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Chapter 11

**CONSTRUCTING AND VALIDATING A
JAPANESE VERSION OF THE INTENSIVE
PARENTING ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE
(J-IPAQ) AND INVESTIGATING ITS
RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENTING BEHAVIOR**

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ABSTRACT

Intensive mothering is the idea that child-rearing is primarily a maternal responsibility and that mothers are to devote their time, energy and money to their children. In developed countries including the United States, this concept has negative effects on mothers (e.g., lower life satisfaction and greater depression and stress). To address this maternal problem concerning parenting and the development of children in Japan,

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there is a need to investigate the effects of “intensive parenting attitude” on parenting behavior. The aim of this study was to construct and validate a Japanese version of the Intensive Parenting Attitude Questionnaire (IPAQ) and examine its correlation with parenting behavior. It was based on written responses of 824 mothers. The results showed that each sub-scale of IPAQ affected any one of the mothers’ six parenting behaviors: “involvement and monitoring,” “positive responsivity,” “respect for will,” “overprotection,” “inconsistency” and “harsh discipline.” The first half of these behaviors are positive parenting, which lead to higher social and academic development of children, the latter half are negative and cause children’s problematic behavior.

Keywords: parenting, intensive parenting attitude, mother, parenting behavior

INTRODUCTION

“Parenting” as a theme has fascinated researchers, academics, practitioners, therapists and parents themselves around the world. Topics related to parenting include the determinants of parenting, parenting outcomes, and the best ways of parenting. Belsky (1984) suggested three main determinants of parenting (personal psychological resources of parents, characteristics of the child, and contextual sources of stress and support) and many scholars have tried to demonstrate his theory. As for parenting style, Baumrind stated that an “authoritative” parenting style, which has a high responsiveness and high demand or expectation placed upon children, is crucial for the socioemotional development of children (Baumrind, 1967, 1991). Regarding parenting behavior, for example, “time-out” has been controversial in Western countries (Morawska and Sanders 2011). Attachment theory proposes that secure attachment in children requires parents’ responsivity, consistency and, more recently, emotional availability (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall 1978; Biringen 2000). On the other hand, “helicopter parenting,” which is parents’ over-involvement in their emerging adults’ or college-aged children’s life, is a hot research theme in many studies in psychology (LeMoyne and Buchanan 2011; Reed,

Duncan, Lucier-Greer, Fixelle, and Ferraro 2016). Naturally, there is a big difference in what is required for the range of children's developmental stages, however, discussion about good parenting has changed with the times, and there are cultural differences.

Some studies have showed interesting and meaningful results concerning the cultural differences between the U.S. and Japan. Azuma (1994) suggested that the U.S. mothers of preschoolers taught letters and numbers more directly than Japanese mothers. It seemed that Japanese mothers thought that their children learned "naturally." More recently, Kazama, Hirabayashi, Karasawa, Tardif, and Olson (2013) showed that Japanese mothers with four-year-olds had more ambiguous parenting than U.S. mothers, and that parenting did not encourage the development of four-year-olds' theory of mind and emotional understanding of others. In Japan, there has been much research using domestic data. Some recent studies developed a parenting scale (Itani 2010; Matsuoka, Okada, Tani, Ohnishi, Nakajima, and Tsujii 2011; Ito, Nakajima, Mochizuki, Takayanagi, Tanaka, Matsumoto, Ohtake, Harada, Noda, and Tsujii 2014). A distinctive feature of the ideal mother in Japan, however, is always staying with her children and devoting love, attention, energy, time and resources to them (Kashiwagi 1998). Moreover, "parent" almost means "mother" in many blogs, columns, conversations, and even studies.

In regard to "parenting," "intensive parenting" which almost means "intensive mothering" has recently been controversial in Western countries. "Intensive mothering" is an ideology which holds that mothers' emotion, energy, time, and money should be concentrated on their children (Hays 1996). It was first discussed in the U.S. context, but has also been investigated in Canada and France (Christopher 2012; Loyal, Sutter Dallah, and Rasclé 2017). For example, Wall (2010) highlighted that middle-class well educated mothers were convinced of and overly focused on the relationship between intensive parenting and children's brain development. As a result, they were often worn out and felt guilty. These results mainly concerned middle-class or upper middle-class Caucasian housewives with children; however, Christopher (2012) showed that working mothers constructed their own accounts about good mothering, which were better for

