



Rethinking Family Inclusion in Japan : What Raises the Quality of Life of Young, Unmarried Women Living with Parents?

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論文

Rethinking Family Inclusion in Japan: What Raises the Quality of Life of Young, Unmarried Women Living with Parents?

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[Abstract]

This study examines the quality of life of young, unmarried women who live with their parents. Family is considered a safety net for its members. However, the quality of life of women in the family has remained under explored. Thus, this study evaluates the same by focusing on life satisfaction, distress, and self-esteem and analyzes its correlation with employment status and family dependency in comparison to men. Data analysis of our online survey¹ (conducted in 2014) indicated that the quality of life of women is worse than that of men and is correlated with their employment conditions rather than familial relationships. The study results hold implications for the visualization of the quality of life of women who usually remain hidden within the family.

[Keywords]

Quality of life, young women, parent-child relationship, self-esteem, working conditions, agency

¹ This survey was part of the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C) entitled “Work and Life of young people in Japan: Gender analysis of the intra-household dependence relationship of economy, care, emotion, and power” (principal investigator: Kumiko Ida, Osaka Prefecture University; project number: 15K01920). The survey was outsourced to My Voice Communications, Inc. and conducted online with their registered users.

1. Introduction

In recent times, the number of young people who do not leave their parental homes after coming of age has been increasing worldwide. According to the OECD(2020), this increase was observed primarily after the global economic crisis of 2008.

Japan has witnessed an increase in the number of young, unmarried adults (20-34 years) living with their parents since the 1980s. It is notable that the number of women within the age group of 25-29 years has shown a constant growth throughout this period. A dramatic increase in the number of men in this regard was observed in the age groups of 25-29 and 30-34 years from the latter half of the 1990s. As of 2016, the number of these population groups of unmarried people living with their parents has declined in tandem with the declining national population. However, the ratio of these population groups remains relatively high (45.8 percent; Nishi 2017).² The percentage of population living with parents varies according to the level of education. Those who are educated up to high school are more likely to be living with their parents than those who pursue higher education (Shikata et al. 2011). In terms of economic factors, a low income makes financial independence difficult, increasing the likelihood of living with parents. There has recently been an increasing trend of non-regular workers among the younger generation who are usually subject to poor working conditions and a lack of job security. This trend largely depends on gender and education levels; unmarried women with high school education or lower are significantly more unlikely to be engaged in regular employment (Table 1). As shown in Table 2, there is a disparity in annual income for those in the same employment category, depending on their final education and gender. Evidently, the annual income level for women with high school education working as non-regular employees is extremely low.

² In Japan, the ratio of population living with parents peaked in 2012, followed by a gradual decrease. In terms of the age/gender comparison, women have a slightly higher percentage than men among those aged 15-29 years. In those aged 30-34 years, men account for 30.6 percent and women 22.4 percent, the latter significantly lower than the former (Nishi 2017).

Table 1. Employment Status of Unmarried Adults by Final Education (age group of 15-34 years)

	Secondary education ^a		Higher education ^b	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Regular employment ^c	37.1%	52.2%	66.7%	73.4%
Non-regular employment ^d	40.0%	24.9%	24.7%	15.5%
Other types of work ^e	1.7%	3.6%	1.5%	2.5%
Not engaged in work ^f	21.2%	19.3%	7.0%	8.7%

Source : Statics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications “Employment status survey 2012”

Notes : ^a = final education is high school or lower

^b = final education is either college, vocational college, or university/graduate school

^c = directly employed by their employers and can continue working until their retirement age

^d = employed by their employers either directly or indirectly and work at the same or shorter time as a regular employment

^e = having their own businesses to run or freelance

^f = out of work

Table 2. Annual Income Levels by Final Education and Employment Status(age group of 15-34 years)

(million yen)

	Secondary education		Higher education	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Regular employment	2.70	3.28	3.45	3.99
Non-regular employment	2.06	2.35	2.46	2.66

Source : Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare “Basic Statistics on Wage Structure 2014” private and public sectors

Notes : Total annual income by age class = ((base wage * 12 + annual bonus and other special benefits) * number of individuals in the age class)

Annual income = total annual income of each age class for people aged 15-34 years/total number of individuals in each age class for people aged 15-34 years

In Japan this phenomenon has been discussed not only from the perspective of an impoverished young adult population, but aspects such as the tendency to never marry and declining childbirth rates have also been highlighted (Yamada 1999). However, the lack of gender-based perspectives allows women’s experiences in a household, which are significantly different from those of men, to be ignored or overlooked.

