Proceedings of ICSPHS 2026 Symposium: Ethics, Law, and Psychology: Interdisciplinary Reconstruction of Humanities in Medicine
DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2026.ZJU33026

Parental Aspirations and Fertility Intentions: The Impact of Parental Educational Attainment and Educational Expectations on the Intention to Have a Second Child

Linlin Zhong

School of Social Science, Soochow University, Suzhou, China
3355633104@qq.com

Abstract. To reduce the economic burden of raising children in Chinese families, China has carried out the universal three-child policy. However, there are still many factors related to fertility intention in real life, especially parents' educational attainment, which has an important influence on fertility decisions. Higher educational attainment is often associated with lower fertility intention due to higher opportunity costs and parents' priority on their children's education. For the above reasons, this study explores the relationship between Chinese parents' educational attainment, educational expectations and the intention to have a second child, and examines the mediating role of educational expectations. This paper uses the method of Logit regression analysis to process data from CFPS. The results show that although parents' educational attainment has no direct impact on fertility intention, it significantly reduces parents' intention to have a second child by increasing parents' educational expectations for their children, thus playing a mediating role. In other words, parents' educational attainment indirectly affects fertility intention through educational expectations. Families with higher educational attainment tend to adopt an attitude of focusing on quality rather than quantity in fertility decisions, and educational expectations play a crucial role in fertility decisions. Future research may explore policy solutions to alleviate the negative impact of high educational expectations on fertility decisions.

Keywords: parents' educational attainment, educational expectations, fertility intention, educational investment, family decision-making

1. Introduction

The implementation of the universal three-child policy and various fertility incentives has relieved the economic burden of contemporary Chinese families in "giving birth to, raising and educating children" to a certain extent. However, regarding the population problem of the "low fertility trap", the fertility rate of families of childbearing age is still low, so it is particularly important to explore the causes and internal mechanisms of fertility intention in Chinese families in the new era. Existing studies show that the factors affecting fertility intention mainly include institutions, culture, family, individuals and other aspects. Intergenerational support, educational matching between spouses, family gender division of labor and social support networks will all significantly affect fertility

© 2026 The Authors. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2026.ZJU33026

intention [1]. The family is the basic unit for giving birth to and raising children, and the fertility intention and motivation within the family play a leading role in the fertility decision-making of couples. Therefore, exploring how families affect fertility intention is particularly crucial to explaining the internal mechanism of fertility intention.

Scholars at home and abroad have conducted relevant discussions in existing literature. The overall conclusion shows that the higher the parents' educational level, the lower their fertility intention [2]. The study by Li Changan and others [3] believes that among middle and low-income groups, the improvement of parents' educational level will significantly reduce their fertility intention; but among high-income groups, this negative effect is significantly reduced. This means that the inhibitory effect of educational attainment on fertility intention is heterogeneous among groups with different socioeconomic statuses. Some studies have confirmed a negative correlation between educational attainment and fertility rate. Lavely and Freedman [4] found that before the implementation of the family planning policy, the fertility rate of Chinese couples with higher education had generally decreased. Educational attainment is regarded as a key factor affecting fertility behavior, and it has an obvious impact in both developing and developed countries. It is worth noting that the impact brought by parents' educational attainment may also have an intergenerational transmission effect. Scholars such as Ye Tuo [5] found that the higher the parents' educational attainment, the lower their children's fertility intention. As parents' educational attainment continues to increase, the intergenerational childcare support they provide to their children generally decreases. Moreover, those children from highly educated families often have a stronger desire for personal development and pay more attention to educational investment. The above factors have comprehensively caused the current situation of generally low fertility intention in contemporary Chinese families. As an important factor affecting fertility intention, parents' educational attainment needs further exploration and analysis of the specific mechanism process affecting fertility intention.

2. Literature review

2.1. Parental educational attainment and fertility intention

Parents' educational level affects fertility intention through many ways. First, parents with higher education often have higher goals for personal achievement and career development, and having children will surely take their energy and resources. To ensure the quality of personal development, highly educated parents often choose to have fewer children. As parents' educational level increases, investment in their children's education will gradually increase, and the cost of family life will also rise. To maximize family benefits, parents prefer to have fewer children. At the same time, higher educational attainment also brings higher opportunity costs, so conflicts between career development and raising children will weaken fertility intention to a certain extent [6]. Yang Baoyan and Wan Minggang [7] believe that as parents' educational level improves, parents pay more attention to the education quality of their children. In daily life, families with higher education usually face greater economic pressure, which reduces fertility intention. This situation is especially obvious among low-income groups in China: higher educational attainment makes it harder for low-income families to afford raising many children, so their fertility intention is significantly reduced [8]. In contrast, among high-income families with more economic resources, the negative effect of educational attainment on fertility intention may be weakened or even disappear completely [9].

