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Editors' Introduction

We are pleased to introduce you to our summer 2016 issue. Overall, the *IAFOR Journal of Psychology & the Behavioral Sciences* covers a variety of topics about applications of psychological theories and principles in educational settings, improvement of mental health conditions, human development, psychological outreach services and community development, family studies and professional practice, as well as articles addressing the needs of at-risk children, youth and families, and vulnerable populations.

The journal is an internationally peer reviewed and editorially independent interdisciplinary journal associated with The International Academic Forum (IAFOR) conferences on Psychology and the Behavioral Sciences. This issue is devoted to several interdisciplinary studies which represent diverse topics, cultures, and disciplines in the fields of psychology and the behavioral sciences. All papers published in the journal have been subjected to the rigorous and accepted processes of academic peer review. Some of the articles are original and some are revised versions of previously presented papers or published reports in IAFOR's conference proceedings.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to all reviewers for taking time from their busy schedules to review each assigned manuscript, offering their professional expertise and recommendations for improvement of the manuscripts. Also, we would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of our support staff at IAFOR who were involved with the publication of this journal.

Please note that we are seeking manuscripts for our upcoming autumn 2016 and spring 2017 issues. Below is the link to the journal's webpage for your attention; please review this webpage to become familiar with the journal's objectives and the submission guidelines for authors:

jopbs.iafor.org

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us, otherwise please send your manuscripts to the journal's editors below. Thank you for considering this invitation and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best Regards,

Journal Editors

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IAFOR Journal of Psychology & the Behavioral Sciences

Expectancies for Social Support and Negative Mood Regulation Mediate the Relationship between Childhood Maltreatment and Self-Injury

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Abstract

Nonsuicidal self-injury (NSSI) is common among young people. A majority of individuals who injure themselves do so to alleviate negative affect, as most self-injurers report difficulties with mood regulation. Trauma in childhood is an important risk factor that may cause individuals to develop poor interpersonal relations and impaired emotion-regulation, leading to the use of non-adaptive coping strategies such as NSSI.

This study examined factors contributing to self-injury, focusing on the link from childhood maltreatment, through mood regulation expectancies and expectancies for social support (father, mother, and friends), to self-injury. Understanding how these variables relate to NSSI is crucial for early identification of individuals at risk of NSSI. Participants were 377 Japanese university students. Lifetime prevalence of self-injury was 20% among the sample.

Results showed childhood maltreatment is a strong predictor that increases the risk for NSSI. However, expectancies for social support and mood regulation seem to be potential protective factors. Mood regulation expectancies mediate the relationship between childhood maltreatment and self-injury. In addition, expectancies for social support were indirectly linked with NSSI through negative mood regulation expectancies. It appears that perceived support from father and friends increases one's confidence in regulating difficult emotions, which in turn reduces risk for NSSI. Results suggest that strong expectancies for social support, especially from friends, increase one's confidence in regulating emotion, which contributes as a protective factor against self-injury.

Keywords: self-injury, childhood maltreatment, mood regulation, social support

Self-injury represents a maladaptive response to intolerable emotional pain. Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) refers to the direct, deliberate destruction of one's own body tissue without the intent to die (Nock & Favazza, 2009); it does not include drug or alcohol overdoses (Pattison & Kahan, 1983). Self-injury methods range from methods that cause little tissue damage (e.g., pinching, hair pulling) to methods that cause severe tissue damage (e.g., cutting, burning) (Nixon & Heath, 2009). In Japan, the rate of NSSI cases among young adults in university samples has been between 7% and 38% (Yamaguchi et al., 2004; Gotoh & Sato, 2006). A number of studies of self-injury have demonstrated a strong link between childhood maltreatment and later mood regulation difficulties (e.g. Cloitre, Stovall-McClough, Miranda, & Chemtob, 2004; Paivio & McCulloch, 2004; Tresno, Ito, & Means, 2012). Trauma in childhood has also been considered an important factor in later self-injury (Matsumoto, Azekawa, Yamaguchi, Asami, & Isekiet, 2004). There is some evidence that children ignored by their caregiver may have serious negative impairments for later ego-control, affect expression, and emotion regulation, which have been implicated in the etiology of self-injuring behavior (Gratz, Conrad, & Roemer, 2002).

Over the years, the question of why people purposely harm themselves has been investigated by researchers in self-injury literature. Individuals who report a history of self-injury often tend to report maltreatment and neglect (Paivio & McCulloch, 2004; Van der Kolk, Perry, & Herman, 1991). Trauma during childhood may contribute to a vulnerability that prevents the child from learning effective skills to cope with emotional distress, which may result in using of NSSI as an ineffective coping method (Nock, 2009). In addition, these individuals may have impaired interpersonal relationships and less trust in people that keep them from seeking help from others (Connors, 2000).

Pepin and Banyard (2006) were interested in the effects of social support on the development of college students who had been maltreated in the past. The authors found that a history of childhood maltreatment related negatively to perceived social support and developmental outcomes, such as trust, autonomy, and intimacy. In Paivio and McCulloch's (2004) study, alexithymia, the inability to identify and communicate one's feelings, mediated the relationship between childhood trauma and self-injury. Insufficient parental support among individuals with maltreatment and a neglectful environment created an incapacity to regulate emotion among Canadian college students, as the children did not learn effective ways to cope with their negative emotions. Without healthy coping strategies during stressful times, individuals with maltreatment histories are at risk of maladaptive coping, such as self-injury (Paivio & McCulloch, 2004).

In Japan, emotional or psychological maltreatment has been less studied. Unlike physical abuse that results in visible injuries such as bruises, cases of psychological maltreatment may be hidden from the community (Yamamoto, Iwata, Tomoda, Tanaka, Fujimaki, & Kitamura, 1999). Gotoh and Sato (2006) replicated Paivio and McCulloch's (2004) study among Japanese undergraduate students but found mood regulation difficulties did not mediate the relationship between child maltreatment and self-injury status. No association was found between mood regulation difficulties and self-injury, or between maltreatment and mood regulation difficulties.

The effects of perceptions of family and peer support on self-injury have been less researched (Heath, Ross, Toste, Charlebois, & Nedecheva, 2009). Recent studies report that having family members or friends who provide support may reduce the risk of self-injury. Fortune et al. (2008) found that having someone to talk to, who listened to their problems and provided

support, prevented individuals from engaging in self-injury. Students were more likely to consider talking to family members and friends as a source of support than talking to mental health professionals. In childhood maltreatment studies, survivors of child abuse who reported greater levels of social support tended to show better psychosocial skill following maltreatment, such as developing more trust or autonomy (Pepin & Banyard, 2006). Self-injuring individuals who reported feeling connected to and supported by their parents appeared better able to cope with stressors and to avoid more serious suicidal risk (Muehlenkamp & Gutierrez, 2007; Muehlenkamp, Brausch, Quigley, & Whitlock, 2013). In NSSI, non-self-injuring university students reported significantly greater friend support than did students who engaged in self-injury (Heath et al., 2009).

Crowell, Beauchaine, and Linehan (2009) suggested that emotional difficulties foster and maintain self-injury in an unsupportive social environment. Social support can be seen as one of the potential mediators that may decrease the harmful effects of stress and enable individuals to carry out their social functions (Kim, Lee, & Kim, 2009). A lack of supportive resources may increase the intensity of negative emotions, which in turn are regulated through NSSI as a maladaptive coping style (Klonsky, Muehlenkamp, Lewis, & Walsh, 2011). In a study of an adolescent psychiatric sample, Adrian and colleagues (2011) revealed that insufficient support from, and more conflict with, peers was indirectly associated with NSSI severity through mood regulation. They examined an integrated model of the associations among family problems, peer problems, mood regulation, and self-injury. Another study by Muehlenkamp and colleagues (2013) mirrored this finding, showing that poor mood regulation connected interpersonal difficulties with self-injury. However, childhood maltreatment was not a focus of their study.

Previous studies have identified that negative mood regulation expectancies (NMRE) buffer the effect of child maltreatment on self-injury frequencies (e.g. Tresno, Ito, Mearns, 2013). NMRE represent people's confidence that they can alleviate negative affect. The risk of self-injury is increased by the presence of distal factors, such as childhood maltreatment, that may lead to vulnerabilities or impaired capacities to respond to life stress appropriately (Nock, 2009). Even so, it is not clear how the associated risk factors may lead to self-injury, either alone or in combination with other factors (Nock, 2010).

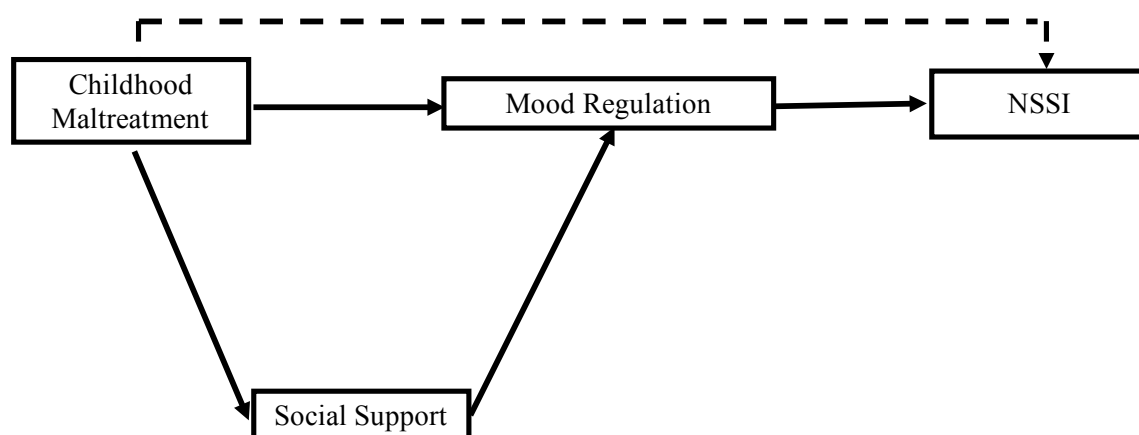
Despite the prevalence of NSSI, why people engage in self-injury still remains unclear. Research examining factors influencing the development of NSSI is important for improving prevention efforts (Nock, 2009), particularly in terms of understanding how maltreatment may contribute to self-injury (Klonsky et al., 2011). Adding interpersonal factors such as perceived social support to emotion regulation is considered important for explaining how self-injury is maintained (Muehlenkamp et al., 2013; Nock, 2008).

The current study intended to examine the links among childhood maltreatment, mood regulation expectancies, expectancies for social support, and self-injury among NSSI and non-self-injury (NoSI) groups. Furthermore, the current study examined the links among factors contributing to the maintenance of self-injury in a single model, focusing on the roles of mood regulation expectancies and expectancies for social support.

Figure 1 shows the hypothesized model. We expected that greater maltreatment experiences would be associated with poorer mood regulation expectancies and lower expectancies for social support. In addition, that mood regulation expectancies would be an intervening variable in the relationship between child maltreatment and NSSI. We also predicted that

insufficient social support would indirectly predict NSSI through mood regulation expectancies.

Figure 1: Proposed Model of the Pathway to Self-Injury



Method

Participants

Data from 377 Japanese undergraduate students in the Aichi prefecture, enrolled in psychology classes, were analyzed in this study. Participants ranged from age 18 to 25, with a mean age of 19 years ($SD = .87$); 52% were men and 46% women. Participants completed the anonymous self-report questionnaires voluntarily in class. The procedure to carry out the current study was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Board of the University.

