

Chapter #15

CONTENT OF THE FATHER AND MOTHER STEREOTYPES IN JAPAN: COMPARED TO THE OVERALL GENDER STEREOTYPES

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ABSTRACT

Suzuki (2017) reviewed the studies on gender inequality and concluded that gender stereotypes contribute to the persistence of gender discrimination in the workplace and at home. It has also been verified that the content of father (Troilo, 2013) and mother stereotypes (Ganong & Coleman, 1995) differed from the overall gender stereotypes in American society. This study investigated whether the content of the father and mother stereotypes was dissimilar to that of the overall gender stereotypes in Japan. That is, does the content of the father (versus men) and mother (versus women) stereotypes differ from the typically held gender stereotypes? A survey was conducted among undergraduates (N = 266; Men = 106, Women = 160), with a mean age of 19.05 years (SD = 1.02 years). The results imply that the idea that ‘fathers (rather than men) should work outside the home and mothers (rather than women) should keep the house’, is held in Japanese society. In the future, it would be helpful to examine not only explicit stereotypes but also implicit stereotypes about fathers and mothers. Further, it would be useful to study stereotypes held by older and/or less educated adults.

Keywords: stereotype, father, mother, gender.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the ‘Global Gender Gap Report 2018’, the Japanese Gender Gap Index (GGI, ranging from 0 [disparity] to 1 [parity]) was 0.662, which ranks 110th among 149 countries (World Economic Forum, 2018). In each four subindexes, the ‘Economic Participation and Opportunity’ subindex is 0.595 (117th ranking), the ‘Educational Attainment’ subindex is 0.994 (65th ranking), the ‘Health and Survival’ subindex is 0.979 (41st ranking), and the ‘Political Empowerment’ subindex is 0.081 (125th ranking) (World Economic Forum, 2018). Gender inequality is a serious issue in Japan, particularly in terms of its economic and political dimensions.

Suzuki (2017) indicated that even though laws prohibiting gender discrimination have been established, gender inequality still persists in Japan; moreover, she discussed the mechanisms of persistence in gender inequality, focusing on work and family. She reviewed previous research and identified sociological factors (such as the division of labour by gender, employment and management systems and practices, and long working hours) and psychological factors contributing to gender inequality in offices and families, of which ‘gender stereotypes’ are of particular interest.

Gender stereotypes have been described by two primary dimensions: agency and communion, as men are agentic or instrumental and women are communal or expressive (for review, Kite, Deaux, & Haines, 2008) and such gender stereotypes were seen in 30

countries including Japan (Williams & Best, 1990). Moreover, the studies examining broader dimensions of gender stereotypes showed social role difference. Men are suited to leaders, heads of households, and financial providers and women are suited to caregivers and emotional supporters (Cejka & Eagly, 1999; Deaux & Lewis, 1984). In connection to gender stereotypes, Troilo (2013) demonstrated that in the U.S.A., the content of the father stereotype was dissimilar to that for men (e.g., American fathers were thought to be *Hardworking* and *Busy*, when compared with American men). Similarly, Ganong and Coleman (1995) substantiated that the content of the mother stereotype differed from that for women (e.g., American mothers were believed to *Act for the good of family* and *Favor her own children*, when compared with American women). In Japan too, are parent stereotypes different from overall gender stereotypes? This study tries to verify whether in Japan, the content of father stereotype differs from that for men and whether the content of mother stereotype differs from that for women.

In Japan, women's labour force participation rate tends to decline once women reach the age of 30 and over, when most of them give birth and take care of children (Cabinet Office, 2013). Among the Japanese women who work before marriage, 71.4% of them continue to work after marriage and 32.8% of them continue to work after their first child-birth (Cabinet Office, 2011). It is maintained that motherhood, rather than marriage, marks the turning point for women's employment termination. The tendency might reflect the idea that 'mothers (rather than women in general) should keep the house', thereby the content of the mother stereotype might differ from that of women. Moreover, because the fathers whose wives left employment must work in order to earn a living, it is also considered that the content of the father stereotype might be different from that of men, reflecting the idea that 'fathers (rather than men in general) should work outside the home'.

