

Maternal Self-Discrepancy and Subjective Well-Being: A Study of Middle-Aged Japanese Mothers Across Employment Status

母親の現実自己と理想自己の不一致と主観的幸福感について
—就業形態における中年期の日本人母親を対象とした研究—

A Dissertation Presented to
the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
International Christian University
for the Degree of Doctoral of Philosophy

国際基督教大学 大学院
アーツ・サイエンス研究科提出博士論文

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Abstract

The psychological well-being of mothers has been studied from various perspectives, including child-rearing anxiety, social support, employment status, and family structure. However, self-discrepancy theory has not been thoroughly examined in this context. Furthermore, most prior studies have predominantly focused on younger mothers, leaving a gap in understanding the psychological well-being of middle-aged mothers. The main objectives of this research were to utilize self-discrepancy theory to examine the influence of discrepancies between the actual self and ideal self, as well as between the actual self and ought self, on psychological well-being (maternal role achievement, state-trait anxiety, and subjective well-being) and to identify the significant predictor of subjective well-being among middle-aged Japanese mothers. The research also considered the role of employment status in these relationships and explored how conceptions of the ideal and ought selves vary across different employment statuses, as well as how they contribute to subjective well-being.

In the context of self-discrepancy theory, the actual self represents “who I am,” or the attributes an individual possesses. The ideal self refers to “what I wish to be,” reflecting personal aspirations and direction. The ought self, on the other hand, is a version of the ideal self imposed by significant others (i.e., parents, spouses, children) or society, represents the expectations of others, reflecting a sense of duty or obligation. According to self-discrepancy theory, discrepancies between the actual and ideal self or between the actual and ought self is related to psychological maladjustment. To address the research objectives, a pilot study was conducted, followed by Study 1 and Study 2, each designed to measure distinct aspects of the phenomenon under investigation.

Method

The pilot study established a robust foundation for the subsequent Study 1 and Study 2 by examining the research design, particularly to assess whether participants could answer the self-report questionnaires accurately. The pilot study also examined the appropriateness of survey instruments measuring maternal role achievement, state-trait anxiety, and subjective well-being concerning the discrepancy variables. Twenty Japanese mothers with university-aged children (aged 40-55 years) participated in the study, comprising nine regular employed mothers, eight non-regular employed mothers, and three homemakers. In the self-report questionnaire, participants were asked to list three aspects of their ideal self and three aspects of their ought self (from their own perspective). The ought selves include the perspective of how their parents, spouses, children, and society (e.g., friends, colleagues, or relatives) perceive them from their own perspective. They then evaluated how closely each aspect matched their actual self using a 7-point scale, ranging from “very much aligned” (7) to “not aligned at all” (1).

Study 1 was to investigate the elements of mothers’ ideal and ought selves based on their employment status. It was hypothesized that the composition of mothers’ ideal selves and ought selves would vary according to their type of employment. A total of 120 Japanese mothers with university-aged children participated in the study, including 45 regular employees, 52 non-regular employees, and 23 homemakers. The self-report questionnaire from the pilot study was utilized, asking mothers to list three aspects of their ideal selves and three aspects of their ought selves. Data analysis was conducted using KH Coder (Version 3. Alpha.17e), incorporating frequency extraction, hierarchical cluster analysis, and co-occurrence network analysis. Additionally, a Chi-square test was performed using extracted

phrases from KH Coder to evaluate mean differences in maternal roles, family roles, and self-roles across employment statuses.

The objective of Study 2 was to examine the influence of discrepancies between the actual self and ideal self on the discrepancy between the actual self and ought self, as well as on maternal role achievement, state-trait anxiety, and subjective well-being across employment statuses. Additionally, the study aimed to identify predictors of subjective well-being. A total of 284 Japanese mothers with university-aged children (aged 40 to 60 years) participated in the study, including 97 regular employees, 87 non-regular employees, and 57 homemakers. The study utilized the design methodology, and all survey questionnaires confirmed in the pilot study.

Results

The pilot study demonstrated that participants sufficiently comprehended the questionnaires and could respond accurately. Consequently, the results affirmed the suitability of these measures for Study 1 and Study 2. Furthermore, the findings confirmed that the research design and methodology were both applicable and appropriate for addressing the research objectives.

The results of Study 1 revealed significant differences in mothers' ideal selves based on their employment status, as identified through the KH Coder analysis. Among mothers in regular employment, the words "child" and "mother" appeared frequently, and the co-occurrence network highlighted that these mothers often described their ideal selves in relation to "mother-child," "family," and "work-life balance." Similarly, non-regularly employed mothers emphasized ideal selves associated with "child," "mother," and "family." However,

they also mentioned ideal selves related to “self” and “enjoying life.” Homemakers frequently cited ideal selves associated with “child” and “family” but also highlighted aspects of “self (enjoyment),” “interpersonal relationships,” and “communication skills.”

A Chi-square test revealed significant differences in ideal self-related phrases linked to maternal roles, family roles, and self-roles across employment statuses. When analyzed separately, significant differences emerged for both maternal roles and self-roles based on employment status. Residual analysis further indicated that the self-role category showed the most pronounced discrepancies, with homemakers overrepresenting this category compared to regular and non-regular employees.

Regarding the ought self, KH Coder analysis revealed notable patterns in mothers’ descriptions, particularly in expectations from parents and spouses across employment statuses. Among regularly employed mothers, the ought self included elements such as “having a job,” “being independent,” and “supporting the husband.” Non-regularly employed mothers also described their ought selves as including “having a job,” “being independent,” and “supporting the husband.” However, their ideal selves did not include “having a job” but rather emphasized “not relying on parents.” In contrast, homemakers’ descriptions of their ought selves did not include any work-related elements. These findings suggest that the components of maternal ideal and ought selves vary depending on employment status.

A Chi-square test on phrase frequencies related to maternal roles, family roles, and self-roles within ought selves (as perceived by parents, children, and society) showed no statistically significant differences across employment statuses, including separate category analyses. However, when analyzing ought selves as perceived by husbands, no statistically significant differences were found in overall frequencies for maternal, family, and self-roles

across employment groups. However, when analyzed separately, the family role category exhibited statistically significant differences across employment statuses. These findings suggest that ought selves as perceived by parents, children, and society remain largely consistent across employment statuses, while husbands' expectations of family roles are influenced by the mother's employment type.

The results of Study 2 indicated no significant differences across all five discrepancy measures, maternal role achievement, and state-trait anxiety among mothers of different employment statuses. However, a significant difference was observed in subjective well-being, particularly between mothers in regular and non-regular employment. Additionally, a positive correlation was observed between the discrepancy between the actual self and ideal self and the discrepancy between the actual self and ought self. This suggests that as the discrepancy between the actual self and ideal self increases, the discrepancy between the actual self and ought self also increases. Furthermore, the discrepancy between the actual self and ideal self was negatively correlated with both maternal role achievement and subjective well-being. However, it was positively correlated with trait anxiety. Moreover, hierarchical multiple regression analysis revealed that the discrepancy between the actual self and ideal self is a significant predictor of mothers' subjective well-being across all employment statuses.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research presented a novel perspective on maternal psychological well-being by applying self-discrepancy theory. The findings shed light on the intricate relationship between maternal self-discrepancy and subjective well-being. The validated self-report questionnaire yielded significant insights into the diverse ideals held by participants across different employment statuses, with notable differences identified in maternal roles and

self-roles. Additionally, the results demonstrated that a greater discrepancy between the actual and ideal self not only correlates with a wider gap between the actual and ought self but also serves as a predictor of subjective well-being across employment status. These findings emphasize the importance of addressing the gap between the actual and ideal self to enhance maternal well-being. In future research, it may be beneficial to include the discrepancy between mothers' actual self and ideal self as one of the factors when examining mothers' psychological well-being. Incorporating this perspective could lead to the development of new approaches for improving mothers' psychological adjustment and well-being.

Keywords: self-discrepancy, maternal employment, maternal role achievement, state-trait anxiety, subjective well-being.

Japanese Abstract

母親の心理的幸福感は、育児に対する不安、社会的支援、雇用状況、家族構成など、さまざまな観点から研究されている。しかし、この文脈において自己不一致理論が十分に検討されていない。さらに、これまでの研究の多くは主に若年層の母親を対象としており、中年層の母親の心理的幸福感についての理解には欠けている。本研究の主な目的は、自己不一致理論を用いて、現実自己と理想自己の不一致、および現実自己と義務自己の不一致が、中年期の日本人母親における心理的幸福感（母親役割の達成感、状態-特性不安、主観的幸福感）に与える影響を検討し、さらに主観的幸福感の有意な予測因子を特定することであった。また、理想自己および義務自己に対する認識が雇用状況によってどのように異なるか、それが主観的幸福感にどのように影響するかについても検討した。

自己不一致理論の文脈において、現実自己は「自分が何者であるか」、すなわち個人が持つ属性を表す。一方、理想自己は「自分がこうでありたい」と願う姿を指し、個人の願望や目標を反映している。一方、義務自己は、重要な他者（例えば、親、配偶者、子ども）、や社会によって課された理想自己の一形態であり、他者の期待を表し、義務や責任感を反映している。自己不一致理論によれば、現実自己と理想自己、または現実自己と義務自己の間に不一致が生じると、心理的適応に問題が生じるとされている。本研究の目的を達成するために、予備調査を実施し、その後、異なる側面を測定するよう設計された「研究 1」と「研究 2」が行われた。

方法

予備調査では、研究デザインを検証し、特に参加者が自己記入式質問票に正確に回答できるかどうかを評価することで、その後の「研究 1」および「研究 2」の基盤を強化した。予備調査では、不一致変数に関連する母親役割の達成感、状態-特性不安、および主観的幸福感を測定する調査票の適切性についても検討した。調査には、大学生の子どもを持つ 40～55 歳の日本人母親 20 名が参加した。このうち、正規

雇用者は9名、非正規雇用者は8名、専業主婦は3名であった。自己記入式質問票では、参加者に対し、自身の視点から見た理想自己の3つの側面と、義務自己の3つの側面を挙げるよう求めた。義務自己については、親、配偶者、子ども、社会（友人、同僚、親戚など）がどのように認識しているかを、自身の視点から回答するよう求めた。次に、それぞれの側面が現実自己とどの程度一致しているかを、7段階の尺度（「非常に一致している」＝7点から「全く一致していない」＝1点）を用いて評価した。

研究1では、母親の「理想自己」と「義務自己」の要素が雇用状況によってどのように異なるかを調査した。母親の雇用形態に応じて「理想自己」と「義務自己」の構成が異なると仮定した。調査には、大学生の子どもを持つ日本人母親120名が参加した。内訳は、正規雇用者が45名、非正規雇用者が52名、専業主婦が23名であった。予備調査で確認された自己記入式質問票を使用し、母親に「理想自己」と「義務自己」の3つの側面をそれぞれ挙げてもらった。データ分析には、KH Coder（バージョン3. Alpha. 17e）を使用した。頻度抽出、階層型クラスター分析、および共起ネットワーク分析を実施し、言語データを視覚的かつ統計的に検討した。さらに、KH Coderで抽出されたフレーズを用いて、母親役割、家族役割、および自己役割における雇用状況ごとの差を評価するために、カイ二乗検定を実施した。

研究2の目的は、現実自己と理想自己の不一致が、現実自己と義務自己の不一致、および母親役割の達成感、状態-特性不安、主観的幸福感に与える影響を、就業形態別に検討することであった。さらに、本研究では、主観的幸福感の予測因子を特定することも目的とした。調査には、大学生の子どもを持つ40～60歳の日本人母親284名が参加した。内訳は、正規雇用者が97名、非正規雇用者が87名、専業主婦が57名、その他43名であった。本研究では、予備調査で妥当性が確認されたすべての調査質問票を使用し、設計された調査手法を用いてデータを収集した。分析では、不一致スコアと心理的幸福感（母親役割の達成感、状態-特性不安、主観的幸福感）の各尺度との関連を雇用状況別に検討した。

結果

予備調査の結果、参加者は質問票を十分に理解し、正確に回答できることが示された。その結果、これらの測定方法が研究 1 および研究 2 に適していることが確認された。さらに、本研究の設計と方法論が研究目的に対して適用可能であり、適切であることも明らかになった。

研究 1 の結果、母親の理想自己は雇用状況によって有意な違いがあることが、KH Coder 分析により明らかになった。正規雇用の母親では、「子ども」および「母親」という単語が頻繁に出現し、共起ネットワーク分析でも、これらの母親が「母子関係」、「家族」、「仕事と生活のバランス」に関連した理想自己を持つことが示された。同様に、非正規雇用の母親も「子ども」、「母親」、「家族」に関連する理想自己を強調したが、加えて「自己」や「人生を楽しむ」といった理想自己も挙げられた。専業主婦の母親は「子ども」や「家族」に関連する理想自己を多く挙げたが、さらに「自己（楽しみ）」、「対人関係」、「コミュニケーション能力」といった側面も強調された。

カイ二乗検定の結果、母親役割、家族役割、自己役割に関連する理想自己の表現には雇用状況ごとに有意な違いがあることが示された。個別に分析したところ、特に母親役割と自己役割において雇用形態による顕著な違いが確認された。さらに、残差分析の結果、自己役割のカテゴリーで最も大きな差異が見られ、専業主婦の母親は、正規雇用および非正規雇用の母親と比較して、このカテゴリーを過剰に表現していることが明らかになった。

義務自己に関しては、KH Coder 分析により、母親の記述において、特に親や配偶者からの期待が雇用状況によって異なる傾向があることが明らかになった。正規雇用の母親の義務自己には、「仕事を持つこと」、「自立していること」、「夫を支えること」といった要素が含まれ、これらは理想自己と密接に一致していた。非正規雇用の母親も同様に、「仕事を持つこと」、「自立していること」、「夫を支えること」を義務自己に含めたが、理想自己には「仕事を持つこと」が含まれず、代わりに

「親に頼らないこと」という表現が挙げられていた。一方、専業主婦の母親の義務自己の記述には、「仕事」に関連する要素は全く含まれていなかった。これらの結果は、母親の理想自己と義務自己の構成要素が雇用状況によって異なることを示唆している。

カイ二乗検定の結果、親、子ども、社会（友人、同僚、親戚など）が描く義務自己に関しては、雇用形態による有意な違いは認められなかった。カテゴリ別の分析を含めても、統計的に有意な差はなかった。しかし、夫が描く義務自己を分析したところ、母親役割、家族役割、自己役割の全体的な頻度には雇用形態間で有意な差は見られなかったものの、家族役割カテゴリにおいては雇用形態間で統計的に有意な違いが示された。これらの結果は、親、子ども、社会が描く義務自己には雇用形態による違いがほとんどないことを示唆する一方で、夫が描く家族役割に関しては、母親の雇用形態による影響が反映される可能性があることを示している。

研究2の結果、5つの不一致測定項目、母親役割の達成感、状態-特性不安については、雇用状況による有意な差は見られなかった。しかし、主観的幸福感には有意差が認められ、特に正規雇用の母親と非正規雇用の母親の間に顕著であった。さらに、現実自己と理想自己の不一致と現実自己と義務自己の不一致の間には**正の相関**が見られた。これは、現実自己と理想自己の不一致が大きくなるほど、現実自己と義務自己の不一致も大きくなることを示唆している。加えて、現実自己と理想自己の不一致は、母親役割の達成感および主観的幸福感と負の相関を示した。また、状態不安とは負の相関が見られたが、特性不安とは正の相関を示した。さらに、階層的重回帰分析の結果、現実自己と理想自己の不一致が、すべての雇用状況において母親の主観的幸福感を有意に予測する要因であることが明らかになった。

結論

本研究では、自己不一致理論を用いて母親の心理的幸福感を検討する新たな視点を提示した。結果として、母親の自己不一致と主観的幸福感の関係についての洞察が得られた。特に、自己記入式質問票によって、雇用状況ごとの参加者が抱えるさまざまな理想自己に関する重要な情報が得られた。これには、母親役割と自己役割が雇用状況によって有意に異なることが示唆している。また、現実自己と理想自己の不一致が増加することで、現実自己と義務自己の不一致も増加し、それが主観的幸福感を予測することが明らかになった。このことは、母親が現実自己と理想自己のギャップを対処することの重要性を示唆している。今後の研究では、母親の心理的幸福感を検討する際に、母親の現実自己と理想自己の不一致を要因の一つとして含めることが有益であると考えられる。この観点を取り入れることで、母親の心理的適応や幸福感を向上させるための新たなアプローチが展開される可能性があると考えられる。

キーワード：母親の就業形態、現実自己と理想自己の不一致、母親の役割達成感、特性・状態不安、主観的幸福感

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research examined the influence of discrepancies between the actual self and ideal self, as well as the actual self and ought self, on the psychological well-being of middle-aged Japanese mothers. Motherhood is a transformative and dynamic journey, intersecting with various aspects of women's lives. Previous research indicated that mothers are navigating multiple roles, complex responsibilities, societal expectations, and personal aspirations, which becomes a profound task for mothers as they raise their children (Kashiwagi, 2008; Matsuzaka, 2002; Meeussen & Laar, 2018; Ohinata, 2020; Ota, 2006; Toda, 2012). Moreover, the challenges and joys of motherhood are further shaped by external factors, including cultural norms, employment status, and the life stage of their children (Kashiwagi & Wakamatsu, 1994; Kohler & Mencarini, 2016; Matsuoka et al., 2006; Yokoyama et al., 2017). Furthermore, the intricate balance between nurturing children and pursuing self-realization poses a significant dilemma for mothers with careers outside (Hays, 1996; Toda, 2012). Besides, women who give up their jobs and become full-time homemakers again experience conflict between being a mother and as an individual (Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005).

Additionally, research on mothers with adolescent children also revealed that the transition to adulthood, or the departure of their offspring, introduces a unique set of

circumstances and emotions, potentially impacting maternal well-being (Harkins, 1978; Kashiwagi, 1998, 1999; Okamoto, 1997; Okamoto & Fukase, 2013; Shimizu, 2004).

In the context of this complexity, this research employed the self-discrepancies theory to explore the relationship between employment status, maternal self-discrepancies, maternal role achievement, state-trait anxiety, and subjective well-being among Japanese mothers of university-aged students. The ultimate goal is to uncover insights into the relationship between maternal self-discrepancies and employment status and how these factors collectively influence the subjective well-being of the mother participants.

Understanding the relationship between maternal self-discrepancies and subjective well-being within the context of employment status is critical. Japanese culture has long upheld strong expectations regarding familial roles, particularly the role of mothers in nurturing and educating their children (Kashiwagi, 1998; Matsuzaka, 2002). These cultural expectations, coupled with the changing landscape of women's higher education and participation in the workforce, create a complex dynamic for Japanese mothers in terms of work-life balance (Hiwatashi et. al., 2018; Okamoto & Fukase, 2013; Tanaka, 2012). Thus, this research aims to provide insight into how Japanese mothers navigate the tensions between maternal roles and employment aspirations, family lives, and how these dynamics influence their well-being.

The theoretical foundation of this research is grounded in Higgins' Self-Discrepancies Theory (1987), which postulates that individuals compare their actual self (who they believe they are), ideal self (who they aspire to be), and ought self (who they believe they should be). Discrepancies between these self-concepts can lead to adverse emotional outcomes, such as dissatisfaction and distress (Boyatzis & Akriyou, 2006). Employment status may exacerbate

these discrepancies for mothers with university-aged children (Matsuoka et al., 2006). Mothers who are employed may experience a disjunction between their role as a working professional and their role as a nurturing mother, while mothers who are not employed may grapple with the expectations placed on them to be full-time caregivers (Okamoto & Fukase, 2013; Polasky & Holahan, 1998).

Notably, a mother's satisfaction with her roles, e.g., maternal role, parental styles, and life circumstances, can affect her children's emotional and psychological well-being (Baumrind, 1966/1991; Bowlby, 1988; Kashiwagi, 2008; Lee & Naoi, 2023; Matsuzaka, 2002; Shima, 2014; Yamamoto & Kimide, 2017). Therefore, understanding the interplay between employment status, self-discrepancies, and subjective well-being is not only essential for the well-being of mothers but also for fostering healthier family dynamics and providing targeted support systems. The focus on Japanese mothers is particularly relevant, given the unique societal and cultural backdrop in which they navigate their roles. Japanese society places a high value on the family, and mothers are central to the harmony of the household (Kashiwagi, 1998; Ohinata, 2020). Additionally, this research aims to provide insight into how Japanese mothers experience self-discrepancies concerning their employment status during their children's university years.

In the subsequent sections of this research, the existing literature covers maternal well-being, maternal self-discrepancies, the concept of subjective well-being, and the specific impact of employment status on these variables. Due to limited resources addressing the connection between maternal self-discrepancies and subjective well-being, this research initiates a pilot study, succeeded by Study 1 and Study 2. Study 1 seeks to delineate the components of mothers' ideal selves based on their employment statuses. Additionally, Study

2 aims to investigate maternal self-discrepancies, exploring differences between actual and ideal selves and actual and ought selves and their relationship with maternal role achievement, state-trait anxiety, and subjective well-being across various employment statuses.

Finally, this research aims to enhance the comprehension of the complex interplay among employment status, maternal self-discrepancies, and subjective well-being within the context of Japanese mothers with university-aged students. This insight is intended to lay the groundwork for crafting targeted interventions support systems and fostering societal awareness. Such initiatives aim to improve the well-being of mothers and their families during this crucial life transition. Before proceeding to the next chapter, “Related Literature Review,” the following will briefly overview the background that led to this study.

1.1. The Background Study

Significantly, researchers have explored maternal mental health and well-being through various lenses, including childrearing anxiety, social support, employment status, and family structure (Iwasaki et al., 2017; Kashiwagi, 1999; Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005; Toda, 2012). However, these studies have concentrated on young mothers with small children navigating the challenges of childrearing and career management. There is a notable gap in our understanding of the psychological well-being of middle-aged mothers (Frech & Damaske, 2012). Furthermore, the application of a self-discrepancy theory perspective still needs to be explored.

Notably, the cultural orientation of Japanese society underwent a noteworthy transformation in the late 20th century. Advances in higher education and the implementation

of the Equal Employment Opportunities law for Japanese women have expanded opportunities for mothers to pursue careers outside the home rather than adhering to traditional roles as stay-at-home moms. Additionally, shifts in socioeconomic and family structures have played a pivotal role in reshaping the value orientation of contemporary Japanese women (Kashiwagi, 1999; Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005; Nagahisa, 2015). Consequently, modern Japanese mothers increasingly focus on their self-role orientation while striving for life satisfaction. Research indicates a significant correlation between individual self-roles and self-actualization, which in turn influences the psychological well-being of mothers.

1.2. Self-Discrepancy Theory

Self-discrepancy theory, introduced by Higgins (1987), has widespread application in psychological studies. Several investigations employing this theory have sought to identify disparities between the actual self and the ideal self, the actual self and the ought self, and the related factors or issues, including anxiety, self-esteem, self-identity, and overall well-being (Matsuoka, 2006; Mizuma, 1998; Stachowski et al., 2020).

Higgins (1987) defined the ideal self as the envisioned image of an individual's aspirations. Most studies characterize the ideal self as representing an individual's desires, hopes, aspirations, and goals (Baumeister, 1998; Boyatzis & Akriyou, 2006; Higgins, 1987; Rogers, 1959). Furthermore, research acknowledges that the ideal self serves as a self-guide, steering an individual's subsequent actions, motivations, and behaviors toward achieving a satisfying and fulfilling life (Endo, 1992; Higgins, 1987; Matsuoka, 2006; Mizuma, 1998; Moretti & Wiebe, 1999; Stachowski et al., 2020; Strauman, 1992). Rogers (1961) emphasized

the importance of alignment or proximity between an individual's actual and ideal self for attaining happiness. Consequently, discrepancies between the actual and ideal self could negatively impact an individual's self-evaluation, self-concept, motivation, self-achievement, well-being, and parental attitudes (Lee & Naoi, 2023; Matsuoka, 2006; Mizuma, 1998; Moretti & Higgins, 1990; Stachowski et al., 2020). However, does the perception of a gap between the actual and ideal self significantly contribute to variations in subjective well-being yet need to be clarified.

Critically, the ideal self is not necessarily formed solely by individual ideals. There could also be the ideal self, the concept of a close other, which refers to the 'ought self' and pertains to the idealized self-image shaped by individuals' perceptions of close others, such as husbands, parents, children, or peers (Higgins, 1987).

Similar to the ideal self, the ought self serves as a standard that individuals strive to achieve (Boyatzis & Akriyou, 2006; Higgins, 1987, 1989). For instance, a mother may conform to societal norms and adhere to the perceived expectations of being a 'good mother,' leading her to make decisions like quitting her job or altering her work style (Ikeda, 2019; Toda, 2012). Research suggests that individuals actively and consciously pursue the ought self when they believe it aligns with the desires of significant others or when seeking to please them (Boyatzis & Akriyou, 2006; Matsuoka et al., 2006). In addition, according to Higgins (1987), the ought self is laden with a sense of duties or obligations. Extensive research has unveiled that failing to meet the ought self or encountering a misalignment between the actual and ought self can lead to psychological discomfort, encompassing feelings of shame, fear, perceived threats, restlessness, and resulting in anxiety (Higgins, 1987/1989/1999; Higgins et al., 1986; Matsuoka et al., 2006; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Moretti & Higgins, 1990).

Notably, discrepancies between the actual and ideal selves are anticipated to result in disappointment or depression. In contrast, disparities between the actual and ought selves are expected to manifest as social anxiety and insecurity. The magnitude of these discrepancies correlates with the intensity of mental distress (Straumann, 1992; Higgins, 1987; Moretti & Higgins, 1990; Straumann & Higgins, 1987). Consequently, this theory may elucidate the connections between mothers' self-discrepancies across actual, ideal, and ought selves, as well as the perspectives of different significant individuals, shedding light on maternal subjective well-being.

1.3. The Change of Women Value Orientation

Historically, Japanese women typically assumed the role of homemakers upon marriage, often adjusting their schedules to align with their children's or husbands' needs (White, 1992). This practice elucidates why mothers opted for part-time employment, aligning their work commitments with the demands of family life. Consequently, during this period, childcare, family management, and household duties were predominantly viewed as female roles, and women derived significant satisfaction from their contributions to the family (Kashiwagi, 1999).

Nevertheless, a notable shift occurred in the late 20th century as Japanese women increasingly pursued higher education from 17.7% in 1970 to 48.3% in 2003, reported by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology 2004. The number of women pursuing university degrees increases yearly, leading to a departure from traditional gender roles and reflecting changing dynamics in women's educational and professional aspirations

(Nagahisa, 2015). Moreover, higher education enhances personal achievement, goals, expertise, and more opportunities for formal employment in a professional field, which changed women's value orientation (Kashiwagi, 1999). Tanaka (1990) discussed how contemporary Japanese women have become financially independent, self-reliant, and more ambitious than in traditional roles. Consequently, the values and roles of Japanese women have changed, which has also influence how women associate with their families (Nagahisa & Kashiwagi, 2000; Shirahase, 2000).

Furthermore, according to the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research in 2019, the progression rates to higher education for women in Japan have also changed significantly, encompassing university, junior college, college of technology, and specialized training college. In 2010, the progression rate was 78.4% for men and 81.1% for women, while in 2017, these figures shifted to 77.4% for men and 83.9% for women. Notably, the graph depicts an increase in the advancement rate for Japanese women, while the rate for men remains relatively constant. Moreover, the data indicates that women consistently exhibit higher advancement rates than men throughout the period.

However, when considering advancement solely to university, the numbers reveal a nuanced picture. In 2010, the higher education advancement rate for men in Japan stood at 56.4%, slightly decreasing to 55.9% by 2017. In contrast, women saw an upward trend, with their advancement rate climbing from 45.2% in 2010 to 49.1% in 2017 (refer to Figure 2). This suggests that women in Japan may exhibit a more robust determination to pursue their dreams and goals.

1.4. Women Developmental Psychology Study

Developmental psychology studies address tasks that emerge at specific stages in an individual's life, such as building trust in infancy or achieving independence in adolescence (Okamoto & Fukase, 2013). Individuals who accomplish these tasks can lead to subsequent happiness and success, while failure may result in societal disapproval and challenges in facing subsequent tasks (Havighurst, 1953). Moreover, life-span developmental psychology suggests that these tasks stem from individual maturation, societal and cultural norms, and individual values and standards (Gilligan, 1982; Hornstein, 1986; Okamoto & Fukase, 2013).

The change in women's value orientation has shifted the focus of developmental psychology studies from a conservative framework to a more individualistic one. Notably, the evolving landscape of higher education and employment in Japan, which has significantly influenced women's value orientation, has brought transformative impacts on research in developmental psychology (Nagahisa, 2015). Consequently, there has been a growing focus on exploring how women achieve life satisfaction by balancing societal and individual roles (Haraguchi et al., 2005). For example, consider the challenges faced by mothers striving to find happiness while managing the dual responsibilities of motherhood and career.

Several studies have indicated that highly educated women are more inclined to pursue their interests and personal goals, and such individuals tend to delay marriage and exhibit lower fertility rates (Nagahisa & Kashiwagi, 2000; Okamoto & Fukase, 2013, p. 137; Utsuomiya, 2008). The trend towards increased educational attainment and workforce participation suggests that women increasingly embrace a value orientation that prioritizes personal interests and abilities. Research has consistently shown that women derive

satisfaction, self-actualization, and happiness by actively pursuing and achieving their interests and goals (Kashiwagi, 1999; Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005; Nishida, 2000).

In addition, in 1986, the Japanese government passed the law of equal employment opportunities for men and women, which opened the door for women to become significantly active contributors to cultural, social, and economic growth within the country (Tanaka, 1990). According to the Japan Labor Force Survey 2018 by the Ministry of Communication, the country had 29.46 million (51.3%) married women at work. That revealed that more than half of the women in the country were pursuing careers outside rather than becoming homemakers. Indeed, social recognition enhances the value of women's self-actualization through the achievement of clear personal goals within their social roles. Ultimately, the transformation in the perception of women's worth reshaped the emphasis of women's studies within developmental psychology (Kashiwagi, 1999; Nagahisa, 2015).

Consequently, research has emerged exploring how women balance their maternal roles with their self-fulfillment and how this balance may relate to their overall life satisfaction. Tanaka and Ishida's (2013) study support the idea that perceiving the ideal self or achieving self-realization contributes to an individual's self-efficacy, which is ultimately linked to self-actualization. This perspective aligns with broader shifts in societal attitudes toward women's roles and aspirations, highlighting personal development and self-realization as crucial components. Developmental psychology suggests an interest in understanding how these changes impact individuals' psychological growth and well-being. Significantly, the evolution of women's values has prompted a shift toward a more individualized approach to researching developmental issues concerning women (Nagahisa, 2015). The focus has expanded to investigate how women, including mothers, can achieve self-fulfillment,

happiness, and satisfaction through diverse avenues such as employment status or pursuing personal goals.

Simultaneously, an individualized orientation denotes a way of life that honors personal standards and maximizes individuality, often referred to as being “self-actualized” (Ito, 1993; Maslow, 1954). This represents a departure from the earlier emphasis on predefined societal roles, allowing for a more personalized and self-directed approach to life choices and fulfillment.

In addition to these findings, studies underscore the significance of a mother’s self-role, highlighting its equal importance alongside their maternal role (Iwasaki et al., 2017). Notably, self-role satisfaction has been identified as a more potent influence on psychological well-being. Research indicates that the satisfaction derived from one’s self-role has implications for maternal role satisfaction and correlates with other factors such as social support from sources like the husband, parents, or friends, which are linked to maternal anxiety (Haraguchi et al., 2005; Iwasaki et al., 2017).

Furthermore, research reveals that discrepancies between a mother’s actual and ideal self are associated with mental anxiety (Haraguchi et al., 2005). Essentially, any disparity between a mother’s actual and ideal selves could lead to psychological maladjustment, inadequate coping mechanisms, or negative parental attitudes. Research conducted by Lee and Naoi (2023) suggests that a gap between a mother’s actual and ideal self is associated with parental avoidance behaviors and can also influence their daughters’ self-esteem. Furthermore, the perspectives of close others are paramount in shaping maternal well-being. Research indicates that mothers who perceive themselves as not meeting societal standards for what

defines a good mother often endure feelings of guilt, shame, and self-blame for their perceived shortcomings (Okamoto & Fukase, 2013).

Additionally, other studies have emphasized the impact of meeting psychological needs on maternal well-being (Brenning & Soenens, 2017). Recognizing the significance of maternal well-being extends beyond the individual's health, influencing the development of their children and the dynamics within relationships with husbands and other family members. A comprehensive understanding of the potential factors influencing maternal well-being is crucial for providing targeted support and fostering improved parenting practices (McLeish & Redshaw, 2017). Regarding employment status, research has uncovered that employed women tend to exhibit a higher sense of life satisfaction and overall better psychological well-being compared to full-time homemakers (Takeya, 2006).

1.5. Maternal Employment and Childcare

Changes in Maternal Employment Status After Childbirth

In Japan, there is a distinct employment pattern among women, often referred to as the “M-curve.” This phenomenon reflects the fluctuations in women’s participation in the workforce at different stages of life. Most women in Japan begin working after graduating, typically in their early twenties. However, many of them leave their jobs or shift to part-time or flexible work arrangements after marriage or childbirth, with the majority of these changes occurring between their late twenties and late thirties. Once their children start school and require less direct care, many women return to the workforce, leading to an increase in the number of working women. As their children grow older and gain more independence, women’s workforce participation further increases. This creates the “M-shaped” curve when

graphed, showing high participation early on, a dip during the child-rearing years, and a rise again as children grow up. This pattern is a significant feature in discussions about women's employment trends in Japan (Ikeda, 2014).

The reality is that roughly 60 percent of Japanese women quit their jobs after giving birth to their first child, suggesting that women's weaker attachment to the labor market is due to fewer career advancement opportunities and a low support system for working mothers (Steinberg, 2017; Steinberg & Nakane, 2012). In a societal context where childcare remains predominantly the responsibility of women, managing the demands of childbirth, childcare, and work poses a substantial hurdle for working women (Ahmad, 2017; Hamada, 2005).

In an illuminating study conducted by the Ministry of Labor, Health, and Welfare (2010), a compelling narrative unfolds regarding the evolving landscape of maternal employment in Japan. The proportion of mothers with gainful employment reached 62.2% in the 6th survey (aged 5 years and 6 months), marking a significant increase of 10.8 points compared to the 51.4% reported in 2001. The percentage of mothers engaged in gainful employment decreased from 62.1% one year before childbirth to 35.7% in the 1st survey (6 months after childbirth). However, it has been gradually increasing each year since then. In the 6th survey (at 5 years and 6 months), it reached 62.2%, indicating a notable rise of 10.8 points compared to the 51.4% reported in 2001. Examining the changes in maternal employment status, the proportion of "full-time employment" showed minimal variation from the 1st survey (25.1%) to the 6th survey (25.2%). On the other hand, the proportion of "part-time or temporary employment" has been steadily increasing, starting from 6.0% in the 1st survey (6 months after childbirth) and reaching 30.0% in the 6th survey. These findings underscore the formidable challenges women face in striking a balance between their roles in childcare and the demands of the workplace.

Previous research has pointed out how contemporary Japanese mothers face work-life conflict, equal share of housework, and emotional distress, as well as concerns about their children's lives (Naito & Wie, 2018). Lack of social support remain the main reason why Japanese mothers leave their workforce after firstborn (Yokoyama et al., 2017). As we delve deeper into the intricate dynamics of women's employment in Japan, a study by Steinberg and Nakane (2012) serves as a poignant exploration of the factors influencing the decision of Japanese women to leave their jobs. The study revealed that housework accounts for the highest proportion, at 33.9%, appeared to be a factor influencing Japanese women's decision to leave their jobs. The subsequent factors include working hours at 14.2% and health at 12.1%. These findings beckon a closer examination of the role that traditional gender expectations play in shaping the professional choices of Japanese women. The study posits that, despite aspirations for career growth, women in Japan may continue to grapple with the enduring expectation of being the center of the family, predominantly responsible for household duties. As we navigate the nuanced implications, it becomes evident that full-time working hours might align differently with these expectations, further compounded by concerns about the dual burden of housework and professional responsibilities. This study, therefore, offers a nuanced perspective, shedding light on the complexities that influence Japanese women's decisions, particularly in the crucial post-childbirth phase, contributing to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted factors behind women's workforce choices in Japan.

Notably, motherhood poses a barrier to women's labor participation; mothers with children are more likely to have workforce gaps (Frech & Damaske, 2012). According to Frech and Damaske (2012), the condition of women, particularly those who choose to change their employment status or leave their jobs after the birth of their first child can have

significant implications for their mental health and overall well-being later in life. The decision to change employment status seems to be influenced by a complex interplay of societal expectations, workplace norms, personal choice, and weak social support systems (Ikeda, 2014; Toda, 2012).

One key aspect to consider is the potential impact on the woman's identity and sense of self-worth. The transition from a professional career to full-time homemaker may lead to shifts in self-perception and can pose challenges to one's self-efficacy (Kashiwagi, 1998; Ohinata, 2020). Previous studies have been reported that most working women wanted to continue their jobs. The 2018 Work-Life Balance Report indicated that 46.9% of women leave the workforce after the birth of their first child, reported by the Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office of Japan, 2019. The report also indicated that 80% of women who left their workforce wanted to participate in full-time work (cited from Gender and Equality Cabinet Office Japan, 2019). Consequently, due to departing from the workforce because of the birth of their children and the demand for part-time increased, those conditions ultimately channel middle-aged women into part-time or temporary employment because the systematic barriers restrict their access to full-time jobs (Yu, 2002).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Previous studies define psychological well-being as something that extends beyond mere happiness pursuit; it constitutes a comprehensive approach to individuals' lives, stressing the importance of positive emotions and functional efficacy (Diener, 1984; Huppert, 2009). According to Huppert (2009), sustaining well-being relies on the equilibrium between experiencing positivity and maintaining effective functionality. This viewpoint recognizes life's inherent diversity, encompassing a spectrum of experiences, including challenging emotions like disappointment, failure, and grief.

Importantly, psychological well-being does not necessitate a constant state of euphoria. Instead, it recognizes that navigating and managing negative emotions is crucial for long-term contentment. Experiencing pain or distress is a regular aspect of human experience, and individuals who can effectively cope with these emotions are better positioned for sustained well-being (Huppert, 2009; Ruggeri et al., 2020). However, the delicate equilibrium of psychological well-being can be disrupted when negative emotions become overwhelming or persist for extended periods, interfering with a person's daily functioning. Extreme or

prolonged negative emotions can detrimentally impact various aspects of life, from relationships to work and overall quality of life (Diener, 1984).

In essence, psychological well-being extends beyond the fleeting nature of happiness (Ruggeri et al., 2020). It encompasses the overall sense of how individuals feel about their lives and the contentment they experience. This broader perspective includes a sense of control over one's life, allowing individuals to navigate challenges functionally and adaptively. Thus, the capacity to manage both positive and negative emotions, coupled with effective functioning in daily life, contributes to a more resilient and sustainable psychological well-being.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has comprehensively defined positive mental health, emphasizing a broader and more proactive perspective. According to WHO (2001), positive mental health is “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can contribute to his or her community.”

This chapter embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the pertinent literature surrounding the multifaceted dimensions of the maternal role, self-role, maternal self-discrepancies, and their intricate interplay with psychological well-being. By delving into a nuanced understanding of these interconnected themes, this chapter aims to synthesize existing knowledge, identify gaps, and lay the groundwork for a deeper comprehension of the factors influencing the psychological well-being of mothers. By examining the evolving landscape of research on maternal roles and self-perceptions, we aspire to contribute valuable insights to the broader discourse on the intricate dynamics shaping mothers' subjective experiences in contemporary society.

2.1. Maternal Role, Self-Role, and Anxiety

Women have been reported to experience anxiety and fatigue regarding their self-role, not only in fulfilling the role of mother but also in determining what they want to become as individuals. Previous research has reported that self-role is essential as the mother's role for maternal well-being and life satisfaction and is related to anxiety (Haraguchi et al., 2005; Iwasaki et al., 2017). Furthermore, research also pointed that the conflict of being “a mother” and as “an individual,” could affect the mother's life-satisfaction and happiness, apart from childrearing anxiety, relationship with husband, economic status, employment status, and social support (Iwasaki et al., 2017; Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005; Ohinata, 1998, 2020; Onishi & Yoshimura, 1997).

Iwasaki and colleagues (2017) investigated the relationships between maternal and self-role satisfaction and anxiety together with other variables, such as social support (from husband, mother, and friends), concerning the mothers' employment statuses, educational background, health condition, and the number of children. They analyzed 881 mothers' (mean aged 33.7) data. Among the participants, 45.4% of the mothers were employed, and 42.2% had a college degree or above. The data was collected during the participants' children's 18 months of health checkups in seven cities of the Tokyo metropolitan area. The study's results revealed that all the variables, including maternal role, and self-role satisfaction, social support (from husband, mother, friends), health condition, and employment status, were negatively associated with anxiety. Moreover, non-working mothers, mothers not in good health condition, and those with two or more children with less social support were shown to have higher anxiety scores. On the other hand, participants with higher maternal role and self-role satisfaction had lower anxiety. Furthermore, the findings revealed that maternal role and self-

role satisfaction predicted anxiety, and self-role was found to have the most influence of all other factors. Essentially, self-role satisfaction also affects other variables. However, the demographic variables (employment and the number of children) and social support (e.g., husband, family, and friends) did not predict maternal anxiety. Finally, the study suggested that mothers who are satisfied with their lives tend to be more satisfied with their self-role and have less childrearing anxiety. Critically, Iwasaki et al. (2017) study demonstrated that self-role satisfaction could be the most significant factor related to maternal happiness, life satisfaction, and lower childrearing anxiety.

