



# Determinants of Gender-Role Attitudes Among Japanese Regular Employees: A Generational Analysis of Adolescent Family Environment

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**Abstract:** To understand and address gender inequality in Japan, it is necessary to clarify the processes through which individuals acquire traditional or egalitarian gender-role attitudes. Individuals likely learn and internalize gender-role attitudes by modeling the attitudes of parents and other family members within the household. Therefore, examining people's past family environments is essential for understanding the formation of gender-role attitudes. This study used a retrospective design to examine family environments during early adolescence (junior high school years). The sample consisted of regular full-time employees across Japan (N = 1,102, 552 men and 550 women, age range 20-61 years, Mage = 43.89, SD = 12.53). They were recruited through an online survey company. A multiple regression analysis using the mean gender-role attitude score as the dependent variable showed that current gender-role attitudes were significantly predicted by the perceived gender-role attitudes of the influential role model, whether the mother had held a managerial position, and age. The role model's gender-role attitudes exerted the strongest effect. A three-way between-subjects ( $2 \times 2 \times 3$ ) analysis of variance further revealed a significant two-way interaction effect. Among older participants in their fifties and sixties, having a mother who held a managerial position was associated with stronger egalitarian gender-role attitudes, particularly when the role model also held egalitarian values. In contrast, younger generations in their twenties exhibited more traditional attitudes toward gender roles. The study discusses potential socio-cultural and economic factors underlying this pattern.

**Keywords:** gender-role attitudes, adolescent family environment, role model gender-role attitudes, generational differences, mothers in managerial positions

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## INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study examines the determinants of gender-role attitudes, that is, an individual's views on gender and gender roles. In 2025, Japan elected its first female prime minister. However, women remain underrepresented in leadership and managerial positions in the economic and political sectors (World Economic Forum, 2025). Although Japanese society increasingly expects women to play active roles, progress has not kept pace with these expectations. The persistence of negative perceptions about female leaders may explain this gap (Muto & Katsurada, 2024; Muto, 2025). In Japan, gender differences in attitudes toward gender roles and toward women in managerial positions, particularly the tendency for male followers to hold negative perceptions, have changed little over the past 30 years (Muto & Katsurada, 2024). Why have gender-role attitudes remained stable over such a long period? Put differently, what factors foster egalitarian gender-role attitudes that promote the psychological acceptance of female leaders? To address these questions, this study examines

the influence of the adolescent family environment on the development of gender-role attitudes.

Researchers have proposed several explanations for sexism and gender inequality. These include theories of intergroup discrimination and individual differences in personality variables such as authoritarian personality traits, empathy, and tolerance for ambiguity (Muto & Katsurada, 2024). For example, when men with high self-esteem experience a threat to their self-esteem, they may display automatic prejudice toward women as an outgroup (Ishii & Numazaki, 2011, 2012). Moreover, research on authoritarian personality traits, often associated with discrimination and prejudice, has shown that latent fascistic tendencies predict prejudice toward outgroups (Adorno et al., 1950; Asbrock et al., 2010). Other scholars have identified factors that increase psychological tolerance toward others, including higher levels of empathy (Kakuta, 1994) and greater tolerance for ambiguity, which enables individuals to think flexibly and consider issues from multiple perspectives (Budner, 1962). Although these studies clarify mechanisms underlying negative perceptions of outgroups and identify factors that facilitate understanding of others, they do not explain why some individuals adopt traditional patriarchal values while others endorse gender equality. In particular, research has not sufficiently examined how individuals learn and internalize these value systems. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research question: What aspects of the adolescent family environment contribute to the development of egalitarian versus traditional gender-role attitudes in adulthood?

### **Determinants of Gender-Role Attitudes**

In addition to previously identified factors, scholars argue that gender-role attitudes themselves contribute to sexism (Muto & Katsurada, 2024; Muto, 2025). Gender-role attitudes reflect deeply held value systems regarding appropriate roles for men and women. These attitudes influence individuals' cognitions, emotions, and behaviors (Muto, 2025) and shape their views on marriage, gender relations, education, work, and society more broadly (Muto & Katsurada, 2024). Individuals who strongly endorse gender equality and reject rigid role prescriptions for men and women are considered egalitarian, whereas those who reject equality are considered traditional (Suzuki, 1991, 1994).