Existing studies have proved that there is a negative correlation between parents' educational attainment and fertility intention. On the one hand, as women's educational level gradually

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2026.ZJU33026

increases, the ideal family size tends to become smaller. During the global fertility transition, families with higher education have lower fertility rates [10]. At the same time, educational structure is still an important way to predict population fertility level, and there are still significant differences in fertility status among different educational groups. A cross-national study covering 42 Asian and African countries shows that fertility rate decreases as women's years of schooling increase. The strength of this relationship is influenced by education quality, but in most cases, this negative correlation still exists even in areas with low education quality [11]. In Europe, scholars' cohort analysis of completed fertility has repeatedly confirmed that people with higher education have far fewer children on average than those with lower education [12,13]. In short, under the background of low fertility rate, in different international environments, higher educational attainment is still significantly related to delaying childbirth and reducing the number of children.

It is worth noting that the influence of parents' educational attainment on fertility intention also shows the characteristic of intergenerational transmission. After analyzing CFPS data, Ye Tuo and Chen Zhouyi [5] found that higher parental educational attainment significantly reduces the fertility intention of the next generation. Young people growing up with highly educated parents often prefer to delay childbirth or reduce the number of children, because highly educated parents usually use more detailed parenting methods, so grandparents' participation in raising the next generation decreases accordingly, which weakens the trend of family expansion driven by traditional factors such as intergenerational care support [14]. Moreover, children growing up in highly educated families generally hold more modern fertility values. They often pay more attention to personal achievement and career development, and have lower desire to form large families. This intergenerational influence further strengthens the role of parental educational attainment in shaping fertility intention.

2.2. The mediating role of educational expectations

Parents' educational level does not directly affect their fertility intention. More exactly, it works through the mediating factor of parents' educational expectations for their children [15]. Educational expectations mean parents' hopes for the future educational achievements of their children. They are usually closely related to parents' own educational level. Parents with higher education often have higher educational expectations for their children. Yang Chunhua [16] points out that parents with higher social status, especially higher education, usually have higher educational expectations for their children, and this increase in educational expectations has a very significant influence on family fertility decisions.

Parents' high expectations for their children's educational achievements make them pay more attention to quality rather than quantity in their fertility choices. This is consistent with the quantity-quality trade-off theory proposed by Becker and Lewis [17]. This theory states that parents make a trade-off between the number of children and the quality of investment in children. Parents with high educational expectations, especially those with higher education themselves, often attach great importance to the development quality of their children, so they usually reduce their ideal number of children actively to ensure enough resources for each child. Wang Chunkai and Shi Zhilei [8] point out that rising educational expectations push families to use a fertility mode that replaces quantity with quality, which finally reduces the number of children and allows families to focus more energy on improving education quality.

Excessively high educational expectations also indirectly reduce fertility intention by increasing the cost and energy input of raising children. The study by Bian Shu and Xiong Yuqi [15] provides strong empirical support: they find that parents' high educational expectations significantly reduce

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2026.ZJU33026

family fertility behavior through the wealth crowding-out effect and the time and energy occupation effect. The wealth crowding-out effect means that parents allocate a large amount of family financial resources to meet their high educational expectations for children, thus taking up wealth that could have been used to raise more children and investing in the education of a single child. The time and energy occupation effect means that parents spend too much time and energy on educating a single child, making it difficult for them to take on the responsibility of raising more children. The study by Wang Min and Wang Shucui [18] finds that wealthy urban families are more sensitive to education competition, so the negative effect of educational expectations on fertility intention is especially strong in urban families and high-income families. Competitive pressure pushes parents to spend more time, energy and money in fierce education competition. Therefore, choosing to have fewer children and raise them carefully can help focus on education investment and make it easier for children to maintain or improve their social class.

Although many studies have discussed the relationship between parents' educational level and fertility intention, most studies analyze the direct effect of educational level on fertility intention, and few studies deeply examine the mediating role of parents' educational expectations in this relationship. Studies by scholars such as Li Changan et al [3]., Yang Baoyan and Wan Minggang [7] have found that educational level reduces fertility intention and have confirmed the mediating role of educational expectations in this process. However, the role of educational expectations may differ significantly between poor families and high-income families [8,19].