This study re-evaluates the issue of inclusion in the family from the perspective of gender and educational qualification, focusing on unmarried women with high school education or lower and living with their parents, to analyze the conditions of their lives and propose questions for investigation. Based on Japanese research data, it can offer

an important perspective on the quality of life of women who tend to be hidden within the family.

2. Previous studies: Literature on the topic in Japan

Research on young, unmarried people living with their parents has been conducted in fields such as pedagogy and psychology, which deal with issues related to the growth process of adolescents and social adaptation to society. However, because of the nature of the problem setting, this study makes principal references to (1) studies on non-regular labor and poverty, and (2) research on life satisfaction and quality of life.

(1) Studies of non-regular labor and the poverty of young people

The economic recession and deregulation of labor of the late 1990s induced economic disparities and poverty issues in the 2000s among young adults. Young people forced to work in non-regular employment became a social phenomenon, and they were called “freeters”— these young adults living with their parents were considered, in principle, as being financially disadvantaged (Miyamoto 2002; Genda 2001). In fact, Shikata et al. (2011) demonstrated through micro-simulation that the majority of people living with their parents would suffer from poverty if they left their parental homes.³

The “freeters” were typically presupposed to be men who would otherwise be expected to be breadwinners. This provided the context for the government’s administrative measures. The Japanese government excluded students and married women from the definition of “freeter,” giving the latter a “housewife” status, because married women are presupposed as being financially supported by their husbands, who provide household income.

In recent studies on poverty and social exclusion, more work has focused on women.

³ Some studies suggest that those who live with their parents do not necessarily depend on their parental support, but some of them support their parents (Shirahase 2009), and that their contribution to the household economy is growing (Sakamoto 2011).

Especially there have been more studies on the “deviation” from the family (Iwata 2007) as well as the poverty suffered by single mothers and independent, unmarried women (Yuzawa and Fujiwara 2011; Kosugi et al. 2017), regarding these as the contributing factors toward increased poverty risks for women. These studies, however, investigated women who diverted, or were in a process of diverting, from “standard” families. Therefore, they did not focus on the quality of life of women who are included in the family. Meanwhile, studies on social exclusion, which focus on the social network, considered families important resources for social relationship and discussed the “weakening” and/or “individualization” of families as exacerbating poverty risks. The cases of women in the family have not yet been targeted. In fact, poverty research has been conducted on a household basis, including single parents, and there are few studies that focus on family members other than the main income earners (Moriyama 2012).

Miyamoto (2004) was one of the few studies on women in the family. Based on her survey data analysis concerning unmarried people living with parents, Miyamoto suggested that, in terms of their living arrangements, women are “family-oriented” and prefer staying with their families, while men are “work-oriented” and prioritize the arrangements of work. Watanabe (2011) claimed that the process through which one succumbs to poverty is different for men and women. He attributed present vocations and/or previous career changes as factors that affect men, whereas for women, family composition is a major factor. These studies suggested that, contrary to men, women are more susceptible to their families in terms of their living arrangements.

Meanwhile, Moriyama (2012) analyzed SSM survey data⁴ and argued that poverty among women is determined not by their marital status but by their education levels and career, pointing out that the career status of “housewife” is a factor that exacerbates the risk of poverty for women. Wakita (2016) analyzed the national survey of consumption data and argued against the parasite single hypothesis through an analysis

⁴ The national survey of Social Stratification and Social Mobility. It started in 1955 by The Japan Sociological Society and is implemented every 10 years. Women were not included in the survey until 1985.

of the effect of marriage on the standard of living. She pointed out that young adults did not necessarily gain economic advantages by staying with their parents and that, for women in particular, the financial merit of working as a regular employee is evident irrespective of their marital status. While Miyamoto and Watanabe insisted on the importance of family for women, Moriyama and Wakita pointed out that career and work conditions matter rather than familial factors. However, these few studies of young people living with parents that focused on financial factors did not examine their quality of living conditions in their families.

(2) Studies of life satisfaction and quality of life

Recent economics studies have proposed indicators to measure not only financial situations but also quality of life (Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi 2010; Otake, Shiraishi, and Tsutsui 2010). Surveys on quality of life have been conducted by Eurostat (2019), OECD (2020), and other institutions. In Japan, such surveys are administered by the Cabinet Office of the national government.⁵ These studies employed subjective variables to evaluate the satisfaction of needs, such as life satisfaction and happiness scale, in addition to the objective indicators of income levels, education, and health status.