When managers or employees hold traditional gender-role attitudes, they may accept workplace inequalities, such as disparities in promotion opportunities, professional development, and wages affecting women, without perceiving them as problematic (Muto, 2025). Individuals with traditional gender-role attitudes also tend to believe that men belong in the workplace and women belong in the home, and that housework and childcare should primarily be women's responsibilities. These beliefs can normalize long working hours for men, potentially contributing to overwork-related deaths and mental health problems, and may create family environments characterized by paternal absence (Suzuki, 2017). Women who hold traditional gender-role attitudes may attempt to balance work and family responsibilities when they are employed, but this effort can lead to fatigue, stress, and health problems (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). To address sexism and gender inequality, researchers must clarify how individuals acquire traditional versus egalitarian gender-role attitudes. Accordingly, this study explores the determinants of gender-role attitudes, with particular attention to factors that shape traditional and egalitarian orientations.

Suzuki (2017) identifies several determinants of gender-role attitudes, including gender (men tend to hold more traditional attitudes), educational level (higher education predicts more egalitarian attitudes), age (older individuals tend to hold more traditional attitudes), employment status (regular employees and career-oriented individuals tend to hold more egalitarian attitudes), and gender-role stereotypes. Gender-role stereotypes refer to socially constructed expectations associated with biological sex, such as femininity and masculinity, and they contribute to the formation of gender schemas that function as cognitive frameworks. Individuals begin acquiring these stereotypes in early childhood, and once internalized, they rarely change (Aono, 1994).

If individuals learn gender-role stereotypes in childhood, they likely model and internalize the gender-role attitudes of their most immediate and influential social group, which is the family. Parents and close relatives often function as role models whose attitudes shape children's developing value systems. Family influences may therefore play a substantial role in the acquisition of gender-role attitudes. Previous research has largely focused on individual-level determinants. However, this study also considers the environments in which individuals were embedded, particularly the family environment. Potential familial influences include parents' attitudes toward gender roles, household decision-making authority, and parents' employment status. Aono (2008) emphasizes that gender-related beliefs develop during adolescence and may form the foundation for attitudes in adulthood. However, the specific factors that shape attitudes toward gender roles during adolescence remain unclear. To address this gap, this study employs a retrospective design to examine participants' family environments during early adolescence (junior high school years) and to explore how those experiences relate to gender-role attitudes in adulthood.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants, Procedure, and Data Collection**

We conducted the survey through an online research company. This study used a two-stage design comprising a screening survey and a main survey. Data were collected in Japan between March 8 and March 15, 2023. In the screening phase, the survey company distributed questionnaires to 28,413 men and women residing in Japan, and 4,261 individuals responded. From this pool, we identified regular full-time employees and invited them to participate in the main survey.

In the main survey, we distributed questionnaires to 1,659 individuals selected to ensure approximately equal representation across age groups. We obtained valid responses from 1,119 regular full-time employees aged 20-61 years residing throughout Japan. Seventeen respondents were excluded due to substantial missing data. Thus, the final analytic sample consisted of 1,102 participants (552 men and 550 women, mean age 43.89 years,  $SD = 12.53$ , age distribution: 222 in their 20s, 225 in their 30s, 216 in their 40s, 221 in their 50s, and 218 in their 60s). Of these, 608 participants were married, and 494 were unmarried. A total of 532 participants had children, whereas 570 did not. Their household structure included 668 dual-income households, 212 single-earner households, and 222 single-person households. In terms of occupation, 482 participants were clerical employees, 314 were technical employees, and 306 worked in other roles, such as sales.

## Measures

### *Gender-Role Attitudes*

We used the 15-item Short Form of the Scale of Egalitarian Sex Role Attitudes (SESRA-S; Suzuki, 1987, 1991, 1994) to assess current attitudes toward gender roles. Sample items include “A woman’s place is in the home, and a man’s place is in the workplace” and “Housework should be a joint responsibility of men and women” (reverse-scored). Participants rated their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert-type scale. We computed the mean of the 15 items to obtain a composite gender-role attitude score. Higher scores indicate more egalitarian attitudes. Internal consistency of the scale was high (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .90$ ). We used the SESRA-S score as the primary dependent variable in subsequent analyses.