2.2. Maternal Employment and Subjective Well-Being

Subjective well-being, as defined by Diener in 1984, pertains to self-reported assessments of one's own well-being. It encompasses how individuals personally perceive and evaluate various aspects of their lives. Moreover, subjective well-being can be an important way of predicting individual mental health, wellness, and longevity (Das et al., 2020). It also provides a valuable means of evaluating individuals' overall life satisfaction (Rogers, 1961). According to Ed Diener (1984), subjective well-being comprises three components. 1. Frequent positive affect; refers to an individual experiencing positive emotions and mood frequently. 2. Infrequent negative affect; not experiencing negative feelings or mood often. 3. Cognitive evaluations refer to how individuals think about their lives and overall life satisfaction. Diener (1984) emphasized that these three factors control and manipulate how people experience the quality of their lives. In other words, the living environment is essential to an individual's sense of happiness and satisfaction. Nevertheless, individuals with high levels of subjective well-being will have less discrepancy between their actual and ideal selves

(Das et al., 2020; Rogers, 1961). The more congruence between the actual and ideal self, the more self-satisfaction and happiness (Rogers, 1961). People may feel more satisfied when their fulfillment criteria are met and less satisfied when not (Diener et al., 1999).

Thus, understanding the conflict and the outcome between work and family on women's satisfaction is critical because satisfaction is a component of well-being, which could affect women's function as parents, and ultimately affect the quality of their children's lives (Ahamad, 1996; Kitamura & Muto, 2003). Research has shown that married women with children experience challenges between balancing family and work (Keldenich, 2020), and one of the reasons is that it is due to the deep root of society's norm practice of "what a good mother is" (Ohinata, 2020). For example, fear of negative evaluation by others has been reported as strongly affecting maternal well-being (Liss et al., 2012; Ota, 2006). In other words, working mothers are anxious and worried about being unable to devote their time to their children and household and are aware of others' evaluations (Kashiwagi, 1999, 2008; Ohinata, 1998; Toda, 2012). Concerning that, most mothers quit their jobs to give birth (Ikeda, 2019) and believed it was the right thing to do (Toda, 2012). However, the consequences of being employed or not after the first child's birth may create a gap between what the mother desires to be and cannot achieve. Previous studies have pointed out that having children might be a barrier for a mother to pursue their interest, and the outcome may affect her psychological well-being in later life (Moen & Wethington, 1999; Perrig-Chiello et al., 2008). Indeed, middle-aged mothers' health condition has been discussed as a fundamental problem related to the consequences after their firstborn (Moen & Wethington, 1999).

However, despite that, research showed that working mothers have higher life satisfaction and lower childrearing anxiety than non-working mothers (Haraguchi et al., 2005;

Nakajima et al., 2016; Takeya, 2006). Moreover, non-working mothers showed higher anxiety about their future (Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005). Ideally, part-time mothers were defined as the best ideal to suit their family life or have a work-life balance (Ahmad, 2009; Arshad et al., 2015; Buehler & O'Brien, 2011). However, research reported that part-time mothers have higher anxiety and low satisfaction than full-time mothers and homemakers (Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005).

2.3. Self-Realization, Anxiety and Happiness

Initially, the definition of self-realization was adopted from the theory of self-actualization proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1943 (Sasaki, 2020). It refers to the desire people must achieve in their life in total capacity or potential as human beings. Maslow also emphasized that all humans have an innate desire to achieve self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). Sasaki (2020) studied the concept of self-actualization and how the Japanese adopted it after World War II and referred to it as self-realization. His research found that participation in society was a way for individuals to increase their self-actualization. According to Sasaki (2020), the Japanese often refer to self-actualization as self-realization, translated in Japanese as “*jiko-jitsugen*,” and has been widely discussed in recent years research field regarding life satisfaction and happiness (Sasaki, 2020).

Kashiwagi and Hirayama (2005) investigated the relationships between maternal anxiety, self-realization, relationships with husbands, and happiness among mothers rearing young children and middle-aged mothers with older children concerning their employment statuses. The results showed that self-realization was significantly negatively related to

anxiety, especially seen in part-time mothers, both child-rearing and middle-aged mothers. Moreover, part-time mothers had higher anxiety scores, which was related to lower life satisfaction of the part-time mothers. On the other hand, full-time mothers showed higher scores in self-realization and life satisfaction in both child-rearing and middle-aged mothers. The study results also revealed that self-realization and life satisfaction imply the mother's relationship with their husband (Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005). Besides, child-rearing homemakers revealed low anxiety, which suggested they were strongly connected with their relationship with their husbands. In other words, life satisfaction and self-realization among child-rearing homemakers depend more on their relationship with their husbands than middle-aged homemakers. The study suggested that relationships with husbands are less critical in achieving life satisfaction among middle-aged homemakers. Thus, according to Kashiwagi and Hirayama (2005), self-realization seems essential for achieving life satisfaction, as seen in both full-time child-rearing and middle-aged mothers.

Another finding concerning the relationship between child-rearing anxiety, self-efficacy, and maternal employment was demonstrated by Nakajima and colleagues (2016). The study revealed that full-time mothers have higher self-efficacy than stay-at-home mothers and are less burdened by childcare constraints than stay-at-home mothers. In other words, higher self-efficacy may have influenced the low sense of burden due to childcare constraints. However, there was no significant difference in self-efficacy between part-time and stay-at-home mothers. Furthermore, the study also pointed out that mothers working part-time are less satisfied with their lives than those working full-time or as homemakers. Consequently, the gap between the view of childcare and the actual maternal working style suggests that the gap may increase conflict and anxiety about childcare (Nakajima et al., 2016). Suggesting that

self-efficacy of mothers working part-time may be related to whether they are in their desired employment status.

Indeed, previous research has reported that mothers engaged in part-time work experience different health risks, including nonstandard work hours, significant workload, and less access to health insurance, which may lead to poor health issues and affect their well-being (Broom et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2008). Thus, concerning maternal employment issues, the variables, such as mothers' work history and career pathway, may need to be included when examining the consequences of mothers' employment status on their well-being because mothers with children are more likely to have workforce gaps (Frech & Damaske, 2012). According to Frech and Damaske's (2012) study, a mother's career path after her firstborn would influence their health later in life. For example, full-time mothers who continue to work full-time after their firstborn have better health in their middle age compared to those who are unemployed or discontinue their work after their firstborn (Frech & Damaske, 2012).

The notion is that motherhood poses a barrier to women's labor participation. Most mothers with children prioritize their children and household and may change their working style, e.g., working part-time (Kashiwagi, 2008; Ohinata, 2020; Okamoto & Fukase, 2013; Toda, 2012). For example, the 2018 Work-Life Balance Report indicated that 46.9% of women leave the workforce after the birth of their first child, reported by the Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office of Japan, 2019. The report also indicated that 80% of women that left their workforce wanted to participate in full-time work (cited from Gender and Equality Cabinet Office Japan, 2019). The following will discuss how the discrepancy between "who you are" and "what you want to be" could negatively affect maternal psychological well-being.

2.4. Maternal Self-Discrepancies

Critically, research that employed the self-discrepancy theory suggests that the discrepancy between the actual self, “who I am,” and the ideal self, “what I want to be,” is associated with psychological maladjustment, e.g., sadness, disappointment, and dissatisfaction (Higgins, 1987, 1989). It is in line with Rogers’ statement (1961) for an individual to be self-actualized, their actual self must be congruent or match with their ideal self; otherwise, self-actualization will be challenging. Concerning that research on the consequences of maternal self-discrepancy has revealed that the discrepancies between the mother’s actual and ideal selves are associated with anxiety, depression, and poor coping skills (Haraguchi et al., 2005; Polasky & Holahan, 1998). Moreover, mothers’ self-discrepancies between the actual and ideal self are related to inappropriate parenting attitudes, e.g., parental avoidance (Lee & Naoi, 2023).

2.4.1. *The Ideal Self is the Core Mechanism for Self-Regulation*

Previous research has already ventured into the realm of examining the intricate relationship between maternal well-being, emotional experiences associated with childcare, and employment status. This work has yielded enlightening results, highlighting, for instance, that the sensation of a “burden due to childcare” is notably more pronounced among homemakers when compared to full-time and part-time working mothers (Iwasaki et al., 2017). Additionally, previous findings have hinted at the notion that full-time working mothers tend to exhibit higher levels of self-efficacy, life-satisfaction than part-timer mothers, and homemaker mothers (Nakajima et al., 2016).

Furthermore, Haraguchi et al. (2005) have underscored the paramount importance of a mother's inclination toward "individual living." Their research suggested that the degree of misalignment between the ideal self-concept and the actual self-concept, especially within the "large gap" group compared to the "small gap" group, elevates the levels of childcare-related anxiety. This implies that when a significant chasm exists between one's aspired self-image and the actuality of their life, it can lead to inner conflicts and heightened anxiety regarding childcare. Consequently, it has become evident that the greater the disparity between the proportions of the "individual self-concept" and reality, relative to the ideal, the more likely it is for childcare anxiety to manifest (Haraguchi et al., 2005).

Furthermore, Kashiwagi and Hirayama (2005) have accentuated the significance of "self-fulfillment as an individual." Their research pointed to the profound connection between individual self-fulfillment and overall life satisfaction and happiness. Intriguingly, their work has revealed that irrespective of generational or employment status differences, the negative impacts of "anxiety and impatience" emerge as statistically significant determinants of "life satisfaction" in the context of "self-fulfillment as an individual."

Previous studies have shown that a mother's psychological well-being is related to their employment status. Furthermore, the pilot study's (see Chapter 3) finding suggests that maternal self-discrepancies are related to employment status, which prompted this study to examine the component of the mother's ideal selves (see Study 1) according to their employment status. By examining the components or the elements that form the participant's ideal selves, this research expects to provide another lens for unveiling maternal mental states related to their well-being.

The ideal self has been broadly discussed in psychology studies until recent days. Most scholars defined the ideal self as a positive psychological component of the self, the core of motivation, which consists of a person's desires, hopes, aspirations, dreams, and goals (Baumeister, 1998; Boyatzis & Akriyou, 2006; Higgins, 1987; Markus & Nurius, 1986). In other words, the ideal self represents a driven force that monitors and guides individual actions and decisions (Higgins, 1987). Indeed, it provides a direction to more profound life satisfaction (Rogers, 1951, 1959, 1961). Moreover, the ideal self manifests as a personal vision or the image the person wishes to become; in job engagement, psychological well-being, and group behavior (Martinez et al., 2021). It helps to develop and expand an individual's capabilities and skills. In short, the ideal self is a core role, leading to positive emotion that positively affects the quality of stimuli, concentration, and pleasurable engagement (Watson & Tellegen, 1985).

However, besides having positive energy, the ideal self has the opposite effect on fear and avoidance. According to Boyatzis & Akriyou (2006), fear and avoidance motives trigger emotional and cognitive processes in individuals that have opposite impacts on their behavior. In other words, fear and avoidance motives can negatively affect individuals; instead of moving forward and working toward a desired future, the individual moves away from it to avoid threatening aspects of the present or future (Boyatzis & Akriyou, 2006). Hence, the excitement of the ideal self has the function of engaging positive emotional outcomes and impacts intentional change. Whereas feeling of fear or avoidance engages the negative emotional effect that makes individuals defend themselves or contemplate adaptation (Kang & Aikawa, 2009). Individuals who hold firm in their ideal self (i.e., goals, desires, or

aspirations.) will move in the direction with positive energy, motivation, and efficacy. Thus, those positive energies within them overcome fear, threat, or avoidance behavior.

2.4.2. The Components of the Ideal Self

Scholars defined the form of the ideal self as a deep-seated personality (Boyatzis & Akriyou, 2006). It manifests the individual's desire for what kind of person, job, collective action, or lifestyle he or she wants to achieve (Martinez, 2021). So, what are the elements that make up the ideal self?

The article published by Boyatzis and Akriyou (2006) has provided a further understanding of the components of the ideal self. The components of the ideal self that indicated by Boyatzis & Akriyou (2006) comprise three significant elements that contribute significantly to the development of the ideal self. The three major components (significant elements) are hope, the image of the desired future, and core identity.

The term *hope* refers to something we cannot see but believe or wish could happen in the future. In other words, it refers to a person's expectation, a cheerful attitude, and belief that good things will happen. Alternatively, wishes or aims will be fulfilled. Moreover, hope is essential to setting and achieving goals or expectations, and is linked to self-efficacy, feasibility, and optimism (Boyatzis & Akriyou, 2006). Self-efficacy refers to an individual's confidence in the circumstances or ability to make something happen. A belief that a person has in his/her capacity to accomplish necessary action to achieve efficient performance attainments (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). It reflects confidence in exerting control over individuals' motivation, behavior, attitude, and environment and creates the possibilities or

feasibility for things to happen. Thus, self-efficacy determines individuals' perceptions of possibilities. Meanwhile, it is also essential to keep an optimistic mindset. In other words, these elements (self-efficacy, feasibility, and optimism) work together to create "hope."

The second component is the image of the desired future (dreams and aspirations). The image or dreams also express one's inner needs, wishes, and fears (Murray, 1938; McClelland, 1985). They come from many sources and interact with each other continuously over time. Among the primary sources are one's values and philosophy. Moreover, these sources are created and nurtured by the individual's family culture, reference groups, and social identity groups to which one belongs (Boyatzis et al., 2000; Irtelli et al., 2021). Furthermore, personal history and enduring qualities are a continuous input into one's values and philosophy, including characteristics classified as strengths. In other words, a person's perception of his or her qualities and the degree to which they are positively valued (i.e., viewed as strengths) will influence his or her values and be interpreted by the operating philosophy (Boyatzis et al., 2000). Among these, passion plays a role in activities in sustainable psychological well-being. Passion is strongly inclined toward a self-defining activity that an individual likes or finds essential. Moreover, they invest time and energy regularly (Vallerand, 2012). Besides, for life or career stage, indicating where individuals locate, the environment, and the achievement may contribute to an individual's image of the desired future ideal self-concept because these affects how individuals evaluate themselves and set their goals or aim (Kang & Aikawa, 2009; Mizuma, 1998).

The third component of the ideal self is the core identity. According to Boyatzis and Akriyou (2006), the core identity is an unconscious set of enduring individual characteristics, motives, or traits (behavior, values, skills), including roles adopted consistently in social

settings. Moreover, the core identity involves the personal context underlying historical and individual autobiographical themes that make it visually coherent and intense.

The components of the ideal self that proposed by Boyatzis & Akriyou (2006) provide a clear picture and further understanding of an individual's ideal self-formation. It also added knowledge of the essential associate elements that may contribute to forming the ideal self that can be adopted as a reference. As described by Rogers (1959), self-worth could play an essential part in these settings of the formation of the ideal self. Self-evaluation boosts the individuals' sense of self-efficacy (Boyatzis & Akriyou, 2006). However, evaluating the worthiness of an individual's dreams invokes stress, and that stress could limit the openness to innovative ideas and possibilities.

2.5. The Discrepancy Between the Mother's Actual and Ideal self

Haraguchi and colleagues (2005) investigated the relationship between the mother's individual lifestyle orientation and childcare anxiety by examining the participants' self-discrepancies between actual and ideal self as family role, social role, and self-role. The data was collected from 842 mothers with young children. In the study, the participants were asked to rate how close they think they are to their ideal selves in family, social, and self-roles. Then, the discrepancy was examined by how much of a gap there is in the composition ratio by analysis of variance (ANOVA).

The study's result showed that in the "family role" category, the high discrepancy group had significantly higher child-rearing anxiety scores than the low discrepancy group.

Similarly, with the “self-role,” the high discrepancy group had significantly higher child-rearing anxiety scores than the low discrepancy group. In other words, the more significant the difference between the actual and ideal selves in family and self-role, the higher the mothers’ child-rearing anxiety scores were, and the smaller the difference between the actual and ideal selves, the lower the child-rearing anxiety scores. However, the discrepancy in “social role” category did not reveal any significant relation with child-rearing anxiety.

In addition, among all these variables, discrepancies between the mother’s actual and ideal self-role were revealed to be more critically and positively correlated to child-rearing anxiety. The study also pointed out that non-working mothers revealed significantly higher child-rearing anxiety scores and had more significant discrepancies between their actual and ideal self-role. The study suggested that working mothers gain life satisfaction through their work and have lower child-rearing anxiety. The study also highlighted that the lower the ideal self-role score, the more likely child-rearing anxiety would be aroused. Consequently, the study has demonstrated that self-role is the most essential factor that could be related to maternal child-rearing, which aligns with the previous findings by Iwasaki et al. (2017), self-role satisfaction is essential for maternal life satisfaction.

Self-discrepancy scores could be measured in various ways. Previous research has utilized methods where individuals describe or select traits such as roles they want to embody, personality traits they aspire to, appearance preferences, and their desired relationships with others, in adjective form, to define their ideal self (Matsuoka, 2006; Mizuma, 1992).

Lee and Naoi (2023) investigated the relationship between maternal self-discrepancy, parental attitudes, and the daughter’s self-esteem and self-identity. The study recruited the

participants from female undergraduates and their mothers. The mother participants responded to Parental Attitudes Scale (developed by Suzuki in 1985, cited from Horiyou et al., 1994), and Selves Questionnaire (Matsuoka, 2006). In the Selves Questionnaire, the participants listed up to five ideal selves in five different traits: personality, appearance, relationship, lifestyle, and abilities, then rated to what extent their actual self is compared to their ideal self on a 7-point scale. On the other hand, the daughter participants responded to the questionnaires on self-esteem (Yamamoto et al., 1986, as cited in Horiyou et al., 1994), and self-identity (Kato, 1983). The final sample of 52 mother-daughter pairs was analyzed. The results revealed that the mother's self-discrepancies in personality significantly correlated with parental avoidance. Moreover, discrepancies in personality and abilities significantly negatively correlated with the daughter's self-esteem. In addition, discrepancies in the personality domain predicted parental avoidance and low self-esteem in their daughters. The study suggested that the mother's self-discrepancies between the actual and ideal self could relate to inappropriate parenting styles, such as parental avoidance (Lee & Naoi, 2023).

2.5.1. The Confusion of the Ideal Self: The Ought Self

Research has defined that the confusion about the ideal self is from the "ought self" (Baumeister, 1998; Boyatzis & Akriyou, 2006; Higgins, 1989a; Markus & Nurius, 1986). The ought self is a concept, a belief, and an expectation desired by others. It is a version of the ideal self imposed by significant others (i.e., parents or peers) or society. In other words, the ought-self refers to the perspective of others, how others think or expect that the individual should be to fulfill his (her) role or purpose. For example, an individual may have the image of

desire to become an artist, but the parents and family members expect him to become a doctor, and they think it is the best choice.

Furthermore, research indicated that the philosophy of the ideal self and the ought self is strongly related to parents' facilitative and preventive nurturing attitudes, respectively (Higgins, 1987). For example, the formation of the ought self is closely related to parents' precautionary attitude toward their children's failures, i.e., the children failed to accomplish what they wanted (Strauman, 1996b).

However, in many cases, the ideal and ought self are consistently internalized and challenging to be identified (Kodaira, 2004). In other words, an individual ought self is integrated into their ideal self, and there appears to be no conflict or contradiction (Higgins, 1987; Kodaira, 2007; Markus & Nurius, 1987). Thus, individuals will confuse their ideal self with their ought self (Boyatzis & Akriyou, 2006; Higgins, 1987; Matsuoka et al., 2006), primarily when social norms of role conformity or stereotype occur. For example, a mother may need clarification on success in her career and becoming a homemaker. This is because, although she wants to be active in her career, she is also thinking of becoming a stay-at-home mom at the same time. After all, it is the right thing to do.

Research defined that suppose a person works toward the ought self intentionally and fails; they awake and feel betrayed, frustrated, or angry for the energy they wasted pursuing dreams and expectations desired by others (Boyatzis & Akriyou, 2006). Moreover, in Japan, research has pointed out that one of the reasons for child-rearing anxiety among Japanese women was the failure to live up to the social norms, "the image of a good mother portrayed by society" (Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005). Indeed, women end up feeling miserable because they try to pursue what others think a good mother should be and fail to please others. On the

other hand, some studies defined that an individual who works toward their “ought self” as the individual’s inner desire or will to please others (Boyatzis & Akriyou, 2006).

The conflict (discrepancy) between becoming the ideal self and the ought self is related to emotional vulnerabilities or emotional distress (Abelson & Rosenberg, 1958; Heider, 1958; Higgins, 1987; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Rogers, 1961). Ideally, people prefer less gap between their actual self and their ideal or ought self. Any discrepancies within the “self” may lead to specific emotional and motivational consequences if they fall short (Matsuoka, 2006).

In light of the above discussion, the components of the ideal self and ought self are conceivable to be dependent on the mother’s particular employment status. Furthermore, by giving the participants an open-ended questionnaire and asking them to articulate their conceptions of the ideal and ought self, it would be possible to elucidate the components of the ideal and ought self that depend on the mother’s distinct employment status. This revelation can be achieved through the astute analysis of co-occurrence network diagrams using KH Coder in Study 1, shedding light on the intricate relationship between a mother’s self-concept and her employment status.

2.6. The Discrepancy Between the Mother’s Actual and Ought Self

Identifying as a mother and developing a motherhood identity involves integrating ideals about how they should act according to reality and societal norms (Hays, 1998; Kashiwagi, 2008; Ohinata, 1998, 2020; Okamoto, 2006; Meeussen & Laar, 2018). Thus, mothers may integrate the ideal proclaimed by their husbands, parents, children, or society,

which defines itself as the ought self. Research has shown that different relationships with significant others relate to expressing various aspects of the self (Matsuoka et al., 2005; Reid & Deaux, 1996). Indeed, significant others may have different views of a mother's ideal self of what they think the mother should accomplish. The perspective of the close others could affect the mother's subjective well-being (Matsuoka et al., 2005; Ota, 2006), incredibly when fear of negative evaluation from their close others is aroused (Liss et al., 2012). In other words, mothers may strive to conform to what others perceive as desirable, out of fear of negative evaluation from those others.

Regarding the detrimental effects of internalizing idealized standards of perfect motherhood, Liss and colleague (2012) investigated the relationships between maternal self-discrepancies, guilt, shame, and fear of negative evaluation of others among 181 mothers of children five and under through an online survey. The study revealed that guilt and shame were related to the fear of negative evaluation by others, which affected maternal self-discrepancy. Moreover, fear of evaluation by others moderates the relationships between maternal self-discrepancy and shame. The study suggested that mothers who greatly feared the negative evaluation of others revealed stronger relationships between those variables than mothers with less fear of negative evaluation. Thus, the mother's close others substantially impact her well-being.

Matsuoka et al. (2006) examined the effects of the discrepancies between individuals' actual selves and their ought selves (i.e., ideal self that portrayed by parents, husband, children, friends, and peers) on self-esteem about gender differences, gender roles, and employment status in 404 men and women with preschool and college-aged children. The study asked the participants to list each three of the ought selves that they think are portrayed

by their husband, parents, children, friends, and peers. The study revealed that the discrepancies between the actual and ought self significantly negatively impact self-esteem, according to gender and employment differences. Male participants were more likely to report that the discrepancies between the actual and ought self (from the perspective of their peers/work colleagues) were negatively correlated with their self-esteem. In contrast, female participants were more likely to report that the discrepancies between the actual and ought self (from the perspective of their children, friends, and parents) were negatively correlated with their self-esteem.

In addition, the discrepancies between the actual and ought self (from their parents' viewpoint) predicted self-esteem in homemakers with preschool and college-aged children. In other words, homemakers' self-evaluation is strongly impacted by their parents rather than their husbands or children. However, peers and friends predicted the self-esteem of part-time mothers with preschool children, and children predicted the self-esteem of part-time mothers with college-aged children. On the other hand, parents and peers predicted full-time mothers with preschool children, and children, parents, and peers predicted full-time mothers with college-aged children.

Consequently, the study by Matsuoka et al. (2006) has demonstrated how discrepancies between individuals' actual selves and their ideal selves (i.e., as portrayed by their husbands, parents, children, friends, and peers) vary concerning gender differences, gender roles, and employment status and how these differences impact self-esteem. More importantly, mothers with preschool children and mothers with college-aged children revealed the differences between different close others that may predict their self-esteem. Moreover, the study suggested that compared to employed women, homemakers have less social connection and

are more closely tied to their mothers. Previous research has shown that most women have a close relationship with their parents from adolescence onward, even into adulthood, and they are more likely to choose their parents as support objects regarding needs (Kitamura & Muto, 2003).

In addition, full-time and part-time mothers with college-aged children revealed an implication that their children impact their self-esteem. Middle-aged may refer to “the nesting period,” with the departure of children. It is also a time of identity restructuring (Okamoto, 1997). Thus, a mother may be concerned about their child’s perspective on her way of life. Adolescents may look critically at their parents’ marriage or family life for clues to their future (Moroi, 1997). The discrepancy between the actual self and the ought self (from child’s perspective) affected only the nesting period, and peers, conversely, only the parenting period among mothers with preschool children. The study indicated that depending on the developmental stage, role fulfillment, such as motherhood and occupational roles, varies and is associated with adjustment (Matsuoka et al., 2006).

However, the study results revealed no effect of the discrepancy between the actual self and the ought self from the husband’s perspective. Although it has long been noted that the marital relationship may significantly impact psychological adjustment in women, the influence of the spousal role is less influential than that of the parental or occupational role (Matsuoka, 2006). Onodera (2005) pointed out how married women gradually become more self-assertive and persistent toward their husbands after becoming parents. In addition, research also reported that contemporary women are more individualistic due to changes in social-economic, family structure, education, and employment opportunities (Nagahisa & Kashiwagi, 2000; Tanaka, 1990; Shirahase, 2000).

2.7. Significance and Research Objectives

In summary, research has pointed out that changes in Japanese women's values have influenced psychological developmental studies on women, shifting the focus toward an individualistic ideology of how women can achieve happiness and life satisfaction through their roles as individuals (Nagahisa, 2015). For example, research has revealed that a mother's self-role satisfaction is substantial and has more influence on their psychological well-being than other variables, e.g., husband or parents' support. Mothers who have higher scores on self-role have higher life satisfaction (Iwasaki et al., 2017). Moreover, the larger the discrepancies between the mother's actual and ideal self-role, the higher the childrearing anxiety and low life satisfaction (Haraguchi et al., 2005). On the other hand, research on the relationship between maternal employment, self-realization, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction revealed that full-time working mothers have higher self-realization, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction, which is related to low childrearing anxiety compared to non-working mothers (Ikeda, 2019; Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005). That demonstrated employment status could be an essential factor for maternal well-being.

In addition, studies on maternal self-discrepancies also provided a further landscape in which discrepancies between the mother's actual and ideal self critically affect their parental attitudes (Lee & Naoi, 2023). Furthermore, the ideal self portrayed by significant others, which the mothers perceive, may impact their well-being (Matsuoka et al., 2006).

However, most studies were conducted among mothers with young children. Moreover, the discussion of role involvement and satisfaction was focused on the challenges young mothers face in establishing a work career and raising their children simultaneously (Iwasaki et al., 2017). There are still lack of understanding the dynamics of middle-aged

mothers' role involvement and life satisfaction (Moen & Wethington, 1999; Perrig-Chiello et al., 2008; Willis et al., 2010). Moreover, limited research has focused on exploring mothers with adolescent children's subjective well-being. The importance or significance of being a mother in the developmental stage of adulthood has yet to be extensively explored (Namioka, 2020). Additionally, it has been noted that there is scarce insight from the perspective of mothers, particularly regarding the impact on mothers' psychological state during middle age (Kitamura & Muto, 2003).

Notably, middle-aged (aged range 40-64) is the peak of life when people reflect on their past and move on (Okamoto & Fukase, 2013, p. 172). According to Okamoto and Fukase (2013), middle age is the crucial turning point, a time to reflect on how one lived the first half of one's life and to reconsider how one will live in the future (p. 155). Life-span developmental psychology has provided evidence that humans are continually growing and experiencing psychological challenges (Lally & Valentine-French, 2023; Okamoto & Fukase, 2013). Having issues such as job-related reorientation, family-related change, bodily or health issues, and children's departure, middle-aged mothers constantly face different role challenges (Matsuoka et al., 2006; Perrig-Chiello et al., 2008). Furthermore, the maternal role is no longer as critical as when their children were small and needed much care and attention (Kashiwagi, 2008; Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005).

Moreover, research has emphasized that middle age is a period marked by instability across various dimensions. These include mental and physical challenges associated with aging, as well as family-related changes, such as the departure of children, which leads to a decreased parental role (Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005; Nagahisa & Kashiwagi, 2001; Pavalko & Gong, 2005). Thus, this period may prompt increased reflection on oneself or self-role

(Matsuoka et al., 2006; Okamoto & Fukase, 2013, p. 172). Individuals might contemplate their achievements, the value of family, children, and spouses, or their broader social roles. Any discrepancies between the mother's actual and ideal self or actual and ought self might affect the mother's well-being. Thus, research on mothers with young adult children is necessary to understand maternal mental health in middle age. Identifying the sources of maternal distress from various perspectives can enhance understanding and reduce adverse risks for the well-being of mothers and children or other family members.

In addition, little is known about the relationship between mothers' self-discrepancies and subjective well-being, as well as the factors that moderate this relationship. Specifically, there is limited understanding of the components that form a mother's ideal self, "what I want to be"—and the ought self, "what others think I should be." The inner voice of mothers remains underexplored. Therefore, this research examines the subjective well-being of middle-aged Japanese mothers through the lens of self-discrepancy theory, with a focus on their employment status.

In this research, an assumption is made that variances in mothers' self-discrepancies related to their employment status are associated with specific aspects of their ideal selves. However, there is still a need for further clarification regarding the component of a mother's ideal self concerning her employment status in order to fully comprehend the influence of employment status on a mother's self-discrepancies. For instance, it is important to examine the nature of maternal ideal self and how it relates to their employment status. These questions need to be addressed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of employment status on a mother's self-perception. Secondly, this study aims to investigate the consequences of the disparity between a mother's perceived ideal self and her ought self in the context of her

maternal role, anxiety levels, and subjective well-being. In addition, this research sheds light on several key areas: It examined the extent to which a mother's self-discrepancy predicts her achievement in the maternal role, levels of anxiety, and subjective well-being, particularly in relation to her employment status. Specifically, the research explored the impact of dissonance between a mother's actual self and her ideal self, as well as her actual-ought selves, on maternal role achievement, state-trait anxiety, and overall subjective well-being. The study investigated the significant relationships among maternal role achievement, state-trait anxiety, and subjective well-being within the context of this research. It also evaluated how the perception of a gap between the actual self and the ideal self contributes to variations in subjective well-being.

The following chapter will outline the procedure for conducting a pilot study, which will precede the main study: Study 1 and Study 2. The main goal of the pilot study is to evaluate the feasibility of the questionnaire design in capturing maternal ideal selves and to assess its alignment with the research objectives. Additionally, the pilot study will be instrumental in refining and adjusting the methodologies for the main study based on initial findings and insights gathered during this preliminary phase, such as participants can freely describe their ideal selves using the designed questionnaire, investigate whether there are differences in ideal self-perceptions and mental health indicators based on maternal employment status (the nature of these differences will be examined). While inferential statistics were not utilized for analysis, the aim is to confirm emerging trends.

Chapter 3: Pilot Study

This doctoral dissertation research investigated how discrepancies between the actual and ideal self, and the actual and ought self, of mothers with university/college-aged children are associated with their employment status and its impact on their psychological well-being. It is expected that indicators of maternal psychological well-being may vary depending on employment status. However, there has been little research conducted on mothers with college-aged children. Therefore, a pilot study was conducted to evaluate the validity of the survey questionnaires intended for use in Study 1 and Study 2. Additionally, it sought to assess the effectiveness of self-report questionnaires in aligning with the study's objectives and participants' ability to provide relevant responses.

The pilot study serves as the inaugural phase in the comprehensive study protocol, playing a pivotal role in the planning and refinement of Study 1 and Study 2. The forthcoming sections will elucidate the design of the questionnaires, the criteria for participant selection, and the data collection procedures. The results and analysis of the pilot study will be

presented, providing valuable insights into the subsequent stages of the research. For instance, participants can freely describe their ideal selves using the designed questionnaire. The study will investigate whether there are differences in ideal self-perceptions and mental health indicators based on maternal employment status. While inferential statistics were not utilized for analysis, the aim is to confirm emerging trends.

3.1. Method

3.1.1. Participants

Twenty mother participants with university/college-aged children were recruited randomly through their children, who attended the local university/college-aged. The mother participants ($M =$ aged 40-55) included nine regular-employed mothers, eight non-regular-employed mothers, and three homemaker mothers. All the participants accessed the survey via a designated URL or QR code. Participants were asked to fill in their age, employment status, and educational background in the demographic section. The participant's employment status was categorized into regular-employed, non-regular-employed, and homemaker. The definition of regular-employed individuals refers to those who are *seiki shokuin/jūgyōin* (regular staff/employees) or who fit under a comparable employment type at their place of employment, according to Japan's labor and employment regulations. Conversely, non-regular employment is defined as those who are legally referred to as "other" employment types, such as *haken jigyōsho no haken shain* (temporary agency workers employed by temporary work agencies, also referred to as "dispatched workers"), *shokutaku* (entrusted workers), *yuki-keiyaku shain* (fixed-term contract workers), or *pāto* (part-time workers) (Takahashi, 2023).

3.1.2. Procedure

According to the university research ethics committee, all pertinent documents, including the questionnaires, were submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of International Christian University for thorough examination in September 2021. Subsequently, ethical approval for the research was granted by the University Ethics Committee in November 2021. As part of ethical considerations, the request for research cooperation encompasses a clear articulation of the research's purpose, methodology, and assurance of confidentiality, with a strict commitment to ensuring that individuals will not be identifiable in the research process.

Subsequently, data collection for the pilot study took place from April to June 2022. To facilitate this process, an online survey link and a QR code were generated. The survey information was then disseminated to students at the conclusion of their classes. Volunteer students were tasked with copying the designated survey link and forwarding it to their respective mothers. This approach allowed for the efficient distribution of the survey to the intended participants.

The survey questionnaires included:

1. **Self-Questionnaire:** This measures the mother's self-discrepancy. The structure of the Self-Questionnaire was adopted from Matsuoka et al. (2006) and Mizuma (1998).
2. **Maternal Role Achievement Scale:** Developed by Doshi et al. (1990; cited in Horiyou et al., 1994).
3. **State-Trait Anxiety Inventory Scale:** Developed by Shimizu and Imae (1981; cited in Horiyou et al., 1994).

4. **Subjective Well-Being Scale:** Developed by Ito et al. (2003).

All the questionnaires are in Japanese.

1. **Self-Questionnaire:** The main objective of this pilot study is to test the adequacy of this questionnaire. The results from the pilot study was applied to Study 1 and Study 2. The questionnaire is an open-ended (self-report) format, which benefits from obtaining detailed and open-ended answers. This questionnaire includes the measurement of two dimensions: (a) the discrepancies between the mother's actual and ideal self, and (b) the discrepancies between the mother's actual and ought self. The ideal self refers to the attributes the mother wants to possess, and the ought self refers to what others (their husband, parents, children, and society) believe the mother should or ought to be. First, the participants were asked to list up to three ideal selves, attributes they want to possess (e.g., "Please list up to three attributes of what type of person you want to be."). Next, the participants are asked to list up to three ought selves, attributes others believe they should or ought to possess (e.g., "Please list up to three attributes of the type of person that your husband, parents, children, and society believes you should or ought to be."). Finally, the participants are asked to rate to what extent their actual self-aligns with their ideal selves and ought selves on a seven-point scale, from one (does not apply to me) to seven (applies to me very well). The discrepancy score for each dimension refers to the reversed values of each score.
2. **Maternal Role Achievement Scale:** This scale was developed by Doshi et al. (1990; cited in Horiyou et al., 1994) to measure the mother's responsibility towards her child from her viewpoint. The scale contains 10 questions. The participants are asked to rate the questions on a five-point scale, with one denoting "does not apply to me at all" and

five denoting “applies to me very well.” Higher scores indicate higher maternal role achievement.

3. **State-Trait Anxiety Inventory Scale:** This scale was developed by Shimizu and Imae (1981; cited in Horiyou et al., 1994), this scale measures two dimensions: state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety refers to situational anxiety, while trait anxiety is the characteristic tendency to experience state anxiety in response to situations. Each dimension contains 20 questions and is measured on a four-point Likert scale, with one denoting “not at all” and four denoting “applies to me very well.”
4. **Subjective Well-Being Scale:** This scale was developed by Ito et al. (2003), this scale consists of 15 questions that measure five areas (3 items in each area): “positive feeling for life,” “achievement,” “self-confidence,” “blessing in life,” and “disappointment.” This scale is measured on a four-point Likert scale, with one denoting “not at all” and four denoting “applies to me very well.”

3.2. Results

Analysis of the collected forms indicates that all participants completed and provided detailed descriptions of their ideal and ought selves, considering perspectives from the roles of parents, husbands, children, and society. This comprehensive and precise engagement by participants underscores the reliability of the self-report questionnaires used in this study. The ability of participants to articulate their perceptions of ideal and ought selves across various employment statuses ensures the credibility and effectiveness of the questionnaires in capturing the nuanced aspects of their self-concept.

The results are shown in Table 1, where the discrepancies between the mothers' actual-ideal self and actual-ought self (portrayed by their husband, parents, children, and society) are explained. The results revealed that the discrepancies between the actual and ideal self: the full-time homemaker scored higher in ($M = 3.44$), next higher is non-regular employment, ($M = 3.04$), and regular employment ($M = 2.96$). Moreover, the discrepancies between the actual-ought self: the discrepancies between the actual-society revealed the higher score, and the non-regular employment show the higher score ($M = 3.79$) compared to the regular employment ($M = 3.19$) and the homemaker ($M = 2.78$).

Table 1

The Mean Scores of Mother's Self-Discrepancy by Employment Status

Employment Status	<i>N</i>	Discrepancy Scores Between the Mother's Actual Self (Ac) and Ideal Self				
		Ac-Ideal	Ac-Parents	Ac-Husband	Ac-Children	Ac-Society
		<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>
Regular	9	2.96	3.11	2.85	3.29	3.19
Non-regular	8	3.04	3.58	3.29	3.63	3.79
Homemaker	3	3.44	3.0	2.44	3.67	2.78

Note. Ac is Actual Self.

Moreover, Figure 1 shows the score of state-trait anxiety. The results revealed that non-regular employment scored higher for both state anxiety ($M = 43.50$) and trait anxiety ($M = 42.25$) than the other two groups. Regular employment scored lower in state anxiety ($M = 37.33$) and trait anxiety ($M = 32.56$).

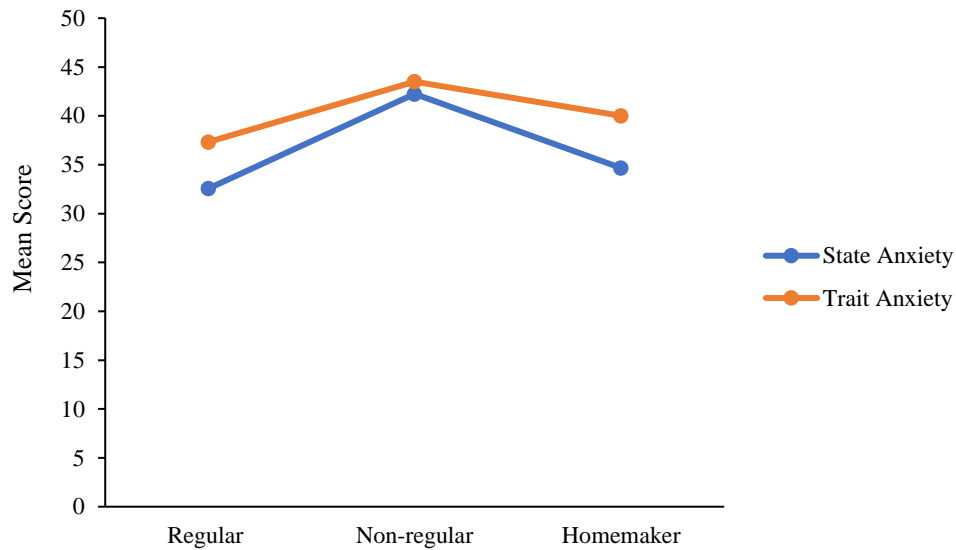
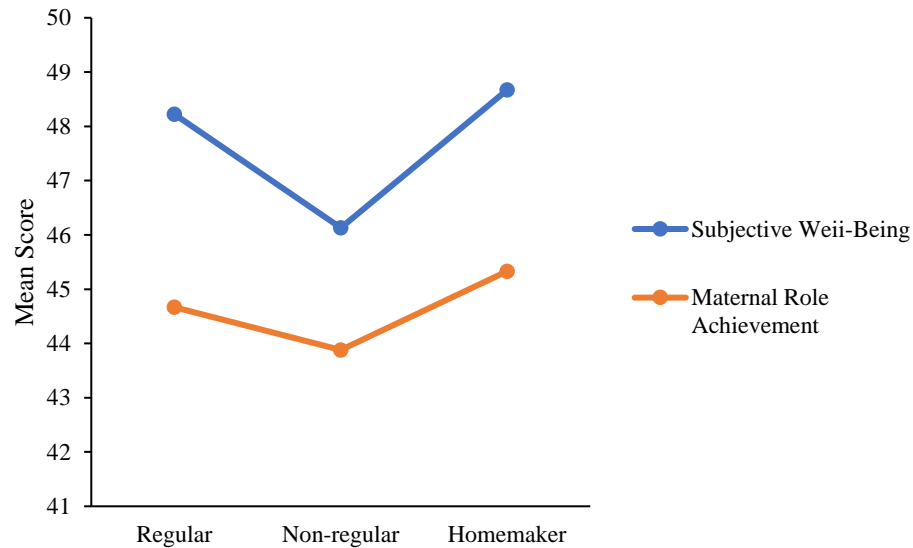
Figure 1*State-Trait Anxiety by Employment Status*

Figure 2 shows the subjective well-being and maternal role achievement score by the employment status. The results revealed that the homemaker scored the highest in subjective well-being ($M = 48.67$), and maternal role achievement ($M = 45.33$). The next higher is the regular employment with subjective well-being score ($M = 48.22$), maternal role achievement ($M = 44.67$). The non-regular employment revealed the lowest in both subjective well-being and maternal role achievement scores.