Measures

Nonsuicidal self-injury (NSSI). NSSI was measured using a short form of Self-injurious Thoughts and Behaviors Interview (SITBI) that assesses presence, frequency, and characteristics of self-injurious behavior (Nock, Holmberg, Photos, & Michel, 2007). The SITBI has demonstrated strong inter-rater reliability, test-retest reliability, and concurrent validity. For the purpose of this study, only the items related to NSSI were used; they were modified to measure the frequency of using 11 self-injury methods, emphasizing “purposely hurting yourself without wanting to die,” the necessity of receiving medical treatment, and the reason for harming oneself “as a way to get rid of bad feelings,” “in order to feel something,” “to communicate with someone else or to get attention,” or “to get away from others.” This scale was translated into Japanese by Tresno et al. (2013).

Childhood maltreatment. The Child Abuse and Trauma (CAT) scale (Sanders & Becker-Laussen, 1995) is made up of fairly general questions about the frequency of different past experiences participants may have suffered as children and teenagers; it assesses the severity of maltreatment and neglect in the home. Thirty-two items were translated into Japanese (Tresno et al., 2013). Responses range from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*always*). An overall score was obtained by averaging responses to all 32 items. The total CAT had satisfactory internal consistency ($\alpha = .89$). The overall CAT score was used in the analyses.

Mood regulation expectancies. The Negative Mood Regulation Scale-Japanese (NMR-J) assesses participants' beliefs in their ability to alleviate the negative moods they experience. Negative mood regulation expectancies predict adaptive coping and buffer the effects of stress, resulting in less negative affect (Mearns et al., 2016). Starting with the stem "When I'm upset, I believe that..." the 40-items are rated on a 5-point scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Higher scores reflect greater confidence that one can regulate one's negative emotions. The internal consistency for the NMR-J in this sample was high ($\alpha = .88$).

Expectancies for social support. The Scale of Expectancy for Social Support (SESS; Hisada, Senda, & Minoguchi, 1989) consisted of 16 items, assessing participants' expectation of receiving emotional social support from others. For the purpose of this study, participants separately rated the items describing types of emotional support provided by father, mother, and friends. Total expectancy for social support was the sum of perceived support from all three sources. Internal consistency was excellent for the SESS total scale ($\alpha = .97$).

Results

Twenty percent of participants ($n = 75$) reported engagement in at least one episode of self-injury (51% women, 48% men). Age of those with a first self-injury episode ranged from 6 to 19 years old, with an average age of 13 years ($SD = 3.02$). Most of the self-injurers (89%) harmed themselves more than one time, and 76% reported multiple methods. Four percent had received medical treatment.

The most frequently endorsed self-injury methods were hitting oneself (59%), pulling out hair (45%), picking at a wound (44%), cutting or carving skin (40%), biting oneself (20%), scraping skin (15%), inserting objects under nails or skin (7%), picking areas of body to the point of drawing blood (7%), burning (1%), and others (9%), such as kicking or punching a wall. Forty-three percent of participants who engaged in self-injury reported having injured themselves within the past year. A chi-square test was performed for participant gender: gender was not related to self-injury, $\chi^2(1, 366) = .71, n.s.$

Regarding underlying reasons for harming themselves, the majority of participants endorsed "to get rid of bad feelings" (65%); others endorsed "to feel something" (17%), "to get away from others" (19%), "to communicate with someone else or to get attention" (15%). Twenty-eight percent endorsed other reasons, such as to make other people worry, to punish oneself, to feel worthless, and to restrain oneself from wanting to die.

Comparing NSSI and non-self-injury (NoSi) groups revealed that individuals with a self-injury history reported a significantly higher level of maltreatment in childhood, poorer NMRE, and less expectation of social support from father compared to the non-self-injury group. As shown in Table 1, pairwise comparisons showed that there were significant differences between the two groups for the level of child maltreatment, NMRE, total social support, and father's social support. The non-self-injury group reported higher expectancies for social support from mother and friends; however, these differences were not significant.

Table 1: Comparisons between NSSI and NoSI Groups

	NSSI		NoSI		
	<i>(n = 75)</i>		<i>(n = 281)</i>		<i>t</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
CAT	37.37	(17.37)	32.12	(13.83)	<i>t</i> (352) = 2.73**
NMRE	116.42	(15.33)	127.35	(17.59)	<i>t</i> (351) = -4.82***
Total SESS	136.81	(26.46)	143.72	(25.94)	<i>t</i> (362) = -2.01*
SESS Father	41.08	(13.65)	44.27	(11.39)	<i>t</i> (365) = -2.06*
SESS Mother	47.52	(11.91)	49.47	(10.45)	<i>t</i> (370) = -1.30
SESS Friends	47.95	(9.29)	50.02	(8.94)	<i>t</i> (371) = -1.77

Note. NSSI = Nonsuicidal self-injury. NoSI = Non-self-injury. CAT = Child abuse and trauma. NMRE = Negative mood regulation expectancies. SESS = Scale of Expectancies for Social Support

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Pairwise correlations were calculated to examine the associations between lifetime NSSI frequencies and other variables. As expected, lifetime NSSI frequencies were negatively correlated with childhood maltreatment and negative mood regulation expectancies. However, no significant correlation was found with any social support subscale. The CAT correlated negatively with NMRE and social support: overall social support expectancies, father, mother, and friends (see Table 2). Results suggest that individuals with childhood trauma are at risk for impairment in mood regulation expectancies and interpersonal relationships. Associations between NMRE and social support expectancies were positive: More confidence in one's ability to regulate one's mood significantly related to great confidence in receiving overall social support, and support from father, mother, and friends.

Table 2: Inter-correlations of NSSI Frequencies and Other Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 NSSI							
2 CAT	.15**						
3 NMRE	-.15**	-.27**					
4 Total SESS	-.07	-.37**	.40**				
5 SESS Father	-.07	-.35**	.32**	.87**			
6 SESS Mother	-.05	-.40**	.30**	.89**	.70**		
7 SESS Friends	-.05	-.16**	.41**	.71**	.38**	.49**	

Note. NSSI = Nonsuicidal self-injury. CAT = Child abuse and trauma. NMRE = Negative mood regulation expectancies. SESS = Scale of Expectancies for Social Support.

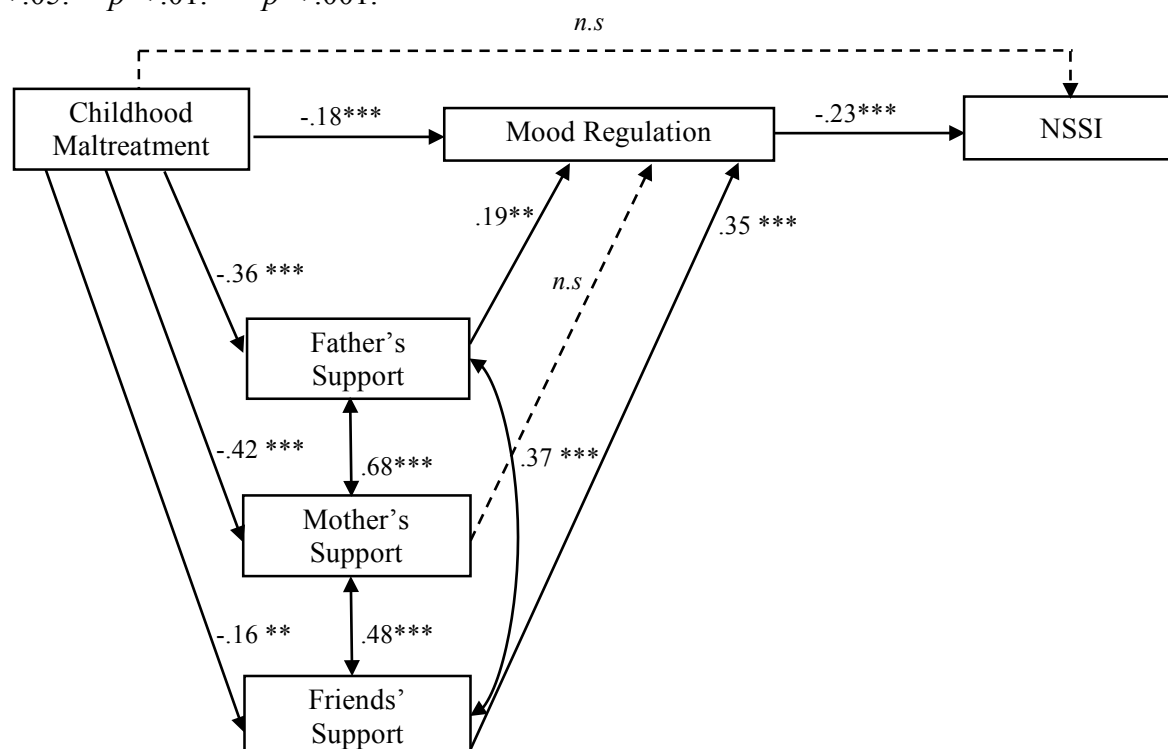
** $p < .01$.

Path Analysis

We created a path model using AMOS to understand the connection between child maltreatment and self-injury and their links with NMRE and social support expectancies. This analysis required complete data for all participants (Byrne, 2010), leaving a total of 324 participants. NSSI was entered as a categorical variable: NSSI versus NoSI. This model showed a good fit to the data, yielding an overall $\chi^2(4) = 2.42$, $p = .66$. Model fit statistics were: Goodness-of-Fit-Index (GFI) = .99, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 1.00, and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .00, which is within the acceptable range (Byrne, 2010).

Figure 2: Standardized Path Coefficients between NSSI, CAT, NMRE, and SESS.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.



The path analysis indicated that maltreatment in childhood was indirectly related to self-injury through NMRE (Figure 2). There was a direct effect between childhood maltreatment and NSSI (unstandardized coefficient = .01, standardized coefficient = .12, $p = .03$) before adding NMRE to the model. After adding NMRE, NSSI was directly predicted by poor mood regulation (unstandardized coefficient = -.01, standardized coefficient = -.23, $p = .001$). There was a direct effect of child maltreatment on NMRE (unstandardized coefficient = -.22, standardized coefficient = -.18, $p = .001$), and all subscales of expectancies for social support expectancies, father (unstandardized coefficient = -.29, standardized = -.36, $p = .001$), mother (unstandardized coefficient = -.31, standardized coefficient = -.42, $p = .001$), and friends (unstandardized coefficient = -.10, standardized coefficient = -.16, $p = .004$). More maltreatment in childhood was directly associated with lower expectancies for regulating emotions as well as indirectly through lower expectancies for receiving social support. In addition, there was a direct prediction of increased confidence in regulating emotion by greater expectancies for social support from father (unstandardized coefficient = .28, standardized coefficient = .19, $p = .008$) and from friends (unstandardized coefficient = .68, standardized coefficient = .35, $p = .001$).

Tests of indirect effects were used to evaluate intervening variables. The direct effect between childhood maltreatment and NSSI was diminished after adding NMRE (standardized coefficient = .06, $p = .31$). More maltreatment and neglect during childhood predicted impairment in mood regulation expectancies, which then predicted NSSI. Supporting Paivio and McCulloch's (2004) findings, these results suggest that impairment in regulating one's emotions is an intervening variable in the relationship between childhood trauma and self-injury (standardized indirect effect = .06, $p = .001$). All social support subscales were not directly related to self-injury, but greater expectations of being supported by father, and especially by friends, were related to increased confidence in affect regulation (social support

from mother showed no significant association with NMRE.) In turn, greater confidence in regulating one's emotions was associated with reduced risk of engaging in NSSI.

