

The sense of married female teachers for taking caregiver's role for their elderly parents

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ABSTRACT

The object of this paper is to clarify the sense of responsibility of female teachers, who are categorized as workingwomen of which number has been increased, for caring their elderly parents. The subjects were 187 married female teachers and they were surveyed with a questionnaire. The employed questionnaire asked how the subjects considered aspects of the gender role, and a caregiver's role for their parents and parents-in-law.

The results indicated that very few subjects supported the gender role and a caregiver's role for elderly parents based on the female role. Regarding the caregiver's role for elderly parents, there was a significant difference between the way they intended to divide the role for their parents and for their parents-in-law. About 70% of the subjects considered that a wife should be a primary caregiver for her parents and a husband was merely a helpmate, and more than 50% of them considered that the caring role for parents-in-law should be equally shared between themselves and their husbands. In both cases, more than 90% of subjects intended to make use of homecare services. The factors that affected how they would divide the caregiver's role for their parents were the sense of responsibility to be a caregiver for parents-in-law and the intention to discontinue career to care for their parents and for parents-in-law. Those that significantly affected their preference in caregiver's role for their parents-in-law were the female gender role orientation, the female role orientation in nursing care, the degree of domestic division of labor, the degree of dividing parenting role, the sense of responsibility to be a caregiver for their parents and for parents-in-law and the intention to discontinue career to care for their parents and for parents-in-law.

The results showed that married and fulltime working female teachers had a strong intention to be involved in caring for elderly parents, and it was indicated that there is a need to facilitate support systems in which they can participate in nursing care for their elderly parents as they continue their career.

KEY WORDS

Elderly parents care, Caregiver's role, Working married female teachers

Introduction

It was suggested that, when elderly are sick in bed, those they expect to take care of them are primarily their spouses, followed by their cohabitating children and children living apart, and they least expect others¹⁾. On caring a widowed elderly at home, women in her

children's generation are expected to be in charge.

Though the number of people who considered caring for elderly parents to be an obligation of children had increased gradually between the 1960s and the 1980s, it began decreasing at the end of the 1980s, and the survey in 1994 showed only about 30% of

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people believed that caring for elderly parents was children's obligation. Also, there is a tendency that the number of those who consider it to be a good custom is decreasing. Instead, the number of people is increasing who consider that caring elderly parents is unavoidable for children because of the insufficiency of institutions and elderly care systems²⁾. This tendency indicates that the generation of children is not positively assume the responsibility of caring.

Working style of women, especially that of married women, who are expected to take the caring role is changing from the self-employed or a worker in family-operated business to an employed worker outside home³⁾. It is assumed that, due to such a change in working style, there must be a difficulty for a workingwoman to take the so-called female roles such as housework, parenting and nursing care. Nevertheless, Shirahase suggested basing on the Social Life Datum Survey that domestic division of labor according to female role was quite consolidated and husbands still did not participate in housework⁴⁾.

The average nursing time per a caregiver is said to be about 3 hours a day⁵⁾, which implies one of the characteristics of homecare that burden of nursing concentrates on a particular person for a certain period of time in the person's life⁶⁾. That is, if a fulltime employed female is expected to be in charge of caring, it is likely that she may be forced to discontinue her career. The objects of this paper are to clarify how workingwomen feels about caring their elderly parents and to examine support systems for home care.

Method

To select workingwomen who are generally in the same working conditions as workingmen are, fulltime employed female were asked to participate in the research. Since it had been assumed that there would be a difference between the sense of caring for the subjects' parents and that for their parents-in-law, all subjects were married.

With a support of Women's Division in the Teacher's Union of S city, blank questionnaires were distributed to each kindergarten, elementary and junior high school in S city. Of the 7,200 teachers in 320 municipal schools, there were 2,800 female teachers.

310 questionnaires were distributed during August and September in 1997 and they were collected using envelopes to protect privacy. 187 questionnaires were collected (the collection rate was 60.3%).

