant children's educational experiences within and outside the school (Bronfenbrenner 1979; García Coll and Marks 2009).

While most studies on immigrant children's educational processes in the Japanese-language literature have focused on students' experiences at school, increasing numbers of scholars have examined family processes, especially how immigrant families value education in Japan and support their children's education. Ethnographers have illustrated "immigrant family stories" (Kojima 2006; Shimizu 2006), how immigrant parents find meaning in their lives in Japan and how such constructed beliefs shape their ways of supporting their children's education. Reviews of these studies suggest that (a) parents' expectations about and attitudes toward their children's education differ depending on immigrants' cultural backgrounds and migration histories and (b) socioeconomic status (SES) plays an important role in family processes and immigrant children's education.

Educational Expectations and Educational Support across Diverse Cultural Groups

While many immigrant parents hope that their children are academically good at school, studies have demonstrated that not all parents value education. Shimizu and Shimizu's (2001) pioneer ethnographic study on immigrant families examined families' migration histories and parents' educational strategies across various ethnic groups. They found that parents from South America, in general, had low expectations for their children's education. Those parents, who had a Japanese parent or grandparent, expected their children to learn Japanese culture and customs, but did not hold high academic goals, especially if they were less educated. Their subjective views about their status in Japan as *dekasegi*, temporary workers to earn money, also lowered their educational expectations.

However, parents' educational expectations differed even among permanent residents, which highlights cultural variations. Shimizu (2006) found varying educational attitudes across different national groups among refugees from Indochina. Many Laotian parents valued making money, but did not necessarily believe that education would lead to a high income in the future. These parents valued their children's work and money earning over their attending school. In contrast, Cambodian parents tended to value education and held high aspirations for their children's future. Their views about Japanese society as a place providing equal educational opportunities increased their educational aspirations and beliefs in the role of effort in educational processes. However, because of their limited educational experiences, they tended to rely on schools in educating their children (Shimizu 2006; Shimizu and Shimizu 2001).

Vietnamese parents not only tended to place strong value on education, but also valued teaching their native language and Vietnamese culture in Japan (Shimizu 2006). These parents tended to value family ties and believe that teaching the native language and culture would strengthen family relationships. Parents' strong value on education coupled with their involvement in children's socialization processes helped Vietnamese children develop positive views about their ethnicity and led to their positive experiences at Japanese schools. Moreover, maintenance of their heritage language helped children of immigrant families to communicate with their parents. Highlighted in these studies are distinctive meanings of a good life depending on families' migration histories and cultural backgrounds. A good life meant earning money for Laotians, having the same life and opportunities as Japanese for Cambodians, and family ties for Vietnamese (Shimizu 2006). These findings suggest that cultural norms brought from their countries of origin, their views about Japanese society, and their future plans interact and shape immigrant parents' expectations about their children's education in Japan.

Parental involvement in education has not always yielded positive effects on children's development, especially when parents do not have any educational experience in the receiving country. Even though immigrant parents pressured their children to study hard, many were not sufficiently familiar with the Japanese school

system to provide effective academic support to their children (Shimizu 2006). Parental authority was particularly limited when children did not speak their native language (Ishikawa 2005; Shimizu 2006). Furthermore, immigrant parents were usually not aware of educational strategies commonly used by the Japanese, such as extracurricular academic lessons to boost academic performance (Kojima 2006). As a result, when children suffered academically, immigrant parents tended not to know how to improve their children's academic experience (Tabusa 2005).

Overall, observations and interviews have illuminated various efforts of immigrant families in immigrant cultural contexts. These studies have demonstrated the importance of immigrant parents' expectations of their children's education and their involvement in their children's educational processes. It is suggested that family involvement, including teaching children their native language and culture, helps these children recognize their differences within the immigrant group, perceive themselves as not inferior to the Japanese, and develop ethnic pride (Shimizu 2011).

