

# The Effect of Father Involvement in Childcare on the Psychological Well-being of Adolescents: A Cross-Cultural Study

TAISUKE KUME



*This study examines the relationship between the retrospective perception of father involvement in childcare, sometimes after divorce, and self-esteem, life satisfaction, and perceived stress in adults. Participants included 244 and 205 university students in the United States and Japan, respectively; they were asked to reflect on their relationship with their fathers. Results indicated that there were statistically significant positive correlations between father involvement and self-esteem, life satisfaction, and lower perceived stress in the United States; furthermore, there were statistically significant positive correlations between father involvement and life satisfaction in Japan. It was determined that*

*a high frequency of paternal contact after divorce resulted in higher levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction. Further studies would benefit from classifying the gender of children and examining more data on the variation in the frequency of paternal contact after divorce.*

**Keywords:** fathers, childcare, divorce, self-esteem, life satisfaction, Japan

This study examines father involvement in childcare and its effect on children's psychological development once they reach adolescence. In Western countries like the United States, Europe, and Scandinavia, a father's involvement in childcare is still less typical than a mother's, although it is commonly accepted, since many women work outside the home and have careers. Thus, the study of father involvement in childcare has inevitably appeared in psychological literature. Many studies prove that father involvement with children has a positive effect on a child's development and that a father and mother's involvement are equally significant. These studies focus on gender-effect differences; for example, can a father provide just as effective childcare as a mother? Other studies emphasize father nurturance and how the father's affection is equal to the mother's; overall, they show that father involvement had a positive effect on both children and the spouse. The father's relationship with the child, however, is far less studied than the mother's relationship with her offspring (Lamb, 2000). Moreover, cross-cultural studies are limited, as are studies of young adults; therefore, this study seeks to explore an area where knowledge is lacking.

When measuring father involvement, it is difficult to define what it consists of and when it is done (Lamb, Pleck, & Levine, 1985). Many previous studies measured children under the age of 16, and most studied children of 4–12 years of age (Lamb, 2000). At such an age it is difficult to procure an accurate reply from the study subjects; therefore, fathers or mothers often reported the children's psychological condition. Studies of these ages are, needless to say, significant, but to produce a more accurate measurement, more longitudinal studies are needed, as children grow into adolescence, adulthood, and middle age. In studies of these older ages, the subjects answered questions on their mental condition and their subjective feelings about how their fathers were involved in their childhood (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). The weaknesses in these studies include the impossibility of accurately measuring childcare provided by the father, but if the adult studies are placed side by side with the childhood studies, a more accurate effect of father involvement through a person's lifetime will be revealed (Allgood et al., 2008).

There are some similarities in family dynamics in Japan and Western countries. As more Japanese women began working full-time, the need for father involvement in childcare increased. In 2006, the childcare organization NPO, Fathering Japan established a partnership with The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (NPO Fathering Japan, 2011). This organization's purpose was to educate and enlighten citizens on father involvement with newborns and children under the age of 12 years. This movement was first created to help women in careers and raise interest in childhood development. While it is necessary to investigate children's psychological development as it is affected by the father's involvement in childcare, the psychological studies focusing on Japanese adolescent subjects and their fathers are very few. While cultural differences between Western countries and Asia exist, the effect of father involvement exists in all cultures and must be demonstrated. Certainly, psychology is rooted in biology, and therefore, such studies are sure to pertain to any culture or country.

Given the current research and research need, this study's intent is to (1) reinforce the evidence that basic father involvement has an effect on the psychological well-being of adolescent children; (2) provide evidence of how father involvement affected the subsequent psychological well-being of Japanese adolescents who were children during a divorce; and (3) provide a cross-cultural comparison of father involvement and its effects in the United States and Japan.

### History of Measuring Father Involvement

Many studies suggest that a father's involvement in the childcare of an infant creates a positive effect on the child and even on the father and mother. When given the opportunities to express affection to their children, men become more expressive and gentle in their relationships with other people as well. The earlier on a father is involved in childcare, the more attached the children will remain in later childhood. Furthermore, if childcare starts at an early age, the father's involvement tends to persist later on (Parke, 1996). The play style of an infant is often different when interacting with the father and mother, and father's play is more often physical. Pederson and Robson (1969) found that in addition to the frequency of the father's caretaking, the intensity of the play interactions between father and infant is important for forming infant-father attachment.

