

Fathers' Perception toward Work and Child Care Involvement : An Application of Identity Theory and Gender Role Ideology

Takayo SASAKI
Ochanomizu University

Abstract

This study examines how fathers' perceptions toward their work influence the perception of their paternal identity and gender role ideology and how paternal identity and gender role ideology affect fathers' involvement in child care. It is revealed that fathers' parental role is an important factor for men's involvement with their children. Meanwhile, the fathers' long working hours are increasing yearly and the time fathers spend with children is declining. Therefore, it is important to study how fathers' perceptions toward their work influence their involvement in child care. I use the data of 715 fathers who responded to questionnaires on work-life balance. The results of this study are as follows: The fathers' perceptions of job satisfaction and desire to succeed at work are positively associated with their paternal identity, although their job priority is negatively associated. The fathers' perceptions of job priority and desire to succeed are positively associated with their gender role ideology. Moreover, their perception of paternal identity is positively associated with their involvement; whereas, their gender role ideology is negatively associated. Their gender role ideology has the strongest effect in reducing their involvement in child care. Additionally, the flexibility of the fathers' work environment is positively associated with their perceptions of job satisfaction, job priority, and desire to succeed at work; however, this is negatively associated with their perception of job stress. The fathers' work and commuting hours is positively associated with their perceptions of job priority, job stress, and desire to succeed at work. This suggests that flexibility of the office environment is an important indirect factor for fathers' further involvement with their children. Their gender role ideology is enhanced by their work priority, which is affected significantly by longer work and commuting hours; accordingly, reducing long work and commuting hours is an essential factor for paternal involvement.

Key words: paternal identity, gender role ideology, fathers' perceptions toward work, paternal involvement in child care, flexible environment of work place

1. Introduction

Over the last two decades, Japan has experienced a prolonged and severe economic condition. Although many companies in Japan have been struggling in these tough economic times, they have relied on their financial health without a corresponding rise in employment or have tried to revive their economic health by hiring more irregular payroll employees than regular. The different employment status of regular and irregular workers widens significant economic disparities among and within all member economies (Hashimoto, 2009). Many young irregular employees have so low an income that they have trouble getting married. The latter's employment status confirms the declining marriage trend (Yamada, 2004).

Meanwhile, the number of Japanese women in the labor force has nearly doubled; consequently, the number of dual-earner families and fathers working long hours is

increasing yearly and approximately 25% of Japanese men in their thirties and forties work more than sixty hours per week (White Paper on the Labour Economy, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2007). Moreover, the time that fathers spend with their children is continually decreasing (White Paper on the National Lifestyle by Cabinet Office, 2007). Recent changes in socioeconomic conditions are predicted to encourage more and more dual-earner couples. Mothers' increased participation in the labor force has engendered the recent demand for fathers' involvement with their children.

However, in Japan, gender role ideology is deep-seated in many people and the meaning of fatherhood has centered on the man's economic role (Ishii-Kuntz, 2009). Many fathers who accord high value to a single-minded dedication to work as central to their sense of self reduce their involvement in housework and child care (Fukumaru et al., 1999). Thus, wives must handle more of the burdens of housework and child rearing. The government has recommended that companies provide opportunities

for fathers to take child-care leave and flextime. However, research shows that the work environment of companies has not changed to accommodate fathers' choosing flexible work hours to allow for their involvement in child rearing (Suemori, 2010).

Furthermore, the Japanese total fertility rate of 2005 was 1.26, the lowest ever (the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2006). The government views the birth dearth as a serious issue and has initiated a number of programs including the New Angel Plan and the Reverse the Birth Dearth initiative enacted in 2003. The government also enacted many policies on the work-life balance front in 2007 to respond to the low marriage and birth rates in recent years. It is suggested that fathers' balancing work and family would enable them to fulfill their paternal role. Suemori (2010) reveals that a simultaneous operation that fosters innovative gender role ideology and a supportive workplace environment for fathers would succeed in both changing traditional gender role ideology and promoting fathers' involvement with their child. Nevertheless, Japanese school textbooks present different examples of the paternal role in keeping with the diverse levels of traditional gender role ideology (Okada, 2006). Hence, it may prove challenging for children to form ideas of equality with regard to gender role ideology.

Theoretical approaches to identity theory are effective in accounting for men's involvement activities. Identity theory explains fathers' involvement in terms of the significance they place on the parental role (Fox & Bruce, 2001; Maurer et al., 2001). Application of this theory suggests that fathers who attach greater importance to their paternal role are more likely to be involved with their children (Ishii-Kuntz, 2009). That is, fathers' parental role is an important influencing factor for men's involvement with their children, similar to gender role ideology. Therefore, I study how fathers' perceptions toward their work influence their perception of their parental identity and gender role ideology, thus affecting their involvement in child care.

The objectives of this study are threefold: to examine how several factors influence fathers' perceptions toward their work, how these fathers' perceptions influence both paternal identity and gender role ideology, and finally, how fathers' perceptions of paternal identity and gender role ideology influence their involvement in child care.

