

Analysis of Work-Child Care Balance of Male Workers in Japan and Their Desires to Take Child Care Leave

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I. Introduction

1. Purpose of This Paper

In this paper, I will analyze the current status of programs for supporting employees balance work and child care (work and child care balance support programs) in workplaces, focusing mainly on the male employees who need to care for their children, and based on this analysis, I will analyze the desires of the male employees, who are in potential need to take child care leave (or are assumed to have a child in the future), to take child care leave.¹

In Japan, there are almost no male child care leave takers and therefore it is impossible to analyze the male child care leave takers. The purpose of this paper is, instead, to explore the factors that encourage male employees to take child care leave and to participate in child care utilizing the work and child care balance support system.

2. Political Efforts by the Japanese Government and Current Status of Child Care Leave Taken by Male Employees

In Japan, since the “Child Care Leave Act” was enforced in 1992, it became possible for both male and female employees of all companies in Japan to take leave for child care. Since then, the repeated revision of the law has resulted in the current “Child Care and Family Care Leave Act, namely Act on the Welfare of Workers Who Take Care of Children or Other Family Members Including Child Care and Family Care Leave” improving work and child care balance support programs. Behind this, there is the reduced birthrate that has become serious since the 1990s, and the “Child Care and Family Care Leave Act” has been positioned as a main countermeasure against this issue.²

One of the important issues in the “Plans to Support Children and Child

¹ This paper is written on the basis of the revisions of and additions to Chapter 8 of The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training (2006).

² For the history of establishment of child care leave act and its development thereafter, refer to Chapter 1 of The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training (2006).

Care” announced by the Cabinet Office Council on Measures for Society with Decreasing Birthrate (chaired by the Prime Minister) in 2004 is the suggestion “2. Review of work and child care balance support programs and ways of working.” It has raised specific items such as “(1) Promotion of more active efforts in companies, etc.” “(2) Promotion of efforts for child care leave system,” “(3) Promotion of male participation in child care,” and “(4) Implementation of the way of working in harmony with private life.” The implementation of these items requires companies to introduce, refine and make all employees aware of work-life balance support system, including a child care leave system, more extensively (according to the meeting for social countermeasures to falling birthrate, 2004: 6-9).

In the “Plus One Measures for Decreasing Birthrate” prepared by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in 2002 and the above-mentioned “Plans to Support Children and Child Care (2004)” prepared by the Cabinet Office Council on Measures for Society with Decreasing Birthrate, the target ratio of male child care leave takers was set as 10%, which attracted great public attention.

Despite these government efforts, however, almost no child care leave has actually been taken by male employees. For example, the ratios of male child care leave takers in the fiscal year 2005 were 1.0% in the case of general male workers of the national government (National Personnel Authority, Employees Welfare Bureau, 2006) and 0.5% in the case of private companies (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2006). These ratios are very small and therefore it is generally considered that the subjects of child care leave system are solely female regular employees.³

Since it is not possible to take child care leave unless workers request, the low ratio of male child care leave takers would be reasonable if male employees did not wish to take child care leave. However, according to the monitoring survey by NLI Research Institute, 35.8% of those male employees who are over 20 years old and younger than 40 years old and have a wife and a child younger than 6 years old, wish to take child care leave if they have another child in the future. Moreover, the male employees who wish to take the child

³ This paper does not deal with family care leave. As supplementary information, the ratio of male family care leave takers is 0.02% in private companies (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2006).

care leave during 8 weeks after child birth,⁴ which they are allowed to take regardless of whether there is a child care leave system or not, reach as high as 51.1% (NLI Research Institute 2003, 157-58).

Meanwhile, the ratios of male and female employees who know that male employees are allowed to take child care leave during 8 weeks after child birth are as low as 34.1% and 41.2%, respectively, which indicates that both male and female employees do not know that they are allowed to take child care leave during 8 weeks after child birth (NLI Basic Research Institute 2003, 158).

Based on these survey results, Sato and Takeishi (2004) raise the following problems as the reasons why the ratio of male child care leave takers is low despite the fact that the ratio of male employees who wish to take child care leave is not so low: (1) Only a small number of male employees know that child care leave system is applicable to them as well, (2) perception that child care is a role of mother, (3) feeling of resistance in workplaces, (4) many male employees are engaged in important jobs, (5) fear about its effect on promotion, (6) the system does not allow male employees to divide child care leave or income is not guaranteed during the leave. Sato and Takeishi (2004) point that in order to encourage male employees to take child care leave, it is important for companies to make it easier to take leave by increasing the acceptance of and promoting male child care leave takers step by step.