### *Retrospective Assessment of Adolescent Family Environment*

Participants retrospectively reported their family environment during their junior high school years. We assessed the family member who most strongly influenced their values, the perceived gender-role attitudes of that family member, household decision-making authority, the mother’s employment and managerial status, the division of housework and childcare, the division of financial responsibility, and household composition during adolescence. Participants identified the influential family member and then completed the 15-item SESRA-S based on how they believed that individual would have responded. We also included original items assessing gender-role stereotypes and intra-household role allocation during adolescence. Participants provided demographic information, including educational attainment, age, gender, marital status, parental status, household type, and occupation. Company employees further specified whether their position was clerical, technical, or other.

## Ethical Considerations

Participants were registered panel members of an online survey company (Fastask). The survey company informed participants that they could discontinue participation at any time and that data would be processed statistically and anonymously. Only individuals who provided informed consent proceeded to the questionnaire. The same procedure was applied to both the screening and main surveys. Participants could respond to each item only once and could not return to previous questions. The Research Ethics Committee of the author’s affiliated institution approved this study.

## RESULTS

### **Exploratory Examination of Determinants of Gender-Role Attitudes Using Multiple Regression Analysis**

We conducted a stepwise multiple regression analysis using the mean gender-role attitude score as the dependent variable. The following variables were entered as independent variables: age, gender, the family member who most strongly influenced the participant’s values regarding housework and work style during junior high school, the perceived gender

role attitude score of that individual, the household decision-maker for important matters during junior high school, participants' educational attainment, whether the mother had been a regular full-time employee in a managerial position, the division of financial responsibility between parents, the division of housework and childcare between parents, household composition during adolescence (two-generation vs. three-generation household), current household composition (two-generation vs. three-generation household), current work arrangement (dual-income, single-earner, or single-person household), marital status, and parental status. We used  $p < .05$  as the criterion for variable entry and  $p > .10$  as the criterion for removal.

We created dummy variables coded for the influential family member (role model) as follows: father (1 = father, 0 = others), mother (1 = mother, 0 = others), unknown/none (1 = unknown or none, 0 = others), and other relative (1 = other relative, 0 = others). We entered father versus others, mother versus others, and unknown/none versus others into the analysis. We created similar dummy variables for the household decision-maker regarding important matters and entered father versus others, mother versus others, and unknown/none versus others into the analysis. We coded educational attainment as an ordinal variable (0 = junior high school graduate, 1 = high school graduate, 2 = vocational school graduate, 3 = junior college graduate, 4 = university graduate, 5 = graduate school graduate) and entered all levels into the model.

For additional dummy variables, we coded mother employed as a regular full-time manager (1 = yes, 0 = no), father contributed more to household finances (1 = yes, 0 = otherwise), mother contributed more to housework/childcare (1 = yes, 0 = otherwise), three-generation household (1 = yes, 0 = two-generation household), dual-income household (1 = yes, 0 = otherwise), single-earner household (1 = yes, 0 = otherwise), single-person households (1 = yes, 0 = otherwise), married (1 = yes, 0 = no), having children (1 = yes, 0 = no), and male (1 = male, 0 = female). We entered dual-income versus others and single-earner versus others into the analysis.

**Table 1: Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis with Mean Gender-Role Attitude Score as the Dependent Variable**

	variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>VIF</i>
1	constant	.66	.14		4.88	<.01	
	Family member's gender-role attitudes	.78	.04	.79	19.99	<.01	1.00
2	constant	1.04	.15		6.89	<.01	
	Family member's gender-role attitudes	.71	.04	.72	17.64	<.01	1.16
	Mother had held a managerial position	-.31	.06	-.20	-4.89	<.01	1.16
3	constant	.77	.16		4.66	<.01	
	Family member's gender-role attitudes	.67	.04	.68	16.81	<.01	1.22
	Mother had held a managerial position	-.26	.06	-.17	-4.21	<.01	1.20
	age	.01	.00	.15	3.83	<.01	1.14

As shown in Table 1, the final model retained three significant predictors: the role model's gender-role attitude ( $\beta = .68$ ,  $p < .01$ ), whether the mother had held a managerial position ( $\beta = -.17$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and age ( $\beta = .15$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The overall model was significant,  $F(3, 242) = 167.19$ ,  $p < .01$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .67$ . However, the remaining variables were not significant. Participants reported more egalitarian gender-role attitudes when (a) the

influential role model held more egalitarian gender-role attitudes, (b) the mother had not held a managerial position, and (c) the participant was older. Among these predictors, the participant's perception of the role model's gender-role attitudes exerted the strongest influence on participants' current egalitarian gender-role attitudes.