both them and their children than the mainstream idea of intensive mothering. Elliott, Powell and Brenton (2015) also suggested that African-American single mothers embraced intensive mothering without much support and resources. Moreover, McCormack (2005) explored how welfare mothers justified their receiving assistance by espousing the intensive mothering idea. In this way, even mothers who may fall out of the hegemonic mainstream of “intensive mothering” deeply embraced the image of “good mothering.” Many researchers have recently shown the influence of “intensive mothering” using qualitative methods (i.e., interviewing) (e.g., Christopher 2012; Elliot, Powell, and Brenton 2015; McCormack 2005; Wall 2010). Yet, Liss Schiffrin, Mackintosh, Miles-McLean, and Erchull (2013) recognized a need to construct the Intensive Parenting Attitude Questionnaire (IPAQ) and to quantitatively show the effect of “intensive mothering,” pointing out that all extant studies were qualitative. The IPAQ consists of five dimensions; “essentialism,” “fulfillment,” “stimulation,” “challenging,” and “child-centered.” Each domain includes the following items; “*Although fathers are important, ultimately children need mothers more,*” “*Being a parent brings a person the greatest joy he or she can possibly experience,*” “*It is important for children to be involved in classes, lessons, and activities that engage and stimulate them,*” “*Parenting is exhausting,*” and “*Children should be the center of attention,*” respectively.

Hereafter, a number of studies with this scale appeared as follows. Rizzo, Schiffrin and Liss (2013) raised the possibility that maternal intensive parenting attitude was harmful to mental health outcomes. In particular, the belief that women are naturally the essential parent was related to poorer life satisfaction, and that parenting is challenging was related to greater depression and higher stress. Subsequently, Schiffrin, Godfrey, Liss, and Erchull (2015) found that maternal intensive parenting attitude was related to one of the maternal parenting styles – anticipatory problem solving behavior that indicating overparenting (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer, and Murphy 2012), enrollment in structured activities including creative and physical activities with child outcomes consisting of motor skills, language usage and subjective happiness. They showed that intensive parenting attitudes were related to anticipatory problem solving behavior and

structured activities via anticipatory problem solving behavior; however, there was no evidence of improved child outcomes. The study is interesting and insightful in terms of the strong impact of intensive parenting attitudes on maternal parenting.

As mentioned previously, the ideology that the ideal of “good parenting” is equivalent to “good mothering” is to be always with children and a mother is responsible for parenting has also been prevalent in Japan (Kashiwagi, 1998; Ohinata, 2000). The Japanese gender gap index (GGI) has been the lowest among the developed countries especially in politics (World Economic Forum 2018). In terms of the division of labor by gender, even now half of Japanese women leave their job because of their first child’s birth (Cabinet Office 2018). However, the socioeconomic structure has dramatically changed recently in Japan. For example, the lifetime employment system and the seniority-wage system collapsed; neither system is now common in Japan. In addition, the number of double-income couples has increased, and parental leave has become common in Japan. These changes should lead to gender equality, since both men and women have the two domain, work and family. Despite this, most of those who take parental leave are women (Cabinet Office 2018). Although the work sphere has become more equal, the family sphere including chores and child-rearing is still considered to be women’s tasks (Kazui 1997; Ohno 2012). In particular, many previous studies have suggested that Japanese people think extremely highly of mother–child bonding and maternal devotion to their children (Ohinata 1988). For example, Japanese mothers not only make lunchboxes for their children, but this has also evolved into “*Kyaraben*,” which is a character-themed lunchbox (Occhi 2016). Thus, Japanese women might impose pressure on themselves concerning their parenting due to myths about motherhood (Egami 2005). The myth of motherhood was defined by Ohinata (2000) as “an irrational belief that maternal love for her child is both instinctive and noble.” Thus, it seems this belief has distorted the real feelings and life perspective of mothers.

Then, how would belief in “intensive parenting” affect Japanese mothers? Egami (2005, 2007) studied the influence of the belief in “maternal love,” which is defined as maternal “unconditional” love for children, on

mothers' emotion regulation and expression toward their children. As a result, in the case of mothers of fast-growing children, adherence to maternal love positively affected their emotion regulation, but its effect was negative for mothers of slow-growing children. This is because mothers of fast-growing children likely feel rewarded and calm toward their children. However, mothers of slow-growing children may feel exhausted and ashamed and be unable to control their negative feelings. Also, for couples who both gave higher ratings concerning their belief in maternal love, the mothers evaluated their responsiveness as high, whereas for couples who were inconsistent in their belief in maternal love, and in which the fathers rated it higher and the mothers lower, the mothers reported lower responsiveness (Egami 2013). These results showed that husbands' strong belief in maternal love drove their wives into a corner, especially for mothers who did not endorse the belief in maternal love. Recently, Egami (2017) suggested that, among Japanese mothers, adherence to maternal love and devotion to their children is stronger than their endorsement of the gender division of labor.