2. Theoretical Model

A number of studies focusing on fathers' involvement in child care activities reveal that fathers' involvement promotes children's emotional development, sociability, global self-worth, and evaluation, as well as their affection toward their fathers (e.g., Ishii-Kuntz et al., 2004; Ishii-Kuntz, 2007; Sasaki, 2009a, 2009b, 2010), while advancing

the fathers' perceptions of their paternal role, development, and feelings of being worthwhile (Ishii-Kuntz, 1999; Sasaki, 2009a, 2010). Thus, fathers' involvement in child care is important not only for their wives but also for their children.

2-1. Work Environment

Fathers' workplace environment affects their involvement in child care, since a situation in which their boss and colleagues take an accommodating view of their involvement in child rearing and of taking time off for their children's illness would be necessary (Ishii-Kuntz 2003). It is important to examine the extent of fathers' involvement in child care from the perspective of whether fathers experience mental and physical restrictions at their workplace (Aoki & Iwatate, 2005). Fathers' work-family conflicts (WFC) are likely to reduce their involvement with their children, whereas their balancing involvement with both work and family diminishes their WFC and is better for their mental health (Kanai, 2008).

2-2. Time Availability

Tanabe (2005) points out that having mental leeway due to time availability makes it possible for fathers to be involved in child care. Ishii-Kuntz et al. (2004) also reveal that the time availability factor is particularly important for father's involvement in child rearing in Japan. Fathers' child care activities are significantly reduced by long work hours (Nagai, 2001; Matsuda, 2006). Additionally, fathers who work long hours tend to be less supportive of their children (Sasaki, 2009b). The earlier fathers come home from their jobs, the more they are involved with their children (Nishioka, 2004). Therefore, it is necessary to examine fathers' involvement with their children from the perspective of time availability.

2-3. Identity Theory

A person has as many identities as roles played in distinct sets of social relationships (Stryker, 1987). Identities are internalized sets of role expectations, according to identity theory derived from symbolic interactionism, and the self is a structure of identities organized in hierarchical fashion (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). The process of self-verification creates and sustains social structures; meanwhile, the relationship of social structures to identities influences the process of self-verification (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Identity theory premises that a strong direct relationship exists between an individual's identity hierarchy and behavior, and that identity theory has focused generally on role identities.

Identity theory has been used to explore fathers' involvement in child care, focusing on the centrality construct in assessing fathers' identity hierarchies (Rane & McBride, 2000). Fathers who regard the nurturing role

as highly central to their sense of self involvement have considerably more interaction and responsible activities with their children (Rane & McBride, 2000). In addition, even after taking into account the influence of sociodemographic factors, the fathers' evaluations about their paternal role influence their behaviors within that role (Fox & Bruce, 2001). Fathers who have strong perceptions of paternal identity provide more support for their children (Sasaki, 2009b, 2011). Accordingly, this research studies paternal involvement with children from the perspective of fathers' perception of their parental role as their paternal identity.

2-4. Gender Role Ideology

Gender norms may be more important than family structure in affecting fathers' behavior (Doherty, 1997). It is revealed that a more traditional gender role ideology influences a father to reduce his involvement in child care (Nagai, 2001; Matsuda, 2006). In a society marked by deep-seated gender role ideology, mothers with young children lacking their husband's support have higher levels of maternal anxiety, stress, and negative feelings involving child rearing. However, their anxiety is likely to diminish when sharing responsibility for children with their husbands. Paternal participation in child care activities directly influences the mothers' negative emotional levels toward child rearing (Makino, 1982; Kashiwagi & Wakamatsu, 1994). Thus, to foster an

equality of gender role ideology for fathers is an important factor promoting their involvement in child care. In this study, it is important to examine how gender role ideology influences paternal involvement in child rearing.

2-5. Conceptual Model

As shown in Figure 1, the theoretical model in this study incorporates the relationship between fathers' perceptions toward their work, parental identity and gender role ideology, and fathers' involvement in child care along with other demographic variables, fathers' work status, and work and commuting hours as they affect time availability. The basic premise of this model is that fathers who have higher perceptions of paternal identity and lower gender role ideology are more likely to be involved with their children. The model also assumes that fathers' higher perception of job satisfaction promotes their paternal identity, and higher job stress reduces it. I predict that fathers' job priority and desire to succeed at work lowers their paternal identity and promotes their gender role ideology.

It is, therefore, hypothesized that fathers' perception of paternal identity is positively associated with their involvement in child care. It is also predicted that fathers' gender role ideology reduces their involvement. I assume that fathers' perception of job satisfaction increases their paternal identity. In addition, I predict that flexibility of