### Effects of Role Model Gender-Role Attitudes, Mother's Managerial Status, and Age

Based on the results of the multiple regression analysis, we conducted a three-way between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine the effects of the significant predictors in greater detail using the mean gender-role attitude score as the dependent variable. The independent variables were: (a) role model gender-role attitudes (traditional group vs. egalitarian group), (b) whether the mother had held a managerial position (managerial vs. non-managerial), and (c) age group (younger generation, early middle-aged generation, older generation).

We dichotomized the role model's gender-role attitude score (mean SESRA-5 score) using a median split. Scores at or above the median were classified as egalitarian, and scores below the median were classified as traditional. A comparison between the two groups confirmed a significant difference,  $t(648) = 32.25$ ,  $p < .01$ . The egalitarian group ( $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = .52$ ) had a significantly higher gender-role attitude score than the traditional group ( $M = 2.83$ ,  $SD = .39$ ), indicating more egalitarian attitudes. We categorized age as follows: participants in their twenties were classified as the younger generation; those in their thirties and forties as the early middle-aged generation; and those in their fifties and sixties as the older generation. Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations for each group.

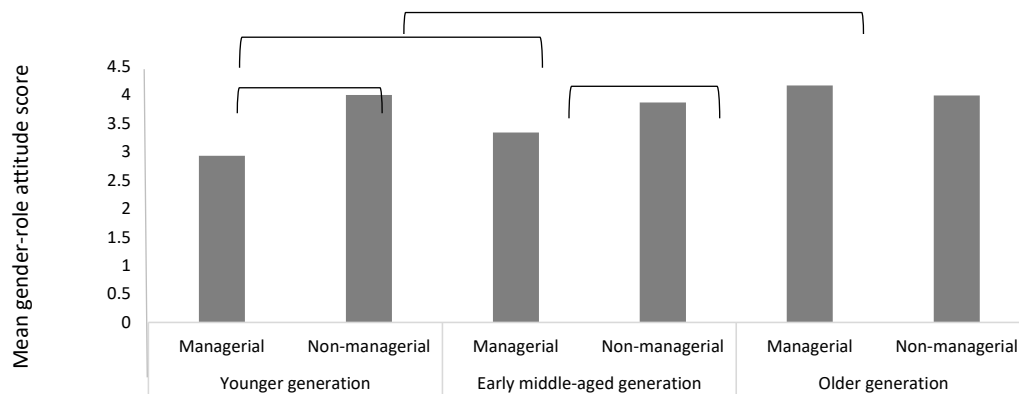
**Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of Current Gender-Role Attitude Scores by Condition**

		Younger generation		Early middle-aged generation		Older generation	
		Traditional	Egalitarian	Traditional	Egalitarian	Traditional	Egalitarian
Non-managerial	mean	2.89	4.00	2.98	3.87	3.35	3.99
	<i>SD</i>	.50	.45	.28	.66	.70	.53
	<i>n</i>	16	14	20	39	11	35
Managerial	mean	2.81	2.93	2.56	3.34	2.86	4.17
	<i>SD</i>	.33	.19	.40	.86	.44	.70
	<i>n</i>	30	7	40	18	8	8

The three-way ANOVA revealed a significant two-way interaction effect,  $F(2, 234) = 7.23$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .06$ . Therefore, we conducted tests of simple interaction effects at each level. No significant interaction effects were observed within the traditional role model group. However, as shown in Figure 1, the interaction between age and mother's managerial status was significant within the egalitarian role model group,  $F(2, 116) = 5.52$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .09$ .