Although Egami (2005, 2007, 2013, 2017) raised the possibility of the influences of maternal belief about motherhood on their parenting styles, there has been no study in Japan on intensive parenting attitudes that includes many dimensions of the recent parenting ideology in Western countries other than belief in maternal love. On top of that, there has been no study concerning correlations of intensive parenting attitude with maternal general parenting behaviors (positive or negative). Moreover, all studies using IPAQ showed only correlations but no predictive relationship. A longitudinal procedure should reveal the effect of intensive parenting attitude on maternal general parenting behaviors. How much does IPAQ apply to Japanese mothers? Do Japanese mothers score higher on IPAQ than counterparts from other countries? What aspect assessed within IPAQ do Japanese mothers embrace especially? Does IPAQ predict the maternal parenting behaviors using Japanese data?

Therefore, Study 1 was conducted to construct a Japanese version of IPAQ (J-IPAQ) using Japanese mothers' responses and to compare maternal endorsement of intensive parenting in Japan with mothers in the U.S. Study

2 examined whether any significant predictive relationship was shown by J-IPAQ to maternal general parenting behaviors including both positive and negative parenting, controlling for any maternal perceived social support that could affect maternal parenting behavior (Belsky 1984; Turner and Avison 1985). This is because it is thought that social support has a strong influence on maternal parenting (Belsky 1984; Simons and Johnson 1996). Thus, Study 2 uses longitudinal data to examine the prediction of intensive parenting attitudes to maternal parenting behavior and to assess test–retest reliability, and includes the same participants as Study 1.

METHODS

The IPAQ is a questionnaire used in many studies for mothers with infants, toddlers and preschoolers (Liss et al., 2013; Rizzo, et al., 2013; Schiffrin et al., 2015) because this group of mothers has the greatest need to care for and raise their children. Consequently, this study was also applied to these mothers (i.e., with children aged 6 and under). Since this is the first research on intensive parenting in Japan, it was aimed broadly across regions and so was performed using an internet research company.

Participants and Procedure

Participants in Study 1 consisted of 1648 Japanese mothers aged 20–49 years [mean (M) = 34.1, standard deviation (SD) = 5.19]. They were educated for 9–21 years (M = 14.2, SD = 1.83). The majority were married (97.3%) and the rest were single (divorced or never married; 2.7%). Most participants (63.9%) were housewives, and the rest were full-time workers (21%), part-time workers (13.9%) or freelancers (1.2%). Their annual income level was selected from 1 (less than ¥ 2 million) to 9 (more than ¥ 20 million). Most (27.3%) were in class 3 (¥ 4 million to less than ¥ 6 million), followed by class 2 (¥ 2 million to less than ¥ 4 million 18.1%) and then class 4 (¥ 6 million to less than ¥ 8 million; 14.9%). At that time, Japanese

average annual income level was ¥ 5.6 million, so most respondents of this study fall into the average income family category. Of the 1648 mothers, 824 agreed to participate in Study 2 – the reduced numbers were due to the research budget. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire via an internet research company in both Study 1 and Study 2. Study 1 was conducted at the end of November 2017 and Study 2 at the end of April 2018.

Measures

Background Variables

Respondents were asked about their socio-demographic characteristics in both Study 1 and 2. Age, number of family members, education level, income level and type of employment were included.

J-IPAQ

Liss et al. (2013) constructed the IPAQ, which contains five categories: “essentialism,” “fulfillment,” “stimulation,” “challenging” and “child-centered.” “Essentialism” is the idea that mothers should perform parenting exclusively. “Fulfillment” means maternal endorsement of the delight and rewards of parenting. “Stimulation” is the notion that parents need to optimally develop their children’s intellect. “Challenging” is difficulty and exhaustion with parenting. “Child-centered” refers to the child-centric lives of parents based on the steadfast belief that children must be the center of parents’ lives. After obtaining permission from M. Liss, IPAQ was translated into Japanese. Then, a translation agency back-translated IPAQ into English, and the correctness of meaning of the scale was checked. Similar to IPAQ, J-IPAQ had 25 items, rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) – the higher the score, the greater the degree of each dimension of intensive parenting. This scale was used for both Study 1 and 2. Cronbach alpha of “essentialism” was 0.74 (Study 1) and 0.76 (Study 2) and correspondingly “fulfillment” was 0.73 and 0.78, “stimulation” was 0.54

and 0.53, “challenging” was 0.64 and 0.67 and “child-centered” was 0.67 and 0.73.

