

Comments on Heckman's Creating Capabilities

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1. Familial Unstability

Investments for early-childhood generations can be achieved by familial stability (i.e., stable father and mother) and sufficient economic prosperity of parents. The trend, however, suggests an increasing number of unstable families (representatively divorces and single mothers), and in poor families. Children with these families cannot be supported adequately.

We are, however, in a society which admits the importance of freedom, and thus cannot intervene such trends. How can we reconcile freedom of human activities (i.e., divorces) and the importance of both cognitive and non-cognitive skills in early-childhood. Does the government have to support these unadvantaged children? If yes, in what way does the government have to do so?

2. The Myth for Children under Age 3

One school: Mothers should commit to child rearing intensively for children whose ages are under 3, and should not work outside. This is good for bringing children up better.

The other school: This school does not support the above thought, and recommends mothers to work outside.

The issue can be discussed in education, psychology, and economics, and it is not settled yet in Japan, although the other school is somewhat dominant. Do you have any opinions about this myth?

3. The Problems of Outside-school Education in Japan

Various kinds of Outside-school Education

- (1) Gakushujuku: mainly academic education.
- (2) Sports clubs for baseball, football, swimming, etc.
- (3) Cultural skills for piano lesson, dancing, painting, etc.

Those educations are good to promote children's academic levels, physical and cultural capabilities. The problems exist, however, because children of higher income families can enjoy them, while children of lower income families cannot enjoy.

Example: Outside schooling educational expenditure under 4 million yen family income is 8,700 yen per month, and over 8 million yen family income is 26,700 yen per month.

Another problem is that Gakushujuku is a symbol of the inadequate education at formal school education. It exists primarily for pupils who want to pass the entrance examination for prestigious schools, and not for pupils whose academic performances are inferior.

Do you accept such outside-school education in Japan?

4. Very Low Public Expenditure for Education in Japan

Table shows that the ratio of public expenditures for education to the GDP in Japan belongs to the group with the lowest ratios among the OECD countries. The ratio of private expenditure is high in Japan, and thus it implies that only children of higher income families can have better education. I would like to hear useful policy recommendations in order to persuade the Japanese government to increase public expenditure for education more.

Educational Expenditures (both public and private)

(% of GDP) (2009)

	Denmark	U.S.	France	U.K.	Germany	Japan
Total	7.9	7.3	6.3	6	5.3	5.2
Public	7.5	5.3	5.8	5.3	4.5	3.6
Private	0.3	2.1	0.5	0.7	0.8	1.7

Source: OECD Facebook 2013