

The Ambivalent Effects of Family on Well-Being: Family Norms and Well-Being in Japan

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Abstract

In modern society, the social role of the family is declining. However, what is the meaning of the family in individual well-being? Can people gain happiness from a broader range of social groups than their families? This study compared the effect of family on individual well-being in the quantitative Social Well-Being Survey in Asia with data from the qualitative Social Well-Being Interview in Asia in Japan. The quantitative survey showed that trust in the family had a strong positive effect on individual well-being. However, 40% of the respondents had lower levels of family trust and below-average well-being. Thus, the family's strong positive effect showed that it is ambivalent and divides people into happiness and unhappiness. We also conducted interviews about people's happiest and unhappiest times in their lives. Significant texts as determinants of happiness were coded and then visualized into (1) codes related to happiness, (2) codes related to unhappiness, and (3) codes related to both happiness and unhappiness. As a result, the three concepts of "parents," "business," and "children" emerged as codes related to both happiness and unhappiness. The results suggest that intergenerational mutual support norms within the family can be considered an ambivalent determinant of individual well-being.

Keywords

individual well-being, family norms, sociology, modernization

With modernization, people spend more time away from their families and live without them, contrary to pre-modern societies, where people could hardly survive without their families. Considered at the social system level, the family in modern society is no longer the center of life but merely a part of life. However, does this statement apply at the level of individual well-being? Can we gain happiness from a broader range of relationships outside the family?

In a society where family has a powerful effect on happiness, failures in family relationships are directly linked to unhappiness. In Japanese society, which is

the subject of this study, the family is indeed a powerful resource for enhancing people's pleasure. However, at the same time, it carries the risk of making people easily miserable. This study aims to understand and explain the ambivalent effects of family in Japan through both quantitative and qualitative surveys.

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Theoretical Framework

How can we think about families in modern society sociologically? Luhmann's (1990) social system theory explains the functional differentiation of families.

In pre-modern societies, people engage in social relations through their families (Luhmann 1990:198). Families were everything and people experienced social inclusion; parents taught their children, gave them jobs, and decided their marriages. Thus, social exclusion in pre-modern societies occurred through exclusion from the family (Luhmann 1995:243-4). People who did not belong to any family were hardly able to survive.

As modernization increased social mobility, the social importance of families has decreased, and the labor market, not families, determines occupations. Further, children decide their marriages and most household tasks are outsourced to professionals outside the family. For instance, education is now offered by teachers, and care is now the work of caregivers under the order of the welfare state. The modern family specializes in intimacy, and the social function of the family includes personalities through intimacy (Luhmann 1990:208). Regardless of external environments such as politics, economics, morality, or religion, the modern family operates autonomously only by the internal household members.

The autonomy of the family can also be empirically confirmed in Japan. Article 24 of the Japanese Constitution states that "marriage shall be based *only* on the mutual consent of both sexes," which guarantees the specialization and exclusivity of the two partners. Furthermore, in social surveys, the most crucial marriage factor was not the partner's education, economic power, occupation, or appearance, but personality (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2015).

Autonomies of various social systems in a functionally differentiated society imply that the family is no longer a whole society but just one part of it. Communication is

differentiated into politics, economics, religion, law, art, family, and so on, and each stands as independent and isolated. Money can never be directly converted to love and marriage cannot be forced to maintain the political status of the lineage.

Considering that the family is reduced to one part of society, we can assume similar changes in the values of individuals. Each individual gains well-being not only from the family, but also from various social groups or systems. Just as the whole society cannot be explained by the family alone, individual values and well-being cannot not be described only within the family.

However, this system theory's concept of the modern family specializing in intimacy is only partially consistent with the actual family in Japan. As Ochiai (2011) clarified, in East Asian societies, individual desires are marginalized in marriage, and the family functions to fulfill social responsibilities; sexuality is not a means of confirming intimacy, thus reducing the frequency of sex after marriage. In addition, many people disfavor divorce and extramarital children (Ochiai 2011). Therefore, whether the family fulfills the function of intimacy is only a secondary issue. As Yamada (1994) points out, love within the family itself is guaranteed by how the family fulfills its "responsibilities."

Thus, from the systems theory perspective, Japanese families are strikingly determined by the external environment, especially traditional and moral norms, not sufficiently differentiated from them, which makes autonomy more difficult. However, what are their moral values?

In traditional societies, mutual support within a family assures people's livelihoods. In Japan, the range of the family includes past ancestors and future children, and this cooperation has been institutionalized as the stem family norm (Morioka 1992). The family lineage has to be maintained over a long period through mutual support relationships between parents and their children. Such family norms remain in people's minds today because people cannot

rely on the government's weak social welfare policies (Yamanishi 1994). In addition, the declining number of children supporting their parents due to the declining birthrate, as well as the increasing life expectancy with the development of medical technology, have increased the social burden of caring for the elderly much more than traditional family norms would have envisioned (Ueno 2013:32). As political scientist Esping-Andersen (1999) has posited, welfare policy and welfare services in the market are weak in Japan, and families tend to bear the burden of welfare. In systems theory terms, a modern Japanese family is not a single-function system specialized in intimacy. It is still a multifunctional system that provides the necessities for survival that cannot be offered by other systems such as politics and the economy. Even though some household tasks are outsourced to the market, and the government supports them partially, the importance of family for survival remains. The family is not fully differentiated into a function of intimacy; it is multifunctional. It provides not only intimacy, but also a variety of welfare, subordinated to norms that favor lineage continuity and intergenerational support.