Quality of life research in economics is driven by the concept of capability proposed by Amartya Sen (1992). The capability approach is based on the idea that people are free individuals with dignity. Martha Nussbaum shed light on women and referred to “self-respect” as a factor of affiliation, one of the central capabilities, such as “having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others” (Nussbaum 2000: 79). People recognize their own worth by being treated in society as dignified beings, which facilitates the development of respectful relationships with others. As mentioned above, this relationship has been a focus in recent years of poverty and social exclusion studies, and it is featured in the quality of life survey of the Cabinet Office of the

⁵ Director-General for Policies on Cohesive Society, 2019, *The initial report concerning the survey on satisfaction and quality of life* and *The second report concerning the survey on satisfaction and quality of life*.

Japanese government through such variables as the number of “people who can be relied on” and the number of hours spent socializing with friends. However, variables for self-respect or dignity have not been included in research on the situation in Japan.⁶

As described above, there are some studies on the situations of life of young, unmarried women living with parents from an economic point of view, but the evaluation of their quality of life is yet to be pursued further. Thus, we focus on the quality of life of such women, using “life satisfaction” as a subjective indicator. To evaluate their status of health, which is indispensable for evaluating the quality of life, we use “distress” (mental health). Regarding self-respect and dignity, we additionally use “self-esteem” as a variable. Women in modern societies still often find themselves in a situation where they are subordinate in a male-dominant social order. In such cases, it is necessary to measure social relationships not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively. For this purpose, notions of self-respect and dignity are considered to provide useful insights into the quality of relationships with others. People often cannot desire something they imagine unfeasible (Nussbaum and Sen 1993: 5). Hence, it is not sufficient to evaluate subjective aspects, such as life satisfaction, when investigating and evaluating the quality of life of women, who are far from being equal to men in terms of opportunities.⁷ It is indispensable to evaluate the conditions under which women are enabled to lead independent lives and exercise their agency (ibid. 1993: 36, 37). Self-esteem may offer insights that facilitate such evaluation.⁸

It has hitherto been considered that the inclusion into family, especially for women, functions as a social safety net from a financial perspective. We approach this from the quality of life perspective. We also attempt to analyze and reconsider the issue by focusing on young women sharing livelihoods with their parents and identifying further

⁶ The Cabinet Office’s survey uses an option “sense of self-worth,” but it is not precisely the same as self-respect or dignity.

⁷ This idea is in alignment with the recent argument about the point of reference used in behavioral economics.

⁸ Regarding the assessment of agency, see, for example, Alkire and Ibrahim (2007), Vaz, Pratley and Alkire (2016). A Special Issue on Voice and Agency, featured in *Feminist Economics*, is an important initiative. Our research group is currently developing a plan for a new study to evaluate the agency of Japanese young women.

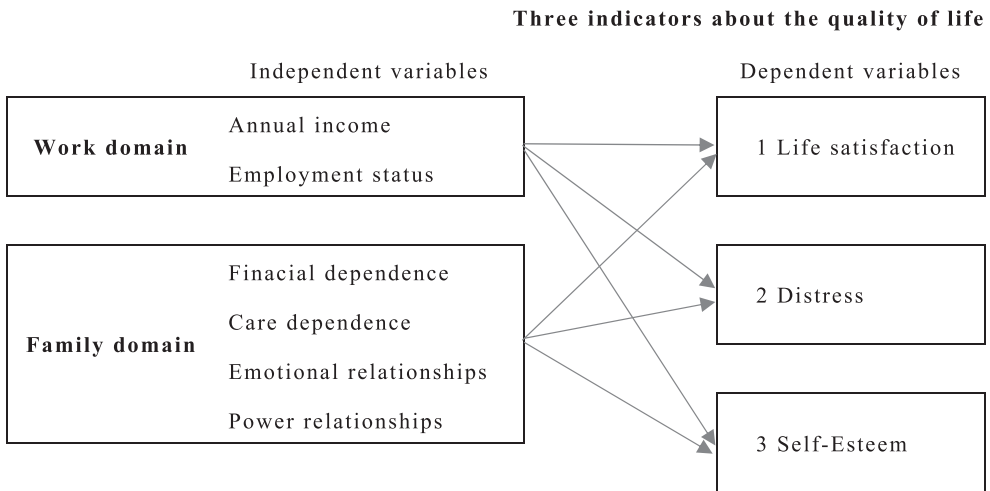
issues to be addressed.

Analytical framework

This study uses three quality of life indicators for young adults to analyze and discuss gender issues in terms of work and family domains. In the analysis, the relationship with parents is a particularly important factor in evaluating whether inclusion in the family contributes to the enhancement of women’s quality of life.

The variables comprising the two domains relevant to quality of life are explained as follows. The work domain is examined by employment conditions, namely income and types of employment. Income refers to annual income in this study. As for the family domain, this study evaluates the relationships between family members based on Connell’s theory of gender relationships as a social structure, which consists of the gender division of labor, power, and attachment (Connell 1987). We used four variables: financial dependence, domestic care, emotional relationships, and power relationships with parents. Respondents were asked about their fathers and mothers separately.

