

## Attitudes toward Work-Life Balance among Japanese Youth

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**Abstract :** Although, thirty years have passed since the enactment of Equal Employment Opportunity Law, contemporary Japanese citizens still have difficulties in balancing work and life responsibilities. Not a few women give up their professional career after childbirth, meanwhile, men spend longer hours at work and have minimal time for their families. One of the reasons should be attributed to the traditional gender role ideas which have been entrenched even among younger generations. In an attempt to explore the psychological factors which enable work-life balance, the current study investigated attitudes of Japanese youth toward work-life balance and their relationships with gender role attitudes. Participants were 948 Japanese (165 men and 783 women) with the average age of 19.60 (SD=1.18). As for measure, a scale developed and modified by the author was used to assess attitudes toward work-life balance and Short form of the Scale of Egalitarian Sex Role Attitudes (SESRA-S) was used to assess traditional vs. egalitarian gender role attitudes. The results showed clear gender differences as follows. First, examination of attitudes toward work-life balance showed that more than 90% of men preferred to continue their work without child care interruption. Meanwhile, women showed various attitudes, with around 50% wanted to have child care interruption, 40% wanted to continue working without it, while, 10% wanted to work until childbirth. Secondly, gender comparison of egalitarian gender role attitudes showed that women possessed equal ideas on gender roles than men. Thirdly, relationships between gender role attitudes and attitudes for work-life balance were examined. No significant relationship between the two was found among men, which implies that regardless of the gender role attitudes, most of the men thought that continuing work without child care interruption was the ideal path for them. On the other hand, the effects of gender role attitudes were apparent among women, showing that women with egalitarian attitudes preferred to continue their professional career even after childbirth. The present study revealed gender difference in the idea about work-life balance with men possessing traditional ideas of 'men should be a bread winner'. Implications for support on young adults to reconcile work and family responsibilities were discussed.

**Keywords :** career path, gender role attitudes, work-life balance, youth

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