Another effect of a father's involvement is in social relationship ability. In one laboratory study, one-year-old infants whose fathers were very involved in their care showed less stress when left alone with a stranger than those not involved with their fathers. The less frequently fathers bathed and dressed their infants at home, the longer the infants cried when left alone with a stranger (Kotelchuck, 1976). If the primary caretaker is the father, the infant is happier.

According to one study (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998), there are three dimensions in father involvement: engagement, responsibility, and accessibility. Engagement is the extent to which a father experiences direct contact and shared interactions with his children in the context of caretaking, play, or leisure. Availability is defined as a father's presence or accessibility to the child, and responsibility is the extent to which a father arranges for resources to be available to the child, including organizing and planning children's lives (Lamb, Pleck, & Levine, 1985). However, the study did not assess how children and fathers develop a positive relationship.

Finley and Schwartz (2004) developed two measuring scales; the Nurturant Fathering Scale and the Father Involvement Scale, which are completed from a child's or an adult's retrospective point of view. The Nurturant Fathering Scale assesses the effective quality of fathering that a young adolescent perceived while growing up. The Father Involvement Scale assesses the extent to which young adults perceived their fathers to have been involved in different domains of their lives during childhood and adolescence. This study obtained high internal consistency estimates for both the Father Involvement Scale, including both the reported and desired involvement subscales, and the Nurturant Fathering Scale. The factor structure of the Father Involvement Scale was expressive, instrumental, and mentoring, which was consistent with Parsons and Bales' instrumental and socio-emotional dimensions of fathering and family life.

Allgood, Beckert, and Peterson (2012), in studying adult daughters' psychological well-being in relation to their relationship with their fathers, found that retrospective perceptions of their father's active involvement in their childcare was positively correlated with female adolescents' psychological well-being. The retrospective perceptions of father involvement and nurturant fathering had a strong positive correlation to self-esteem and a moderately positive correlation to life satisfaction; there was, however, no significant correlation to psychological distress. The data in this research were of great value in proving the positive effect of a father's involvement in childcare. Before this research on father involvement and father nurturance by Finley and Schwartz (2004), research on father involvement in childcare used children as subjects. The children's psychological status in those studies was determined by children themselves or their parents. Moreover, the question of the degree of father involvement tended to be answered by the parents. The retrospective fathering research, however, was more precise in obtaining data on the effects of fathering. The methodology used in this study will also be helpful to us in conducting our future research because it is easier to obtain larger samples of adolescents than of children. As has already been said, we can gain more exact introspective psychological conditions from adolescents than from children.

### Father Involvement after Divorce

Several studies indicate that, as opposed to adults who grew up in intact families, adolescents who grow up in a divorced family have lower psychological well-being, a lower education level, and less satisfaction about their own marriage, with a higher tendency for divorce and behavior problems (Amato & Keith, 1991; Amato, 1994, 2001). Moreover, children whose parents chose joint custody and joint parenting after a divorce became better adjusted to their new divorced lifestyle, when compared to having one alienated parent. Amato (1991, 1993, 2001) suggests that a parental attitude of cooperation and financial support of the child make for better social adjustment of the child.

Wallerstein's 25-year study (1989; Wallerstein, Lewis, & Blakeslee 2000) traced subjects who had experienced parental divorce and examined the adjustment-related contact with the separated parent. Wallerstein's research found that subjects who had consistent contact with the separated parent after a divorce could most easily adjust to the new life after divorce and experience better psychological conditions overall (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Wallerstein, 1985; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989; Wallerstein, Lewis, & Blakeslee, 2000).