This study assumes that these family norms define individual well-being, which is strongly determined by whether individuals carry out family norms. For example, an individual will be happy when they take over their parents' family businesses. Alternatively, even if the parents have no family business, keeping family lineage is the crucial determinant of well-being: marriage and having children, giving the children a good education and a stable job, having grandchildren, and caring for their parents. However, it has become more difficult to implement such a model in today's unstable social situation; hence, people are unhappy. Family norms have an ambivalent effect.

Not much research has been conducted on family norms and individual well-being. Yoshinaka and Shimizuike (2014) examined the relationship between the Better Life Index of each country and Andersen's

classification of welfare regimes. They confirmed that the level of well-being of countries that correspond to the familistic regime, including Japan, is low across the board. This is similar for overall indicators as well as for life satisfaction. Even though we should not directly equate the familistic regime with family norms, we can assume that the latter can decrease individual well-being. However, this study aims to identify the effects of family norms on individual well-being using microstatics and in-depth interviews.

Hypotheses

Therefore, the first question is how family relationships affect individual well-being. This study assumes a risky effect. Therefore, the following hypotheses is proposed.

Hypothesis 1: Trust in the family strongly affects individual well-being, but it has ambivalent effects that divide people between being happy and unhappy.

The next question is: What is the meaning of the family relationship or its trust? Does it include the issue of family norms?

Hypothesis 2: Family norms are an essential issue in individual well-being and have an ambivalent effect.

METHODS

To test Hypothesis 1, this study analyzes the effect of family relationships on individual well-being using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis from a quantitative survey. First, however, the ambivalence effect of the family must be noted. For example, whether a variable makes an averagely happy person even happier or divides people into above-average and below-average happiness, both are regarded as having positive effects. Therefore, the regression coefficients must be drawn to describe their relationship with the mean of well-being. At the same time, the response distributions of the explanatory

variables should also be drawn on the plot. This will give us an idea of what percentage of the respondents will be predicted to be below or above average.

To test Hypothesis 2, this study analyzes the qualitative responses to the questions about the happiest and unhappiest times in life in the Social Well-Being Interview in Asia (SoWIA). First, for the analysis, a list of interviewees' words was created, in which meaningful words were coded as determinants of happiness. Then, based on these codes, the co-occurrence network analysis visualized (1) codes related to happiness, (2) codes related to unhappiness, and (3) codes related to both happiness and unhappiness.

KH Coder was used for the analysis. The analysis method was left at default settings, and co-occurrence relations were drawn within the top 10. In addition, because the subjective well-being experiences of men and women may be different, the analysis was divided by gender.

Based on Hypothesis 2, words regarding family norms appear in the codes related to (3) happiness and unhappiness, indicating that the issue of family inheritance defines both happiness and unhappiness. Specific statements in the in-depth interviews will further explain the meaning of the network figure.

Data

This study uses data from a quantitative survey, Social Well-Being Survey in Asia (SoWSA), and a qualitative survey, SoWIA, conducted by the International Consortium for Social Well-Being Studies.

The quantitative survey data were collected in Japan in 2015 among registered web monitors. The sample size in Japan was 11,786, which is larger than the usual social survey, and so it was re-sampled and reduced to 2,300.

A qualitative survey was conducted in the urban and rural areas of Japan between February and September 2020. Respondents were assigned according to the following criteria: place of residence (rural/urban),

gender (male/female), age (middle-aged people in their 40s and 50s/older people in their 60s), and level of well-being (lower, middle, and higher). Thus, the survey recruited 24 respondents (residence $2 \times$ gender $2 \times$ age $2 \times$ well-being 3). The level of well-being was defined by dividing the results of the Cantril's Ladder with an 11-point scale in the SoWSA survey into three quartiles: low (0–4), normal (5–7), and high (8–10). The respondents of SoWIA were not recruited from the respondents of SoWSA, the quantitative survey; hence, the respondents of both surveys were entirely different. In addition, the respondents of the qualitative survey were not representative.

However, since the Coronavirus pandemic has spread widely, recruiting has been difficult, and we have not been able to conduct interviews with four people at this time. Those who could not be recruited were marked as NA in Table 1. In addition, for R04, the interview has already been conducted, but the transcription of the interview text has not yet been completed and could not be used for this analysis. Therefore, 19 respondents were included in the analysis.

Three of the four non-respondents were people with low levels of well-being, suggesting that there may have been some bias in conducting the interviews. For unhappier respondents, interviewers could be strangers, so it could also be an uphill struggle to confide one's unhappy story to them.

The interview questionnaire has the following seven main topics: (1) basic information about an interviewee, (2) episodes about each type of social relationship and happy experiences, (3) happiest period in life, (4) least happy period in life, (5) changes in happiness levels across life, (6) expectation of happiness in the future, and (7) definition of happiness/unhappiness.

This study covered the happiest and least happiest periods. Both topics contained the same seven questions: (1). When and why were you happiest and unhappiest in life? What was your relationship with the following groups or societies at that time?