Discussion

Understanding why people intentionally harm themselves is necessary for several reasons. This understanding may aid identification of individuals at risk for other unhealthy coping strategies, such as alcohol or drug abuse (Nock, 2010). Results of the present study revealed that 20% of Japanese young adults had injured themselves at least once in their lifetime; the main reason was to cope with negative feelings.

A majority of NSSI individuals reported multiple episodes and multiple methods. Although other NSSI studies commonly reported cutting the skin with sharp objects as the most frequent method, including among Japanese (e.g., Yamaguchi et al., 2004), in the current sample self-hitting was the most endorsed NSSI method. Ross and Heath (2002) found that hitting oneself was the second most common form of self-injury, following cutting. The average age of onset was 13 years, in line with the literature, which reports an average age of first NSSI between 13 and 15 (e.g., Muehlenkamp & Gutierrez, 2007; Ross & Heath, 2002).

In this study, associations among variables paralleled other scholars' findings of childhood maltreatment as a risk factor for self-injury and other impairment, such as reduced expectations for being able to regulate one's emotions and of social support (Cloitre et al., 2008; Paivio & McCulloch, 2004). Both trauma in childhood and lower confidence in regulating one's negative emotions were linked to an increased risk of engaging in NSSI as an unhealthy coping strategy. NMRE and expectations for social support were positively associated. This result was similar to Kim et al.'s (2009) finding that support from colleagues and family was helpful for regulating negative emotions. However, similar to Heath, Ross et al. (2009), no relationship was found between self-injury frequencies and expected social support from parents or friends. Lower expectancies for social support were not directly linked to self-injury.

There were significant differences between groups with and without NSSI in the levels of childhood maltreatment and NMRE. Consistent with Paivio and McCulloch (2004), NSSI individuals reported a more negative home environment in childhood and more mood regulation difficulties. For social support, only overall scores and perceived support from father significantly differed between groups. As suggested by Fortune et al. (2008), having a family member or friend who provides care and support may reduce the risk of NSSI. In Japan, traditionally fathers spend more time at work and remain emotionally distant from the family at home (Tamura, 2001). It seems that scenarios where a father has more communication and greater involvement with the family, or becomes closer to his children are associated with more positive development, such as higher confidence that one can cope with negative affect.

A path analysis testing the variables in a single model revealed that NMRE intervened in the relationship between childhood maltreatment and self-injury. As hypothesized, maltreated children appear to develop deficits in regulating emotions, which result in difficulties coping with painful negative feelings. Difficulties regulating negative emotions appear to increase the likelihood of engaging in NSSI. More severe maltreatment predicted lower mood regulation confidence, which predicted greater NSSI. Moreover, in line with Adrian and

colleagues' (2011) finding, insufficient friend support directly related to impaired mood regulation expectancies, which then predicted NSSI.

Not all individuals who are maltreated in the past develop mood regulation difficulties (Alink, Cicchetti, Kim, & Rogosch, 2009). Many studies have suggested that social support from family or friends can be a strong protective factor against suicide risk or unhealthy behavior (e.g., Brausch & Gutierrez, 2010; Eskin, 1995). In the current study, childhood maltreatment appeared to reduce one's confidence about getting emotional support from others; however, social support variables were not directly linked with self-injury. The current study suggests that social support contributes to increasing one's confidence in regulating difficult emotions. This is particularly true for support from father and friends. Thus, there is an indirect link between expectancies for social support and NSSI, through the influence of social support expectancies on NMRE. It appears that feeling connected to and supported by family and friends increases the likelihood of coping better with unpleasant emotions, and of avoiding the risk of NSSI or other unhealthy behaviors (Muehlenkamp & Gutierrez, 2007).

Many previous researchers have suggested that being maltreated in childhood may contribute to interpersonal vulnerabilities, such as a lower capacity for supportive interpersonal experience (e.g., Cloitre et al., 2004). Future research on the effects of social support as protecting factors that increase resiliency in those who have suffered childhood maltreatment should be done.

Limitations

The present study has several limitations. First, there are limitations related to the generalizability of the findings, as the rate of NSSI in the sample was relatively small. Furthermore, there were missing data, especially for self-injury frequencies. A complete data set was needed for path analysis; thus NSSI was entered as a categorical variable to maximize number of participants. Second, there is the potential bias that may occur in a self-report study. Third, the sample may not be representative of all Japanese university students. Fourth, the current study used the total score of childhood maltreatment to identify maltreatment history. Examining different forms of childhood maltreatment separately may give different results. Fifth, the size of the direct effect between child maltreatment and NMRE in the path analysis, while significant, is relatively small (-.18).

Conclusion

The current study adds to the literature on NSSI among young adults by showing the link between childhood maltreatment and NSSI through important factors of mood regulation expectancies and expectancies for social support from father, mother, and friends. The findings of the current study revealed several important implications for understanding why people harmed themselves and showed a glimpse into how these factors may increase the risk for NSSI. Understanding the links between maltreatment, expectancies for social support and NMRE in a single model may help schools and health professionals to improve intervention efforts.

Perceived social support may serve as a protective factor against the negative effects of childhood maltreatment, helping one develop better confidence for dealing with negative emotions and better abilities to cope with distress, which may reduce the risk of using

maladaptive coping. It is necessary to provide healthy support networks, especially early prevention efforts in junior high school, the average age of first occurrence of NSSI, and to assist vulnerable children to cope with difficulties.

Childhood maltreatment increases the risk of self-injury among abuse survivors. Trauma in childhood may lower adaptive skills for regulating emotion, which increases the use of maladaptive coping such as NSSI. However, greater emotional support expectancies from friends may enable maltreatment survivors to build more confidence and learn more adaptive ways to cope with emotional distress. Believing that someone will provide emotional support is important to building more positive coping, which in turn lowers the risk for self-injury or suicide. A supportive environment, especially comprising family and friends, may also help to develop positive and adaptive coping abilities when facing stressful events, which in turn may reduce the use of flawed coping behavior. These findings can be applied to the early identification and intervention of self-injury or other maladaptive behavior.

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Characterizing Parents' and School Staff's Involvement with Student Attendance from the Perspective of School Staff in Japan

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Abstract

This study investigated the relations between parents and various school staff involvement, and student attendance across time from the viewpoint of school staff in Japan. In addition, student attendance characteristics were classified to investigate potential differences among students related to time and involvement of parents and staff. The research participants were Japanese elementary, junior, and senior high school staff ($N = 206$) who consented to participate in the survey. All participants were sampled from various areas of Japan and recruited through a web-based survey. Data were collected by the polling organization Internet Research Service MELLINKS (Tokyo, Japan), through their web panel (see www.mellinks.co.jp). The results indicated that during the early period of support, there was no positive correlation between class teachers' involvement and students' attendance. However, during the late period of support, it had a positive correlation. Surprisingly, the school nurses' involvement was critical even in the early periods. Furthermore, in the late period, the results of ANOVAs assessing difference among the student attendance categories showed that maintaining and recovery types had higher scores of parents' and class teachers' involvement than non-maintaining and declining types. This study suggests that flexibility of collaboration among parents and various school staff across time is an important component to support student attendance.

Keywords: parents' involvement, school staff involvement, student attendance

In recent years, adolescents that postpone becoming independent, such as Freeter, NEETs and Hikikomori have been increasing in Japan. They are Japanese expressions, referring to people who are not in full-time employment, those who confine themselves to home for long periods and are withdrawn from social life respectively. (e.g. Heinze & Thomas, 2014). In 2010, the number of Hikikomori was estimated at 700,000 among youth aged 15 up to people aged 34, but it did not include “potential” Hikikomori, who were averse to social involvement and kept withdrawing completely from society (Naikakufu, 2010). Long-term school refusal often leads to Hikikomori. In order to prevent Hikikomori, it is important to appropriately cope with school refusal in the early stages.

In Japan, there are over 120,000 potential students currently who have refused to go to school, so school refusal is a serious problem in the country (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology [MEXT], 2015). When supporting such students, it is important to provide support for the students’ parents, by making appropriate contact with the students’ families, as parents play a significant role in their children’s lives, and the choices they make. However, too much focus on dealing with parents sometimes detracts the attention of the school staff from the students. On the other hand, many schools try to construct good relationships with the parents and support the families. Unfortunately, in spite of such efforts, those schools may be faced with the challenge of providing ways for all parents to contact and communicate with teachers and administrators so that information about students flows in two directions—from school to home and from home to school (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005)

Parent involvement in school has been significantly related to lower rates of high school dropout (Barnard, 2004). Dropout rates vary in different configurations of background risk factors, including family socioeconomic status (SES), family type, and family stress level (Alexander, Entwistle, & Kabbani, 2001). Negative parental attitudes about school, low expectations, and poor parenting style contribute to poor student performance and, ultimately, to school dropout (Fagan & Pabon, 1990; Miller & Plant, 1999). Similarly, dropout levels are associated with family factors such as monitoring of child and the quality of parent-child interactions. Students whose parents monitor and regulate their activities provide emotional support, and encourage independent decision-making are less likely to drop out of school (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulos, Ritter, & Doronbush, 1990; Rumberger, 1995). A finding also indicated that parental involvement was generally a salient factor in explaining behavioral but not cognitive outcomes, with greatest support for parent-child discussion and involvement in parent-teacher organizations (McNeal, 1999).

While parents are important for education outcomes, the quality of the relationship between teachers and students is associated with students’ success (Davis & Dupper, 2004). It can be said that many students end up refusing school in childhood because they do not experience good relationships with their teachers. In fact, Kensting (2008) insisted that their biggest complaint about school was uncaring and disrespectful teachers and administrators. Kensting also stated that one of the most critical components of students’ persistence in attending school was the support they received from teachers who cared about their success in school. Rumberger and Thomas (2000) found that the higher the quality of the teachers as perceived by students, the lower the dropout rate, while the higher the quality of the teachers as perceived by the principal, the higher the dropout rate. Therefore, student-teacher relationships are an integral part of students’ school experience.

Furthermore, a positive relationship with teachers may be especially important for the school adjustment of those students who are at higher risk of school failure due to family background variables. In other words, teachers become important agents of socialization and sources of support outside the home environment for children (Almakadma & Ramisetty-Mikler, 2015). Jungert and Koestner (2015) reported that teacher's support for student's autonomy and systemizing are significantly related to motivation, self-efficacy, and achievement over time, but parental support for autonomy is not directly related to the outcomes. However, as parents become more involved with their children's education, they may be more likely to communicate with school personnel about their child's adjustment and behavior in class. In turn, parents may become more informed about their children's social difficulties from teachers and school staff, and then subsequently address and reinforce more positive behaviors at home (Nokali, Bechman, & Votruba-Drazal, 2010). Thus, parent involvement can be encouraged by teachers.

Another section of school staff members that have been shown to influence education outcomes are the school nurses. Lightfoot and Bines (2000) paid attention to the complementary roles of nurses and school staff. School nurses could be a trusted alternative when neither parents nor teachers are appropriate. Similarly, school counselors can play a guiding role in preventing school dropout. Some researchers have described school counselors as being instrumental in the integration of community-wide mental health services (e.g., Bemak, 2000; Keys & Bemak, 1997). Taylor and Davis (2008) suggested several practical strategies for school counselors to promote parent involvement.

As mentioned above, the results of whose support is effective varies among the findings of different researchers. There is a need to reveal not only "who" is important in supporting students, but also what other factors lie in the desirable support system. That is, it is essential to specify "when" and "who" should offer support "to whom", in order to develop effective support plans. From the view of relationships among students, parents, and school staff, the theoretical background of this study is the model of structural family therapy suggested by Minuchin (1974). In this model, preferable family forms are considered to have such structures as cooperative alliance between parents, and appropriate boundaries between parents and children. This theoretical model can be considered applicable to school settings, which are as important as family settings for children. Constructing collaborative relationships between teachers and parents might be the key to finding a solution to students' school refusals.