In contrast, a lack of contact with the separated parent can lead to lower self-esteem, problems of social adjustment, a lack of trust, depression, drug or alcohol problems, repetition of divorce, and parental alienation in the next generation (Baker, 2007). The children who did not have contact with the separated parent had a high tendency to divorce in their own marriages. Moreover, they had more of a tendency to feel alienated from their own children than those who had contact with both parents after divorce. This study (Baker, 2007) found that limiting contact with the separated parent after divorce had negative effects on the child's ability to socially adjust and negatively affected their psychological health and well-being. This finding is important in supporting father involvement after divorce and has great value in proving that the act of parental alienation can be harmful to a child's well-being. Baker (2007) explains features of parental alienation such as bad-mouthing, limiting contact, withdrawal of love, telling the child that the targeted parent does not love him or her, forcing the child to choose between parents, creating the impression that the targeted parent is dangerous, confiding in the child, limiting mention and photographs of the targeted parent, and limiting contact with or belittling extended family.

Bauserman's (2002) comparison of joint custody with sole custody, using meta-analysis, states that children in joint physical or legal custody were better adjusted than children in sole custody settings. However, there was no difference between joint custody families and intact families. Through this research, more positive adjustment, such as general adjustment, family relationships, self-esteem, emotional and behavioral adjustment, and divorce-specific adjustment were found in joint-custody children.

Aoki's research (2011) showed that parent-child contact after divorce has positive effects on adolescents' psychological health. The research evidence further suggests that an absence of contact with the father after divorce was associated with a lack of intimacy on the object-relations scale for young adults and lower self-esteem for adolescents. There was no significant difference in the degree of insufficiency on intimacy and self-esteem when comparing adolescent subjects who had continuing contact with their fathers after divorce and those with an intact family. These results illustrate that contact with both parents after a divorce is important for children and suggests that supporting a consistent visitation and joint custody system is also needed for society.

### Research Design

The purpose of this study was to prove that there is a relationship between the father's child-care levels and the retrospective perception an adolescent has of their subjective well-being. The hypotheses of this study were as follows:

There is a positive correlation between American adolescent retrospective perceptions of nurturant fathering in childhood and self-esteem, life satisfaction, and perceived stress.

There is a positive correlation between Japanese adolescent retrospective perceptions of nurturant fathering in childhood and self-esteem, life satisfaction, and perceived stress.

Among American subjects there is a positive correlation between retrospective perceptions of father involvement in childhood during adolescence and self-esteem, life satisfaction, and perceived stress.

Among Japanese subjects there is a positive correlation between retrospective perceptions of father

involvement in childhood during adolescence and self-esteem, life satisfaction, and perceived stress.

There is a positive correlation between the frequency of contact with a father after parental divorce and self-esteem, life satisfaction, and perceived stress.

## Method

### Subjects

The subjects of this study were 244 university students in a Midwestern university in the United States and 205 university students at a university in Japan. American students were selected at random at all levels (freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, and graduate students); 142 students were female and 102 were male, and all were between the ages of 18 and 29, with a mean of 24.69 (SD= 9.36). The response rate was 20%. Almost all the participants were Caucasian (58.7%). Participants with divorced parents were 20.5%.

In the Japanese sample, there were 134 male students and 71 female students, recruited in a social security class. Response rate was 90%. Ages were between 18 and 22, with a mean of 18.86 (SD=.91). The students were all at freshman or sophomore levels. All of the participants were Asian (100%). Participants with divorced parents were 6.3%.

### Procedure

The survey in the United States was administered on the Internet by qualtrics. This survey obtained permission by an institutional review board (IRB) in college, and used 1,000 e-mail addresses of students. The response period was one month. The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete. For Japanese participants, the same questionnaire survey was conducted on paper. This was necessary because the Internet survey was not expected to have a good response rate. The survey was taken in one large social security class and had a duration of approximately 20 minutes. In both countries the researcher informed participants to "Please remember your childhood relationships with parents and answer honestly." In addition, the questionnaire emphasized that, for the purpose of the study, father must refer to biological father, but not stepfather.

### Measurement

The Nurturant Father Scale measured participants' retrospective relationship with their fathers. It consists of nine items, each rated on a five-point scale. No items are reversed. Possible scores on this measurement range from nine to 45. This Nurturant Fathering Scale produced a single factor. A sample item from this scale was "How much do you think your father *enjoyed* being a father?"