In this paper, based on the above, I will study the reasons for the big gap arising between the number of those who wish to take child care leave and the actual ratio of male child care leave takers, first by analyzing the current status of work and child care balance support system in workplaces and the desires of the male employees, who are in potential need to take child care leave (or are assumed to have a child in the future), to take child care leave, and I will discuss the factors that encourage male employees to take child care leave and to participate in child care utilizing the work and child care balance support system.

⁴ The child care leave during 8 weeks after a wife's childbirth can be taken even in the case that a labor agreement states male employees are not allowed to take child care leave in the case that their wife is a full-time housewife. Therefore, male employees are legally allowed to take child care leave during 8 weeks after their wife's childbirth regardless of availability of child care leave system.

3. Data Used

The data used in this paper are from the “Survey on Work and Life” conducted by The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training (JILPT), an independent administrative agency, in June and July of 2005. This sample survey was conducted by visiting each and every one of the 4,000 men and women at age between 30 to 54 years old and conducted in two-stage stratified random sampling method. The data collection ratio was 57.9%.

Chapter II of this paper will cover male employees and the male employees who have a wife and the youngest child of age between 0 and 12. In Chapters III and IV, I will analyze the male employees who are “unmarried,” “married with no child” or “married with the youngest child of age 0-12” and reply that they “will have a child in the near future,” “will have a child sooner or later,” or “do not know when,” considering these employees as those who are potentially in need of taking child care leave (hereinafter referred to as the “male employees in potential need”).

II. Current Status of Work and Child Care Balance Support System from the View of Male Employees

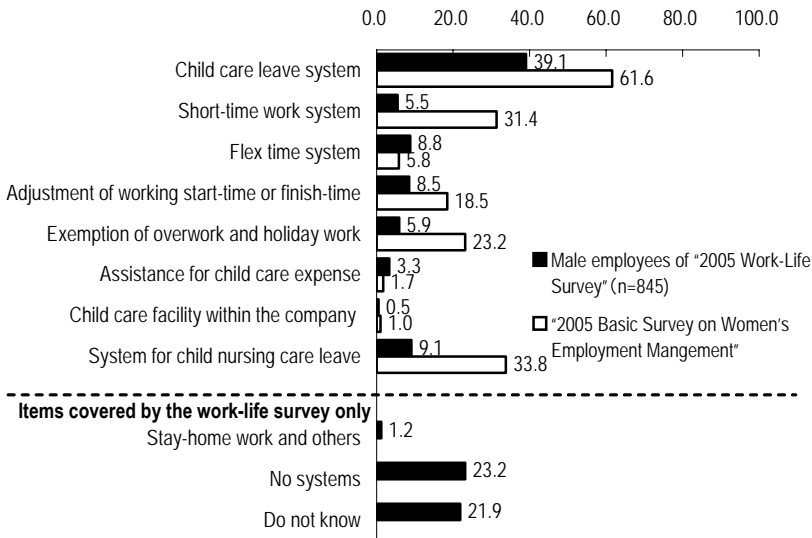
1. Availability of Work and Child Care Balance Support System

Figure 1 shows the results of checking whether there is any work and child care balance support system,⁵ which is stated in the Child Care and Family Care Leave Act, in the companies of the male employees covered by the “Survey on Work and Life.” Figure 1 also shows the results of the “Basic Survey on Women’s Employment Management” conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in the fiscal year 2005 covering approximately 10,000

⁵ In this paper, the “work and child care balance support system” refers to the child care leave system (Articles 5 to 9), child nursing care leave (Articles 16-2 and 16-3), system for limiting overtime work (Articles 17 and 18), system for limiting late-night work (Articles 19 and 20), and measures for reducing working hours (Articles 23 and 24) in the Child Care and Family Care leave Act.

As measures for reduction in working hours, business owners are obligated to make efforts to apply to the employees who have a child younger than 3 years old, one of the following measures: “short-time work system,” “flex time system,” “adjustment of work start-time and finish-time,” “no overwork,” and “establishment and operation of child care centers or provision of similar facility,” and to apply the above measures for reduction in working hours to the employees who have to take care of their child of age from 3 up to the school age.

**Figure 1. Availability of work and child care balance support system
(multiple replies) %**



private companies with 5 regular employees or more.

According to the "Survey on Work and Life," companies having "child care leave system" have a share of approximately 40%, the highest percentage, and companies having other type of systems or facilities have a share of less than 10%. As each employee is asked in this survey whether his company has such a system or not, some male employees of the companies may have replied that "there is no such system" or they "do not know." The total of the male employees who reply that "there is no such system" and those who reply that they "do not know" exceeds 45%, a very high percentage. This is considered as the results of the fact that the male employees are not fully aware of the availability of a work and child care balance support system.