In this study, the period of support was divided into three: early, middle, and late. This study investigated the relations among parents and various school staff members, and student attendance across time from the viewpoint of school staff in Japan. Similar patterns of findings emerged for teacher and parent reports of parent involvement (Nokali, Bechman, & Votruba-Drazal, 2010). Researchers investigating the validity of teacher-student relationship quality (TSRQ) reported good correspondence with both direct observations of the teacher-student relationship (Doumen, Verschueren, Koomen, & Buyse, 2008). Also, teacher rating of TSRQ demonstrated good test-retest reliability over periods of three to four months (Doumen et al., 2008). Thus, this study was investigated from the point of view of the school staff. In addition, students' attendance characteristics were classified to investigate the potential differences among students in relation to the time and involvement levels of parents and school staff.

Method

Participants

All participants were sampled from each area in Japan and recruited through a web-based survey. Data were collected by the polling organization Internet Research Service MELLINKS (Tokyo, Japan), through their web panel (see www.mellinks.co.jp). The details of the survey were sent to potential participants, who had registered and received one ID, by an e-mail in early May 2012. If potential participants agreed to participate in this survey, they clicked on another link to view the survey, which began after they had entered their ID. Participants could not skip any questionnaire items. Elementary, junior, and senior high school staff members who were working in schools located in Hokkaido, Tohoku, Kanto, Chubu, Kinki, Chugoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu were randomly chosen from this database ($N = 210$, 177 men and 33 women, age range: 23-76 years; working in elementary school, $n = 60$, junior high school, $n = 73$, senior high school, $n = 73$, and secondary school, $n = 4$). The four secondary school staff members (1 man and 3 women) were excluded. Responses from 206 participants were then analyzed in this study.

Procedure

Firstly, age, school location, type of school, and type of occupation were inquired into. In this study, students that had been absent from school for more than 30 days a year were regarded as school non-attending, according to the definition by MEXT (2015). The participants were required to answer one completed case of school non-attendance in which they had continuously provided support for over three months. Age and sex of the student were also inquired. It took approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Items regarding the degree of parents and school staff involvement in the case were developed, by referring to *Parent Involvement at School* (Jimerson, 2000). Furthermore, items inquiring into the time and number of days during which students had refused to attend school were developed by referring to *Feeling of School Avoidance Scale* (Watanabe & Koishi, 2000).

Each school staff, indicated in Table 1, was required to evaluate the degree of involvement by parents and other school staff, as well as student attendance. In other words, each school staff responded to queries not only about their own involvement but also the involvement of other staff and student attendance from their own perspective.

Measures

Involvement Score. Participants were asked questions about how strongly parents were involved with truant children. They responded using a four-point Likert scale: 1 (weak), 2 (relatively weak), 3 (relatively strong) and 4 (strong), depending on early, middle, and latter periods after starting support. The involvement of each school staff member, such as class teachers, managerial teachers, school nurses, and school counselors, were examined through similar questions and participants were required to respond, using the identical four-point scale, regarding the three periods described above.

Student Attendance Score. Student attendance scores were examined through a question assessing how many times the truant students attended school, by using a four-point Likert scale: 1 (very few times), 2 (relatively few times), 3 (relatively often), and 4 (very often), depending on the three periods of time. Participants were also asked the question about how long the truant students stayed at school, and they responded using a four-point scale: 1 (very

short time), 2 (relatively short time), 3 (relatively long time), and 4 (very long time). The total score of the above two items were regarded as “Student Attendance Score”.

Ethical Considerations. Before the survey, the author explained to the participants the aim of this study, protection of their anonymity, and their right to freely refuse to answer questions or take part in the survey, and obtained their consent. The author also explained that the data resulting from the study would be used only for research purposes and how the data would be stored, used, and destroyed.

Data Analysis. The data were analyzed using SPSS 21.0. Questionnaire total scores were calculated as sums of item scores. The data were analyzed by Pearson Product Moment Correlation, hierarchical cluster analysis and ANOVAs.

Results

Demographics

The attributes of the participants are indicated below in Table 1. The research participants were Japanese elementary, junior, and senior high school staff ($N = 206$, 176 men and 30 women, 60 elementary, 73 junior, and 73 senior high school staff, $M_{\text{age}} = 48.02$, $SD = 7.68$). The participants were required to recall one completed school non-attendance case in which they had provided support continuously over three months for the student that had been absent from school over 30 days a year. The age and sex of the student was inquired. The results indicated the following: 113 boys, and 93 girls, $M_{\text{age}} = 13.73$ ($SD = 2.46$). The average length of the period during which support was provided was 10.37 months ($SD = 7.12$).

Table 1: Demographics

$N = 206$		
Ages • Gender	Men	$n = 176$
	Women	$n = 30$
	Mean age	$48.02 (SD = 7.68)$
School category	Elementary school staff	$n = 60$
	Junior high school staff	$n = 73$
	Senior high school staff	$n = 73$
Position	Administrators	$n = 23$
	School teachers	$n = 179$
	School nurses	$n = 3$
	School counselors	$n = 1$
Supported student	Boys	113
	Girls	93
	Mean age	$13.73 (SD = 2.46)$
	Length of support (month)	$10.37 (SD = 7.12)$

Correlation

Table 2 shows the results of Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. During the early period of providing support, the class teachers' involvement had positive correlations with that of managerial teachers' ($r = .41, p < .001$), school nurses ($r = .33, p < .001$), and school counselors ($r = .22, p < .001$). Moreover, managerial teachers' involvement had positive correlations with that of school nurses ($r = .56, p < .001$) and school counselors ($r = .26, p < .001$). Furthermore, school nurses' involvement had a positive correlation with that of school counselors ($r = .34, p < .001$). Although the correlation coefficient was low, parents' involvement had a positive correlation with that of class teachers ($r = .16, p < .05$). Similarly, school nurses' involvement had a positive correlation with student attendance ($r = .16, p < .05$).

During the middle period, parents' involvement had positive correlation with that of class teachers ($r = .35, p < .001$) and student attendance ($r = .21, p < .01$). Class teachers' involvement had positive correlations with that of managerial teachers ($r = .43, p < .001$), school nurses ($r = .36, P < .001$), and school counselors ($r = .25, p < .001$). Moreover, managerial teachers' involvement had positive correlations with that of school nurses ($r = .49, p < .001$) and school counselors ($r = .26, p < .001$). Furthermore, the school nurses' involvement had a positive correlation with that of school counselors ($r = .32, p < .001$).

During the late period, parents' involvement had positive correlation with class teachers' involvement ($r = .38, p < .001$) and student attendance ($r = .45, p < .001$). The class teachers' involvement had positive correlation with that of managerial teacher ($r = .47, p < .001$), school nurses ($r = .35, p < .001$), and student attendance ($r = .37, p < .001$). Moreover, managerial teacher involvement had positive correlation with that of school nurses ($r = .48, p < .001$) and school counselors ($r = .26, p < .001$). Again, the school nurses' involvement had a positive correlation with that of school counselors ($r = .26, p < .001$). Though the correlation coefficient was low, parents' involvement had weak positive correlation with that of managerial teacher involvement ($r = .18, p < .01$) and the school nurses ($r = .16, p < .05$). Similarly, class teachers' involvement had a weak positive correlation with that of school counselors ($r = .16, p < .05$). Furthermore, student attendance had weak positive correlations with that of managerial teacher ($r = .14, p < .05$) and school nurses ($r = .19, p < .05$).

Table 2:

Correlations between Parents and Various School Staff Involvement and Student attendance across Each Period

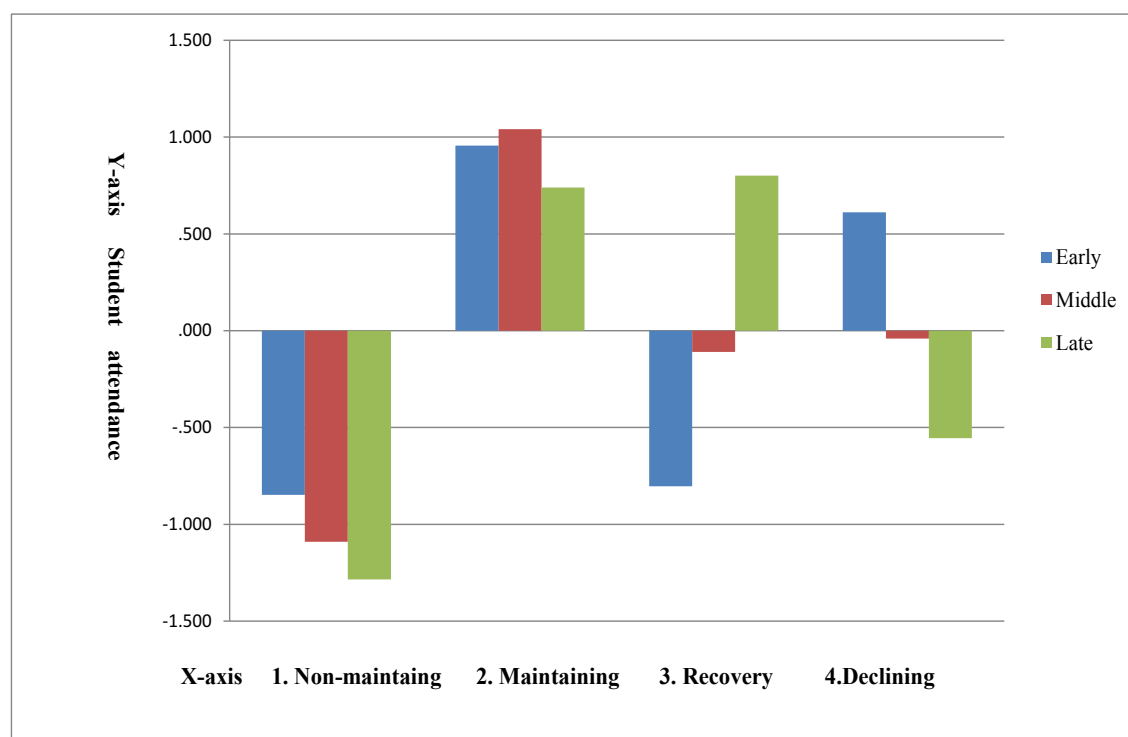
	2	3	4	5	6
1. Parents' involvement	.16*	-.03	.04	-.03	.11
2. Class teachers' involvement	-	.41***	.33***	.22***	.04
Early 3. Administrators' involvement	-	-	.56***	.26***	.06
4. School nurses' involvement	-	-	-	.34***	.18*
5. School counselors' involvement	-	-	-	-	.01
6. School attendance	-	-	-	-	-
1. Parents' involvement	.35***	.11	.09	.12	.21**
2. Class teachers' involvement	-	.43***	.36***	.25***	.14
Middle 3. Administrators' involvement	-	-	.49***	.26***	.07
4. School nurses' involvement	-	-	-	.32***	.12
5. School counselors' involvement	-	-	-	-	.10
6. School attendance	-	-	-	-	-
1. Parents' involvement	.38***	.18**	.16*	.13	.45***
2. Class teachers' involvement	-	.47***	.35***	.16*	.37***
Late 3. Admisitrators' involvement	-	-	.48***	.26***	.14*
4. School nurses' involvement	-	-	-	.26***	.19**
5. School counselors' involvement	-	-	-	-	.05
6. School attendance	-	-	-	-	-

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Creating Attendance Categories

In order to classify changes in the student attendance score by school absentees into different types, hierarchical cluster analysis (Ward's method, Average Euclidean distance) was conducted. The results indicated the following four clusters from the perspective of possible interpretation (Figure 1): The first cluster was named "non-maintaining type ($n = 45$)," in which student attendance scores were always low, regardless of the support period. The second cluster was named "maintaining type ($n = 55$)," in which the student attendance scores were always high, regardless of the support period. The third cluster was named "recovery type ($n = 56$)," in which the frequency and times of attending school increased as time passed. The fourth cluster was named "declining type ($n = 50$)," in which the student attendance score decreased as time passed.