The Father Involvement Scale measured retrospective adolescent and adult children's perception of their fathers' involvement. This scale consists of 20 items, which are lists of fathering domains. For each fathering domain, participants were asked to indicate the following: (a) how involved their fathers were in their lives and (b) how involved they wanted their fathers to have been, relative to how involved their fathers actually were. Both questions were rated one to five. No items were reversed. Possible scores range from 20 to 100. A sample from this scale is "Intellectual development."

The reported father involvement items produced three factors and subscales: Expressive Involvement, Instrumental Involvement, and Mentoring/Advising Involvement. The desired father involvement items produced two factors and subscales: Expressed Desired Involvement and Instrumental Desired Involvement.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) comprises 10 questions measuring global self-esteem. Questions are answered on a four-point Likert-type scale. Four items are reversed. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .85; that variable is consistent and appropriately high (Crandall, 1973). This scale is very popular for assessing self-esteem. This scale consists of a single factor. A sample item from this scale is "I feel that I have a number of good qualities."

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) measures psychological life satisfaction of participants according to five items. No items are reversed. The question is answered on a seven-point Likert-type scale. Possible scores range from five to 35. This scale produced a single factor. A sample item from this scale is "In most ways my life is close to my ideal."

The Perceived Stress Scale measures participants' perceived stress by asking whether their lives seemed to be unpredictable, uncontrollable, or overloaded. Cohen et al. (1983) developed the original 14-item English version. The Perceived Stress Scale is also available in two shortened versions of 10 items (PSS-10) and four items (PSS-4; Cohen & Williamson, 1988). This study used PSS-10. This scale consists of six negative and four positive questions. Each item is rated one to five. Possible scores on the measurement are 10 to 50. PSS produced two factors (Positive subscale, Negative subscale). This scale has several different language versions, including Japanese. A sample item is "In the last month, how often did you feel upset by something happening unexpectedly?"

## Results

### Hypothesis 1

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare self-esteem in high-nurturant and low-nurturant fathering conditions in the United States. There was a significant difference in the scores for high-nurturant ( $M=17.52$ ,  $SD=5.15$ ) and low-nurturant fathering ( $M=19.7$ ,  $SD=6.07$ );  $t(226)=2.56$ ,  $p=0.11$ ,  $p < .05$ . These results suggest that nurturant fathering had an effect on self-esteem in the United States and that American adolescent students who had positive retrospective perceptions of nurturant fathering also had increased self-esteem. When the test was used to compare life satisfaction in high-nurturant and low-nurturant fathering conditions, it showed a significant difference in the scores for high-nurturant ( $M=12.11$ ,  $SD=5.57$ ) and low-nurturant fathering ( $M=16.78$ ,  $SD=7.20$ );  $t(66.35)=4.23$ ,  $p=0.00$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . These results suggest that nurturant fathering does have an effect on life satisfaction in the United States and that when American adolescent students had positive retrospective perceptions of nurturant fathering, their life satisfaction increased.

When it came to perceived stress, the t-test showed a significant difference in the scores for high-nurturant ( $M=25.86$ ,  $SD=6.90$ ) and low-nurturant fathering ( $M=29.10$ ,  $SD=7.55$ );  $t(227)=2.89$ ,  $p=0.004$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . These results suggest that nurturant fathering had an effect on perceived stress in

the United States and that when American adolescent students had positive retrospective perceptions of nurturant fathering, their perceived stress decreased.

### Hypothesis 2

An independent samples t-test compared self-esteem in high-nurturant and low-nurturant fathering conditions in Japan and found no significant difference in the scores for high-nurturant (M=26.05, SD=4.29) and low-nurturant fathering (M=26.32, SD=5.16);  $t(195)=-.33$ ,  $p=.743$  n.s. These results suggest that nurturant fathering did not have an effect on self-esteem in Japan. The t-test for life satisfaction showed a significant difference in the scores for those with high-nurturant (M=18.20, SD=5.91) and low-nurturant fathers (M=21.54, SD=7.03);  $t(48.39)=2.68$ ,  $p=.010$   $p<.05$ . These results suggest that nurturant fathering did affect life satisfaction in Japan and that when Japanese adolescent students had a positive retrospective perception of nurturant fathering, their life satisfaction increased.