Figure 1. Analytical Framework



3. Data and variables

(1) Survey outline

Our data are from the Survey of Life of Young Adults conducted between April 17 and May 2, 2014. The survey was conducted online (an Internet-based survey where registered website users participated), targeting young adults aged between 15 and 34 years, with final education of high school or lower. We analyzed the responses of unmarried men (351 cases) and women (245 cases) who lived with their parents.⁹

(2) Description of survey samples

Our survey samples were compared with national data. Table 3 shows annual income and employment status. The proportion of regular employees is lower (women: 18.0 percent, men: 25.4 percent), and the proportion of non-regular and non-engaged employees is higher than national rates. The average income was lower than that of the national data. Thus, the employment conditions of the respondents were less favorable.

Table 3. Comparison Between National Data and Survey Sample

	Women		Men	
	National data	Survey sample	National data	Survey sample
Annual income(million yen)				
Regular employment	2.70	2.33	3.28	3.14
Non-regular employment	2.06	1.15	2.35	1.47
Employment status				
Regular employment	37.1%	18.0%	52.2%	25.4%
Non-regular employment	40.0%	45.3%	24.9%	31.1%
Other types of work	1.7%	6.5%	3.6%	10.7%
Not engaged in work	21.2%	30.2%	19.3%	32.8%

⁹ The rate of unmarried women living with their parents is 82.2 percent, while that of men is 78.5 percent. Our sample data show almost the same figures as the National Data for 2010 (women: 80.3 percent, men: 79.2 percent) in National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (2010). http://www.ipss.go.jp/ps-doukou/j/s_db_14/s_db_14.html (accessed April 2021)

(3) Analytical questions and hypotheses

There are three analytical questions. The first concerns whether the quality of life of young women living with their parents differs from that of men. We estimated this using three indicators: life satisfaction, distress, and self-esteem. The second concerns the disparities between women and men in terms of the situation of work and their relationship with parents. The third concerns whether the determinants of the quality of life of women differ from those of men.

Regarding the first question, previous research and studies on life satisfaction indicated that women are more satisfied than men in all age groups (Cabinet Office 2019). As for distress, scores were higher for women in all age groups, but among unmarried population men scored higher (Inaba 2002; Shimizu 2001). The difference in self-esteem between men and women has been reported in Japan, but no discussion has focused on this gender-based difference. A meta-analysis of gender differences in the data extracted from published papers conducted by Okada et al. indicated that men have slightly higher levels of self-esteem. However, this gap has been diminishing in recent years. In some studies, women scored higher than men on the self-esteem scale (Okada et al. 2015). These previous studies suggested that women have higher levels of life satisfaction, less distress, and a mixture of high and low levels of self-esteem. Overall, it is estimated that women enjoy a better quality of life than do men.

Regarding the second question, we analyzed the relationship between the four actors: father, mother, son, and daughter. No studies have investigated the relationships in terms of quadruple relationships between father and son/daughter, and between mother and son/daughter.¹⁰ However, this implies that women are more dependent on their parents financially and domestically, and are in better emotional and power relationships with them than men, considering that women's annual income and the probability of being in full-time employment are lower than men, and yet they are more

¹⁰ In terms of studies that took an approach to the quadruple relationships, Mizumoto (2018) analyzes using the Psychological Autonomy Scale (trust and mental independence) and the Intimacy scale (caring for parents, assimilation with parents' values, and feeling safe with parents), which is distinct from our approach of understanding the parent-child relationship in terms of dependency, emotional, and power relationships.

satisfied with their lives. In other words, we predict that women better adapt to family inclusion than men.

Regarding the third question concerning the determinant factor of the quality of life, Miyamoto (2004) stated in her study of life satisfaction that, in the case of men, their own economy seems to influence the degree of their life satisfaction, whereas for women it is their parents' economy, which is more likely to be an influential factor. According to a quality of life survey by the Cabinet Office, the life satisfaction of men aged between 15 and 44 years is associated with their employment circumstances and wages, which is not the case for women (Cabinet Office 2019). Therefore, the family domain, as opposed to the work domain, is supposed to be more relevant to the quality of life of women.

Given the preceding three questions and the existing studies reviewed, it is hypothesized that (a) women enjoy a better quality of life than men, (b) in terms of the family domain, women are more likely to enjoy better dependence on their parents, emotional support from them, and power relationships with their parents than men do. Additionally, it is conceivable that (c) while men's quality of life depends on the work domain, women depend on the family domain. This implies that family inclusion positively contributes to improved quality of life of women, even though women's working conditions are worse than those of men. We now turn to our data for verification to examine the validity of these hypotheses.