Table 1. Sample Allocation Table

Urban Area				Rural Area			
ID	Sex	Age	Well-Being	ID	Sex	Age	Well-Being
U01 (NA)	Male	Middle	Lower	R01	Male	Middle	Lower
U02	Male	Middle	Middle	R02	Male	Middle	Middle
U03	Male	Middle	Higher	R03	Male	Middle	Higher
U04	Male	Older	Lower	R04 (No Transcript)	Male	Older	Lower
U05 (NA)	Male	Older	Middle	R05	Male	Older	Middle
U06	Male	Older	Higher	R06	Male	Older	Higher
U07	Female	Middle	Lower	R07	Female	Middle	Lower
U08	Female	Middle	Middle	R08	Female	Middle	Middle
U09	Female	Middle	Higher	R09	Female	Middle	Higher
U10 (NA)	Female	Older	Lower	R10 (NA)	Female	Older	Lower
U11	Female	Older	Middle	R11	Female	Older	Middle
U12	Female	Older	Higher	R12	Female	Older	Higher

Table 2. Basic Descriptive Statistics ($N=2,300$)

	NA (%)	Mean (or %)	SD	Median	Range
Cantril's Ladder	0	5.55	2.06	6	0-10
Trust in Family	0	3.77	0.92	4	1-5
Trust in Neighbors	0	2.78	0.79	3	1-5
Trust in Most People	0	2.69	0.71	3	1-5
Female	0	50.70%			
Regular (ref)	0	41.43%			
Temporary		19.00%			
Self-employed		9.13%			
Un-employed		2.39%			
Non-employed		28.04%			
Married (dummy)	0	60.83%			
Number of Children	0	1.06	1.15	1	0-6
Age	0	44.21	13.8	43	20-69
Household Income	10.26	5.69	2.8	5.5	1-10
University Graduates (dummy)	0	52.61%			

(2) Relationship with family (3) Relationship with neighbors (4) Relationship with colleagues (5) Relationship with other social groups (6) Relationship with government and social welfare (7) Relationship with macro socio-economic conditions. Both topics were focused on more than just family relationships. Nonetheless, most respondents

spent most of their comments on family relationships.

Variables

The objective variable of the quantitative survey is Cantril's Ladder, which differs from happiness in the ordinary sense. The

questionnaire uses the metaphor of life as an 11-step ladder, with 0 as the lowest and 11 as the highest life. This tricky question, unfamiliar to most respondents, hopes to make individuals look back on their lives with more abstract and general perspectives.

The explanatory variable that should be examined using five scales is trust in a family. First, the control variables, such as trust in neighbors and trust in most people, were included because the various trust variables are positively correlated in this survey, suggesting that people who can trust one group can also trust the other. Furthermore, the theoretical structure of this paper is based on the idea that family relationships strongly define happiness. At the same time, broader social relationships have little effect on happiness, and trust in family members should be distinguished from trust in neighbors and trust in most people. Finally, demographic variables, such as gender, age, employment status, number of children, household income, and educational background, were added (see Table 2).

RESULTS

Results of the Quantitative Survey

The first analysis examined the effect of family trust on well-being. Model 1, presented in Table 3, shows the effect of kinds of trust on well-being. Comparing the effect of trust in neighbors ($\beta=0.11$) and in most people ($\beta=0.09$), we find that the effect of trust in the family on well-being was very high ($\beta=0.24$). Model 2 shows the effect of demographic variables on well-being, which were used as control variables. Finally, Model 3 integrates the explanatory variables for trust in Model 1 and demography in Model 2. This indicates that the strength of the effect of family trust on well-being decreased from 0.24 to 0.20.

Then, the regression coefficients of trusts were visualized in the plot to compare the meaning of the coefficient with the mean value of well-being (see Figures 1, 2, and 3). These plots depict the coefficients of Model 1 in Table 3,¹ each mean value of well-being,

and the distributions of each response.

Figure 1 shows how trust in the family has an ambivalent effect on people, dividing them into happy and unhappy. The predictive value of those who were relatively untrusting of their families on scales 1 to 3 was lower than the average. Moreover, 39% of respondents fit this unsatisfactory type. In contrast, those who were more trusting of family scaled 4 and 5 reached 60%, whose predictive value of well-being was higher than average.

The ambivalence of family trust, which is divided into happiness and unhappiness, becomes more apparent when compared to the effects of trust in neighbors and trust in most people. Regarding trust in neighbors (see Figure 2), only 7% of respondents who did not trust them at all indicated a lower-than-average predicted value of well-being. This trend was similar to trust in most people (see Figure 3). Only 7% of respondents who did not trust most people at all gave a lower-than-average predicted value for well-being. Thus, family trust has the ambivalent effect of dividing people into happiness and unhappiness. In contrast, trust in neighbors and in most people has little effect. Trust in a wide range of people affects respondents who have more-than-average well-being. If respondents have no trust in many people, they can live happier than average. In contrast, unless a person has a strong trust relationship with their family, they can only become unhappy.

These results support Hypothesis 1, which assumes a strong positive effect of trust in the family on individual well-being and the ambivalent effect that divides people into happy and unhappy.

Results of the Qualitative Survey

The above quantitative analysis has revealed that family defines an individual's life; a family has an ambivalent character, being both a source of happiness and unhappiness. However, what is the meaning of family relationships and trust in the interviewee's subjective reality? The effect of family on well-being must also be considered in

