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The Structure of the Midwives Maternal Consciousness

Keiko Matsumura

*Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, Kagawa
Prefectural College of Health Sciences*

Abstract

The structure of midwives' consciousness of maternity was analyzed and its characteristics were investigated. In the factor analysis, three factors pertaining to cognition of maternity were identified. They were <Mother's nature as a female characteristic>, <Inclination to protect and nurture>, <Mentality held by everyone>. Analysis of their consciousness of relationships with infants and children allowed us to extract four factors, <Growth in humaneness>, <Affirmative attitude towards child-rearing>, <Supreme of babies and infants>, <Dissatisfaction with child-rearing>. When a causal relationship model involving inclination to protection and cultivation as a dependent variable was created, it was found that a negative factor <Mother's nature as a female characteristic> determined the dependent variable most strongly ($\beta = -0.739$).

Key Words : Midwives, Maternal Consciousness,
Characteristics

*Correspondence to: Keiko Matsumura, Department of Nursing,
Faculty of Health Sciences, Kagawa Prefectural College of Health Sciences, 281-1 Hara,
Mure-cho, kita-gun, kagawa, 761-0123, japan

Introduction

In many cases the themes of research on maternal consciousness are the essence of maternal consciousness, female lifecycle and maternal consciousness, factors that constitute maternity, raising of children by mothers, etc. in many cases.¹⁻³⁾ The results of research that has either explored the factors that form maternity or relations to maternity suggest that the essence of maternal consciousness is the "empathetic understanding of children". It is reported that the experiences of being nurtured in infancy, close relationship to one's mother, happy experiences, etc. are involved in the development of such empathy.

It is assumed in this study that whether to acknowledge the child-rearing as "an activity characteristic of the nature endowed to women" or as "an activity carried out by anyone regardless of sex of nurturing a child as a human being" makes a difference in the awareness of relation to babies and infants. Therefore, "maternal consciousness" is considered to roughly consist of two elements, that is, "how one acknowledges the term maternity" and "how one wishes to be involved with babies and infants".

Since the relation to babies and infants is defined by how maternity is interpreted, the concept is changed by individual knowledge and experiences and is systematized to form "maternal consciousness" (refer to Fig.1).