Figure 2

Maternal Role Achievement and Subjective Well-Being by Employment Status



Furthermore, Pearson correlation's results (Table 2) revealed that the discrepancy between the actual and ought self (parents) significantly positively correlated with state anxiety ($r = .467, p < .05$), and negatively correlated with subjective well-being ($r = -.547, p = .12$). State anxiety was negatively correlated to maternal role achievement ($r = -.365, p = .114$), but there was no significant correlation. On the other hand, trait anxiety was significantly negatively correlated with subjective well-being, $r = -.654, p < .01$ (see Table 2). In addition, trait anxiety was revealed to be significantly positively correlated with state anxiety, $r = .664, p < .001$.

Table 2*The Correlation Between State-Trait Anxiety and Other Variables*

	Ac-Ideal	Ac-Parent	Ac-Husband	Ac-Children	Ac-Society	MRA	SB
State	.251	.467*	.35	.157	.437	-.365	-.547*
<i>p</i> -value	.286	.038	.131	.509	.54	.114	.12
Trait	.164	.154	.257	-.077	.307	.97	-.654**
<i>p</i> -value	.491	.517	.27	.747	.188	.684	.002

Note. Ac refers to Actual Self, MRA refers to maternal role achievement, and SB refers to subjective well-being.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

3.3. Discussion

The findings from the pilot study indicate that non-regularly employed mothers exhibited higher scores in self-discrepancies between their actual selves and their ought selves as perceived by society, compared to both regularly employed mothers and homemakers. Conversely, homemakers showed higher scores in self-discrepancies between their actual selves and their ideal selves, in contrast to both regularly employed and non-regularly employed mothers. These findings may suggest a relationship between self-discrepancy scores in the context of mothers' actual-ought selves as perceived by society and their levels of state-trait anxiety. Specifically, the higher self-discrepancy scores between their actual-ought selves as perceived by society observed among non-regularly employed mothers, along with their elevated scores in both state anxiety and trait anxiety, could imply a connection between these factors. Further analysis may be needed to explore and confirm the nature of this relationship in more detail.

The observation that homemakers exhibit the lowest score in self-discrepancies between their actual selves and both their actual husband and society suggests a potential

explanation for their alignment with social standards related to maternal role achievement. This minimal self-discrepancy may contribute to their perceived success in meeting societal expectations and norms associated with their maternal roles. It highlights the significance of exploring how self-concept and self-discrepancies can influence individuals' adherence to and success in fulfilling specific social roles and expectations.

In summary, the pilot study confirmed the validity of the self-report questionnaires, indicating their appropriateness for use in Study 1 and Study 2. Participants demonstrated a satisfactory ability to comprehend and respond to the self-report questionnaires, providing insights relevant to the study objectives. Notably, a discernible relationship was observed between employment status and discrepancy scores among the mother participants. Furthermore, this study suggests a potential impact of employment status on the mothers' psychological well-being, warranting further investigation in subsequent studies.

Chapter 4: Study 1

This doctoral dissertation investigates the associations between discrepancies between the actual and ideal self and the actual and ought self of mothers with university/college-aged children and their employment status, focusing on the impact on their psychological well-being. A pilot study suggested that employment status may affect maternal self-discrepancy and psychological well-being based on self-report questionnaires. Consequently, Study 1 examined the components of maternal ideal and ought according to the participant's employment status. At first, the free-text responses were analyzed using the KH Coder, a text-mining tool, to identify differences in the frequency of the most commonly expressed words by the participants. This step helped highlight the differences in the keywords and phrases in how participants articulated their views. Secondly, a Chi-Square analysis of extracted phrase usage related to maternal role, family role, and self-role from KH Coder was examined to define the differences between employment status.

KH Coder is a software created by Koichi Higuchi, intended for content analysis and text mining in sociology (Higuchi, 2011; Higuchi et al., 2022). It automatically extracts words from free-text document data and summarizes the entire content through multivariate analysis, allowing one to grasp overall trends. It also includes features for searching for which words have been extracted and a concordance function to confirm the context in which words are used in the original text data. This capability enables a cyclic analysis process that combines quantitative analysis with original text interpretation, allowing for objectivity and integrating the analyst's perspective (Iwamori, 2020). Thus, using KH Coder to analyze and objectify the free-text self-questionnaire data of Study 1 aligns well with the study's criteria.

In contemporary society, the role of mothers has evolved significantly, transcending traditional stereotypes and embracing diverse forms of maternal identity. A crucial aspect of this evolution is the interplay between a mother's ideal self-concept and her employment status, which can have profound implications for individuals and society. However, less is known about how mothers perceive their ideal self-concept. It remains unclear whether mothers perceive their ideal self differently based on their employment status or whether employment status influences their ideal self-perception. Furthermore, understanding the influence of significant-close others on a mother's ideal self-perception is equally essential.

This study explored the complex relationship between the ideal self-image of mothers and their employment status by harnessing the power of free-text responses. Using KH Coder, a text analysis tool, this study aims to delve into the nuanced narratives, opinions, and perceptions of mothers, shedding light on how their ideals and employment circumstances intertwine and shape contemporary motherhood, and how significant others can impact a mother's ideal self-concept. By uncovering these intricate connections, this study aims to

contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities mothers face in various roles, ultimately informing policies and practices that can support and empower mothers in today's multifaceted society.

In addition to a mother's own ideal self-concept, women often adopt perspectives influenced by significant individuals in their lives, such as family members, partners, and close friends. These external viewpoints can have a profound impact on a mother's psychological well-being, shaping her sense of identity and purpose within the context of motherhood. To comprehensively understand the multifaceted nature of maternal identity, this study extends its analysis beyond the mother's own ideal self and delves into the ideal self-portrayed by others, the ought self from the mother's viewpoint.

By meticulously scrutinizing the intricate interplay between maternal ideal self-concepts and their employment status, this study's objective is to pinpoint both the disparities and commonalities in how mothers perceive and align their identities within the broader societal context, particularly in the domain of employment. The invaluable insights extracted from this research will serve as a foundational element for achieving a comprehensive comprehension of the multifaceted factors influencing maternal well-being. This understanding will, in turn, serve as a guiding light for developing strategies and policies aimed at empowering and supporting mothers while accommodating their unique identities and varied employment circumstances.

This study hypothesizes that the maternal role and self-role are fundamental across all employment statuses. However, the emphasis on these roles may differ based on employment status:

1. There would be differences in the ideal self and ought self across employment status.
2. There would be significant differences in word frequency about ideal self and ought self-related to maternal role, family, and self-role across employment status.

4.1. Method

4.1.1. Participants

The participants in this study were the mothers of students attending a local university in the Tokyo metropolitan area. University students in the area facilitated the recruitment of participants. Survey information was distributed to the participants through their children who were attending the local university, and we successfully received completed responses from 123 mothers. Three participants did not complete the questionnaire correctly and were therefore excluded from the analysis. The final sample comprised 120 participants. Among the participants, 23 were homemakers (19.2%), 45 were regular employees (37.5%), and 52 were non-regular employees (43.3%). All participants were Japanese, with ages ranging from 35 to 39 (0.1%), 40 to 49 (28.6%), 50 to 59 (65%), and 60 and above (5.6%). Higher education attainment was as follows: high school graduate (11.9%), master's degree (10.3%), bachelor's degree (73%), and others (4.8%).

4.1.2. Procedure

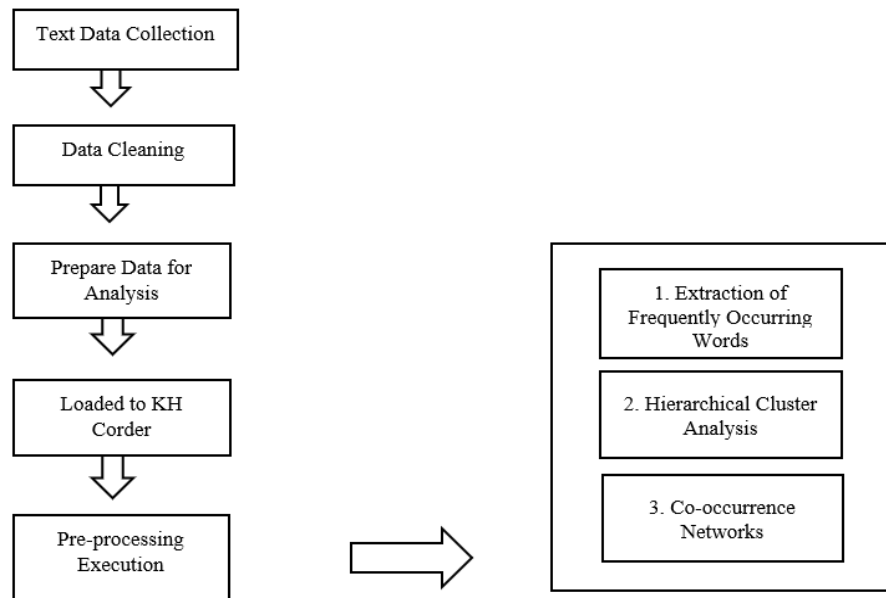
An open-ended survey with a self-report questionnaire in Japanese was developed, drawing inspiration from Matsuoka's (2006) and Mizuma's (1998) research. In the self-report questionnaire, participants were instructed to list three aspects of their ideal selves and ought selves. The demographic section of the survey collected information on participants' age and employment status. The participants' employment status was categorized into three groups: regularly employed, non-regularly employed, and homemakers. Regular employees are individuals who are referred to as *seiki shokuin/jūgyōin* (regular staff/employees) or who fit under a comparable employment type at their place of employment, according to Japan's labor and employment regulations. Conversely, non-regular employment is defined as those who are legally referred to as "other" employment types, such as *haken jigyōsho no haken shain* (temporary agency workers employed by temporary work agencies, also referred to as "dispatched workers"), *shokutaku* (entrusted workers), *yuki-keiyaku shain* (fixed-term contract workers), or *pāto* (part-time workers) (Takahashi, 2023). The survey was conducted from April to October 2023. It was implemented using a Google Form with a unique URL link and QR code. The participants accessed and completed the survey using the provided URL link or QR code.

4.2. Results

KH Coder Analysis

The participants' self-report answers were collected, and the analysis was conducted using KH Coder Version 3 Beta.07f (2023 10/16). The flow of the data analysis and the analysis procedure is outlined in Figure 3. Before proceeding with the analysis, data cleaning involved removing missing words and unreadable symbols, and rectifying typos and errors. Additionally, the standardization of abbreviated notations, *katakana*, *hiragana* expressions, and synonymous terms was performed, and variations in notation were corrected through a replacement process before translation into English. Subsequently, the data was translated into English, and a double-check was conducted using AI software and by Japanese and English native speakers for accuracy. A “Conversion Correspondence Table” was maintained to document these replacement operations.

Once the data was ready for analysis, it was loaded into KH Coder, and preprocessing was initiated. This involved extracting words by part of speech through morphological analysis from the text and organizing them into a database. Additionally, in cases where words were initially separated, such as “fulfill” and “life,” combining them was implemented to enhance the interpretability of the results. The data was prepared for analysis through iterative processes, and text quantification analysis ensued. The analysis involved extracting the most frequently occurring words, conducting hierarchical cluster analysis, and analyzing co-occurrence networks—three distinct methods were employed.

Figure 3*The Flow of Data Analysis*

Extraction of Frequently Occurring Words. At the beginning of the analysis, a list of frequently appearing words was extracted using the KH Coder. This step allowed for a closer examination of the terms commonly used or written by the participants in their writing. The resulting list provides insight into these words' significance in describing their self-concept.

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis. The following hierarchical cluster analysis provides a systematic way to explore and identify patterns or clusters within a dataset. It allows a better understanding of the relationships between participants and their categories of ideal selves.

Co-occurrence Network. A co-occurrence network diagram was created to summarize the frequency of extracted words and the relationships between them. A co-occurrence network illustrates the strength of co-occurrence between extracted words, or in other words, the similarity in occurrence patterns, through a network diagram. The size of the circles represents the frequency of the words, and the distance between connected lines indicates the depth of their relationship.

In this analysis, the calculation of co-occurrence relationships indicating the strength of relevance utilized the *Jaccard* coefficient (Ni Wattanakul et al., 2013). The minimum occurrence frequency for extracted words was set at two, and the visualization of co-occurrence relationships was narrowed down to 60 drawings for analysis. It is worth noting that in the analysis of co-occurrence networks, the points connected by lines are crucial, and proximity alone does not imply the existence of a co-occurrence relationship. Furthermore, given that the purpose is to analyze co-occurrence, extracted words with high occurrence frequencies but low co-occurrence will not be displayed.

Results of KH Coder Analysis

The results were analyzed according to participants' employment status, categorized into Ideal Selves, Ought Selves portrayed parents, Ought Selves portrayed by husbands, Ought Selves portrayed by children, and Ought Selves portrayed by society (e.g., peers, friends, or relatives) from the participants' viewpoint.

Ideal Selves. Participants were asked to list three ideal selves of what they want to become. Regular employed mothers, numbering 45 participants, generated a total of 125 ideal selves. Non-regular employed mothers, with 52 participants, contributed a total of 156 ideal selves. Additionally, homemakers, comprising 23 participants, listed a total of 69 ideal selves. Analysis was conducted according to participants' employment status.

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words. Following (Table 3) is a list of frequently appearing words extracted. This step allowed for a closer examination of the terms commonly used or written by the participants. The analysis is presented according to the participant's employment status.

Regular Employed Mothers. The ideal selves that are listed by regular employed mothers, the frequencies of specific words are detailed in Table 3. The word "child" appeared most frequently, being repeated 36 times. Furthermore, "mother" was another prominently repeated word, occurring 20 times. The term "child," the expression most frequently mentioned is "listen to the child." Additionally, for the term "mother," the most commonly cited phrase is "a mother who supports the child's needs." In addition to the previously mentioned frequently repeated words, "family" appeared 8 times, "life" 7 times, and both "independent" and "work" were each repeated 5 times. Furthermore, words such as "role model," "household," and "balance" were mentioned more than 3 times. These terms refer to "having work-life balance," "being an independent person," "being the child's role model," and "supporting the family."

Table 3

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words of Regular Employed Mothers' Ideal Selves (tops 50 words)

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Child	36	Balance	3
Mother	20	Cooking	3
Be	12	Emotionally	3
Who	12	Gentle	3
Good	11	Household	3
Always	10	Kind	3
Support	9	Loving	3
Family	8	Meal	3
Life	7	Need	3
Listen	7	Sense	3
Listener	7	Environment	3
Bright	6	Tolerant	3
My	6	Understanding	3
Supportive	5	Want	3
Warm	5	When	3
Work	5	Take	3
Do	4	They	3
Embrace	4	Believe	2
Independent	5	Calm	2
Model	4	Cook	2
Positive	4	Chore	2
Respect	4	Believe	2
Role	4	Empathetic	2
Story	4	Accept	2
Well	4	Base	2

Non-Regular Employed Mothers. The ideal selves that are listed by non-regular employed mothers were analyzed, and the frequencies of specific words are detailed in Table 4. Notice that the word “child” appeared most frequently, repeated 53 times. Additionally, “family” was another prominently repeated word, occurring 16 times, and “mother” 14 times in the responses. When analyzing the term “child,” the most frequently mentioned expression is “listen well to the child.” For the term “family,” the most commonly cited phrase was “protect the family’s life.” Additionally, the most commonly cited phrase for the term “mother” is “being an optimistic and warm mother.”

In addition to frequently repeated words, other notable terms emerged with notable frequencies in the listings. The term “listens” appeared 10 times, “care” and “optimism” occurred 9 times, and “kind” and “loving” were each repeated 5 times. Furthermore, words such as “enjoy,” “independent,” “provide,” “support,” “fulfilling,” and “strong” were mentioned more than 2 times in the participants’ responses. The commonly cited phrases were “enjoy my life,” “to be independent,” “be strong, and “and live a fulfilling life.” These recurring words provide insights into the varied aspects and priorities encompassed within the ideal self-concepts articulated by the participants.

Table 4

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words of Non-Regular Employed Mothers' Ideal Selves (tops 50 words)

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Child	53	Independent	4
Family	16	Live	4
Mother	14	Provide	4
Listens	10	Strong	4
Care	9	Support	4
Optimism	9	Ally	3
Life	8	Gentle	3
Warm	8	Model	3
Flexible	7	Role	3
Bright	6	Devoted	2
Cook	6	Fulfilling	2
Emotionally	6	Good	2
Love	6	Polite	2
Stable	6	Wise	1
Accept	5	Believe	1
Educate	5	Calm	1
Healthy	5	Capable	1
Kind	5	Close	1
Loving	5	Communication	1
Protect	5	Generous	1
Respect	5	Hardworking	1
Be	4	Help	1
Comfort	4	Hobby	1
Enjoy	4	Have	1
Home	4	Humorous	1

Homemaker Mothers. The ideal selves that homemaker mothers list was analyzed, and the frequencies of specific words are detailed in Table 5. Notably, the word “person” appeared most frequently, being repeated 31 times, “child” 13 times, “cheerful,” and “family” 9 times. Additionally, the terms “life,” “listen,” “respect,” and “support” are used more than 3 times. These terms addressed “cheerful person.” When analyzing the term “child,” the most frequently mentioned expression is “listen well to the child.” For the term “family,” the most commonly cited phrase was “protect the family’s life.” Additionally, for the terms “communication,” “fulfill,” “housework,” “mother,” “society,” and “serve,” the most commonly cited phrases are “serve the society,” “live a fulfilled life,” “devoted to household,” and “good in communication with others.”

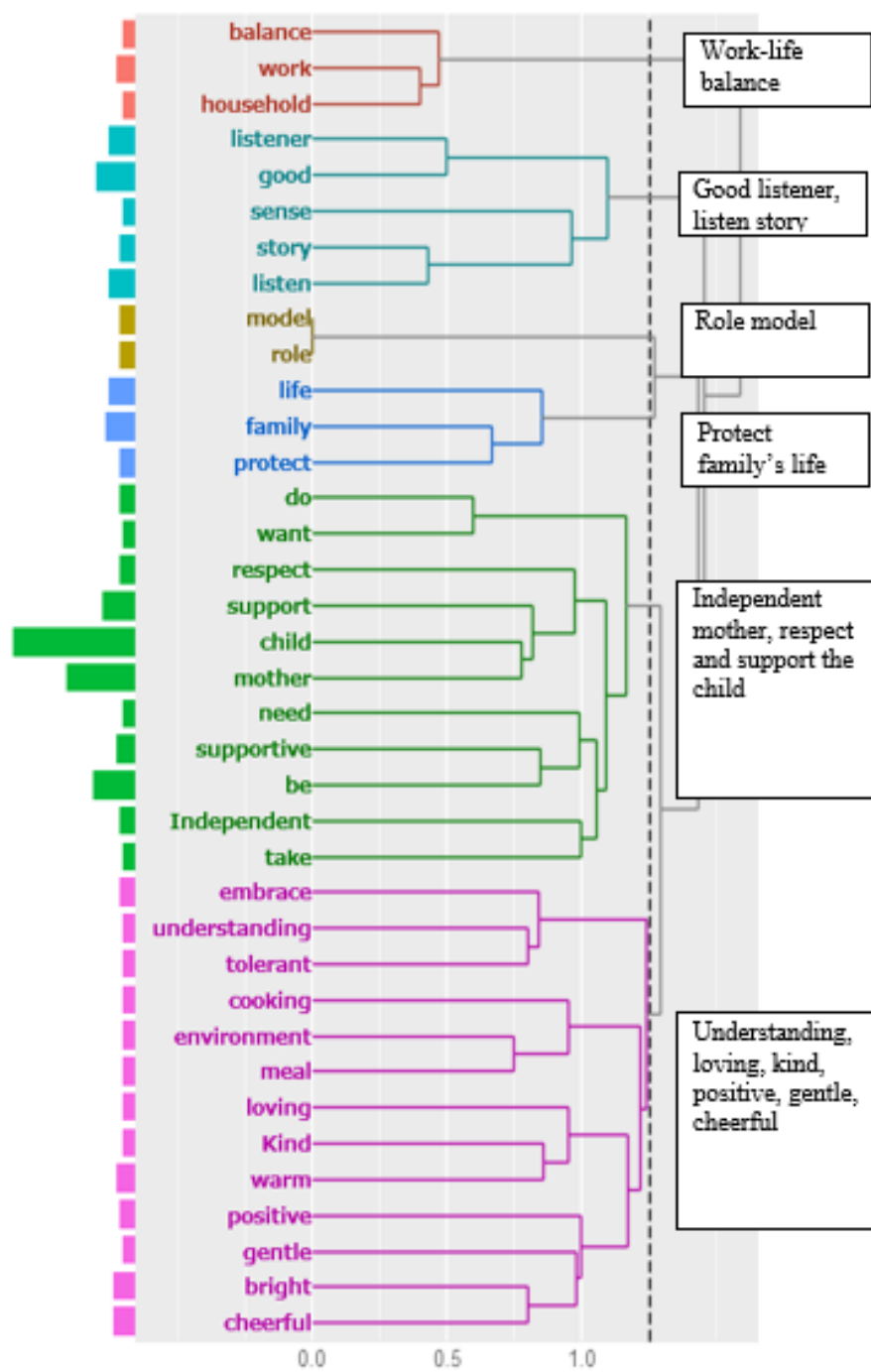
Table 5

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words of Homemaker Mothers' Ideal Selves (tops 44 word)

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Person	31	Live	2
Child	13	Mother	2
Cheerful	9	Serve	2
Family	9	Smile	2
Life	5	Society	2
Listen	5	Treat	2
Calm	4	Understand	2
Kind	4	Value	2
Respect	4	Be	1
Support	4	Cooking	1
Thoughtful	4	Enjoy	1
Comfortable	3	Good	1
Create	3	Hard-work	1
Home	3	Housewife	1
Devoted	3	Money	1
Protect	3	open-minded	1
Affectionate	2	Other	1
Communication	2	Resolute	1
Fulfil	2	Respectable	1
Housework	2	Role-model	1
Keep-up	2	Save	1
Kind	2	Strict	1

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis. The following hierarchical cluster analysis provides a systematic way to explore and identify patterns or clusters within a dataset. It allows a better understanding of the ideal selves' components of the participants according to their employment status.

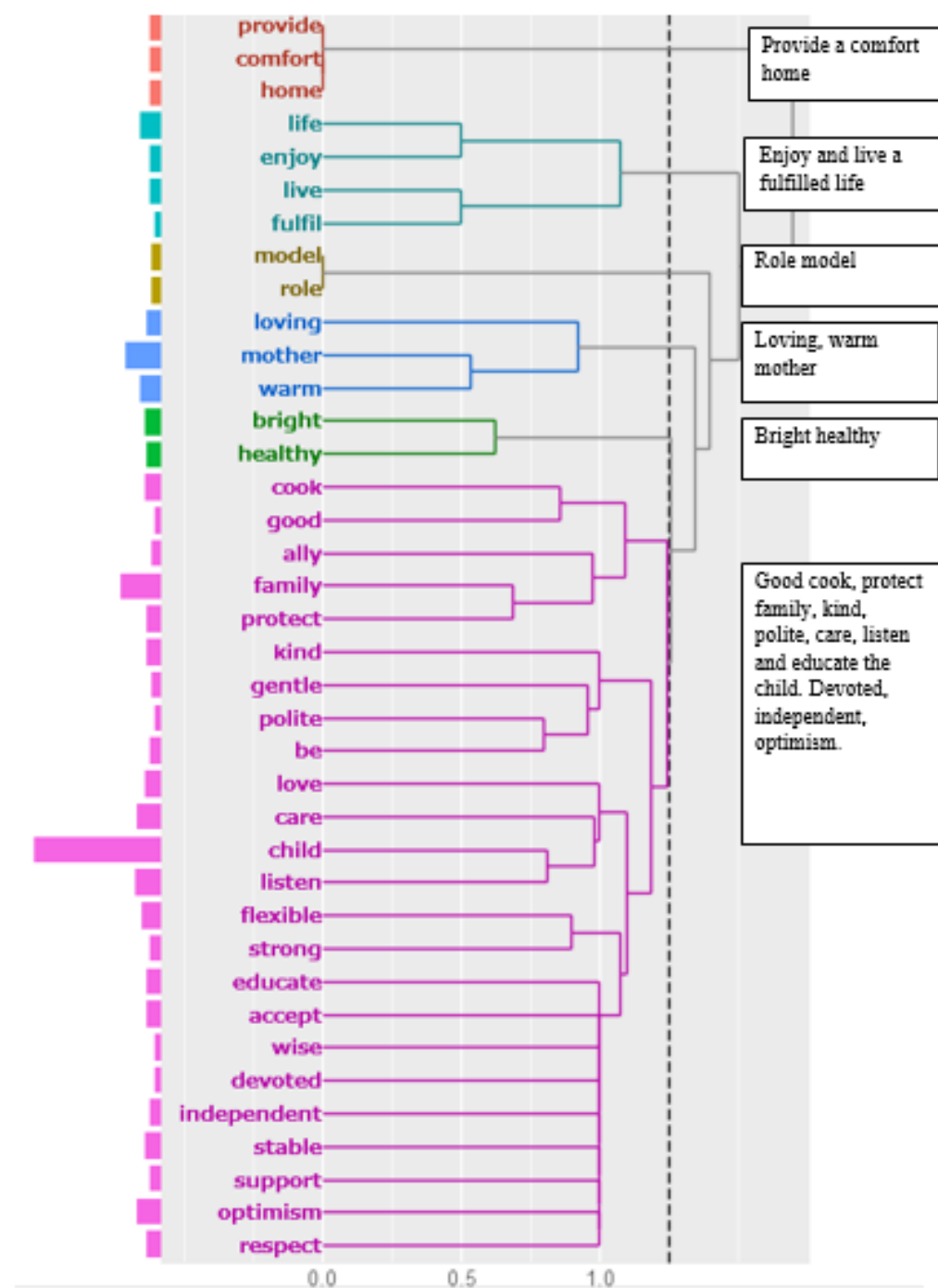
Regular Employed Mothers. The results of the hierarchical cluster analysis in Figure 4 revealed a grouping into six main clusters or categories. Within these overarching categories [work-life balance], [good listener], [role model], [protect family's life], [independent mother, respect and support the child], and [understanding, loving, kind, positive, gentle, cheerful]—further granularity is observed with six subcategories each.

Figure 4*Hierarchical Cluster Analysis of Regular Employed Mothers' Ideal Selves*

Non-Regular Employed Mothers. The results of the hierarchical cluster analysis in Figure 5 revealed a grouping into six main clusters or categories. Within these overarching categories [provide a comfortable home], [live a fulfilled life], [role model], [loving and warm mother], [bright and healthy], and [listen, educate the child, protect, and support family. Optimism, good cook, independent] further granularity is observed with six subcategories each. This detailed classification provides a nuanced understanding of the non-regular employed mother participants' comments on their ideal selves.

Figure 5

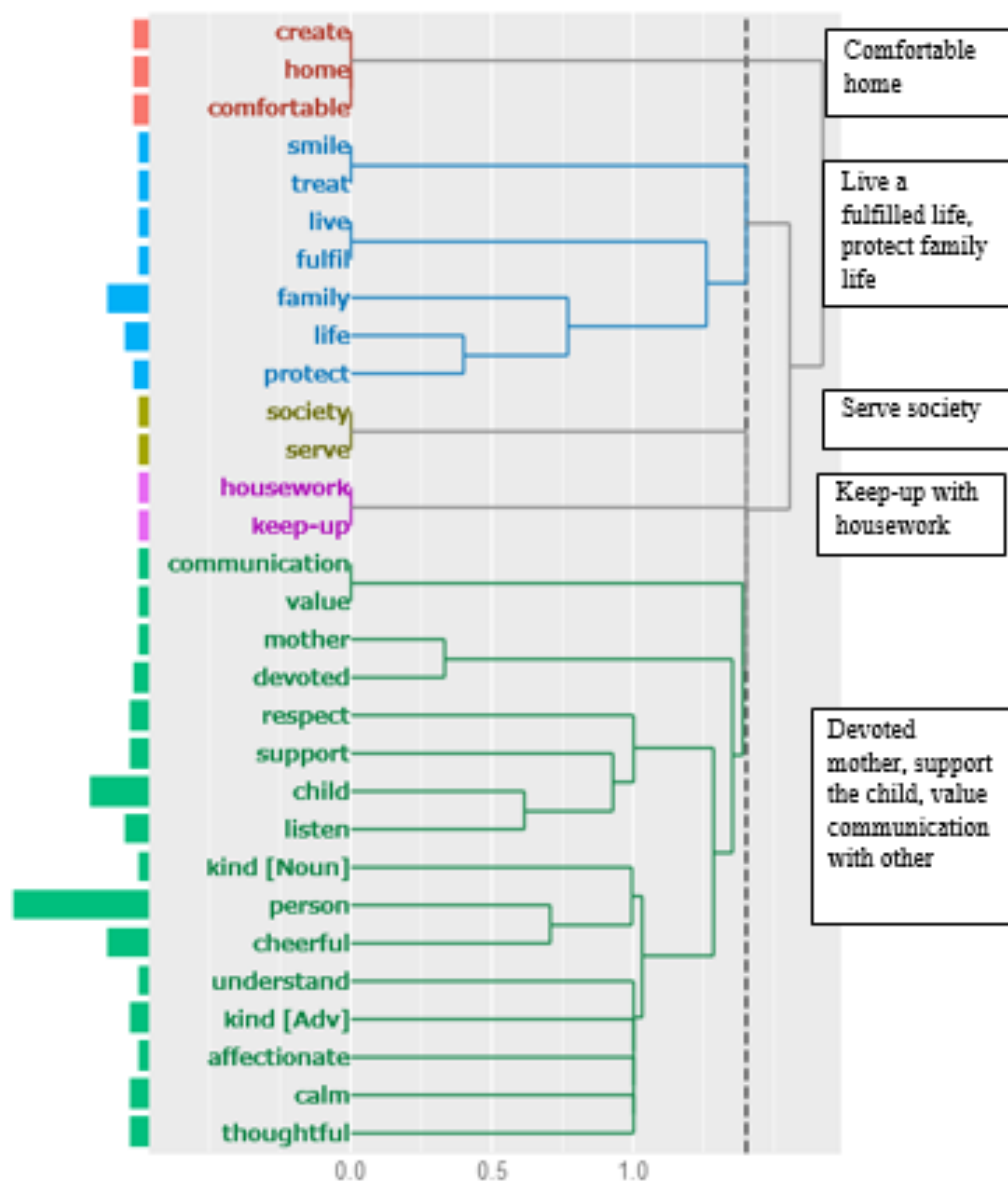
Hierarchical Cluster Analysis of Non-Regular Employed Mothers' Ideal Selves



Homemaker Mothers. The outcomes of the hierarchical cluster analysis conducted for homemakers (Figure 6) disclosed categorization into five primary clusters or categories. These overarching categories [create a comfortable home,] [live a fulfilled life, protect family's life,] [serve society,] [keep-up with housework,] [devoted mother, support the child, value communication with others] exhibit additional intricacies as each is further divided into five subcategories. This detailed classification imparts a nuanced comprehension of the perspectives of homemaker mothers regarding their ideal selves.

Figure 6

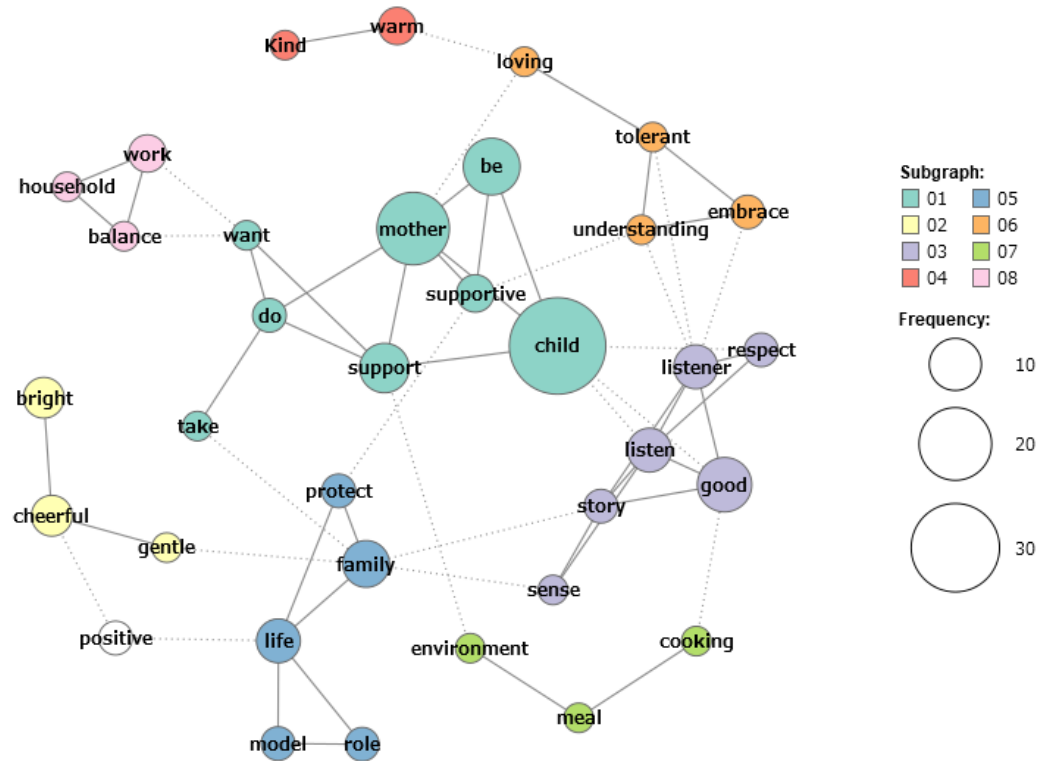
Hierarchical Cluster Analysis of Homemaker Mothers' Ideal Selves



Co-occurrence Network. A co-occurrence network diagram was created to summarize the frequency of extracted words and the relationships between phrases. A co-occurrence network illustrates the strength of co-occurrence between extracted words, or in other words, the similarity in occurrence patterns, through a network diagram. The size of the circles represents the frequency of the words, and the distance between connected lines indicates the depth of their relationship. Below is the co-occurrence network diagram of the participants' ideal selves according to their employment status.

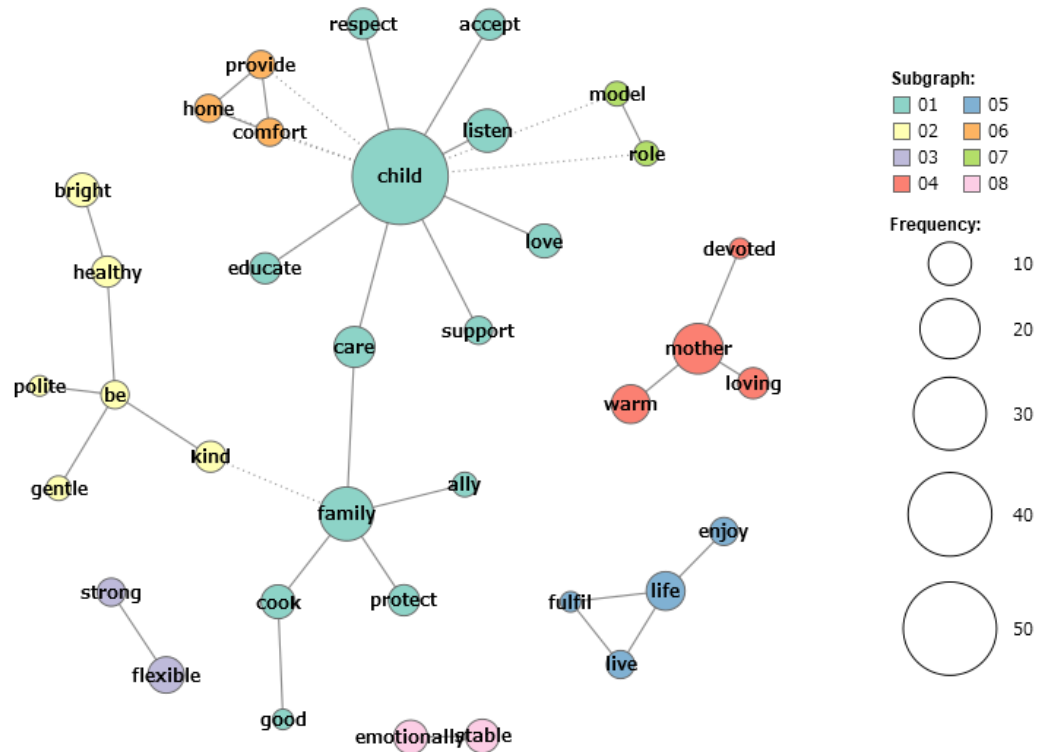
Regular Employed Mothers. The co-occurrence network diagram for the ideal selves among mothers with regularly employed jobs is depicted in Figure 7. On the right, the size of each circle corresponds to the approximate number of occurrences of the selected words. The co-occurrence network diagram shows the presence of eight subgraphs.

In subgraph 01, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords such as child, mother, support, and supportive are encompassed within the largest circle. These terms addressed “support the child” and “be a supportive mother.” In subgraph 02, words such as respect, listen, good, and story are related to subgraph 1, which addressed “respect the child” and “listen to the child’s stories.” In subgraph 03, words such as bright, gentle, cheerful, and positive are addressed to “being a cheerful, gentle, and optimistic attitude mother.”

Figure 7*Co-occurrence Network of Regular Employed Mother's Ideal Selves*

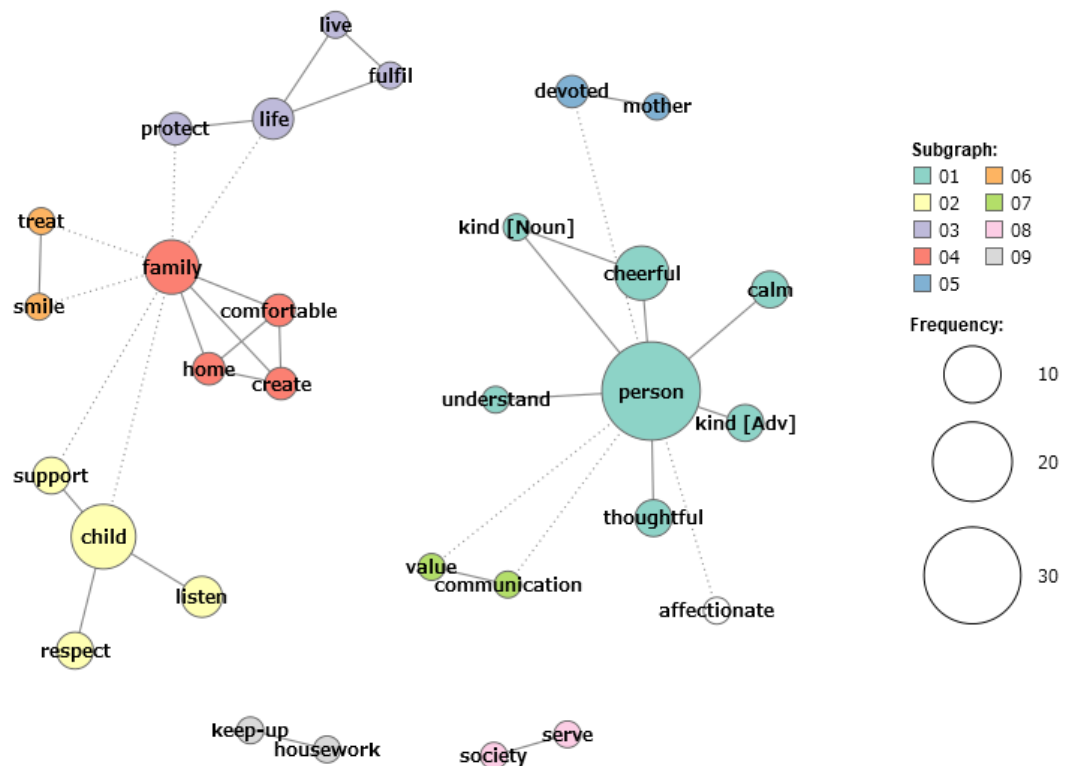
Non-regular Employed Mothers. The co-occurrence network diagram for the ideal selves reported among mothers with non-regularly employed jobs is depicted in Figure 8. On the right, the size of each circle corresponds to the approximate number of occurrences of the selected words. The co-occurrence network diagram shows the presence of eight subgraphs.

