Longitudinal analysis of time perspective during the transition from junior high school to high school

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Introduction
Time perspective is very important concept to understand psychological essence of human being who lives in the flow of time. Time perspective is defined as “the totality of the individual’s view of his psychological past and psychological future existing at the given time” (Lewin, 1951). We can extend our mind not only to the past but also to the future while we exist in present moment.

Empirical studies on time perspective started in 1930s. Israeli (1932, 1935) examined negative future outlook in youths who experienced world-wide economic recession after a great slump of New York stock market in 1929. Because of a drastic down of stock price, many workers lost their job and also their hope for the future showing more negative time perspective in the future.

As Tsuzuki (2007) noted, recently time perspective research expanded from cross-sectional study to longitudinal study. Developmental process of time perspective in childhood and adolescence can be clarified through longitudinal data. Individual difference of time perspective can be obtained by analyzing longitudinal data.

Purpose
This paper aimed to examine developmental change of time perspective during the transition from junior high school to high school. After graduate from junior high school, students must take entrance examination to enter high school and meet different school context. This experience of a big environmental change for adolescence may considerably influence on development of time perspective.

Method
Three cohorts of 732 students (309 boys and 464 girls) answered a sheet of questionnaire from 3rd grade of junior high school (15 years old) to 1st grade of high school (16 years old). The questionnaire was consisted of time perspective (five subscales), self-consciousness (four subscales), school life consciousness (one subscale) and general malaise (two subscales). Survey was conducted in daily classroom group situation at school in junior high school and follow up survey after graduate from junior high school was carried out by post for each participant.

Results
Cluster analysis using four subscales of self-consciousness scores (self-worth, existence of significant others, self-denial, and self-satisfaction) showed six different types of self-consciousness during the transition from junior high school to high school. Two-way ANOVA (group (6) X time (2)) showed that the score of Hope for the future during the transition increased for Construction of new human relation group and Self-affirmative group. On the contrary, the score of Hope for the future during this transition decreased for Self-denial group, Constant self-worth group, and Loss of human relation group.

Discussion
Some student who made new human relationship after entering high school can have positive time perspective, and the other student who failed making new human relationship can negative time perspective. These findings show that human network may serve an important function to raise student’s time perspective in new environment.

In conclusion, this longitudinal study shows individual difference of time perspective during the transition, and transitional (environmental) effect on time perspective change.