Table 3. Regression of the Dependent Variable of the Cantril Ladder

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Est.	Beta	Est.	Beta	Est.	Beta
(Intercept)	1.97 *** (.20)	-.00 (.02)	3.72 *** (.19)	-.39 (.06)	1.10 *** (.26)	-.34 (.05)
Trust in Family	.54 *** (.05)	.24 (.02)			.45 *** (.05)	.20 (.02)
Trust in Neighbors	.30 *** (.07)	.11 (.03)			.25 *** (.07)	.10 (.03)
Trust in Most People	.27 *** (.07)	.09 (.02)			.20 ** (.07)	.07 (.02)
Sex: Female			.45 *** (.10)	.22 (.05)	.50 *** (.09)	.24 (.04)
Job: Temporary (ref: Regular)			-.19 (.13)	-.09 (.06)	-.18 (.12)	-.09 (.06)
Self-employed			-.02 (.16)	-.01 (.08)	.02 (.15)	.01 (.07)
Un-employed			-.73 * (.29)	-.36 (.14)	-.69 * (.28)	-.34 (.14)
Non-employed			.20 (.12)	.10 (.06)	.09 (.11)	.05 (.06)
Marital Status: Married (dummy)			.72 *** (.11)	.35 (.05)	.60 *** (.11)	.29 (.05)
Number of Children			.08 (.05)	.04 (.03)	.06 (.04)	.03 (.02)
Age			.01 (.00)	.04 (.02)	.00 (.00)	.02 (.02)
Household Income (deciles)			.13 *** (.02)	.17 (.02)	.11 *** (.02)	.16 (.02)
University Graduates (dummy)			.22 * (.09)	.11 (.04)	.17 * (.09)	.08 (.04)
Observations	2,300		2,064		2,064	
R ² /R ² adjusted	.127 / .125		.127 / .123		.209 / .204	
AIC	9542.730		8558.505		8362.261	

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

subjective interview texts. In this survey, 19 people were interviewed regarding their happiness. Among the questions, this study analyzed the topic of the happiest and unhappiest periods in their lives.

Figure 4 shows the most frequent words and their co-occurrence among the 19 interviewees. Overall, most interviewees mentioned family relationships. Second, we focused on codes related to both happiness and unhappiness to test our hypotheses. Next, *business*, *parents*, and *children* emerged as codes related to both happiness and

unhappiness.

These three words suggest that *family norms*, that is, the extent to which respondents were able to inherit their parents' social and economic status and transmit it to their children, are related to both happiness and unhappiness.

The birth of a *child* along with marriage increases an individual's well-being as the first step toward family succession. However, raising a child imposes a heavy burden on the parents and children do not always meet their expectations. For example, the child may drop

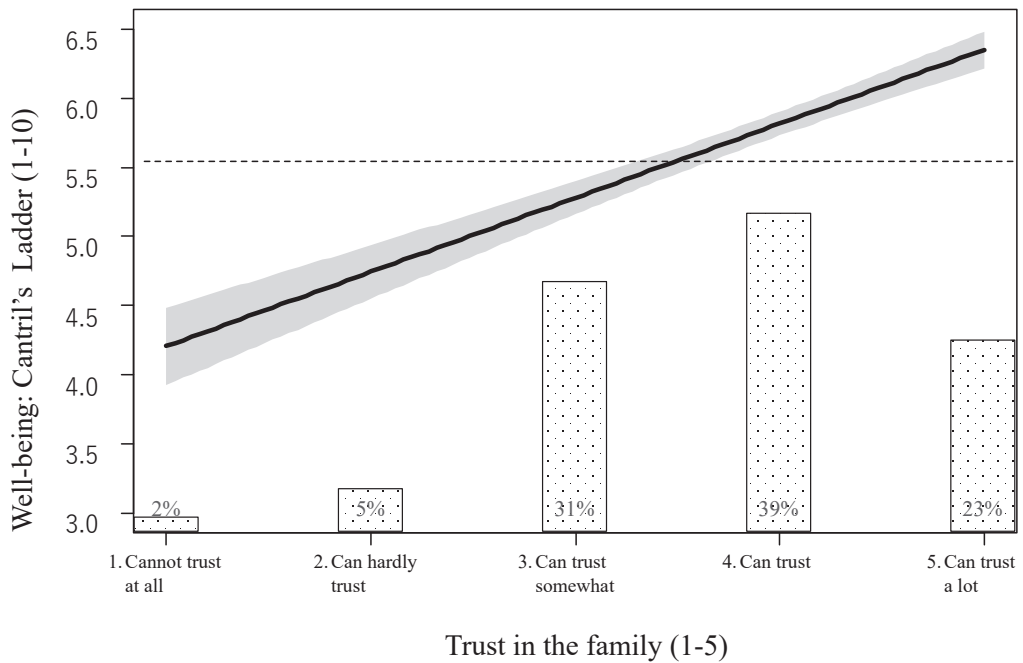


Figure 1. Effect of Family Trust on Well-being, Distribution of Family Trust, and the Mean Value of Well-Being.