Within subgraph 01, comprising words of utmost frequency, the pivotal keywords, including child, family, listens, respect, educate, support, care, protect, ally, and cook, are encapsulated within the most expansive circle. The terms addressed “educate, respect and listen to their child,” “support and protect the family.” In subgraph 2, words comprising bright, healthy, gentle, and kind. That addressed to “being kind, polite,” “healthy and bright person.” In subgraph 4, comprising words such being devoted, warm and loving mother.

Figure 8*Co-occurrence Network of Non-Regular Employed Mothers' Ideal Selves*

Homemaker Mothers. The co-occurrence network diagram for the “ideal self” among homemaker mothers is depicted in Figure 9. On the right, the size of each circle corresponds to the approximate number of occurrences of the selected words. Notably, the co-occurrence network diagram for the ideal self-reveals the presence of nine subgraphs.

Subgraph 01 comprises words including family, protection, health, life, smile, make, and home. Within subgraph 02, comprising words of utmost frequency, the pivotal keywords, including child, listens, support, are encapsulated within the most expansive circle. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, it is evident that a predominant aspiration among homemaker mothers is to adeptly “listen to and provide support for their children.” Furthermore, there is a consistent desire to safeguard the health and well-being of their families while maintaining a perpetually comfortable home environment. Additionally, the significance of emotional stability within subgraph 07 and effective communication within subgraph 05 emerged as notable priorities for these homemaker mothers.

Figure 9*Co-occurrence Network of Homemaker Mothers' Ideal Selves*

Ought Selves Portrayed by Parents from Participants' Viewpoint. In this section, each participant was asked to list three ought selves portrayed by their parents from their point of view. The final sample, comprising 45 regular employed mothers, generated a total of 125 phrases; 52 non-regular employed mothers, contributed a total of 156 phrases, and 23 homemaker mothers, listed a total of 69 phrases. Following is the analysis of the extracted list of frequently appearing words, hierarchical cluster analysis, and co-occurrence network according to the participants' employment status.

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words. A list of frequently appearing words was extracted. This step allowed for a closer examination of the terms commonly used or written by the mother participants. The resulting list provides insight into these words' significance in describing the ideal selves portrayed by their parents from the participants' viewpoint. The analysis is presented according to the participant's employment status.

Regular Employed Mothers. The ought selves portrayed by parents listed by regularly employed mother participants were analyzed, and the frequencies of specific words are detailed in Table 6. Notably, the word "child" appeared most frequently, being repeated 52 times. Additionally, the term "person" was another prominently repeated word, occurring 35 times in the responses. In the analysis of the term child, the expression most frequently mentioned is "listen well to the child." The term of person, most commonly cited phrases are "thoughtful person," "independent person," and capable person." Additionally, for the term "mother," occurred 10 times, the most commonly cited phrase is "a mother who educate the child."

In addition to frequently repeated words, other notable terms emerged with notable frequencies in the listings. For example, “family” appeared 27 times, and both “career” and “devote” were each repeated 9 times. Furthermore, words such as “household,” “communicate,” “husband,” and “independent” appeared 4 times, and “capable,” “financial,” and “income” were mentioned more than 3 times in the participants’ responses. The most commonly cited phrases are “financially independent,” “communicate with husband,” “have career and income,” “devote to family and household.” These recurring words provide insights into the varied aspects and priorities encompassed within the ideal self-concepts portrayed by their parents articulated by regularly employed mother participants.

Table 6

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words of Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Parents from Their Viewpoint (tops 48 words)

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Child	52	Income	3
Person	35	Strong	3
Family	27	Hard work	2
Educate	17	Healthy	2
Thoughtful	15	Housewife	2
Protect	14	Loving	2
Mother	12	Open-minded	2
Self	12	Trustworthy	2
Life	11	Wife	2
Prioritize	10	Balance	1
Career	9	Beautiful	1
Devote	9	Calm	1
Sacrifice	9	Community	1
Affectionate	8	Enjoy	1
Care	5	Financially	1
Household	5	Friendly	1
Support	5	Future	1
Communicate	4	Neighborhood	1
Husband	4	Parent	1
Independent	4	Peaceful	1
Capable	3	Respect	1
Cheerful	3	Role-model	1
Cook	3	Smart	1
Financial	3	Work-life	1

Non-Regular Employed Mothers. The ought selves portrayed by parents listed by non-regular employed mothers were analyzed, and the frequencies of specific words are detailed in Table 7. Notice, the word “child” appeared most frequently, repeated 48 times. Additionally, the term “person” was another prominently repeated word, occurring 47 times, “family” 25 times, “educate” 21 times, and “mother” 12 times in the responses. In analyzing the term child, the most frequently mentioned expression is “educate the child.” For the term family, the most commonly cited phrase was “protect the family’s life.” Additionally, the most commonly cited phrase for the term mother is “affectionate, sacrifice, and thoughtful mother.”

In addition to frequently repeated words, other notable terms emerged with notable frequencies in the listings. The term “listens” appeared 6 times, “devote” and “respect” occurred 5 times, “kind” and “loving” were each repeated five times. “Parents,” “housewife” appeared 4 times. Furthermore, words such as “do not rely,” “independent,” “work-life,” “balance,” “be happy,” “fulfilled,” were mentioned more than two times in the participants’ responses. The common cited phrases were “do not rely on parents,” “be independent,” “work-life balance,” “live a fulfilled live,” and “do not rely on parents.” These recurring words provide insights into the varied aspects and priorities encompassed within the ideal selves portrayed by their parents articulated by the non-regular employed mother participants.

Table 7

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words of Non-Regular Employed Mother's Ought Selves Portrayed by Parents from Their Viewpoint (tops 50 words)

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Child	48	Discipline	3
Person	47	Do not-rely on	3
Family	25	Happy	3
Educate	21	Husband	3
Protect	16	Independent	3
Self	13	Balance	2
Mother	12	Cook	2
Prioritize	12	Fulfill	2
Kind	11	Gratitude	2
Affectionate	9	Pretty	2
Sacrifice	8	Work-life	2
Thoughtful	8	Youthful	2
Capable	7	Christian	1
Healthy	6	Confidence	1
Listen	6	Good	1
Be	5	Health	1
Devote	5	Income	1
Respect	5	Live	1
Household	4	Loving	1
Housewife	4	Open-minded	1
Life	4	Secure-home	1
Parent	4	Smart	1
Calm	3	Strong	1
Cheerful	3	Trustworthy	1
Discipline	3	Wife	1

Homemaker Mothers. The ought selves portrayed by parents listed by homemakers were analyzed, and the frequencies of specific words are detailed in Table 8. Notably, the word “child” appeared most frequently, repeated 18 times. Additionally, the term “family” was another prominently repeated word, occurring 17 times, “protect,” and “life” 11 times, and “educate” 10 times in the responses. When analyzing the term child, the most frequently mentioned expressions are “protect the child’s life” and “educate the child.” For the term family, the most commonly cited phrase was “protect the family’s life.” Additionally, for the terms “sacrifice,” “devote,” “household,” “mother,” and “listen,” the most commonly cited phrases are “devoted to household,” “self-sacrifice,” “listen to the child,” and “devoted mother.”

Table 8

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words of Homemaker Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Parents from Their Viewpoint (tops 38 words)

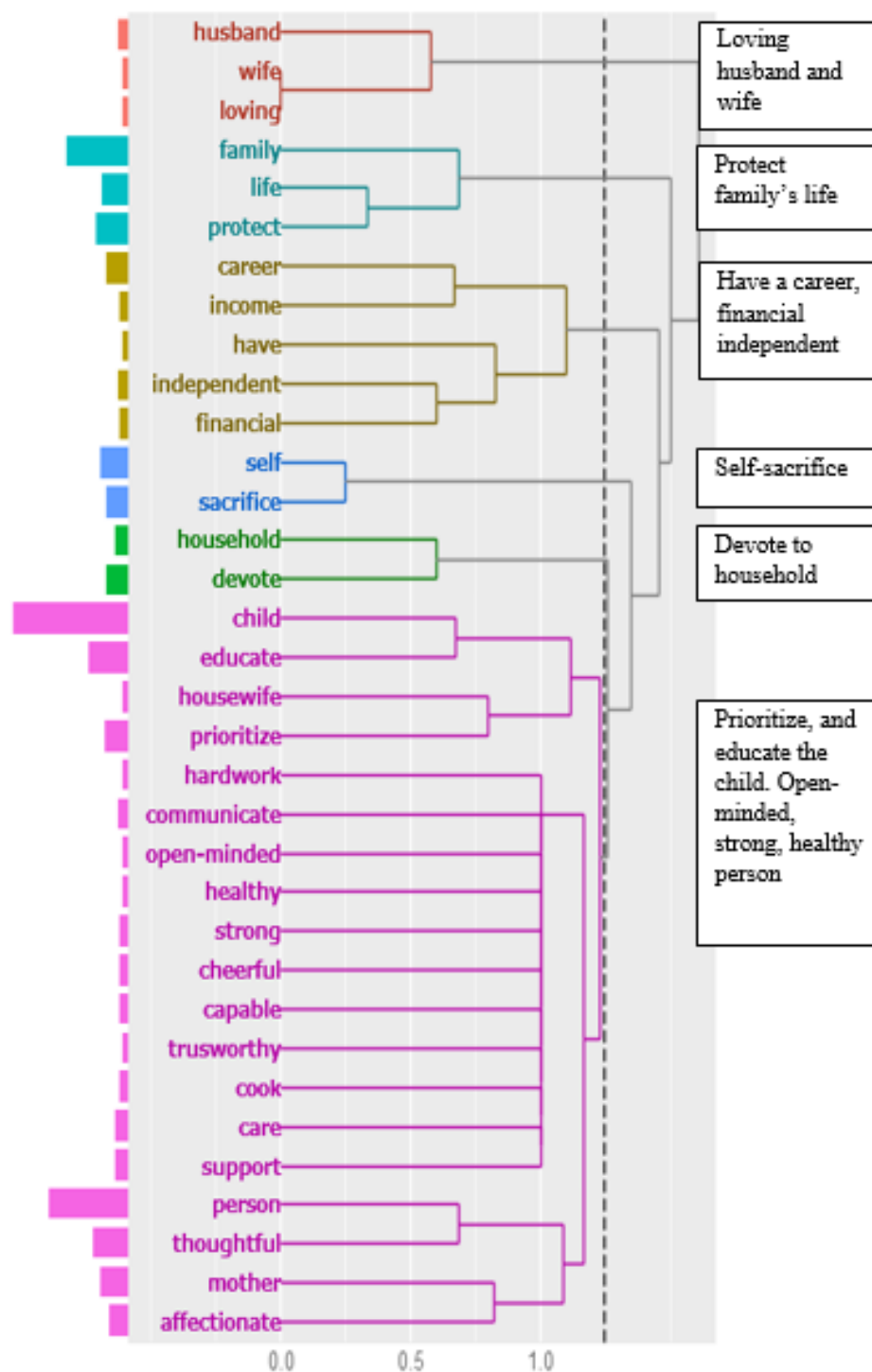
Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Child	18	Save	2
Family	17	Strong	2
Person	15	Thoughtful	2
Life	11	Care	1
Protect	11	Career	1
Educate	10	Cheerful	1
Prioritize	6	Discipline	1
Self	6	Financial	1
Kind	5	Good	1
Sacrifice	5	Happy	1
Devote	4	Hard work	1
Household	4	Have	1
Mother	4	Income	1
Listen	3	Independent	1
Affectionate	2	Money	1
Capable	2	Pretty	1
Character	2	Relationship	1
Healthy	2	Smart	1
Parent	2	Stay-close	1

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis. The following hierarchical cluster analysis provides a systematic way to explore and identify patterns or clusters within a dataset. It allows a better understanding of the relationships between participants and their categories of ideal selves portrayed by their parents from the participants' viewpoint according to their employment status.

Regular Employed Mothers. The results of the hierarchical cluster analysis in Figure 10 revealed a grouping into six main clusters or categories. Within these overarching categories [loving husband and wife], [protect family life], [have a career and financially independent], [self-sacrifice], [devoting to household], and [prioritizing and educating the child, open-minded, strong, and healthy person] further granularity is observed with six subcategories each. This detailed classification provides a nuanced understanding of regular employed mothers' comments on their ideal selves portrayed by their parents.

Figure 10

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis of Regula Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Parents from Their Viewpoint



Non-Regular Employed Mothers. The results of the hierarchical cluster analysis in Figure 11 revealed a grouping into five main clusters or categories. Within these overarching categories [work-life balance], [youthful, pretty], [devote to household], [do not rely on parents], and [affectionate mother, educate the child, prioritize, and protect the family's life, capable, thoughtful, and calm, respect for husband and child] further granularity is observed with five subcategories each. This detailed classification provides a nuanced understanding of non-regular employed mothers' comments on their ideal selves portrayed by their parents.

Figure 11

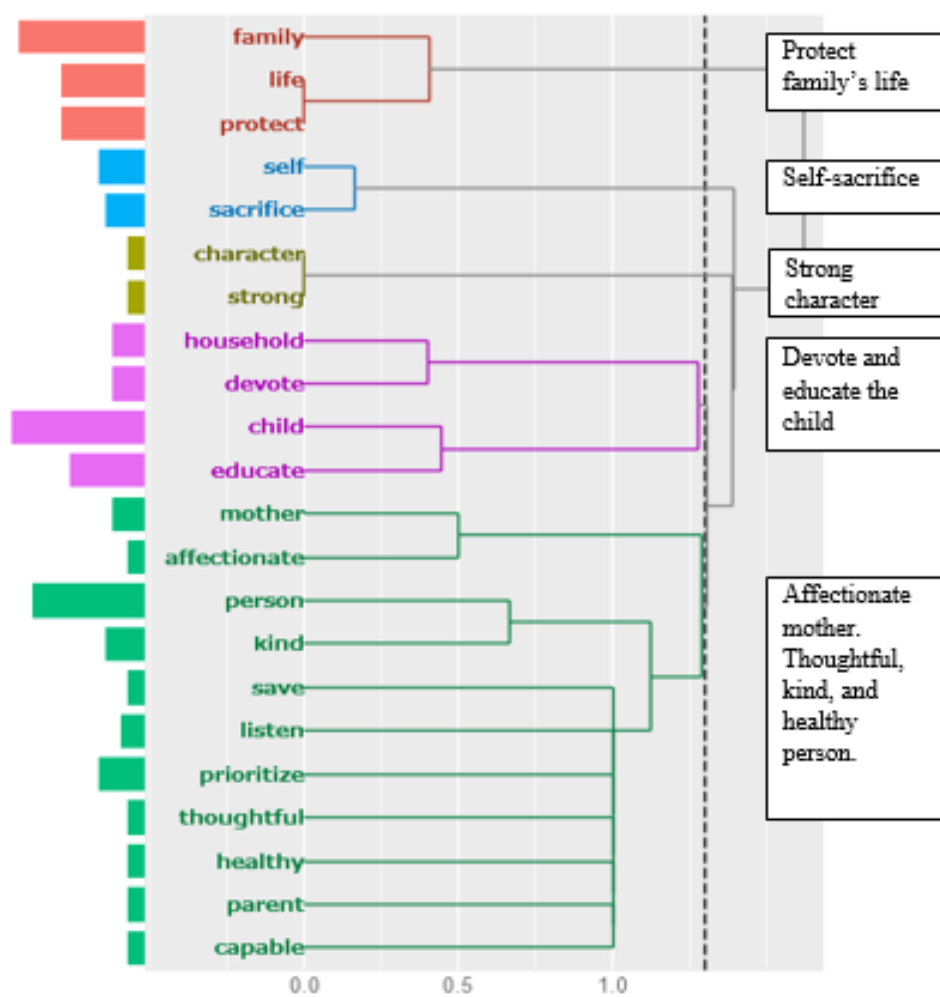
Hierarchical Cluster Analysis of Non-regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Parents from Their Viewpoint



Homemaker Mothers. The results of the hierarchical cluster analysis in Figure 12 show a grouping into five main clusters or categories. Within these overarching categories [protect family's life], [self-sacrifice], [strong character], [devote and educate the child], and [affectionate mother, thoughtful, kind, and healthy] further granularity is observed with five subcategories each. This detailed classification provides a nuanced understanding of homemaker mothers' comments on their ideal selves portrayed by their parents.

Figure 12

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis of Homemaker Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Parents from Their Viewpoint



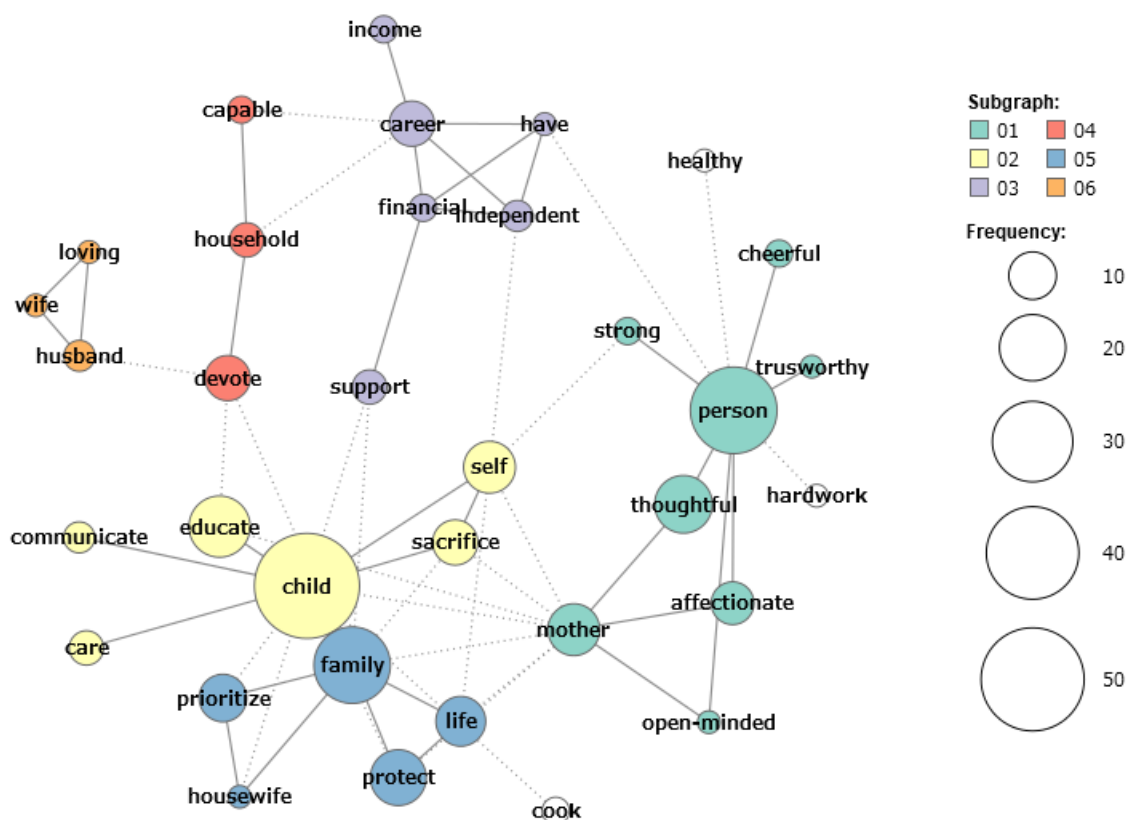
Co-occurrence Network. A co-occurrence network diagram was created to summarize the frequency of extracted words and the relationships between phrases. A co-occurrence network illustrates the strength of co-occurrence between extracted words, or in other words, the similarity in occurrence patterns, through a network diagram. The size of the circles represents the frequency of the words, and the distance between connected lines indicates the depth of their relationship. Below is the co-occurrence network diagram of parents' perspective on the participants' ideal selves according to their employment status.

Regular Employed Mothers. The co-occurrence network diagram for the ideal selves portrayed by parents among regularly employed mothers is depicted in Figure 13. On the right, the size of each circle corresponds to the approximate number of occurrences of the selected words. Notably, the co-occurrence network diagram for the participants comments reveals the presence of eight subgraphs.

In subgraph 01, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords such as person, family, thoughtful, mother, affectionate, prioritize, protect, and life are encompassed within the largest circle. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, the preponderance of participants articulated aspirations related to being a thoughtful person, affectionate mother, prioritize and protect family's life. In subgraph 02, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords such as child, educate, communicate, self-sacrifice, and care. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, the preponderance of participants articulated aspirations related to educating the child, communicating with child, and self-sacrifice and care for the child.

Figure 13

Co-occurrence Network of Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Parents from Their Viewpoint



Non-Regular Employed Mothers. The co-occurrence network diagram for the ideal selves portrayed by parents among mothers with non-regular employed jobs is depicted in Figure 14. On the right, the size of each circle corresponds to the approximate number of occurrences of the selected words. Notably, the co-occurrence network diagram for the participants comments reveals the presence of eight subgraphs.

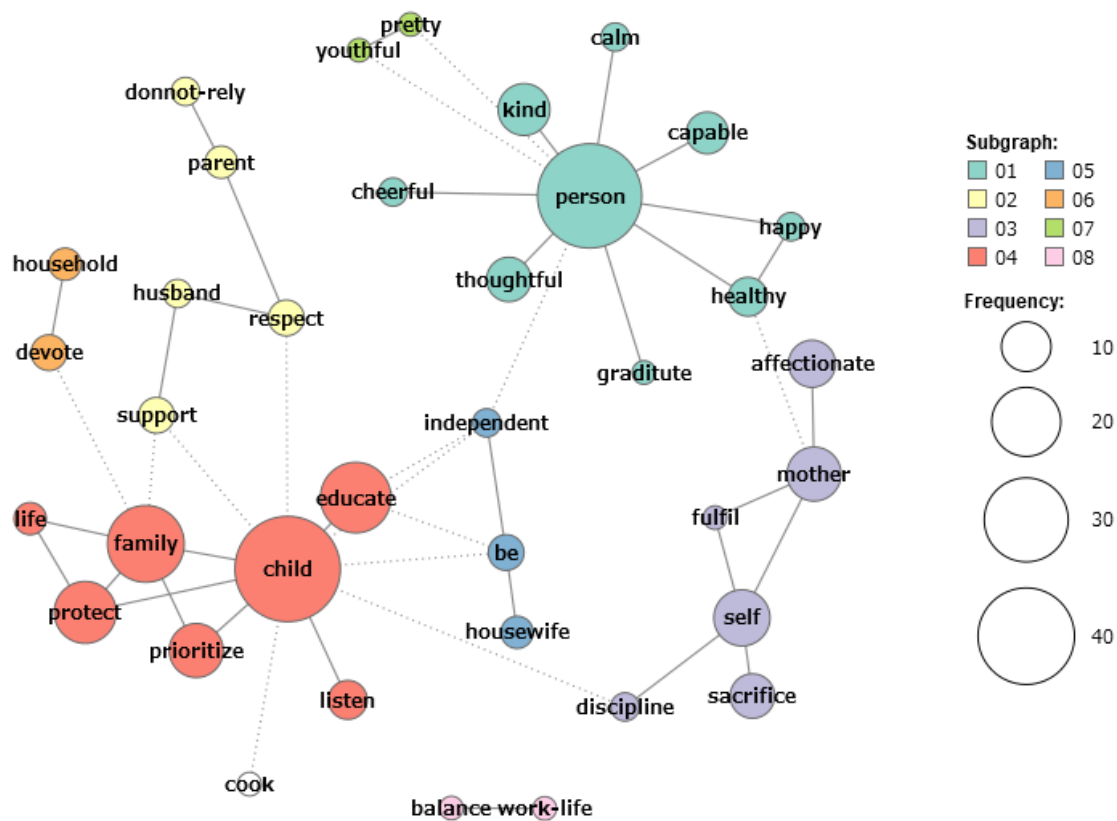
In subgraph 01, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords such as a person, capable, kind, thoughtful, happy, calm, and healthy are encompassed within the largest circle. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, the preponderance of participants articulated aspirations related to being a capable, thoughtful, kind, healthy, and happy person.

In subgraph 02, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords do not rely on parents, respect, support, and husband. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, the preponderance of participants articulated aspirations related to not relying on parents, respect, and support of the husband.

This observation implies a prevailing inclination among most non-regular employed mothers towards the ideal of not relying on their parents and supporting and respecting the husband, which is most likely portrayed by their parents.

Figure 14

Co-occurrence Network of Non-regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Parents from Their Viewpoint

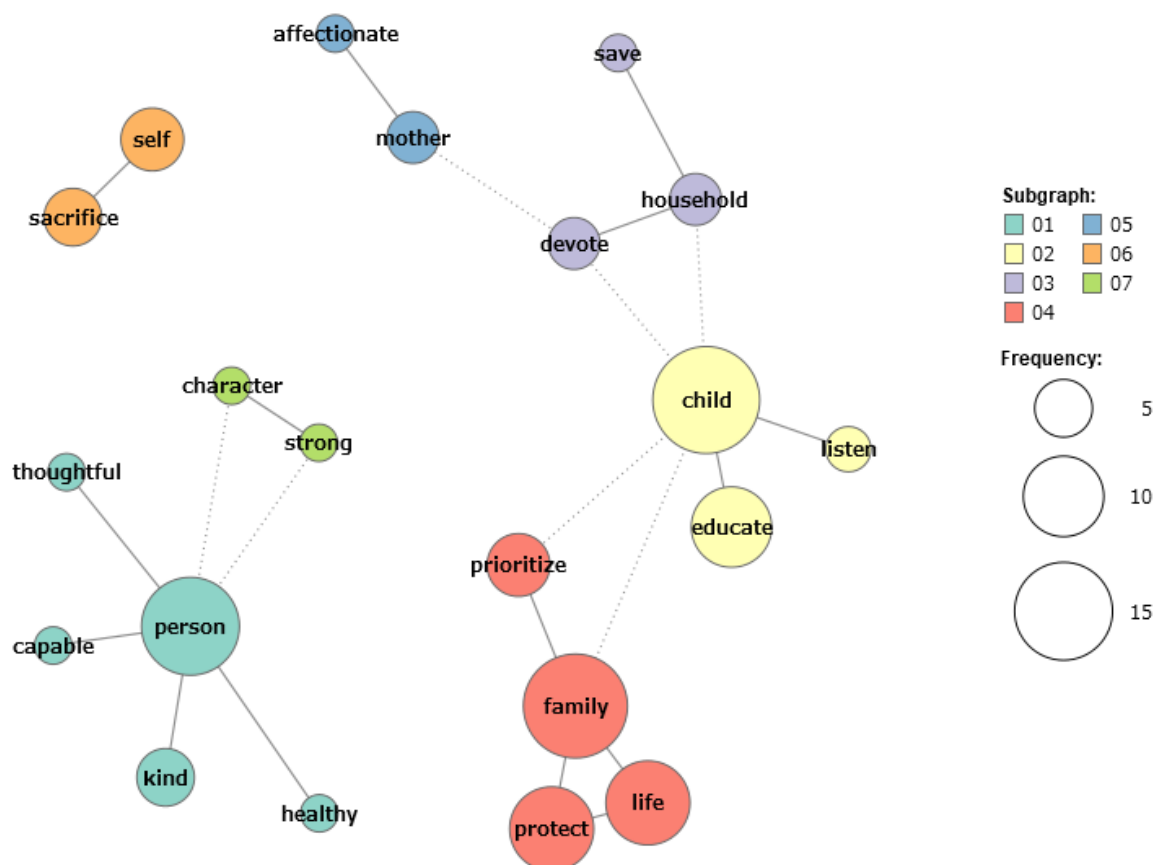


Homemaker Mothers. The co-occurrence network diagram for the ideal selves portrayed by parents among homemaker mothers is depicted in Figure 15. On the right, the size of each circle corresponds to the approximate number of occurrences of the selected words. Notably, the co-occurrence network diagram for the ideal selves reveals the presence of seven subgraphs.

Subgraph 01 comprises words including person, capable, kind, thoughtful, and healthy. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, it is evident that a predominant aspiration among homemaker mothers' parents is to become a thoughtful, capable, kind, and healthy person. In subgraph 02, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords are child, educate, and listen. These are referring to educating the child and listening to the child well. subgraph 03 is devoted to the household; subgraph 04 prioritizes and protects the family's life; subgraph 05 is an affectionate mother; subgraph 6 is self-sacrifice, which reveals a consistent desire to safeguard the health and well-being of their families.

Figure 15

Co-occurrence Network of Homemaker Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Parents from Their Viewpoint



Ought Selves Portrayed by Husbands from Participants' Viewpoint. In this section, participants were asked to list three ought selves portrayed by their husbands from their point of view. Regularly employed mothers, numbering 45 participants, generated 125 ideal selves portrayed by their husbands (45 participants * 3 phrases per participant). Non-regular employed mothers, with 52 participants, contributed 156 phrases. Homemaker mothers, with 23 participants, listed 69 phrases of the ideal selves portrayed by their husbands.

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words. A list of frequently appearing words was extracted. This step allowed for a closer examination of the terms commonly used or written by the mother participants in their writing. The resulting list provides insight into these words' significance in describing the ideal selves portrayed by their husbands from the participants viewpoint. The analysis is presented according to the participant's employment status.

Regular Employed Mothers. The ought selves portrayed by husbands listed by regularly employed mother participants were analyzed, and the frequencies of specific words are detailed in Table 9. Notably, "person" was the most repeated word, occurring 35 times in the responses. The word "child" appeared to be repeated 28 times. Additionally, the term "family" appeared 16 times. In the analysis of the term person refers to "a thoughtful person," and the term child, the expressions most frequently mentioned are "educate the child" and "respect the child." Additionally, for the term family, the most commonly cited phrase is "protect the family's life."

In addition to frequently repeated words, other notable terms emerged with notable frequencies in the listings. Words such as "self-sacrifice" were repeated 7 times, "cheerful,"

“listen,” and “mother” appeared 6 times, and “husband,” “job,” and “support” were each repeated 5 times. These terms are referred to as “listening to the child, having a job,” and “supporting the husband.” Furthermore, words such as “affectionate,” “assertive,” “dual-income,” and “prioritize” appeared 4 times, and “capable,” “cook,” “flexible,” were mentioned 3 times in the participants’ responses. These terms refer to being an “affectionate mother,” “prioritized family,” “being self-assertive,” and “a double-income family.” These recurring words provide insights into the varied aspects and priorities encompassed within the ideal selves portrayed by their husbands articulated by the participants.

Table 9

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words of Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Husbands from Their' Viewpoint (tops 50 words)

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Person	45	Calm	3
Child	28	Capable	3
Family	26	Cook	3
Kind	13	Cooking	3
Thoughtful	13	Flexible	3
Self	11	Good	3
Protect	9	Be	2
Educate	8	Grow	2
Household	7	Independent	2
Respect	7	School	1
Sacrifice	7	Breakfast	1
Cheerful	6	Close	1
Life	6	Couple	1
Listen	6	Happiness	1
Mother	6	Healthy	1
Have	5	Housewife	1
Husband	5	Income	1
Job	5	No-complained	1
Support	5	Open-minded	1
Affectionate	4	Parenting-together	1
Assertive	4	Responsible	1
Care	4	Role-model	1
Devote	4	Save-money	1
Dual-income	4	Trustworthy	1
Prioritize	4	Well-groomed	1

Non-Regular Employed Mothers. The ought selves portrayed by husbands listed by non-regular employed mothers were analyzed, and the frequencies of specific words are detailed in Table 10. Notably, “person” was the most repeated word, occurring 51 times in the responses. The word “child” appeared to be repeated 40 times. Additionally, the family term appeared 24 times. In the analysis, the term person refers to a kind and thoughtful person, and in the term child, the expression most frequently mentioned is “prioritize the child.” Moreover, “respect the child.” Additionally, for the term family, the most commonly cited phrase is “protect the family’s life.”

In addition to frequently repeated words, other notable terms emerged with notable frequencies in the listings. The terms “household” and “prioritize” 13 times; “sacrifice” and “devote” appeared 10 times; “husband,” “respect,” and “support” appeared 7 times; and “good,” “mother,” “flexible,” appeared 5 times. These terms referred to self-sacrifice, devotion to the household, support, and respect for the husband.

Furthermore, words such as “open-minded” and “calm” appeared 4 times, “healthy,” “job,” “pretty,” “discipline,” “independent,” and “sociable” appeared more than one time in the participants’ responses. These terms refer to being an open-minded, calm, and independent person. These recurring words provide insights into the varied aspects and priorities encompassed within the ideal self-concepts portrayed by their husbands articulated by the participants.

Table 10

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words of Non-Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Husbands from Their Viewpoint (tops 46 words)

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Person	51	Calm	4
Child	40	Open-minded	4
Family	24	Have	3
Self	15	Healthy	3
Kind	15	Job	3
Protect	15	Pretty	3
Life	14	Awareness	2
Prioritize	13	Be	2
household	13	Communicate	2
Devote	10	Discipline	2
Sacrifice	10	Enjoy	2
Cheerful	10	Health	2
Listen	8	Housewife	2
Thoughtful	8	Income	2
Husband	7	Strong	2
Respect	7	Community	1
support	7	Independent	1
Flexible	6	Kind	1
Care	5	Positive	1
Cook	5	Praise	1
Flexible	5	Sociable	1
Good	5	Work-hard	1
Mother	5	Youthful	1

Homemaker Mothers. The ought self-concepts portrayed by husbands listed by homemakers were analyzed, and the frequencies of specific words are detailed in Table 11. Notably, “person” was the most repeated word, occurring 26 times in the responses. The word “child” appeared to be repeated 20 times. Additionally, the term of the family appeared 20 times. In the analysis, the term “person” refers to a cheerful person, and in the term “child,” the expression most frequently mentioned is devote to child,” “prioritize the child,” “educate the child.” Additionally, for the term “family,” the most commonly cited phrase is “protect family’s life.”

In addition to frequently repeated words, other notable terms emerged with notable frequencies in the listings. The terms “household,” “open-minded,” appeared 3 times “self-sacrifice,” and “calm” appeared 2 times; “capable,” “communicate,” and “flexible,” “housewife,” “healthy,” and “job,” appeared 1 time. These terms referred to self-sacrifice, devotion to the household, support, and respect for the husband.

Table 11

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words of Homemaker Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Husbands from Their Viewpoint (tops 38 words)

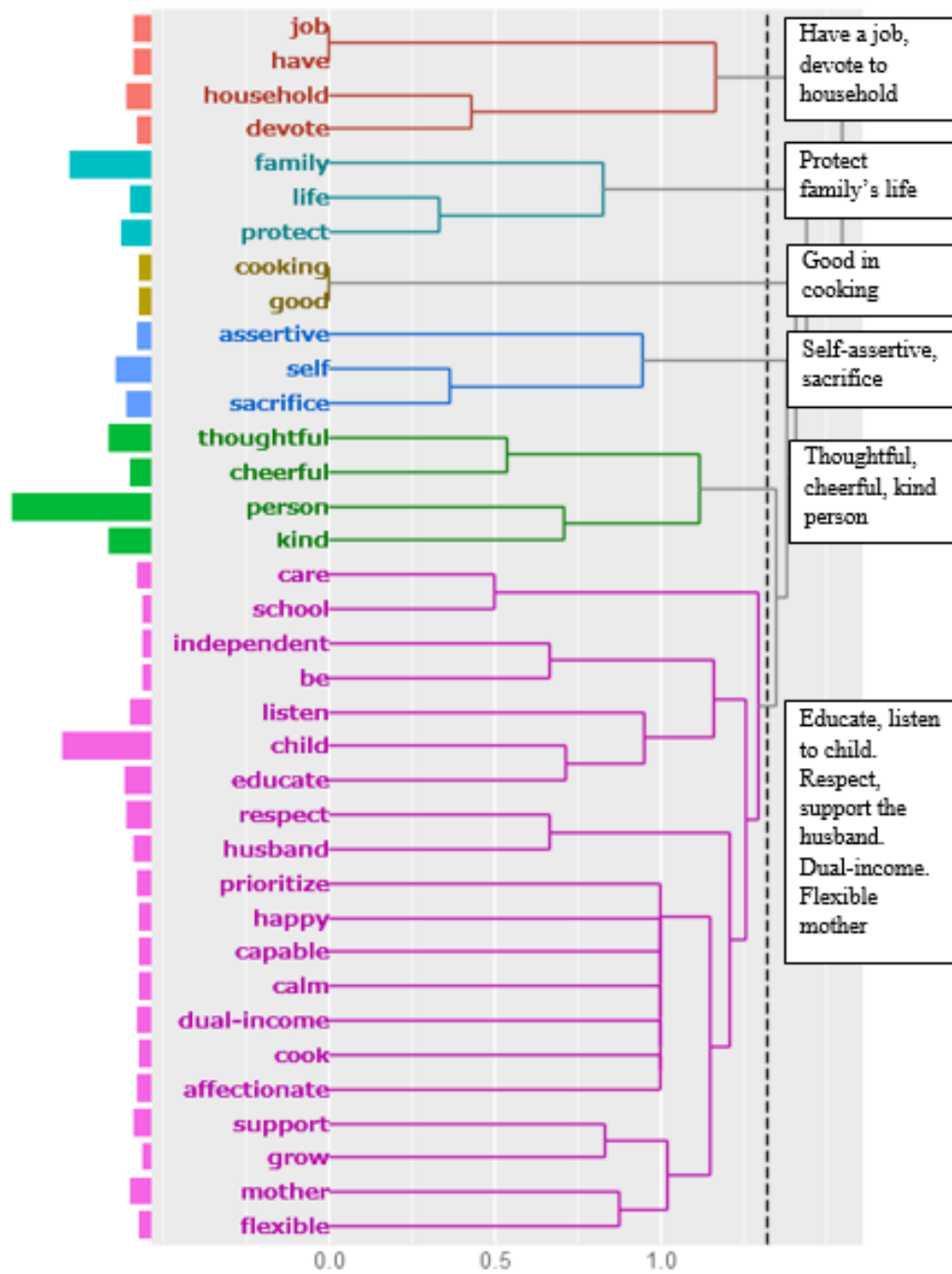
Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Person	26	Communicate	1
Child	20	Discipline	1
Family	20	Flexible	1
Protect	11	Have	1
Life	9	Healthy	1
Cheerful	7	Home	1
Devote	7	Housewife	1
Educate	6	Job	1
Prioritize	6	Keep	1
Thoughtful	4	Kind	1
Household	3	Listen	1
Open-minded	3	Pretty	1
Calm	2	Pretty	1
Kind	2	Save	1
Self-sacrifice	2	Secure	1
Affectionate	1	Smart	1
Be	1	Smile	1
Capable	1	Time	1
Comfort	1	Understand	1

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis. The following Hierarchical Cluster Analysis provides a systematic way to explore and identify patterns or clusters within a dataset provided by participants. It allows a better understanding of the relationships between participants and their categories of ideal selves portrayed by their husbands from the participants' viewpoint according to their employment status.

Regular Employed Mothers. The results of the hierarchical cluster analysis in Figure 16 show a grouping into six main clusters or categories. Within these overarching categories [have a job], [protect family's life], [good in cooking], [self-sacrifice], [thoughtful, cheerful, and kind person], and [educate and listen to the child, respect, and support the husband, dual-income, and flexible]. This detailed classification provides a nuanced understanding of regular employment mothers' comments on their ideal selves portrayed by their husbands.