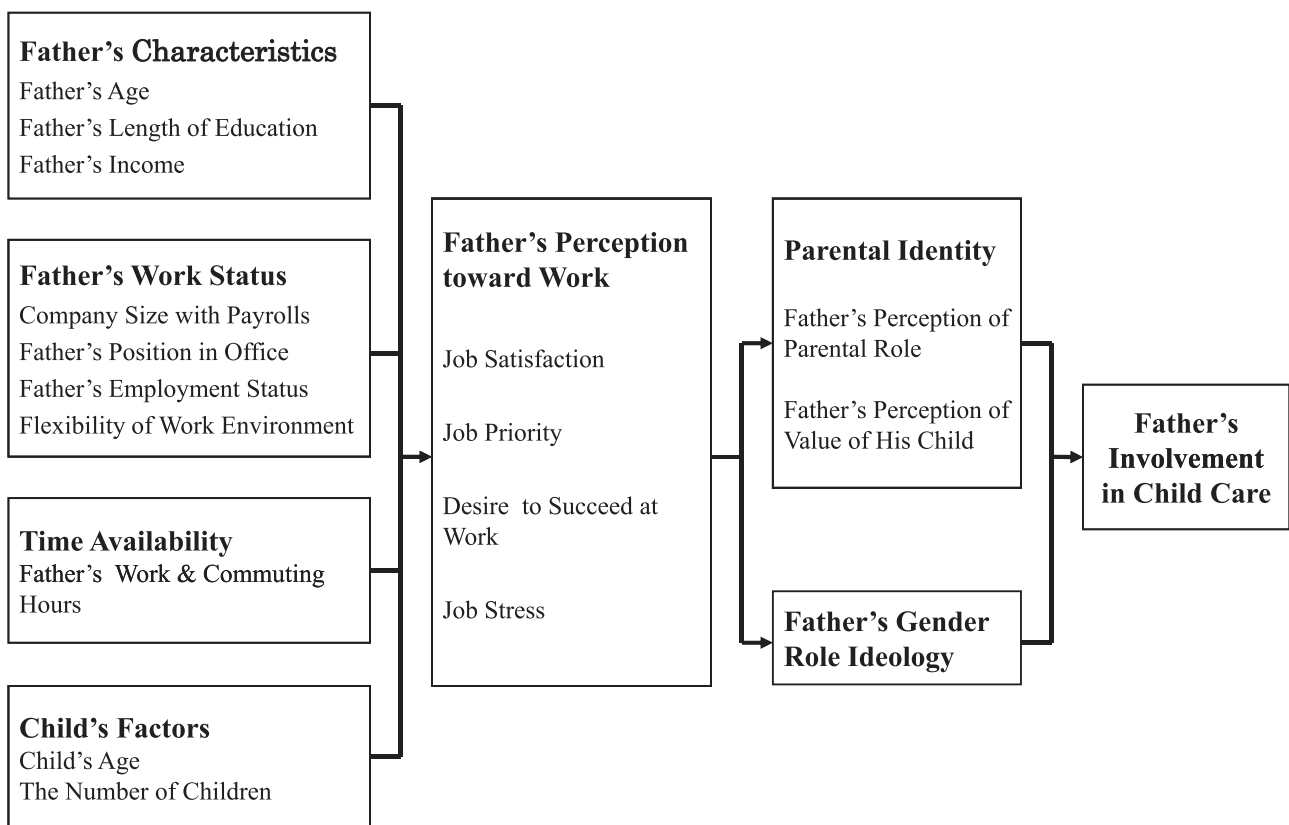


FIGURE 1. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

the work environment promotes fathers' job satisfaction, and that their desire to succeed and longer work and commuting hours increase job stress and job priority. Finally, I used several control variables including the father's and child's age, the number of children, and the company payroll size, position in the office, employment status, and flexibility of the work environment as fathers' work status.

3. Methods

3-1. Sample

The data used in this study came from 715 fathers with children under twelve that live in Japan. The survey was conducted by mail to examine the issues concerning their "Work and Life Balance." The questionnaires for fathers that we created were distributed to 2,750 fathers through a research company using a random sampling method in 2011. The response rate was 26.0%. The main aims of this survey, conducted by the program "Work and Life Balance from Gender-Sensitive Perspectives: Designing a Work Style that Enables Career Development, Family and Community Activities," are to identify factors associated with men's difficulties in being involved in child care and housework, to propose policies that support work/life balance with an emphasis on family well-being and child development, and to create role models.

3-2. Sample Characteristics

The major demographic characteristics of the samples

are presented in Table 1. The fathers' and the mothers' mean ages were 39.2 years old and 37.3 years, respectively. Approximately 49.0% of the fathers had two children, 32.0% had one child, 17.0% had three children, and 2.0% had four children. Their children's mean age was 4.9 years old. Thirty-eight percent of the fathers lived in the Kanto and Koshinetsu districts, 29% lived in the Tokai and Kinki districts, 12% lived in the Hokkaido area, 12 % lived in the Kyusyu area, and 8% lived in the Chugoku and Shikoku districts. The mode of fathers' incomes was between 500 and 600 million yen. The proportion of employed mothers was 46.6% and that of unemployed mothers was 53.4%. In addition, the fathers' educational level was higher than the national average: 51.5% of the fathers had graduated from 4-year universities or graduate schools.

The fathers' employed status was 90.0 % regular and 10% of them had a titled position in their offices. The average payroll of their companies was 530.0 persons. The average daily work and commuting hours of the fathers was 10.9 hours. The economic level of the fathers was the Japanese household income average: the national average was 563.8 million yen (2007, Survey of Household Economy, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications). Although the fathers in this sample were likely to be more educated and their wives were more often nonemployees, I speculated that this sample was useful because it was a random sampling of the fathers whose incomes were the Japanese average and they had children under the age of twelve.