Belief in Maternal Love

Egami (2005, 2007) constructed the “adherence to maternal love” scale to assess belief in motherhood. It contains 13 items rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This scale describes the tendency to accept and obey blindly the traditional maternal role and sociocultural belief in “desirable mothers.” For example, “*For their children, mothers can bear almost anything*” and “*It is natural for women to bring up children, because they are suited as caregivers*” – the higher the score, the greater the degree of belief in maternal love. This scale was used only in Study 1 to test the validity of J-IPAQ. Cronbach alpha of the scale was 0.89.

Negative and Positive Feelings about Child-Rearing

Negative and positive feelings about child-rearing were assessed using the scale of Aramaki and Muto (2008). This has 16 items rated from 1 (not at all) to 4 (extremely), which includes three factors: “a sense of being burdened,” “anxiety” and “positive feelings” – the higher score, the greater the degree of each domain of feelings. This scale was used only in Study 1 to test the validity of J-IPAQ. Cronbach alpha for “a sense of being burdened” was 0.81, for “anxiety” was 0.86 and for “positive feelings” was 0.67.

Expectation of Early Education

Maternal expectation of early education was assessed using the scale of Shimizu and Sagara (2011). This scale includes 25 items rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (agree) and consists of two factors: “learning aspect” and “psychological aspect.” The higher the score, the greater the degree of each domain of significance by mothers. This scale was only in Study 1 to test the validity of J-IPAQ. Cronbach alpha for “learning aspect” was 0.86 and for “psychological aspect” was 0.83.

Social Support

Social support was assessed using a Japanese version of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al. 1988). The Japanese version was constructed by Iwasa et al. (2007). This scale indicates the degree of participants' perceived social support from their family, friends and significant others. Participants answered 12 questions rated from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree). This scale was used as a controlling variable for mothers' parenting behavior. This scale was used only in Study 2 to test the validity of J-IPAQ. Cronbach alpha of the scale was 0.94.

Parenting Behavior

Parenting behavior was measured only in Study 2 using the Positive and Negative Parenting Scale (PNPS) constructed by Ito et al. (2014). The PNPS includes 35 items, grouped into "involvement and monitoring," "positive responsivity," "respect for will," "overprotection," "inconsistency" and "harsh discipline." They are rated from 1 (very slightly or not at all) to 4 (extremely). The higher the score, the greater the degree of each dimension of parenting behavior. Because the PNPS was designed for parents with a child aged from elementary school to junior high school, the item expression was changed to suit preschoolers' parents in the present study. For example, the word "school" was changed to "preschool or kindergarten." Then, permission from the creator of the scale was obtained. Cronbach alpha for "involvement and monitoring" was 0.85, for "positive responsivity" was 0.82, for "respect for will" was 0.61, for "overprotection" was 0.62, for "inconsistency" was 0.81 and for "harsh discipline" was 0.85.

RESULTS

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

First, a confirmatory factor analysis procedure was conducted to determine whether the five-factor model of IPAQ was appropriate for

Japanese mothers. The same analysis was also used for the PNPS. All analyses were performed using AMOS 25.

Model 1 of IPAQ was a five-factor model using all 25 items. Model 2 was also a five-factor model. However, according to the analysis results, the following five items were deleted: “Both fathers and mothers are equally able to care for children” (1), “Parenting is not the most rewarding thing a person can do” (10), “Women are not necessarily better parents than men” (16), “It is harder to be a good parent than to be a corporate executive” (22), and “To be an effective parent, a person must possess wide range of skills” (23). The goodness-of-fit indices for each model are shown in Table 1. The model fit increased after deleting items from the original model, and Model 2 was adopted. Internal consistency of J-IPAQ after deleting the five items was generally high, as mentioned in the Methods section except for “stimulation.”