Family SES in Immigrant Contexts

> Newcomer youth reside neither within the educational system nor within the immigrant communities from which they come. Rather, they are located in that mystical space that few speak of: the communities of low-income Japanese themselves (Gordon 2010).

Based on a literature review, one striking element appears in immigrant children's educational processes: family SES. Even though I did not find a statistical analysis testing its significance, various ethnographic studies have suggested the powerful influence of SES on parental processes and immigrant children's academic development in Japan (Gordon 2010; Inui 2007). Immigrant groups in Japan, especially recent immigrants, differ not only in their cultural and ethnic backgrounds but also in their SES in the country of origin and the host country. Socioeconomic variables such as income, occupation, and education reflect parents' available resources as well as their access to information and networks that help to support their children's educational experiences (García Coll and Marks 2009; Huafen and Yasumoto 2011; Shimizu and Shimizu 2001). SES is also likely to affect immigrant parents' level of acculturation, linguistic proficiency, knowledge about educational systems, and relationship with Japanese schools (Inui 2007; Shimizu 2006).

Significant numbers of high SES and professional Korean and Chinese families have come to Japan for business opportunities. These parents tend to be highly involved in their children's education, expect their children to attend a competitive college, and supplement their children's education by sending them to private academic classes and cultural lessons (Huafen and Yasumoto 2011; Shimizu and Shimizu 2001). They even believe that public schools in Japan are too relaxed and not the best place for children's academics, which are beliefs shared among Japanese middle- and upper middle-class parents (Yamamoto 2013).

The power of SES, regardless of cultural origin, is suggested in a study that examined different SES groups within the same ethnic group. Inui (2007) conducted

interviews with 20 Laotian families with different educational levels, ranging from primary school to higher education (Inui 2007). Parents with a high school education, less than 5% in Laos, tended to value education and expected their children to graduate from high school. These families also reported sufficient Japanese language skills, positive relationships with their adolescent children, and satisfaction with their children's schools. On the other hand, immigrant parents with limited education (e.g., primary school) tended to report insufficient Japanese skills, negative or distant relationships with their children, dissatisfaction with Japanese schools, and more delinquent behavior in their adolescent children, such as drunk driving. Yağmur and Van de Vijver (2012) found that more educated Turkish immigrants in France tended to be more positively oriented to the culture of the host country than less educated immigrants; more educated Laotian parents tended to report positive views about and interactions with Japanese schools (Inui 2007).

Reviews of ethnographic studies reveal that children of unskilled migrant workers tend to suffer academically more than children with wealthy and educated immigrant parents in Japan (Gordon 2009; Shimizu and Shimizu 2001). Socioeconomic contexts are intertwined with immigrant contexts and create problems unique to low SES immigrant families. For immigrant parents with limited education, understanding the educational system in the new land is extremely challenging. Limited Japanese language skills create communication gaps between parents and children, especially when children have not learned their parents' native language. Long hours of work deprive unskilled migrant workers of energy and time to become involved in their children's education. Low SES parents often expect older children to stay at home and care for their younger siblings or provide financial support to their families; about one third of the parents with unschooled children reported that their unschooled children had work or child care responsibilities (MEXT 2007a).

Elements related to parental status that contribute to parental involvement, such as ethnicity and social class, are deeply intertwined in immigrant contexts. Thus, it is crucial to examine socioeconomic contexts both in the country of origin and in the host society in investigations of immigrant parents' beliefs about and attitudes toward education.

Discussion

The major goal of this chapter was to provide an overview of immigrant children's educational experiences in Japan and to offer insights learned from a Japanese case to studies of immigrant families and children. A review of survey data and studies demonstrates that Japan's so-called egalitarian and homogeneous educational system has not had a miracle effect on immigrant students' educational experiences. As in other nations, Japan has faced educational challenges associated with immigrants for the last few decades as Japanese schools have begun to accept students with diverse backgrounds. A large academic gap between Japanese and immigrant students suggests unequal distribution of educational opportunities between Japanese and

foreign-national students. In Japanese society and schools, immigrant children are treated as *gaijin*, or foreigners, whose school attendance is not mandatory, as it is for Japanese students. Such a marginal status as *gaijin* can affect Japanese students' interactions with immigrants and hinder immigrant students' school experiences. As described, immigrant students report *ijime* (being teased and bullied) as a common experience at Japanese schools. Immigrant children's unique cultural and language backgrounds also create challenges to their academic processes in an egalitarian-oriented educational system that ignores the diverse needs associated with students' backgrounds.