The questionnaire asked the attributes of the subject, how she considers gender role and how she thinks about caring her elderly parents. As the attribute of the subject, the age, the place of employment, the degree of existing domestic division of labor, the extent of child rearing role, existence of parents, cohabitation with the parents and experience in nursing care were asked. For the degree of existing domestic division of labor and the extent of child rearing role, subjects were asked to choose one out of 6 types. Regarding gender role orientation, three areas of questions were asked. In the area of career, it asked how she feels about combining child rearing with career, gender difference in positions and promotions in workplace and office gender role. In the area of nursing care, it asked how she considers dividing caregiver's role by gender and a role of a housewife as a caregiver. For these two areas, the rating scale that had 4-rank answers of 'agree,' 'relatively agree,' 'rather disagree' and 'disagree' was employed. As for the area of caring elderly parents, to find out not a generalized opinion but their true way of thinking based on their own situations, the subjects were required to answer supposing a setting in which their parents and parents-in-law respectively were bedridden. There were 5 items asked in this area : intention to divide caregiver's role with her husband, her own sense of responsibility for taking caregiver's role, combination of career with nursing care, making use of a nursing-care leave and making use of homecare services. In answering the first item, subjects were to choose one type out of 5 types. For the remaining 4 items, 4-rank rating scale was employed. Besides, the nursing-care leave, which is regulated by the Board of Education, is a leave within 180 days without payment, which a teaching staff can make use of when her/his relation in the first degree, the second degree, or the third degree of cohabitation needs the nursing care.

The answers were analyzed by comparing the degree of role division for housework and parenting, the degree of division of caregiver's role, and how a

subject feels about caring elderly parents in the case of their parents and that of parents-in-law. Since the collected data was in the rating scale, the sign test was employed. To examine the factors relating how caring role was divided in the case of their parents and in that of parents-in-law, χ^2 was employed. The answers for the degree of role division were further categorized into 2 types : "Primarily Wife Type," which included answers of 'wife only' and 'primarily wife and a husband helps her,' and "Equal or Primarily Husband Type," which included those of 'equally shared,' 'primarily husband and a wife helps him,' 'husband only' and 'other people.' SPSS9.0J for Windows was employed for the analysis.

Results

1. General information of the subjects

The general information of the subjects is shown in Table 1. Of the total 187 subjects, 18 (9.6%) were in their 20's, 77 (41.2%) in their 30's, 71 (38.0%) in their 40's and 21 (11.2%) in their 50's, and the average age of the subjects was 39.3 ± 7.6 . As for the place of employment, 120 (64.2%) worked in an elementary school and 52 (27.8%) in a junior high school. The number of subjects cohabitated with their parents were 54 (28.9%), that of those whose their

parents existed were 175 (93.5%), and that of those whose parents-in-law existed were 156 (83.5%). 22 (11.8%) subjects had experiences in nursing elderly parents.

2. Gender role orientation

5 questions were asked about the gender role orientation in relation to career. Those who agreed that it is natural to combine child rearing with career were 150 (81%), counting those who answered 'agree' and 'relatively agree.' Those who thought that gender differences in promotion are unavoidable were 36 (19.4%) as the total of those who answered 'agree' and 'relatively agree,' and the majority of the subjects disagreed with such gender discrimination. For the gender role, i.e., a male is a breadwinner and a female is a housekeeper and a child bearer, those who 'relatively agree' were only 6 (3.2%) and those who 'don't agree' were 130 (69.9%), showing the majority was against the traditional gender role.

Regarding nursing care, the number of the subjects who agreed that caregiver is a female role was 0 and that of those who relatively agreed with it was 15 (8%), showing that more than 90% of them were against female role in caring. On the question that asked if a subject considers it natural for a nonworking homemaker to be in charge of caring,