According to the "Basic Survey on Women's Employment Management," the companies which reply that "child care leave system is available" have a share of approximately 60%, the highest percentage, followed by approximately 30% of those who reply that "a system for child nursing care is available," and those who reply that "a short-time work system is available." Those who reply other systems are available account for less than 30%. Thus, the current status in Japan is still far from the situation where any employees, including male

employees, can participate in child care utilizing a work and child care balance support system.

It is not possible to simply compare the results of the “Survey on Work and Life,” which was done on individuals, and the results of the “Basic Survey on Women’s Employment Management,” which was done on companies. If we compare the results of both surveys for reference, however, the ratios of the male employees who reply in the “Survey on Work and Life” that there are a “child care leave system,” “short-time work system,” “system for child nursing care leave,” “system for adjustment of working start-time and finish-time,” and “system for exemption of overwork and holiday work” are lower than the ratios of the companies that reply in the “Basic Survey on Women’s Employment Management” that “there is such a system.” This indicates that the male employees are not fully aware of the work and child care balance support system so that they may think that the system is only applicable to female employees and that they have nothing to do with the system.

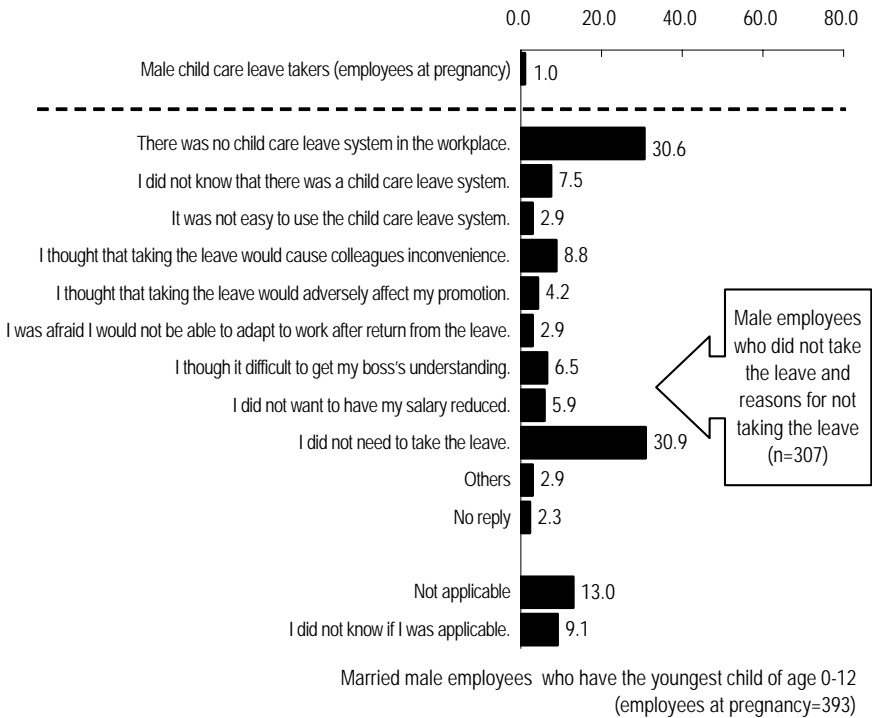
According to the above results, it can be said that the work and child care balance support system has not yet been refined to the extent that any employees (including male employees) are able to participate in child care utilizing such a system and that male employees themselves have not yet adopted the notion of utilizing the system to participate in child care.

2. The Ratio of Those Who Took Child Care Leave When Their Youngest Child Was Born and Reasons for Not Taking the Leave

Next, in the male employees who have the youngest child of age 0-12 covered by the “Survey on Work and Life,” a question is asked whether they took child care leave when their youngest child was born (refer to the figure shown above the dotted line in Figure 2). Of the male workers who were employees at the time of pregnancy, only four persons, or only approximately 1%, took child care leave.

When a question is asked to the male employees who did not take child care leave on why they did not (refer to the section below the dotted line in Figure 2), approximately 30% of them reply that they “did not need to take the leave,” or that “there was no child care leave system in their workplaces.” In addition, some of the male employees reply that they “did not know that there was a child care leave system,” “the child care leave system was not applicable to them,” or “there was a child care leave system but whether it was applicable

Figure 2. Male employees who took child care leave for their youngest child and reasons for not taking the leave (multiple replies) %



to them or not was unclear.” It is considered that these male employees were not at all involved in the decision to whether to take a child care leave or not and that it never occurred to them to take the leave.