Three indicators for evaluating the quality of life and variables

In this study, we employed three indicators to evaluate the quality of life: life satisfaction, distress, and self-esteem. Table 4 shows the variables used to quantify the indicators, questions, and each scale option. For life satisfaction, the scale options of the answers were converted to a score. Distress was measured using the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), which assesses the physical and psychological health status for the last seven days.¹¹ To evaluate self-respect, which we

¹¹ This scale was developed by the Center for Epidemiologic Studies at the US National Institute of Mental Health, designed to evaluate the state of depression among the national population. It is employed in many

consider important for the quality of life, we employed self-esteem, which has been well-studied in psychology for evaluating the self, reflecting approving opinions about the self or the sense of self-worth (Okada, et al. 2015). To measure self-esteem, we used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). The RSES has been translated into Japanese with many different versions, and some studies have pointed out that the use of a translated version results in different outcomes depending on its translation outputs or incoherence in the number of options translated (Oshio et al. 2014). This study adopted the Japanese version of the RSES translated by Mimura and Griffiths (2007) .

Table 4. Variable Descriptions

Variables	Description
Quality of Life Indicator	
Life satisfaction	How satisfied you are with your lives in general 1 = very dissatisfied to 5 = very satisfied
Distress Scale	(1) I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me (2) I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with help from my family or friends (3) I felt depressed (4) I had trouble concentrating on what I was doing (5) I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor (6) I felt that everything I did was an effort (7) I felt fearful (8) My sleep was restless (9) I talked less than usual (10) I felt lonely (11) I enjoyed life (12) I felt sad 1 = rarely or none of the time, 2 = 1-2 days a week, 3 = 3-4 days a week, 4 = most or all of the time ($\alpha = 0.92$) Higher scores indicate more distressed states
Self-Esteem Scale	(1) On the whole, I am satisfied with myself (2) At times, I think I am no good at all (3) I feel that I have a number of good qualities

questionnaire-based stress studies, through which its reliability and validity have been verified. While there are 20 items in the original CES-D, Shimizu (2001) conducted a factor analysis and identified 11 items to form a depressive tendency scale. This study incorporated an 11-item scale following Shimizu (2001) and formed a 12-item distress scale by adding another question designed to eliminate acquiescence.

- (4) I am able to do things as well as most other people
- (5) I feel I do not have much to be proud of
- (6) I certainly feel useless at times
- (7) I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others
- (8) I wish I could have more respect for myself
- (9) All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure
- (10) I take a positive attitude toward myself

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree

Negative items are scored on reverse

($\alpha = 0.85$)

Higher scores indicate higher level of self-esteem

Work Domain

Annual income

Respondent's annual income(million yen)

Regular employment

Directly employed by their employers and can continue working until their retirement age

Non-regular employment

Employed by their employers either directly or indirectly and work at the same or shorter time as a regular employment

Other types of work

Having their own businesses to run or freelance

Not engaged in work

Out of work

Family Domain

Financial dependence

To what extent you depend on father for living expense

To what extent you depend on mother for living expense

1 = not depend at all to 4 = depend on very much

Care dependence

To what extent you depend on your father for domestic care

To what extent you depend on your mother for domestic care

1 = not depend at all to 4 = depend on very much

Emotional relationships

To what extent you depend on your father for emotional support

To what extent you depend on your mother for emotional support

1 = not depend at all to 4 = depend on very much

Power relationships

How much your opinions are accepted by your father/mother

How much your opinions are accepted by your father/mother

1 = never accepted to 5 = always accepted

Control variable

Age

Respondent's age

Education

0 = graduate junior high school or drop out of high school, 1 = graduate high school

4. Results

(1) First question: Gender gap of the quality of life

Table 5 shows the gender comparisons of the three quality of life indicators. The life satisfaction score for unmarried women living with parents (mean 2.87) was slightly higher than that of men (2.83), but the difference was not significant. The distress score for women (25.33) was significantly higher than that for men (22.48), indicating poorer mental health for women. The self-esteem score for women (20.16) was significantly lower than that of men (22.38). Thus, a gender gap in the quality of life exists between unmarried, young men and women living with parents, such that women are worse-off.