Table 1 General Information of the Subjects

Characteristics of the Subjects		Age groups				Total
		20s	30s	40s	50s	
Workplace	Elementary school	10 (55.6)	49 (63.6)	47 (66.2)	14 (66.7)	120 (64.2)
	Junior high school	7 (38.9)	25 (32.5)	15 (21.1)	5 (23.8)	52 (27.8)
	Others	1 (5.6)	3 (3.9)	9 (12.7)	2 (9.6)	15 (8.1)
Children	1 or More	4 (22.2)	52 (68.8)	60 (88.7)	18 (85.7)	134 (73.8)
	None	14 (77.8)	24 (31.2)	8 (11.3)	3 (14.3)	49 (26.2)
Their parents	Exist	18(100.0)	76 (98.7)	63 (88.7)	18 (85.7)	175 (93.5)
	None	0	0	5 (7.0)	3 (14.3)	8 (4.3)
	No response	0	1 (1.3)	3 (4.2)	0	4 (2.1)
Parents-in-law	Exist	15 (83.4)	73 (94.8)	59 (83.1)	9 (42.8)	156 (83.5)
	None	1 (5.6)	3 (3.9)	8 (11.3)	8 (38.1)	20 (10.7)
	No response	2 (11.1)	1 (1.3)	4 (5.6)	4 (19.0)	11 (5.9)
Cohabitation with parents	Yes	3 (16.7)	17 (21.1)	29 (40.9)	5 (23.8)	54 (28.9)
	No	15 (83.3)	60 (77.9)	42 (59.2)	16 (76.2)	133 (71.1)
Experience in nursing care for elderly	Yes	1 (5.6)	1 (1.3)	11 (15.5)	9 (42.9)	22 (11.8)
	No	17 (94.4)	76 (98.7)	60 (84.5)	12 (57.1)	165 (88.2)
Currently giving nursing care	Yes	1 (5.6)	0	1 (1.4)	1 (4.8)	3 (1.6)
	No	18	77	71	21	187

Table 2 Survey for Gender Role Orientation

	n(%)				Total ^{#1}
	Agree relatively	Rather agree	Rather disagree	Disagree	
It is natural for a woman to combine child rearing and career.	80 (43.2)	70 (37.8)	23 (12.4)	12 (6.5)	185
Gender difference in promotion is unavoidable.	7 (3.8)	29 (15.6)	81 (43.5)	69 (37.1)	186
Men are breadwinners and women are house makers.	0	6 (3.2)	50 (26.9)	130 (69.9)	187
A caregiver is a female role.	0	15 (8.0)	64 (34.2)	108 (57.8)	187
It is natural for a non-working housewife to be in charge of nursing care.	9 (4.8)	50 (26.7)	77 (41.2)	51 (27.3)	187

#1 Excepting those with no response

Table 3 Analysis of the Degree of Role Division in Housework, Child-rearing and Nursing Care

	Total ^{#1}	Wife only	Primarily wife and a husband helps her	Equally shared	Primarily husband and a wife helps him	Husband only	Other people	Sign test results
Domestic division of labor	185	18 (9.7)	116 (62.7)	40 (21.6)	2 (1.1)	0	9 (4.9)	Z=-3.641***
Role division in child-rearing	138	9 (6.5)	75 (54.3)	44 (31.9)	5 (3.6)	0	5 (3.6)	
Role division in caring their parents	184	16 (8.7)	129 (70.1)	36 (19.6)	3 (1.6)	0	—	Z=-9.700***
Role division in caring parents-in-law	183	4 (2.2)	48 (26.2)	103 (56.3)	27 (14.8)	1 (0.5)	—	

#1 Excepting those with no response and not applicable ***p<0.001

those who agreed and relatively agreed summed up to 59 (31.5%).

3. Role division in housework, parenting and nursing

The results obtained for the degree of role division in housework, parenting and nursing are shown in Table 3. Regarding the existing state of domestic division of labor, 18 (9.7%) answered that only a wife was in charge of housework, 116 (62.7%) answered that a wife was primarily in charge and a husband helped her, and 40 (21.6%) answered that housework was equally shared. On parenting role, of the total 138 subjects who answered, 9 (6.5%) said only a wife was in charge, 75 (54.3%) said that a wife was primarily in charge and a husband helped her, and 44 (31.9%) said that the role was equally shared. When the degree of role division in housework and that in parenting were compared, there was a tendency that husbands participate more in parenting than in

housework ($p < 0.001$).

Regarding the intention to divide caregiver's role, for the subjects' parents, 16 (8.7%) answered that only a wife would be in charge, 129 (70.1%) answered that a wife would be primarily in charge and a husband would help her, 36 (19.6%) answered that the role would be equally shared, 3 (1.6%) answered that a husband would be primarily in charge and a wife would help him, and none answered that only a husband would be in charge. For the subjects' parents-in-law, i.e., their husbands' parents, 4 (2.2%) answered that only a wife would be in charge, 48 (26.2%) answered that a wife would be primarily in charge and a husband would help her, 103 (56.3%) answered that the role would be equally shared, 27 (14.8%) answered that a husband would be primarily in charge and a wife helps him, and 1 (0.5%) answered that only a husband would be in charge. When the case for their parents and that for the par-