Consistent with studies on immigrant families in other nations, a review of the literature suggests that families' expectations for their children's education and the value parents place on education lead to parents' support of their children's education (Yamamoto and Holloway 2010). However, unlike studies in some countries such as the USA, where most immigrant parents, including low SES parents, value education and aspire to college educations for their children (Delgado-Gaitan 1992; Holloway et al. 1995; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2008; Valdés 1996), low SES immigrant parents in Japan do not always aspire to have their children pursue higher education. This pattern is surprising considering the strong value placed on education in Japanese society. Low expectations for their children's education shared by some immigrant groups may be rooted in structural factors such as a lack of supportive immigrant communities and a lack of role models in immigrant communities owing to Japan's short history of accepting unskilled migrant workers compared to some other countries which consist of a large number of immigrants (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Tabusa 2005). Using the acculturation theory, it is also possible to hypothesize that Japan's strong pressure for assimilation, especially in its educational system, has led some immigrants to lower their educational expectations (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver 2007; Bourhis et al. 1997). Japan's less-than-pluralistic climate compared with countries such as the USA might have facilitated some immigrants in developing antischool attitudes and higher levels of ethnic orientation.

Various educational expectations and processes, depending on immigrants' ethnic backgrounds, should be carefully examined in relation to their orientation toward mainstream culture and the possibly different levels of assimilation pressure placed on them. As the revision of the immigration law in 1990 opened the door only to descendants of Japanese as unskilled laborers, immigrants from South America may feel stronger pressure to assimilate with mainstream culture than other immigrants owing to their Japanese ethnic origins and blood ties. Such strong expectations toward South Americans to assimilate may facilitate their higher levels of ethnic identification and lower orientation toward Japanese mainstream culture. Acculturative pressure may partially explain the low ratio of school enrollment and educational difficulties experienced by students from South America. At this point, one can only speculate based on theories and empirical studies in other countries. Future studies comparing pressure to assimilate and ethnic identification across different groups in Japan are crucial to further examine these issues.

Diversifying populations of immigrants made it possible to examine various ethnic groups among immigrants in Japan. Unlike many other nations where different

ethnic groups arrived at different times, most ethnic groups, except for Koreans and Chinese, started to come to Japan only a few decades ago. However, a review of the literature demonstrated distinct family processes across ethnic groups. Varying parental processes across immigrant groups suggest that preceding conditions in the country of origin, such as SES and culture-based beliefs, provide the basis for immigrant students' adaptations at Japanese schools, as was found in studies in other nations (García Coll and Marks 2009; Portes and Rumbaut 2006).

In this literature review, I have also described the importance of SES in children's educational experiences. As high SES parents in many countries tend to value education and become involved in their children's education, it is critical to examine immigrant families' SES in the country of origin as well as in the host country because both are likely to affect their educational orientation, acculturation processes, and access to information, networks, and resources.

Limitations and Directions for Future Studies

Limitations of my review study should be noted. In this chapter, I mainly relied on government and local data to provide information related to immigrant children's school enrollment and educational experiences. While national data collected by the government are helpful in understanding overall patterns, the ways in which data are collected in Japan provide limitations in studies of immigrants. For example, national data distinguish foreign nationals and Japanese, but do not separate first and later generations. Because citizenship is not provided upon birth in Japan, people who were born and raised in Japan are categorized as foreign nationals if their parents are not Japanese. The nature of such data, which include third and fourth generations, makes it impossible for scholars to examine patterns and trends unique to immigrant children or children of immigrant parents. To understand the unique experiences among immigrants, it is essential to distinguish the first generation from others.