Table 5. Quality of Life (three indicators) by Gender

	Women (<i>N</i> = 245)		Men (<i>N</i> = 351)		<i>t</i>	
	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>		
Life satisfaction	2.87	0.99	2.83	0.92	-0.55	
Distress	25.33	9.18	22.48	8.45	-3.90	***
Self-esteem	20.16	5.61	22.38	5.13	4.99	***

$p < 0.1 = +$, $p < 0.05 = *$, $p < 0.01 = **$, $p < 0.00 = ***$

(2) Second question: A) Gender gap in the work domain

Concerning annual income and employment status, Table 6 shows that the average annual income for men is about 1.59 million yen versus 0.96 million for women, showing a significant difference. Employment status indicate a discrepancy between men and women in that women engage less in regular employment than do men (18.0 percent vs 25.4 percent respectively) and more in non-regular employment (45.3 percent vs 31.1 percent, respectively). An annual income gap by employment type also exists. Thus, the circumstances in the work domain are significantly worse for women than for men.

Table 6. Work Domain by Gender

	Women (<i>N</i> = 182)		Men (<i>N</i> = 225)			
	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	
Average annual income(million yen)	0.96	1.01	1.59	1.46	4.88	***
	Women (<i>N</i> = 33)		Men (<i>N</i> = 74)			
Regular employment annual income	2.33	0.76	3.14	0.92	4.71	***
	Women (<i>N</i> = 74)		Men (<i>N</i> = 61)			
Non-regular employment annual income	1.15	0.68	1.47	0.89	2.28	*
Ratio of below the income tax threshold of 1.03 million yen	59.9%		45.8%			
	Women (<i>N</i> = 245)		Men (<i>N</i> = 351)		chi-square	
Employment status(100%)					14.71	**
Regular employment	18.0%		25.4%			
Non-regular employment	45.3%		31.1%			
Other types of work	6.5%		10.7%			
Not engaged in work	30.2%		32.8%			

p<0.1=+, p<0.05=*, p<0.01=**, p<0.00=***

Second question: B) Gender gap in the family domain

Table 7 illustrates the financial dependence, care dependence, emotional relationships, and power relationships in relation to fathers and mothers separately. There were no significant gender differences in terms of financial and caring dependence on either the mother or father. There were some gender gaps in terms of emotional and power relationships only with the mother, not with the father. In summation, the dependence, emotional, and power relationships with fathers did not show gender-based differences, while those with mothers showed no major gender-based differences.

Table 7. Family Domain by Gender

		Women (<i>N</i> = 245)		Men (<i>N</i> = 351)		
		Mean	<i>SD</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
Financial dependence	Father	2.74	1.14	2.62	1.16	-1.33
	Mother	2.59	1.11	2.49	1.13	-1.09
Care dependence	Father	2.00	1.05	2.09	1.05	1.00
	Mother	3.24	0.86	3.19	0.89	-0.63
Emotional relationships	Father	2.28	1.00	2.16	0.96	-1.41
	Mother	2.89	0.91	2.46	0.95	-5.52 ***
Power relationships	Father	2.92	0.97	2.84	0.98	-1.01
	Mother	3.21	0.85	3.04	0.94	-2.19 *

$p < 0.1 = +$, $p < 0.05 = *$, $p < 0.01 = **$, $p < 0.00 = ***$

(3) Third question: Variables relevant to the quality of life

We now turn to the variables relevant to the quality of life to examine gender-based differences. Table 8 shows the results of the multiple regression analyses for the data related to men and women. For women, life satisfaction correlated to annual income ($\beta = 0.307$), emotional support from mother ($\beta = 0.206$), and financial dependency on father ($\beta = -0.184$), in that order. Greater life satisfaction was derived from higher income and stronger support from the mother, whereas it decreased as financial dependency on the father increased. For men, life satisfaction was greater when their fathers accepted their opinions ($\beta = 0.336$), income ($\beta = 0.304$) was higher, and they were self-employed ($\beta = 0.131$), as opposed to being engaged in regular employment.

In terms of distress, in the case of women, it was related to annual income ($\beta = -0.250$), financial dependency on father ($\beta = 0.214$), and types of employment and other types of work ($\beta = -0.206$), as opposed to being engaged in regular employment. The level of distress was higher when their income was smaller, their financial dependence on fathers was greater, and they were self-employed rather than being engaged in regular employment. Men tended to feel more distressed if their opinions were less accepted by their fathers ($\beta = -0.205$) and the degree of domestic dependence on fathers ($\beta = 0.132$) was greater.

Regarding self-esteem, for women, type of employment was the only relevant variable, and self-esteem was higher when they were engaged in regular employment than in all other types. Men tended to have a stronger sense of self-esteem when they earned more annual income ($\beta = 0.305$), had more emotional support from their fathers ($\beta = 0.256$), depended less on their mothers financially ($\beta = -0.211$) and/or domestically ($\beta = -0.204$), financially depended more on their fathers ($\beta = 0.175$), and were engaged in other types of work ($\beta = 0.168$), as opposed to being engaged in regular employment.