Figure 16

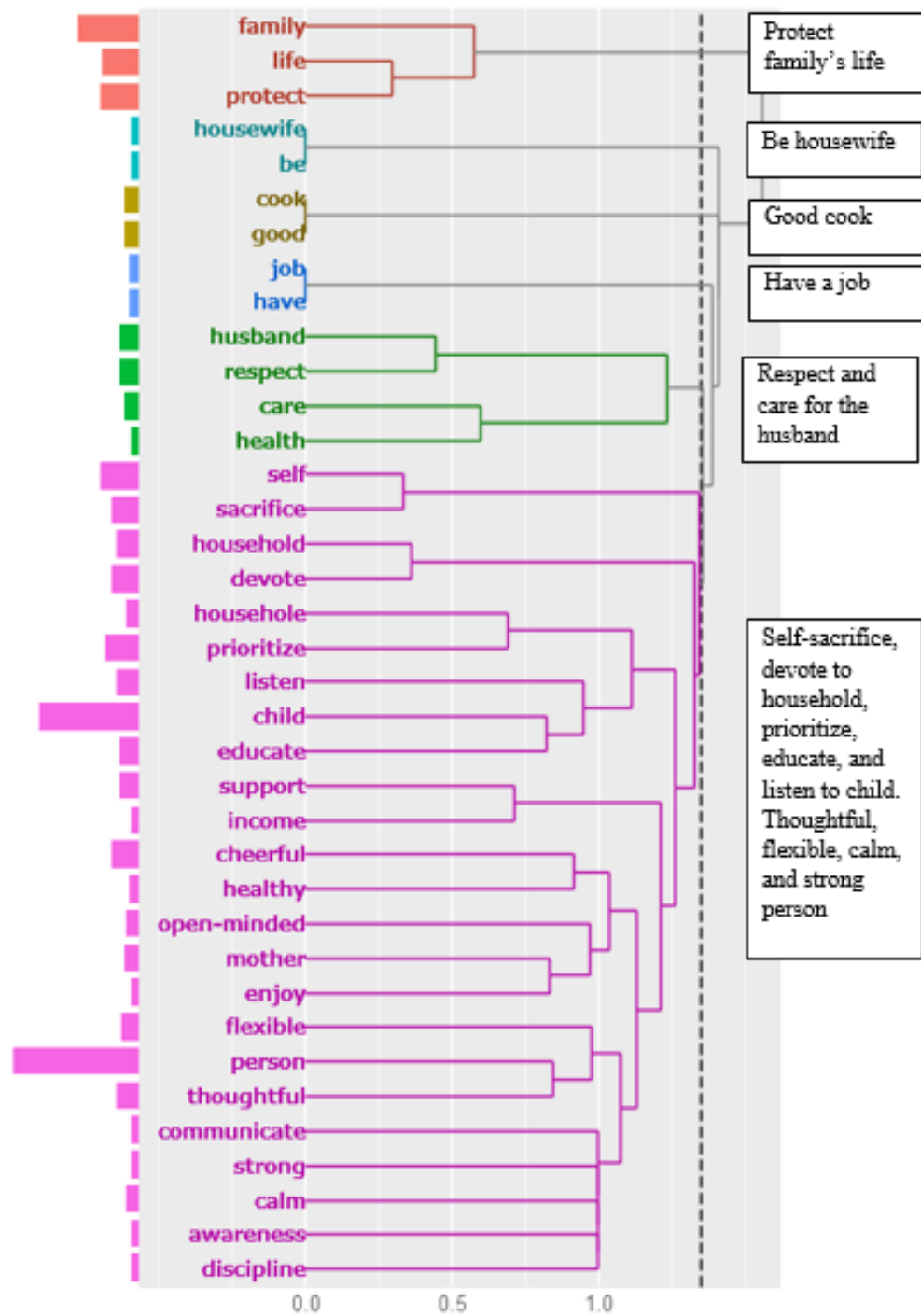
Hierarchical Cluster Analysis of Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Husbands from Their' Viewpoint



Non-Regular Employed Mothers. The results of the hierarchical cluster analysis in Figure 17 show a grouping into six main clusters or categories. Within these overarching categories [have a job], [protect family's life], [good in cooking], [self-sacrifice], [thoughtful, cheerful, and kind person], and [educate and listen to the child, respect, and support the husband, dual-income, and flexible]. This detailed classification provides a nuanced understanding of regular employment mothers' comments on their ideal selves portrayed by their husbands.

Figure 17

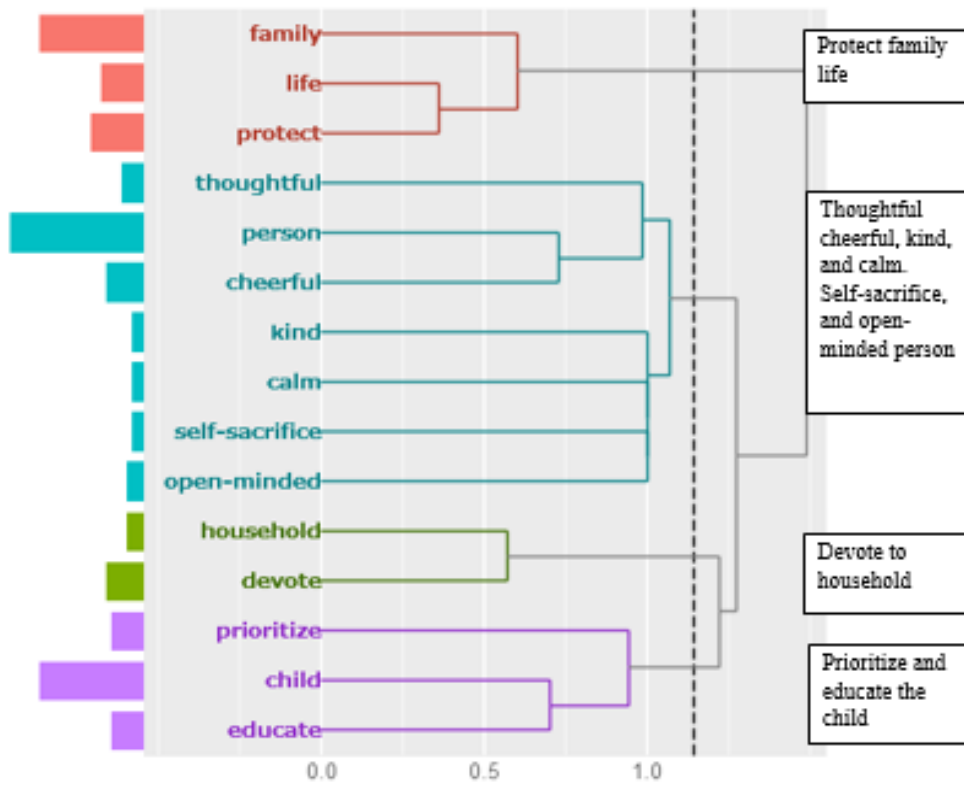
Hierarchical Cluster Analysis for Non-Regular Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Husbands from Their Viewpoint



Homemaker Mothers. The results of the hierarchical cluster analysis in Figure 18 show a grouping into four main clusters or categories. Within these overarching categories [protect family's life], [thoughtful, cheerful, open-minded, and self-sacrifice person], [devoted to household], [prioritize and educate the child]. This detailed classification provides a nuanced understanding of regular employment mothers' comments on their ideal selves portrayed by their husbands.

Figure 18

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis for Homemaker Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Husbands from Their Viewpoint



Co-occurrence Network. A co-occurrence network diagram was created to summarize the frequency of extracted words and the relationships between phrases. A co-occurrence network illustrates the strength of co-occurrence between extracted words, or in other words, the similarity in occurrence patterns, through a network diagram. The size of the circles represents the frequency of the words, and the distance between connected lines indicates the depth of their relationship. Below is the co-occurrence network diagram for the ideal selves portrayed by husbands from the participants viewpoint according to their employment status.

Regular Employed Mothers. The co-occurrence network diagram for the ought selves portrayed by husbands among mothers with full-time jobs is depicted in Figure 19. On the right, the size of each circle corresponds to the approximate number of occurrences of the selected words. Notably, the co-occurrence network diagram for the participants comments reveals the presence of six subgraphs.

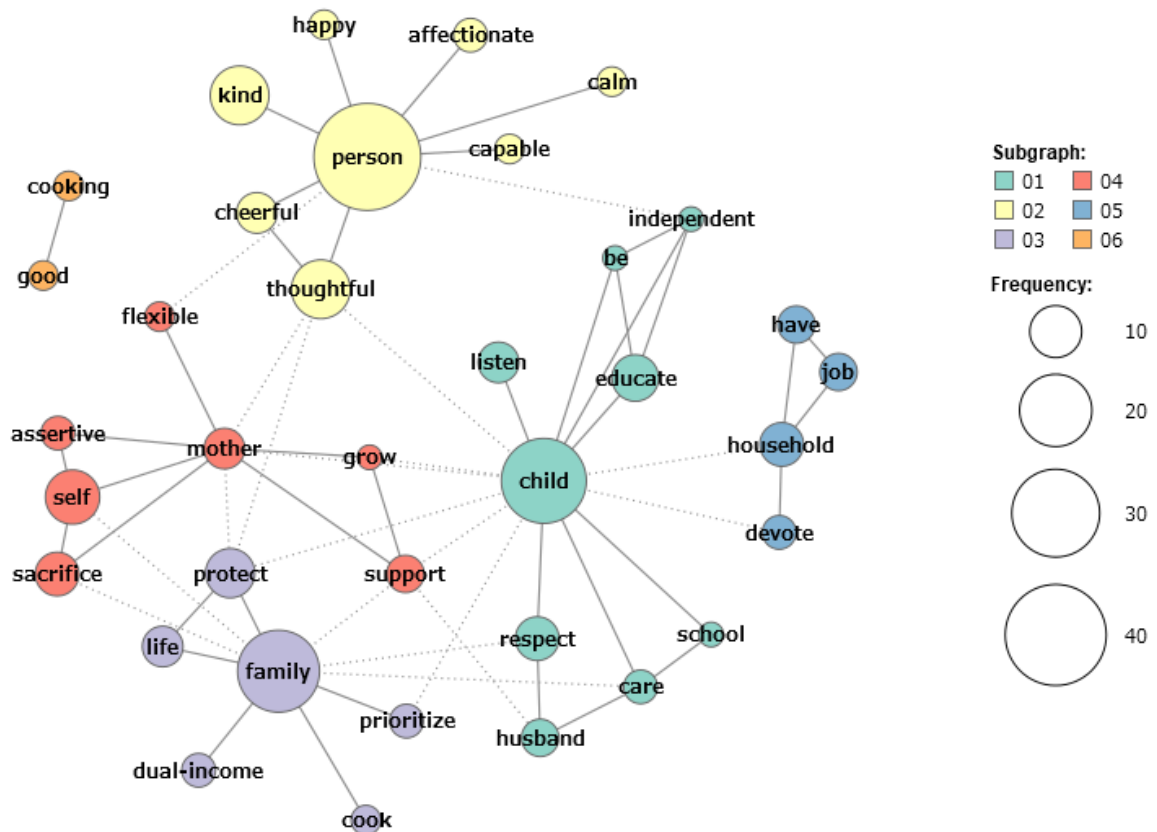
In subgraph 01, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords are child, educate, listen, respect, husband, independent, and care, and encompassed within the largest circle. Based on the sample responses analysis, the participants' preponderance articulated aspirations related to listening and respecting the child, educating the child, respecting the husband, and being independent. In subgraph 02, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords include person, thoughtful, cheerful, kind, affectionate, and capable. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, the preponderance of participants articulated aspirations related to being thoughtful, cheerful, kind, and capable. In subgraph 03, family, prioritize, protect, life, and dual-income. These are addressed as prioritizing and protecting a family's life and double income family. In subgraph 04, words included extracted words such as mothers,

self-sacrifice, assertive, and flexibility. These are the terms referred to as being a self-sacrificed and assertive mother.

This observation implies a prevailing inclination among most regularly employed mothers towards actively supporting the well-being and development of their children, which their parents most likely portray.

Figure 19

Co-occurrence Network of Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Husbands from Their Viewpoint



Non-Regular Employed Mothers. The co-occurrence network diagram for the ideal selves portrayed by husbands among mothers with full-time jobs is depicted in Figure 20. On the right, the size of each circle corresponds to the approximate number of occurrences of the selected words. Notably, the co-occurrence network diagram for the participants comments reveals the presence of eight subgraphs.

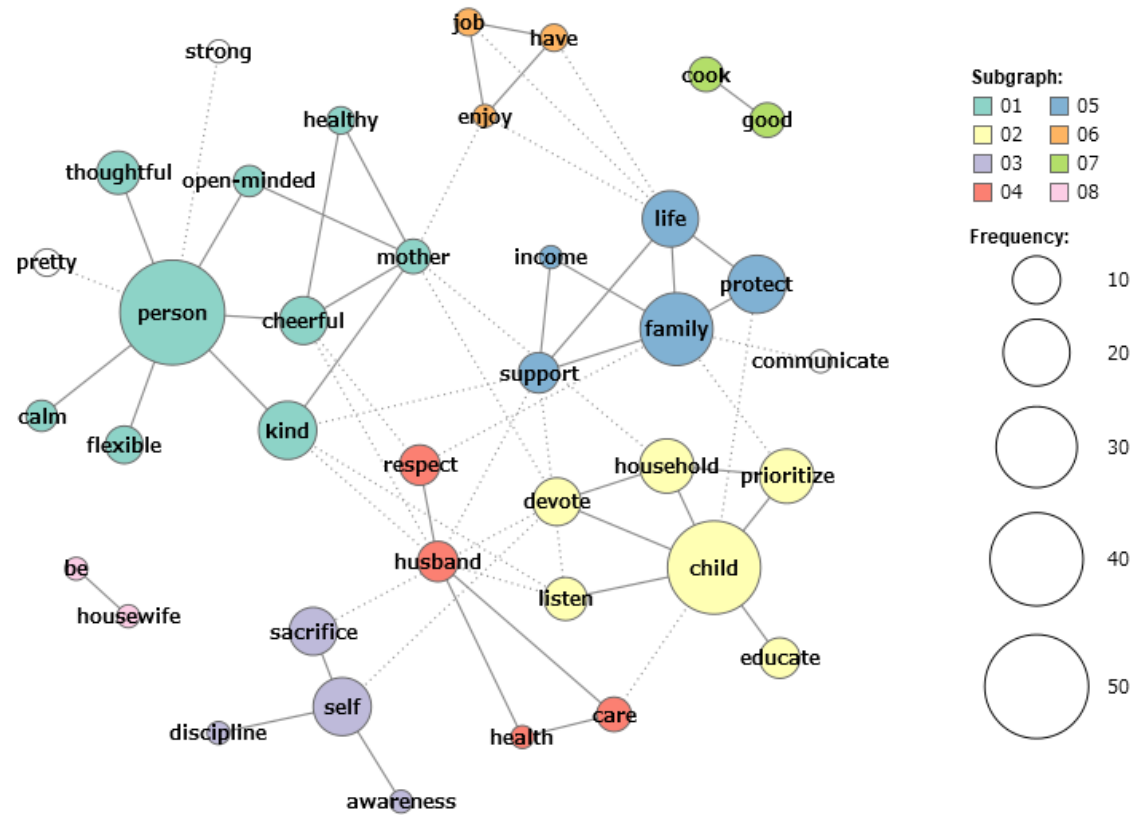
In subgraph 01, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords such as mother, thoughtful, open-minded, cheerful, flexible, and healthy are encompassed within the largest circle. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, the preponderance of participants articulated aspirations related to being a thoughtful, open-minded, flexible, cheerful, and healthy mother.

In subgraph 02, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords are child, prioritize, listen, educate, and household. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, the preponderance of participants articulated aspirations related to prioritizing and educating the child, listening to the child, and devoting it to the household. Subgraph 03 comprises family, protection, support, life, and income. These are addressed to protect the family's life and support the family's income.

This observation implies that most non-regular employed mothers support family income, which their husbands most likely portray.

Figure 20

Co-occurrence Network of Non-Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Husbands from Their Viewpoint

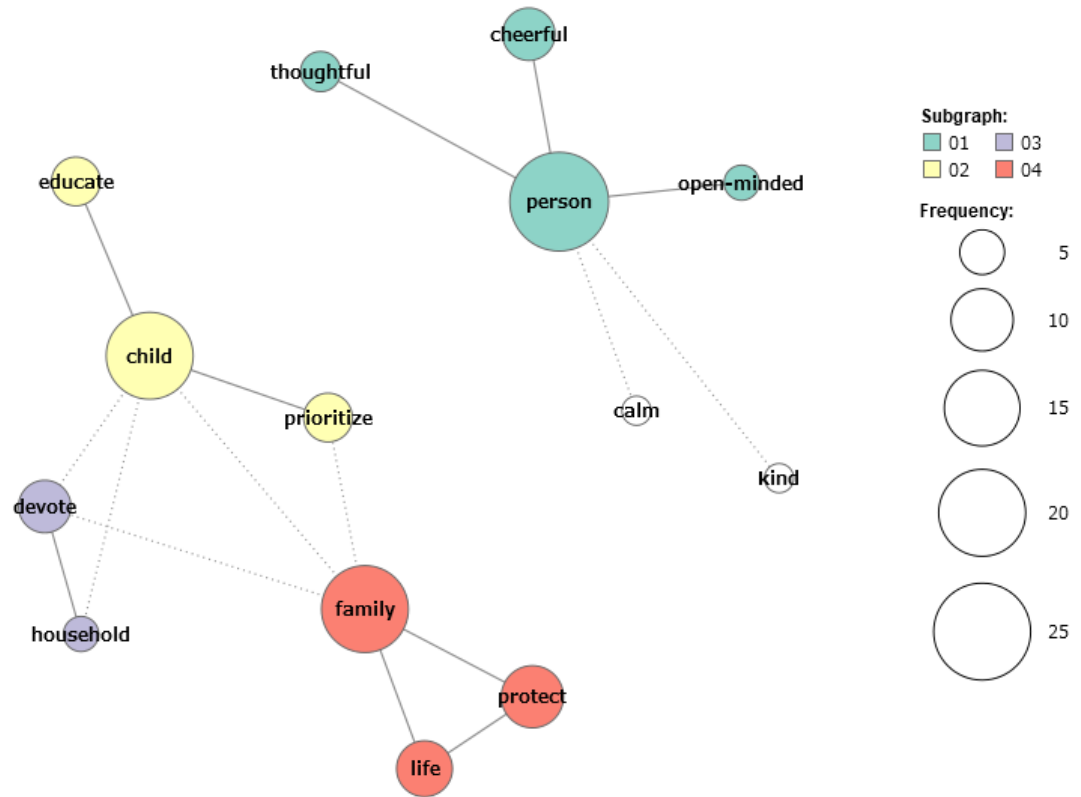


Homemaker Mothers. The co-occurrence network diagram for the ought selves portrayed by parents among homemaker mothers is depicted in Figure 21. On the right, the size of each circle corresponds to the approximate number of occurrences of the selected words. Notably, the co-occurrence network diagram for the ideal self-portrayed by participants' husbands reveals the presence of four subgraphs.

Subgraph 01 comprises words including person, open-minded, cheerful, and thoughtful. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, it is evident that a predominant aspiration among homemaker mothers' parents is to become a thoughtful, open-minded, and cheerful person. In subgraph 02, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords are child, prioritize, and educate. These are referring to prioritizing and educating the child. Subgraph 03 is devoted to the household; subgraph 04 prioritizes and protects the family's life.

Figure 21

Co-occurrence Network of Homemaker Mothers Ought Selves Portrayed by Husbands from Their Viewpoint



Ought Selves Portrayed by Children from Participants' Viewpoint. Below is the analysis of the participants' ought selves portrayed by their children. Each participant was asked to list three ideal selves portrayed by their children from their point of view. Regularly employed mothers, numbering 45 participants, generated 125 ideal selves portrayed by their children (45 participants * 3 phrases per participant). Non-regular employed mothers, with 52 participants, contributed 156 phrases. Homemaker mothers, with 23 participants, listed 69 phrases of the ideal selves portrayed by their children.

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words. A list of frequently appearing words was extracted, the terms commonly used or written by the mother participants, describing the ideal selves portrayed by their children from the participants' viewpoint.

Regular Employed Mothers. The ought self-concepts portrayed by children listed by full-time mother participants were analyzed, and the frequencies of specific words are detailed in Table 12. Notably, "mother" was the most repeated word, occurring 54 times in the responses. The word "child" was repeated 33 times. Additionally, the term "listens" appeared 18 times, "kind" 17 times, "person" 11 times, "pretty," and "thoughtful" 8 times. These terms are addressed to "kind mother," "listen to the child," and "pretty and thoughtful person." Other words such as "affectionate," "easy" and "communicate" appeared 7 times, which addressed "easy to communicate." Furthermore, the words "good," "cook" 6 times, "cheerful," self-sacrifice" 4 times, "happy," "youthful," "capable," "career," "freedom," and "respect" are more than 2 times. The expressions most frequently mentioned are "good in cooking," "self-sacrifice for the child," "stay youthful and happy," and "respect the child and freedom for the child."

Table 12

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words of Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Children from Their Viewpoint (tops 44 words)

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Mother	54	Career	2
Child	33	Educate	2
Listen	18	Freedom	2
Kind	17	Respect	2
Person	11	Self-assertive	2
Pretty	8	Accept	2
Thoughtful	8	Calm	2
Affectionate	7	Can-rely-on	1
Communicate	7	Capacity	1
Easy	7	Do-not-nag	1
Supportive	7	Encourage	1
Cook	6	Family	1
Good	6	Financial	1
Cheerful	4	Support	1
Have	4	Flexible	1
Self-sacrifice	4	Gorgeous	1
Care	3	Hobby	1
Happy	3	Housewife	1
Secure-based	3	Individual	1
Youthful	3	Job	1
Advice	2	Married	1
Capable	2	Open-minded	1

Non-Regular Employed Mothers. The ought self-concepts portrayed by children listed by non-regular employed mother participants were analyzed, and the frequencies of specific words are detailed in Table 13. Notably, “mother” was the most repeated word, occurring 68 times in the responses. The word “child” appeared to be repeated 53 times. Additionally, the term “listens” appeared 23 times, “kind” 18 times, “person” 16 times, and “thoughtful” 14 times. These terms are addressed to “kind mother,” “listen to the child,” and “thoughtful person.” Other words such as “good,” “cook,” “supportive,” and “affectionate” appeared 8 times. The word “do not nag” appeared 7 times, which addressed “good in cooking,” “affectionate mother,” and “do not nag at the child.” Furthermore, the words “happy,” “beautiful,” “cheerful,” and “respect” were used more than 5 times, and “accept” and “youthful” appeared 4 times. The words “best friend,” “calm,” “freedom,” “open-minded,” and “smart” appeared 3 times. These terms referred to being “best friend for the child,” “freedom for the child,” “respect the child,” and “freedom for the child.” and “smart and open-minded mother.” Other words such as “communicate,” “do not angry,” “easy,” and “spend time” are more than 2 times. The expressions most frequently mentioned are “easy to communicate,” “do not angry the child,” “spend time with the child.”

These recurring words provide insights into the varied aspects and priorities encompassed within the ought self-concepts portrayed by their children articulated by the participants.

Table 13

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words of Non-Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Children from Their Viewpoint (tops 48 words)

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Mother	68	Communicate	2
Child	53	Do-not-angry	2
Listen	23	Easy	2
Kind	18	Generous	2
Person	16	Healthy	2
Thoughtful	14	Prioritize	2
Cook	8	Spent-time	2
Good	8	Support	2
Supportive	8	Calm	1
Affectionate	8	Devote	1
Do-not-nag	7	Educate	1
Happy	6	Enjoy	1
Beautiful	5	Flexible	1
Cheerful	5	Household	1
Respect	5	Income	1
Accept	4	Interesting	1
Heart	4	Life	1
Youthful	4	Praise	1
Best-friend	3	Protect	1
Calm	3	Respectful	1
Family	3	Stay-home	1
Freedom	3	Supportive	1
Open-minded	3	Who	1
Smart	3	Stylist	1

Homemaker Mothers. The ought self-concepts portrayed by children listed by homemakers were analyzed, and the frequencies of specific words are detailed in Table 14. Notably, “child” was the most repeated word, occurring 24 times in the responses. The word “mother” appeared to be repeated 24 times, “listen” appeared 10 times, which addressed “mother listen to the child.” The term of “person” appeared 9 times, and thoughtful 6 times, which referred to being a “thoughtful person.” and “cheerful person.”

The words “cook,” “open-minded,” “family,” “pretty” appeared more than 3 times. “Cheerful,” “communicate,” “easy,” “generous,” “respect,” and “protect” appeared more than 1 time. In the term “family,” the expression most frequently mentioned is “protect the family’s life.” Other terms such as “open-minded and cheerful person,” “easy to communicate.”

Table 14

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words of Homemaker Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Children from Their Viewpoint (tops 38 words)

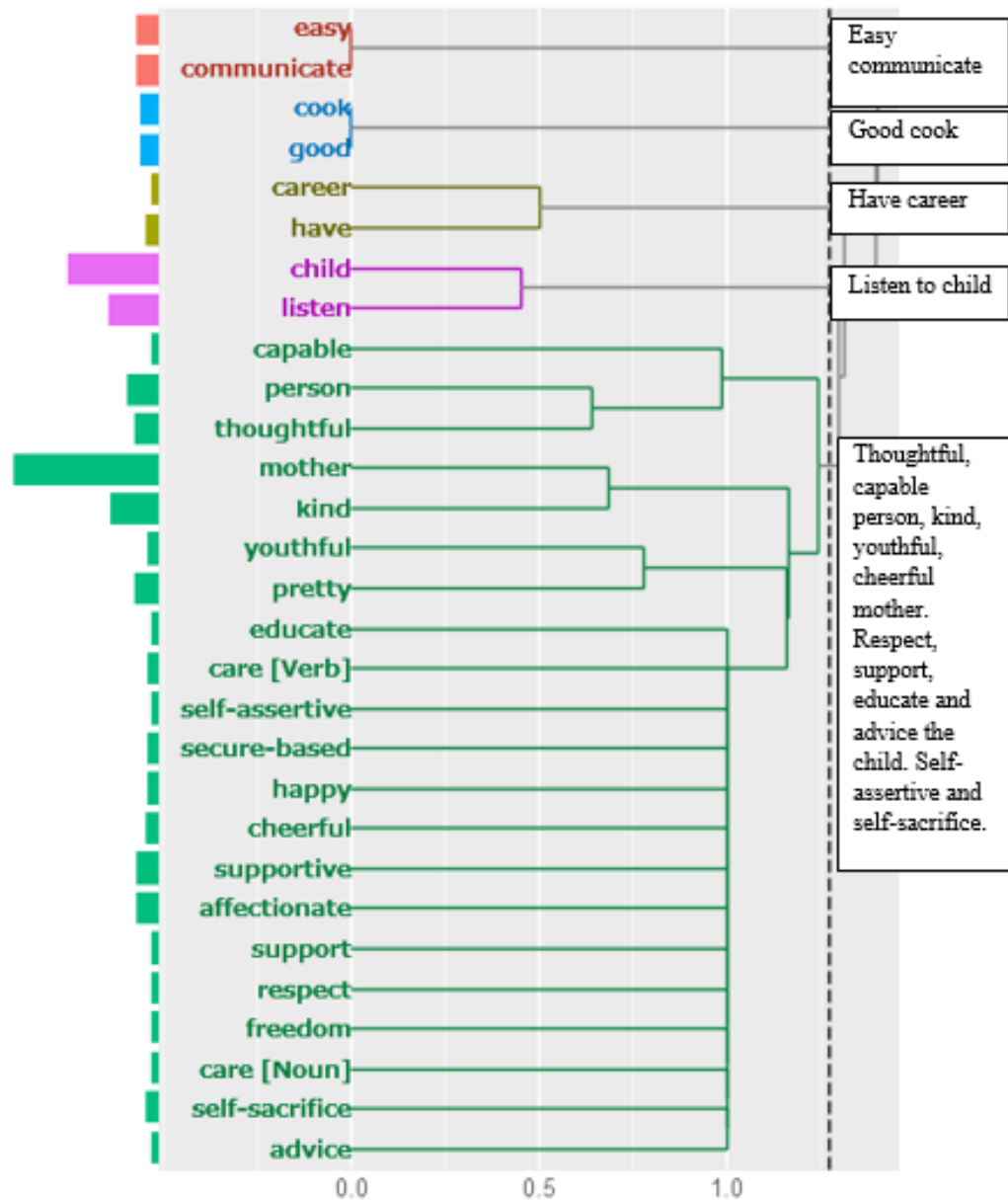
Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Child	24	Smart	2
Mother	24	Support	2
Listen	10	Understand	2
Person	9	Advice	1
Kind	8	Affectionate	1
Thoughtful	6	Always-smile	1
Cook	4	Always-there	1
Open-minded	4	Best-friend	1
Family	3	Can-rely-on	1
Good	3	Care	1
Pretty	3	Household	1
Cheerful	2	Keep-busy	1
Communicate	2	Not-over-involve	1
Easy	2	Prioritize	1
Generous	2	Secure-based	1
Happy	2	Sociable	1
Life	2	Spent-time	1
Protect	2	Work	1
Respect	2	Youthful	1

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis. The following Hierarchical Cluster Analysis provides a systematic way to explore and identify patterns or clusters within a dataset provided by participants. It allows a better understanding of the relationships between participants and their categories of ideal selves portrayed by the participants' children from their viewpoint.

Regular Employed Mothers. The results of the hierarchical cluster analysis in Figure 22 show a grouping into five main clusters or categories. Within these overarching categories [easy to communicate], [good in cooking], [have a career], [listen to child], and [thoughtful, capable, kind, youthful and cheerful mother. Respect, support, educate and advise the child. Self-assertive, and self-sacrifice]. This detailed classification provides a nuanced understanding of regular employment mothers' comments on their ought selves portrayed by their children.

Figure 22

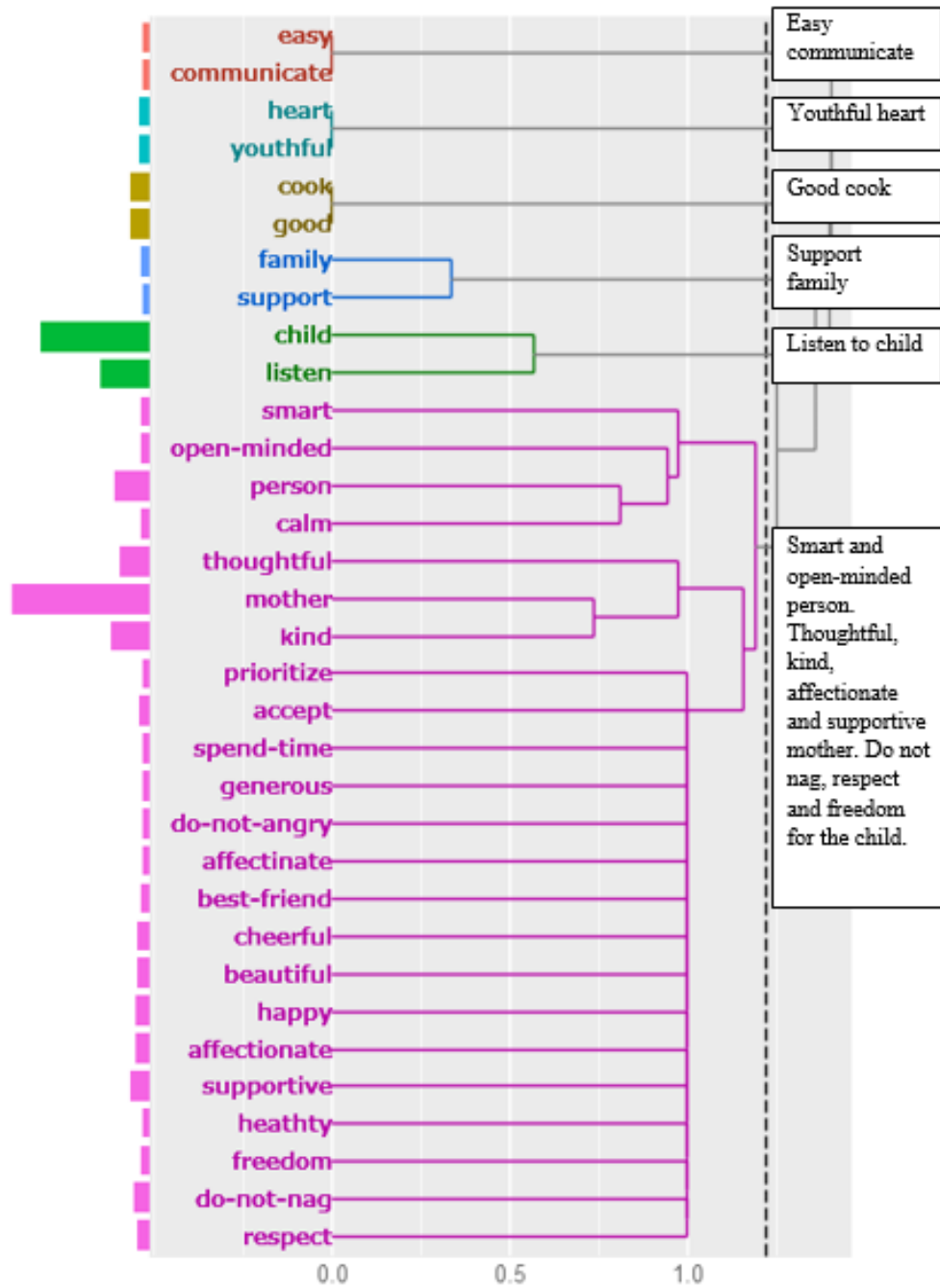
Hierarchical Cluster Analysis of Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Children from Their Viewpoint



Non-Regular Employed Mothers. The results of the hierarchical cluster analysis in Figure 23 show a grouping into six main clusters or categories. Within these overarching categories [easy communicate], [youthful heart], [good cook], [support family], [listen to child], and [smart and open-minded person—thoughtful, kind, affectionate and supportive mother. Do not nag, respect, and freedom for the child]. This detailed classification provides a nuanced understanding of regular employment mothers' comments on their ought selves portrayed by their children.

Figure 23

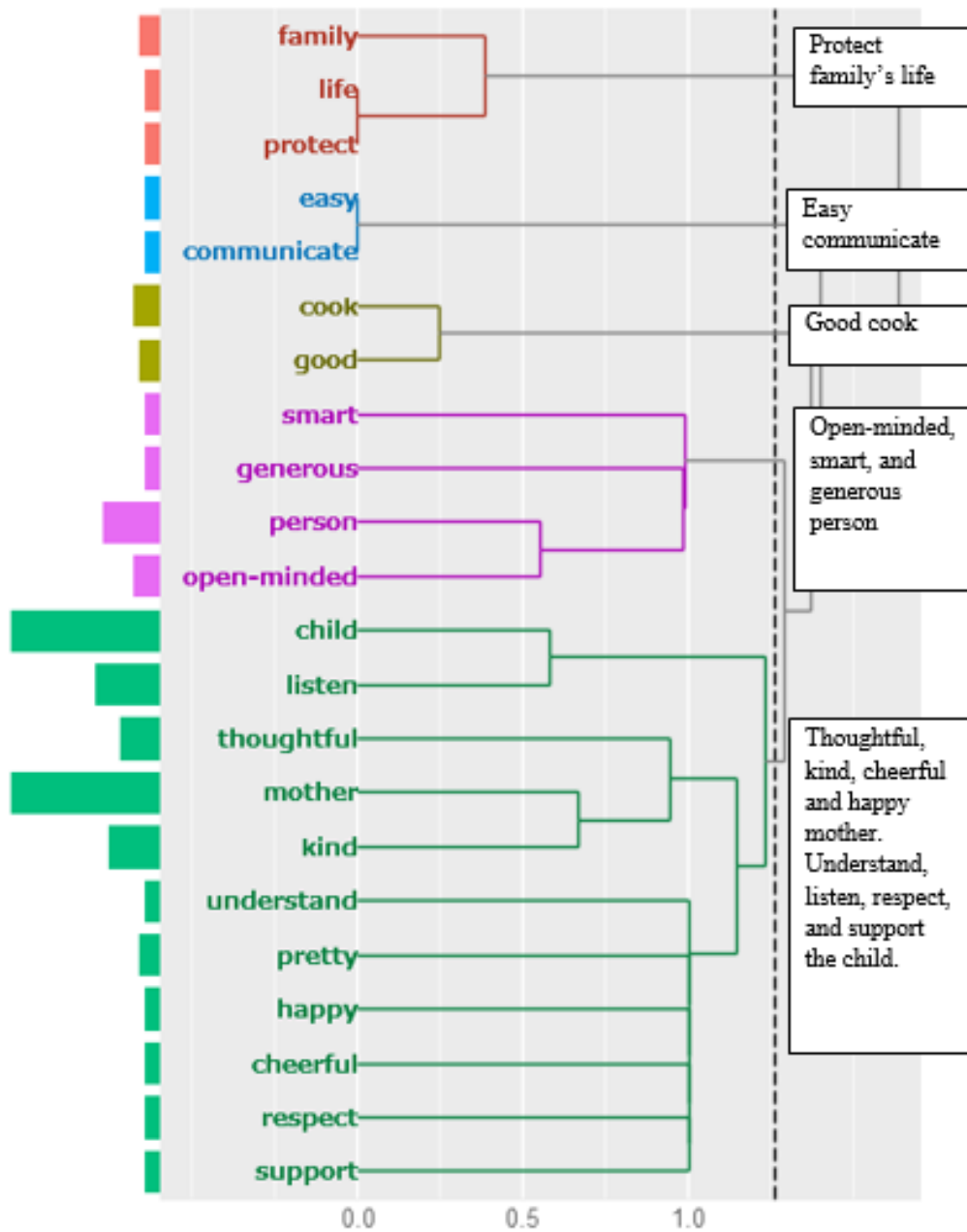
Hierarchical Cluster Analysis of Non-Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Children from Their Viewpoint



Homemaker Mothers. The results of the hierarchical cluster analysis in Figure 24 revealed a grouping into five main clusters or categories. Within these overarching categories [protect family's life], [easy to communicate], [open-minded, smart, and generous person], [thoughtful, kind, cheerful and happy mother. Understand, listen, respect, and support the child]. This detailed classification provides a nuanced understanding of regular employment mothers' comments on their ought selves portrayed by their children.

Figure 24

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis of Homemaker Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Children from Their Viewpoint



Co-occurrence Network. A co-occurrence network diagram was created to summarize the frequency of extracted words and the relationships between phrases. A co-occurrence network illustrates the strength of co-occurrence between extracted words, or in other words, the similarity in occurrence patterns, through a network diagram. The size of the circles represents the frequency of the words, and the distance between connected lines indicates the depth of their relationship. Below is the co-occurrence diagram of participants' children's perspective ideal selves according to their employment status.

Regular Employed Mothers. The co-occurrence network diagram for the ought selves portrayed by children among regularly employed mothers is depicted in Figure 25. On the right, the size of each circle corresponds to the approximate number of occurrences of the selected words. Notably, the co-occurrence network diagram for the participants' comments reveals the presence of seven subgraphs.

In subgraph 01, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords are child, educate, listen, respect, freedom, advice, and care are encompassed within the largest circle. Based on the sample responses analysis, the participants' preponderance articulated aspirations related to listening and respecting the child, educating, and advising the child while providing freedom for the child.

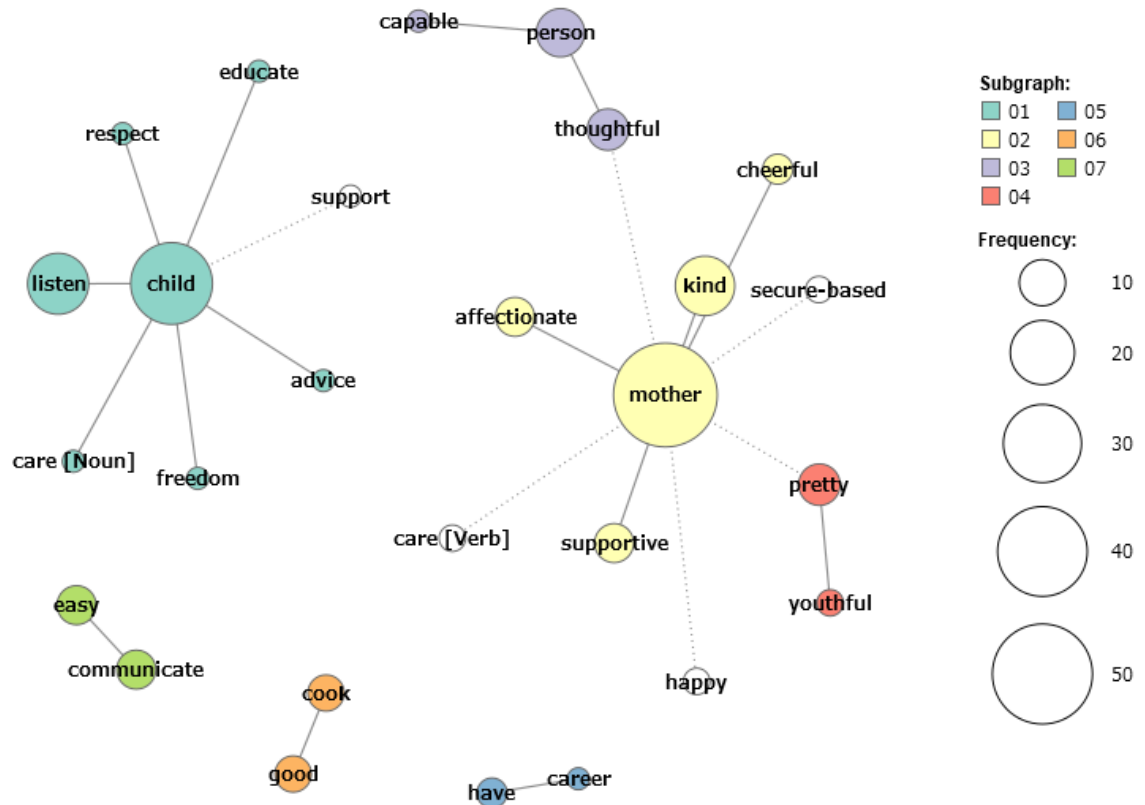
In subgraph 02, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords include mother, cheerful, kind, affectionate, supportive, and secure-based. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, the preponderance of participants articulated aspirations related to being cheerful, kind, supportive, and secure for the child. In subgraph 03, a person is thoughtful and capable. These are addressed for being

thoughtful and a capable person. In group 04, words included extracted words such as pretty and youthful.