Table 4 Nursing Care for Their Parents and for Parents-in-Law

		Total ^{#1}	Agree relatively	Rather agree	Rather disagree	Disagree	Sign test results
(For parents)						n(%)	
Sense of her own responsibility to be a caregiver	Their parents	186	83 (44.6)	74 (39.8)	18 (9.7)	11 (5.9)	Z=8.303***
	Parents-in-law	186	30 (16.1)	89 (47.8)	43 (23.1)	24 (12.9)	
Intention to discontinue her career	Their parents	181	11 (6.1)	26 (14.4)	80 (44.2)	64 (35.4)	Z=-4.475***
	Parents-in-law	184	8 (4.3)	17 (9.2)	73 (39.7)	86 (46.7)	
Intention to make use of nursing-care leave	Their parents	186	133 (71.5)	36 (19.4)	12 (6.5)	5 (2.7)	Z=6.171***
	Parents-in-law	185	96 (51.9)	46 (24.9)	27 (14.6)	16 (8.6)	
Intention to utilize homecare services	Their parents	186	124 (66.7)	46 (24.7)	13 (7.0)	3 (1.6)	n.s.
	Parents-in-law	185	122 (65.9)	43 (23.2)	13 (7.0)	7 (3.8)	

^{#1} Excepting those with no response

*** p<0.001

ents-in-law were compared, "Primarily Wife Type" was dominant in caring for the subjects' own parent, while "Equal or Primarily Husband Type" was dominant in caring for their husbands' parents with the majority of answering that the role would be equally shared. There was a significant difference between the intended degrees of caregiver's role for their parents and for their parents-in-law ($p<0.001$).

4. Consciousness for nursing care and career

The results on the subjects' sense of responsibility in caring elderly parents and how they conceived caring while working are shown in Table 4. On caring elderly parents as they come to be bedridden, about 85% of the subjects agreed that taking caregiver's role for their parents would be her own responsibility, with 83 (44.6%) answered 'agree' and 74 (39.8%) answered 'relatively agree.' For their parents-in-law, about 65% would assume such responsibility, with 30 (16.1%) answered 'agree' and 89 (47.8%) answered 'relatively agree.'

Regarding discontinuation of career as a subject comes to take the caregiver's role, about 20% thought that she would discontinue her career to provide care for their parents, with 11 (6.1%) answered 'agree' and 26 (14.4%) answered 'relatively agree.' About 80% showed the intention to continue working, with 80 (44.2%) answered 'rather disagree' and 64 (35.4%) answered 'disagree.' To provide care for their parents-in-law, many of the subjects did not show strong intention to discontinue their career : 8 (4.3%) answered 'agree' to discontinuation, 17 (9.2%) answered 'relatively agree,' 73 (39.7%) answered 'rather disagree' and 86 (46.7%) answered 'disagree.' Regarding

the intention to make use of a nursing-care leave to provide care, 133 (71.5%) answered 'agree' to do so for their parents, 36 (19.4%) answered 'relatively agree,' 12 (6.5%) answered 'rather disagree' and 5 (2.7%) answered 'disagree.' For their parents-in-law, 96 (51.5%) answered 'agree' to make use of a nursing-care leave, 46 (24.9%) answered 'relatively agree,' 27 (14.6%) answered 'rather disagree' and 16 (8.6%) answered 'disagree.' About 90% of the subject showed their intention to make use of a nursing-care leave to care for their parents, and about 75% of them showed such an intention to care for their parents-in-law. On the intention to make use of homecare services, 124 (66.7%) answered 'agree' to take advantage of such services for their parents, 46 (24.7%) answered 'relatively agree,' 13 (7.0%) answered 'rather disagree' and 3 (1.6%) answered 'disagree.' The results were the same for their parents-in-law.

When comparing the case of caring for their parents and that for parents-in-law, the degree of assuming responsibility to care, that of the intention to discontinue the career and that of the intention to make use of a nursing-care leave were significantly lower for parents-in-law than for their parents ($p<0.001$).