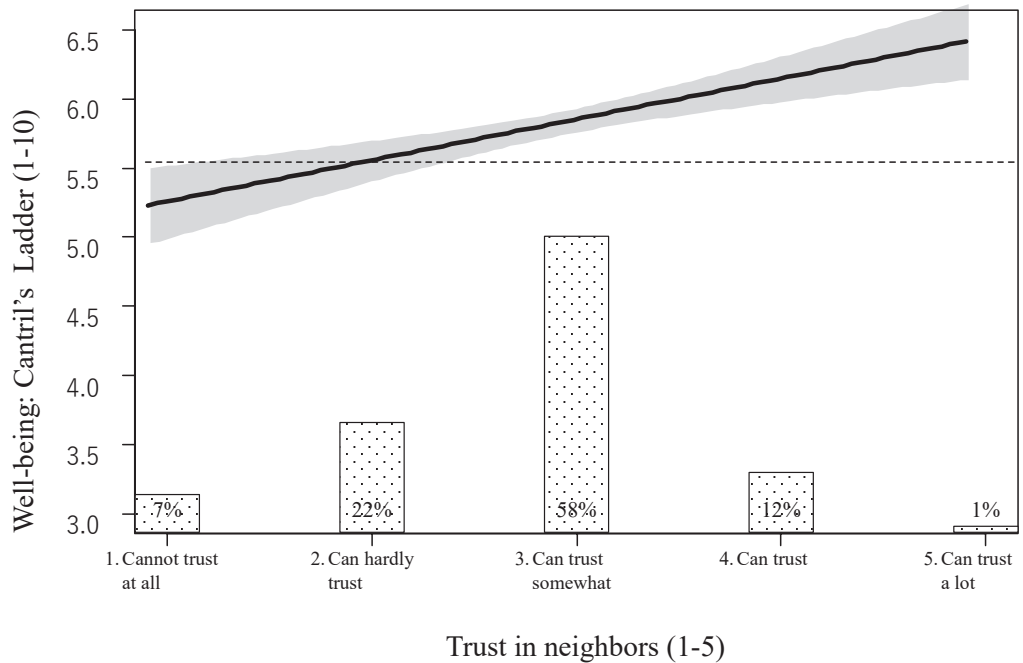


Figure 2. Effect of Trust in Neighbors on Well-being with Mean, Distribution of Trust in Neighbors.

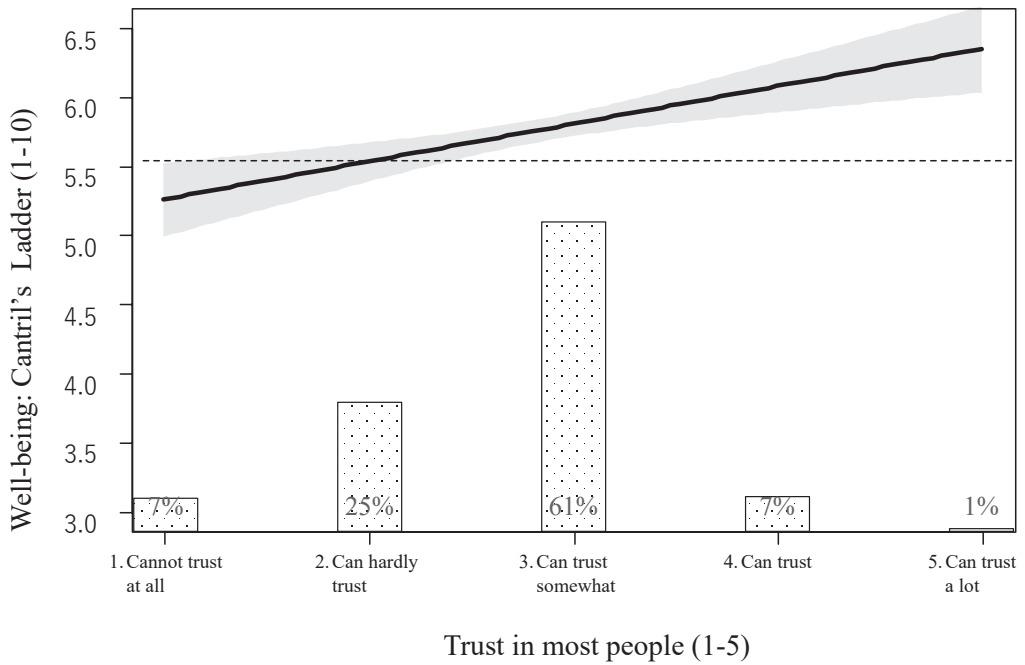


Figure 3. Effect of Trust in Most People on Well-being with Mean, Distribution of Trust in Most People.

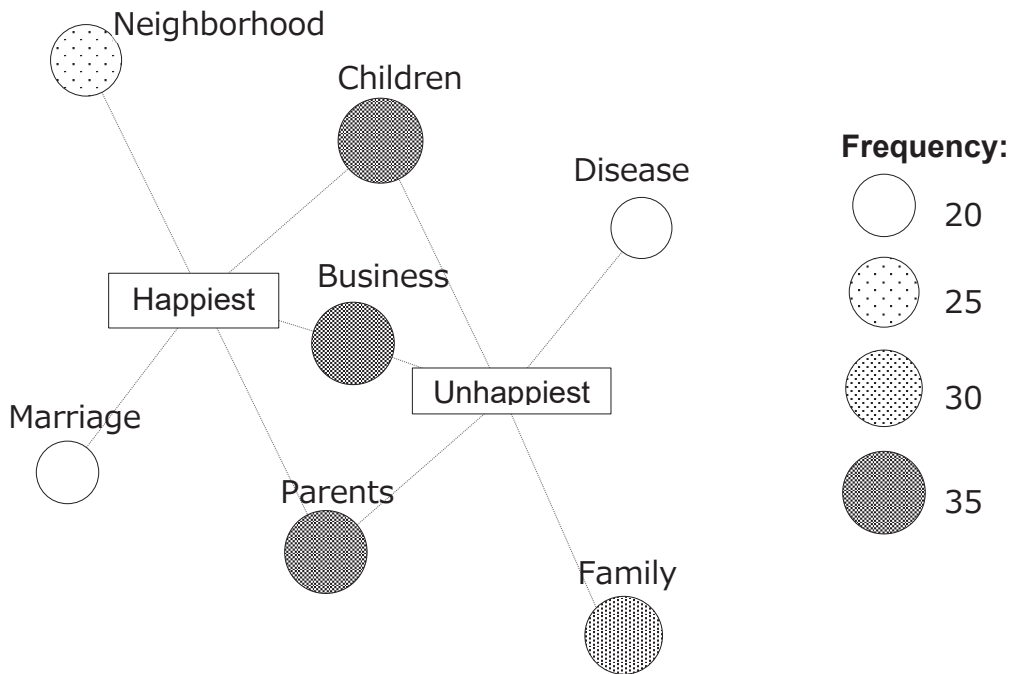


Figure 4. Co-occurrence Network Results. N=38 (19 persons × 2 items)