Figure 1: Student attendance characteristics



Student attendance characteristics were classified into four categories in accordance with three periods. Zero indicates the average value. A plus indicates the positive value beyond an average. A minus indicates the negative value below the average. Each cluster was organized by the attendance types. The cluster that showed the best attendance was the second cluster, while the first cluster showed the worst attendance.

Attendance category comparisons

Next, one-way mixed design ANOVA was conducted on parents' and school staff's involvement in the early, middle, and late periods of support as an independent variable, and each cluster as a between-subjects factor. The results indicated the main effects between clusters in the middle period ($F(3, 202) = 4.68, p < .01, \eta^2 = .01$) and in the late period ($F(3, 202) = 14.57, p < .001, \eta^2 = .03$) of parents' involvement in school attendance. Bonferroni multiple comparison tests indicated that in the middle period, the degree of parental involvement in the maintaining type was higher than that in the non-maintaining, or declining, type. In the late period, parents' involvement in the maintaining type and the recovery type were higher than that in the non-maintaining type, or declining, type. Regarding the class teachers' involvement, main effects were observed in both clusters in the middle period ($F(3, 202) = 2.95, p < .05, \eta^2 = .00$) and late period ($F(3, 202) = 7.94, p < .001, \eta^2 = .01$). Bonferroni multiple comparison tests indicated that in the middle period, the class teachers' involvement in the recovery type was higher than that in the non-maintaining type. In the late period, the class teachers' involvement in the recovery type was higher than in the non-maintaining, or declining, types. Class teachers' involvement in the maintaining type was higher than that in the non-maintaining type. Regarding the school nurses' involvement, main effects were observed in all clusters in the early ($F(3, 202) = 4.57, p < .01, \eta^2 = .01$), middle ($F(3, 202) = 3.68, p < .01, \eta^2 = .00$), and late periods ($F(3, 202) = 3.33, p < .05, \eta^2 = .00$). Bonferroni multiple comparison tests indicated that school nurses' involvement during the early period in the maintaining type was higher than that in the non-

maintaining type, or declining, type. Moreover, school nurses' involvement during the middle and late periods in the maintaining type was higher than that in the non-maintaining type.

Table 3:

Effect of Parent and School Staff Involvement on Student Attendance Categories

	Period	Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3		Cluster 4		<i>F</i>	Bonferroni's
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Parents	Early	2.71	1.10	2.96	1.02	2.68	1.10	2.60	1.12	1.13	
	Middle	2.42	1.03	3.04	0.98	2.88	0.88	2.48	1.07	4.68**	2 > 1,4
	Late	2.42	1.12	3.25	0.91	3.29	0.78	2.40	0.93	14.57***	2,3 > 1,4
Class Teachers	Early	3.04	0.82	3.24	0.69	3.29	0.82	3.18	0.83	0.84	
	Middle	3.04	0.77	3.33	0.70	3.46	0.66	3.30	0.74	2.95*	3 > 1
	Late	2.93	0.84	3.42	0.76	3.63	0.59	3.24	0.74	7.94***	3 > 1,4 2 > 1
Administrators	Early	2.24	0.91	2.51	0.94	2.25	1.08	2.46	0.95	1.04	
	Middle	2.27	0.89	2.67	0.92	2.55	1.08	2.72	0.86	2.18	
	Late	2.36	1.05	2.73	1.01	2.77	1.10	2.80	0.93	1.92	
School Nurses	Early	2.36	0.93	2.93	0.94	2.30	1.01	2.52	0.99	4.57**	2 > 1,3
	Middle	2.33	0.95	2.96	0.90	2.63	1.07	2.78	0.95	3.68*	2 > 1
	Late	2.36	0.96	2.96	0.96	2.71	1.12	2.88	1.02	3.33*	2 > 1
School Counselors	Early	3.30	1.63	3.21	1.34	3.09	1.61	3.16	1.51	0.14	
	Middle	3.24	1.53	3.33	1.23	3.35	1.48	3.35	1.35	0.05	
	Late	3.21	1.49	3.41	1.26	3.38	1.45	3.41	1.31	0.19	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Discussion

The results of this study indicated that (a) involvement of class teachers and parents are correlated on all periods, (b) class teachers' involvement and student attendance is only related in late period, and (c) student attendance is related to parents' involvement in the middle and late periods. It is suggested that continuous relationships between class teachers and parents might be partially related to student attendance.

Wakashima, Ikuta, Massaki, Noguchi, and Itakura (2013) showed that a child's school satisfaction was strongly associated with parent-class teacher relationship in Japan. Higher levels of parent-school communication and more active types of parent involvement (i.e., help with a class activity) were associated with children's adaptive behavior (Marcon, 1999). In addition, Almakadma and Ramisetty-Mikler (2015) concluded that schools and parents should be encouraged to work as a team, and to recognize the importance of school connectedness in improving positive student behavior and outcomes. These results indicate that the structural family therapy model (Minuchin, 1974) could be applied to relationships between parents, class teachers, and students in the school settings, as well as to family relationships. Therefore, it is important to construct cooperative relationships between parents and class teachers by increasing the degree of their involvement in supporting truant students. In other words, an essential component of the supporting system is to maintain class teachers' continuous involvement with parents as well as the students. As a result of maintaining class teachers' involvement, parents' motivation to make their children attend

school increased in the middle period, and the frequency and times of students' attending school increased as well.

Furthermore, the involvement of class teachers and school counselors showed a middle positive correlation up to the middle period, whereas in the late period, class teachers' involvement had a weak positive correlation with school counselors' involvement. It is suggested that although school counselors provide support to students until the middle period by interacting with class teachers, in the late period, class teachers become more directly involved with the students. As a result, the correlation between class teachers' involvement and school counselors' involvement becomes weak, which might be one of the effective styles of cooperation. In many school refusal cases, the relationships between students and their school tend to gradually weaken, and the role of the school counselor is considered important as a mediator between them (Fukumaru, 2005). By the same token, the teachers were found to have determined their actions with reference to guidance from the school counselor (Yamamoto, 2015). Therefore, it is expected that the school counselor would play the role of a bridge between parents and class teachers, as well as between students and class teachers.

The correlations between the types of changes in school attendance and parents' involvement as well as the degree of school staff's involvement among clusters indicated no major difference in the early period. On the other hand, after the middle period, an increase in parents' involvement highly affected attendance in maintaining and recovery types. Moreover, the degree of class teachers' involvement with recovery type increased over time. This result also corroborated findings of previous studies to some extent (e.g., Barnard, 2004; Davis & Dupper, 2004).

It is a surprising point that the school nurses' involvement with the maintaining type was high from the early period. Furthermore, school nurses were more highly involved with the recovery type, compared to the non-maintaining type after the early period. Four key elements of the school nurse role were identified; safeguarding the health and welfare of children, health promotion, a pupils' confidante, and family support (Lightfoot & Bines, 2000). Thus, school nurses are considered to play an important role in the beginning of support. Especially, if a student goes to the school infirmary on arriving at school, this can be seen to be a sign of school absenteeism. Then the role of the school nurse in collaborating with other school staff may be effective for the prevention of school refusal.

On the other hand, parents' involvement and class teachers' involvement did not change, or decrease in the non-maintaining type and the declining type. Parent's involvement is generally a salient factor with greatest support for parent-child discussion and involvement in parent-teacher organization (McNeal, 1999). It would be important for class teachers to establish relationship with parents and increase their involvement for supporting students refusing to attend school. The results of this study suggest that in the early period, there are rarely significant changes, and people around the students might lose motivation to provide support. Thus, the crucial period can be considered to be the middle period. In this period, whether class teacher's and parents' involvement would increase or decrease might highly affect the prognosis of school refusal. Thus, cooperation with class teachers is considered effective in supporting students. In addition, Amitani (2001) has reported that teachers have a sense of failure and guilt when they cannot provide effective support to truant students. School nurses and school counselors have expert knowledge and, thus, they should help class teachers feel motivated to support students.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include the following: Firstly, this study was conducted only from the perspective of school staff. It is suggested that the results should be re-examined through paired analysis with other school staff, parents, and students. Secondly, the number of participants of this study was small, and gender differences among school staff and those among students refusing school were not investigated. Thirdly, differences in the types of schools were not examined in this study.

According to the MEXT, it is known that the rate of school non-attendance is different between elementary, junior, and senior high schools. It is suggested that gender differences and differences based on the type of school should be investigated in the future to develop support systems. Moreover, the participants in this study consisted of only Japanese people, and cultural differences were not considered. Therefore, it can be difficult to generalize the results of this study to other countries. It is suggested that future studies should take cultural differences into consideration.

Finally, the study did not include how to improve relationships between teachers and parents. As mentioned previously, the relationships between teachers and parents affect students in many ways. This study also indicated the importance of teacher-parent relationships, particularly in the late period. However, many schools face the difficulty of maintaining good relationships with certain parents. Harada et al. (2011) showed that the greatest number of issues on school refusal were problems related to parents. Further studies are expected to investigate effective ways of building these relationships.

Conclusion

In spite of above limitations, the result suggests effective three steps for supporting students. It can be said that the role of school staff and parents varies between each period. In the early period, of course, class teachers are required to be involved with the students. On the other hand, they have to establish good relationships with parents so that they can inform parents about the students' school life. At the time, the school counselor is expected to be an intermediary between them. During the middle period, referring to the sharing of information with teachers, parents will be able to increase interactions with their children. It can be important for class teachers to make connections with school nurses and school counselors, because they have expert knowledge on psychological support. In the late period, the alliance between teachers and parents will help in ensuring that the students attend school again.

The ratio of teachers to all workers in schools in Japan is higher than that of other countries in the West: The ratio in Japan is 82%, whereas that of the United States and the United Kingdom is 56% and 51%, respectively (MEXT, 2014). This implies more diversity of teachers' work, because the work in schools has not been divided among school staff properly. That is, teachers are burdened with various roles and deal with some issues as bullying, school refusal, and others. It can be inferred that the bonding between teachers and students in Japan is relatively stronger than in other countries. Although MEXT suggested the assignment of school staff's work toward "school as a team" in 2014, utilizing the present bonding is also assumed to be important. In other words, to maintain good relationships with students, they are required to collaborate with school counselors and school nurses. And then,

each school staff and parents are expected to play effective roles in accord with the three stages of school refusal.

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Vocational Services and Outcomes of Psychiatric Clients from a Midwestern State

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Abstract

This study examined services received and outcomes of clients with psychiatric disabilities of a Midwestern public rehabilitation program. More specifically, multiple regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between specific vocational services, demographic factors and service outcomes of clients with psychiatric disabilities. The specific vocational outcome of interest was weekly earnings at closure. The twelve predictor variables included in the model were (a) Age, (b) Race, (c) Education, (d) Public assistance, (e) Restoration, (f) College/University, (g) Business/Vocational, (h) Adjustment, (i) Miscellaneous, (j) Placement, (k) Transportation, and (l) Maintenance. The results of the multiple regression analysis revealed that the most parsimonious model for predicting weekly earnings of successful closures included six predictor variables: education, public assistance, placement, college/university training, business/vocational training and adjustment training.