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (N=715)

Variables	Means	SD	Range
Father's Characteristics			
Father's Age	39.19	6.01	24-58
Father's Length of Education	14.47	2.04	9-18
Father's Income	10.84	2.90	1-19
Company Size with Payrolls	530.03	523.86	15-1250
Father's Position in Office (0=no title,1=title)	.10	0.30	0-1
Father's Employment Status (0=irregular, 1=regular)	.90	0.30	0-1
Flexibility of Work Environment	14.17	4.64	5-25
Father's Time Availability			
Father's Work & Commuting Hours	659.20	117.24	280-1180
Child's Age	4.93	3.65	0-12
The Number of Father's Children	1.91	0.76	1-5
Father's Perception of Job Satisfaction	11.12	2.57	3-15
Father's Perception of Job Priority	7.00	2.18	3-15
Father's Perception of Desire to Succeed at Work	5.65	1.89	2-10
Father's Perception of Job Stress	16.50	4.03	5-25
Paternal Identity			
Father's Perception of Parental Role	15.82	2.51	4-20
Father's Perception of Value of His Child	20.08	3.38	6-25
Father's Gender Role Ideology	20.25	4.38	6-30
Father's Involvement in Child Care	13.42	4.06	5-25

3.3. Measures

Demographic Variables: I expect that as independent variables, the ages of fathers and children, the number of children, and income and educational levels will influence the level of the intervening variables. I use the company payroll size, position in the office, employment status and flexibility of the work environment, as well as father's work and commuting hours as independent variables.

Flexibility of Father's Work Environment: Flexibility of the father's work environment was measured by five items: a) I can decide on flexible work hours regardless of gender, b) I can work shorter hours as needed for childcare regardless of gender, c) I can take leave for my child's sickness without constraint regardless of gender, d) We have the opportunity for advancement regardless of gender, e) There are women who take maternity leave and child care leave in our office. A five-point scale for these items ranged from "I think so" to "not at all." These five items are summed up to create a composite variable of fathers' perception of the flexibility of the work environment with scores ranging from 5 to 25. The alpha is .82.

Father's Perception of Job Satisfaction: Father's perception of job satisfaction was measured by three items: a) I think my job is rewarding, b) My job makes me proud, and c) My job suits me. A five-point scale for these items ranged from "I think so" to "not at all." These three items are summed up to create a composite variable of fathers' perception of job satisfaction with scores ranging from 3 to 15. The alpha is .88.

Father's Perception of Job Priority: Father's perception of job priority was measured by three items: a) The most important thing to me is my job, b) I think my family is more important than success at work, c) I have no choice but to sacrifice my life on the altar of my job. A five-point scale for these items ranged from "I think so" to "not at all." These three items are summed up to create a composite variable of fathers' perception of job priority with scores ranging from 3 to 15. The alpha is .65.

Father's Perception of Desire to Succeed at Work: Father's perception of desire to succeed at work was measured by two items: a) My main objective is to be promoted in my office earlier and b) I make a vigorous effort to succeed at work. A five-point scale for these items ranged from "I think so" to "not at all." These two items are summed up to create a composite variable of father's perception of desire to succeed at work with scores ranging from 2 to 10.

Father's Perception of Job Stress: Father's perception of job stress was measured by five items: a) The current scale of my job is heavy for me, b) My job carries with it a lot of responsibility, c) I do not have enough time with my child due to my job, d) I do not have enough time to do housework due to my job, e) I have no energy to be a better father due to my job. A five-point scale for these

items ranged from "I think so" to "not at all." These five items are summed up to create a composite variable of fathers' perception of job stress with scores ranging from 5 to 25. The alpha is .92.

Father's Perception of Parental Role (as Parental Identity): Father's perception of their parental role toward their children was measured by four items: a) I will do anything possible as a father for my children's development, b) My parental role is to create a good environment for my children, c) I want to be a role model for my children, d) I place importance on disciplining my children. A five-point scale for these items ranged from "I think so" to "not at all." These four items are summed up to create a composite variable of the fathers' perception of their parental role with scores ranging from 4 to 20. The alpha is .78.

Father's Perception of Value of His Child (as Parental Identity): Father's perception of their children's value comprises five items taken from Kashiwagi et al. (1996): a) I consider my child as my alter ego, b) I feel fulfillment in being a father, c) I feel my child is the most important person to me, d) My child is my breath of life, e) My child provides me emotional support. A five-point scale for these items ranged from "I think so" to "not at all." These five items are summed to create a composite variable of fathers' value placed on their child with scores ranging from 6 to 25. The alpha is .79.

Father's Gender Role Ideology: Father's gender role ideology was measured by six items: a) To support a family financially is a husband's role, b) I must earn more than my partner, c) Wives should be responsible for housework, d) Wives should be responsible for child care, e) Mothers stop working to devote their lives to raising children by the time their children are three, f) Husbands must work outside, wives must bring up the family. A five-point scale for these items ranged from "I think so" to "not at all." These six items are summed to create a composite variable of father's gender role ideology with scores ranging from 6 to 30. The alpha is .79.