This observation implies a prevailing inclination among most regularly employed mothers towards actively supporting the well-being and development of their children, which their children most likely portray.

Figure 25

Co-occurrence Network of Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Children from Their Viewpoint



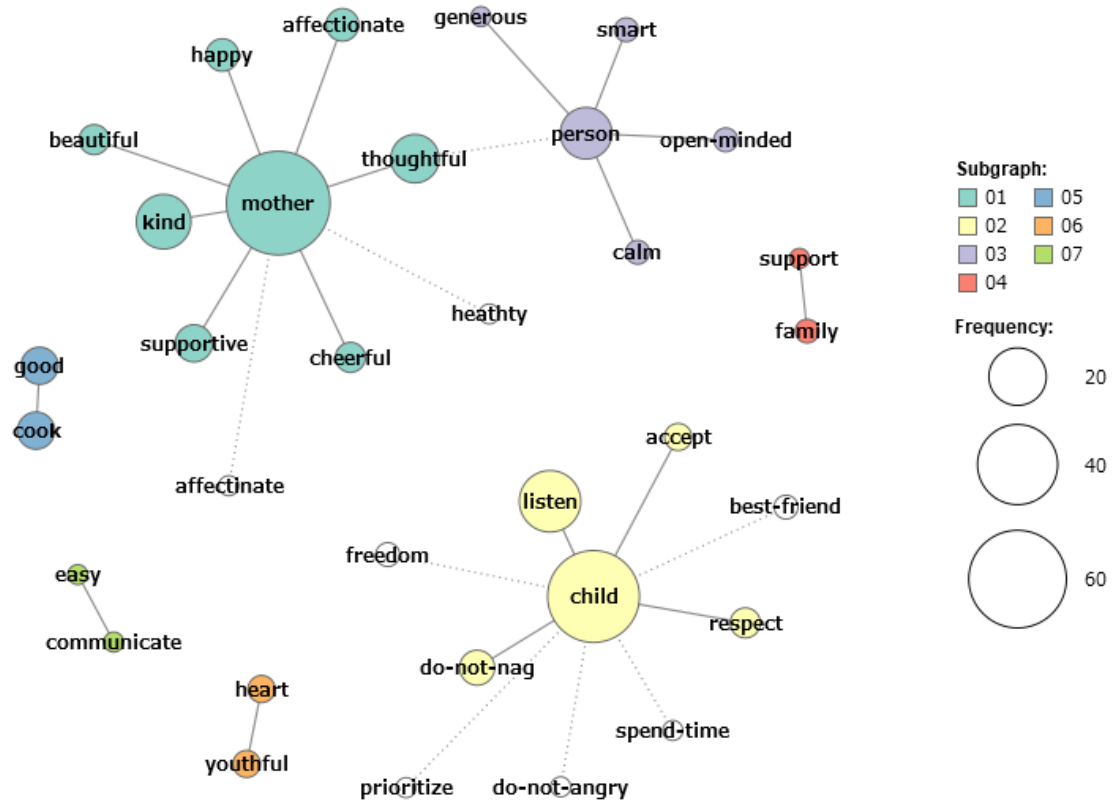
Non-Regular Employed Mothers. The co-occurrence network diagram for the ought selves portrayed by children among non-regular employed mothers is depicted in Figure 26. On the right, the size of each circle corresponds to the approximate number of occurrences of the selected words. Notably, the co-occurrence network diagram for the participants' comments reveals the presence of seven subgraphs.

In subgraph 01, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords such as mother, thoughtful, kind, affectionate, happy, cheerful, and supportive, are encompassed within the largest circle. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, the preponderance of participants articulated aspirations related to being a thoughtful, kind, affectionate, cheerful, and supportive mother.

In subgraph 02, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords are child, listen, respect, accept, do not nag, best friend, spend time, and freedom. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, the preponderance of participants articulated aspirations related to listening to the child, respecting, accepting, and not nagging at the child. Be the child's best friend and spend time with the child, free for the child to decide. Subgraph 03 comprises words like a person, open-minded, generous, thoughtful, and calm. These are addressed to open-minded, generous, calm, and intelligent people.

Figure 26

Co-occurrence Network of Non-Regular Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Children from Their Viewpoint

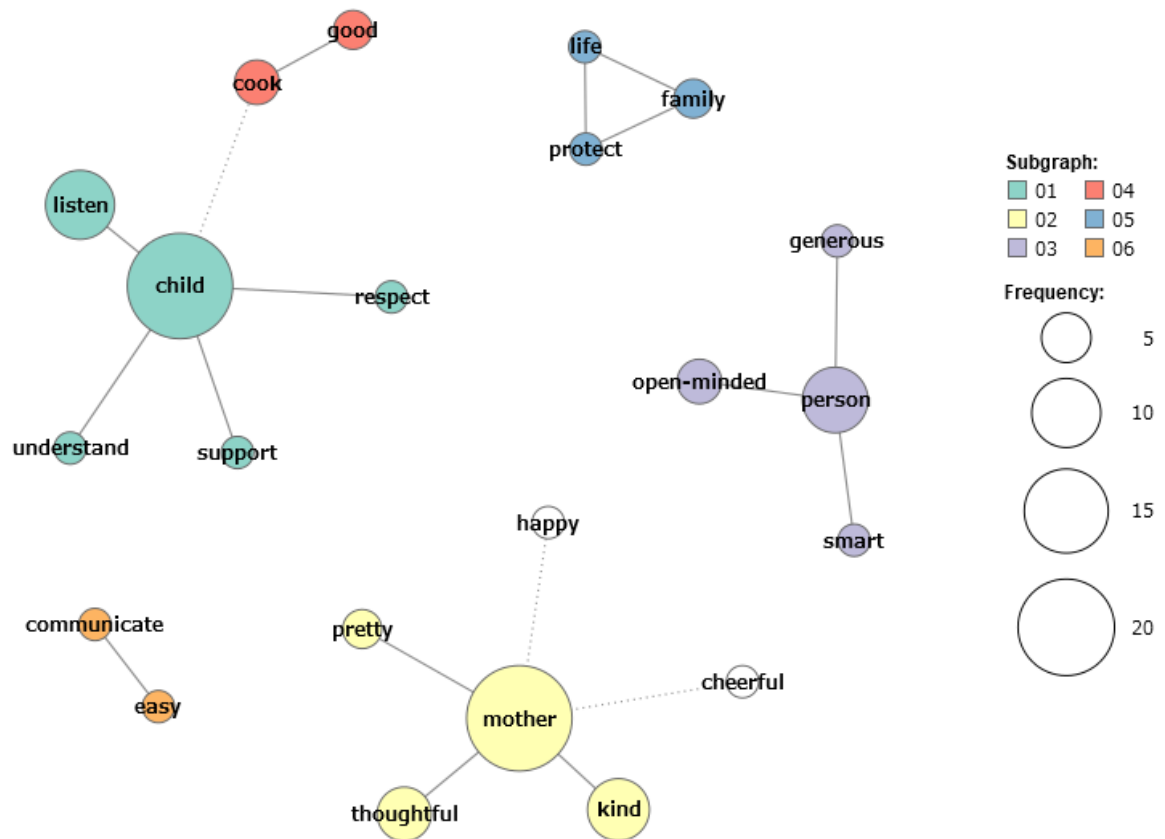


Homemaker Mothers. The co-occurrence network diagram for the ought selves portrayed by parents among homemaker mothers is depicted in Figure 27. On the right, the size of each circle corresponds to the approximate number of occurrences of the selected words. Notably, the co-occurrence network diagram for the ought self-reveals the presence of six subgraphs.

Subgraph 01 comprises children, respect, listening, understanding, and support. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, it is evident that a predominant aspiration among homemaker mothers' children is a mother who can listen, respect, understand, and support their child. In subgraph 02, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords are mother, kind, thoughtful, and pretty. These refer to the expectation of a kind, thoughtful, and pretty mother. Subgraph 03 is an open-minded, generous, and intelligent person. Subgraph 04 addressed the mother, who is good at cooking.

Figure 27

Co-occurrence Network of Homemaker Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Children from Their Viewpoint



Ought Selves Portrayed by Society from Participants' Viewpoint. Below is the analysis of the participants' ought selves portrayed by society (e.g., peers, friends, or relatives). Each participant was asked to list three ideal selves portrayed by society. The participants are allowed to address either peers, friends, or relatives, which has more influence on their self-perception from their point of view. Regularly employed mothers, numbering 45 participants, generated 125 ideal selves portrayed by the society (45 participants * 3 phrases per participant). Non-regular employed mothers, with 52 participants, contributed 156 phrases. Homemaker mothers, with 23 participants, listed 69 phrases of the ought selves portrayed by society.

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Word. A list of frequently appearing words was extracted. This step allowed for a closer examination of the terms commonly used or written by the mother participants. The resulting list provides insight into these words' significance in describing the ought selves portrayed by society (e.g., peers, friends, and relatives) from the participants' viewpoint. The analysis is presented according to the participant's employment status.

Regular Employed Mothers. The ought self-concepts portrayed by society listed by regular employed mothers were analyzed, and the extracted list of frequently appearing words are identified in Table 15. The most frequently appearing words were "person," 46 times, "child" 38 times, "family" 24 times, "balance" and "work" appeared 13 times. Additionally, the word "educates" appeared 12 times, "mother" 10 times. These terms are addressed to "work life balance," "devote mother," and "educate the child." Other words such as "affectionate," "kind," "listen," and "prioritize" appeared more appeared 7 times, which addressed "listen to the child," "prioritize the child," and "affectionate mother." Furthermore,

the words “thoughtful,” “cheerful,” self-sacrifice” are more than 5 times, “independent,” “open-minded,” “accommodative,” “calm,” “” mom-friend,” and ‘respect” are more than 1 time. The expressions most frequently mentioned are “thoughtful and cheerful person,” “self-sacrifice for the child,” “independent person,” and “open-minded person.”

Table 15

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words of Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Society from Their Viewpoint (tops 50 words)

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Person	46	Independent	2
Child	38	Listener	2
Family	24	Normative	2
Balance	13	Open-minded	2
Work	13	Respect	2
Educate	12	Accommodative	1
Mother	10	Activity	1
Affectionate	8	Attitude	1
Devote	8	Bento	1
Kind	8	Calm	1
Listen	7	Capable	1
Prioritize	7	Career	1
Thoughtful	7	Close	1
Cheerful	6	Dream	1
Good	6	Discipline	1
Life	6	Friend	1
Protect	6	Healthy	1
Have	5	Household	1
Self-sacrifice	5	Know	1
Attentive	3	Maintain	1
Cook	3	Mature	
Job	3	Mom-friend	1
Smart	3	Participate	1
Support	3	Peers	1
Understand	3	Flexible	1

Non-Regular Employed Mothers. The ought self-concepts portrayed by society listed by non-regular employed mothers were analyzed, and the frequencies of specific words are detailed in Table 16. Notably, “person” was the most repeated word, occurring 56 times in the responses. The word “child” appeared to be repeated 31 times, and “family” appeared 20 times. Additionally, the term “mother” appeared 20 times, “affectionate” “devote,” “educate” and “protect” appeared 14 times. These terms are addressed to “affectionate person,” “educate the child,” and “protect the child,” and “devote mother.”

Other words such as “work-life balance,” “thoughtful,” “smart,” “double-income” “positive,” “sociable,” “serve-community” appeared more than 3 times. These terms referred to “smart and thoughtful person,” “double-income family,” “as a mother and able to serve the community,” “participate in social activities and a sociable person.”

The word “independent” “open-minded,” “not over interfere” “respect,” and support” appeared more than 2 times. These words addressed “an independent person,” “open-minded person,” and “do not over interfere with the child.” Furthermore, the words “enjoy,” “hobby,” “housewife,” “good wife,” and “not over assertive” appeared one time.

Table 16

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words of Non-regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Society from Their Viewpoint (tops 50 words)

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Person	56	Well-manner	3
Child	31	Cooperative	2
Family	20	Income	2
Mother	20	Independent	2
Affectionate	14	Job	2
Devote	14	Not-over-interfere	2
Educate	14	Open-minded	2
Protect	14	Pretty	2
Kind	13	Respect	2
Life	13	Support	2
Balance	9	Beautiful	1
Work-life	9	Calm	1
Cheerful	9	Cook	1
Household	7	Enjoy	1
Thoughtful	7	Friend	1
Smart	5	Good	1
Double-income	4	Good-wife	1
Have	4	Healthy	1
Listen	4	Hobby	1
Be	3	Housewife	1
Positive	3	Many	1
Prioritize	3	My-life	1
Serve-community	3	Not-over-assertive	1
Sociable	3	Not-slack-off	1
Understand	3	Not-angry	1

Homemaker Mothers. The ought self-concepts portrayed by society listed by homemakers were analyzed, and the frequencies of specific words are detailed in Table 17. Notably, the word “person” appeared 21 times, “child” 13 times and “family” 11 times were the most repeated words in the responses. The word “mother” appeared to be repeated 9 times, “educate” 7 times, and “devote, “thoughtful,” and “kind” appeared 6 times, which addressed “educate the child,” “thoughtful and kind mother,” and “devote to the child.” The term “double-income,” “job,” “support,” appeared more than 1 time.

Table 17

Extracted List of Frequently Appearing Words of Homemaker Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Society from Their Viewpoint (tops 40 words)

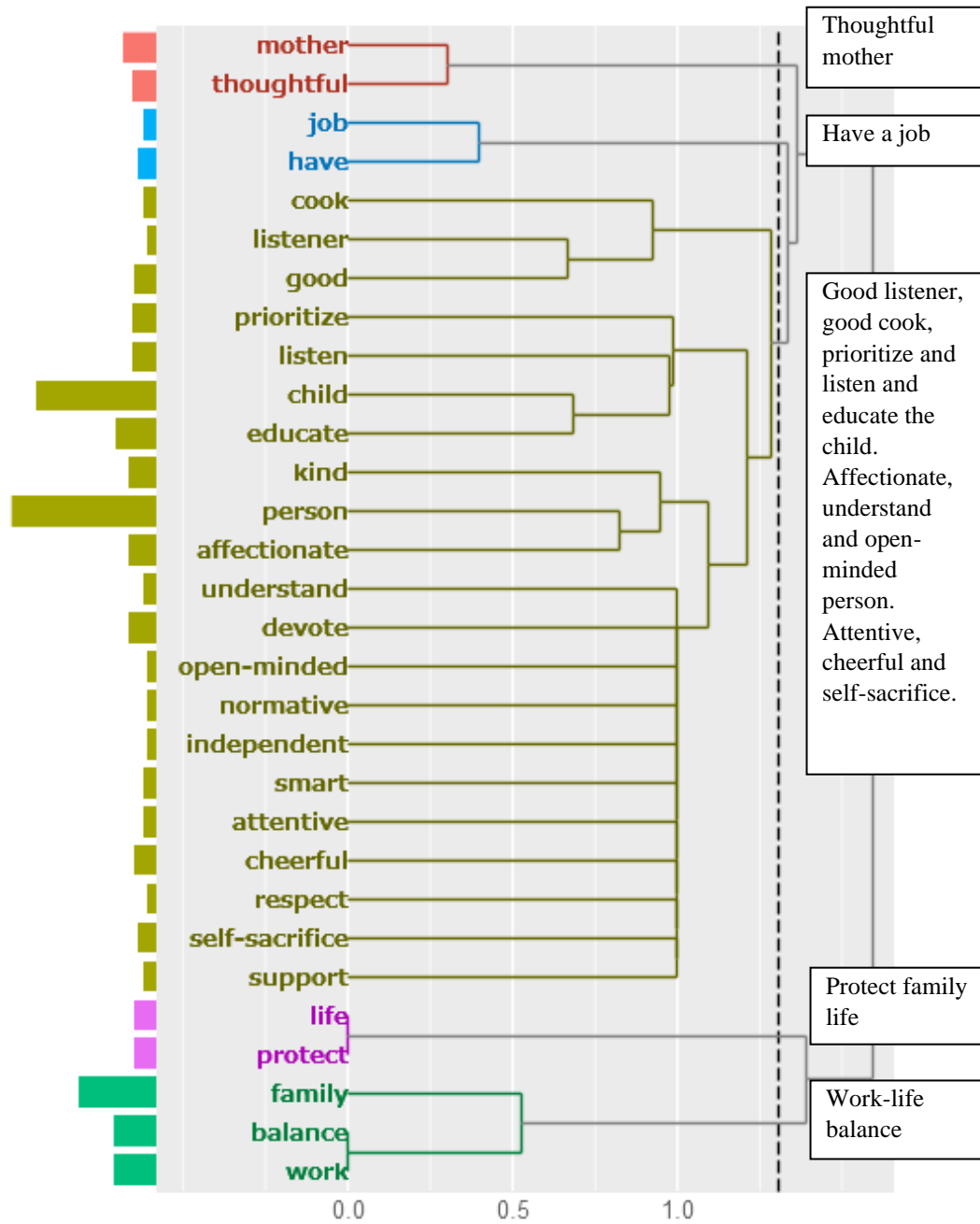
Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Person	21	Job	2
Child	13	Smart	2
Family	11	Support	2
Mother	9	Work-life	2
Educate	7	Alone	1
Devote	6	Be	1
Thoughtful	6	Cheerful	1
Kind	5	Contribute	1
Protect	5	Cook	1
Life	4	Enjoy	1
Pretty	4	Good	1
Prioritize	4	Diligent	1
Household	3	Healthy	1
Affectionate	2	Maintain	1
Balance	2	Perseverant	1
Double-income	2	Praise	1
Flexible	2	Self-discipline	1
Have	2	Sociable	1
Income	2	Stable	1

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis. The following Hierarchical Cluster Analysis provides a systematic way to explore and identify patterns or clusters within a dataset provided by participants. It allows a better understanding of the relationships between participants and their categories of ideal selves portrayed by society (e.g., peers, friends, and relatives) from the participants' viewpoint, according to their employment status.

Regular Employed Mothers. The results of the hierarchical cluster analysis in Figure 28, reveal a grouping into five main clusters or categories. Within these overarching categories [thoughtful mother], [have a job], [good cook, listen to child, affectionate, understand, and open-minded person, attentive, cheerful, and open-minded], and [protect family life], and [work-life balance]. This detailed classification provides a nuanced understanding of regular employment mothers' comments on their ought selves portrayed by society from their viewpoint.

Figure 28

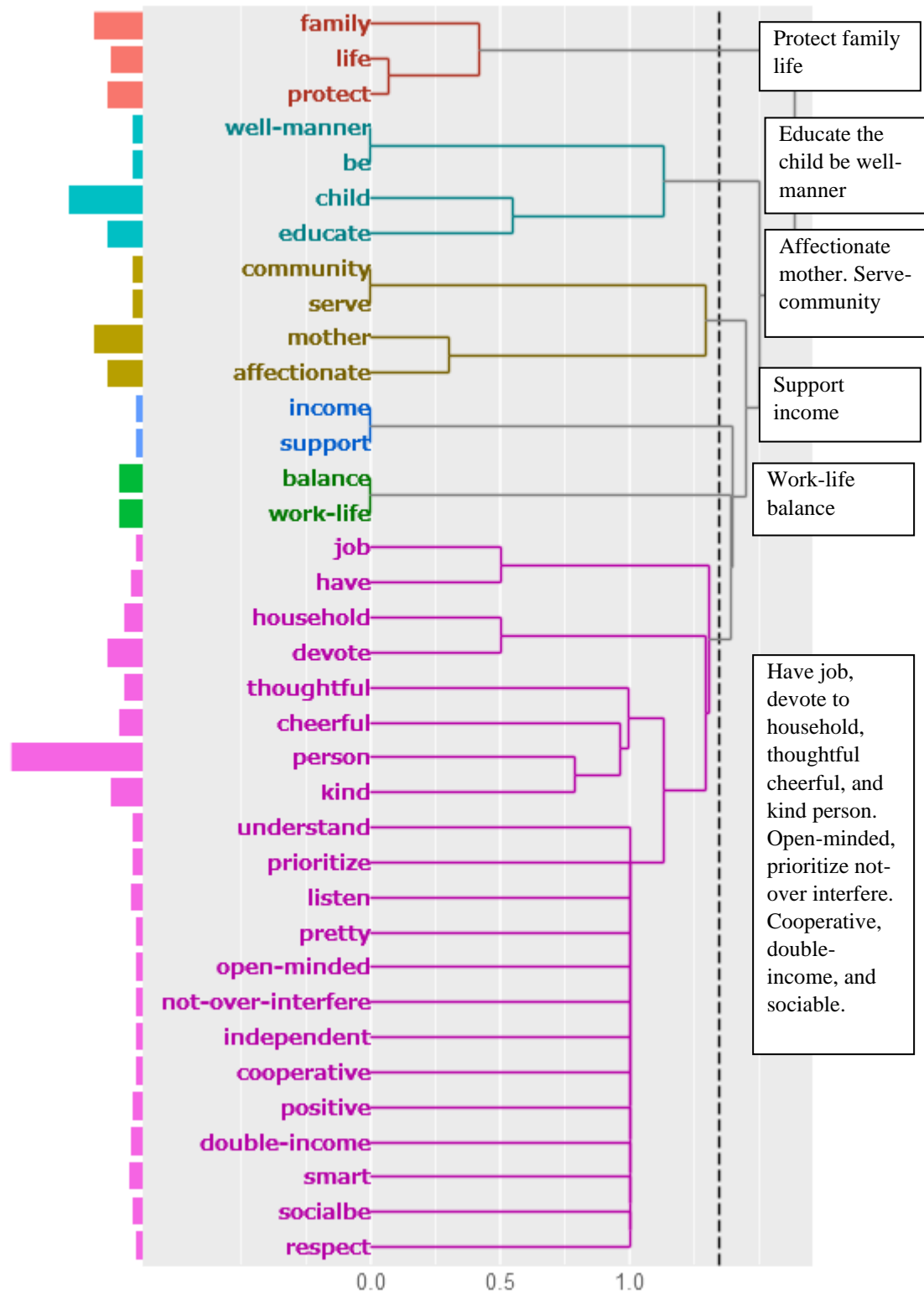
Hierarchical Cluster Analysis of Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Society from Their Viewpoint



Non-Regular Employed Mothers. The results of the hierarchical cluster analysis in Figure 29 reveal a grouping into six main clusters of the ought selves portrayed by society from the participants' viewpoint. Within these overarching categories [protect family life], [educate the child to be well-manner], [affectionate mother, serve-community], [support family income], [work-life balance], and [Have job, devote to household, thoughtful cheerful, and kind person. Open-minded, prioritize not-over interfere. Cooperative, double-income, and sociable]. This detailed classification provides a nuanced understanding of regular employment mothers' comments on their ought selves portrayed by society from their view of point.

Figure 29

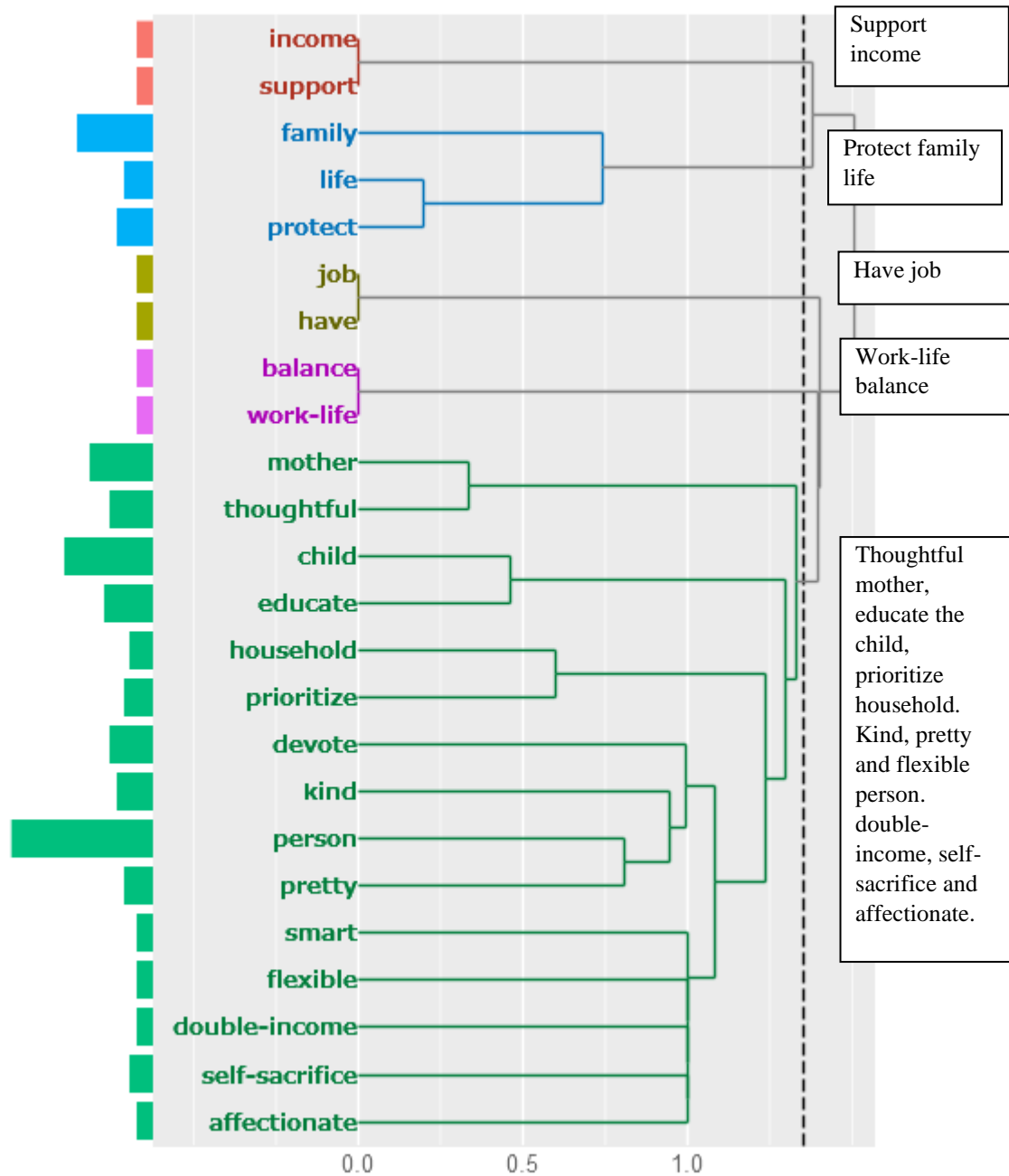
Hierarchical Cluster Analysis of Non-Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Society from Their Viewpoint



Homemaker Mothers. The results of the hierarchical cluster analysis in Figure 30 revealed a grouping into five main clusters or categories. Within these overarching categories [support income], [protect family's life], [have job], [work-life balance], and [Thoughtful mother, educate the child, prioritize household. Kind, pretty and flexible person. double-income, self-sacrifice and affectionate]. This detailed classification provides a nuanced understanding of homemaker mothers' comments on the ought selves portrayed by society from their viewpoint

Figure 30

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis of Homemaker Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Society from Their Viewpoint



Co-occurrence Network. A co-occurrence network diagram was created to summarize the frequency of extracted words and the relationships between phrases. A co-occurrence network illustrates the strength of co-occurrence between extracted words, or in other words, the similarity in occurrence patterns, through a network diagram. The size of the circles represents the frequency of the words, and the distance between connected lines indicates the depth of their relationship. Below is the co-occurrence diagram of participants' ought selves portrayed by society from their viewpoint according to their employment status.

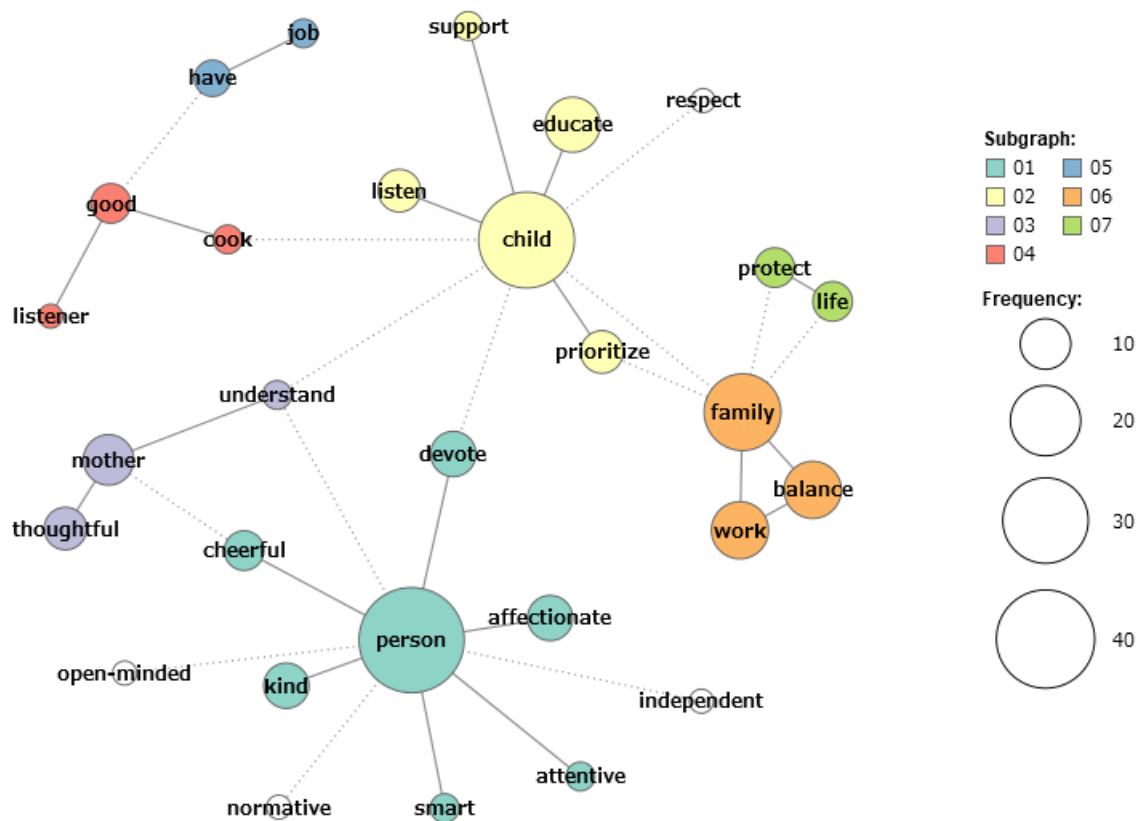
Regular Employed Mothers. The co-occurrence network diagram for the ought selves portrayed by society among regular employed mothers is depicted in Figure 31. On the right, the size of each circle corresponds to the approximate number of occurrences of the selected words. Notably, the co-occurrence network diagram for the participants' comments reveals the presence of seven subgraphs.

In subgraph 01, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords are person, affectionate, kind, devoted, cheerful, attentive, and smart are encompassed within the largest circle. Based on the sample responses analysis, the participants' preponderance articulated aspirations related to being an affectionate, cheerful, smart, and attentive person. In subgraph 02, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords include child, educate, support, respect, listen and prioritize. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, the preponderance of participants articulated aspirations related to educating the child, prioritizing, listening, respect, and supporting the child. In subgraph 03, it is related to being a thoughtful and understanding mother. In subgraph 04, words included extracted words such as good cook and good listener. In subgraph 5, have a job. subgraph 6, referred to having balance

between family life and work. This observation implies a prevailing inclination among most regularly employed mothers towards actively supporting the well-being and development of their children, which society is most likely portrayed.

Figure 31

Co-occurrence Network of Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Society from Their Viewpoint



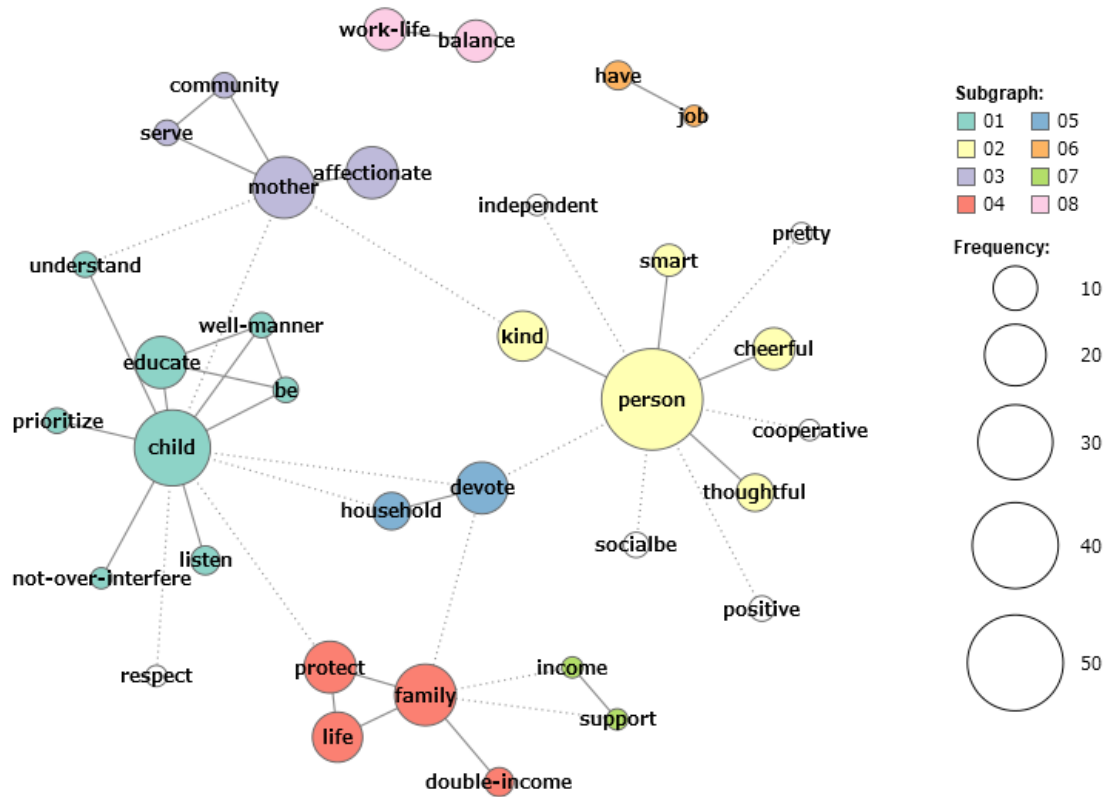
Non-Regular Employed Mothers. The co-occurrence network diagram for the ought selves portrayed by society among non-regular employed mothers is depicted in Figure 32. On the right, the size of each circle corresponds to the approximate number of occurrences of the selected words. Notably, the co-occurrence network diagram for the participants' comments reveals the presence of eight subgraphs.

In subgraph 01, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords such as child, educate, prioritize, well-manner, understand, listen, and not over interfered, are encompassed within the largest circle. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, the preponderance of participants articulated aspirations related to educating the child to be well-manner, prioritizing the child, listening, and understanding the child's stories, and not over interfering with the child.

In subgraph 02, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords are person, cheerful, thoughtful, intelligent, and kind. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, the preponderance of participants articulated aspirations related to being a cheerful, thoughtful, intelligent, and kind person. subgraph 03 comprises words like mother, affectionate, and serve-community. These are addressed to being a mother who is affectionate and participates in community activities or serves the community. Subgraph 4 protects family life and has a double-income family related to subgraph 7, which supports family income. Subgraph 5 is devoted to the household, subgraph 6 has a job, and subgraph 8 has a work-life balance. This observation implies that most non-regular employed mothers' self-perception of society is most likely portrayed.

Figure 32

Co-occurrence Network of Non-Regular Employed Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Society from Their Viewpoint

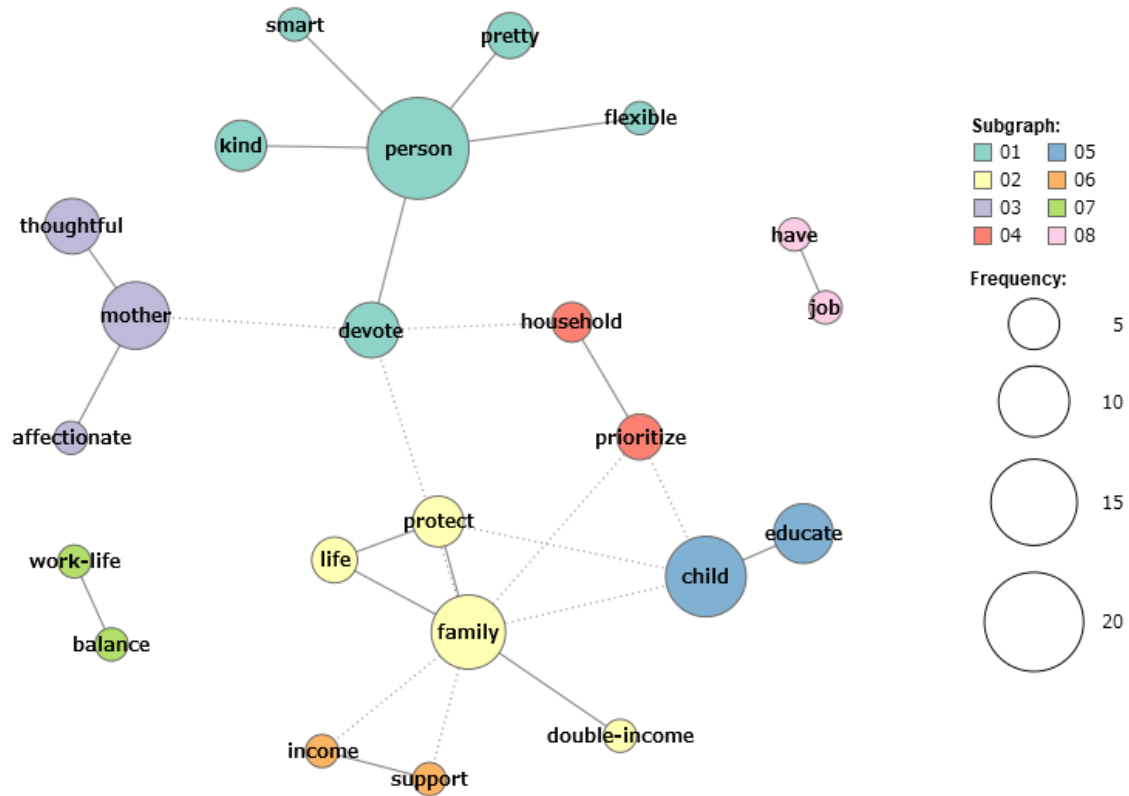


Homemaker Mothers. The co-occurrence network diagram for the ought selves portrayed by society among homemaker mothers is depicted in Figure 33. On the right, the size of each circle corresponds to the approximate number of occurrences of the selected words. Notably, the co-occurrence network diagram for the society portrayed ought selves reveals the presence of eight subgraphs.

Subgraph 01 comprises words like a person, kind, intelligent, devoted, flexible, and pretty. Based on the analysis of the sample responses, it is evident that a predominant aspiration of society portrayed ideal selves among homemaker mothers as people who are kind, devoted, flexible, and pretty. In subgraph 02, which comprises extracted words with the highest frequency of occurrence, the prominent keywords are family, protect, and double-income, related to subgraph 6, support family income. These refer to the expectation of protecting family life and supporting income. Subgraph 03, a thoughtful and affectionate mother. Subgraph 4 prioritizes household. Subgraph 5 educates the child, and subgraph 7 work-life balance. subgraph 8 is to have a job.

Figure 33

Co-occurrence Network of Homemaker Mothers' Ought Selves Portrayed by Society from Their Viewpoint



The analysis of participants' self-reports yielded insightful findings regarding their ideal and ought selves (i.e., perspectives influenced by parents, husbands, children, and societal standpoints) across different employment statuses. For regularly employed mothers, their ideal selves predominantly revolved around caregiving and familial responsibilities. Words such as *child* (36 occurrences), *mother* (20 occurrences), *family* (8 occurrences), and *work-life balance* (3 occurrences) were prominently highlighted. Notably, the frequent emphasis on the word *child* suggests a strong connection to the ideal selves depicted by regularly employed mothers. Furthermore, the terms *child* and *mother* were often linked to phrases such as "a mother who supports the child's needs," underscoring the centrality of caregiving in their self-concepts.

When comparing the ideal selves of regularly employed mothers with their ought selves (as portrayed by parents and husbands), themes such as *having a job* and *work-life balance* appear to align with the perspectives of parents and husbands. Additionally, references to *work-life balance* align with both husband and societal perspectives, suggesting a multifaceted understanding of these mothers' roles.