5. Factors concerning caregiver's role for elderly parents

As shown in Table 5, the factors relating to caring for elderly parents were examined. In the case of caring for their parents, the factors in which significant differences were obtained in the degree of caregiver's role were the sense of responsibility to be a caregiver for parents-in-law ($P<0.001$), the intention to

Table 5 Factors Relating to Division of Caregiver's Role (Chi Square Test)

Relating factor	Nursing care for their parents	Nursing care for parents-in-law
Cohabitation with their parents (Exist/Non-exist)	n.s.	n.s.
Cohabitation with parents-in-law (Exist/Non-exist)	n.s.	n.s.
Gender role (Agree/Disagree)	n.s.	p=.036*
Combination of child rearing and career (Agree/Disagree)	n.s.	n.s.
Caregiver is a female role (Agree/Disagree)	n.s.	p=.000***
Domestic division of labor (Primarily wife/Equal/Primarily husband)	n.s.	p=.001**
Child rearing role division (Primarily wife/Equal/Primarily husband)	n.s.	p=.000***
The sense of responsibility to be a caregiver for their parents (Exist/Non-exist)	n.s.	p=.000***
The sense of responsibility to be a caregiver for parents-in-law (Exist/Non-exist)	p=.000***	p=.011*
The intention to discontinue career to care for their parents (Exist/Non-exist)	p=.013*	p=.007**
The intention to discontinue career to care for parents-in-law (Exist/Non-exist)	p=.022*	p=.000***
The intention to make use of nursing care leaves to care for their parents (Exist/Non-exist)	p=.012*	n.s.
The intention to make use of nursing care leaves to care for parents-in-law (Exist/Non-exist)	p=.006**	n.s.

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

discontinue career to care for their parents and for parents-in-law ($P<0.05$) and the intention to make use of a nursing-care leave to care for their parents ($P<0.05$) and for parents-in-law ($p<0.01$). No significant difference in caregiver's role was obtained in the factors such as cohabitation, the gender role orientation, the belief that a caregiver is a female role, the degree of role division in housework and parenting and the sense of responsibility to be a caregiver for their parents.

In the case of caring for parents-in-law, the factors in which significant differences were obtained in the degree of caregiver's role were the gender role orientation ($p<0.05$), the degree of role division in caring ($p<0.001$), housework ($p<0.01$), parenting ($p<0.001$), the sense of responsibility to be a caregiver for their parents ($p<0.001$) and for parents-in-law ($p<0.05$), the intention to discontinue career to care for their parents ($p<0.01$) and for parents-in-law ($p<0.001$). No significant difference in the degree of caregiver's role was obtained in the factors such as cohabitation, the consciousness of combining child rearing with career and the intention to make use of a nursing-care leave to care for their parents and for parents-in-law.

Discussion

Most married women who are employed as fulltime workers manage to continue their careers by controlling housework and child rearing tasks in their daily lives. According to Washitani's survey⁷⁾, the average

of the total duration of time spent on housework and parenting per week for female teachers was 24 hours and 53 minutes, which was three times more than male teachers' average of 7 hours and 49 minutes. If a burden of caring for elderly parents is added to such a busy life of a workingwoman in her late adulthood, nursing care is expected to be a serious problem for her that may lead to giving up her career.

When the degrees in which a wife and a husband share roles between them in the three areas of housework, parenting, and nursing care were compared, the same tendency was found in the area of housework and nursing care for their parents that the majority was "Primarily Wife Type." In the area of parenting, though "Primarily Wife Type" was still dominant, the degree of husband's participation was higher than in the areas of housework and nursing care for their parents. In the area of nursing care for parents-in-law, the majority was 'equally shared,' indicating that female teachers, who were daughters-in-law for the persons needed care, had weak intentions to take caregiver's role upon themselves. The reason why a workingwoman takes household tasks seems to be that there is a norm that females should be in charge of house in Japan where the traditional gender role is strongly fixed and deeply believed. On the other hand, however, some factors that promote husbands' participation in household tasks were suggested to be, among other factors, that the wife earned relatively

high income and that the wife was not the self-employed or a worker in a family-operated business⁴⁾. That is, the wife's job being a teacher seems to be a factor that accelerates the husband's participation in household tasks.

Though the female teachers showed strong agreement for assuming responsibility to care for their parents, their sense of responsibility to care for their parents-in-law was weak. This result implies that the norm that males should support family has been diluted⁸⁾ and that the workingwomen's sense of responsibility to take physical care of their husbands' parents has been weakened.