2.3. Hypotheses

Families with higher education often have more human capital. Career development requires a lot of time, which clearly conflicts with the time needed to raise children. Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction states that parents' own educational experience not only reflects their level of human capital but also, more importantly, deeply shapes their cognitive framework of educational goals for their children. Becker's quantity-quality trade-off theory provides another explanation. It holds that parents with higher education tend to concentrate limited family resources on the education and training of a single child when making fertility decisions, rather than pursuing more children. One important reason for this is that having more children will reduce the educational resources each child can get in the family, thus lowering the possibility of the whole family achieving intergenerational upward mobility.

Parents' educational experience makes them more likely to accept the social logic that "education changes fate". In an increasingly competitive society, internal competition becomes more serious, so parents' educational expectations for their children rise with increasing social competition. Higher educational expectations usually mean higher economic and time costs for families to improve their children's educational achievements. However, family resources are limited. Families with more children will reduce the resources each child can get, which is not good for children's educational achievements. Therefore, high educational expectations limit family fertility levels. In different social classes, because families have different amounts of resources, parents also make different trade-offs between the number of children and the education quality of children. Families with high socioeconomic status have more social resources, but they also pay more attention to the education quality of each child, so they often choose to have fewer children. In contrast, families with low socioeconomic status not only face resource constraints but also often prefer quantity over quality. They give priority to having more children to replace quality and pay less attention to education quality.

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2026.ZJU33026

Therefore, educational expectations play an important mediating role between parents' educational background and fertility decisions. Based on the above logic, this study puts forward the following hypotheses:

H1: The higher parents' educational attainment is, the lower their intention to have a second child is.

H2: The higher parents' educational attainment is, the higher their educational expectations for children are.

H3: The higher parents' educational expectations are, the lower their intention to have a second child is.

H4: Educational expectations play a mediating role between parents' educational attainment and the intention to have a second child.

3. Data and statistical modeling

3.1. Data processing

3.1.1. Dependent variable

The dependent variable is the intention to have another child. Based on CFPS data, the variable of intention to have another child is constructed according to questions about family future fertility plans in the questionnaire. If at least one parent in the family says they still plan to have children in the future, the family is considered to have the intention to have another child; if both parents show no plan to have another child, the family is considered to have no such intention. The intention to have another child is set as a binary variable, in which no intention is coded as 0 and having intention is coded as 1.

3.1.2. Independent variable

The independent variable is parental educational attainment. Parental educational attainment reflects the family's human capital level and its potential influence on children's development and family decisions. In specific operation, it is measured by the highest educational attainment of the father and the mother respectively. Educational attainment is constructed according to the education classification variable in the CFPS questionnaire and is assigned in ascending order, covering primary school and below, junior high school, senior high school/technical secondary school/vocational school, junior college, bachelor's degree, postgraduate and above. For ease of interpretation and comparison, the variable of parental educational attainment is processed as continuous in empirical analysis, and a larger value means higher educational attainment.

3.1.3. Mediating variable

The mediating variable is educational expectation. Educational expectation reflects parents' subjective judgment and expectation for their children's future educational achievements, and it is an important psychological and behavioral mechanism in family education investment and fertility decisions. This study operationalizes educational expectation based on the question in the CFPS questionnaire: "What level of education do you hope your child will at least finish?" This variable is divided into several ordered categories, including junior high school, senior high school/technical secondary school/vocational school, junior college, bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctorate. A larger value means higher parental expectation for their children's educational achievements. In

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2026.ZJU33026

the analysis, educational expectation is included in the model as an ordered continuous variable to test its mediating role between parental educational attainment and the intention to have another child.

3.1.4. Control variables

To reduce omitted variable bias as much as possible, a series of family and individual-level control variables are introduced into the model. They specifically include: father's age, mother's age, family income, age of the first child, gender of the first child and place of residence. Among them, father's age and mother's age are included as continuous variables; family income uses the indicator of annual family income and its logarithm is taken to reduce the influence of extreme values; age of the first child is a continuous variable; gender of the first child and place of residence are set as dummy variables. The above control variables control the intention to have another child from the aspects of demographic characteristics, family economic conditions and children's characteristics to improve the robustness of the estimation results.