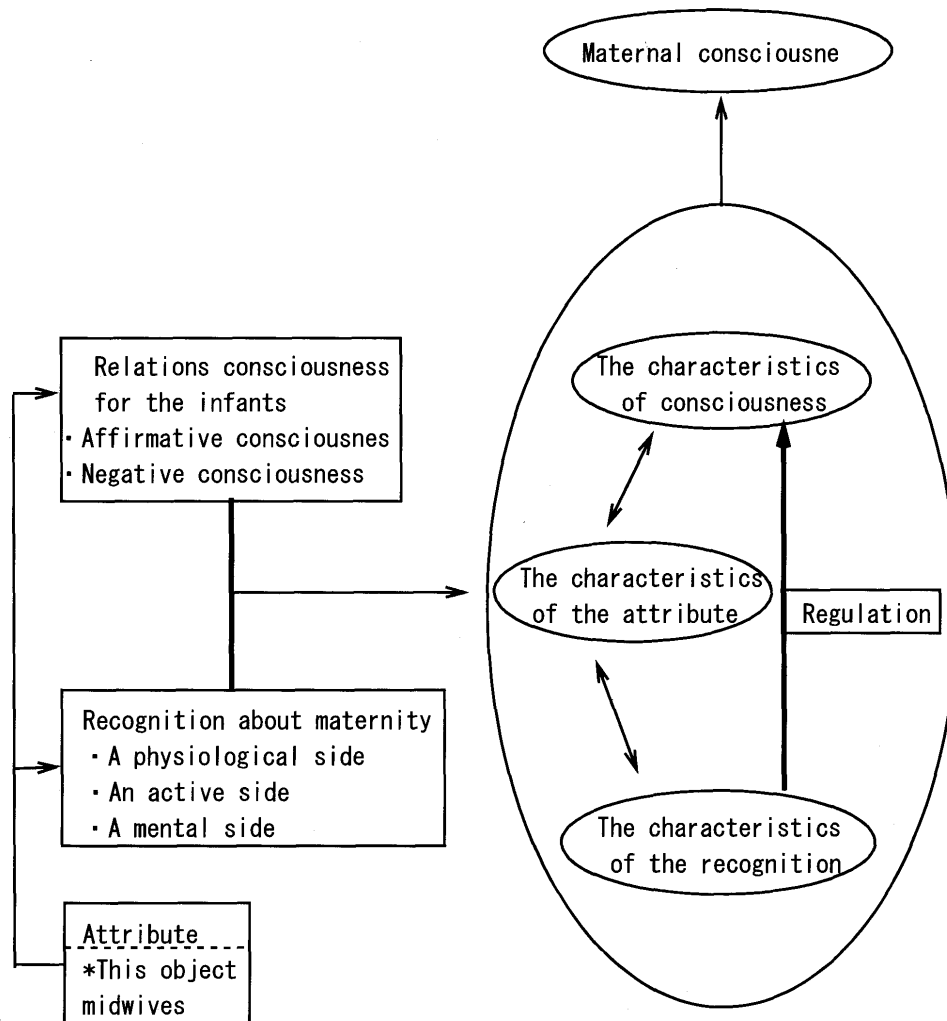


Figure 1 The general idea outline about the maternal consciousness

The cognizance of maternity here is viewed from 3 aspects, that is, "physiological, psychological and behavioral aspects". The consciousness of relation to babies and infants is viewed from 2 aspects, that is, "affirmative consciousness and negative consciousness". The cognizance of maternity depends on how one views the involvement with babies and infants, for example, "cute, want to hug, don't want to do dirty work such as changing diapers, don't want to be involved because babies cry a lot", etc.

Purpose

As an attempt to elucidate "maternal consciousness", the "cognizance related to maternity" and "consciousness of relation to babies and infants" were separately analyzed and the characteristics were compared and investigated by attribute, after which both were integrated to establish a causal relation model of "maternal consciousness". This time, facts about midwives who work as specialists were analyzed for the purpose of clarifying the characteristics of "maternal consciousness".

Methods

1. Subjects and duration

A total of 30 medical institutions including 10 each of national, public and private university hospitals were randomly picked and 10 midwives from each hospital (total 300) who never experienced pregnancy, delivery or child rearing were used as subjects of the study. The duration of the study was from November 1 to November 30, 1999.

2. Data collection method

The purpose of the research, contents and methods of investigation were explained to the nursing department of each hospital. When approval for the research was granted, the department in question was asked to distribute and collect the questionnaire & envelope to the midwives who worked in the department and who gave consent to participate

in the research.

3. Ethical consideration

The purpose and method of research were clearly stated on the cover of the questionnaire. The midwives who approved the research and who were willing to cooperate in the research were used as subjects. Each questionnaire was filled out, but without a signature, and was returned in an addressed envelope so as to avoid individual identification. It was explained to the subjects that the data were to be statistically analyzed and not used for any other purpose than the intended one.

4. Data analysis method

The facts were investigated using an instrument whose validity, reliability and unidimensionality had been confirmed (according to a thesis for doctorate).⁴⁻⁸⁾ A stage of a rating: 1=It is really wrong. 2=It is wrong. 3=Which isn't it, either?. 4=It is so. 5=It is so at all. SPSS 12.0j, Amos Version 4.0 was used for statistic analysis. Multiple regression analysis and covariance structural analysis were performed concerning the major variables, descriptive statistics, factor analyses (principal factor method, promax revolution), reliability analysis (α coefficient of Cronbach's), and a model was provided on the basis of the results.

Results

1. Collection rate

A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed and 162 valid replies were collected at a collection rate of 54%.

2. Background of subjects

The subjects were 22 to 57 years old (30 ± 6.87). The experiences of involvement with babies and infants as a midwife were assessed in 4 grades of "often", "sometimes", "a few times" and "never". As to the answer "often", the forms of involvement were "held a baby in my arms (96.5%)", "Carried a baby on my back (25.0%)", "Experience of babysit-

ting (50.0%)", "Fed milk to a baby (97.2%)", "Changed diapers (97.2%)" and "Lulled a baby to sleep (75.0%)".