The t-test measure for perceived stress showed no significant difference in the scores for high-nurturant fathering (M=30.52, SD=3.94) and low-nurturant fathering (M=31.05, SD=4.33);  $t(196)=-.735$ ,  $p=.501$  n.s. Thus, nurturant fathering did not have an effect on perceived stress in Japan.

### Hypothesis 3

The t-test for self-esteem in high father involvement and low father involvement conditions in the United States showed significant differences in the scores for high-involvement (M=17.62, SD=5.12) and low-involvement (M=20.26, SD=6.23);  $t(206)=2.95$ ,  $p=.004$ . Father involvement had an effect on self-esteem in the United States, and American adolescent students who had positive retrospective perceptions of their fathers' involvement had increased self-esteem.

The t-test comparing life satisfaction for high (M=12.12, SD=5.55) and low (M=17, SD=7.70);  $t(58.97)=4$ ,  $p=.000$   $p<.01$  father involvement showed that father involvement had an effect on life satisfaction in the United States, and that when American adolescent students had a positive retrospective perception of father involvement, their life satisfaction increased.

When the t-test compared perceived stress in high and low father involvement conditions in the United States, it showed significant differences in the scores for high father involvement (M=25.85, SD=6.99) and low father involvement (M=30.20, SD=7.42;  $t(206)=3.68$ ,  $p=.000$ ). These results show that when American adolescent students had positive retrospective perceptions of father involvement, their perceived stress decreased.

### Hypothesis 4

The t-test measuring self-esteem in high and low father-involvement conditions in Japan showed no significant differences in the scores (M=25.71, SD=4.05 for low involvement and M=26.82, SD=4.89 for high involvement;  $t(193)=1.74$ ,  $p=.084$  n.s.). Thus, father involvement did not have an effect on self-esteem in Japan. The t-test conducted for life satisfaction showed a significant difference in the scores for high (M=17.87, SD=6.17) and low father involvement (M=20.2, SD=6.15);  $t(194)=2.59$ ,  $p=.010$ . These results suggest that father involvement does have an effect on life satisfaction in Japan, and that Japanese adolescent students who had positive retrospective perceptions of father involve-



ment had increased life satisfaction.

The t-test comparing perceived stress in high and low father-involvement conditions in Japan showed no significant difference in the scores for high father involvement ( $M=30.35$ ,  $SD=3.68$ ) and low father involvement ( $M=31.04$ ,  $SD=4.453$ );  $t(195)=1.18$ ,  $p=.241$ . These results suggest that father involvement does not have an effect on perceived stress in Japan.

### Hypothesis 5

Finally, the t-test for self-esteem related to high/low frequency of contact with the father after divorce showed a significant difference in the scores for high frequency ( $M=16.63$ ,  $SD=5.47$ ) and low frequency of contact with a father after divorce ( $M=21.82$ ,  $SD=6.55$ );  $t(34)=2.59$ ,  $p=.014$ . Adolescent students who had a high frequency of contact with their father after parental divorce had increased self-esteem. With regard to the correlation of life satisfaction to the same measure, a significant difference in the scores for high frequency of contact with a father after divorce ( $M=12.58$ ,  $SD=5.60$ ) and low frequency of contact with a father after divorce ( $M=19.72$ ,  $SD=7.27$ );  $t(35)=3.36$ ,  $p=.002$   $p<.01$  was found. Specifically, the results suggest that when adolescent students had a high frequency of contact with their fathers after parental divorce, their life satisfaction increased.

When comparing perceived stress in high/low frequency of contact with a father after divorce, there was no significant difference in the scores for high frequency of contact ( $M=28.31$ ,  $SD=7.10$ ) and low frequency of contact ( $M=29.12$ ,  $SD=8.63$ );  $t(34)=-.306$ ,  $p=.762$  n.s. These results show that frequency of contact with a father after divorce did not have an effect on perceived stress.