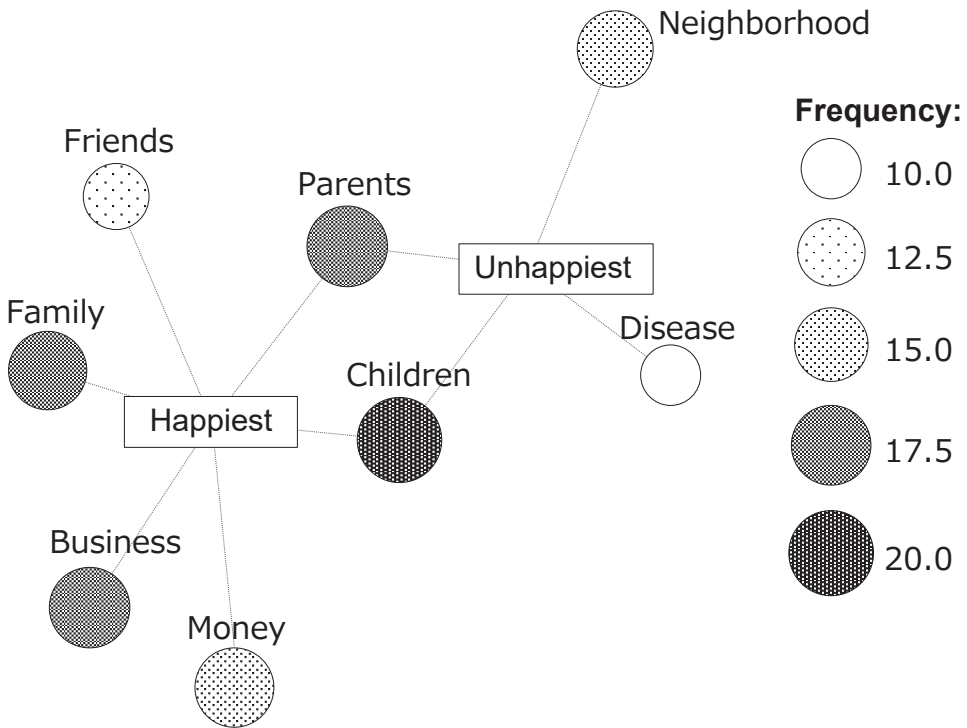


Figure 5. Co-occurrence Network Results for the Female Respondents. $N=20$ (10 persons \times 2 items)

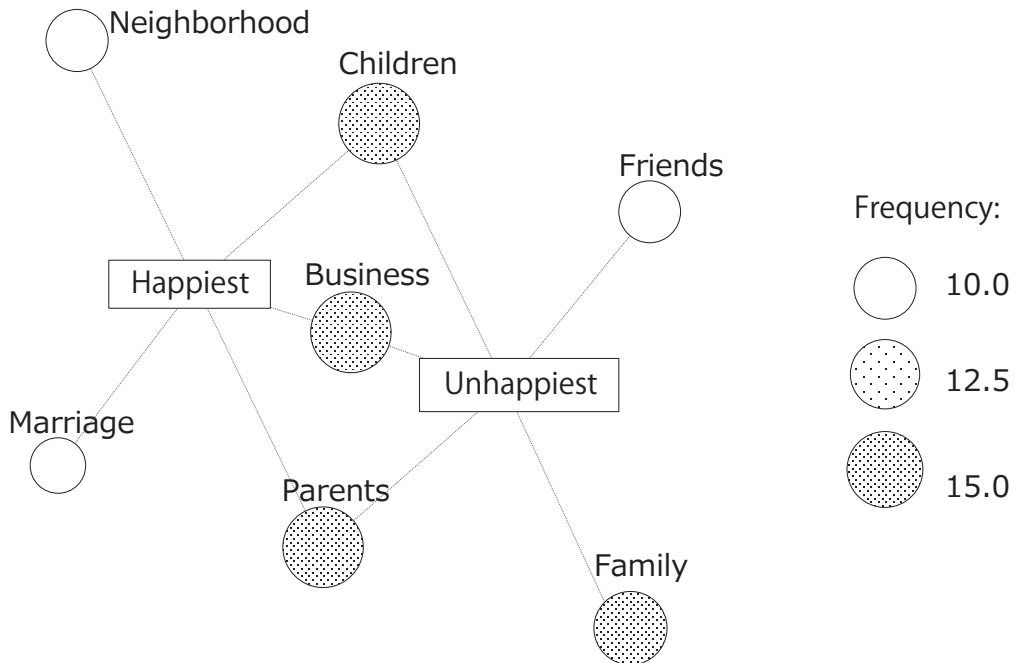


Figure 6. Co-occurrence Network Results for the Male Respondents. $N=18$ (9 persons \times 2 items)

out of school due to bullying. Furthermore, it is highly uncertain whether the child will find a spouse and bear grandchildren. *Parenthood* can provide various kinds of well-being to individuals, such as taking their children traveling. However, parents can put a lot of pressure on their children to study and find a stable job. Parents' illness is a severe event; when parents need care, and the welfare system cannot support them enough, children must sacrifice their own lives to offer it. *Disease*, in this figure, does not necessarily include only the respondent's disease but also the parents' disease that engages the respondent for care. *Business* is a way to satisfy *parents'* expectations and, at the same time, provide educational opportunities for their *children*, and prepare them for a respectable job. However, it is extremely uncertain whether the individual will find a job and get used to the job. This kind of contingency decreases an individual's well-being, especially when the individual has high expectations from their family.