If the parent stereotypes differ from the overall gender stereotypes that fathers (rather than men in general) should work outside the home and mothers (rather than women in general) should keep the house, the parent stereotypes rather than the gender stereotypes might cause gender inequality in Japan. Thus, this study attempts to clarify the difference between the parent stereotypes and the overall gender stereotypes in Japan.

2. METHODS

This study conducted two pilot studies and a main study in a similar way to previous research (Ganong & Coleman, 1995; Troilo, 2013). All three studies were conducted among undergraduates who were 18-22 years old, of both genders, unmarried, born and raised in Japan, and whose native language was Japanese.

First, this study conducted a pilot survey among 25 undergraduates (12 men and 13 women) whose mean age was 18.76 ($SD = 1.01$) years old. They randomly received one of two self-report questionnaires on either fathers and mothers (13 undergraduates: 6 men and 7 women) or men and women (12 undergraduates: 6 men and 6 women). The order was randomised to reduce order effects. They were asked to list descriptors describing fathers, mothers, men, or women, for example 'List adjectives to describe how you think FATHERS-IN-GENERAL are thought of in Japanese society, whether or not it is your opinion. That is, what do most people think are characteristics of FATHERS-IN-GENERAL?' As a result, 129 descriptors were generated.

Second, this study conducted a pilot survey among 43 undergraduates (24 men and 19 women) whose mean age was 20.02 ($SD = 0.74$) years old. The descriptors were randomly sorted to reduce order effects. The participants randomly received one of two self-report questionnaires on either fathers and mothers (21 undergraduates: 12 men and 9 women) or

men and women (22 undergraduates: 12 men and 10 women). The order was randomised to reduce order effects. They were asked to review the lists and to check off items they believed represented general societal beliefs about either fathers and mothers, or men and women in general, and to add other widely held beliefs they thought were missing from the list. Eighty-two descriptors that were checked off by at least 8 participants were retained. Further, three new descriptors were added: 'Looking down on' was added for fathers in general; 'Work than children' was added for mothers in general; and 'Coward' was added for men in general.

Last, a main survey among 266 undergraduates was conducted. They randomly received one of four self-report questionnaires on either fathers, mothers, men, or women, followed by the 85 descriptors (Table 1). They were asked to list a percentage for each descriptor on a 11-point scale ranging from 0 to 100% (e.g., 'What percentage of Japanese fathers do you think have each of the following descriptors? For example, if you think that all Japanese fathers have the characteristic, you would choose 100%. If you think that 20% of Japanese fathers have the characteristic, you would choose 20%. Do not think of the fathers you know, but of fathers in general'). The 85 descriptors were randomly sorted to reduce order effects.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Respondents

The mean age of respondents was 19.05 ($SD = 1.02$) years old. The respondents comprised 106 men (39.85%) and 160 women (60.15%). 73 (33 men and 40 women) answered the questionnaires on fathers, 71 (25 men and 46 women) answered those on mothers, 59 (20 men and 39 women) answered those on men and 63 (28 men and 35 women) answered those on women.

3.2. Analysis of variance

The data were analysed using a two-way analysis of variance. The analysis design used two independent variables: whether the target was parents or not (a between factor), and men or women (a between factor), and the dependent variable was each descriptor. Table 1 shows the results of analysis of variance.

First, it was found that the content of stereotypes of fathers, mothers, men, and women differed from each other. The respondents believed that fathers rather than men, mothers, and women have the four characteristics *Work*, *Hardworking*, *Breadwinner*, and *Masculine* (category 'Men < Fathers' in Table 1).

They thought that mothers rather than women, fathers, and men have the 14 characteristics: *Childrearing*, *Love family*, *Love children*, *Take children's sides*, *Cherish family*, *Family oriented*, *Warm*, *Capacious*, *Like children*, *Friendly*, *Interfering*, *Dedicated*, *Worrier*, and *Stabilise family* (category 'Mothers > Women' in Table 1) and that mothers rather than fathers, women, and men have the eight characteristics *Caring*, *Thoughtful*, *Amazing*, *Kind*, *Watch over*, *Understanding*, *Fine*, and *Generous* (category 'Fathers < Mothers' in Table 1).