3. Cognizance structure related to maternity

1) Descriptive statistics of major variables

The subjects were most affirmative on "1. Effort to bring up a child as a human being while building a favorable relation with him/her" (4.07 ± 0.633)" (refer to Table 1).

Table 1 Recognition structure about the midwives' maternity

Item	The amount of factor load			Standard deviation	
	1	2	3	Mean	
《Mother's nature as a female characteristic》					
5. Maternal nature characteristic of females, nature related to reproduction and child-rearing	0.850	0.402	0.051	3.74	0.856
3. The natural gift which is characteristic of the woman and a generic name for role	0.810	0.494	0.188	3.52	0.967
4. The kindness which accepts the child applying for the protection	0.679	0.581	0.046	3.98	0.746
9. The privilege of the wonderful woman as to the sex that it has it	0.667	0.604	0.298	3.61	0.825
7. The child care ability which a woman shows in the relations with the child	0.659	0.586	0.195	3.48	0.850
2. The function concerned with pregnancy, childbirth, nursing	0.657	0.449	0.257	3.75	0.852
《Inclination to protect and nurture》					
12. Behavioral patterns including protection, anxiety, solicitude, consideration	0.458	0.682	0.368	3.31	0.880
10. Affection to grow from the relations with the child, and a feeling to cherish	0.576	0.622	0.172	3.96	0.690
14. It is not only our child, affection for all the children	0.262	0.619	0.106	3.86	0.821
1. Effort to bring up a child as a human being while building a favorable relation with him/her	0.559	0.611	0.142	4.07	0.633
16. A life is the nature of the mother who isn't regretted, too	0.477	0.595	0.178	3.07	0.960
15. The nature of the mother who loves a child without a condition	0.429	0.586	0.416	3.11	1.00
6. A heart to cherish to the life except for oneself	0.387	0.564	0.198	3.73	0.782
13. Mother as an emotional united whole like sociology like physiology with and child	0.538	0.540	0.257	3.39	0.799
《Mentality held by everyone》					
11. Anyone has it with the mental function which wraps a child and to protect	0.069	0.219	0.927	3.30	0.940
8. Anyone has it by the tendency that it tries to bring up a child	0.253	0.303	0.735	3.21	0.991
Characteristic value	6.217	1.787	1.28		
Rate of contribution	38.853	11.167	8.057		
Accumulation rate of contribution	38.853	50.020	58.077		

2) Factor analysis and reliability analysis

Based on the results of factor analysis, 3 factors that satisfied the criteria for factor load of 0.540 or more and cumulative contribution rate of 58.07% were chosen. According to the reliability analysis result (internal integrity viewed by alpha coefficient of Cronbach's), the α coefficient was 0.884. Factor I consisted of 6 items including "5. Maternal nature characteristic of females, nature related to reproduction and child-rearing", etc. These items were summarized and named "mother's nature as a female characteristic". Factor II consisted of 8 items including "12. Behavioral patterns including protection, anxiety, solicitude, consideration", etc. These items were summarized and named "Inclination to protect and nurture". Factor III consisted of 2 items of "11. Psychological function to hold and protect children" and "8. Tendency for nurturing". These items were summarized and named "Mentality held by everyone".

As the next step, the correlation of components was investigated. Significant positive correlation was found between Factor

I "mother's nature as a female characteristic" and Factor II "Inclination to protect and nurture" ($r=0.659$), and between Factor II "Inclination to protect and nurture" and Factor III "Mentality held by everyone" ($r=0.347$) as well as between Factor I "mother's nature as a female characteristic" and Factor III "Mentality held by everyone" ($r=0.215$).