We then conducted tests of simple main effects. Among the younger generation, participants whose mothers had held managerial positions reported more traditional current gender-role attitudes than those whose mothers had not,  $F(1, 116) = 13.18$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .10$ . A similar pattern emerged in the early middle-aged generation: participants whose

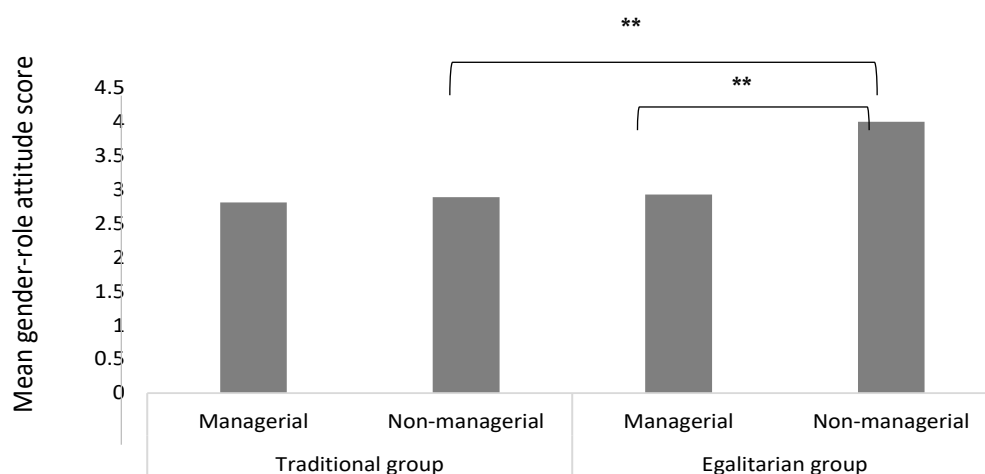
mothers had been managers reported more traditional gender-role attitudes than those whose mothers had not,  $F(1, 116) = 9.07, p < .01, \eta^2 = .07$ . Furthermore, within the group whose mothers had held managerial positions, the older generation reported more egalitarian gender-role attitudes than the younger generation, and the older generation also reported more egalitarian attitudes than the early middle-aged generation,  $F(2, 116) = 7.99, p < .01, \eta^2 = .12$ .



**Figure 1: Results of Simple Main Effects Tests in the Egalitarian Role Model Group.**

**Note: \*\*  $p < .01$**

Next, we examined the interaction between the role model's gender-role attitudes and the mother's managerial status within each age group. In the early, middle-aged, and older generations, this interaction was not significant. However, in the younger generation, the interaction between role model gender-role attitudes and mother's managerial status was significant,  $F(1, 63) = 20.24, p < .01, \eta^2 = .24$ .

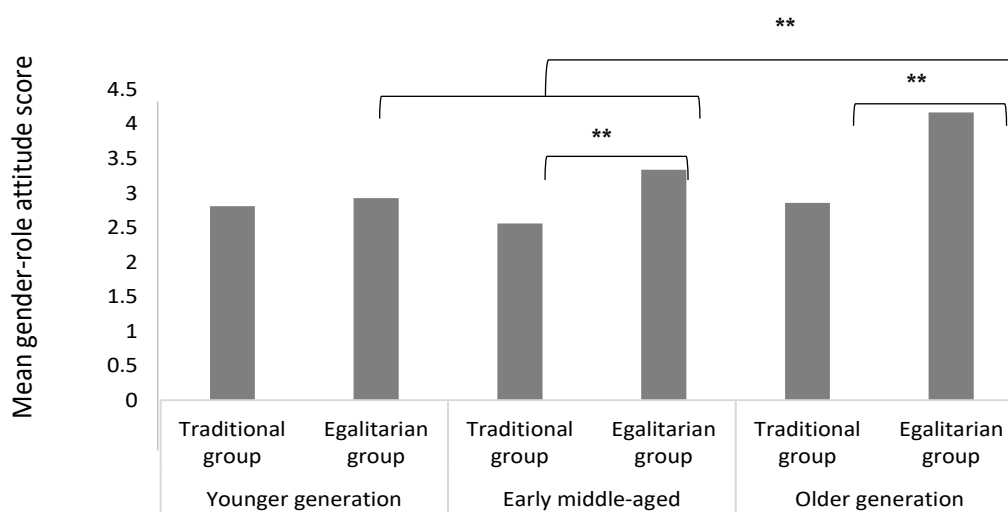


**Figure 2: Results of Simple Main Effects Tests in the Younger Generation. Note: \*\*  $p < .01$**

As shown in Figure 2, within the egalitarian role model group, participants whose mothers had held managerial positions reported more traditional gender-role attitudes than

those whose mothers had not,  $F(1, 63) = 34.28, p < .01, \eta^2 = .35$ . Conversely, within the non-managerial mother group, participants in the egalitarian role model group reported more egalitarian current gender-role attitudes than those in the traditional role model group,  $F(1, 63) = 59.21, p < .01, \eta^2 = .48$ .