Conversely, non-regularly employed mothers emphasized the words *child* (53 times), *mother* (16 times), and *family* (14 times) when describing their ideal selves. The frequency of the word *child* underscores the paramount importance of childcare in their lives. Notably, the terms *child* and *mother* were not connected within sentences, indicating that they seemed independent of one another. This finding highlights that non-regularly employed mothers prioritize their child above all else but do not emphasize themes specifically relating to the mother-child relationship as regularly employed mothers did.

In addition, non-regularly employed mothers often idealized *living a fulfilled life* or *self-realization*. Unlike regularly employed mothers, phrases related to work were absent among this group. However, in their descriptions of ought selves (as portrayed by parents and husbands), *having a job* and *financial independence* were mentioned, revealing a noticeable gap between their ideal selves and ought selves.

Homemaker mothers, like their non-regularly employed counterparts, centered their ideal selves around the concepts of *child* (13 times), *mother* (2 times), and *family* (9 times). However, references to *individual* (31 times) and *society* (2 times) were also present, suggesting broader considerations. Interestingly, the ideal selves of homemaker mothers demonstrated closer alignment with parental perspectives, highlighting a strong influence from familial upbringing.

The *ought selves* from children's perspectives showed minimal differences across employment statuses. Most participants emphasized phrases such as *listening to the child*, *supporting*, *understanding the child*, *thoughtful and supportive mother*, *capable*, *open-minded*, and *generous*. These findings indicate that participants had a clear understanding of their children's perspective of an ideal maternal role, which appeared consistent across different employment statuses.

From the societal standpoint, the *ought selves* of regular, non-regular, and homemaker mothers also showed alignment with their ideal selves. Common phrases included *having a job*, *being independent*, *prioritizing the child*, *protecting family life*, and *thoughtful mother*. Interestingly, *double-income families* emerged as a frequently emphasized concept across all

employment statuses, reflecting societal expectations for individuals to balance broader personal and familial roles.

In conclusion, this analysis highlights the complex interplay between personal aspirations, societal expectations, and familial influences in shaping mothers' ideal selves. The findings underscore the nuanced nature of identity formation among mothers with varying employment statuses.

Chi-Square Test Analysis

Furthermore, a Chi-square test was conducted using the frequent terms identified through KH Coder analysis to determine whether the frequencies of the terms “maternal role,” “family role,” and “self-role” differed significantly by employment status. Maternal roles encompassed phrases such as “a mother who supports the child,” “a mother who listens to the child,” and “a devoted mother,” among others. Family roles referred to expressions like “support family income,” “protect family’s life,” and “be devoted to household responsibilities.” In contrast, self-roles included phrases such as “be financially independent,” “live a fulfilled life,” “develop communication skills,” and “participate in societal activities,” among others. These are shown in Table 18.

To determine whether significant differences exist in the frequencies of maternal role, family role, and self-role across employment groups, a chi-square test of independence was performed. Additionally, to analyze the frequencies within each category (maternal role, family role, and self-role) separately, a chi-square goodness-of-fit test was conducted for each

category. This approach helps identify whether the distribution of word frequencies within each category differs significantly across the employment groups.

Results of Chi-Square Test Analysis

Ideal Self by Employment Status. The results showed that there is a statistically significant difference in the frequencies of the categories maternal role, family role, and self-role among the three employment groups, $\chi^2(4, N = 216) = 84.99, p < .001$.

When examining each category separately: A significant difference was observed for *maternal role* ($\chi^2 = 9.44, p < .05$) and *self-role* ($\chi^2 = 111.05, p < .001$) across employment groups. However, no significant difference is observed for the category of family role ($\chi^2 = 1.23, p > .05$).

Ought Selves (Parents) by Employment Status. The results showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the frequencies of the categories; maternal role, family role, and self-role among the three employment groups, $\chi^2(4, N = 330) = 3.75, p = .44$.

There are no statistically significant differences in the frequencies of the categories; maternal role, family role, and self-role across the three employment groups when analyzed separately; maternal role: $\chi^2 = 2.42, p > .05$, family role: $\chi^2 = 1.37, p > .05$, self-role: $\chi^2 = 2.16, p > .05$.

Ought Selves (Husband) by Employment Status. There is no statistically significant difference in the frequencies of the categories “mother’s role,” “family role,” and “as an individual” across the three employment groups, $\chi^2(4, N = 297) = 2.38, p = .67$.

There is a statistically significant difference in the frequencies of the category family role ($\chi^2 = 5.78, p < .05$) across employment groups. However, there are no statistically significant differences between the categories of maternal role ($\chi^2 = .41, p > .05$) and self-role ($\chi^2 = 1.19, p > .05$).

Ought Selves (Children) by Employment Status. There is no statistically significant difference in the frequencies of the categories of maternal role, family role, and self-role across the three employment groups, $\chi^2(4, N = 300) = 5.39, p = .25$. Furthermore, there are also no statistically significant differences in the frequencies of maternal role ($\chi^2 = 1.77, p > .05$), family role ($\chi^2 = 5.35, p > .05$), and self-role ($\chi^2 = .53, p > .05$) across the three employment groups when examined it separately.

Ought Selves (Society) by Employment Status. There is no statistically significant difference in the frequencies of maternal role, family role, and self-role across the three employment groups, $\chi^2(4, N = 323) = 1.24, p = .87$. Furthermore, there are also no statistically significant differences in the distribution of word usage across employment groups for maternal role ($\chi^2 = .26, p > .05$), family role ($\chi^2 = 1.19, p > .05$), and self-role ($\chi^2 = 1.26, p > .05$) when examined it separately.

Residual Analysis

Furthermore, to better understand where the significant differences in *maternal role* and *self-role* lie within the ideal self across employment statuses, a residual analysis was conducted by calculating the standardized residuals for each cell. Standardized residuals indicate the extent to which the observed frequency deviates from the expected frequency,

adjusted for its size. Residuals greater than ± 1.96 indicate a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level. Residuals greater than ± 2.58 indicate significance at the 0.01 level. Residuals greater than ± 3.29 indicate significance at the 0.001 level. These thresholds help determine the extent to which an observed value deviates from what would be expected by chance.

The results showed that for the *maternal role*, the homemaker group exhibited a significant underrepresentation ($-3.76, p < .001$). In contrast, the regularly employed (1.37) and non-regularly employed (1.87) groups showed slight overrepresentation, but these differences were not statistically significant. Regarding the *self-role*, both the regularly employed ($-2.41, p < .05$) and non-regularly employed ($-3.56, p < .001$) groups showed significant underrepresentation. In contrast, the homemaker group exhibited a highly significant overrepresentation ($6.94, p < .001$).

Table 18*Chi-Square Test Analysis of Mother Role, Family Role and Self-Role by Employment Status*

Employment Category/		Regular N=45 (135)		Non-regular N=52 (156)		Homemaker N=23 (69)	
Ideal Self	Mother Role (*)	56 (41.48%)	Listen, respect the child, be a mother that supports the child, kind, warm, loving	69 (44.23%)	Listen, respect, educate, support the child, Loving, warm, devoted	15*** (21.74%)	Listen, respect, support the child, Devoted mother
	Family Role (n. s.)	11 (8.15%)	Protect family's life, role model, Family's role model	14 (8.97%)	Protect, cook, care for the family	9 (13.04%)	Comfortable home, protect family's life,
	Self-Role (**)	5* (3.7%)	Work-life balance	2*** (3.20%)	Enjoy life, live a fulfilled life	35*** (50.72%)	Cheerful, kind, thoughtful, calm, communication skills, live a fulfilled life, Serve community
Ought Selves (Parent)	Mother Role (n. s.)	62 (45.94%)	Educate the child, sacrifice for the child, communicate with the child, Affectionate, thoughtful, self-sacrificed	60 (38.46%)	Educate, listen to the child, prioritize the child, Affectionate, self-sacrificed	22 (31.88%)	Educate the child, listen to the child, Affectionate mother
	Family Role (n. s.)	31 (22.96%)	Prioritize, protect family's life, Loving husband and wife	28 (17.95%)	Protect family's life, Support, respect husband	17 (24.64%)	Protect family life, prioritize family
	Self-Role (n. s.)	44 (32.59%)	Thoughtful, affectionate, open-minded, trustworthy, Have a career, financially independent	49 (31.41%)	healthy, capable, cheerful, calm, happy, Do-not rely on parents, Work-life balance	15 (21.74%)	Thoughtful, capable, kind, healthy
Ought Selves (Husband)	Mother Role (n. s.)	34 (25.18%)	Educate, listen, respect, schoolwork, Self-sacrifice, flexible, support the child and family	45 (28.85%)	Prioritize the child, listen, educate the child, Open-minded, cheerful	20 (28.98%)	Prioritize the child, educate he child
	Family Role (*)	21 (15.55%)	Prioritize family, protect family's life, dual-income family, Respect husband, support husband	33 (21.15%)	Support family income, protect family's life, Respect, care for husband health, Be a housewife	22 (31.88%)	Protect family's life, Housewife
	Self-Role (n. s.)	40 (29.63%)	Thoughtful, capable, affectionate, cheerful, Have a job	56 (35.90%)	Thoughtful, flexible, open-minded, kind, Have a job	26 (37.68%)	Thoughtful, open-minded, cheerful

Ought Selves (Children)	Mother Role (<i>n. s.</i>)	87 (64.44%)	Listen, educate the child, freedom for the child, Supportive, kind, affectionate, a secure based	121 (77.56%)	Listen, respect, do-not nag, freedom for the child, best friend for the child, Thoughtful, affectionate, kind, supportive, beautiful, happy	48 (69.56%)	Listen, support, understanding, respect, Thoughtful, pretty, kind
	Family Role (<i>n. s.</i>)	0%	None	3 (1.92%)	Support family	3 (4.35%)	Protect family's life
	Self-Role (<i>n. s.</i>)	13 (9.63%)	Capable, thoughtful, Have career	16 (10.26%)	Open-minded, smart, generous, calm	9 (13.04%)	Open-minded, generous, smart
Ought Selves (Society)	Mother Role (<i>n. s.</i>)	48 (35.55%)	Prioritize, educate, listen, support the child, Thoughtful, understanding	51 (32.69%)	Prioritize, educate the child, not-over interfere, Affectionate, serve community	22 (31.88%)	Educate the child, Thoughtful, affectionate
	Family Role (<i>n. s.</i>)	24 (17.78%)	Protect family, balance work and family	20 (12.82%)	Protect family life, dual-income family	11 (15.94%)	Protect family life, double- income family
	Self-Role (<i>n. s.</i>)	59 (43.70%)	Affectionate, devoted, cheerful, attentive, kind, smart, Have a job	65 (41.67%)	Thoughtful, kind, smart, cheerful, Have a job, work- life balance	23 (33.33%)	Devoted, smart, kind, pretty, Have a job, work-life balance

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, () words generated, % of words generated.

4.3. Discussion

This study investigated the variations in the participants' perception of their ideal self and ought self (ideal selves portrayed by others) based on their employment status. The employment of KH Coder analysis of the self-report questionnaires has revealed noteworthy similarities and differences among the mother participants concerning their ideal selves and ought selves related to their employment status. In addition, Chi-square test revealed significant differences between ideal self, maternal role, family role and self-role across employment status.

Ideal Self

The ideal self's perception of regular-employed working mothers appeared to center around being a tolerant and affectionate mother to their children. These mothers frequently cited ideal selves that were closely tied to their children. Additionally, striving for a work-life balance emerged as a prominent aspect of their ideal selves. This inclination towards work-life balance is likely influenced by the perceived constraint of having limited time to spend with their children and family due to the demands of full-time employment. Furthermore, based on the analysis of the sample responses, the preponderance of participants articulated aspirations related to being a supportive mother and expressing a desire to support their children. This observation implies a prevailing inclination among most regularly employed mothers toward actively supporting their children's well-being and development (Ryoo, 2015).

In essence, the results indicate that employment status plays a significant role in shaping the ideal self-concept of mothers, with full-time working mothers emphasizing qualities related to motherhood and family, as well as expressing a desire for a balanced approach to work and personal life.

Like the regularly employed working mothers, non-regularly employed working mothers expressed ideals related to motherhood and family. Upon analyzing the responses provided, a predominant pattern emerges among non-regularly employed mothers, manifesting aspirations centered around proficiently demonstrating respect, providing education, safeguarding the family's well-being, and undertaking culinary responsibilities. This discernment underscores a prevalent proclivity among most part-time mothers toward actively nurturing the well-being and growth of their children and family.

However, they notably also frequently mentioned ideal selves related to their identity, indicating that, apart from being “a mother,” they are concerned and aware of their existence as an individual. This exploration might manifest in aspirations such as “live a fulfilled life, enjoy my life, stay true to myself, or be myself.” Additionally, these mothers expressed concerns about their health. Due to the nature of non-regular employment, which could involve similar job responsibilities and working hours as full-time employment, it may contribute to a shorter amount of time available for personal pursuits or spent at home. The contrasting employment terms and conditions between regular and non-regular positions may lead to conflicts, as suggested by previous research (Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005). This conflict could be rooted in the challenge of balancing professional and personal demands. Despite of that, women who choose to be non-regularly employed might embrace a dominant idea that part-time work offers ‘the best of both worlds,’ as the contemporary culture of motherhood with its growing emphasis on ‘balance’ (work-life), individualization, and parental determinism (Armstrong, 2017).

Contrastingly, homemaker mothers articulated ideal selves intricately linked to their roles concerning children and family. Notably, they also expressed ideals related to their identity, such as enjoying personal time and excelling in interpersonal relationships, exemplified by practical communication skills. This emphasis on personal fulfillment and social connections may suggest a response to the impact of limited social interaction, as indicated by previous research (Matsuoka et al., 2006). The finding suggests that homemaker mothers are aware of needing to catch up in social interaction or not being able to fit into society’s values. Furthermore, the frequent mention of ideals related to “self” and “enjoyment” among homemakers might reflect a compensatory need for personal time, given the demands

of housework and child-rearing (Iwasaki et al., 2017). Giving up that homemaker mothers, while deeply involved in domestic responsibilities, aspires to carve out moments for personal satisfaction and meaningful social interactions.

Overall, the ideal selves co-occurring in the homemaker mothers group appear more straightforward than those of regular and non-regularly employed working mothers. This observation implies that the lifestyle of homemaker mothers is more centered around domestic responsibilities and caring for children, potentially limiting their pursuits beyond these roles. In addition, regardless of employment status, maternal role and self-role revealed significant difference across employment status. That may have an influence on their perception of self-realization.

Additionally, the Chi-square test results revealed significant differences in word usage frequencies among the three employment groups, particularly for the categories of *maternal role* and *self-role*. These findings indicate that employment type is associated with differences in the way these roles are expressed. First, the overall chi-square test demonstrated a statistically significant difference across the three categories (*maternal role*, *family role*, and *self-role*). This suggests that the distribution of word frequencies across employment groups is not uniform and is influenced by the type of employment. When examining each category separately: A significant difference was observed for maternal role and self-role across employment groups. These results imply that the roles of being a mother, and an individual, are perceived or expressed differently depending on employment type. However, no significant difference was found for family role, indicating that expressions related to family responsibilities might not vary substantially by employment status.

Furthermore, the residual analysis results revealed that the self-role category shows the most notable discrepancies: It is significantly overrepresented in the homemaker group and underrepresented in both the regularly employed and non-regularly employed groups. The maternal role is significantly underrepresented in the homemaker group but not significantly different in the other groups. The family role shows no significant differences across employment groups. These findings highlight how employment status impacts the way individuals express their roles, particularly emphasizing the differences in self-perception in the homemaker group.

Ought Selves Portrayed by Parents from Participants' Viewpoint

In the analysis of ought selves portrayed by parents from the participants' viewpoint, regularly employed mothers revealed descriptions of being independent, having a career, being financially independent, and supporting the family. Moreover, educating and prioritizing the child, devoting themselves to the household, supporting the family's life, and having a good relationship with the husband were stated. These participants frequently cited the ought selves portrayed by their parents as closely tied to their children and family. This observation implies a prevailing inclination among most regular employed mothers towards the ideal of actively supporting the well-being and development of their children, which is most likely portrayed by their parents. Additionally, having a career and supporting family emerged as a prominent aspect of their ought selves portrayed by their parents as well. Notice that regularly employed mothers' perception of their ought selves portrayed by their parents revealed a similarity with their ideal selves.

The perception of the ought selves portrayed by parents among mothers in non-regular employment unveils self-independence, advocating not to rely on their parents. Their ideal vision includes personal happiness and a fulfilling life beyond the traditional roles of educating children or solely dedicating themselves to household and family responsibilities. That demonstrates that mothers in informal employment seek financial independence and are motivated to do without parental support while balancing time with their children and household chores. One might be non-regularly employed to achieve a work-life balance and live a fulfilled life (Toda, 2012). The finding revealed that there might be a gap between the ought selves portrayed by parents and the ideal selves among non-regularly employed mothers.

In contrast, homemaker mothers' perceptions of their ought selves portrayed by their parents are characterized by a strong focus on children and family, such as safeguarding the child's life and providing educational guidance. The term family is predominantly associated with protecting the family's well-being. Moreover, key phrases such as sacrifice, devotion, household, mother, and listening to the child are the most commonly addressed themes. Overall, the ought selves depicted by homemakers' parents are distinctly centered around the concept of family. That revealed a similarity to their ideal selves.

Additionally, the Chi-square test results revealed no statistically significant differences in the maternal role, family role, or self-role among the three groups. This suggests that parents, regardless of their employment status, articulate similar expectations or ideals regarding these roles. The absence of significant differences may indicate a shared societal or cultural understanding of these roles that transcend employment status. For example: Maternal role expressions, such as nurturing and caregiving, may reflect broadly accepted norms and

values about motherhood that are consistent across full-time, part-time, and stay-at-home parents. Family role responsibilities, such as household management or supporting the family unit, might be seen as fundamental to all parents, irrespective of their work status. Self-role expressions, such as aspirations for independence or personal fulfillment, could similarly reflect universal ideals that parents hold about themselves, independent of their employment circumstances. These findings suggest that the idealized parental roles (or *ought selves*) may be influenced more by societal or cultural norms than by individual employment situations. This could highlight the strength of shared parental expectations and the persistence of traditional role perceptions across different lifestyles.

Ought Selves Portrayed by Husbands from Participants' Viewpoint

In analyzing participants' ought selves portrayed by their husbands from regularly employed mothers' viewpoint, themes such as prioritizing the child and devoting to family, a double-income family, and working mothers were stated. This indicated that participants knew that their husbands were expecting a double-income family and that their counterparts had jobs.

For non-regular employed mothers, the ought selves portrayed by husbands included being kind and thoughtful, prioritizing and respecting their children, safeguarding the family's well-being, and supporting the husband. Furthermore, they reported valuing attributes such as having a job, being open-minded, self-independent, and sociable. In essence, the terms associated with self-sacrifice, dedication to household responsibilities, providing support, and displaying respect for the husband encapsulate the ought selves perceived by non-regularly

employed mothers from their perspective. The analysis presents a portrayal of the part-time employment mothers' awareness of their husband's expectations that encompass various responsibilities. These expectations include maintaining employment, dedicating time to household and childcare duties, prioritizing family needs, offering support, and respecting the husband's decisions.

On the contrary, homemaker mothers detailed their ought selves as depicted by their husbands, emphasizing qualities such as being cheerful, prioritizing and dedicating time to their children, engaging in their education, and safeguarding the family's well-being. Additionally, self-sacrifice, wholehearted commitment to household responsibilities, offering support, and showing respect for their husbands were reported. Fewer homemaker mothers reported their husbands expecting them to hold a job. This pattern suggests a prevailing expectation among males for their female partners to embody affection, cheerfulness, and a self-sacrificing nature—dedicating themselves to the roles of a homemaker and prioritizing family and child-related responsibilities over pursuing external employment. The finding revealed a similarity between homemaker mothers' perception of their ideal selves and their ought selves portrayed by their husbands. There is a possibility that homemaker mothers might have modified their ideal selves in alignment with their husband's expectations. Indeed, previous research has highlighted the role of husbands' attitudes might contribute to women's decision-making regarding employment choices (Ikeda, 2014).

Additionally, the Chi-square Test results revealed no statistically significant differences in the overall frequencies of the maternal role, family role, and self-role across employment status. The results suggest that the way husbands perceive and articulate these roles does not significantly differ among full-time, part-time, and stay-at-home parents.

When analyzing the categories separately, however, the family role category displayed a statistically significant difference across employment groups. This indicates that husbands' perceptions of family-related responsibilities vary depending on their spouse's employment status. In contrast, no significant differences were observed for the maternal role or self-role, suggesting consistent expectations or portrayals of these roles across employment groups.

The significant difference observed in the family role category may reflect varying dynamics in how husbands perceive their spouses' contributions to family life based on employment status: For stay-at-home parents, husbands might emphasize family-oriented responsibilities more, reflecting traditional views of household management. In dual-income households, such as those with full-time or part-time working parents, family responsibilities might be perceived as more shared or adjusted to accommodate employment demands. The lack of significant differences in maternal role and self-role frequencies implies that husbands maintain similar portrayals of these aspects regardless of employment status: Maternal role expectations, such as caregiving and nurturing, might remain consistent as they align with societal norms and cultural ideals about motherhood. Self-role portrayals, encompassing traits like independence and personal fulfillment, may be less influenced by employment status and more tied to individual aspirations or values that husbands see as universally applicable.

Ought Selves Portrayed by Children from Participants' Viewpoint

The ought selves portrayed by children from the regularly employment working mothers' viewpoint revealed, such as, a kind mother, listen to the child, pretty and thoughtful person. Other words such as affectionate, easy to communicate, good, happy, youthful,

capable, and have a career. Moreover, freedom for the child and respect for the child and freedom for the child, were described. Suggesting that, children are most likely to prefer to have a kind, cheerful and thoughtful mother, easy to communicate with, respect them and give them freedom to do what they want to do. On top of this, the children also prefer a youthful and good-looking mother.

Mothers engaged in non-regular employment disclosed the ought selves as perceived by their children, including descriptors such as being a kind, attentive, and thoughtful mother, proficient in cooking, and displaying affection. Additionally, terms frequently mentioned were refraining from nagging at the child, serving as the child's best friend, allowing freedom, and showing respect. Furthermore, characteristics like being intelligent, open-minded, easy to communicate with, avoiding anger towards the child, and spending quality time together were emphasized.

Homemakers revealed the ought selves as perceived by their children included qualities such as respecting and listening to the child, being pretty and thoughtful, and having a cheerful disposition. Furthermore, characteristics like being open-minded, cheerful, and protective of the family's well-being were emphasized. Interestingly, similar to both regular and non-regular employment mothers, the ability to communicate easily with their children was also reported as an ideal self-concept portrayed by the children.

The ought selves portrayed by children revealed a similarity across employment status. The findings underscore the enduring closeness of parent-child relationships during adolescence, as highlighted by Kitamura and Mutou (2003). Notably, children often turn to their parents as a primary source of support, particularly when navigating challenges and

seeking guidance, as evidenced in this study. The expectation for prompt communication, especially with mothers, emerges as a significant aspect of this dynamic. Furthermore, the transitional phase of the “empty nest,” marked by the departure of children, is a pivotal period for women's identity reformation, as articulated by Okamoto (1997). This stage prompts a conscious reflection on life choices, with individuals attuned to their children's perspectives' mothers are aware of their adolescent children's perception and actively reassessing their trajectories (Matsuoka et al., 2006).

Additionally, the Chi-square test results revealed showed no statistically significant differences in the overall frequencies of the *maternal role*, *family role*, and *self-role* categories. The chi-square test results indicate that children's perceptions of these roles are consistent regardless of whether their parents are employed full-time, part-time, or are stay-at-home parents. Furthermore, separate analyses of each category also revealed no statistically significant differences in all categories across employment status. These results suggest that children perceive their parents' roles in similar ways across different employment groups. Children may hold broadly similar expectations of their parents that are less influenced by employment status.

Ought Selves Portrayed by Society from Participants' Viewpoint

The ought selves as perceived by society, as listed by regularly employed mothers, were analyzed to include aspects such as maintaining work-life balance, being a devoted and educating mother, actively listening to, and prioritizing the child, and embodying qualities of affection, thoughtfulness, cheerfulness, self-sacrifice, independence, openness, and

accommodation. The participants' expectations suggest that society is more likely to anticipate their ability to balance work and personal life, excel in maternal roles, engage in "mom-friend" activities, and possess a range of positive attributes.

Mothers engaged in non-regular employment expressed their ought selves portrayed by society, such as being affectionate, educating the child, protecting the child, and devoting the mother. Others include work-life balance, being intelligent and thoughtful, having a double-income family, being a mother who can serve the community, participating in social activities, and being sociable. Additionally, an independent, open-minded person who does not interfere with the child was stated. Furthermore, enjoy life and have hobbies. Several mentioned a housewife, a good wife, and not an over-assertive wife.

Examining the ought selves portrayed by society as depicted by homemaker mothers exposed a concentration on qualities like nurturing the child, embodying thoughtfulness, and kindness as a mother, and wholeheartedly dedicating oneself to the child's well-being. Furthermore, societal expectations encompassed maintaining a dual income, engaging in employment, and actively contributing to the family's financial stability.

This observation resonates with prior discussions, highlighting the societal norm. It underscores the perception of society's anticipation for mothers to actively participate in employment, thereby playing a crucial role in supporting the family's financial needs. This social expectation, however, has a significant implication in many mothers' lives and could relate to their well-being.

Consequently, the ought selves portrayed by society align with the current trend in Japan. Contemporary families in Japan have been going through significant changes in their

structure and functions due to the decline in the birthrate and rapid aging of the population (Nishioka et al., 2003). Increased dual-earning families exemplify such demographic changes due to the rise in women's labor force participation (Nishioka et al., 2003). This study's findings indicate that, from the perspective of most mothers, the society expectation involves being a working mother capable of supporting the family income while also dedicating time to their children and families.

Additionally, the Chi-square test results revealed no statistically significant differences in the overall frequencies of the maternal role, family role, and self-role categories across the three employment groups. This indicates that societal expectations about these roles are not influenced by whether parents are employed full-time, part-time, or stay-at-home. Similarly, when analyzing the categories separately, no significant differences were found. These results suggest that societal perceptions of parental roles remain consistent regardless of employment status. The lack of significant differences in societal portrayals across employment groups highlights the stability of societal expectations regarding parental roles.

Chapter 5: Study 2

Study 2 investigated maternal self-discrepancy across various aspects concerning employment status, aiming to understand the distinct connections between different employment statuses and self-discrepancies with their ideal self and ought selves (ideal self portrayed by parent, husband, children, and society). Additionally, the study explored the impact of these self-discrepancies on maternal role attainment, state-anxiety, trait anxiety, and subjective well-being.

Ultimately, the primary objective of this research is to identify predictors of maternal subjective well-being, specifically focusing on self-discrepancy variables. By examining how employment status influences self-discrepancy and its subsequent effects on maternal outcomes, Study 2 aims to contribute valuable insights into the intricate interplay between maternal self-discrepancy and maternal roles, state-trait anxiety, and subjective well-being. By pursuing these, the whole research deepened the understanding of how self-concept,

employment status, and self-discrepancies can collectively influence maternal psychological well-being and overall life satisfaction.

The hypotheses for the whole research have been developed based on a comprehensive review of the related literature. Furthermore, the pilot survey preceding the study validated the feasibility of the questionnaire design, participant selection, procedures, and the overall survey structure. This rigorous preliminary assessment has ensured the robustness and reliability of the research framework.

Furthermore, Study 1 provides a deeper investigation into the content and descriptions provided by the participating mothers, yielding valuable insights into the factors (from the significant close-other) that could moderate or serve as indicators of maternal self-discrepancies. By delving into the specific self-discrepancies stemming from interactions with significant-close others, it becomes possible to identify the potential factors that hold tremendous significance for the participating mothers – those aspects they prioritize the most. This deeper understanding demonstrates the potential and can help unravel the intricate relationship between these prioritized factors: maternal role achievement, anxiety levels, and subjective well-being.

Notice that previous studies suggest that discrepancies between an individual's actual self and ideal self tend to be linked with psychological maladjustment, often leading to emotions like sadness, disappointment, or dissatisfaction. Conversely, when there is a gap between an individual's actual self and their ought self, shaped by the expectations of significant-close others, it tends to be associated with different forms of psychological distress, including fear, anxiety, or restlessness. This distinction highlights the various emotional

outcomes associated with diverse types of self-discrepancies, as supported by research (Boyatzis & Akriyou, 2006; Higgins, 1987/1989; Matsuoka et al., 2006; Moretti & Higgins, 1990; Straumann, 1992).

In addition, research revealed that full-time working mothers have more self-reliance, higher self-efficacy, and higher life satisfaction. On the other hand, part-time working mothers have lower life satisfaction, homemakers have higher childrearing anxiety and rely more on their parents (Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005; Iwasaki et al., 2017).

The following will address the abbreviation: MSD (Maternal Self-Discrepancy) refers to gaps between a mother's actual self and various perceived standards:

1. **MSD Ideal Self:** Discrepancy between the mother's actual self and her ideal self.
2. **MSD Parents:** Discrepancy between the mother's actual self and the "ought self" portrayed by the husband's perspective (as she perceives it).
3. **MSD Husband:** Discrepancy between the mother's actual self and the "ought self" portrayed by the parents' perspective (as she perceives it).
4. **MSD Children:** Discrepancy between the mother's actual self and the "ought self" portrayed by the children's perspective (as she perceives it).
5. **MSD Society:** Discrepancy between the mother's actual self and the "ought self" portrayed by societal expectations (as she perceives them).

Based on previous studies, this study hypothesized the following:

1. MSD Ideal Self would positively correlate with all other MSD variables (MSD Parent, MSD Husband, MSD Children, and MSD Society).

2. MSD would positively correlate with State-Trait Anxiety
3. MSD Ideal Self would negatively correlate with Maternal Role Achievement and Subjective Well-being.
4. Regularly employed mothers would score lower on MSD Ideal Self and higher on Subjective Well-being compared to mothers with different employment statuses.
5. MSD Ideal Self predicts Subjective Well-being.

5.1. Method

5.1.1. *Participants*

This study targeted mothers of university or college-aged children who are living with their spouses. Single mothers were excluded from participant recruitment, as specified in the recruitment requirements outlined in the survey questionnaire. Thus, the participants for this study were restricted to married women with university or college-aged children.

Recruitment was conducted through local university students and a local research firm (Lancers Inc.) to reach the target participants. The survey was administered from October 2023 to February 2024. Among the participants, 123 mothers were recruited via university students. Three participants did not complete the questionnaire, and their responses will be excluded from the final analysis. Additionally, 168 mothers were recruited through collaboration with the local research firm, Lancers Inc. Four participants from the research company did not complete the questionnaire as requested. The final sample comprises 284

participants, categorized as follows: 97 (34.15%) regularly employed mothers, 87 (30.63%) non-regularly employed mothers, 57 (20.07%) homemakers, and 43 (15.14%) mothers in other employment types. Approximately 81% of the participants hold a bachelor's degree. All participants are between the ages of 40 and 60, with 68.6% aged 40–50 and 31.4% aged 51–60. Additionally, all participants have children attending university or college.

5.1.2. Procedure

This study utilized survey questionnaires that were validated during the pilot study. The questionnaires include: the Self-Questionnaire, the Maternal Role Achievement Scale, developed by Doshi et al. (1990) and cited in Horiyou et al. (1994); the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory Scale, developed by Shimizu and Imae (1981) and also cited in Horiyou et al. (1994), and the Subjective Well-Being Scale, developed by Ito et al. (2003). All questionnaires were administered in Japanese.

The **Self-Questionnaire** is an open-ended, self-report tool designed to gather detailed and unrestricted responses, allowing for the capture of nuanced information. This questionnaire measures: the discrepancies between the mother's actual self and ideal self, and the discrepancies between the mother's actual self and the ought self. Participants were first asked to list up to three attributes that represent their ideal selves—qualities they most aspire to possess. For example, they were prompted with: *“Please list three attributes of the type of person you want to be.”* Next, participants were asked to list up to three attributes that represent their ought selves—qualities they believe others expect them to possess. They were prompted with: *“Please list three attributes of the type of person that your parent, husband,*

children, and society believe you should be.” Finally, participants rated the extent to which their actual selves aligned with both their ideal selves and ought selves on a seven-point scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*), with 4 indicating a medium level of alignment.

Examples were incorporated into the guidelines provided to enhance clarity and promote a more comprehensive understanding of the survey and questionnaires. These examples were derived from insights and responses gathered during Study 1, with a focus on descriptions participants found most illustrative and relevant. The examples were designed to serve as reference points, offering participants concrete instances that are closely aligned with the nature of the questions. By drawing on the experiences and narratives shared during the pilot study and Study 1, these examples aimed to provide relatable scenarios, helping participants articulate their thoughts and responses more effectively.

However, these examples are not exhaustive nor prescriptive. Participants are encouraged to respond based on their unique experiences and perspectives. The examples were intended to elucidate the types of responses that may be relevant to the survey and questionnaires, ensuring that the instruments resonate with a diverse range of participant backgrounds and contexts.

The **Maternal Role Achievement Scale**, developed by Doshi et al. (1990) and cited in Horiyou et al. (1994), measures a mother’s sense of responsibility toward her child from her perspective. The scale consists of 10 questions, each rated on a five-point Likert scale. A score of 1 indicates “does not apply to me at all,” while a score of 5 indicates “applies to me very well.” Higher scores reflect greater maternal role achievement.

The **State-Trait Anxiety Inventory Scale**, developed by Shimizu and Imae (1981) and also cited in Horiyou et al. (1994), was applied in this study to measure two dimensions of anxiety: *state anxiety* and *trait anxiety*. State anxiety refers to anxiety experienced in specific situations, while trait anxiety reflects a person's predisposition to experience anxiety in response to various situations. Each dimension consists of 20 questions, rated on a four-point Likert scale. A score of 1 indicates "not at all," while a score of 4 indicates "applies to me very well."

The **Subjective Well-Being Scale**, developed by Ito et al. (2003), consists of 15 questions that assess five areas of well-being, with three items for each area: *positive feelings about life*, *achievement*, *self-confidence*, *blessings in life*, and *disappointment*. Responses are rated on a four-point Likert scale, where a score of 1 indicates "not at all," and a score of 4 indicates "applies to me very well."

In the biography section, participants were asked to provide details regarding their age, employment status, and education level. The participant's employment status was categorized as regular employment (full-time), non-regular employment (part-time, *haken shain* (dispatched workers), *shokutaku* (entrusted workers), or *yuki-keiyaku shain* (fixed-term contract workers), homemaker, and others (self-employed, sole-proprietor, or free-lance). Additionally, eligibility criteria dictate that all mother participants must be Japanese citizens residing in Japan. These criteria aim to ensure a focused and homogeneous participant group, allowing for a targeted exploration of the study objectives

5.2. Results

Among the participants, 43 individuals (15%) were engaged in other forms of employment, such as self-employment or sole proprietorship. Due to the relatively high percentage, these participants were included in the analysis. However, the discussion primarily focuses on mothers in regular and non-regular employment, as well as homemakers, in alignment with the research objectives.

First, discrepancy scores for actual-ideal selves and actual-ought selves were computed by subtracting participants' ratings of the degree to which they actually possessed specific attributes from their ratings on a 7-point scale. This calculation was performed separately for each area. The method for calculating misalignment scores between actual and perceived ideal selves followed the approach introduced by Mizuma (1998). This process involved reversing the alignment ratings for each aspect, summing these reversed scores, and dividing the total by three. The resulting scores represent the degree of misalignment between participants perceived actual selves and their ideal and ought selves.

The reliability coefficients for each discrepancy score were computed as follows: MSD Ideal Self ($\alpha = .75$), MSD Parents ($\alpha = .74$), MSD Husband ($\alpha = .74$), MSD Children ($\alpha = .64$), and MSD Society ($\alpha = .75$). These results indicate high reliability for most discrepancy scores.

Table 19 presents the means and standard deviations for all variables by employment status. The results indicate that the MSD Ideal Self scores were lowest among regularly employed mothers ($M = 2.30$, $SD = 1.16$) and highest among homemaker mothers ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 1.57$). For MSD Parents and MSD Husbands, homemaker mothers had lower scores, while non-regularly employed mothers exhibited higher scores. Regarding MSD Children,

regularly employed mothers had lower scores ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 1.14$), whereas non-regularly employed mothers showed higher scores ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.40$). In terms of MSD Society, regularly employed mothers demonstrated the lowest scores ($M = 2.24$, $SD = 1.12$), while homemaker mothers reported significantly higher scores ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 1.40$).

For maternal role achievement scores, regularly employed mothers reported higher scores ($M = 43.13$, $SD = 5.88$) compared to the other groups. Minimal differences were observed between non-regularly employed mothers ($M = 42.24$, $SD = 6.33$) and homemaker mothers ($M = 42.34$, $SD = 5.84$). For state anxiety, regularly employed mothers exhibited a higher mean score ($M = 47.39$, $SD = 4.89$) compared to homemaker mothers ($M = 46.00$, $SD = 4.70$). For trait anxiety, regularly employed mothers had slightly lower mean scores ($M = 50.48$, $SD = 6.68$) compared to non-regularly employed mothers ($M = 51.63$, $SD = 5.90$) and homemaker mothers ($M = 51.73$, $SD = 6.00$). In terms of subjective well-being, regularly employed mothers reported a higher mean score ($M = 44.47$, $SD = 8.00$), while non-regularly employed mothers had the lowest mean score ($M = 41.11$, $SD = 8.73$).

Table 19

Mean, Standard Deviations Among MSD Variables by Employment Status

Employment Status	<i>N</i>	MSD Ideal Self	MSD Parent	MSD Husband	MSD Children	MSD Society	Maternal Role	State Anxiety	Trait Anxiety	SWB
		<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Regular	97	2.31 (1.16)	2.41(1.23)	2.38(1.41)	2.21(1.15)	2.23(1.12)	43.13(5.88)	47.26(5.05)	50.42(6.68)	44.42(8.0)
Non-regular	87	2.46(1.22)	2.54(1.19)	2.62(1.17)	2.50(1.40)	2.47(1.19)	42.24(6.33)	46.31(4.14)	51.63(5.90)	41.11(8.73)
Homemaker	57	2.78(1.60)	2.45(1.48)	2.36(1.36)	2.37(1.27)	2.64(1.40)	42.37(5.79)	46.02(4.66)	51.88(6.02)	41.86(8.19)
Others	43	2.57(1.21)	2.95(1.51)	2.59(1.43)	2.42(1.21)	2.60(1.18)	41.12(7.97)	46.93(4.37)	49.40(5.99)	42.28(9.35)

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the mean differences in Maternal Self-Discrepancy (MSD) scores across employment statuses. The results indicated no significant differences across employment statuses for any MSD variables: MSD Ideal Self: $F(3, 281) =$

1.69, $p = .169$, MSD Parent: $F(3, 281) = 1.77$, $p = .152$, MSD Husband: $F(3, 281) = 0.74$, $p = .528$, MSD Children: $F(3, 281) = 0.83$, $p = .477$, MSD Society: $F(3, 281) = 1.70$, $p = .168$.

Similarly, there were no significant differences in maternal role achievement, state anxiety, or trait anxiety across employment statuses. However, the ANOVA revealed a marginally significant effect of employment type on subjective well-being, $F(3, 281) = 2.566$, $p = .055$, mean square = 183.801. This result suggests that differences in subjective well-being across employment types were close to but did not reach the conventional level of statistical significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). Despite the overall ANOVA being marginally significant, a Tukey HSD post hoc test was conducted to explore pairwise group differences. The results showed that regular employed mothers ($M = 3.303$) reported significantly higher subjective well-being compared to non-regular employed mothers, $p = .042$. This difference is significant at the 0.05 level (see Table 20).

Table 20*The Mean Scores of Subjective Well-being by Employment Status*

Dependent Variable	(I) Employment	(J) Employment	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	<i>p</i> value	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
SWB	Regular	Non-regular	3.303*	1.247	0.042	0.08	6.53
		Homemaker	2.559	1.41	0.268	-1.09	6.2
		Others	2.139	1.548	0.512	-1.86	6.14
	Non-regular	Regular	-3.303*	1.247	0.042	-6.53	-0.08
		Homemaker	-0.745	1.442	0.955	-4.47	2.98
		Others	-1.164	1.578	0.882	-5.24	2.91
	Homemaker	Regular	-2.559	1.41	0.268	-6.2	1.09
		Non-regular	0.745	1.442	0.955	-2.98	4.47
		Others	-0.419	1.71	0.995	-4.84	4
	Others	Regular	-2.139	1.548	0.512	-6.14	1.86
		Non-regular	1.164	1.578	0.882	-2.91	5.24
		Homemaker	0.419	1.71	0.995	-4	4.84

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Spearman Correlation

Following, a Spearman correlation was performed to examine the correlation between all the variables across employment status (see Table 20).