Although such reasons as “I thought that taking child care leave would cause my colleagues inconvenience,” “I thought it difficult to have my boss’s understanding,” and “I did not want to have my salary reduced by taking the leave” are generally raised as the factors that prevent male employees from taking child care leave, these factors were actually not much mentioned by the respondents as reasons for their not taking child care leave, even though the survey allowed for multiple replies. In this respect, the results suggest that their awareness of the child care leave has not yet reached such a level.

Figure 3. Adjustment of work and leave taken for child care (regardless of the availability of child care leave system)



3. Adjustment of Assignment and Leave Taken Because of Child Care

Subsequently, in the male employee who have the youngest child of age 0-12 and are employees both at the time of pregnancy and at the present time, a question is asked on whether they had their assignment adjusted before their youngest child entered an elementary school because of child care and regardless of the availability of child care balance support system (Figure 3). As a result, approximately only 4% of them reply that they had their work adjusted.⁶ In Japan, an extremely small number of male employees try to have their work adjusted in order to participate in child care.

When a question is asked to them on whether they took leave for nursing care when their youngest child was sick (Figure 3), 37.1% of them reply that they did so, showing that many male employees had such experience in comparison with the situations in former questions.

Thus, in Japan, only a small number of male employees are involved in child care by taking child care leave, utilizing a work and child care balance support system, or having their work adjusted regardless of whether or not such a system is available, and some of them merely take leave only when their children are sick. This represents the current status of work-child care balance of Japanese male employees.

⁶ Specifically, “no overwork,” “reduced regular working hours,” “no holiday work,” “adjustment of working start-time and finish-time,” “flex time,” “stay-home work,” “changes in work,” etc.

III. Analysis of Desires of Male Employees in Potential Need to Take Child Care Leave

In the preceding chapter, it is found that only a small number of male employees try to participate in or participate in child care by taking child care leave or utilizing other types of work and child care balance support system. Is this because they do not wish to do so or because they do not have such a desire?

In this chapter, I will analyze the male employees who are “unmarried,” “married with no child” or “married with the youngest child of age 0-12” and who reply that they “will have a child in the near future,” “will have a child sooner or later,” or “do not know when,” considering them as “male employees in potential need” to take child care leave. This is because it is considered difficult for the male employees, who reply that they “will not have a child,” to accurately answer the question of whether they wish to take child care leave.

As for the male employees who wish to take child care leave, the number of those who “wish to take it” and those who “wish to take it if possible” are tallied up together as those who “wish to take it (total),” while the number of those who “do not wish much to take it” and those who “do not wish to take it” are tallied up together as those who “do not wish to take it (total).”

As indicted in Table 1, the ratios of male employees in potential need who wish to take child care leave (n=293) are 34.1% for “wish to take it (total),” 41.0% for “do not know,” and 22.5% for “do not wish to take it (total).” When we compare the ratios of the male employees who wish to take child care leave to the total male employees (n=845), the ratios of the male employees in potential need who “wish to take it (total),” “do not wish to take it (total)” and “do not know” are a slightly larger, smaller and almost the same at 40%, respectively. Below, I will discuss what types of male employees in potential need wish much to take child care leave.

When we compare the ratios of each status of family of male employees in potential need in the lower part of Table 1, the ratios of those who “wish to take it (total)” are 35.5% and 40.9% in the cases of those who are “unmarried” and “married with no child,” respectively; in other words, the ratios of those who expect to have a firstborn child are high. Furthermore, the ratio is 25.0%, the lowest, in the case of those who have “the youngest child of age 0-3” and are applicable to take child care leave, whereas the ratio is again as high as

Table 1. Those who wish to take child care leave (%)

	Wish to take it (total)	Do not know	Do not wish to take it (total)	No answer
Total male employees (845)	27.7	40.8	28.5	3.0
Male employees in potential need (293)	34.1	41.0	22.5	2.4
Unmarried (141)	35.5	42.6	19.1	2.8
Married with no child (44)	40.9	31.8	27.3	—
Youngest child of age 0-3 (72)	25.0	44.4	27.8	2.8
Youngest child of age 4-12 (36)	38.9	38.9	19.4	2.8

38.9% in the case of those who have “the youngest child of age 4-12.” As a result, the ratio of male employees who wish to use a child care leave system proved to be the lowest among the male employees with the “youngest child of age 0-3,” who normally are expected to have the strongest need to take child care leave.