The tendency observed in the intention how the subject would divide caregiver's role for their parents resembled to that observed in role division in housework and parenting. It is assumed that this tendency was obtained as a result of the parent-daughter relationship rather than the social norm. Motivations of homecare, especially for daughters, were suggested to be dissatisfaction with nursing facilities, requital for helping child rearing and emotional bonds with parents⁹⁾. Therefore, the subjects seemed to show the intention to take more tasks than their husbands would do for their parents to whom they had strong attachment. The reason why there was no relation between role division in housework and parenting and that in nursing care for their parents seemed to be that the degree of female participation was high in all of the areas.

By examining the factors relating to how nursing care for parents-in-law would be divided, it was found out that subjects who intended to take a role of primary caregiver for their parents-in-law tended to have a strong gender role orientation and to take household tasks primarily to themselves. These subjects also demonstrated a strong sense of responsibility for caring and an intention to discontinue their careers rather than to make use of a nursing-care leave. In the case of caring for parents-in-law, that is, when a daughter-in-law is the caregiver, it is suggested that the motivation to take a caregiver's role was not out of affection, but to keep up appearance or to keep up with other people's expectation that she should assume the responsibility because of her position in a family¹⁰⁾. Accordingly, it is assumed that the

subjects intended to take a caregiver's role not out of affection but out of obligation and their own senses of their role in a family. It was observed that the degree of caregiver's role division for parents-in-law with husbands was related to the degree of role division in housework and parenting. It indicates that, if a husband has participated in household tasks, a wife can expect him to also participate in nursing care easily. Moreover, it is possible to assume that workingwomen, especially female teachers, are not willing to actively participate in nursing care for their parents-in-law because it is difficult for them to expand their time for household tasks more than in the present conditions as indicated by Washitani's survey⁷⁾.

The female fulltime teachers had a strong intention to make use of a nursing-care leave and homecare services while continuing their careers. The opinion poll carried by the Prime Minister's Office¹¹⁾ showed that, among the requests for the administration in creating gender-free society, the item that married fulltime workingwomen had chosen most frequently was "to make facilities, institutions and services satisfactory for childcare and for nursing care for the elderly and the sick," with the frequency of 66%. Though nursing care turns out to be an immediate concern for female teachers in their late adulthood, the age of 40's and 50's is generally assumed to be the maturity of one's vocational life in which one can accomplish her/his career fully. Therefore, it is important to further facilitate social services that respect workingwomen's will, that is, how they would like to participate in nursing care for their elderly parents. Their employers should consider extending the nursing-care leave period and paying for the leave. Also, due to introduction of the nursing-care insurance system, nursing care services are under expansion and improvement. Further expansion and improvement of day care centers for the elderly and a brief nursing home stay system are needed. According to the categorization of Yamaguchi¹²⁾, female teachers are assumed to possess the gender role attitude of "a sexual equality advocate and a career-oriented type." It is predicted that such attitudes of pro-sexual equality and a career-oriented type will spread in our society as women's social participation expands. Furthermore, the subjects' expectation for husbands to participate in

caring for their parents-in-law was high. Therefore, one of the important issues to be discussed is to create an office culture and office norms that allow a workingmen to engage in caring easily. A support system for workingmen to easily participate in nursing care for their elderly parents if they desire to should be sought along with such a support system for workingwomen.

Acknowledgement

We would like to show our appreciation to the staff of the Teacher's Union of S city.

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既婚女性教員の老親介護に対する介護役割担当についての意識

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要 旨

女性の雇用就労が増加しており、勤労女性である女性教員の老親介護に対する介護役割担当に関する意識を明らかにすることを目的とした。対象は既婚の女性教員187名で、質問紙による調査を行った。性別役割意識に関して、性別役割分業および介護における性別役割分業意識を肯定する者は非常に少数であった。老親介護の役割分担については、実親の場合は、妻が主で夫が協力という型が約70%で最も多く、義親の場合は、平等に分担する型が最も多く半数以上であった。実親と義親の介護分担の仕方は有意に異なっていた。実親・義親の場合ともに90%以上が介護サービスの利用意向を持っていた。

調査結果から、勤労既婚女性教員の老親介護への意識は高く、職業を継続しながら老親の介護に参加できる支援体制の整備の必要が示唆された。