

**Factors Fostering Civic Pride According to Regional  
Characteristics among High School Students and Its Influence  
on Their Attitude toward Settling Down**

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[SYNOPSIS]

As a strategy to counteract the decline in U-turn population, it is deemed crucial to enhance civic pride among high school students, which is defined as the pride citizens feel towards their city. Prior investigations conducted by the authors in the culturally historic city of Takaoka and the fishing village area of Himi, both in Toyama Prefecture, revealed that regional characteristics such as history, industry, and culture significantly influence civic pride and intentions regarding future settlement. However, it remains uncertain whether similar results can be replicated in areas with distinct regional characteristics from these two locales. This study therefore focuses on Ube City in Yamaguchi Prefecture, a leading industrial city in Japan, and undertakes a comparative analysis with the results from Takaoka City and Himi City to elucidate how regional characteristics affect civic pride and future settlement intentions.

From the analysis of attributes and intentions to settle, it was observed that across all three regions, high school students who aspire to find employment exhibit higher levels of civic pride and a stronger intention to settle in the future. These findings suggest that initiatives to bolster civic pride and future settlement intentions should particularly target high school students whose futures remain undecided. The research further demonstrated that a strong attachment to the region significantly impacts future settlement intentions in all studied areas, underscoring the vital role that fostering regional attachment plays in enhancing these intentions. Additionally, the study highlighted that the attachment and future settlement intentions of high school students are augmented by the representative industries and cultures of each city; for instance, Ube City's coal memorials, sculptures, and UBE Corporation, Takaoka City's traditional industries like copperware and casting, and Himi City's fisheries including fish and winter yellowtail. Moreover, the influence of parks and public transportation systems on regional attachment was noted across all areas. Consequently, the maintenance of parks and the preservation of public transportation systems are crucial for raising future settlement intentions and civic pride.

This research provides critical insights for local governments and educational bodies in devising strategies and educational programs aimed at nurturing civic pride and future settlement intentions among the youth in regional cities. The enhancement of civic pride and the intention to settle among young individuals in regional cities is a pressing issue in Japan, where population decline is a significant concern. The findings of this study are expected to assist in formulating solutions and contribute to the development of more effective regional revitalization strategies. Future research should focus on a more detailed analysis of regional characteristics to further refine and develop effective strategies for regional revitalization.