4. Empirical results

4.1. Benchmark regression analysis

Table 1 and Table 2 report the effects of fathers' and mothers' educational attainment and educational expectations on family intention to have a second child, after controlling for factors such as parental age, family income, children's characteristics and place of residence. It can be seen from Table 1 that after introducing educational expectations, the effect of fathers' educational attainment on the intention to have a second child is not significant ($\beta = -0.009$, $p > 0.05$), while there is a significant negative relationship between educational expectations and the intention to have a second child ($\beta = -0.186$, $p < 0.001$). This shows that, with other variables controlled, the higher parents' expectations for their children's educational achievements, the lower the possibility of the family having a second child. In contrast, fathers' educational attainment itself does not directly affect whether the family has the intention to have a second child, and its role may be exerted indirectly more through family educational values and parenting decision-making processes. In addition, in terms of control variables, fathers' age has a significant inhibitory effect on the intention to have a second child ($\beta = -0.118$, $p < 0.05$), which means that as fathers grow older, the possibility of the family having a second child decreases significantly; the gender of the first child has a significant effect on the intention to have a second child ($\beta = -0.339$, $p < 0.001$), which indicates that family fertility decisions are still affected by gender preferences for children. Variables such as mothers' age, family income, age of the first child and place of residence show no significant effects in this model.

Table 2 further replaces the core independent variable with mothers' educational attainment, and the results are generally consistent with Table 1. The direct effect of mothers' educational attainment on the intention to have a second child is also not significant ($\beta = -0.084$, $p > 0.05$), while educational expectations still have a significant negative effect on the intention to have a second child ($\beta = -0.170$, $p < 0.001$). This result shows that whether examined from the perspective of fathers or mothers, the level of family educational expectations for children is an important factor affecting the intention to have a second child. Among the control variables, the direction and significance of the effects of fathers' age and the gender of the first child remain stable as in the previous model, showing that the model results have good robustness.

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2026.ZJU33026

Table 1. Benchmark regression of fathers' educational attainment, educational expectations and intention to have a second child

Variables	Coefficient	std. err.
Educational Expectation	-.186***	.052
Father's Education Level	-.009	.217
Father's Age	-.118*	.047
Mother's Age	.011	.062
Household Income	.051	.079
First Child's Age	-.103	.077
First Child's Gender	-.339***	.025
Place of Residence	-.067	.089
Constant	3.172***	.188

Note: $p<0.05$, $p<0.01$, $p<0.001$, the same below.

Table 2. Benchmark regression of mothers' educational attainment, educational expectations and intention to have a second child

Variables	Coefficient	std. err.
Educational Expectation	-.170***	.054
Father's Education Level	-.084	.208
Father's Age	-.121*	.049
Mother's Age	.014	.057
Household Income	.089	.057
First Child's Age	-.110	.073
First Child's Gender	-.347***	.012
Place of Residence	-.022	.114
Constant	3.000***	.225

4.2. Mediating effect test

To further verify the mediating role of educational expectations between parental educational attainment and the intention to have a second child, regression analyses were further conducted between fathers' and mothers' educational attainment and educational expectations respectively (as shown in Table 3 and Table 4). After controlling for variables such as parental age, family income, children's characteristics and place of residence, both fathers' and mothers' educational attainment show significant positive effects on educational expectations.

Specifically, Table 3 shows that fathers' educational attainment has a significant positive effect on educational expectations ($\beta = 0.114$, $p < 0.001$), which means that for each unit increase in fathers' educational attainment, parents' expectations for their children's educational achievements increase significantly. Factors among the control variables such as fathers' age, mothers' age, family income, age of the first child, gender of the first child and place of residence do not significantly affect educational expectations.

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2026.ZJU33026

Table 4 further shows that mothers' educational attainment also significantly increases educational expectations ($\beta = 0.137$, $p < 0.001$), and the direction of the effect is the same as that of fathers. Other factors among the control variables, such as mothers' age and family income, also have no significant effects on educational expectations.

Combined with the benchmark regression analysis, although parental educational attainment does not directly and significantly affect the family intention to have a second child, it indirectly affects the intention by significantly increasing educational expectations. This finding provides empirical support for the mediating path of "higher parental educational attainment – higher educational expectations – lower intention to have a second child". It shows that families with high educational backgrounds strengthen the trade-off between parenting costs and the number of children by raising expectations for educational investment in children, thus inhibiting the intention to have a second child.