The majority of studies reviewed for this chapter used ethnographic research methods based on observations and interviews. In fact, I found a good number of studies in the field of sociology and anthropology written in Japanese. Ethnographic studies greatly helped in understanding the processes through which immigrant families support their children's education. Moreover, case studies illuminated complex experiences and in-depth beliefs shared among immigrant children and families. Surprisingly, I did not find statistical analyses of key factors associated with immigrant students' academic success or failure, or acculturation processes. Statistical analysis is crucial to identify overall patterns and factors associated with positive and negative academic experiences among immigrant children. By reviewing available ethnographic studies, I found that the value parents place on education in Japan, parental involvement, and family resources associated with SES may contribute to immigrant children's academic experiences. However, effective types of family involvement or necessary educational resources may differ depending on

ethnic groups. I look forward to future studies that examine such elements by investigating a larger population of immigrant families.

I also found a lack of acculturation theories and empirical studies in the field. Assessing immigrant children's acculturation and how acculturation or assimilation affects their educational processes would advance our understanding of immigrant children's educational processes. Longitudinal research that examines immigrant families' acculturation processes, socialization processes, and support of their children's cognitive and social development would help us understand challenges faced by immigrant families as well as key elements that facilitate immigrant children's academic experiences in Japan.

Recommendations and a Future Perspective

While more research that informs practice and policies to assist with immigrant children's issues and needs is necessary, several suggestions for educational practice can be made based on the review of research. This review clearly indicates that Japan's centrally controlled educational system, uniform curricula, and instructional styles are likely to create academic difficulties for immigrant children with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Many scholars have already pointed out these issues and offered various recommendations (Kojima 2006; Miyajima and Ota 2005; Morita 2007; Ota 2000; Sakuma 2005). These recommendations include providing preschools and extracurricular classes to improve immigrant children's Japanese language skills (Sakuma 2005), having teachers who are trained to teach Japanese as a second language (Kojima 2006; Morita 2007; Sakuma 2005), and reforming the system for high school enrollment (Kojima 2006; Sakuma 2005; Tamaki and Sakamoto 2012). Some of these recommendations, such as extracurricular classes, have been put in place by schools, local communities, and activists, especially in communities with high ratios of foreign-national children (Shimizu 2006, 2011). My recommendations include using a standardized language proficiency test in addition to teacher evaluation to assess immigrant students' Japanese language skills, including literacy and academic skills.

This review suggests that the fundamental issues lie in the legal arrangement, social climate, and educational structure that designate foreign-national children as "*gaijin*" (foreigners). Such marginal status is likely to create a border between Japanese and non-Japanese, expect assimilation of the non-Japanese, and lead to discrimination and prejudice toward immigrant students. Sociologists in the field of migration studies have recommended legal and immigration reforms that facilitate multiculturalism in Japan (Chung 2010; Yamanaka 2008). Recommendations I have for microlevel educational practices include facilitating communication and interactions between schools or teachers and immigrant parents. Such effort, which can readily be provided by a school or community, may increase immigrant parents' understanding of the school system in Japan and help them effectively support their children's education. A review of the literature suggests that communicating school

expectations is especially critical for low SES immigrant parents. Involving immigrant parents in their children's schools would also help teachers and practitioners increase their understanding of students' diverse cultural backgrounds and facilitate mutual understanding. Yamanaka (2006) documented active processes through which a Brazilian mother who started a parents' network became a board member of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), established a branch PTA for foreign nationals, bridged cultural gaps between Japanese and Brazilians through exchange events, and involved local governments to provide institutional support. This case study demonstrates the collective power of immigrant parents in negotiating their status from being *gaijin* (foreigners) to being influential school and community members and in facilitating multicultural contexts in schools and local communities.

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