Furthermore, in the group whose mothers had not held managerial positions, no significant interaction was observed. However, as shown in Figure 3, within the group whose mothers had held managerial positions, the interaction between role model gender-role attitudes and age was significant,  $F(2, 105) = 6.75, p < .01, \eta^2 = .11$ . In both the early middle-aged and older generations, participants in the egalitarian role model group reported more egalitarian current gender-role attitudes than those in the traditional role model group (early middle-aged generation:  $F(1, 105) = 29.46, p < .01, \eta^2 = .22$ ; older generation:  $F(1, 105) = 26.79, p < .01, \eta^2 = .20$ ). In addition, within the egalitarian role model group, the older generation reported more egalitarian gender-role attitudes than the early middle-aged and younger generations,  $F(2, 105) = 12.14, p < .01, \eta^2 = .19$ . These results suggest that when the mother had held a managerial position, particularly among the older generation, participants were more strongly influenced by egalitarian values and therefore reported more egalitarian gender-role attitudes.



**Figure 3: Results of Simple Main Effects Tests in the Group Whose Mothers Held Managerial Positions. Note: \*\*  $p < .01$**

## DISCUSSION

We used a retrospective method to examine the family environment during early adolescence (junior high school years) and to explore how that environment relates to the gender-role attitudes currently held by adult men and women. The multiple regression analysis showed that the role model's gender-role attitudes, whether the mother had held a managerial position, and age, significantly influenced current gender-role attitudes. Among these predictors, the most influential factor was the participant's perception of the role model's gender-role attitudes. Specifically, when the role model held egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles, participants were more likely to hold egalitarian attitudes themselves. This finding is particularly important for identifying determinants of gender-role attitudes.

Previous research has suggested that gender-related beliefs form during adolescence (Aono, 2008). The present results indicate that the gender-role attitudes of the person who most strongly influenced participants' values during childhood continue to exert a strong influence on their current gender-role attitudes and function as a key determinant. As Muto and Katsurada (2024) have noted, efforts to foster egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles in Japan include school-based initiatives aimed at reducing gender bias. These efforts include increasing the number of women in administrative positions such as principals and vice principals, and increasing the number of female teachers in STEM fields. The present findings further suggest that, in addition to school-based interventions, greater engagement with parents and the grandparent generation within the family context is also important.

The analysis of variance conducted following the regression analysis revealed a more nuanced pattern. Within the egalitarian role model group, participants in the younger and early middle-aged generations reported more traditional attitudes toward current gender roles when their mothers held managerial positions than when they did not. In contrast, among younger participants whose mothers had not held managerial positions, those in the egalitarian role model group reported more egalitarian gender-role attitudes than those in the traditional role model group. Furthermore, within the group whose mothers had held managerial positions, older-generation participants in the egalitarian role model group reported more egalitarian gender-role attitudes than both the younger and early middle-aged generations.

When the role model held egalitarian gender-role attitudes, and the mother had held a managerial position, participants in their twenties through their forties reported more traditional current gender-role attitudes than those whose mothers had not held managerial positions. One possible interpretation is that these individuals grew up in families in which both the role model endorsed egalitarian values, and the mother worked intensively in a managerial role. In such contexts, participants may have experienced greater responsibilities during childhood, such as assisting with housework or caregiving. If they perceived these experiences as burdensome, particularly in relatively recent years, they may not have developed positive evaluations of such family arrangements.

In recent decades, Japan has seen an increase in nuclear families, with more households consisting only of parents and children (Inaba, 2011; Kato, 2006). In Japan, there is a common belief that household matters should be resolved within the family. There is also a strong norm that one should not cause problems to others, such as neighbors or people outside the family, reflecting a culture of shame in which causing inconvenience to others is considered embarrassing. As a result, people often hesitate to seek help from those outside the family. Simultaneously, people tend to believe that they should not interfere too much with others' private affairs. As a result, dual-income households and single-parent households may receive limited external support and become socially isolated as they face psychological, economic, or practical difficulties. Moreover, in contemporary Japan, the issue of "young carers," i.e., when children take on responsibilities such as household chores, childcare, or caregiving, or work part-time to support the family finances, and as a result become unable to live a typical childhood, has become a social concern (NHK Special Reporting Team, 2020). Even when mothers hold managerial positions, society should provide broader support for families so that children can have sufficient time and stability. Such support may contribute to the development of more egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles among younger generations. Moreover, in Japan, women spend substantially

more time than men on housework and childcare, and even in dual-income households, women continue to bear a disproportionate share of domestic responsibilities (Tomita et al., 2012). Household chores, childcare, and caregiving should not be limited to mothers or female relatives. When fathers and male relatives actively take on these responsibilities, it may help reduce the burden on children.