Table 1. Model fit statistics for confirmatory factor analyses concerning J-IPAQ

Measures of fit	Models	
	Model 1	Model 2
χ^2	2181.70	1228.48
<i>df</i>	266	160
<i>p</i> -value	0.000	0.000
GFI	0.898	0.928
AGFI	0.875	0.905
CFI	0.777	0.854
RMSEA	0.066	0.064
AIC	2299.70	1328.48

For PNPS, Model 1 (original model) was a seven-factor model including 35 items. Model 2 was seven-factor model with eight items eliminated. The goodness-of-fit indices for each model indicated Model 2 gave a better fit [$\chi^2(309) = 1116.620$ ($p < 0.001$), GFI = 0.902, AGFI = 0.880, CFI = 0.906, RMSEA = 0.056, AIC = 1254.620, CAIC = 1648.898] than Model 1 [$\chi^2(545) = 2801.956$ ($p < 0.001$), GFI = 0.819, AGFI = 0.791, CFI = 0.781, RMSEA = 0.071, AIC = 2971.956, CAIC = 3457.660]. Thus, Model 2 was selected.

Test–Retest Reliability

To assess the test–retest reliability of J-IPAQ, intra-class correlation coefficients (ICC) were calculated for Study 1 and 2. The ICC of every sub-scale was as follows: “essentialism” [ICC (1, 2) = 0.80], “fulfillment” [ICC (1, 2) = 0.82], “stimulation” [ICC (1, 2) = 0.75], “challenging” [ICC (1, 2) = 0.82] and “child-centered” [ICC (1, 2) = 0.78]. Thus, all test–retest reliability in this study was acceptable.

Construct Validity

To confirm the validity of J-IPAQ, correlations among all factors in Study 1 were examined (Table 2). As expected, “essentialism” and “child-centered” were moderately positively correlated with belief in “maternal love.” “Fulfillment” was strongly positively correlated with “positive feelings” about child-rearing. “Stimulation” had a strong positive correlation with the sub-scale of expectation of early education from “learning aspect.” “Challenging” was moderately positively correlated with “a sense of being burdened” and with “anxiety” about child-rearing from the sub-scale of negative and positive feelings about child-rearing. These results suggested that J-IPAQ had concrete criteria-related validity, in other words, construct validity.

Statistical Characteristics of J-IPAQ

Descriptive analyses were conducted (Table 3). Compared to the results of Liss et al. (2013), participants responding to J-IPAQ in this study strongly endorsed “essentialism”; in detail, the corresponding values were 2.22 (Liss et al. 2013) and 3.68 in this study. The values in this study for “fulfillment” (4.37) and “child-centered” (3.94) were slightly higher than the previous values of 3.79 and 3.32, respectively. However, the value of 4.08 for

“challenging” in the present study was lower than the 4.44 of Liss et al.; and the 4.13 for “stimulation” was very similar to the 4.08 of Liss et al.

Table 2. Correlations for all scales of J-IPAQ in Study 1

	Es	Fu	St	Ch	CC	Bu	An	PF	BM	LA	PA
Es	1	0.20**	0.26**	0.49**	0.34**	0.15**	0.15**	-0.06*	0.38**	0.20**	0.10**
Fu		1	0.35**	0.15**	0.47**	-0.31**	-0.07**	0.54**	0.50**	0.14**	-0.03
St			1	0.26**	0.37**	-0.02	0.07**	0.24**	0.29**	0.45**	-0.21**
Ch				1	0.31**	0.32**	0.29**	-0.18**	0.19**	0.12**	0.12**
CC					1	-0.11**	0.09**	0.23**	0.49**	0.17**	-0.02
Bu						1	0.42**	0.00	-0.17**	0.05	0.10**
An							1	-0.21**	0.02	0.17**	0.09**
PF								1	0.28**	0.05*	-0.10**
BM									1	0.33**	0.05*
LA										1	-0.27**
PA											1

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Note. Es, Essentialism; Fu, Fulfillment; St, Stimulation; Ch, Challenging; CC, Child-centered; Bu, Sense of being burdened; An, Anxiety; PF, Positive feelings; BM, Belief in maternal love; LA, Learning aspect; PA, Psychological aspect.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of J-IPAQ for Study 1

	Mean	Standard deviation	Possible range	Actual range
Essentialism	3.68	0.80	1.00–6.00	1.17–6.00
Fulfillment	4.37	0.92	1.00–6.00	1.00–6.00
Stimulation	4.13	0.63	1.00–6.00	1.25–6.00
Challenging	4.08	0.85	1.00–6.00	1.00–6.00
Child-centered	3.94	0.82	1.00–6.00	1.00–6.00

Multiple Regression Analysis

Six hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted to examine the effect of intensive parenting attitude in Study 1 on maternal child-rearing behavior in Study2 while controlling for social support in Study 2 (Table 4).