Multiple regression analyses revealed that the variables relevant to the three indicators for evaluating the quality of life were not identical for men and women. While it is difficult to identify the determining variables in relation to the quality of life, the analyses of the three indicators generally indicated that the variables of the work domain seem to affect the quality of life of women as they do for men. Meanwhile, the variables of the family domain seem less relevant to women's quality of life compared to men, with few correlating variables. This result is contrary to our initial premise that women's quality of life be affected more by factors in the family domain. It is notable that the quality of life declined as women were more dependent on their fathers financially, which was not the case with men.

Table 8. Multiple Regression Analysis on the Quality of Life by Gender

	Life satisfaction						Distress						Self-esteem								
	Women		Men		Women		Men		Women		Men		Women		Men		Women		Men		
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	
Work domain	1.151		2.370		** 27.973		*** 21.207		*** 21.836		*** 28.212		***		***		***		***		***
Annual income	0.003	0.307 *	0.002	0.304 *	-0.023	-0.250 *	-0.008	-0.132	0.003	0.051	0.012	0.305 *									
Employment status																					
Non-regular	0.239	0.113	0.336	0.148	-2.710	-0.145	-1.475	-0.078	-2.565	-0.222	+ -0.965	-0.077									
Other types of work	-0.145	-0.029	0.475	0.131 +	9.242	0.206 *	-2.662	-0.089	-4.745	-0.171 *	3.356	0.168 *									
Not engaged in work	0.474	0.220	0.209	0.096	-4.355	-0.229	1.424	0.079	-3.400	-0.288	+ -0.218	-0.018									
Family domain																					
Financial (father)	-0.163	-0.184 +	-0.006	-0.007	1.676	0.214 *	0.971	0.135	-0.562	-0.116	0.833	0.175 +									
Financial (mother)	0.003	0.003	-0.084	-0.095	-0.492	-0.061	-0.177	-0.024	-0.193	-0.038	-1.029	-0.211 *									
Care (father)	0.066	0.068	0.038	0.038	-0.095	-0.011	1.086	0.132 +	0.198	0.038	-0.204	-0.037									
Care (mother)	0.100	0.082	-0.015	-0.013	0.642	0.060	-0.096	-0.010	-0.680	-0.102	-1.339	-0.204 **									
Emotional (father)	-0.081	-0.079	0.040	0.037	0.228	0.025	-1.333	-0.150	0.661	0.118	1.507	0.256 *									
Emotional (mother)	0.250	0.206 *	0.072	0.067	0.713	0.066	0.068	0.008	-0.641	-0.096	-0.238	-0.040									
Power (father)	0.185	0.169	0.350	0.336 **	-1.288	-0.133	-1.768	-0.205 +	0.321	0.053	0.248	0.043									
Power (mother)	0.187	0.144	-0.203	-0.190	-0.768	-0.067	0.714	0.080	0.766	0.108	-0.397	-0.067									
Control variable																					
Age	-0.010	-0.040	-0.021	-0.086	0.007	0.003	0.188	0.091	0.053	0.036	-0.090	-0.065									
Education	-0.151	-0.051	0.031	0.012	0.036	0.001	-0.540	-0.025	-0.173	-0.011	-1.338	-0.093									
N	182		225		182		225		182		225										
F	3.280	***	3.800	***	2.620	**	2.590	**	2.380	**	4.240	*									
Adjusted R-squared	0.178		0.125		0.111		0.090		0.096		0.168										

Note: Regular employment is the reference category for employment status.

p<0.1=+, p<0.05=*, p<0.01=**, p<0.00=***

5. Discussion

In this study, we examined the three hypotheses and obtained unique findings: (a) We hypothesized that women enjoy a better quality of life than men. This was not supported. Women's quality of life was poorer than men. (b) We hypothesized that women are more likely to enjoy better relationships with their parents than men. This was not supported. No major gender differences were identified in the family domain. (c) We hypothesized that women's quality of life is related to the family domain variables, but little to the variables in the work domain. This was not supported.

Preventing poverty risks by living with parents

The employment conditions for women are worse than those of men as per our research data. The ratio of women regular employees was 18.0 percent, and women's average annual income was JPY 0.96 million. Furthermore, 59.9 percent of women fell below the income tax threshold of 1.03 million yen, while it was 45.8 percent for men (Table 6). This means that approximately 60 percent of women would face difficulties in managing financially if they left their parental homes,¹² and living with parents would significantly help young women to avoid poverty risks. The poverty of young adults cannot become apparent as long as they live with their parents, as pointed out by Shikata et al. (2011) and Wakita (2016). However, these young people probably can fall back on their families, who act as a social safety net,¹³ and women in particular seem to derive great benefit from it.