Current gender-role attitudes were more egalitarian in the role-model egalitarian group, in which the mother held a managerial position, than in the traditional group among both the early-middle-aged and the older generations. In addition, within the older generation with mothers holding managerial positions, the role-model egalitarian group showed more egalitarian current gender-role attitudes than the role-model egalitarian groups of the early middle-aged and younger generations. Therefore, individuals in their 30s and 40s may have developed more egalitarian gender-role attitudes influenced by the egalitarian values of their role models when their mothers held managerial positions. However, individuals in their 50s and 60s appear to have been more strongly influenced by the egalitarian values of their role models. Moreover, their current values were correspondingly more egalitarian. Therefore, mothers holding managerial positions likely had a particularly strong impact on the values of people in their 50s and 60s.

At the time of data collection in March 2023, participants in their fifties and sixties were born between approximately 1962 and 1972. The number of female workers doubled between the 1960s and 1984. However, many companies treated female workers differently from male workers (Employment Equality and Child and Family Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2016). According to the 1985 Labor Force Survey conducted by the Statistics Bureau of Japan (1985), only 0.6% of employed women held managerial positions, far below the corresponding percentage for men. Under such social conditions, having a mother who held a managerial position was relatively rare, and this experience may have had a substantial psychological impact and contributed to the maintenance of egalitarian attitudes in adulthood.

Finally, contemporary young people in Japan may live under dual normative pressures. Akazawa (2026) reports that attitudes toward traditional gender-role norms have become increasingly negative. However, a relatively high proportion of students continue to engage in behaviors consistent with traditional gender-role norms.

Muto (2025) also suggests that younger generations may exhibit stronger unconscious bias regarding gender roles in the workplace. A 2022 survey on unconscious bias conducted by the Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office (2022) reported that men, particularly those in their twenties and thirties, were more likely to agree that education or training to promote female employees to managerial positions is unnecessary. To understand this pattern, Muto (2025) argues that researchers must also consider Japan's current economic conditions. In Japan, both men and women face relatively high rates of non-regular employment and comparatively low wages (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2020). In 2024, the average annual income in Japan was reported to be 4.78 million yen per person (Planning Division, Commissioner's Secretariat, National Tax Agency, 2025). Wage growth has remained relatively stagnant in Japan compared with other G7 countries (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2022).

Compared with 1991, nominal and real wages in the G7 countries had risen by 2020 to 146.7% in the United States and 144.4% in the United Kingdom. In contrast, wages in

Japan have remained largely unchanged at 103.1% (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2022). As a result, although taxes and prices have continued to rise in Japan, people's incomes have remained relatively low. In addition, because many Japanese companies maintain a pay system in which salaries increase with age, younger generations tend to earn lower annual incomes and may therefore experience greater financial insecurity.

At the same time, younger people receive a school education that emphasizes equality. Consequently, they may feel uncomfortable with gender-role norms deeply rooted in Japanese society, such as the expectation that men primarily support the household financially while women take responsibility for housework, childcare, and caregiving. After entering the workforce, however, they encounter the economic realities of life in Japan. As a result, some may feel nostalgia for the period of high economic growth, when Japan was often described as a "nation of a universally middle-class society." During that period, traditional gender-role attitudes were strong, with husbands working outside the home and wives serving as full-time homemakers; nevertheless, many people enjoyed greater economic prosperity. Saito (2020) reports that younger age is associated with a stronger preference for becoming a full-time homemaker, suggesting that younger women may increasingly endorse this orientation.

To increase the number of individuals who hold egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles, psychological education targeting parents and grandparents is important. However, structural reforms, including promoting stable employment and strengthening social resources and social welfare systems, are also necessary.

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