The above analysis must be done separately for men and women because the family's situation differs according to gender. Figure 5 illustrates the results for female respondents and Figure 6 for male respondents.

A comparison between men and women revealed a slight difference. For women, business does not have an ambivalent nature; rather, it is related to happiness. This can be interpreted as an effect of the gender division's norm of labor, as the family norm does not require labor for women. For women, business may be described as free activity outside the family's burden. However, children were mentioned with high frequency by women and had a strong ambivalent effect.

Having outlined the characteristics of the interviews from the above three figures, we refer to the cases of individual interviews and describe respondent U06 as the typical male model in Figure 6, and U07 as the typical female model in Figure 5.

U06's Case. U06 was a 60s male living in an urban area with a high level of well-being,

choosing "8" on the Cantril scale of 0 to 10. This case is symbolic of the results of the analysis in Figures 4 and 6.

U06's father owned a metalworking factory soon after the war. In the beginning, he was unwilling to succeed in his father's company. However, when his father became ill and could not work, he could not tell his father the truth. After graduating from university, he decided to take over the company. He became a young president, but he did not have enough experience as a company manager, so he felt much pressure, and his workload was extremely hectic.

Getting married in his late 20s and having a son in his early 30s were the happiest times of his life; U06 must have had many expectations for his son.

However, his life took a turn shortly after that, and his unhappiest time came. His son was bullied in junior high school and stopped going to school. Nevertheless, U06 was committed to run his company and could not adequately care for his son and help him meet his expectations. U06 felt responsible for his son, who became socially withdrawn. However, he also felt guilty of failing to help the next generation continue the family business. As a compromise for his inability to maintain the family business succession was to at least try to keep the family line going. However, it was almost impossible for the withdrawn son to find a spouse. Therefore, the succession of the family business and lineage were abandoned.

Why did U06 choose 8 on Cantril's Ladder and feel happy? As he gained experience as a manager and became more comfortable with his work, he gradually became involved in community activities. He began working as a probation officer alongside his job to support youth after his release from prison, and this is where he began to find meaning in his life. This activity was also to make up for the lack of care he had given his son. Now, he is happy to rely on others.

We can understand this as liberation from family succession problems. However, we can also see it as a more abstracted family succession that leaves something for future

generations by providing support to more generalized people, especially young people after their imprisonment.

U07's Case. U07, who has a low level of well-being and chose a score of 4 on Cantril's Ladder, is a woman in her 50s living in a city and born into an artisan family. Her father was the third generation in their family business. As per Japanese traditions, a boy takes over succession from his father. However, her father did not have a son, but only three daughters. U07, as the eldest daughter, was responsible for family succession. As a woman, she had no right to inherit the family business, but was obligated to make the lineage succession. In Japan, couples must choose one of their family names when getting married, and usually, a couple adopts the groom's family name. This convention led to a crisis in her family. She could not change her family name and had to find a man who would accept the rename, that is, a man willing to take his in-law's name. Her boyfriend rejected the family name change and refused to marry her. Fortunately, she could marry another man who did not hesitate to change. Clearly, Luhmann's principle of modern society, the family's autonomy, was not applied here. Marriage is completely subordinated to the social norms of family succession as desired by the parents.

U07 had taken these marriage and lineage customs for granted; her parents had taught her to prioritize the family over self-interest. However, she found that "times have changed," which means she was aware that these norms did not match the reality in modern society. Therefore, she performed various duties demanded by the family, but with doubts. As the eldest daughter responsible for the family, U07 was also obligated to support her father's job and community. Because her father could not drive, she acted as a driver and "substituted" for a cab. During the meetings with her father's neighbors, she "reluctantly" had to perform various tasks such as cooking, serving meals, or accounting. These neighborhood relationships should not be

seen as a place to escape from family burdens, as in the case of U06. The neighborhood relationships here can be similar to the pre-modern European court described by Elias (1997); it is not something *beyond* the family but a relationship *among* families within the local community.

The happiest time in U07's life was when she got a job after graduating from high school until she married. Relationships at work were not always good. She was sometimes harassed, but in general, having the job gave her the freedom to have a good time with her friends almost every day after work and forget about her family obligations. Contrary to U06 and many other men, for U07 business was not a passion or suffering for fulfilling family responsibilities for parents and children. Furthermore, her happiest moment occurred just after the birth of her child. Her boss had given her permission to continue working after birth, and she intended to do so. Immediately after birth, however, she changed her mind and realized the importance of raising her child by herself, so she resigned and chose to become a housewife.

The least happy period in U07's life was caring for her father since she was in her mid-40s. The father had been in and out of the hospital because of alcohol consumption. After leaving the hospital, he went to a senior daycare center. Since the care provided by the center was only partial, U07 and her mother had to take care of him almost every day. Currently, she has moved her father into a group home and is relieved of the daily care, but she feels guilty because she believes that the family should be taking care of him, and her father also does not want to live in the group home and sometimes comes back without permission. Unfortunately, her husband, an adopted son-in-law and not an official member of the family, is almost entirely silent on this issue.