Keywords: public vocational rehabilitation, psychiatric disabilities

More than two decades of research suggests the notion that engagement in meaningful work, or some related activity, is basic to the human psyche. The ability to work is as important a phenomenon for individuals with persistent mental illness issues as it is for the general population (Donnell, Mizelle & Zheng, 2009; Gill, Murphy, Burns-Lynch, & Swarbrick, 2009). Chan (2010) suggested that work is related to improved quality of life, independence, and promotes community integration. Eklund, Hannson, and Ahlqvist (2004) observed that employed individuals tend to be “more satisfied with their lives than those who are unemployed” (p. 466). In relation to persons with mental illness, employment also provides structure and serves as a diversion from symptoms and related issues (Drake, Bond & Becker, 2012). Data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) indicated that approximately 9.3 million adults, or about 4 % of Americans aged 18 and over, experience serious mental illness (SAMSHA, 2012). On the other hand, the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI, 2014) reported that the employment rate for persons with mental disability was less than 17.8% in 2012. Additionally, individuals with mental illness constitute the largest number of supplementary security income beneficiaries and are the most unlikely to completely leave the disability rolls (Wewiorski & Fabian, 2004).

The Barden Lafollette Act (1943) extended the provision of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services for persons with severe mental illness. The VR program currently provides vocational rehabilitation services to a significant number of persons with psychiatric disabilities, because employment is considered to be a standard treatment goal for persons with mental illness (Rosenthal, Dalton, & Gervery, 2007). In fact, individuals with mental illness constitute the second-largest disability group receiving VR services, after orthopedic impairment (Hayward & Schmidt-Davis, 2003). However, it has been reported that the employment rate for persons with mental illness has declined in the last decade, despite increased annual spending of approximately \$4 billion (NAMI, 2014). The costs of this development include loss of productive workforce, reduced earnings, increased dependence and spending by government.

Previous research studies have noted that consumer characteristics are likely to impact their experiences in the VR program and the achievement of successful employment outcome (Da Silva Cardoso, Romero, Chan, Dutta, & Rahimi 2007; Schaller, & Yang, 2005). Researchers (Burke-Miller et al., 2006, 2007; Wewiorski & Fabian (2004) stated that demographic factors such as age, gender, race, prior work history, and education are frequently related to the achievement of successful employment outcomes. However, there have been limited studies that have examined these variables in relation to consumers with psychiatric disabilities receiving services in the VR program.

With regard to race, African Americans and other minorities have been reported to be underserved by the nation's mental health system (Alegría et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2005). Minority consumers experience significant disadvantages in addition to their disability, or what is referred to as a “dual disadvantage” within the VR system (Harley, Alston, & Middleton, 2007; Olney & Kennedy, 2002; Wilson, Edwards, Alston, Harley, & Doughty, 2002). As members of a minority group, consumers with psychiatric disabilities experience the barriers of a traditionally underserved community and as individuals with disabilities, they experience additional barriers within in terms of services and employment in their own communities (Wilson et al., 2002). Further, Wewiorski & Fabian (2005) found in their meta-analysis that in general, being white was associated with attaining employment, and that people of color were more likely to be employed six months after placement. However,

Bomet (2005) found that neither race/ethnicity nor gender were predictors of employment. Therefore, further examination of this relationship is required in light of these inconsistencies.

The age of the consumer has also been identified as a significant demographic factor that impacts employment outcome among consumers with psychiatric disability. However, there is an inconsistency in the results with regard to age. Whereas, Waghorn, Chant and Harris (2015) found that young adults with psychiatric disabilities are less likely to achieve employment outcome than mature adults, Wewiorski and Fabian (2005) reported that a younger age was associated with both getting and keeping a job. Similarly, Burke-Miller, et al. (2006) also found that psychiatric consumers of a younger age were more likely to achieve competitive employment, and work additional hours each month. Competitive employment is simply jobs paying at least minimum wage in regular, socially integrated community settings, not reserved for individuals with disabilities, and held by patients rather than provider agencies (Cook et al., 2005).

Scholars purport that it is generally difficult to fully assess the impact of the array of VR services because they are applied and studied variably (Davis, Delman, & Duperoy, 2013; Fleming et al., 2013). However, some researchers have implicated the level of education in consumers with psychiatric disability as a significant determinant of employment outcome (Boutin & Accordino, 2011). In their study, Boutin and Accordino found consumers with psychiatric disability that received college and university training support achieved better competitive employment compared to similar individuals without such support (Boutin & Accordino, 2011). Other researchers (Bromet, 2005; Bond & Drake, 2008) have also identified job placement as a significant predictor of employment outcome among consumers with psychiatric disabilities.

Gendered expressions and consequences of mental illness or psychiatric disability are important considerations for health service providers and policy makers in recent years (Salmon, Poole, Morrow, Greaves, Ingram & Pederson, 2006). Vlassoff (2007) described gender as “the array of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviors, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis” (p.47). The interactions between gender, socioeconomic conditions and consequences of mental health create different health outcomes for males and females. Previous studies have found that women with psychiatric disabilities that received VR services tend to have less favorable outcomes and earn less than men (Carrick & Bibb, 1982; Cook, 2003). Consequently, gender-based analysis that recognizes and highlights the differential impact of interventions on consumers of rehabilitation services significantly contributes to the body of evidence-based practice.

The types of services that clients receive in the VR program have also been associated with successful employment outcomes (Balcazar, Suarez-Balcazar, Taylor-Ritzler, & Keys, (2010). For instance, the authors (Balcazar et al., 2010) found that clients who receive job placement support services were 1.13 times likely to be employed than those who did not receive such services. Similarly, Hayward and Schmidt-Davis (2003), in their longitudinal analysis of the VR program, also found that consumers who received services such as postsecondary education, including business or vocational school, community college, and four-year college or university, were more likely to achieve competitive employment outcome.

Statement of the Problem

Due to fiscal constraints, a burgeoning service need and accountability, there is a need for increased use of evidence-based practices in the VR program (Rosenthal, Lui, Chan, & Pruett, 2005; Leahy et al., 2014; Sherman et al., 2014). Indeed, matching the characteristics of a group of people with specific outcomes answers the fundamental questions underlying evidence-based practice: “What procedures/techniques make a specific intervention work and for whom is the intervention most effective?” (Chronister, Cardoso, Lee, Chan & Leahy, 2005; Rosenthal, Chan, Wong, Kundu, & Dutta, 2006). Such an understanding will enable practitioners to have a service focus that allows the judicious use of resources in light of resource constraints and demands for accountability. Wewiorski and Fabian (2004) opined that such information is useful in a number of ways. First, it can help sort out whether illness factors alone, or whether other factors in combination with illness factors, are related to employment outcome, although it is sometimes difficult to separate the discrete contribution these variables make to the outcome. Second, these data may suggest the type and intensity of intervention most appropriate and/or effective for various subgroups of the population of individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

The current study sought to examine the relationship between specific vocational services, demographic factors and service outcomes of clients with psychiatric disabilities. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between consumers’ demographic factors, types of vocational services received and earnings of successful closures of consumers with psychiatric illness in a Midwestern state. The research question that was addressed was: What is the most parsimonious model for predicting the relationship between consumers’ demographic factors, vocational services received and earnings of successful closures? The study also examined the difference in earnings between Caucasians and African Americans, as well as male and female consumers after successful closure.

Method

Data Source

Data for this study were extracted from the Rehabilitation Services Administration Case Service Report (RSA-9 11) for the fiscal year (FY) 2010, which included cases classified by a Midwestern State public rehabilitation agency (PRA) as having (a) psychotic disorders (Disability Code 18); and (b) other mental and emotional disorders (Disability Code 19) (their primary disability) and without any secondary disability. RSA 911-data comprised more than 40 fields, including age, disability, race, gender, education, public assistance, and maintenance.

Participants and Procedure

Based on data sorting, 888 cases were initially included in the study. Due to the relatively few number of cases involving Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans ($n = 19$, 2.2%) within the reported data timeframe, these groups were excluded from the analysis; leaving a sample of 869 Caucasians and African Americans. The final total included 348 females (202 Caucasians/146 African Americans) and 521 males (260 Caucasians/261 African Americans).

Predictor Variables

Previous studies (Anthony, 1994; Wewiorski & Fabian, 2004) have used factors such as level of education, race/ethnicity and public support as predictors of successful

closure/employment outcome. For the purpose of this study, eight rehabilitation program service variables and 12 consumer characteristics were used to examine the relationship among demographic factors, service variables and employment outcome. Program service variables included (1) Restoration, (2) College/University, (3) Business/Vocational, (4) Adjustment, (5) Miscellaneous, (6) Placement, (7) Transportation, and (8) Maintenance (RSA, 2010), whereas consumer variables included (1) Age, (2) Race, (3) Education, and (4) Public assistance.

Outcome Variables

The outcome variable used for the study was Weekly Earnings at Closure, measured by dollars earned in competitive employment during the week before case closure. Daniels and Mickel (2002) stated that VR consumers' weekly earnings are an appropriate outcome measure because it is significantly related to the level of education, age and because most individuals with significant disabilities—including those with psychiatric disability—often have prior working experience before seeking VR services.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as simple percentages and averages were used for consumers' demographic variables. Regression analysis, which allowed assessment of the relationship between predictor variables (consumer's demographic characteristics and VR services) and the criterion variable (weekly earnings at closure), were conducted to answer the research questions.

Results

Description of subjects

Demographic characteristics and types of VR services received among the study's population are presented in Tables 1. Overall, 53.2% were Caucasian and 46.8% were African Americans, and the majority (60%) of the closures were male (260 Caucasians and 261 African Americans during the fiscal year reviewed. Subjects ranged in age from 17 to 70 years, with a mean age of 40 (males – 40.28 and females – 39.9). The largest single age group was between 40 and 49 years ($n=346$, 39.8%). With regard to educational backgrounds, more than half of the clients (57%; 323 males and 192 females) were reported as high school [special education] graduates and nearly a quarter (23.4%) reported having completed secondary educational levels beyond associate degrees.

Table 1: Consumer Characteristics: Frequencies and Percentages

Consumers characteristics	Male		Female		Total	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Age						
< 20	19	(3.6)	8	(2.3)	27	(3.1)
20 - 29	87	(16.7)	60	(17.3)	147	(17.0)
30 - 39	97	(18.6)	80	(23.0)	177	(20.4)
40 - 49	217	(41.7)	129	(37.1)	346	(39.8)
50 - 54	71	(13.6)	48	(13.7)	119	(13.6)
55 or >	30	(5.8)	23	(6.6)	53	(6.1)
Race						
Caucasian	260	(49.9)	202	(58.0)	462	(53.2)
African American	261	(50.1)	146	(42.0)	407	(46.8)
Education						
No Formal School	2	(.4)	3	(.9)	5	(.6)
Less than High School	104	(19.9)	62	(17.8)	166	(19.1)
Special Education & High School	323	(62.0)	172	(49.4)	495	(57.0)
Associate or >	92	(17.7)	111	(31.9)	203	(23.4)
Public Assistance						
Yes	120	(23.0)	109	(31.3)	229	(26.4)
No	401	(77.0)	239	(68.7)	640	(73.6)
Total	521		348		869	

Services and weekly earnings. Tables 2 and 3 summarize services received and weekly earnings information. In terms of services received, males and females received similar

numbers of services (females = 2.01, males = 1.94), with each group receiving a maximum of six agency services. Maintenance was the most frequently provided service, with more than 50% of the sample receiving this service, followed by transportation (46.7%) and placement (40.6%) services. When viewed from a gender perspective, 55% of females (n = 194/348) received maintenance compared to 53% of males (n = 280/521), followed by transportation for males (47.2%) and females (46%). Business/vocational training (14.4%), college/university training (8.1%) and adjustment training (3.3%) were the least services to clients with psychiatric disabilities in the study.