First, for “involvement and monitoring,” social support was a significant predictor at the first step. Adding five factors of J-IPAQ predicted unique

variance in “involvement and monitoring” at the second step [$F\Delta(5, 817) = 2.40, p < 0.05$]; however, only “fulfillment” and “child-centered” were significant predictors. “Fulfillment” had a positive effect on “involvement and monitoring” but “child-centered” had a negative effect.

Next, social support was a significant predictor of “positive responsivity” at the first step. Adding five factors of J-IPAQ predicted unique variance in “positive responsivity” at the second step [$F\Delta(5, 817) = 16.79, p < 0.001$]. “Essentialism,” “fulfillment” and “stimulation” were significant predictors, with a negative effect for “essentialism” and positive effects for the other two.

Table 4. Hierarchical regression analyses predicting parenting behaviors

	IM	PR	RW	Ov	In	HD
Step 1						
SS	0.15**	0.45**	0.26**	-0.12**	-0.16**	-0.18**
Step 2						
SS	0.11**	0.35**	0.20**	-0.16**	-0.10**	-0.10**
Es	0.02	-0.09*	-0.05	0.03	0.05	0.05
Fu	0.11*	0.21**	0.06	0.07	-0.02	-0.04
St	0.05	0.10**	0.09*	0.09*	-0.08	-0.06
Ch	-0.05	0.05	0.01	-0.07	0.20**	0.22**
CC	-0.11*	0.05	0.16**	-0.10*	-0.05	-0.15**

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Note. SS, Social support; Es, Essentialism; Fu, Fulfillment; St, Stimulation; Ch, Challenging; CC, Child-centered; IM, Involvement and monitoring; PR, Positive responsivity; RW, Respect for will; Ov, Overprotection; In, Inconsistency; HD, Harsh discipline.

In the case of “respect for will,” social support was also a significant predictor at the first step. Adding five factors predicted unique variance in “respect for will” at the second step [$F\Delta(5, 817) = 9.96, p < 0.001$]. “Stimulation” and “child-centered” were both significant positive predictors of “respect for will.”

For “overprotection,” social support was also a significant predictor at the first step. Adding five factors predicted unique variance in “overprotection” at the second step [$F\Delta(5, 817) = 2.65, p < 0.05$]. However,

only “stimulation” and “child-centered” were significant predictors of “overprotection,” with positive and negative effects, respectively.

“Inconsistency” was also significantly predicted by social support at the first step. Adding five factors predicted unique variance in “inconsistency” at the second step [$F(5, 817) = 7.24, p < 0.001$]. “Challenging” was the only significant predictor of “inconsistency” and had a negative effect.

“Harsh discipline” was significantly predicted by social support at the first step, as expected. Although unique variance in “harsh discipline” was predicted by adding five factors [$F(5, 817) = 10.92, p < 0.001$], only “challenging” and “child-centered” were significant, with positive and negative effects, respectively.

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to construct a J-IPAQ and use this to examine the effect of maternal intensive parenting attitude on their child-rearing behavior in Japan. Prior to the main discussion, the terms of parenting behavior used in this study should be clarified. “Involvement and monitoring” are parental positive concern about their children and active involvement. “Positive responsivity” is the positive and empathic response to children’s needs and behavior. “Respect for will” is when parents think highly of their children’s will and autonomy. These are all positive parenting behaviors. In contrast, the following three are negative parenting behaviors. “Overprotection” is excessive parental intervention based on their anxiety and high demands on children. “Inconsistency” is the lack of consistent parental behavior toward children. “Harsh discipline” is severe parental behavior toward their children.

Many scholars have stated that there is a strong belief in motherhood in Japan (e.g., Ohinata 1988). About half of Japanese women leave their job because of their first child’s birth (Cabinet Office 2018). The M-shaped curve concerning Japanese women has been controversial in Japan, with the vast majority of Japanese women taking a break from their career during their 30s. These ‘blank years’ often create an M-shape in labor graphs.