Thus, she has spent most of her life serving her family. As the eldest daughter, she is responsible for the entire family, making her unhappy.

Summary. Figure 1 shows that trust in the family has a high effect on individual well-being. At the same time, family has an ambivalent nature that dichotomizes well-being compared to other relationships. Figure 4 shows that the three codes of business, parents, and children determine both happiness and unhappiness. However, as Figure 5 shows, for women, the ambivalent codes do not include business but are limited to only two codes: parents and children. This is probably an effect of the gender role division of labor norms, which was observed in detail in Case U07. For U06, the inheritance of his father's family business was important, and for U07, the care of her father was meaningful. These challenges were burdensome for them, but they accepted them as a child's duty. In both cases, the birth of their child was important for well-being. Of course, the birth of a child can be considered a happy moment for everyone. However, considering that U07, as a woman, voluntarily gave up working and chose to raise her child as a housewife, we can still consider that the birth of a child enhances happiness because it is consistent with family norms.

Overall, the results generally support hypotheses 1 and 2.

DISCUSSION

The qualitative survey results suggest that family norms largely determine the level of individuals' well-being. However, there is still some question about how far the results can be applied to other countries. Therefore, the validity of the results will have to be examined in the future by comparing them with the results of other countries. Since the same family norms also exist in Confucian countries such as Korea and Taiwan (Shishido 2018), similar results may emerge there. However, the family cultural similarities between Japan, Taiwan, and Korea do not guarantee that codes for business, children, and parents will emerge in all interview surveys. In addition, the SoWIA will be conducted in Southeast Asia, which

will require additional analytical frameworks for the non-Confucian region. In any case, an international comparison of qualitative data is anticipated to be much more difficult than quantitative data. The qualitative analysis in this paper is one way to make this possible, but various other methods will have to be explored.

In recent years, scholars have focused on personal well-being as a new indicator of policy goals instead of economic growth (Shiraishi and Shiraishi 2016). The attempt to transform society into a post-materialistic value is gaining great interest not only in politics but also in many social sciences. As Layard (2005) points out, family relationships are one of the big seven factors of well-being. However, considering the ambivalent effects of family norms, we can understand that the policy insistence that emphasizes the importance of the family is fraught with danger. In the postwar period, Japanese family sociology has treated familism as equivalent to conservatism, which rejects the values of democracy and individualism (Sakai 2013). Return to the family could lead to extremism and fundamentalism.

However, sociologists cannot completely deny the meaning of family in today's society. Japanese intellectuals in the pre-war period tried to promote a democratic society through love for the family (Sakai 2013). Even today, the family is still the last defense against Japan's lack of welfare policies (Kubota 2009). If the family specializes only in intimacy and loses its social help function without sufficient social welfare, people will no longer have access to any support.

The effect of the family on individual well-being must always be considered under this kind of duality. There is no doubt that the family enriches spiritual life and is extremely efficient in creating a happier society. However, families constrain individuals and impose various social contradictions. In the case of U07, a generous welfare policy would have alleviated most of her burden.

The results of this study remind us that the positive effects of family on well-being have both positive and negative meanings for

individuals and society.

Limitations

As already mentioned in the discussion, the validity of the qualitative survey results has not been fully examined. The contents of the interviews were compared with those of other countries.

Furthermore, under the current research design, the interviews targeted only married people in their 40s–60s, which is inadequate to capture the diversification and changes in families in recent years. In particular, divorce rates and single-person households have been increasing in East Asian countries such as Japan, China, Taiwan, and South Korea (Iwai 2017). The number of people who do not join family networks is increasing, and their well-being should be re-examined.

CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzed the relationship between family and well-being using data from the quantitative survey, SoWSA, and the qualitative survey, SoWIA.

First, OLS regression using data from the SoWSA indicated that trust in the family has a stronger effect on individual well-being than trust in neighbors and most people. However, comparing its coefficients with the mean value of well-being, family trust divides people into happiness and unhappiness, in contrast to the effect of trust in neighbors and most people. The results suggest an ambivalent effect of family on well-being.

The study then analyzed the meaning of happiness and unhappiness in people's subjective experience by examining questions about "the happiest time of life" and "the unhappiest time of life." The survey was not designed to ask only about family relationships. Nonetheless, most respondents' answers were concentrated on their family relationships. In addition, co-occurrence network analysis drew codes related to happiness, unhappiness, and both happiness and unhappiness. The results showed that parents, children, and work emerged as codes

related to both happiness and unhappiness. Two case studies from the interviews were conducted to better understand the meaning of these codes. It was found that while the birth of a child had a great effect on happiness, children also felt pressure to inherit their parents' family business and to take care of their parents.

We found that family norms may be strongly linked to well-being: The two cases revealed that while the birth of a child is crucial for well-being, the burden of inheriting the family business and caring for parents and children makes individuals unhappy. They suggested that the stem family norm, which guarantees the continuity of the family line and endorses mutual support between parents and children, still constrains people today. It may have both positive and negative meanings for the well-being of individuals.

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Notes

1. The theoretical hypothesis of this study assumes a situation in which a family cannot be entirely separated from other social factors. For example, unlike individual income, household income reflects not only material income but also family relationships. Thus, household income was positively correlated with family trust ($r = 0.23$, $p < 0.001$). What should be explained here is not the modern family that is relatively autonomous from the outside world, but a family that is inseparable from various external social factors.

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