1. Working Hours

According to studies on the participation of male employees in household work and child care, the long working hours of male employees is considered a factor that prevents them from participating in child care. To put it simply, the male employees who commit themselves to work longer are expected to wish to take child care leave less strongly. On the contrary, the male workers who commit themselves to work for shorter time are expected to wish to take child care leave more strongly.

According to analysis by weekly working hours (Table 2), the ratios of the male employees who “wish to take it (total)” are 26.1%, 39.4% and 37.9% in the cases of “less than 45 hours,” “45-54 hours” and “55 hours or more,” respectively, which, contrary to expectation, indicates that the male employees whose weekly working hours are longer tend to wish to take child care leave more strongly. The ratio of the male employees who reply that they “do not know” is 46.7%, the highest, in the case of “less than 45 hours.” This is probably because the male employees whose working hour is shorter are able to more often participate in child care without taking child care leave. Therefore, the ratio of the reply “do not know” and not that of “do not wish to take it” becomes higher.

Meanwhile, the male employees who work long hours are in a position to be

Table 2. Male employees in potential need, working hour factor and those who wish to take child care leave (%)

	Wish to take it (total)	Do not know	Do not wish to take it (total)	No answer
Weekly working hours				
Less than 45 hours (92)	26.1	46.7	27.2	—
45–54 hours (127)	39.4	39.4	19.7	1.6
55 hours or more (66)	37.9	34.8	24.2	3.0
Frequency of work at 06–10 pm				
Often (147)	41.5	38.8	18.4	1.4
Seldom (90)	30.0	43.3	25.6	1.1
Never (51)	23.5	45.1	29.4	2.0
Frequency of work on Saturdays				
Often (122)	41.0	36.9	22.1	—
Seldom (135)	31.9	43.7	21.5	3.0
Never (32)	21.9	50.0	28.1	—

unable to participate in child care even when they want to. This may be the reason why they reply that they wish to take child care leave.

Regarding night work from 6–10 p.m. (Table 2), the male employees who often have to work from 6–10 p.m. tend to wish to take child care leave. Also, the male employees who often have to work on Saturdays (Table 2) tend to wish to take child care leave strongly. These indicate that as in the case of long working hours, male employees are in a position to be unable to participate in child care even when they want to and presumably, this is why those employees reply that they wish to take child care leave.

2. Factors Related to Workplace Situation

The present situation where the ratio of male employees who take child care leave is extremely low is said to be related to the workplace environment that does not allow them to take child care leave when they want to. I will discuss this matter in relation to factors related to the workplace, such as the size of business, availability of a work and child care balance support system, and concerns about child care leave.

Regarding the size of business, in large companies, where, relatively speaking, a work and child care balance support system including child care leave system is considered to have been made available, a greater percentage

Table 3. Male employees in potential need, workplace factor and those who wish to take child care leave (%)

	Wish to take it (total)	Do not know	Do not wish to take it (total)	No answer
Size of business				
Less than 30 employees (68)	39.7	42.6	17.6	—
30–299 employees (107)	32.7	40.2	24.3	2.8
300 employees or more and governmental organizations (117)	32.5	41.0	23.9	2.6
Availability of child care leave system or other work–child care balance support systems				
Both available (48)	25.0	47.9	27.1	—
Child care leave system is available but no other (60)	38.3	30.0	30.0	1.7
No child care leave system but the other is available. (14)	50.0	21.4	28.6	—
Neither system is available. (61)	44.3	32.8	23.0	—
Do not know (102)	29.4	52.9	15.7	2.0

of male employees are expected to wish to take child care leave in view that their wish to take child care leave is likely to be met.⁷

According to the analysis by business size (Table 3), the ratios of “wish to take it (total)” are 39.7% for “less than 30 employees,” 32.7% for “30–299 employees,” and 32.5% for “300 employees or more and governmental organizations,” which shows that the ratio of male employees who wish to take child care leave is, unexpectedly, a little higher in the companies with “less than 30 employees.”

Regarding the availability of child care leave system and other balance support systems in the present workplaces, the ratios of male employees who wish to take child care leave are expected to be higher in the workplaces where there is child care leave system or other balance support systems, in view of the acceptability of their wish.

According to the analysis by the availability of child care leave system and other balance support systems (Table 3), the ratio of “wish to take it (total)” is 25.0%, the lowest in the workplaces where “both systems are available,” and

⁷ According to the results of the Basic Survey on Women’s Employment Management (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2006), larger companies tend more actively to make child care system and other work and child care balance support systems available.

50.0%, the highest in the workplaces where “no child care leave system is available but the other system is available.” “Child care leave system is available but no other” is 38.3%, while “neither system is available” is 44.3%, showing that the ratios in these cases are higher than in the case of “both systems are available.” However, only 14 persons replied that “child care leave system is available but no other,” and therefore whether this percentage represents a general trend or not is uncertain.