Table 2: Services Received by Male and Female Participants

Services	Male		Female		Total	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Restoration	79	(15.2)	63	(18.1)	142	(16.3)
College/University Training	31	(6.0)	39	(11.2)	70	(8.1)
Business/Vocational Training	6	(11.5)	65	(18.7)	125	(14.4)
Adjustment Training	15	(2.9)	14	(4.0)	29	(3.3)
Misc. Training	74	(14.2)	74	(21.3)	148	(17.0)
Placement	223	(42.8)	130	(37.4)	353	(40.6)
Transportation	246	(47.2)	160	(46.0)	406	(46.7)
Maintenance	280	(53.7)	194	(55.7)	474	(54.5)

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Selected Variables (Age, Services Received and Weekly Earnings)

	Male				Female				Total			
Variables	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	17	65	40.28	11.12	18	70	39.90	10.95	17	70	40.13	11.05
Services received	0	6	1.94	1.12	0	6	2.10	1.29	0	6	2.01	1.19
Weekly earnings												
At application	0	600	23.81	83.16	0	1200	43.38	123.4	0	1200	31.62	101.6
At closure	0	769	281.8	140.1	0	700	258.0	142.1	0	769	272.3	141.3

	Caucasian A				African A				Total			
Variables	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	17	70	39.02	11.81	18	64	41.48	9.91	17	70	40.13	11.05
Service received	0	6	1.92	1.30	0	6	2.11	1.05	0	6	2.01	1.19
Weekly earnings												
At application	0	664	36.91	98.91	0	1200	27.29	110.4	0	1200	31.62	101.6
At closure	0	800	257.2	156.9	0	808	295.6	130.0	0	769	272.3	141.3

Regression

Regression analysis, using SPSS 23.0, was used to address the research question. Results of the analysis showed the most parsimonious model for predicting weekly earnings at case closure contained six variables: weekly earnings at closure = $101.59 + .38.33 (\text{education}) - 130.50 (\text{public assistance}) + 53.40 (\text{Restoration}) + 86.68 (\text{college/university}) + 60.13 (\text{business/vocational}) - .83.69 (\text{adjustment training})$. Whereas, education, restoration, college/university and business/vocational training have a positive relationship with weekly earnings at closure, the level of public assistance and adjustment training have a negative relationship with weekly earnings at closure (See Table 4 & Table 5).

Table 4: Regression Model Predicting Weekly Earnings of Males with Psychiatric Disabilities

Source	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Regression	3507508.40	12	20.46**	.000**
Residual	7258485.50	508		
Total	10765994.0	520		

Variables	<i>B</i>	β	<i>P</i>
Intercept	275.01	7.73**	.000**
Age	-.39	-.76	.449
Race	-14.92	-1.25	.212
Education	28.62	3.55**	.000**
Public Assistance	-145.39	-10.92**	.000**
	4.43	.29	.769
College/University	53.56	2.15*	.032*
Business/Vocational	43.26	2.61**	.009**
Adjustment	166.36	1.95	.051
Miscellaneous	-9.77	-.57	.567
Placement	-61.04	-5.11**	.000**
Transportation	19.53	1.65	.099
Maintenance	8.81	.70	.487

* $p < .05$, two-tailed. ** $p < .01$, two-tailed.

Table 5: Regression Model Predicting Weekly Earnings of Females with Psychiatric Disabilities

Source	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Regression	2330160.80	12	12.16**	.000**
Residual	5347814.80	335		
Total	7677975.50	347		

Variables	<i>B</i>	β	<i>p</i>
Intercept	101.59	2.48**	.014**
Age	.47	.724	.470
Race	18.31	1.23	.221
Education	38.33	4.42**	.000**
Public Assistance	-130.50	-8.73**	.000**
Restoration	53.40	3.01**	.003**
College/University	86.68	3.51**	.001**
Business/Vocational	60.13	3.07**	.002**
Adjustment	-83.69	-2.17*	.031*
Miscellaneous	4.36	.23	.816
Placement	-.10	-.01	.995
Transportation	16.66	1.16	.248
Maintenance	5.35	.35	.723

* $p < .05$, two-tailed. ** $p < .01$, two-tailed.

Discussion

This study was designed to increase understanding of the relationship between consumers' characteristics, types of vocational services and employment outcomes of clients with psychiatric disabilities served by public rehabilitation programs. The results of the study showed that enrollment in public assistance programs was a significant predictor of successful outcomes. These results confirm previous findings that public assistance and the type of training or level of education received are significant predictors of successful employment outcomes for persons with psychiatric disability (Balcazar et al., 2010; Hayward

& Schmidt-Davis, 2003). In addition, consumers who received SSI only, SSDI only, or SSI and SSDI tended to have lower weekly earnings at case closure. More importantly, this adds to the Evidence Based Practice (EBP) literature in public rehabilitation. EBP in rehabilitation counseling practice has been emphasized over the past two decades (Pruett, Swett, Chan, & Rosenthal, 2008). As defined by Chan, Rosenthal and Pruett (2008), EBP involves identifying relevant questions regarding service, and subsequently using research to answer those questions, which results in more effective, and hopefully, efficient service delivery. For mental health and rehabilitation practitioners, this finding speaks to the importance of understanding the type and extent of public support that should be provided to individuals with psychiatric disabilities. In particular, counselors' ability to emphasize and encourage clients to gradually ease their way out of public support are explorations that can be concurrently made while clients are receiving vocational services (Cook, 2006; Rubin & Roessler, 2008). Moreover, this study supports the EBP research (Fleming, Del Valle, Kim & Leahy, 2012) and its importance in times when efficiency is as important as effectiveness, while supporting Rubin and Roessler's (2008) observation that enrollment in public benefits programs may inherently reduce a client's sense of ability, need or urgency to become gainfully employed.

Similarly, the level of education was also a significant predictor of successful outcome. Previous studies (Burke-Miller et al., 2006; Henry, Hashemi, & Zhang, 2014), also found that higher wages are associated with higher levels of education for persons with psychiatric disability. Associatively, the results of the study show that college/university, business/vocational adjustment training were all significant predictors of successful employment outcomes. Collectively, these results are in agreement with the findings of Dutta et al. (2008) that consumers with psychiatric disabilities who received these vocational trainings or university level education were one and a half times more likely to be employed than those who did not receive such services.

Additionally, the results of the current study show that consumers who have received adjustment training services tend to have higher weekly earnings at closure. This suggests that rehabilitation counselors may need to provide more adjustment training (e.g., social skills training, anger management, symptom management etc.) to help consumers with psychiatric disabilities improve their work performance and work-related behaviors, in relation to specific work settings and situations. The results also show that the receipt of restoration services was a significant predictor of successful employment outcomes for persons with disabilities. However, this result was not supported in the study by Rosenthal et al. (2007).

The results of the study with respect to gender differences in employment outcomes is also noteworthy. Compared to males, female consumers with psychiatric disabilities had a higher weekly earning at the time of application, but a lower weekly earning at the time of closure. As well, there are differences in earnings, although males and females receive similar services. This confirms earlier findings that women receive considerably lower wages than men with disabilities (Featherstone, 2009; National Women's Law Center, 2015). One possible explanation provided by Capella (2002) was that the quality of closures favored men over women. This disparity in earnings further reflects the gender-based discrimination that women with disabilities face in employment settings. There is a dual need for mental health practitioners and vocational counselors working with these populations to adopt gender-specific interventions that will improve the employment outcomes of females with psychiatric disabilities. First, practitioners need to understand the factors related to women's family and sociocultural environment and provide transitional support services in the areas of

physical health, parenting and relationships with significant others (Sacks, 2004). Second, practitioners need to continuously network and advocate on behalf of female consumers, given the level of gender discrimination that is prevalent in many employment settings.

With regard to race, the results showed that Caucasian consumers with psychiatric disabilities had significantly higher weekly earnings earned both at the time of application and closure compared to their African American counterparts. This finding is not surprising since it reflects the overall sociopolitical and economic realities of African Americans and other minorities. Beside the inherent ethnic and racial bias against African Americans and other minorities in the VR system, it may be that the peculiar but broad social conditions in African-American communities significantly impact the VR service outcomes (Harley et al., 2007). Vocational counselors working with these individuals need to improve the quality of placements for these individuals. In addition, as part of EBP, counselors need to provide continuous on-the-job support to ensure better employment outcomes.

Implications

The results of this research have implications for state VR agencies that provide services to consumers with psychiatric disabilities. Given the findings on the relationship between specific VR services that predict successful outcomes for psychiatric consumers an important consideration for VR agencies will be the improvement of the emphasis of the provision of these services. Specifically, counselors should explore ways to improve the determination of public assistance and type of education/training that provides the best fit for each consumer, given their sociocultural and economic realities. Such determination will result in the efficient utilization of scarce resources and the achievement of desired employment outcomes.

The findings regarding the differences in earnings between males and female consumers with psychiatric disabilities also has implications for specific VR services related to placement, and support services provided to female consumers. In particular, counselors need to ensure that placements for female consumers are commensurate with knowledge, skills and experience. In addition, due to issues related to discrimination at the workplace, there is a need for continued support and advocacy on behalf of female consumers with disabilities to ensure inclusion and fair treatment.

Given the findings regarding the differences in earnings between Caucasian consumers with psychiatric disabilities and African Americans, it is important for state agencies to take into consideration not only the type and quality of placement and support services provided to these populations, but also understand and address issues related to the “socioeconomic baggage” that these consumers come with. Future research should examine the relationship between the environment in which services are provided and how that effects the outcomes. Such an examination will determine the extent to which socioeconomic factors intervene in services delivery, and their impact on the ability of consumers to achieve successful employment outcomes.

Limitations

The first limitation of the study relates to the data source for the study. The data for this study were extracted from the RSA-911 database. Consequently, problems related to data error or the determination of causality impact the interpretation of the results. Second, while it may be suggested that the study’s population (e.g., individuals with psychiatric disabilities) is likely

more similar than different from those of other states with the same diagnosis, the characteristics of consumers with psychiatric disabilities, including educational levels, may not be the same across all states and all agencies. As such, the generalization of the results of this study is limited to only states with similar population characteristics. Associatively, environmental characteristics such as economic situations tend to vary across states; thus, the outcomes achieved by consumers in this state are only comparable to other states with similar economic conditions.

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Gender Differences in Identity Features and Self-Determination Process

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Abstract

This article describes the results of the investigation which was conducted among adult Russian males and females. The purpose of the investigation was to describe the gender differences of identity and self-determination process. In this investigation we also confirmed our model of identity statuses that was elaborated on the base of Marcia's model. Forty-five people were interviewed. The results indicate that women have the identity status 'open stable identity' more often than men ($p < 0.05$), and it is accompanied by the more intensive process of self-determination ($p < 0.05$). The identity status 'closed stable identity' is more typical for men ($p < 0.05$), and is associated with the weakening of the desire for change that may hinder the process of self-determination and self-development. For women, the main stimulus of self-determination is the family's welfare, and for men the main stimulus is self-development and achievement of status in society. Based on these results, we elaborated a program of individual coaching for women, which promotes open innovation processes and self-determination. The results can be also used in family therapy and occupational counseling.