¹² Shikata et al. (2011) investigated poverty rates for men and women by comparing the incomes before (pre-separation) and after (post-separation) leaving parental homes. The former were taken from the equivalized disposable income of the household and the latter from the person's disposable income. They found that for men, the pre-separation poverty rate was 5.1 percent while the post-separation poverty rate was 43.8 percent, while for women the corresponding figures were 8.3 percent and 43.2 percent, respectively.

¹³ However, it should be noted that both Shikata et al. (2011) and Wakita (2016) used equivalized disposable income instead of the person's disposable income. Thus, the risk prevention in this context presupposes that the household income is distributed evenly within the family.

Family inclusion does not improve women's quality of life

The analyses suggest that living with parents leads to a high probability of preventing poverty for men and even higher for women. The question is whether women have more financial support, are given more care, and maintain better relationships with their parents than men. As the second analysis illuminated, there is not much difference between women and men in this regard. Given that women are worse off in terms of income and employment necessary to ensure standard living, and that the relationships with their parents are not particularly better than those of men, it is understandable that women's quality of life is poorer than that of men.

Another question derived from this is whether women's quality of life would be improved if they had more financial and emotional support from their parents and gained better standing in their families. The results of the multiple regression analysis indicated that inclusion in the family does not have relevance to the quality of women's lives, suggesting instead that their life satisfaction would decrease and distress increase if they were to become more financially dependent on their fathers. This means that paternal support in finance can compromise women's quality of life more. This point is further evidenced in the fact that a significantly higher percentage of women indicated that they wished not to be dependent on their fathers (45.7 percent) than men (37.0 percent) (chi-square 4.504, $df = 1$, $p < 0.05$).¹⁴

Evaluating quality of life focusing on life satisfaction, distress, and self-esteem

We found that women's quality of life was poorer than men's, and that it could be improved by earning more and having regular jobs. Of the three indicators, life satisfaction and distress are most closely related to women's annual income: Higher income leads to higher life satisfaction and less distress. Meanwhile, the more they

¹⁴ As for the question about paternal dependence, the options given were "I want to be more dependent," "neutral," and "I don't want to be dependent." The comparison was made between the ratio of respondents who gave the last option as their answers. Where mothers are concerned, the response of not wanting to be dependent was 27.5 percent among women, and 27.7 percent among men, showing no significant differences.

depend on their fathers financially, the less satisfied and the more distressed they become. This indicates the importance of having a stable income instead of the father's financial support. Self-esteem, which we introduced experimentally in this study, is associated with the type of employment, being significantly higher in cases of regular employment (23.45) than in all other types ($F = 9.311$, $p < 0.000$): non-regular (20.24), other types (16.75), and not engaged in work (18.82). Non-regular workers and other types tend to have lower incomes, insecure employment, and limited authority over work. These people are not, perhaps, recognized as dignified agents, as referred to by Nussbaum, which may explain the low self-esteem levels among them.

These young, unmarried women are more likely to be financially vulnerable due to their working status of non-regular employment, other types of work, or non-engagement in work. To improve the quality of their lives, some urgent measures may have to be implemented, such as for regular and non-regular employees, equal opportunities and equal treatment, and establishing a system that enables change of employment status from non-regular to regular. In Japan, the gap between regular and non-regular workers is large, with the latter getting only about half the wages of the former, and job security is poor.

Conclusion

This study examined the issue of inclusion into family by analyzing the quality of life of young, unmarried women living with parents with up to high school education, who have been understudied in previous studies. We focused on two domains: work and family contexts. We also evaluated the quality of life using additional indicators, such as self-esteem and distress, rather than only one indicator of subjective life satisfaction.

Consequently, women's quality of life was low, contrary to the suggestions of preceding studies, and they were worse off than men. The variables contributing to higher quality of life were found mostly in relation not to the family domain, but to the work domain: higher annual income and more stable working conditions, such as regular employment and improved quality of life. Dependence on paternal financial

support also had an adverse effect.

These findings show that the quality of life for young, unmarried women improves not through family inclusion but through accessing the labor market, thereby gaining financial independence. To this end, appropriate labor policies and extended social security systems are indispensable. To bridge the serious gender disparity in Japan, it is essential to support the empowerment of disadvantaged young women.

In this study, we measured quality of life using three indicators. However, we think it should be evaluated from multiple aspects. In a future study, we will examine the quality of life focusing on women's agency, as suggested by Sen and Nussbaum, which may lead to an updating of the quality of life concept. Although women's agency as an indicator is mainly used in developing countries, we consider it valid for Japan, where gender disparity remains seriously large.

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