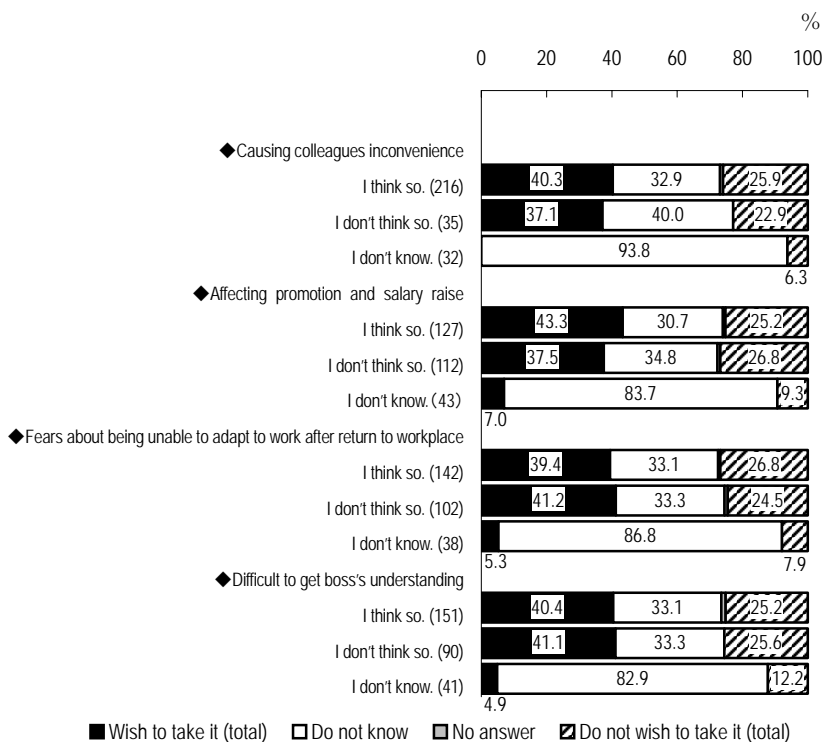
The interpretation of these results of the analysis is not easy, but I consider that in the workplaces where “both systems are available,” an increased number of male employees reply that they “do not know” instead of “wish to take it (total),” because the workplace environment allows them to participate in child care using other support systems than child care leave system and without taking child care leave. (In the case that “both systems are available,” “do not know” has a share of 47.9%.) In other words, it is considered that this indicates that they possibly select the realistic means instead of taking child care leave.

Meanwhile, regarding “child care leave system is available but no other system,” the male employees who wish to take child care leave are considered to wish more strongly to participate in child care because the other support systems are not available. Regarding “child care leave system is not available but the other system is available” and “neither system is available,” the ratio of those who wish to use the child care leave system is considered to become higher, representing their demand for their companies to introduce a child care leave system.

Next, with respect to concerns related to taking child care leave, four questions are asked regarding “causing colleagues inconvenience,” “affecting promotion and salary raise,” “fears about being unable to adapt to work after returning to workplace,” and “difficult to get boss’s understanding.” It is expected that the ratio of those who wish to take child care leave is low in the workplaces where there are such concerns and that the ratio is high in the workplaces where there are no such concerns.

When the number of those wishing to take child care leave are added up in relation to the four concerns mentioned below (Figure 4), the ratios of those who wish to take it are almost the same, showing that these concerns have no significant effect on the ratios. However, the ratio of “wish to take it” among those who think they apply as those having a concern for “affecting promotion

Figure 4. Male employees in potential need classified by concerns about taking child care leave into those who wish to take child care leave



and salary raise” is a little higher.” Most of those who reply that they “do not know” to each question also reply that they “do not know” if they wish to take child care leave.

At the present time, it is considered that failure to encourage male employees to take child care leave is attributable more to the factors not related to concerns about taking the leave in the workplaces.