### Discussion

This section presents a discussion of the results along with conclusions and implications for further research.

### Hypothesis 1

The results of this research supported the first hypothesis that a positive correlation would be found between the retrospective perceptions of nurturant fathering in childhood during adolescence and self-esteem, life satisfaction, and perceived stress in the United States. Subjects who scored high on nurturant fathering had higher self-esteem and life satisfaction and lower perceived stress. These results show that the theories of father involvement and closeness in childhood had a positive effect on self-esteem, which is supported by the research of Michael Lamb (1997), Scott (2008), and others. These studies prove that father childcare is important for healthy psychological development. In the United States, a father's involvement in childcare is more common than in Asian countries, and many fathers have more knowledge about effective childcare. Therefore, more fathers in the United States can positively affect their children's psychological conditions.

### Hypothesis 2

The research did not fully support the second hypothesis that there would be a positive correlation between retrospective perceptions of nurturant fathering in childhood during adolescence and self-esteem, life satisfaction, and perceived stress in Japan. A positive correlation was found for

life satisfaction, but not for self-esteem and perceived stress. Perhaps there is no relationship between nurturant fathering and self-esteem in Japan because female students' self-esteem is lower on average, whether father nurturance is high or low. These scores are largely lower compared to those of Japanese male students and American students of both sexes. This may have influenced the average score in Japan and contributed to the findings of no significant relationship between nurturant fathering and self-esteem.

Life satisfaction was positively correlated with nurturant fathering. This has been previously shown in studies of Western countries, but these findings show that similar results can be obtained in Asian countries. The reason that perceived stress was not significantly affected by father nurturance may be due to the fact that Japanese fathers do not generally take an active role in childcare. Japanese fathers do not have the knowledge or education about effective childcare. Moreover, they did not have role models of fathering, and traditional role models are still a strong influence in society. In addition, Japanese subjects who participated in this survey did not know as much about fathering compared to their American counterparts; hence, they may have exaggerated their retrospective perceptions of father involvement; that is, if a father's involvement in childcare is small but existent, people in Japan may perceive it as larger than it is, in comparison to Western perceptions of the same level of involvement.

### Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 was supported, and a positive correlation was found between retrospective perceptions of father involvement in childhood during adolescence and self-esteem, life satisfaction, and perceived stress in the United States. These results support preceding research (Scott; Lamb). Scott's study showed that female adolescent retrospective father involvement correlated with positive self-esteem, life satisfaction, and stress, and our research shows that male adolescents may have similar experiences. Our results suggest that in the United States, a father's childcare involvement has certain positive effects on adolescent psychological health.

The reason this result is different in Japan may be in part because in the U.S., a father's role in childcare is supported by society, and thus American fathers can obtain proper knowledge and education to become better caretakers. Men in the U.S also have more role models for childcare. This leads to sufficient father involvement for children's healthy psychological development.

### Hypothesis 4

The results of this research partially support the fourth hypothesis that there is a positive correlation between retrospective perceptions of father involvement in childhood during adolescence and self-esteem, life satisfaction, and perceived stress in Japan. Perceived stress was not correlated with father involvement in Japan most likely because the social norm in society is that a father is not very involved in childcare. Children do not feel stress without their father's involvement because it is natural in their environment. A further significant point is the effect of father involvement on life satisfaction in Japan, which appears similar to the results for hypothesis two. These results, which showed that the level of life satisfaction decreases when father involvement is negligible, illustrate why Japanese adolescents need relationships with their father in childhood. Father involvement affects life satisfaction; however, there is no reverse effect in other psychological factors. It is clear that

father involvement has a positive effect on children's psychological health in Japan.

### Hypothesis 5

The results of this research partially support the last hypothesis that there is a positive correlation between the frequency of contact with a father after parental divorce and self-esteem, life satisfaction, and perceived stress. The results held up for self-esteem and life satisfaction, but not perceived stress. These results are mostly supported by Amato (2001) and Baker (2007). Children who have high frequencies of contact and visitation with their separated father have more positive psychological development. Moreover, our research included both Japanese and American subjects, with the results showing that a positive relationship with the father can help to change Japanese children. The results are also supported by the study of Japanese visitation effects on self-esteem (Aoki, 2010).