Moreover, Japanese fathers were noted for spending long hours on their job at the expense of family life (Aono and Kashiwagi 2011). Focusing on the influence of the motherhood myth (as mentioned above) on Japanese mothers, Egami (2005, 2007, 2013) found that the belief of maternal love has both positive and negative effects on parenting, depending on other factors such as children's developmental status, the working mother's satisfaction in the workplace and their husbands' belief in maternal love. Therefore, the influence of intensive parenting attitudes on Japanese mothers needs to be examined.

First, the J-IPAQ was constructed. Confirmatory factor analysis and test-retest reliability revealed that the IPAQ could be applicable to Japanese mothers but that five items should be eliminated (e.g., *“Both fathers and mothers are equally able to care for children,” “Parenting is not the most rewarding thing a person can do,” “Women are not necessarily better parents than men,” “It is harder to be a good parent than to be a corporate executive,”* and *“To be an effective parent, a person must possess wide range of skills”*). These five items may have had some negative form or a subtle expression introduced when translated into Japanese. These should be more carefully translated from English to Japanese in the future. The relationships between two sub-scales (“essentialism” and “child-centered”) of the J-IPAQ and belief in maternal love were high and positive as expected. As anticipated, each sub-scale was correlated with one of the negative and positive feelings of the child-rearing scale. This suggested construct validity of J-IPAQ. For internal consistency, “essentialism,” “fulfillment,” “challenging” and “child-centered” were acceptable; however, “stimulation” was lower than 0.6. Some other studies using IPAQ had results concerning “stimulation” that were similar to those of this study. This is because this sub-scale included a mixed idea of intellectual education and socioemotional interaction. Azuma (1994) stated that Japanese mothers prefer social interaction with their children to intellectual education. Consequently, since “stimulation” is the important attitude in the intensive parenting attitude (Hays, 1996), there is a need to reexamine some items related to “stimulation” in both Japan and Western countries. Additionally, the J-IPAQ should be modified according to the Japanese cultural

background by a bottom-up procedure as performed by Loyal, Dalley, and Rasclé (2017) in France. For example, the dimension of “sacrifice” was added by Loyal, Dalley and Rasclé (2017). In Japan, it seems that the kind of items related to “shame” or “socially-conscious” should be added regarding cultural context. The ICC values indicated that J-IPAQ was a stable concept for Japanese mothers.

Next, the effect of intensive parenting attitude on maternal parenting was examined using hierarchical multiple regression. The results showed that every factor affected maternal various maternal behaviors after controlling for social support. Interestingly, “essentialism” had a negative effect on “positive responsivity.” “Essentialism” is the idea that the woman is the most important person for the child, and is responsible for the child – so mothers may feel burdened to commit themselves to their child/children. Therefore, they may not respond positively to their child as found by Egami (2005, 2007). However, “fulfillment” had positive effects on both “involvement and monitoring” and “positive responsivity.” Since “fulfillment” indicates joy and satisfaction concerning parenting or being with their children, mothers rating high on “fulfillment” seemed to show more “involvement and monitoring” and “positive responsivity” toward their children. Surprisingly, “stimulation” affected “positive responsivity,” “respect for will” and “overprotection.” It is said that education-minded parents have a high developmental expectation for their children and do everything for their children’s optimal developmental outcomes; so those who rated high on “stimulation” in this study are thought to be education-minded parents. For education-minded parents, responsivity and protective behavior were generally important; however, they did not seem to rate high on “respect for will” - this recalls images of the “tiger mother” (Chua 2011) or “education mamas” (Thorsten 1996). These terms seem relevant to education-minded parents, who may actively do all they can for their children’s education without thinking much of the children’s will or thought. However, this result seems to indicate that mothers rated high on “stimulation” would have considered their children’s will clearly and regarded this as good learning for their children. “Challenging” was related to being in a state of exhaustion; thus, those who rated it high did not have