Father's Involvement in Child Care: To measure father's frequency of involvement in child care, I used seven items adapted to preschoolers and five items adapted to school-aged children.

The seven items for preschoolers' fathers were as follows: a) I care for my child's meal, b) I have a meal with my child, c) I take care of changing my child's clothes and preparation for the day, d) I play with my child, e) I bathe with my child, f) I change my child's diapers and care for my child's toilet issues, g) I read books to my child.

The five items of school-aged children's fathers were as follows: a) I have a meal with my child, b) I play with my child at home, c) I play with my child outdoors (park, movie theater, sports), d) I have conversations with my child, e) I care for my child's study, homework, and

extracurricular activities. A five-point scale for both sets of items was (1) no time, (2) 1 to 2 times a week, (3) 3 to 4 times a week, (4) 5 to 6 times a week, and (5) every day.

First, seven items of the preschoolers' fathers are summed to create a composite variable of involvement in child care. The alpha is .85. Second, five items of school-aged children's fathers are added to create a composite variable of involvement in child care. The alpha is .76. Third, I divide the scores of the preschoolers' fathers by seven. Finally, I multiply the average score by five to obtain a common variables of fathers' involvement in child care as same as school-aged children's fathers with range of scores from 5 to 25.

3-4. Analyses

The analytical strategies in this study involve descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and path analysis. First, descriptive statistics are used to examine the respondents' characteristics and the variables, and the mean and standard deviation of all variables used are calculated in this study. Second, correlation analysis is used to examine all variables used in this study. Finally, the main part of the path analysis involves the independent and intervening variables with the demographic variables and investigates their influences on the fathers' involvement in child care.

4. Results

The means and standard deviations of all variables are shown in Table 1. The mean of flexibility of the fathers' work environment is at a medium level; however, their work and commuting hours indicate less time availability for them. The fathers' scores on perceptions of job satisfaction and stress indicate higher than the median and that on job priority indicates lower than the median. Their scores on perceptions of desire to succeed at work and gender role ideology indicate a medium level. Finally, fathers' scores on perceptions of parental role and value of their children indicate higher paternal identity; however, their involvement in child care is at a lower

level.

In Table 2, correlation analyses for key variables in this study are presented along with the results of the correlation coefficients. At the bivariate level, their perception of job priority is negatively associated with their paternal identity; whereas, it is positively associated with their gender role ideology. Their perception of job satisfaction significantly correlates with their paternal identity. The fathers' desire to succeed at work is positively associated with both their paternal identity and gender role ideology. Their perception of job stress is positively associated with their perception of the value of their children and gender role ideology. In addition, the fathers' perception of the value of their children significantly correlates with their gender role ideology.

Focusing on the correlation between the fathers' frequency of involvement in child care and their perceptions of their work, paternal identity and gender role ideology, their perceptions of job priority, job stress, and gender role ideology are negatively associated with their frequency of involvement in child care. However, their perception of paternal identity is positively associated with their involvement in child rearing. Concerning the fathers' involvement in child care, it is clear that the magnitude of the correlation coefficients of job stress is greater than that of the other variables.

Figure 2 reports the results of the path analysis that explores the effects of the intervening variables in this study on the fathers' involvement in child care. All independent, intervening, and dependent variables are entered simultaneously in this analysis. The GFI is .988 and RMSEA is .047, indicating that the data reasonably fit the theoretical model.

First, the effects of all the independent variables for the intervening variables of the fathers' perceptions of their work are accounted for. The fathers' office position and the flexibility of their work environment are positively associated with their perception of job satisfaction, job priority, and desire to succeed at work. The fathers' work and commuting hours is positively associated with the fathers' perception of job priority, job

TABLE 2. BIVARIATE CORRELATIONS AMONG KEY VARIABLELLES

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
(1) Father's Perception of Job Satisfaction								
(2) Father's Perception of Job Priority	.18***							
(3) Father's Perception of Desire to Succeed at Work	.24***	.36***						
(4) Father's Perception of Job Stress	-.01	.11***	-.11**					
(5) Father's Perception of Parental Role	.12***	-.13***	.21***	.04				
(6) Father's Perception of Value of His Child	.09**	-.18***	.19***	.08*	.50***			
(7) Father's Gender Role Ideology	.07	.30***	.16***	.09*	.07	.08*		
(8) Father's Involvement in Child Care	.06	-.23***	-.04	-.25***	.16***	.12**	-.21***	