Table 1.
The Results of Analysis of Variance.

Category	Descriptors	Fathers	Mothers	Men	Women	<i>F</i>		<i>F</i>
Men	Lazy	54.29	47.89	62.20	50.00	<i>F</i> (3,257)	=	***
>						8.01		
Fathers	Selfish	50.14	40.14	55.00	47.90	<i>F</i> (3,256)	=	***
						7.52		
Men	Physically strong	61.86	48.03	68.47	36.07	<i>F</i> (3,257)	=	***
=						34.25		
Fathers	Strong	63.24	49.86	68.28	31.45	<i>F</i> (3,258)	=	***
						49.62		
	Powerful	64.14	52.39	65.34	36.45	<i>F</i> (3,257)	=	***
						32.26		
	Big	62.86	44.71	62.54	32.10	<i>F</i> (3,255)	=	***
						40.31		
	Strong constitution	62.06	50.70	64.92	40.48	<i>F</i> (3,256)	=	***
						19.90		
	Looking down on	57.25	55.44	56.72	42.62	<i>F</i> (3,252)	=	***
						7.70		
	Work than children	52.54	33.19	56.27	38.23	<i>F</i> (3,257)	=	***
						22.17		
	Well built	56.86	45.00	55.42	32.26	<i>F</i> (3,257)	=	***
						25.65		
Men	Work	85.51	64.20	79.65	58.39	<i>F</i> (3,253)	=	***
<						35.25		
Fathers	Hardworking	76.96	65.29	70.18	60.97	<i>F</i> (3,252)	=	***
						10.00		
	Breadwinner	68.57	49.43	60.18	28.23	<i>F</i> (3,255)	=	***
						40.57		
	Masculine	62.43	45.74	56.55	33.87	<i>F</i> (3,254)	=	***
						24.74		
Fathers	Busy	74.43	75.44	66.03	63.55	<i>F</i> (3,254)	=	**
=						5.87		
Mothers	Very busy	68.86	74.71	64.04	62.90	<i>F</i> (3,253)	=	**
						5.25		
	Mature	69.72	72.86	45.76	61.45	<i>F</i> (3,259)	=	***
						24.87		
	Reliable	66.00	72.21	55.61	54.52	<i>F</i> (3,253)	=	***
						14.01		
	Dependable	65.86	70.14	56.21	50.97	<i>F</i> (3,256)	=	***
						13.91		
	Reassuring	64.86	68.57	54.92	53.33	<i>F</i> (3,255)	=	***
						10.05		
	Trustworthy	63.14	68.12	56.78	50.83	<i>F</i> (3,254)	=	***
						10.55		
	Sociable	60.56	66.38	57.93	56.13	<i>F</i> (3,257)	=	**
						4.91		

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	Robust	60.00	65.94	55.09	50.81	$F(3,255) = 6.90$	***
	Tough	63.10	64.20	60.70	50.32	$F(3,255) = 5.81$	**
	Brave	60.42	63.19	50.00	46.94	$F(3,256) = 10.38$	***
	Cool	50.74	57.50	47.54	37.54	$F(3,250) = 10.64$	***
	Courageous	58.75	59.71	51.69	44.26	$F(3,257) = 8.98$	***
	Polite	63.24	63.57	54.07	61.11	$F(3,259) = 3.60$	*
	Sincere	60.71	60.88	52.54	53.23	$F(3,255) = 4.20$	**
	Strict	55.56	59.58	49.30	52.79	$F(3,257) = 3.71$	*
Fathers < Mothers	Caring	62.54	73.68	47.72	62.13	$F(3,253) = 20.10$	***
	Thoughtful	61.74	71.74	56.03	60.49	$F(3,253) = 9.79$	***
	Amazing	59.58	71.18	47.72	56.77	$F(3,254) = 13.76$	***
	Kind	64.37	70.29	59.48	62.42	$F(3,256) = 4.24$	**
	Watch over	64.79	68.55	50.17	58.52	$F(3,256) = 11.37$	***
	Understanding	58.47	68.55	45.00	55.97	$F(3,257) = 16.60$	***
	Fine	62.82	69.30	52.03	55.16	$F(3,259) = 10.69$	***
	Generous	56.03	64.93	49.48	51.61	$F(3,251) = 9.03$	***
Mothers > Women	Childrearing	40.70	79.57	36.32	71.94	$F(3,255) = 87.15$	***
	Love family	66.23	77.71	59.83	69.03	$F(3,256) = 11.66$	***
	Love children	63.57	77.71	57.07	65.48	$F(3,256) = 13.93$	***
	Take children's sides	60.87	77.50	57.97	67.42	$F(3,254) = 12.21$	***
	Cherish family	65.86	76.06	56.10	66.45	$F(3,258) = 12.51$	***
	Family oriented	51.29	75.36	47.93	63.06	$F(3,255) = 27.75$	***
	Warm	59.72	72.90	52.76	62.26	$F(3,256) = 15.27$	***
	Capacious	54.71	71.86	53.79	58.52	$F(3,255) = 13.04$	***

