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Research Note

Mothers' Work Conditions and Early Adolescents' Psychological Adjustment in Japan - Work Socialization Hypothesis vs. Work Stress Hypothesis -

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Introduction

Labour force participation of married women has been promoted in Japan. Sociologists and psychologists in Japan have been paying attention to the effects of married women's work on marital relations and their children's lives as well as in the United States (Gottfried et al., 1988; Hara, 1987; Makino, 1987; Percel and Menaghan, 1994; Sodei et al., 1993; Suemori, 2002).

One of the major issues is effects of maternal employment on their children behaviours and well-being. The studies on this theme demonstrate that working status (working/not-working) of mothers doesn't have significant and consistent effects on children's behaviour and mental health in Japan as well as the United States (Gottfried and Gottfried, 1988; Nagathu, 1982; Suemori, 2002, 2005).

On these results of previous literatures, recent relevant studies tend to pay attention to working condition and characteristics, not working status (Crouter et al., 1999). However, effects of conditions of mothers' work on their children's lives are not fully investigated in Japan. Therefore, this study examines the relations between mothers' work conditions and early adolescents' psychological adjustment by using quantitative data in Japan.

Current Status of Women's Labour Force in Japan

Before we attack main subject on this paper, we'll look into basic statistics of women's and maternal employment in Japan. There're three points on women's labour force in Japan.

Firstly, labour force of Japanese married women has been increased, we'll see the basic statistics on working status of women's labour force in Japan.

1167 thousands women were worked in 1975. More recently, 2329 thousands women are working in 2010 (Table 1). In three decades, Japanese women labour force has been increased about two times.

In addition, the ratio of women's labour force also has been increased from 32.0% in 1975 to 42.6% in 2010. Based on these statistics, it becomes more popular that women have jobs in Japan.

Table 1. Trend of Women Employment in Japan

year	Women (thousands)	Sum of Men & Women (thousands)	Ratio (women/total)
1975	1167	3646	32.0%
1980	1354	3971	34.1%
1985	1548	4313	35.9%
1990	1834	4835	37.9%
1995	2048	5263	38.9%
2000	2140	5356	40.0%
2005	2229	5393	41.3%
2010	2329	5462	42.6%

This statistics means employees only
Labor Force Survey in Japan

However, these trends don't necessarily raise the status and power of Japanese women. The second feature is increase of women who work as temporal worker. Because, its rise have been brought by increase of women who work as a part-time, not as a full timer (Figure 1). In addition, this tendency is recently more definitive as world economy become new-economy system and globalization. In a long-term economic recession in Japan, it is more tangible that women's employment status has been unstable than that of men's status.

Third point is that most women in Japan still resign their jobs when they get married or especially give birth to a baby. Japanese women's representative career/family course is that they work as a full-time after graduated their school, afterwards they quit their jobs when they have a baby, they come back to labour market as a part-time worker as their children were grown up.

Japanese have more egalitarian attitudes on gender role than in the former days (Figure 2). But, employment system in Japan is still male-oriented, work and family role system is also gendered.

Theories and Empirical Studies

There are two theoretical backgrounds on connections between the conditions of parents' work and children's adjustment.

The one is work socialization hypothesis that jobs that facilitating occupational orientation increase intellectual flexibility (Kohn and Schooler, 1983). This hypothesis claims that occupational self direction socializes workers in ways that are generalized to life off the job. People who work in high complexity and self direction tend to place emphasis on individual autonomy in non-work life such as family domain, while people who work in high conformity tend to behave more traditionally.

Parcel and Menaghan (1994) demonstrated that occupational complexity of mothers is related to the extent to which they create a positive home environment that provides cognitive stimulation and emotional support for their children.

Some studies in Japan have applied this theoretical framework to examine relation between the characteristics of parent's work and children's adjustment.