n=715, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

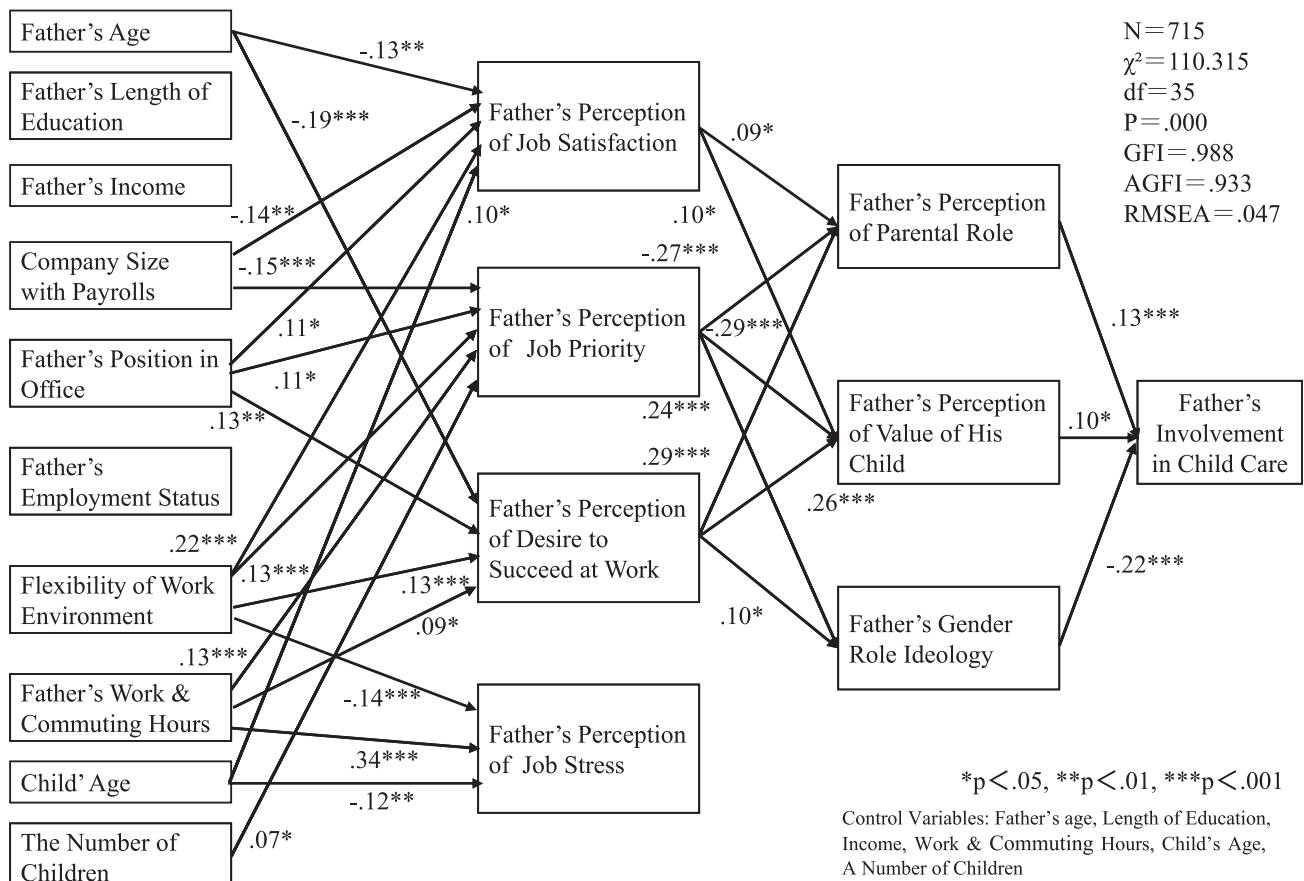


FIGURE 2. RESULTS OF PATH ANALYSIS

stress, and desire at work. However, the flexibility of their work environment and child's age are negatively associated with their perception of job stress. Additionally, the fathers' age is negatively associated with their perception of job satisfaction and desire to succeed, and the company size is negatively associated with their job satisfaction and job priority. Furthermore, the child's age is positively associated with the father's job satisfaction and the number of children is positively associated with their job priority.

Second, the effect of the fathers' perceptions of their work on their perception of their paternal identity and gender role ideology are accounted for. The fathers' perception of job satisfaction and desire to succeed at work are positively associated with their paternal identity; however, their job priority is negatively associated with it. The fathers' perceptions of job priority and desire to succeed at work are positively associated with their gender role ideology.

Finally, concerning the fathers' involvement in child care, their perceptions of the paternal role and value of their children are positively associated with their involvement; whereas, their gender role ideology is negatively associated with it. Their perception of the paternal role increases their involvement in child care more than does the perception of their value of their

children. Their gender role ideology is the strongest effect reducing their involvement in child care.

5. Discussion

This study examined how the fathers' perception toward their work influenced their paternal identity and gender role ideology, which affected their involvement in child care. Using the questionnaire data of 715 fathers with under-12 children, I found that the fathers' perception of job priority reduces their paternal identity and increases their gender role ideology. Indeed, the fathers' gender role ideology reduces their frequency of involvement in child care, although their paternal identity increases their involvement. Their longer work and commuting hours increase their job priority and job stress accordingly, which suggests that reducing long work hours may promote the fathers' paternal identity and lower their gender role ideology.

The results also show that job satisfaction promotes their paternal identity. That is, the fathers' job satisfaction may help them to be more at ease; consequently, their paternal identity is increased by their job satisfaction. The most important factor promoting their job satisfaction is flexibility in working. This means that the flexibility of their office in allowing child care leave and

absences to take their children to the hospital influences fathers' involvement with children.