4. Consciousness structure of relation to babies and infants

1) Descriptive statistics of major variables

The subjects were most affirmative on "28. I wish for babies and infants to grow healthy (4.51 ± 0.875). This was followed by "7. I also mature with children (4.26 ± 0.753)", "8. I want to hug a baby because he/she is so cute (4.26 ± 0.852)" and "17. I love babies and I want to protect them (4.15 ± 0.699)". The reversal (negative) items were "22. I don't want to do dirty work such as changing diapers (1.75 ± 0.800)", "2. Something is lacking (1.94 ± 0.714)" and "1. I won't have any fun or hobbies (if a baby is with me) (1.99 ± 0.760)" (refer to Table 2).

Table 2 The structure of relations consciousness for the midwives' infants

Item	The amount of factor load				Mean Standard deviation	
	1	2	3	4		
《Growth in humaneness》						
5. My countenance is enriched	0.843	-0.476	0.439	-0.168	3.91	0.801
8. I want to hug a baby because he/she is so cute	0.836	-0.537	0.382	-0.147	4.26	0.852
17. I love babies and I want to protect them	0.799	-0.635	0.536	-0.311	4.15	0.699
4. One itself is made a gentle human being	0.792	-0.539	0.539	-0.326	3.88	0.820
10. When it is here together, there is feeling of the fulfillment every day	0.693	-0.428	0.629	-0.402	3.63	0.777
7. I also mature with children	0.689	-0.454	0.404	-0.045	4.26	0.752
3. A feeling becomes stable	0.676	-0.423	0.466	-0.399	3.56	0.758
25. It is pleasant when it is here with the infants	0.551	-0.438	0.443	-0.097	3.81	0.833
28. I wish for babies and infants to grow healthy	0.383	-0.155	0.137	0.047	4.51	0.875
《Affirmative attitude towards child-rearing》						
14. I don' t want to be involved because babies cry a lot	-0.579	-0.804	-0.539	0.488	2.16	0.761
1. I won' t have any fun or hobbies	-0.408	-0.744	-0.361	0.278	1.99	0.760
15. It is disappointed that activities are restricted	-0.414	-0.730	-0.364	0.444	2.40	0.746
2. Something is lacking	-0.412	-0.699	-0.290	0.295	1.94	0.714
16. It is the same as the infants, and a change can' t be done	-0.418	-0.672	-0.233	0.566	2.36	0.814
11. One isn' t suitable for being concerned with the infants	-0.457	-0.639	-0.524	0.425	2.34	0.765
22. I don' t want to do dirty work such as changing diapers	-0.412	-0.583	-0.248	0.245	1.75	0.800
23. It is left behind from the world	-0.364	-0.551	-0.304	0.405	2.03	0.814
19. View becomes limited	-0.505	-0.519	-0.426	0.315	2.08	0.779
24. It is more interested in its thing than infants	-0.242	-0.300	-0.123	0.061	3.04	0.271
《Supreme of babies and infants》						
27. Babies and infants are my life and worth living for	0.412	-0.339	0.881	-0.287	2.80	0.871
26. Infants and the time concerned seem to be themselves	0.466	-0.423	0.663	-0.215	3.07	0.845
20. It is the most interested in the infants	0.254	-0.146	0.546	-0.256	2.68	0.854
12. Anything can be done for the infants	0.427	-0.387	0.539	-0.058	3.12	0.877
13. It is more interested in other matters than infants	-0.359	0.428	-0.512	0.239	2.75	0.812
《Dissatisfaction in child-rearing》						
9. Babies and infants make me feel irritated	-0.202	0.395	-0.196	0.684	2.85	0.885
6. It can' t be done as its thought	0.017	0.190	-0.108	0.660	3.28	0.958
18. It gets tired when it is concerned with the infants	-0.240	0.312	-0.285	0.648	3.02	0.797
21. It is often endured when it is here with the infants	-0.133	0.292	-0.270	0.601	2.98	0.819
Characteristic value	9.300	2.702	1.877	1.441		
Rate of contribution	33.214	9.648	6.703	5.148		
Accumulation rate of contribution	33.214	42.862	49.565	54.713		

2) Factor analysis and reliability analysis

Based on the results of factor analysis, 4 factors that satisfied the criteria for factor load of 0.30 or more and cumulative contri-

bution rate of 54.71% were chosen. According to the reliability analysis result (internal integrity viewed by alpha coefficient of Cronbach's), the α coefficient was 0.782.