	Like children	60.28	70.58	49.32	63.39	$F(3,257)$	=	***
						16.38		
	Friendly	54.29	68.55	48.10	56.45	$F(3,255)$	=	***
						14.61		
	Interfering	45.14	68.29	31.86	52.42	$F(3,257)$	=	***
						47.19		
	Dedicated	54.51	66.14	50.34	60.82	$F(3,256)$	=	***
						9.76		
	Worrier	52.36	65.88	47.89	58.23	$F(3,255)$	=	***
						11.25		
	Stabilise family	60.00	63.86	52.07	62.90	$F(3,255)$	=	**
						5.50		
Mothers	Do housework	38.87	76.62	36.21	70.16	$F(3,255)$	=	***
≡						69.43		
Women	Busy with childrearing	27.46	73.82	27.76	70.00	$F(3,255)$	=	***
	Cooperative	54.64	64.93	54.83	62.26	$F(3,254)$	=	***
						6.18		
	Emotional	49.71	64.43	47.54	62.74	$F(3,253)$	=	***
						12.68		
	Cheerful	53.52	61.88	56.44	61.29	$F(3,257)$	=	**
						4.61		
	Preciuos	34.20	58.12	35.09	54.84	$F(3,253)$	=	***
						23.59		
	Pure	41.55	52.43	36.21	51.13	$F(3,257)$	=	***
						10.06		
	Soft	37.36	61.88	37.37	66.72	$F(3,255)$	=	***
						44.16		
	Gracious	50.14	57.50	47.02	63.06	$F(3,254)$	=	***
						10.57		
	Calculating	44.57	53.48	42.76	58.23	$F(3,255)$	=	***
						9.78		
	Pretty	32.82	54.00	35.52	57.54	$F(3,256)$	=	***
						30.25		
	Fresh	37.68	52.90	46.90	52.90	$F(3,254)$	=	***
						12.05		
	Sweet	31.86	52.54	33.22	56.89	$F(3,257)$	=	***
						26.12		
	Refined	35.07	50.74	32.54	55.97	$F(3,254)$	=	***
						25.44		
	Tidy	30.42	53.19	36.90	55.57	$F(3,256)$	=	***
						24.56		
	Elegant	26.09	48.29	27.59	54.52	$F(3,255)$	=	***
						35.19		
	Modest	33.86	46.87	28.95	52.26	$F(3,252)$	=	***
						20.58		