Table 3. Regression analysis of fathers' educational attainment and educational expectations

Variables	Coefficient	Std. err.
Father's Education Level	.114***	.025
Father's Age	.012	.010
Mother's Age	-.006	.010
Household Income	.008	.037
First Child's Age	-.017	.011
First Child's Gender	-.023	.053
Place of Residence	.098	.058
Constant	3.374***	.446

Table 4. Regression analysis of mothers' educational attainment and educational expectations

Variables	Coefficient	Std. err.
Mother's Education Level	.137***	.024
Father's Age	.015	.010
Mother's Age	-.006	.010
Household Income	-.004	.037
First Child's Age	-.016	.011
First Child's Gender	-.009	.053
Place of Residence	.064	.058
Constant	3.324***	.442

5. Discussion

5.1. Mechanism of parental educational attainment, educational expectations and intention to have a second child

The empirical results of this study find that higher parental educational attainment will significantly increase their educational expectations for their children, while higher educational expectations will have a significant negative impact on the intention to have a second child. This finding is of great

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2026.ZJU33026

significance for us to understand the internal mechanism behind the phenomenon that groups with high education have low fertility rates.

First, the positive correlation between parental educational attainment and educational expectations actually reflects the intergenerational transmission of educational values. Parents with higher education usually have a highly consistent and stable understanding of the value of education because they have personally experienced the long-term benefits of education for personal growth and career development. These benefits include more stable employment opportunities, higher social status and broader promotion prospects [20]. In the family environment, this high recognition of the value of education not only stays at the level of parents themselves, but also eventually turns into higher educational expectations for children through parents' various plans for their children's future development [21]. Educational expectation is not just a simple attitude variable; it is actually closely related to family decisions on the allocation of educational resources. Higher educational expectations are accompanied by higher educational goals for children, and will also push parents to make long-term educational plans to achieve these goals.

The negative impact of educational expectations on fertility intention reveals the real trade-off that families face in the process of fertility decision-making [22]. For families with high educational expectations, the key issue of fertility decision-making is no longer whether they can afford to raise more children, but whether they can maintain the original educational quality of a single child under the premise of having multiple children. As education competition becomes increasingly fierce, rising educational expectations are usually accompanied by higher educational costs. These costs are not only reflected in explicit financial expenditure, but also in parents' long-term and implicit investment in time, energy and emotion. In daily life, family resources are regarded as limited and scarce, and increasing the number of children is considered to threaten the educational quality each child can obtain. To avoid the situation that it is difficult to achieve children's educational goals due to resource dispersion, some families will choose the fertility strategy of reducing the number of children, and adopt the way of concentrating educational resources on a single or a small number of children to ensure educational quality [8]. This logic further explains how educational expectations play a mediating role between parental educational attainment and the intention to have another child.

5.2. Possible explanations for why parental educational attainment has no direct effect on the intention to have a second child

Although educational attainment has a significant negative impact on fertility intention through the mediating effect of educational expectations, educational attainment has not been proven to have a direct impact on fertility intention.

From the perspective of family resources, the improvement of educational attainment does not necessarily reduce fertility. Families with higher education usually have a good economic foundation and clearer career development, which makes them more capable of dealing with various practical restrictions brought by raising multiple children. Therefore, the improvement of educational attainment may even relieve the fertility pressure caused by high fertility costs by enhancing family resource endowment [23].

In addition, parents with higher education often have more mature parenting concepts and stronger ability to allocate family resources. They have advantages in time management, family division of labor and integration of educational resources, and can balance the educational needs of multiple children through more reasonable internal family arrangements. In this case, ensuring the educational quality of children does not necessarily have to rely on reducing the number of children,

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2026.ZJU33026

but can be balanced by optimizing internal family arrangements. This breaks the traditional assumption that higher education must correspond to lower fertility rates to a certain extent.

From the perspective of values, families with higher education will pay more attention to the diversity and integrity of family relationships, and the improvement of educational attainment does not necessarily make them pay less attention to family bonds and intergenerational continuation. On the contrary, they will realize that families with multiple children have positive effects in providing emotional support for family members, promoting children's interaction and promoting social development [24]. With such values, having more children is no longer just a problem of resource allocation, but more an important way to meet emotional needs and pass on life.