In addition, it is revealed that the fathers' perception of desire to succeed at work promotes their paternal identity and gender role ideology. It is speculated that the fathers who want to succeed at work have a tendency to work such longer hours that they have little time for involvement with their children, though, on the other hand, they are likely to have higher paternal identity. Moreover, it is suggested that their desire to succeed at work is likely to encourage them to work harder. Consequently, they have a tendency to reinforce their traditional gender role ideology, and to consider child rearing and housework as their wives' work and leave the children's upbringing to their wives. That is, fathers' perception of paternal identity is an important factor in their being involved in child care. Moreover, it is revealed that fathers' perception of the paternal role is a more affecting factor than that of the value of their children. Therefore, it is also necessary for the fathers to improve their perception of the paternal role.

This study also examined how fathers' demographic variables and their work status influence their perception toward their work. The fathers' age is negatively associated with their perception of job satisfaction and desire to succeed at work. These results suggest that fathers yearly lower their satisfaction and desire toward their work. Their company size is negatively associated with their perception of job satisfaction and job priority. This suggests that smaller offices provide them with satisfaction and allow them to give their family priority. It is speculated that because there is more flexibility at smaller companies, they have increased satisfaction and are more likely to be involved with their children and household activities. In addition, it is revealed that the fathers' titled position promotes their perception of job satisfaction, job priority, and desire to succeed at work. These results suggest that promotions based on performance at the office are important factors for fathers' satisfaction and motivation.

This study has a few limitations. The sample consists of fathers who are likely to be more educated, 90% regular employees and without titles, and who live near the Tokyo metropolitan and the Kinki area. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized in comparison to a larger population of Japanese fathers. These findings need to be carefully interpreted with these limitations in mind. However, data collected from fathers with under-12 children that include their perceptions toward their work are scarce in Japan; thus, there is reason to believe that the analyses of this data may be useful to understanding the relationships between fathers' work and their involvement in child care.

Future paternal research needs to identify the diverse dimensions of fathers' work environment. Additionally,

future studies in this area need to examine the issue from the perspective of the quality of marital relations. Despite these data limitations, the findings of this study also have several important implications. First, the findings reveal that the fathers' perceptions of their parental role and value of their children that promote their involvement in child care are encouraged by their job satisfaction due to greater flexibility of the work environment. Therefore, for men who have children or have a baby on the way, there may be a need for a father's workshop and educational programs to encourage their paternal identity, in particular, in regard to their paternal role. Moreover, flexibility of the office environment to lower fathers' job stress is an important indirect factor for fathers' greater involvement in child rearing.

Finally, the fathers' gender role ideologies that reduce their involvement in child care are enhanced by their work priority being significantly affected due to longer work and commuting hours. This shows that reducing long work and commuting hours is an important factor for paternal involvement. In particular, the magnitude of path analysis coefficients concerning work and commuting hours in regard to job stress is the highest. Hence, proper work hours for men are needed at companies. Furthermore, there may be a need in school education to attempt to foster equality of gender roles ideology for school-aged children. In summary, from fathers' work environment perspectives, fathers' shorter work and commuting hours and flexibility of the office environment are very important for paternal involvement with children.

Reference

- Aoki, S., and Iwatate, K. (2005) "Determinants of paternal involvement in childcare: The analysis of differences between mother's and father's belief." *Tokyo Gakugei University Kiyou Daiichibumon Kyouikukagaku*, 56, 79-85. (Originally in Japanese)
- Doherty, W. J. (1997) "The best of times and the worst of times: Fathering as a contested arena of academic discourse." In A. J. Hawkins & D. C. Dollahite (eds) *Generative Fathering: Beyond Deficit Perspectives* (pp. 228-241). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fox, G. T., and Bruce, C. (2001) "Conditional fatherhood: Identity theory and parental investment as alternative sources of fathering." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 394-403.
- Fukumaru, Y., Muto, T., and Iinaga, K. (1999). "Concepts of work and children among parents of young children—In relation to paternal involvement in child care." *The Japanese Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 10(3), 189-198. (Originally in Japanese)
- Hashimoto, K. (2009) *Inequalities in Postwar Japan: Short History of a Class Society*. Kawadebooks. (Originally in Japanese)
- Ishii-Kuntz, M. (1999) "Children's affection toward fathers: A