Factor I consisted of 9 items including "5. My countenance is enriched", etc. These items were summarized and named as "growth in humaneness". Factor II consisted of 10 items including "14. I don't want to be involved because babies cry a lot (negative factor load)", etc. These items were summarized and named as "affirmative attitude towards child-rearing". Factor III consisted of 5 items including "27. Babies and infants are my life and worth living for", etc. These items were summarized and named as "sublimeness of babies and infants". Factor IV consisted of 4 items including "9. Babies and infants make me feel irritated", etc. These items were summarized and named as "dissatisfaction in child-rearing".

As the next step, the correlation of components was investigated. Significant posi-

tive correlation was found between Factor I "growth in humaneness" and Factor III "Supreme of babies and infants" ($r=0.590$), and between Factor I "growth in humaneness" and Factor II "affirmative attitude towards child-rearing" ($r=0.474$). On the other hand, significant negative correlation was found between Factor I "growth in humaneness" and Factor II "affirmative attitude towards child-rearing" ($r=-0.628$), and between Factor II "affirmative attitude towards child-rearing" and Factor III "Supreme of babies and infants" ($r=-0.501$) as well as between Factor III "sublimeness of babies and infants" and Factor IV "dissatisfaction in child-rearing" ($r=-0.354$), and between Factor I "growth in humaneness" and Factor IV "dissatisfaction in child-rearing" ($r=-0.286$).