References

[1] He, X. B., Wang, X. Y., & Zhou, K. (2017). Filial support beliefs and fertility intentions among rural youth: Empirical evidence from CGSS (2013) (In Chinese). Northwest Population, 38(02), 31–38+53.
[2] Xue, L., Liu, Y., & Rui, X. (2025). A Study on the Relationship Between Overall Education Attainment and Fertility Intentions in China—An Empirical Analysis Based on CGSS 2012–2021 Data. Journal of Social Systems and Policy Analysis, 2(2), 65-76.
[3] Li, C. A., Yang, Z. J., & Fan, X. H. (2023). Educational attainment, income class, and fertility intentions (In Chinese). Education Economics Review, 8(02), 106–128.
[4] Lavely, W., & Freedman, R. (1990). The origins of the Chinese fertility decline. Demography, 27(3), 357-367.
[5] Ye, T., & Chen, Z. Y. (2024). The impact of parental educational attainment on youth fertility intentions: Evidence from CFPS data (In Chinese). Changbai Academic Journal, (03), 107–121+2.
[6] Zhou, X. M., & Pei, X. T. (2022). Mechanisms of the impact of higher education on women's fertility levels (In Chinese). Population and Development, 28(06), 46–58.
[7] Yang B. Y., & Wan M. G. (2015). How fathers' educational attainment and economic capital affect academic performance: An analysis based on mediating and moderating effects. Peking University Education Review, 13(2), 127-145+192. https: //doi.org/10.19355/j.cnki.1671-9468.2015.02.011.
[8] Wang, C. K., & Shi, Z. L. (2024). Family educational expectations and their fertility effects under the threechild policy (In Chinese). Population and Economy, (01), 76–89.
[9] Strulik, H. (2024). Higher education and the income-fertility nexus. Journal of Population Economics, 37(1), 35.
[10] Qi, X. Y., & Zhang, C. (2024). The effect of education on women's fertility intentions and its mechanisms (In Chinese). Education Economics Review, 9(06), 98–122.
[11] Chen, S. (2025). Women's education and fertility in select countries of Africa and Asia: Moderation by quality of education. Population Studies, 1-23.
[12] Merz, E. M., & Liefbroer, A. C. (2017). Cross-national differences in the association between educational attainment and completed fertility. Do welfare regimes matter?. Vienna Yearbook of Population Research, 15, 95-120.
[13] Nisén, J., Klüsener, S., Dahlberg, J., Dommermuth, L., Jasilioniene, A., Kreyenfeld, M., ... & Myrskylä, M. (2021). Educational differences in cohort fertility across sub-national regions in Europe. European Journal of Population, 37(1), 263-295.
[14] Wang, J. Y., & Yu, S. (2025). The effect of intergenerational support on fertility behavior among women with different human capital (In Chinese). Northwest Population, 46(04), 1–13.
[15] Bian, S., & Xiong, Y. Q. (2023). The influence and mechanism of educational expectations on fertility behavior under the context of "involution" (In Chinese). Population and Development, 29(05), 2–11.
[16] Yang C. H. (2006). Social class differences in educational expectations: The relationship between parents' social status and children's educational expectations. Tsinghua Journal of Education, (4), 71-76+83. https: //doi.org/10.14138/j.1001-4519.2006.04.011.
[17] Becker, G. S., & Lewis, H. G. (1973). On the interaction between the quantity and quality of children. Journal of political Economy, 81(2, Part 2), S279-S288.
[18] Wang, M., & Wang, S. C. (2024). Child education pressure, housing pressure, and fertility intentions: A study based on wellbeing and social class crowdingout effects (In Chinese). Southern Population, 39(03), 14–26.
[19] Yan, Y. P., & Zhang, S. X. (2025). Family educational expectations and women's secondchild fertility intentions: An empirical analysis based on 2018 CFPS data (In Chinese). Journal of Kunming University, 47(02), 34–44.

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2026.ZJU33026

[20] Ju, G. D., & Chen, Y. S. (2024). The structure and changes of educational returns in China (2003–2021): Hierarchical differences, time trends, and social structural factors (In Chinese). Society, 44(05), 61–95.
[21] Liu, Y., & Cai, H. B. (2020). The impact of paternal characteristics on children's educational expectations and its intergenerational trends (In Chinese). Labor Economics Research, 8(03), 77–96.
[22] Wu, G. Z., & Zheng, S. N. (2022). How educational economic costs suppress contemporary youth's intention to have more children: Theoretical pathways and empirical tests (In Chinese). Journal of Fujian Open University, (06), 68–76.
[23] Shi, Z. L., & Wang, Z. (2024). Socioeconomic status and fertility: A framework for fertility inequality analysis (In Chinese). Population Journal, 46(04), 5–23.
[24] Zhang, R., & Li, Y. (2025). The fluctuating fertility intentions: An analysis of the fertility decision logic and mechanisms of women of childbearing age under emotional tension (In Chinese). Chinese Youth Research, (03), 40–49.