- comparison between Japan and the United States." *International Journal of Japanese Sociology*, 8, 35-49.
- Ishii-Kuntz M., (2003) "Balancing fatherhood and work: Emergence of diverse masculinities in contemporary Japan." In J. Roberson & N. Suzuki (ed) *Men and Masculinities in Japan* (pp.198-216). New York: Routledge.
- Ishii-Kuntz, M. (2007) "Fathers and adolescent children's development: How do fathers influence children's sociability?" In H. Mimizuka & K. Makino (eds) *Closed Road to Adulthood: Risks of Academic Ability and Transition* (pp.125-142). Tokyo: Kaneko Shobo. (Originally in Japanese)
- Ishii-Kuntz M. (2009) "Paternal roles and child care: Current conditions, determinants, and their consequences in families." *Japanese Journal of Research on Household Economics*, 81, 16-23. (Originally in Japanese)
- Ishii-Kuntz, M., Kato K., Makino K., and Tsuchiya M. (2004) "Japanese fathers of preschoolers and their involvement in child care." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66, 779-791.
- Kanai, A., (2008). "Toward attainment of work-life-balance." In K. Kashiwagi & K. Takahashi (eds.), *Japanese Men's Psychology -Another Gender Problem* (pp. 209-226). Yuhikaku. (Originally in Japanese)
- Kashiwagi, K., and Wakamatsu, M. (1994) "Becoming a parent and personality development: A life span developmental view." *The Japanese Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 5(1), 72-83. (Originally in Japanese)
- Kashiwagi, K., Wakamatsu, M., and Ono, S. (1996) "Development and change as parents: Value of children for parents and involvement in child care." In K. Makino, K. Kashiwagi & Y. Nakano (eds) *Child Development and Fathers' Roles* (pp.121-134). Kyoto: Minerva. (Originally in Japanese)
- Makino, K. (1982) "The ordinary lives and childrearing anxieties of Japanese mothers with infants." *Katei Kyouiku Kenkyusho Kiyo*, 3, 34-55. (Originally in Japanese)
- Matsuda, S. (2006) "Change of levels and participation factors in paternal child rearing and households in recent years." *Japanese Journal of Research on Household Economics*, 71, 45-54. (Originally in Japanese)
- Maurer, T.W., Pleck, J.H., and Rane, T. R. (2001) "Parental identity and reflected-appraisals: Measurement and gender dynamics." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 309-321.
- Nagai, A. (2001) "Factors of fathers' household performance and child care and influences on children's participation in households." *Japanese Journal of Research on Household Economics*, 49, 174-181. (Originally in Japanese)
- Nishioka, H. (2004) "Men's role of household and gender system: Factors of husbands' housework and involvement in child care." In Y. Meguro & H. Nishioka (eds) *Gender Analysis of Birth Dearth* (pp.176-196). Tokyo: Keisoshobo. (Originally in Japanese)
- Okada, M. (2006) "Role of father in textbooks: Comparison of fathering roles between home economics education and the other subjects." *Journal of Hokkaido University of Education (Education)*, 57(1), 249-266. (Originally in Japanese)
- Rane, T. R., and McBride, B. A. (2000) "Identity theory as a guide to understanding fathers' involvement with their children." *Journal of Family Issues*, 21, 346-366.
- Sasaki, T. (2009a) "The involvement of fathers through children's extracurricular activities and children's global self-worth: A case of swimming schools." *Japanese Journal of Family Sociology*, 21(1), 65-77. (Originally in Japanese)
- Sasaki, T. (2009b) "Paternal Involvement and Children's Affection." *Japanese Journal of Family Relations, Kazoku kankei gaku*, 28, 43-55. (Originally in Japanese)
- Sasaki, T. (2010) "Fathers' development through their involvement in children's extracurricular activities and children's evaluation of fathers." *The Journal of Child Study*, 16, 31-44. (Originally in Japanese)
- Sasaki, T. (2011) "Parental involvement and children's perception of competence: From gender perspectives." *Applied Ethics* (ed) Center for Applied Ethics and Philosophy (Hokkaido University), 208-221.
- Stryker, S. (1987) "Identity theory: Developments and extensions." In K. Yardley & T. Honess (eds). *Self and Identity: Psychosocial Perspectives* (pp.89-103). New York: John Wiley.
- Stryker, S., and Serpe, R. T. (1994) "Identity salience and psychological centrality: Equivalent, overlapping, or complementary concepts?" *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 57, 16-35.
- Stryker, S., and Burke, P. L. (2000) "The past, present, and future of identity theory." *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63(4), 284-297.
- Suemori, K. (2010) "Work environment and men's work-life-balance: Gender role structure is changing?" In S. Matsuda, K. Shiomi, K. Shinada, & K. Suemori (eds) *Contemporary Issues of Child Rearing Environment in Japan* (pp.161-181). Keisousyobo. (Originally in Japanese)
- Tanabe, S. (2005) "Factors related to 'realization of having become fathers' among fathers parenting preschool children—in relation to paternal characteristics and participation in child care/housework." *Human Life Science* (Graduate school of Human Life Science, Osaka City University), 4, 139-150. (Originally in Japanese)
- Yamada, M. (2004) *The Expectation Gap Society: Winners and Losers in the New Economy*. Chikumashobo. (Originally in Japanese)

Acknowledgement

The data used in this study were collected by a research project entitled "Work and Life Balance from Gender-Sensitive Perspectives: Designing a Work Style that Enables Career Development, and Family and Community Activities." The research was funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan. The author gratefully acknowledges Professors Nobuko Nagase, Masako Ishii-Kuntz and the project team for its permission to use the data.

The author also gratefully acknowledges the Global COE programs of Ochanomizu University for the funds provided for this paper.

PROCEEDINGS 17

February 2012

Author Note

Graduate school student

Graduate school of humanities and sciences, Ochanomizu University

E-mail: mona-sasaki@a01.itscom.net