Table 21

Spearman Correlation Between All the Variables by Employment Status

Employment		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Regular (N = 97)	1. MSD Ideal Self	-								
	2. MSD Parent	.496**	-							
	3. MSD Husband	.439**	.601**	-						
	4. MSD Children	.511**	.563**	.531**	-					
	5. MSD Society	.38**	.393**	.334**	.409**	-				
	6. Maternal Role	-.295**	-.268**	-.282**	-.347**	-.269**	-			
	7. State Anxiety	-.07	.00	-.04	-.179*	-.07	.253**	-		
	8. Trait Anxiety	.270**	.278**	.07	.09	-.09	.07	.212**	-	
	9. Subjective Well-being	-.484**	-.338**	-.278**	-.285**	-.16	.499**	.272**	-.268**	-
Non-regular (N = 87)	1. MSD Ideal Self	-								
	2. MSD Parent	.498**	-							
	3. MSD Husband	.71**	.503**	-						
	4. MSD Children	.526**	.42**	.59**	-					
	5. MSD Society	.458**	.584**	.53**	.49**	-				
	6. Maternal Role	-.389**	-.23*	-.373**	-.474**	-.31**	-			
	7. State Anxiety	-.01	-.01	-.09	.01	-.189*	.02	-		
	8. Trait Anxiety	.375**	.24**	.20	.07	.84	-.26	.266*	-	
	9. Subjective Well-being	-.527**	-.324**	-.401**	-.27**	-.355**	.546**	.06	-.445**	-
Homemaker (N = 57)	1. MSD Ideal Self	-								
	2. MSD Parent	.643**	-							
	3. MSD Husband	.601**	.541**	-						
	4. MSD Children	.752**	.600**	.692**	-					
	5. MSD Society	.422**	.602**	.405**	.474**	-				
	6. Maternal Role	-.522**	-.337**	-.389**	-.484**	-.263*	-			
	7. State Anxiety	-.14	-.258*	.13	-.13	-.12	.12	-		
	8. Trait Anxiety	.25	-.15	.08	.26	-.278*	-.04	.371**	-	
	9. Subjective Well-being	-.605**	-.340*	-.23	-.478**	-.18	.534**	.14	-.313*	-
Others (N = 43)	1. MSD Ideal Self	-								
	2. MSD Parent	.493**	-							
	3. MSD Husband	.584**	.489**	-						
	4. MSD Children	.432**	.29	.449**	-					
	5. MSD Society	.391*	.399**	.373*	.611**	-				
	6. Maternal Role	-.44**	-.334*	-.617**	-.58**	-.521**	-			
	7. State Anxiety	-.03	-.30	-.03	.26	-.04	.05	-		
	8. Trait Anxiety	.10	-.02	.11	-.03	.06	.02	.29	-	
	9. Subjective Well-being	-.384*	-.509**	-.527**	-.352*	-.412**	.561**	.15	-.353*	-

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ level (2-tailed).

Among regularly employed mothers, several strong correlations were observed. MSD Parent had a strong positive correlation with MSD Ideal Self ($r = .496, p < .01$), and MSD Husband showed a strong positive correlation with MSD Parent ($r = .601, p < .01$). MSD Children also correlated strongly with MSD Parent ($r = .563, p < .01$) and MSD Husband ($r = .531, p < .01$). Moderate correlations included a positive relationship between MSD Society and MSD Ideal Self ($r = .380, p < .01$), as well as between MSD Children and MSD Ideal Self ($r = .511, p < .01$). Maternal Role correlated moderately and positively with Subjective Well-being ($r = .499, p < .01$). Trait Anxiety also showed a moderate positive correlation with MSD Ideal Self ($r = .270, p < .01$). Weak correlations included a negative relationship between State Anxiety and MSD Children ($r = -.179, p < .05$) and a negative correlation between Subjective Well-being and Trait Anxiety ($r = -.268, p < .01$).

For non-regularly employed individuals, several strong correlations emerged. MSD Parent had a strong positive correlation with MSD Ideal Self ($r = .498, p < .01$) and MSD Husband correlated strongly with MSD Parent ($r = .503, p < .01$). Similarly, MSD Children showed a strong positive relationship with MSD Husband ($r = .590, p < .01$), while MSD Society correlated strongly with MSD Parent ($r = .584, p < .01$). Moderate correlations included a positive relationship between Maternal Role and Subjective Well-being ($r = .546, p < .01$), as well as between MSD Children and MSD Ideal Self ($r = .526, p < .01$). MSD Society also showed a moderate correlation with MSD Husband ($r = .530, p < .01$), and Subjective Well-being correlated moderately and negatively with MSD Ideal Self ($r = -.527, p < .01$). Weak correlations were found between Trait Anxiety and MSD Parent ($r = .240, p < .01$), and Subjective Well-being and Trait Anxiety exhibited a weak negative correlation ($r = -.445, p < .01$).

For homemakers, strong correlations were particularly prominent. MSD Parent had a strong positive correlation with MSD Ideal Self ($r = .643, p < .01$), and MSD Children correlated strongly with both MSD Ideal Self ($r = .752, p < .01$) and MSD Husband ($r = .692, p < .01$). Additionally, Maternal Role exhibited a strong positive relationship with Subjective Well-being ($r = .534, p < .01$). Moderate correlations included positive relationships between MSD Society and MSD Ideal Self ($r = .422, p < .01$), as well as between MSD Society and MSD Parent ($r = .602, p < .01$) and MSD Husband ($r = .405, p < .01$). Weak correlations were observed between State Anxiety and MSD Parent ($r = -.258, p < .05$) and between Subjective Well-being and MSD Children ($r = -.478, p < .01$).

For other employment, MSD Husband had a strong positive correlation with MSD Ideal Self ($r = .584, p < .01$). Maternal Role showed strong negative correlations with MSD Husband ($r = -.617, p < .01$), MSD Children ($r = -.580, p < .01$), and MSD Society ($r = -.521, p < .01$). Conversely, Maternal Role had a strong positive relationship with *Subjective* Well-being ($r = .561, p < .01$). Additionally, MSD Society correlated strongly and positively with MSD Children ($r = .611, p < .01$). Several moderate correlations were noted. MSD Parent correlated positively with MSD Ideal Self ($r = .493, p < .01$), while MSD Husband had a moderate positive correlation with MSD Parent ($r = .489, p < .01$). MSD Children also correlated moderately with MSD Ideal Self ($r = .432, p < .01$). MSD Society showed moderate positive correlations with MSD Ideal Self ($r = .391, p < .05$), MSD Parent ($r = .399, p < .01$), and MSD Husband ($r = .373, p < .05$). Subjective Well-being exhibited moderate negative correlations with MSD Parent ($r = -.509, p < .01$), MSD Husband ($r = -.527, p < .01$), and MSD Society ($r = -.412, p < .01$).

In summary, across all employment groups, strong positive correlations were consistently found among MSD Ideal Self, MSD Parent, and MSD Children, highlighting their

interconnectedness. Maternal Role exhibited a negative relationship with most MSD variables but a positive association with Subjective Well-being. State Anxiety and Trait Anxiety correlations with other variables were generally weak, indicating their more limited influence in the overall patterns.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression

To discern the predictors of subjective well-being across various employment statuses, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted. Maternal Role Achievement, State-Anxiety, and Trait Anxiety were designated as control variables to account for their potential influence. In Step 1 of the analysis, the control variables were introduced, and in Step 2, all other variables, namely MSD Ideal Self, MSD Parent, MSD Husband, MSD Children, and MSD Society, were included. This two-step approach allows the study to explore the unique contributions of the specified predictors beyond the influence of the control variables, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing subjective well-being across different employment statuses. The detailed results are presented in Table 21, 22, 23, and 24.

The findings in Table 22 indicate that the model for Regular Employed Mothers exhibits a good fit ($R^2 = .465$, Adjusted $R^2 = .417$, $F(8, 89) = 9.67$), demonstrating statistical significance with $p < .001$. Subjective well-being is notably influenced by the MSD Ideal Self, as evidenced by a significant negative relationship ($B = -1.874$, Beta = $-.273$, $t = -2.796$, $p < .01$). This suggests that variations in the MSD Ideal Self are associated with changes in subjective well-being among Regular Employed Mothers, a significant predictor for subjective well-being.

Table 23, for Non-Regular Employed Mothers, the hierarchical multiple regression analysis revealed a well-fitting model ($R^2 = .503$, Adjusted $R^2 = .452$, $F(8, 78) = 9.88$), demonstrating statistical significance with $p < .001$. The analysis indicates that subjective well-being is significantly influenced by the MSD Ideal Self, revealing a noteworthy negative relationship ($B = -2.08$, Beta = $-.291$, $t = -2.473$, $p < .05$). These results suggest that variations in the MSD Ideal Self are associated with changes in subjective well-being among Non-Regular Employed Mothers, a significant predictor for subjective well-being.

Similarly, for Homemaker Mothers (see Table 24), the hierarchical multiple regression model also exhibits a good fit ($R^2 = .565$, Adjusted $R^2 = .492$, $F(8, 48) = 7.79$), demonstrating statistical significance with $p < .001$. Subjective well-being for Homemaker Mothers is notably influenced by the MSD Ideal Self, indicating a significant negative relationship ($B = -2.371$, Beta = $-.464$, $t = -2.531$, $p < .05$). This implies that variations in the MSD Ideal Self are associated with changes in subjective well-being among Homemaker Mothers, a significant predictor for subjective well-being.

Additionally, for Other Employment Mothers (see Table 25), the hierarchical multiple regression analysis shows a good model fit ($R^2 = .609$, Adjusted $R^2 = .517$, $F(8, 34) = 6.62$), demonstrating statistical significance with $p < .001$. In this group, subjective well-being is notably influenced by the MSD Parent, revealing a significant negative relationship ($B = -1.987$, Beta = $-.322$, $t = -2.325$, $p < .05$). These findings suggest that variations in the MSD Parent, specifically the discrepancy between actual and parental expectations, are associated with changes in subjective well-being among Other Employment Mothers, a significant predictor for subjective well-being among other employment mothers.

Ultimately, the observed predictors and their coefficients contribute valuable insights into the factors influencing subjective well-being within this specific employment status group.

Table 22

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Regular Employed Mothers' Subjective Well-being by MSD Scores

Employment	Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	95.0% Confidence Interval	
								Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Regular	1	(Constant)	16.501	7.45		2.215	.029	1.708	31.294
		Maternal Role	.629	.116	.464***	5.416	<.001	.398	.859
		State Anxiety	.408	.142	.258	2.882	.005	.127	.689
		Trait Anxiety	-.367	.101	-.307	-3.635	<.001	-.567	-.166
	2	(Constant)	19.736	8.024		2.46	.016	3.793	35.679
		Maternal Role	.535	.121	.395	4.421	<.001	.295	.776
		State Anxiety	.357	.142	.226	2.51	.014	.074	.64
		Trait Anxiety	-.229	.107	-.192	-2.139	.035	-.442	-.016
		MSD Ideal Self	-1.874	.67	-.273**	-2.796	.006	-3.206	-.542
		MSD Parent	-.792	.746	-.122	-1.062	.291	-2.273	.69
		MSD Husband	-.106	.563	-.019	-.188	.851	-1.225	1.013
		MSD Children	.249	.765	.036	.326	.745	-1.271	1.769
		MSD Society	.983	.659	.138	1.492	.139	-.326	2.293

$R^2 = .465$, Adjusted $R^2 = .417$, $F(8, 89) = 9.67$

Table 25

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Other Employment Mothers' Subjective Well-being by MSD Scores

Employment	Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95.0% Confidence Interval	
								Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Others	1	(Constant)	32.342	12.237		2.643	.012	7.59	57.094
		Maternal Role	.676	.132	.577	5.117	<.001	.409	.943
		State Anxiety	.433	.232	.216	1.867	.069	-.036	.902
		Trait Anxiety	-.773	.183	-.495	-4.232	<.001	-1.143	-.404
	2	(Constant)	49.365	13.507		3.655	<.001	21.915	78.815
		Maternal Role	.599	.165	.511	3.639	<.001	.264	.933
		State Anxiety	.197	.262	.1	.751	.458	-.336	.729
		Trait Anxiety	-.717	.183	-.46	-3.909	<.001	-1.09	-.344
		MSD Ideal Self	.03	1.096	.004	.027	.978	-2.197	2.257
		MSD Parent	-1.987	.855	-.322*	-2.325	.026	-3.724	-.25
		MSD Husband	-.195	1.06	10.03	-.184	.855	-2.348	1.959
		MSD Children	.763	1.356	.098	.563	.577	-2.993	3.518
		MSD Society	-.418	1.165	-.053	-.359	.722	-2.786	1.95

$R^2 = .609$, Adjusted $R^2 = .517$, $F(8, 34) = 6.62$

5.3. Discussion

In Study 2, we investigated the implication of maternal self-discrepancy on subjective well-being according to participants' employment status. The statistical analysis results imply that regularly employed mothers tend to experience higher subjective well-being levels than non-regularly employed mothers and homemaker mothers. The lower scores in maternal self-discrepancy variables for regularly employed mothers may indicate a more stable psychological state. In comparison, the higher scores in maternal role achievement and subjective well-being suggest a positive association between regular employment and psychological well-being among mothers. This aligns with previous studies, which found that regularly employed mothers have better psychological conditions and well-being than others

(Levinson, 1996; Sinha, 2017; Takeya, 2006). Working mothers are associated with high subjective well-being and low psychological distress (Barnett & Marshall, 1991).

Consequently, this information contributes to further understanding of the nuanced relationships between employment status and various psychological factors affecting mothers through the lens of discrepancy theory.

Furthermore, in Spearman correlation analysis, positive correlations collectively indicate that an escalation in the maternal self-discrepancy between actual and ideal self is linked to increased discrepancies between maternal actual self and ought self in the roles of parent, husband, children, and society. The negative correlation might suggest that when mothers perceive their actual selves aligning more closely with their ideal and ought selves in multiple aspects, they may experience reduced anxiety associated with fulfilling maternal roles. According to Haraguchi et al. (2005), working mothers gain life satisfaction through their work and have lower child-rearing anxiety. The study also highlighted that the lower the discrepancy scores between the actual and ideal self-role, the more likely it is to have a lower discrepancy between the actual and family roles. In other words, mothers with a lower discrepancy between their actual and ideal self might have a lower discrepancy between their actual self and their ought self.

A smaller self-discrepancy could signify that mothers feel they are meeting expectations or standards set by themselves or society in various domains (Liss et al., 2012; Matsuoka et al., 2006). This alignment might contribute to a more positive maternal role experience and potentially reduce anxiety related to perceived discrepancies. The positive correlation highlights the interconnectedness between how mothers perceive their roles and

their subjective well-being, emphasizing the importance of maternal roles in influencing overall life satisfaction.

In addition, the positive correlation between maternal role achievement and subjective well-being indicates that, on average, there is a tendency for mothers who feel positively about their maternal roles to also report higher levels of subjective well-being.

In terms of state and trait anxiety, the observed pattern in the statistical analysis can be interpreted through the lens of role fulfillment, time constraints, and the distinction between state and trait anxiety. Homemaker mothers may experience lower state anxiety because they have more time to focus on immediate tasks and responsibilities at home. Their daily routines and responsibilities may provide a sense of structure and control, leading to lower levels of state anxiety. The higher levels of trait anxiety could be associated with concerns about their self-role/personal identity as a mother. Homemaker mothers might place a significant emphasis on their identity and performance as caregivers, leading to persistent and enduring anxiety about their ability to fulfill this role over the long term (Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005).

In contrast, regular-employed mothers may face higher levels of state anxiety due to the demands of their full-time jobs. The time constraints and pressures associated with balancing work and family responsibilities can contribute to heightened levels of stress and anxiety in the short term (Toda, 2012). The lower levels of trait anxiety may be linked to the satisfaction of fulfilling their social role in the workplace. Regular-employed mothers might find a sense of accomplishment and identity in their professional roles, contributing to a lower baseline of enduring anxiety about their self-identity as mothers.

In summary, the differences in anxiety scores between homemakers and regular-employed mothers can be explained by the unique challenges and sources of satisfaction associated with their respective roles. Homemaker mothers may find fulfillment and purpose in their caregiving role but harbor ongoing concerns about their self-identity (Kashiwagi, 2008; Kashiwagi & Hirayama, 2005; Ohinata, 2020; Toda, 2012). Regular-employed mothers, while experiencing immediate stressors related to time management, may find satisfaction and a sense of self-identity in their professional roles, leading to lower enduring anxiety. As a working mother, women are also seeking a new identity as women and mothers, away from the traditional concept (Takeya, 2006). It is crucial to recognize that individual experiences may vary, and factors beyond employment status may also contribute to these patterns in anxiety scores.

Additionally, the Hierarchical Multiple Regression analysis results indicate that maternal self-discrepancy between the actual and ideal self significantly predicts subjective well-being across all employment statuses except other employment mothers. The findings suggest a meaningful relationship between how mothers perceive themselves (the actual self) and their idealized version of themselves in various domains and their reported subjective well-being. This means that, when considering employment status, the extent to which mothers perceive a gap between their actual and ideal selves has a notable impact on their subjective well-being among regular, non-regular employed mothers and homemaker mothers.

In this study, “other employment” mothers were referred to as groups who were self-employed, sole proprietors, or had family businesses. The results revealed that the discrepancy between the actual self and ought self from the parents’ standpoint predicted the subjective well-being of this group of mothers. For example, if the participants are to follow in their

parents' footsteps to maintain the family's business, their goals or vision could be the ones that fulfill their parents' wishes. Thus, the discrepancy between their actual and parents' perspectives of what they should become may contribute to their well-being. Future studies may further examine the group characteristics and may provide more clarification.

Critically, the Hierarchical Multiple Regression analysis might inform interventions or support strategies by identifying whether addressing self-discrepancy could have a meaningful impact on maternal well-being, even after accounting for the effects of maternal role and anxiety influence.

In summary, the inclusion of maternal role and anxiety as control variables in the hierarchical multiple regression analysis enhances the rigor and validity of the study, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing maternal subjective well-being. Moreover, the hierarchical multiple regression results indicate that the perceived gap between the actual and ideal self is a robust predictor of subjective well-being for mothers, transcending various employment statuses. Addressing and understanding this self-discrepancy may be important in interventions aimed at enhancing maternal well-being.

In addition, maternal self-discrepancy captures the psychological distance or discrepancy between how mothers see themselves and their idealized selves. The significance of this variable in predicting subjective well-being implies that when this discrepancy is high, it might negatively influence mothers' overall well-being. The fact that this relationship holds across all employment statuses suggests that regardless of whether mothers are regular-employed, non-regular-employed, or homemakers, the association between self-discrepancy and subjective well-being is observed consistently. The findings may suggest that

interventions or support strategies focusing on aligning maternal self-perception with idealized selves could positively impact subjective well-being across different employment statuses

As discussed in previous studies, mothers who experience a more significant gap between their actual and ideal selves may face challenges related to self-acceptance, satisfaction, or fulfillment (Haraguchi et al., 2005; Nakajima et al., 2016), which could, in turn, impact their subjective well-being. In terms of balancing multiple responsibilities, juggling maternal roles with other responsibilities such as work, household chores, and personal commitments can contribute to stress and anxiety. The challenge of finding a balance may lead to heightened anxiety, which shows in non-regular employed mothers. Mothers may feel pressure to meet societal or personal expectations regarding their maternal roles. If these expectations are perceived as excessively high, it can lead to anxiety about meeting those standards.

Furthermore, social comparisons are also crucial; mothers may compare themselves to others, particularly in the era of social media where curated images of parenting are prevalent. This social comparison can lead to feelings of inadequacy and anxiety about not measuring up to perceived standards. Mothers may experience anxiety if they feel they lack the necessary skills or competence to fulfill their maternal roles successfully. The fear of being unable to meet the role's demands can be stressful.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This research investigated the relationship between maternal self-discrepancies, psychological well-being, and employment status. A pilot study was conducted to examine the validation of the design method and all the questionnaires. Following, Study 1 examined variations in self-perception, particularly regarding the ideal self and the ought self across different maternal employment statuses, by analyzing the frequency of phrases provided by participants in written responses. This analysis laid the groundwork for subsequent investigations. Study 2 employed statistical methods to explore the primary objective of the research: assessing the impact of discrepancies between a mother's actual self and her ideal self, as well as her actual self and her ought self, on maternal role achievement, anxiety levels, and subjective well-being.

Fundamentally, the research focused on several critical questions, such as the extent to which maternal self-discrepancy predicts outcomes related to maternal role achievement, levels of anxiety, and overall subjective well-being, considering the influence of employment status. This included examining how the dissonance between a mother's actual and ideal selves, and between her actual and ought selves, impacts her sense of accomplishment in the maternal role, her experience of state-trait anxiety, and her overall subjective well-being.

Moreover, this research hypothesized that regularly employed mothers would exhibit lower scores in discrepancies between their actual and ideal selves and score higher in subjective well-being compared to mothers in other employment categories. It further posited that discrepancies between the actual self and the ideal self could predict maternal subjective well-being.

The study specifically targeted middle-aged Japanese mothers with university-aged children. By addressing existing gaps and examining the unique challenges faced by this demographic, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how self-discrepancy may serve as a significant factor influencing their psychological well-being. Furthermore, it explored the relationship between self-discrepancy and subjective well-being, shedding light on how these dynamics may impact their overall mental health and life satisfaction.

The Pilot study confirmed the research design method and all the initial survey questionnaires. Specifically, the self-report questionnaires intended for use in Study 1 and Study 2 ensured their alignment with the research objectives and confirmed the participants' ability to provide relevant responses. Moreover, the study demonstrated that the questionnaires effectively measured the discrepancies between actual and ideal selves and actual and ought selves of mothers with university-aged children concerning their maternal role achievement, state-trait anxiety, and subjective well-being across their employment status. Additionally, the pilot study revealed that providing phrases as examples could facilitate participants' reflections on describing their ideal and ought selves for use in Study 1. Thus, the pilot study has established a robust foundation for this research, confirming the reliability and effectiveness of the research design and its instruments.

Study 1 revealed significant variations in the components of the ideal self and ought self among participating mothers, highlighting the critical influence of employment status on their self-conceptualizations, as hypothesized. Specifically, distinct perspectives emerged among regularly employed, non-regularly employed, and homemaker mothers, emphasizing the nuanced impact of employment type on their perceptions of the maternal role, family role, and self-role. Despite these differences, a shared concern across all groups centered on their roles as mothers to their children, their contributions to the family dynamic, and the preservation of their personal identities. Additionally, significant differences were observed between maternal role perceptions and self-role perceptions across employment statuses, suggesting that maternal employment type may influence how mothers perceive their ideal selves. The differences in maternal self-perceptions across employment types may stem from variations in daily routines, responsibilities, and the time available for caregiving.

For example, regularly employed mothers often face time constraints due to work commitments, which limit the hours they can spend with their children. As a result, they may prioritize or idealize qualities that reflect their role as attentive and nurturing parents, despite limited time, such as creating meaningful moments or ensuring their children's needs are met efficiently. In contrast, homemakers typically have more time to engage directly with their children, allowing them to embody their ideal selves in ways that align closely with caregiving responsibilities, such as being consistently present, managing household routines, or fostering emotional bonds. Non-regularly employed mothers, who may balance part-time work or irregular schedules, could hold a blend of these perspectives, idealizing both work-related competence and caregiving presence. These nuanced differences reflect how employment type

shapes not only the practical aspects of motherhood but also the ideals mothers strive to achieve in their roles.

Additionally, research has pointed out that middle-aged women often grapple with the conflict between living on their terms and maintaining significant connections with others (Miller, 1986; Okamoto & Fukase, 2013, p. 173), suggesting that resolving the tension between the desire for personal identity and the role of caring and supporting others is crucial for the maturation of identity during this life stage. The ideal selves described by the participants revealed similarities, particularly regarding support for their children. Suggesting that middle-aged mother participants actively reflect on their lives, contemplating whether they have adequately fulfilled their roles in supporting their children (Matsuoka et al., 2006; Naito & Wie, 2018).

Mothers traditionally played emotional support-oriented roles in child education. However, according to Ryoo (2015), there has been a noticeable shift towards adopting more manager-like roles. The shift in priorities is noted to be more pronounced among contemporary mothers who have obtained higher levels of education. This could be indicative of an evolving societal trend where educated mothers place a greater emphasis on their own self-fulfillment and personal development, including their roles in their children's education. This suggests that mothers are becoming more actively involved in the planning and organization of their children's educational activities, moving beyond emotional support. Additionally, more mothers are pursuing a career, and that could have shifted in how they approach their roles in child education (Ryoo, 2015). The implication is that mothers are striving to balance their professional aspirations with active involvement in their children's educational experiences. Analyzing the data reveals changes in mothers' positions within

contemporary Japanese families. This may indicate a departure from traditional roles, with mothers playing a more active and managerial role in their children's education, aligning with the evolving dynamics of modern families. The trends identified in the self-report questionnaire suggest that contemporary mothers in Japan with higher education levels and professional jobs are emphasizing their self-actualization through active involvement and supporting their children's education (Nitta, 2011). This represents a shift from traditional roles towards a more balanced and managerial approach within the evolving landscape of Japanese families. Higher-educated mothers choose to be actively involved in child education as self-actualization (Ryoo, 2015).

On top of that, balancing the 'self' and the ability to care for and support others is deemed highly important during the maturation of identity in middle age (Okamoto & Fukase, 2013). On the other hand, pursuing self-realization and satisfaction as an individual is paramount. Maintaining connections with family, friends, and the community is crucial (Josselson, 1987, 1996; Takeya, 2006; Utsunomiya, 2008). Thus, the mother participants are not only considering their own needs and desires but also considering the needs and interests of others. Balancing these elements might be a key theme in the maturation of identity.

Furthermore, Study 1 also provides a glimpse into achieving balance; it may be necessary to progress toward personal goals and dreams while valuing communication and support from significant others. Deepening connections with others can lead to discoveries and empathy, contributing to individual growth and well-being, especially for homemaker mothers. Simultaneously, pursuing personal time, hobbies, and individual interests can contribute to emotional richness and fulfillment.

Finally, Study 2 will be conducted with an expanded participant pool to elucidate these associations further. This subsequent study investigates the relationship between maternal self-discrepancies, maternal role, state-trait anxiety, and subjective well-being. By exploring these additional variables, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how maternal self-concepts and well-being are interconnected. This approach will contribute valuable insights into the complex dynamics that influence the psychological experiences of mothers in diverse employment situations.

Study 2 successfully examined the influence of maternal self-discrepancies on maternal role achievement, state-trait anxiety, and subjective well-being among Japanese middle-aged mothers with university-aged children across different employment statuses. Moreover, the results revealed that the discrepancy between the actual and ideal self-predicted subjective well-being, supporting this research hypothesis.

As drawn from the findings in Study 1, the results revealed that regularly employed mothers and homemakers exhibited alignment between their ideal selves and the ought selves of their parents and husbands. Study 1 and Study 2 suggest consistency between participants' ideal selves and the ought selves of their parents and husbands, which explains the discrepancy scores in Study 2, where regularly employed mothers and homemakers revealed less discrepancy between their actual and ought selves than non-regularly employed mothers.

In conclusion, this research highlights that the perception of a gap between the actual self and ideal self significantly contributes to variations in the perceived gap between the actual self and ought self. More importantly, this discrepancy predicts subjective well-being across employment statuses. Furthermore, Study 1 revealed differences in participants'

descriptions of their ideal selves across employment statuses, whereas Study 2 demonstrated that the discrepancy between the actual self and ideal self is a significant predictor of subjective well-being. Together, these findings validate that, regardless of its specific nature, the ideal self plays a critical role in shaping participants' subjective well-being.

The discrepancy between the actual self and ideal self should therefore be carefully considered when evaluating and promoting subjective well-being. The relationship between fulfilling maternal roles and state anxiety is complex and influenced by individual differences, support systems, and contextual factors. Additionally, this study included participants from self-employment sectors, further research is needed to explore the unique characteristics of this group in greater detail. Future studies should include self-discrepancy as a potential factor in examining these relationships.

6.1. Limitations

This study noted the limitations of KH Coder analysis, particularly in handling English text and larger datasets. As the software is primarily designed for analyzing the Japanese language, careful consideration is needed when translating and analyzing phrases, avoiding prepositions and articles (e.g., at, on, the, a, an), focusing on nouns and verbs, and recognizing the software's constraints with big data is crucial.

Additionally, participant recruitment posed a significant challenge in this research. Future studies may consider employing or paying for a research institute or company to ensure

the recruitment of a sufficient and diverse pool of participants. This approach could enhance the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

6.2. Recommendation for Future Study

This research has provided an understanding of maternal self-discrepancy and well-being among middle-aged Japanese mothers. The research demonstrated that pursuing personal goals can significantly influence maternal subjective well-being compared to previous research. However, parents and husbands may impact maternal roles and their perception of the ideal self, as reported in Study 1. Moreover, the discrepancy between actual and ideal selves was positively correlated with the discrepancy between actual and ought selves of parents and husbands. Although the results indicated that the discrepancy between the actual and ought selves of parents and husbands did not directly predict maternal subjective well-being, parents and husbands may have an indirect influence. Future studies may investigate this potential relationship using mediator analyses, such as path analysis.

In Study 2, about 34% of the participants are regularly employed, 31% are non-regularly employed, and 15% fall into other employment categories. Notably, 81% of the participants hold a bachelor's degree. Despite their higher educational attainment, the regular employment rate remains low. This situation has been attributed to several factors, including the lack of adequate social support, such as insufficient childcare centers. Additionally, some research highlights the influence of husbands' attitudes and the persistence of societal norms, such as the 'motherhood myth,' which dictates that women should remain at home to care for children and manage household responsibilities (Iwasaki et al., 2017; Kashiwagi, 2008;

Ohinata, 1998; Toda, 2012). This research has proved that the expectation continues to be prevalent even today.

In particular, future research should also focus on the group of non-regularly employed mothers. The concept of non-regular employment in Japan encompasses various types of employment arrangements according to company requirements. Despite being non-regular employees, their working hours and duties can be comparable to those of regular employees. Understanding these factors may contribute to a deeper comprehension of the consequences that impact their psychological well-being. Adequate support and consideration may be necessary to foster the well-being of non-regularly employed mothers, as their well-being ultimately affects that of other family members. Other types of employment, e.g., self-employed and family business, are another topic that needs to be considered in future study.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Self-Report Questionnaire (in Japanese)

「理想自己」についてお尋ねします。a. あなたが思う「理想自己」とは『私はこうでありたい』という理想像のことです。他者、b. 両親, c. 配偶者, d. 子ども, e. 社会・職場・親しい友人から望まれている「理想自己」とは、他者が『あなたにこうであってほしい』と望まれているとする理想自己を指します。以下各項目にそれぞれの理想の自己を想像して、3つ記入してください。書きにくい場合は以下の欄に挙げた例の中から選んで記入してください。そしてその「理想自己」にどのくらい現実の自分が当てはまっているか、それぞれ、「非常に当てはまる」を7、「全く当てはまらない」を1、「どちらとも言えない」を4とした7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで答えてください。

(参考例：思いやりがある人、明るい性格の人、責任感がある人、子どもに親としての責任を果たしている人、健康状態が良い人、協調性（人との関係がうまくやれること）がある人、気持ちがいつも安定している人、満足している職業についている人、経済状態が良い人、仕事ができる人、家族を大切にする人、人生を楽しむ人、自分の生き方に自信を持つ人、家族との関係良い人、人間関係が良い人、スタイルが良い人、体力に自信がある人、仕事ができる人、親孝行な人、知性がある人、勤勉な人、仕事と家庭の両立ができる人、コミュニケーション能力が高い人、子どものロールモデルになれる人、良い妻になれる人、子どもを応援する人、社交的である人、目標に向かって努力する人。)

a.

あなたが思う「理想自己①②③」を思い浮かべて、以下の欄に自由に書いてください。3個全て書くようにしてください。書きにくい場合は、挙げた例の中から選んでその言葉を記入していただいても構いません。

1. あなたが思う「理想自己①」

1.1. あなたが思う「理想自己①」にどのくらい現在の自分が当てはまっているか。7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで答えてください。

非常に当てはまる 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 全く当てはまらない

2. あなたが思う「理想自己②」

2.1. あなたが思う「理想自己②」にどのくらい現在の自分が当てはまっているか。7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで教えてください。

非常に当てはまる 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 全く当てはまらない

3. あなたが思う「理想自己③」

3.1. あなたが思う「理想自己③」にどのくらい現在の自分が当てはまっているか。7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで教えてください。

非常に当てはまる 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 全く当てはまらない

b.

両親から期待される「理想自己①②③」を思い浮かべて、以下の欄に自由に書いてください。3個全て書くようにしてください。書きにくい場合は、挙げた例の中から選んでその言葉を記入していただいても構いません。

4. 両親から期待される「理想自己①」

4.1. 両親から期待される「理想自己①」にどのくらい現在の自分が当てはまっているか。7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで教えてください。

非常に当てはまる 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 全く当てはまらない

5. 両親から期待される「理想自己②」

5.1. 両親から期待される「理想自己②」にどのくらい現在の自分が当てはまっているか。7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで教えてください。

非常に当てはまる 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 全く当てはまらない

6. 両親から期待される「理想自己③」

6.1. 両親から期待される「理想自己③」にどのくらい現在の自分が当てはまっているか。7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで答えてください。

非常に当てはまる 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 全く当てはまらない

c.

配偶者から期待される「理想自己①②③」を思い浮かべて、以下の欄に自由に書いてください。3個全て書くようにしてください。書きにくい場合は、挙げた例の中から選んでその言葉を記入していただいても構いません。

7. 配偶者から期待される「理想自己①」

7.1. 配偶者から期待される「理想自己①」にどのくらい現在の自分が当てはまっているか。7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで答えてください。

非常に当てはまる 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 全く当てはまらない

8. 配偶者から期待される「理想自己②」

8.1. 配偶者から期待される「理想自己②」にどのくらい現在の自分が当てはまっているか。7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで答えてください。

非常に当てはまる 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 全く当てはまらない

9. 配偶者から期待される「理想自己③」

9.1. 配偶者から期待される「理想自己③」にどのくらい現在の自分が当てはまっているか。7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで答えてください。

非常に当てはまる 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 全く当てはまらない

d.

子どもから期待される「理想自己①②③」を思い浮かべて、以下の欄に自由を書いてください。3個全て書くようにしてください。書きにくい場合は、挙げた例の中から選んでその言葉を記入していただいても構いません。

10. 子どもから期待される「理想自己①」

10.1. 子どもから期待される「理想自己①」にどのぐらい現在の自分が当てはまっているか。7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで答えてください。

非常に当てはまる 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 全く当てはまらない

11. 子どもから期待される「理想自己②」

11.1. 子どもから期待される「理想自己②」にどのぐらい現在の自分が当てはまっているか。7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで答えてください。

非常に当てはまる 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 全く当てはまらない

12. 子どもから期待される「理想自己③」

12.1. 子どもから期待される「理想自己③」にどのぐらい現在の自分が当てはまっているか。7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで答えてください。

非常に当てはまる 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 全く当てはまらない

e.

社会・友人・職場の人から期待される「理想自己①②③」を思い浮かべて、以下の欄に自由を書いてください。3個全て書くようにしてください。書きにくい場合は、挙げた例の中から選んでその言葉を記入していただいても構いません。

13. 社会・友人・職場の人から期待される「理想自己①」

13.1. 社会・友人・職場の人から期待される「理想自己①」にどのくらい現在の自分が当てはまっているか。7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで教えてください。

非常に当てはまる 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 全く当てはまらない

14. 社会・友人・職場の人から期待される「理想自己②」

14.1. 社会・友人・職場の人から期待される「理想自己②」にどのくらい現在の自分が当てはまっているか。7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで教えてください。

非常に当てはまる 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 全く当てはまらない

15. 社会・友人・職場の人から期待される「理想自己③」

15.1. 社会・友人・職場の人から期待される「理想自己③」にどのくらい現在の自分が当てはまっているか。7段階の中から、あなたの気持ちに一番近いものを選んで教えてください。

非常に当てはまる 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 全く当てはまらない

Appendix B: Maternal Role Achievement

1. ほとんどあてはまらない
2. あまりあてはまらない
3. どちらともいえない
4. ややあてはまる
5. よくあてはまる

1	子どもは私をとて信用している。	1	2	3	4	5
2	子どもの成長に最も喜びを感じる。	1	2	3	4	5
3	子どもは私を十分愛してくれる。	1	2	3	4	5
4	子どもの将来がたいへん楽しみにできる。	1	2	3	4	5
5	子どもはみなから愛されている。	1	2	3	4	5
6	子どもとならどんな困難にも耐えられる自信がある。	1	2	3	4	5
7	子どもと楽しく過ごしている。	1	2	3	4	5
8	子どもは私のいきがいである。	1	2	3	4	5
9	子どものおかげで私が成長している。	1	2	3	4	5
10	子どもに良い家庭環境を与えている。	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C: State-Trait Anxiety Inventory

1. 全くそうでない
 2. いくぶんそうである
 3. ほぼそうである
 4. 全くそうである
-

[A- state]

心の状態を表現する文章が下に記述してあります。その各文章について、現在、今、どの程度感じているか、該当する番号を○で囲んでください。あまり考える必要はありませんが、現在の気持ちを最もよく表現しているものに反応するよう心掛けてください。

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 平静である。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. | 安心している。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. | 固くなっている。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. | 後悔している。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. | ホッとしている。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. | どうてんしている。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. | まずいことが起こりそうで心配である。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. | ゆったりした気持ちである。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. | 不安である。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. | 気分が良い。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. | 自信がある。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. | ピリピリしている。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. | イライラしている。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. | 緊張している。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. | リラックスしている。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. | 満足している。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. | 心配である。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. | ひどく興奮しろうばいしている。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

- | | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|---|---|---|---|
| 19. | ウキウキしている。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. | たのしい。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

[A-trait]

心の状態を表現する文章が下に記述してあります。その各文章について、ふだん、一般にどの程度の状態か、該当する番号を○で囲んでください。あまり考える必要はありませんが、ふだんの気持ちを最もよく表現しているものに反応するよう心掛けてください。

- | | | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | たのしい。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. | 疲れやすい。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. | 泣きだしたくなる。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. | ほかの人と同じぐらい幸せであったなと思う。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. | すぐに決心がつかず迷いやすい。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. | ゆったりした気持ちである。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. | 平静・沈着で落ちついている。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. | 困難なことがかさなると圧倒されてしまう。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. | 実際にたいしたことないことが気になってしかたがない。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. | 幸せである。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. | 物事を難しく考える傾向がある。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. | 自信が欠如している。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. | 安心している。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. | やっかいなことは避けて通ろうとする。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. | 憂うつである。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. | 満足している。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. | ささいなことに思いわずらう。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. | ひどくがっかりしたときに気分転換ができない。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. | 物事に動じないほうである。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. | 身近な問題を考えるとひどく緊張し混乱する。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Appendix D: Subjective Well-being

1. あなたは人生が面白いと思いますか。
 4 非常に 3 ある程度は
 2 あまりそうは思わない 1 全くそう思わない
2. 過去と比較して、現在の生活は（幸せ）。
 4 とても幸せ 3 まあまあ幸せ
 2 あまり幸せでない 1 全く幸せでない
3. ここ数年やってきたことを全体的に見て、あなたはどの程度幸せを感じていますか。
 4 とても幸せ 3 まあまあ幸せ
 2 あまり幸せでない 1 全く幸せでない
4. 物事が思ったように進まない場合でも、あなたはその状況に適切に対処できると思いますか。
 4 だいたいできる 3 ときどきはできる
 2 ほとんどできない 1 全くできない
5. 危機的な状況（人生を狂わせるようなこと）に会ったとき、自分が勇気を持ってそれに立ち向かって解決していくという自信がありますか。
 4 非常に 3 ある程度は
 2 あまり自信はない 1 全く自信はない
6. 今の調子でやっていけば、これから起きることにも対応できる自信がありますか。
 4 非常に 3 ある程度は
 2 あまり自信はない 1 全く自信はない
7. 期待通りの生活水準や社会的地位を手に入れたと思いますか。
 4 非常に 3 ある程度は
 2 あまりそうは思わない 1 全くそうは思わない
8. これまでどの程度成功したり出世したと感じていますか。

- 4 非常に 3 まあまあ
2 あまりうまくいっていない 1 全くうまくいっていない
9. 自分がやろうとしたことはやりとげていますか。
- 4 ほとんどいつも 3 ときどき
2 ほとんどできていない 1 全くできていない
10. 自分の人生が退屈だとか面白くないとか感じていますか。 *
- 4 非常に 3 ある程度は
2 あまり感じていない 1 全く感じていない
11. 将来のことが心配ですか。 *
- 4 非常に 3 ある程度は
2 あまり心配ではない 1 全く心配ではない
12. 自分の人生には意味がないと感じていますか。 *
- 4 非常に 3 ある程度は
2 あまり感じていない 1 全く感じていない
13. 自分が周りの環境と一体化していて、欠かせない一部であるという所属感を感じることはありますか。
- 4 非常に強く 3 ある程度は
2 あまり感じていない 1 全く感じていない
14. 非常に強い幸福感を感じる瞬間がありますか。
- 4 とてもよく 3 ときどき
2 ほとんどない 1 全くない
15. 自分が人類という大きな家族の一員だということに喜びを感じることはありますか。
- 4 とてもよく 3 ときどき
2 あまり感じていない 1 全く感じていない

主観的幸福感尺度は5領域で15項目。それは“人生に対する前向きな気持ち”、“達成感”、“自信”、“至福感”、“人生に対する失望感”の5領域(各3項目)である。4件法で評定を求める。

* 逆転項目