Nakai (1991) examined the relations between parent's educational level, occupational

Figure 1. Ratio of temporal employees in Japan (by sex)

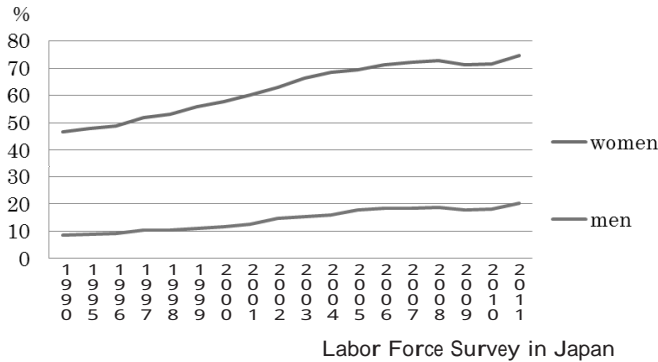
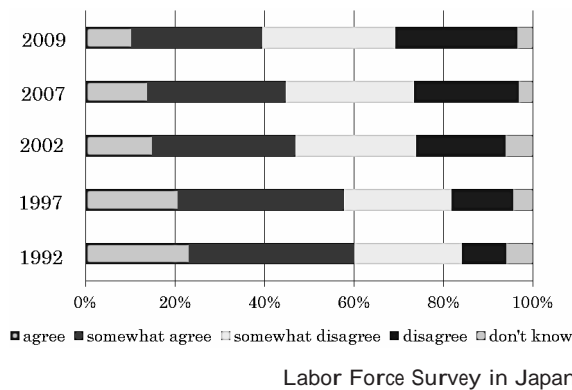


Figure 2. Trend of Traditional gender role attitude in Japan *1



status and their parenting based on 324 adults data. Results indicated that the higher their educational level, occupational status, the more parents have value that puts emphasis on autonomy in their child-rearing.

Apparently, these results seem to support Kohn's hypothesis. However, she didn't controlled parent's educational level in analysing the effects of their occupational status on parenting value. Previous studies pointed out that parent's education is influential to the relation between occupational characteristic and their parenting value: the effects of occupational characteristics on parenting value was diminished in controlled by their educational level. This study couldn't present clear evidence about the effects of occupational status and parenting value.

Naoi (1989) attacked this research question. She also examined the relations between parent's occupational complexities and their parenting value. It is remarkable that this study accurately tried to apply the measure on Kohn's occupational complexities, that they controlled parent's educational level in analyzing the effects of their occupational complexities on parenting value.

The results suggested that parent's occupational complexities were not significant for their parenting value. Parent's occupational complexities had a significant effect on parenting value in correlation analysis. However, by controlled their age and educational years,

this relation diminished statistical significance. On these results, Naoi stated that parent's occupational complexities has not definite effects on parenting value in Japan.

There were same line in this study in Japan. Kataoka (1987) investigated the associations between parent's social economic status and parent-adolescent relationships. The results indicated that parent's social economic status has no effects on their parenting behaviours: discipline, parental control. She also claimed that Kohn's theoretical framework didn't necessary account for the relation between parent's job and parenting value and behaviours in Japan.

The second perspective is work stress hypothesis that effects of parents' work conditions on an individual ultimately influence their marital relation and children (Perry-Jenkins et al, 2000). Relevant studies suggest that work stress results in less responsive and more negative interactions with family members (Repetti and Wood, 1997)

Crouter et al (1999) examined the associations between parent's job pressure, role overload and their children. The data were 190 dual-earner families, mothers, fathers, and their children answered questionnaire. The analysis indicated that parent's job pressure increased their role overload, and their role overload decreased quality of parent-child relationships. Thefore, decline of parent-child relationships promoted negative condition on children's adjustment.

Many studies in United States were executed on this issue based on work stress hypothesis, few study was not done in Japan.

Hypotheses

Given these theoretical backgrounds and previous studies, the present study has two hypotheses.

First, women who work as professionals tend to involve their children more self directly. Children whose mothers work as professional position has more autonomy, and has better psychological adjustment. This hypothesis is based on Kohn's theoretical discussions.

Second, women who are satisfied with their jobs tend to involve their children more responsively. As a result, children whose mothers are satisfied with their work have better psychological adjustment. This hypothesis is based on work stress theoretical framework.

This paper also tries to expand our understanding of interface between work and family by considering comparative perspectives (Ishii-Kuntz, 1994).

Methods: Data and Variables

The respondents were drawn from random probability sample of mothers, lived in the west area of Tokyo in 1998. The data were 528 sets of mothers and their oldest children in intact families.

Mothers' mean age was 41.2 years old. Fathers' mean age was 44.0 years old. Focal children were early adolescents, their age ranged from 12 to 14 years old.

Independent variables are mothers' occupations and job satisfaction. Mothers' occupation

is measured as an operational variable on work socialization hypothesis. Occupation variable consists of several category of occupation: manager, professional, officer, sales staff, factory worker, non-worker, the others.