**Table 4. Ratios of those who wish to take child care leave classified
by (main) perceptions of gender-role division (%)**

	Wish to take it (total)	Do not know	Do not wish to take it (total)	No answer
Men for work and women for housekeeping (117)	29.9	39.3	29.1	1.7
Men for work and women for work-child care balance (20)	45.0	25.0	30.0	–
Both men and women for work-child care balance (52)	42.3	30.8	23.1	3.8
Men for work-child care balance and women for housekeeping (18)	50.0	33.3	11.1	5.6
Others (86)	29.1	54.7	14.0	2.3

3. (Main) Perceptions of Gender-role Division

According to the analysis by (main) perception of gender-role division (Table 4),⁸ the ratio of “wish to take it (total)” is 29.9%, the lowest in the case of “men for work and women for housekeeping,” which is a traditional perception, and 50.0%, the highest in the case of “men for work-child care balance and women for housekeeping.” The ratios for “men for work and women for work-child care balance” and “both men and women for work-child care balance” are 45.0% and 42.3%, respectively. Since there are only a few samples of “men for work and women for work-child care balance” and “men for work-child care balance and women for housekeeping,” whether the results represent a general trend or not is unclear, but it can be said that the ratio of “wish to take it (total)” tends to be high in the case where it is considered that work-child care balance is desirable for either man or woman, or both. This is probably because the high ratio of male employees who wish to use the child care leave system is the result of their intention to reduce the burdens of either man or woman, or both.

⁸ The perceptions of gender-role division have been created on the basis of the replies made by male employees to the question, “Which lifestyle do you think is desirable for men and women?”

IV. Factors Determining the Wish to Take Child Care Leave among Male Employees in Potential Need

Based on the analysis by the above cross tabulation, I will conduct logistic regression analysis with “wish” or “not wish” to take child care leave and “do not know,” and analyze the factors that prompt male employees in potential need to wish to take child care leave. Explained variables used in this analysis are 0 for “do not wish to take it (total)” and “do not know” and 1 for “wish to take it (total).” Explanatory variables are selected on the basis of the results of cross tabulation (Table 5).

The results of the analysis show that “whether to have a child or not” in the future,⁹ “status of family,” the frequency of “work from 6-10 p.m.,” “availability of child care leave system and work and child care balance support system,” and “perceptions of gender-role division” have statistically significant effect.

The odds ratio (Exp(B)) of male employees who wish to use the child care leave system is higher in the case of those who reply that they “will have a child (total)” than in the case of those who reply that they “do not know” to the question “whether to have a child in the future.” When those who have “the youngest child of age 0-3 in the “status of family,” regarding whom the desire to use the child care leave system was the smallest in the cross tabulation, are used as the reference, the ratio is higher in the cases of “unmarried” and “married with the youngest child of age 4-12” than in the case of “the youngest child of age 0-3.”

Regarding variables related to working hours, only the frequency of work from 6-10 p.m. proved to be statistically significant. With “never” as the reference, the ratio of male employees who wish to take child care leave system and reply “often” is higher than that of those who reply “never.”

With respect to the availability of “child care leave system and work and child care balance support system,” when “both systems are available” is used as the reference, the ratio of male employees who wish to take child care leave system and reply “child care leave system is available but no other system” is higher than that of those who reply “both systems are available” and also, the

⁹ The reply “I don’t think so” to whether to have a child in the future is not included in the male employees in potential need and are excluded from this analysis.

**Table 5. Logistic regression analysis regarding male employees in
potential need who wish to take child care leave**

Explanatory variables	Explained variables		Male employees who wish to take child care leave
	(Do not wish to take it (total)/do not know = 0, Wish to take it (total) =1)		
	Effect	B	Effect Exp (B) (Odds ratio)
▼Dummy for whether I will have a child (do not know=0, I think so (total)=1)			
	0.983	**	2.673
▼Status of family (reference: the youngest child of age 0-3)			
Unmarried	0.926	*	2.524
Married with no child	0.617		1.853
Married with the youngest child of age 4-12	1.472	**	4.359
▼Working hours (reference: less than 45hrs.)			
45-54 hours	0.482		1.619
55 hours or more	0.361		1.435
▼Work from 6-10 pm (reference: never)			
Often work	1.151	*	3.161
Seldom	0.414		1.514
▼Work on Saturdays (reference: never)			
Often work	0.198		1.219
Seldom	0.028		1.028
▼Business size (reference: 300 employees or more and governmental organizations)			
Less than 30 employees	0.505		1.656
30-299 employees	-0.007		0.993
▼Child care leave system and work and child care balance support system (reference: both systems available)			
Child care leave system available but no other system	1.071	*	2.918
No child care leave system but the other is available.	1.645	*	5.181
Neither system is available	1.003		2.726
I do not know	0.460		1.583
▼Concerns about taking child care leave (Higher points given to more concerns)			
Causing colleagues inconvenience	0.241		1.272
Affecting promotion and salary raise	0.182		1.200
Fears about being unable to adapt to work after return to workplaces	-0.146		0.864
Difficult to get boss's understanding	-0.090		0.914
▼Gender-role division (reference: "men for work and women for housekeeping")			
Men for work and women for work-child care balance	0.492		1.636
Both men and women for work-child care balance	0.919	*	2.507
Men for work-child care balance and women for housekeeping	1.338	*	3.812
Others	0.517		1.677
Constant	-5.074	***	
Number	(273)		
Cox & Snell R ²	0.171		
Nagelkerke R ²	0.234		
-2 log likelihood	305.3		
Chi-squared	51.2		
Degree of freedom	24		
Significance probability	P.<.0010		