The reason perceived stress was not affected was probably because stress is limited to a short span of time, or possibly because Japanese subjects have a strong perceived stress on average; these may both affect their score. However, we do know that perceived stress is not changed by frequency of contact with the father.

### Limitations of Study and Future Study

The parental divorce sample was very small; if the sample numbers were larger we could see more variation of frequency of contact with father. Moreover, the male and female student ratios were for the Japanese and American groups, and the American sample included many more women than the sample from Japan, which could have skewed the results. This study focused on the differences between Japan and the United States; nevertheless the next study should treat this difference. The father's attitude may also change depending on the sex of the child.

There was a large difference in the scores on self-esteem when comparing countries and genders, so a follow-up study should consider these differences more closely. Moreover, adding other countries, such as China and other Western countries, could provide better knowledge of father involvement effects worldwide.

For Japan, more studies about visitation after divorce are needed, along with more comparisons to Western cultures. Subsequent studies should focus more on detailed divorce comparisons between Japan and Western countries. Changing the subject to children may also be beneficial. However, using adolescent subjects is easier than using child subjects.

### Conclusion

This paper contributed to the study of positive correlations between father involvement in childcare and psychological well-being. Nurturant and father involvement resulted in the same effect; therefore these concepts can be considered under one rubric, known as father involvement in childcare. Father involvement has a positive effect on all aspects of psychological health in the United States. Furthermore, father involvement has a positive effect on life satisfaction in Japan, and there is no reverse effect. It is reasonable to conclude that father involvement has a positive effect on Japanese children's psychological health.

It could be suggested that the differences between Japan and the United States are due to the progress made by the United States in fathering education and the recognition of the importance of the father's role in child rearing. If fathers' involvement in childcare was common in Japanese society, the differences in results might be smaller. In Japan more women are moving towards having full-time jobs, which will result in greater involvement of men in childcare. As traditional roles change, more comprehensive effects have appeared in Japan. We should develop proper methods of childcare and more role models for fathers. There is not enough research in the United States and Japan about father involvement, so participation of more Asian and Western countries in the study and research may make for better father childcare worldwide.

In the presence of divorce, a positive effect on psychological health was found with the frequency of contact with the father. Supporting visitation and joint custody is also good for children's psychological well-being for cultures beyond Asia and the U.S. This implies that father involvement is effective even when parents are separated. The Japanese visitation system and family law system is behind Western countries in matters of divorce; this contributes to the evidence that it is a necessity to change the system in the direction of joint custody. Further studies should be done, on divorce and visitation, but they should focus on what Japan and other western countries can do to improve the future. Contact situations could include supervised visitation in cases related to abuse or domestic violence. We can classify domestic violence as mental or physical, and which parent is the abuser. The research that proves fundamental benefit of paternal contact after divorce classifying a case of domestic violence and abuse or normal divorce can help break the stereotypes of a "bad father" and "the father who was not around, except for financial support, after a divorce." In conclusion, this study shows that father contact with children after a divorce has great benefits to children's psychological health.

This approach to parenting is already common in the U.S., Europe, Australia, Canada, and Scandinavia; however it is very rare in Japan. This study provides important evidence that paternal visitations after divorce are necessary and are also in the best interests of children. In Japan there is a stigma that divorced parents are in conflict so that, potentially, if a father meets with his children, the mother may be annoyed. This leads to the children feeling more insecure. This research supports the claim that it is necessary to improve the visitation law system. Clearly, it cannot be assumed that contact with the father after a divorce is negative. Every society should support change that allows both parents to have visitations with their children after a divorce. It is also essential because in developing countries divorce rates are increasing.

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Taisuke Kume is a graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Stout Department of Human Development and Family Studies and Kansai University in Japan. He is the Japanese translator of *The Myth of Male Power*.

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