Mothers' job satisfaction is an operational variable on work stress hypothesis. These variables are composed of five items answered by mothers: job contents, human relations in work domain, wages, hours of work, general job satisfaction.

Dependent variables are adolescent's sociability and sense of independence as adolescents' psychological adjustment. Mother's children themselves answer these variables.

Control variables are mothers' and fathers' education and income. These variables are based on mothers' answers.

Results

Generalized linear models show that mothers' occupation is not related to early adoles-

Table 2. General Linear Model on Adolescents' Psychological Adjustment

	sum of square	df	<i>Sociability</i>	
			mean square	F value
<i>Mother</i>				
education	2.280	1	2.280	.374
income	0.073	1	.073	.012
<i>Father</i>				
education	6.009	1	6.009	.985
income	1.252	1	1.252	.205
Mothers' occupation	2.157	3	.719	.118
<i>Sense of Independence</i>				
<i>Mother</i>				
education	19.536	1	19.536	3.189
income	11.601	1	11.601	1.894
<i>Father</i>				
education	1.298	1	1.298	.212
income	.855	1	.855	.140
Mothers' occupation	5.467	3	1.822	.297

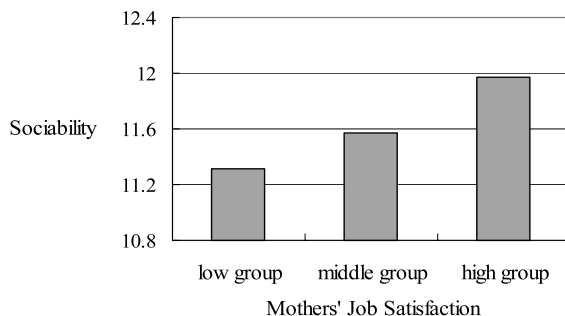
*p<.05 **p<.01

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis on Adolescents' Psychological Adjustment

	<i>Sociability</i>		<i>Sense of Independence</i>	
	<i>Beta</i>	<i>s.e</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>s.e</i>
<i>Mother</i>				
education	.012	.150	.100	.150
income	.068	.069	.121	.070
<i>Father</i>				
education	.038	.134	.043	.134
income	-.077	.068	.027	.068
Mothers' job satisfaction	.132*	.097	.054	.097

*p<.05 **p<.01

Figure 3. Mothers' Job Satisfaction and Adolescence's Sociability



cents' psychological adjustment (Table 2).

Multiple regression analyses indicate that mothers' job satisfaction is significantly related to sociability, not related to sense of independence (Table 3).

The more mothers are satisfied with their jobs, the higher their children answer the items of sociability (Figure 3).

Discussion: International Perspectives on Work and Family Issues

This study examined connections between mothers' work conditions and their adolescents' psychological adjustment by testing work socialization hypothesis and work stress hypothesis.

The findings of present study supported work stress hypothesis. The more satisfied mothers with their jobs, the more sociability their children had. This result imply that it is important for adolescents to improve their mothers' quality of work life and work environment in Japan. Developmental research in the U.S. also illustrated that parent's experience at work influences their children's live (Crouter et al., 1999; Reppeti and Wood, 1997). The findings of this paper and previous studies in the U.S. suggests that work stress hypothesis could be applied to both culture.

Work socialization hypothesis, however, was not supported by this study. Previous research in Japan also indicated that the idea of Kohn and Schooler could not be supported (Naoi, 1989). Through this analyses and previous studies, it might be difficult that work socialization hypothesis was supported in Japan.

There could be two reasons why work socialization hypothesis wasn't applied in Japan. The first is that there might be differences in social meanings of occupational positions between U.S. and Japan. It would be definite for American that each occupational position means social status and difference among them. But it doesn't seem clear for Japanese difference of social meanings or images of occupations.

The second is that there could be differences on parenting value between two countries. Japanese parents recently tend to place more emphasis on autonomy in rearing their children than ever, but American parents place emphasis on autonomy than Japanese counterparts.

Several limitations of this study need be recognized. First, this study didn't use the original measures of Kohn's occupational complexities. Second, in the absence of longitudinal data, we can access only associations between mothers' work conditions and their children's psychological adjustment, not the causal process. Third, this paper used local sample who lived in the west area of Tokyo, not national representative sample in Japan.

*1 Traditional gender role attitudes is measured by one item "What do you think about the idea: Men should play provider role, women should play domestic role."

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