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Mothers < Women	Feminine	26.48	53.94	35.25	67.21	$F(3,258) = 54.22$	***
	Pretty hair	30.14	49.00	35.93	63.55	$F(3,258) = 37.80$	***
	Feel lonely	48.33	51.74	50.69	62.58	$F(3,257) = 6.67$	***
	Blackhearted	32.11	43.77	42.98	61.29	$F(3,255) = 23.62$	***
	Cute	27.00	48.94	33.86	59.19	$F(3,251) = 32.79$	***
	Brilliant	26.34	46.97	32.41	57.90	$F(3,253) = 40.05$	***
	Beautiful	23.53	49.13	30.68	56.39	$F(3,253) = 46.74$	***
Women > Men	Coward	32.32	46.67	47.07	59.02	$F(3,253) = 22.91$	***
	Mentally weak	36.29	42.75	49.31	53.44	$F(3,254) = 9.51$	***
Others	Active	50.74	58.70	57.89	55.32	$F(3,252) = 2.85$	*
	Moody	46.44	49.85	53.73	53.55	$F(3,257) = 2.13$	
	Quiet	48.00	40.59	42.46	46.13	$F(3,253) = 2.44$	
	Immovable	55.92	55.22	49.82	52.26	$F(3,255) = 1.65$	
	Calm	47.50	42.75	42.37	46.13	$F(3,258) = 1.54$	
	Audacious	50.71	55.57	53.39	48.69	$F(3,256) = 1.58$	
	Stubborn	55.63	55.57	54.48	51.13	$F(3,257) = 0.81$	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ 'Fathers', 'Mothers', 'Men', and 'Women' are means of each percentage. 'F' is p value of F value, 'Parent' and 'Sex' are p values of each main effect, and 'Interaction' is p value of interaction effect.

They believed that men rather than fathers, women, and mothers have the two characteristics *Lazy and Selfish* (category 'Men > Fathers' in Table 1). They thought that women rather than mothers, men, and fathers have the seven characteristics *Feminine, Pretty hair, Feel lonely, Black hearted, Cute, Brilliant, and Beautiful* (category 'Mothers < Women' in Table 1) and that women rather than men, mothers, and fathers have the two characteristics *Coward and Mentally weak* (category 'Women > Men' in Table 1).

Next, it was also indicated that the content of parent stereotypes was different from that of overall gender stereotypes. The respondents believed that fathers and mothers rather than men and women have the following 16 characteristics: *Busy, Very busy, Mature,*

Reliable, Dependable, Reassuring, Trustworthy, Sociable, Robust, Tough, Brave, Cool, Courageous, Polite, Sincere, and Strict (category 'Fathers=Mothers' in Table 1).

On the other hand, the respondents thought that men and fathers rather than women and mothers have the seven characteristics *Physically strong, Strong, Powerful, Strong constitution, Looking down on, Work than children, and Well built* (category 'Men=Fathers' in Table 1) and mothers and women rather than fathers and men have the following 17 characteristics *Do housework, Busy with childrearing, Cooperative, Emotional, Cheerful, Precious, Pure, Soft, Gracious, Calculating, Pretty, Fresh, Sweet, Refined, Tidy, Elegant, and Modest* (category 'Mothers=Women' in Table 1). This means that the content of parent stereotypes overlaps with that of overall gender stereotypes, in particular, regarding physical appearance.

4. DISCUSSION/ FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

These results showed that the content of father and mother stereotypes differed from that of overall gender stereotypes and suggest that Japanese have the idea that 'fathers (rather than men) should work outside the home, and mothers (rather than women) should keep the house'. Thus, it might be effective focusing on parent stereotypes rather than the overall gender stereotypes in order to solve gender inequality in Japan.

However, it should be noted that the content, especially about physical appearance, repeated in parent stereotypes and overall gender stereotypes. Similar results were seen in previous studies (Cejka & Eagly, 1999; Deaux & Lewis, 1984).

Furthermore, Park, Smith, and Correll (2010) investigated not explicit but implicit stereotypes and found that fathers were strongly associated with professional images and mothers were more strongly associated with childcare images. It is said that gender stereotypes are not explicitly expressed by social desirability but that they persist implicitly (Blair & Banaji, 1996). Therefore, it will deepen our understanding to compare implicit parent stereotypes to implicit overall gender stereotypes.

In addition, although this study targeted only undergraduates, future research should target older and/or less educated adults in order to generalise the findings. Since gender stereotypes depend on socio-economic factors such as age, gender, education, income, and employment status (Suzuki, 2017), parent stereotypes might also vary accordingly.

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