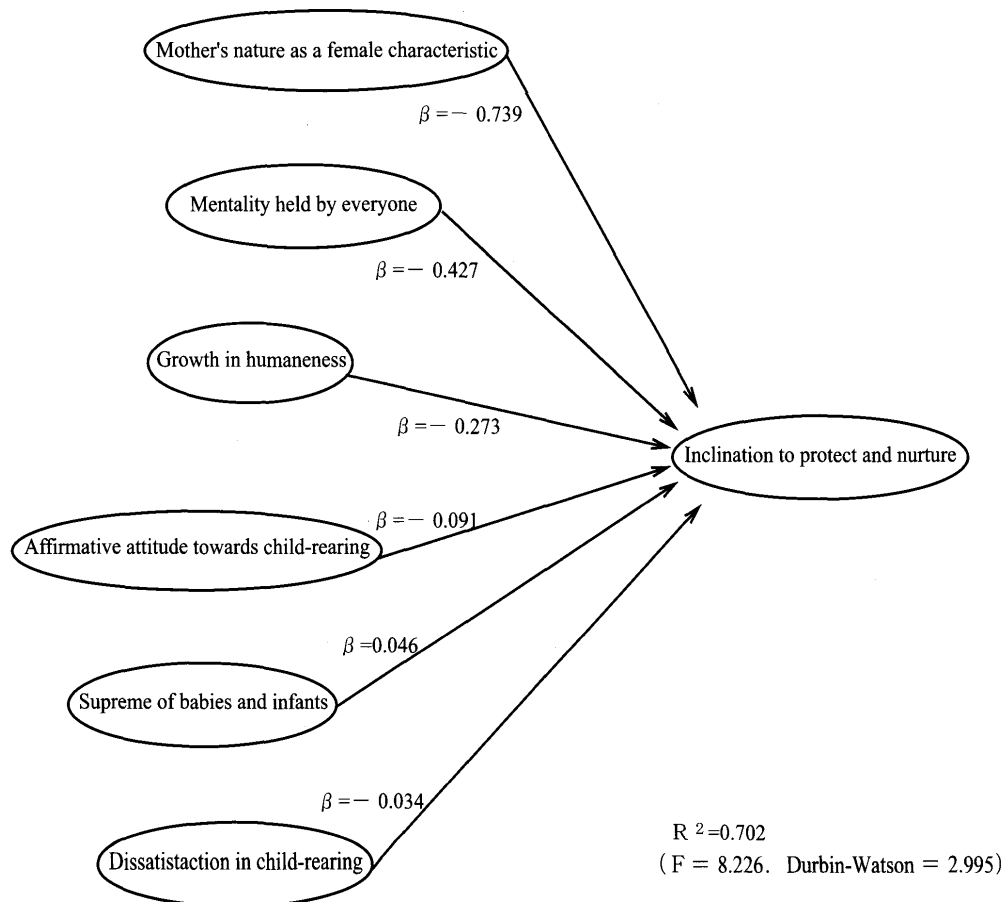


Figure 2 The causal relation model of the midwives' maternal consciousness

5. Causal relation model of maternal consciousness

Based on the results of correlation between the factor components, a model in which "Inclination to protect and nurture" was used as an attribute variable and other factors as independent variables was established. As the explanatory rate of the model, 0.838 was interpreted as appropriate (refer to Fig.2). It was demonstrated that the "Inclination to protect and nurture" declined in the midwives when the following factors became negative:

"Maternal nature as a female characteristic: $\beta = -0.739$ ", "Mentality held by everyone: $\beta = -0.427$ " and "Growth in humaneness: $\beta = -0.273$ ". That is, the further in the negative direction, the lower the "Inclination to protect and nurture".

Discussion

The following results were obtained from the study conducted this time to clarify the characteristics of "maternal consciousness" by analyzing facts about midwives. As to the cognizance related to maternity, it was demonstrated that the subjects of this study were more affirmative in the "behavioral aspect" to accept it as "Caring for life" such as "1. Effort to bring up a child as a human being while building a favorable relation with him/her", etc. and in the "psychological aspect" to accept it as "Nurturing feelings, love and empathy towards a young and weak life, and one's relation to others" such as "kindness to receive children who seek protection", etc. than in the "physiological aspect" to accept it as "production of life" such as "Maternal nature as a female characteristic, nature related to reproduction and child-rearing". Concerning the consciousness of relation to babies and infants, the midwives were characterized in that they had affirmative consciousness such as "I wish for babies and infants to grow healthy, I also mature with children, I want to hug a baby because he/she is so cute" while they did not agree on concepts such as "I don't want to do dirty work such as changing diapers, some-

thing is lacking". This is assumed to be a characteristic attributable to their objective view that comes from the experiences of midwifery in keeping mothers and babies healthy through their expert knowledge and skills, as well as from the ideal interpretation of the "maternal consciousness" concept for wanting a happy relation between mother and child.

The second characteristic indicated by the results is that a significant positive correlation was found between the "Inclination to protect and nurture" in the "behavioral aspect" and "Mentality held by everyone" in the "psychological aspect". A significant positive correlation was also found between "affirmative consciousness" (such as "Growth in humaneness" and "sublimeness of babies and infants") and "affirmative attitude towards child-rearing". This characteristic is assumed to indicate the influence of identity as a midwife who witnesses the process from conception to the moment of birth.

In other words, midwives are assumed to regard babies and infants as tender, small and weak lives. To them, these lives are sublime and objects of protection and nurturing. They think that their humaneness is also nurtured by taking affirmative stance about child-rearing.

Conclusion

What sort of cognizance and consciousness constitute the factors that induce problems in the process of forming "maternal consciousness"? As the author wished to clarify the factors related to "maternal consciousness" in this research, the "maternal consciousness" was roughly classified into two elements. In the preceding research, items frequently determined as "maternal idea" were expressed as "cognizance related to maternity" and those frequently determined as "maternal consciousness" were expressed as "consciousness of relation to babies and infants", after which an instrument to separately measure this cognizance and consciousness was prepared.

Using this instrument, the characteristics of

cognizance and consciousness of midwives who support child-rearing were clarified, and a causal relation model of maternal consciousness was established this time. The characteristics of maternal consciousness structure were clarified in this study by demonstrating the presence of an organic relation between "mother's nature as a female characteristic", "Mentality held by everyone" and "growth in humaneness" with "Inclination to protect and nurture" as the core. Based on the results obtained this time from the fact finding study, the author wishes to tackle a longitudinal study in the future by expanding the scope of investigation and by conducting a follow-up of subjects.

Acknowledgment

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