mild, stable and consistent behavior toward their children, and had higher “inconsistency” and “harsh discipline.” Interestingly, “child-centered” affected more kinds of child-rearing behavior than any other factor of J-IPAQ. In detail, those who rated high on “child-centered” had lower “involvement and monitoring,” “overprotection,” and “harsh discipline,” but higher “respect for will.” These results appear to show that child-centeredness is prevalent and strong in Japanese culture (Kashiwagi 1998) and hence has a good and an ideal image among Japanese mothers (Egami 2017). Thus, many mothers might have tried to respect their children’s thought, not to be intrusive concerning their children’s feelings, and to have a warm attitude toward them. Moreover, the children might express that they do not wish to be monitored so much and or that they want freely choose what to do. “Involvement and monitoring” and “overprotection” in this study seem to be positively related to “anticipatory problem solving” investigated by Schiffrin et al. (2015) from the viewpoint of interacting with children actively and strongly protecting them. Contrary to the results in this study, Schiffrin et al. found that “child-centered” positively affected “anticipatory problem solving.” Are these differences because of minor conceptual deviation between “anticipatory problem solving” and both “involvement and monitoring” and “overprotection”? Or are they due to cultural differences between the U.S. and Japan? This should be further studied.

Finally, it should be noted that the mothers in this study were able to access the internet. Thus, it is possible that the particular group participating in this study was relatively financially well-off and more technically aware than the average population. Therefore, despite a large number of participants, this study may not generalize to all Japanese mothers. Nevertheless, this is the first longitudinal research based on IPAQ, at least in Japan. The findings of this study raised the possibility that an intensive parenting attitude affected maternal “extensive” parenting including both positive and negative parenting behavior generally. For practitioners, there is a need to know the importance of not only social support but also “co-parenting” because “essentialism” and “challenging” had negative effects on maternal parenting in this study. Moreover, Prikhidko and Swank (2019) showed that “essentialism” and “challenging” predicted the experience of

anger for mothers. In the case of mothers who feel challenged, it seems necessary to listen to them concerning the difficulties. Since the idea of “challenging” is broad and ambiguous, clarifying their struggles can help them find what they need.

In sum, although there are some cultural differences, intensive parenting attitudes are prevalent in Japan just as in the U.S., U.K. and France (Rizzo, Schiffrin and Liss 2013; Stirrup, Duncombe and Sandford 2014; Loyal et al. 2017). In particular, it is worth mentioning the idea that the bond between mother and her child is incredibly strong in Japan (Kazui 1997; Ohinata 1988, 2000). This is why “essentialism” scores were considerably higher in Japan than in the U.S. Considering both the circumstances of Japanese women and socioeconomic changes in Japan, the link between intensive parenting attitudes and maternal well-being and their children’s development should be further studied. This kind of study might serve to raise questions about intensive parenting attitudes of mothers with lower socioeconomic status or of single mothers. Because most such socioeconomically disadvantaged mothers are financially insecure due to the persistent and non-fluid structure of the current Japanese society, if they highly endorse intensive parenting attitudes, this suggests that they would carry a heavy load on their shoulders. Additionally, socioeconomically disadvantaged mothers receive complicated messages about mothering (Gross et al. 2014). They are forced to work outside of the house for the welfare of their children and themselves; however, they are also blamed for working apart from their children. Meanwhile, they may feel less guilty about working on the job because they cannot help but work outside the home and they are not blamed by society for working. Because most mothers in this study were in middle-class and intact families, there is a need to study other mothers under more stressful situations. This study suggested that intensive parenting attitudes affected maternal parenting both positively and negatively. Given that “essentialism” and “child-centered” are relatively high in Japan, the burden of child-rearing could weigh most heavily on mothers. This may harm maternal psychological well-being. Additionally, the negative impact of “essentialism” on “positive responsivity” and “respect for will” was greater when not controlling for social support than

when controlling for (see Appendix). There is a need to study the way that Japanese society could absolve mothers from exclusive parenting duty and consider “parenting” as a social behavior.

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APPENDIX. REGRESSION ANALYSES WITHOUT CONTROLLING FOR SOCIAL SUPPORT

	IM	PR	RW	Ov	In	HD
Es	0.00	-0.15**	-0.08*	0.05	0.06	0.06
Fu	0.15**	0.33**	0.13**	0.02	-0.05	-0.07
St	0.07	0.15**	0.12**	0.07	-0.09*	-0.08*
Ch	-0.06	-0.00	-0.02	-0.05	0.21**	0.23**
CC	-0.11*	0.05	0.16**	-0.10*	-0.05	-0.15**
R^2	0.03**	0.18**	0.09**	0.01	0.06**	0.08**

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Note. Es, Essentialism; Fu, Fulfillment; St, Stimulation; Ch, Challenging; CC, Child-centered; IM, Involvement and monitoring; PR, Positive responsivity; RW, Respect for will; Ov, Overprotection; In, Inconsistency; HD, Harsh discipline.