(*P.<.05 **P.<.01 ***P.<.001)

ratio of male employees who wish to take child care leave system and who reply “child care leave system is not available but other system is available” is much higher than that of those who reply “both systems are available.”

As for “perceptions of gender-role division,” when those who reply “men for work and women for housekeeping” are used as the reference, the ratio of male employees who wish to take child care leave and reply “both men and women for work-child care balance” or “men for work-child care balance and women for housekeeping” is higher than that of those who reply “men for work and women for housekeeping.”

V. Summary

In this paper, I have first analyzed the current status of the work and child care balance support system in workplaces covering the male employees who have a child that needs care as well as the factors that prompt male employees in potential need to wish to take child care leave.

1. Current Status of the Work and Child Care Balance Support System

It can be said that the introduction of a work and child care balance support system in workplaces has not reached a satisfactory level and that such a system is not fully known or understood by male employees. Only an extremely small number of male employees take child care leave. It is also confirmed that it is very rare for male employees to take child care leave or to participate in child care by having their work adjusted to some extent.

In the background, there is such a perception that “child care is the role of a woman (mother),” as pointed out by Sato and Takeishi (2004). According to various public opinion researches, 50% of young male are against the perception of gender-role division¹⁰ and such perception is becoming weaker.

However, if there are no male models that successfully participate in child care by taking child care leave, utilizing a work and child care balance support system, or having their work adjusted, few male employees will take such an

¹⁰ According to the “public opinion survey on gender-equal society (November 2004)” by the Cabinet Office, the ratios of the men who are against the perception of “husband should work outside the home and wife should keep home” are higher than that of the men who are in favor of the perception in the cases of those who are 20-29 years old (49.7% against) and 30-39 years old (51.8% against).

action even through they wish to do so.

In the meantime, approximately 40% of male employees took leave to provide nursing care for their child when he/she was sick, indicating that male employees are also in need of such nursing care leave. It is important for companies to meet such a need through a work and child care balance support system. This is because taking nursing care leave will possibly lead them to participate more in child care by utilizing child care leave system and other systems.

2. Wish to Take Child Care Leave

Approximately 30% of male employees wish to take child care leave. Especially, more than one-third of the male employees who are “unmarried” or “married with no child” and probably will have a child in the future, wish to take child care leave. However, the fact is that only less than 1% of those male employees actually took child care leave, showing that there is a big gap between the reality and their desire. The results of the analysis reveal that the male employees who wish to have a child, those who are unmarried and those who have the youngest child of age 4-12 have a tendency to wish to take child care leave.

Also, the results reveal that the male employees who often work from 6-10 p.m. and those who work for the workplaces where there is a “child care leave system but no other work and child care balance support system” or “no child care leave system but other work and child care balance support systems,” tend to wish to take child care leave.

Regarding the perceptions of gender-role division, the male employees who have such a perception as “both men and women for work-child care balance” or “men for work-child care balance and women for housekeeping,” tend to wish to use the child care leave system.

These results of the analysis suggest that male employees are in a position to be unable to participate in child care even when they want to, because of long working hours or an unsatisfactory system of supporting for work-child care balance. Therefore, it is considered that their wish to be involved in child care by having their work adjusted is reflected on their wish to take child care leave. Their wish to take child care leave remained unchanged regardless of whether there was lack of understanding in their workplaces or any concern about their salary, which shows that men simply want to be involved in child

care. In this situation, it is an unattainable objective or significantly unrealistic for male employees to take child care leave under their current systems.

Meanwhile, it can be understood that their wish to take child care leave represents their hope not for the current child care leave system but for a more flexible child care leave system or other work and child care balance support systems that allow them to be involved in child care even in such a bleak situation. If they seek to balance work and child care so as to realize “both men and women for work-child care balance” and “men for work-child care balance and women for housekeeping,” it will be difficult for them to do so without such a flexible child care leave system or other work and child care balance support systems. For those male employees who seek to balance work and child care, it is necessary to review the current child care leave system and other work and child care balance support systems by introducing more flexible institutional designs and making them more user-friendly systems that are respondent to their desires.

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