

Relative contribution of gender role attitude in coping with work-family conflict for dual-earner couples with children

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The overarching purpose of the study was to investigate the role of gender role attitude in relation to work-family conflict (WFC) in dual-earner families with children ages 0–6 years. The relationship between gender role attitude and WFC also coping behavior of spouse was examined by covariance structure analysis. A total of 698 participants with at least one preschool child in Japan participated in the study, in which data from 240 dual-earner couples were analyzed. By further analysis, dual-earner couples were divided into 3 groups, wives with fulltime job, wives with part-time job and husbands with fulltime job.

First, wives with fulltime job had a higher level of WFC and a more egalitarian gender role attitude than the other groups. As for coping behavior, husbands with fulltime job had a lower level of coping behavior on family role reduction coping, flexible work role assignment and work role reduction coping than the other groups. Second, as for fulltime job couples, the gender role attitude of husbands was correlated with WFC of their wives. However, wives' gender role attitude was not correlated with WFC of their husbands. Similarly, the family role fulfillment coping from husbands was correlated with marriage satisfaction of the wives, but marriage satisfaction of husbands had no correlation with coping behavior from wives. Third, for husbands with fulltime job, one's WFC had a negative effect on both work role fulfillment coping and family role reduction coping, which had positive effects on one's job satisfaction and marriage satisfaction. Fourth, the covariance structure analysis revealed that gender role attitude from husbands had a negative effect on WFC of wives for couples with fulltime job. Besides, the flexible family role assignment coping had a positive effect on marriage satisfaction of the wives. Finally, dual earner couples were furtherly divided into 8 groups depending on if they had an egalitarian or traditional gender role attitude. For fulltime job couples with egalitarian gender role attitude, wives reported a higher level of job satisfaction than the couples with traditional gender role attitude. Moreover, for the couples that husbands had an egalitarian gender role attitude while part-time job wives had a traditional gender role attitude, husbands reported a higher level of flexible family role assignment coping and family role fulfillment coping.

The implications of these results were discussed.