Keywords: self-determination, identity status, social identity, personal identity, decision-making, gender differences

The problem of self-determination seems to be very popular in contemporary psychology. The interest in this problem in Russia is determined by social changes, which have caused a need to understand self-determination in the new social context. On the one hand, due to the so called 'speed social changes' in all spheres of life (economic, technical, social, political, and others), people experience identity crisis and the need to determine themselves in the new environment. On the other hand, the development of free market economy in Russia leads to increasing of competition and high demands in the labor market. The specific set of personal qualities that enable a person to be successfully integrated into a complex social environment is in demand: these are flexibility, dynamics, mobility, ability to learn new methods.

In these circumstances, gender differences play a specific role. In Russia, as in many other countries, men and women legally have equal rights in all spheres of life, including the professional one. But in fact, the society offers certain stereotypes of professional activities related to gender differences. Thus, the professions related to the active political and public leadership role are traditionally defined as 'male', and they are characterized by behavioral repertoire full of masculine behavioral patterns. Women choosing these professions must accept the masculine self-image and incorporate it into their identity. That is why the problem of identity and self-determination may be more difficult for women, especially for those who make career in business, than it is for men.

Russian psychologists consider self-determination in different aspects: a) a conscious act of decision-making in problem situations; b) an internal activity, which gives a certainty to personality; c) a conscious process of analysis, decision, checking representations of themselves in problem situations; d) a process of self-realization in a social context (Ermolaeva, 2011; Ivanova, 2011; Klimov, 1996; Pryazhnikov, 1996). Professional self-determination as a sort of self-determination is understood as the personality growth in vocational activities (Klimov, 1996). European and American psychologists consider self-determination to be a sort of motivation and self-regulation, but they also analyze it in connection with the problem of individual choice (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Schwarz, 2000).

Several researchers emphasize the crucial role of identity in the deployment of self-determination. For example, Ermolaeva (2011) considers identity to be a central part of professional development. She includes the individual, operational and social components into the structure of professional identity, bringing the problem of professional identity into the broader social context. However, she does not analyze the types and stages of identity in connection with the problem of professional self-determination. Soenens and Vansteenkiste (2011) underline the importance of motives and goals of identity formation, and claim that identity may vary in congruency to a person's basic growth tendencies of the self. But they do not describe these variations in terms of identity statuses or types.

In our investigation, we considered professional self-determination to be the decision-making process in a professional context, and identity to be the result of the process of self-determination. We also elaborated on the typology of identity statuses based on the model of Marcia (1980). This model includes four identity statuses, and among them only one, the achieved identity, is connected with the self-determination process.

The purpose of our investigation was to analyze the gender differences in identity and self-determination process among adult Russian males and females. The results of the investigation can be used for creating individual coaching and family therapy programs for Russian men and women.

The problem of self-determination in contemporary psychology

There are two different approaches to considering self-determination in Russian and Western psychology. In the Western (European and American) tradition, self-determination is considered as a sort of motivation when a person makes his/her own choice without any external influence. Self-determination theory (SDT) was created by Deci and Ryan (2000) and focused on the degree of self-motivated behavior. The SDT identifies three needs, which constitute the basis of self-motivated behavior: competence, autonomy and psychological relatedness. Intrinsic motivation occurs when these needs and inner personal resources are supported during prior development.

Some other investigations also analyze the problem of self-determination in connection with the problem of choice. For example, Schwarz (2000) considers that the more freedom of choice people have, the less rational the choice becomes and therefore more excessive the self-determination becomes.

In Russian psychology, self-determination is considered not in terms of motivation but in terms of self-identification (Klimov, 1996; Ivanova, 2011; Pryazhnikov, 1999; Zeer, 2003). It is the process of conscious activity aimed at understanding one's own personality and the purposes of one's own existence. The following are the main kinds of self-determination: a) life self-determination, (understanding of life purposes); b) personal self-determination (the awareness of one's personality); c) professional self-determination, which is understood as awareness of professional goals and identification with professional roles (Pryazhnikov, 1996, 1999).

Professional self-determination is usually understood by Russian researchers as personal growth in the context of vocational activities. For example, Klimov (1996) defines professional self-determination as a human activity that takes a particular content depending on the stage of the person's development as the subject of work. Pryazhnikov emphasizes values and semantics as very important aspects of the professional self-determination process. He also notes that "the essence of professional self-determination is an independent and informed search for meanings in work and life in a particular historical and cultural (socio-economic) situation" (Pryazhnikov, 1996, p. 16). Zeer (2003) underlines that professional self-determination is facilitated by different events. It is connected with the conscious choice of profession in certain psychological and socio-economic conditions.

Several researchers highlight the crucial role of professional identity in the deployment of the process of professional self-determination. For example, Shneyder (2004) defines professional identity as "the psychological category, which refers to the awareness of belonging to a particular profession and specific professional community" (p. 113). However, she considers that professional identity is the integration of personal and social identity in a professional context and that it is not confined to one's own professionalism. Ermolaeva (2011) includes individual, operational, and social components into the structure of professional identity. This idea involves the problem of professional identity in a broad social context. Ermolaeva (2011) also proposes the notion of 'professional marginalism' as the opposite of professional identity. Professional marginalism occurs when there is a conflict between the components of professional identity.

The term 'professional-personal self-determination' represents the interrelationships between professional and personal self-determination. The professional-personal determination affects

the following areas of personality: a) the motivational sphere, b) the cognitive sphere, c) behavior, d) the reflective sphere, and e) the value-sense sphere. This approach emphasizes the inextricable link between professional and personal self-determination. Professional self-determination in its close relationship with personal development was considered by Pryazhnikov and Pryazhnikova (2004). The researchers relate the concept of 'professional self-determination' with terms such as 'self-actualization', 'self-realization', and 'self-transcendence'. Professional and personal self-determination, according to the researchers, appear in close relationship and merge in their higher manifestations. The essence of professional self-determination, according to Pryazhnikov (1996) is a conscious search for meaning in professional activities in the context of a specific social, economic and cultural-historical situation. The core of professional self-determination is the internal readiness to plan and implement future personal and professional development.

Pryazhnikov (1996) does not draw clear boundaries between professional, life and personal self-determination; however, he determines the following features of these processes:

- a) professional self-determination is more formal, and depends on the environment (social inquiry, respectively corresponding organizations, equipment, etc.);
- b) self-determination of life is more global and covers the whole life and lifestyle of the person in the specific cultural and economic environment. At the same time, it depends on the stereotypes of the public consciousness of the cultural environment, on economic, social, environmental and other 'objective' factors determining the life of the social and professional groups;
- c) personal self-determination is impossible to formalize; it develops in complex, as opposed to favourable, circumstances, from which the best personal qualities of the person emerge. At the same time, self-determination is a conscious process of analysis, deciding, and checking the strength of one's own position, and the representations of oneself in problem situations.

Considering self-determination as "a problematic situation, which determines a change of life circumstances and triggers the appropriate activity aimed at choice" (Ivanova, 2009, p. 95), Ivanova (2009) comes to the conclusion that the process of self-determination in a social or professional environment is close to the decision-making process in its content and meaning. Thus, the main function of self-determination is the preparation and adoption of the optimal solution for a person's future prospects in the context of the problem situation. In this case, self-determination acts as the process of solving tasks on different levels of complexity and importance for the individual. In the course of this process the number of alternatives reduces. The identity is the "inner frame" of the selection process; it is at the same time a basis and a result of self-determination. Thus, Ivanova (2009) concludes that the process of social and professional self-determination should be considered on two levels: in terms of the construction of social and professional identity, and in terms of the individual characteristics of decision-making (Ivanova, 2011, 2009).

Based on Ivanova's model of self-determination, we believe that self-determination is the process of learning about oneself by taking deliberate action, based on selection decisions regarding 'Self'. However, we believe that social and professional self-determination is inextricably linked to personal self-determination.

Identity Status and Self-determination

Previously, we analyzed the different identity models, and developed a model of identity based on the views of Erikson, Breakwell, and Marcia (Antonova, 1997). This model was the basis of our further researches. As a basic definition of identity, we adopted the definitions of Erikson (1968), Marcia (1980) and Breakwell (1986), slightly modified it: identity is a system of self-representations, beliefs, values, life goals, which a person subjectively experiences as a sense of continuity of his/her personality, and perceives other people as recognizing his/her identity as well. In this research, we understand identity as a complex personal system, which includes self-concept, detailed in the time perspective (past, present, and future I), as well as goals, values and beliefs of the individual.

Based on the model of identity, described in papers of Breakwell (1986) and Marcia (1980), we identified the following structural components of identity:

- 1) Cognitive dimension: includes all the features that people use to describe themselves. Cognitive dimension includes social and personal components. Personal identity is the self-categorization in terms of physical and personality traits; social identity is the self-categorization in terms of group membership.
- 2) Estimated dimension: every element of the identity is assessed by the person, according to internalized norms and values.
- 3) The time dimension of identity: implies that identity development moves in terms of subjective time. Individual self-concepts are the vertical slices of the structure at different time periods. That is, unlike Tajfel (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), we consider the self-concept as a component of identity; the latter combines individual sections of the self-concept (I – past, I – present, I – future) into a united system, which gives a person a sense of self-continuation.

Cognitive dimension of identity extends over a person's life. Actual elements of identity are not static, neither are their structural organization. They change following a change in the social context. People differ in the degree of coherence of identity elements. Some people have a strict hierarchical structure of identity, others – a chaotic set of individual elements.

We recognize the social determinism of identity and connection between social and personal identity, so we concentrate on the component, which was called by Ermolaeva (2011) as 'individual', recognizing the existence of other components, but not accentuating them.

In developing the model of identity types (statuses), we relied on the status model of Marcia (Marcia, 1980; Kroger, Martinussen & Marcia, 2010), in which there are four statuses or conditions of identity. According to Marcia (1970), identity is a dynamic system of needs, abilities, beliefs, and individual history. The key point of his theory is the idea that this structure is manifested phenomenologically through the patterns of 'problem-solving'. In fact, every life problem to be solved by people contributes to the formation and development of identity through the formation of so-called 'identity units'. As the identity structure expands, the degree of self-awareness, goal-orientation and understanding the meaning of life increases. In our view, the patterns of 'problem-solving' are phenomenological content of the process of self-determination and may be considered as indicators of its presence.

Marcia identified four identity statuses. To construct his model he used two variables: 1) the presence or absence of crisis – the state of search for identity, and 2) the presence or absence of identity units – personally meaningful goals, values, beliefs.

The four identity statuses according to Marcia's model are:

1. Identity Achievement. People who have experienced the period of crisis and self-exploration and formed definite units of significant goals, values and beliefs, have this status.
2. Identity Moratorium. Marcia uses this term after Erickson in relation to a person in a state of identity crisis and those who actively try to solve it, attempt different options.
3. Identity Foreclosure. This status is attributed to the person who has never suffered a crisis of identity, but nevertheless has a specific set of goals, values and beliefs. The content and strength of these identity elements may be the same that achieved identity has, but the way of formation differs. Premature identity elements are formed relatively early in life, not as a result of self-search and selection, but mainly due to identification with parents or other significant people. Thus taken goals, values, and beliefs may be similar to the parent or may reflect the expectations of the parents.
4. Identity Diffusion. Such a state of identity is typical for people who do not have strong goals, values and beliefs, and are not trying to actively shape them. They have not yet made commitments. They have never come through identity crisis, or have been unable to solve problems. In the absence of a clear sense of identity, people may experience a number of adverse conditions, including pessimism, apathy, depression, undirected anger, alienation, anxiety, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness (Marcia, 1980).

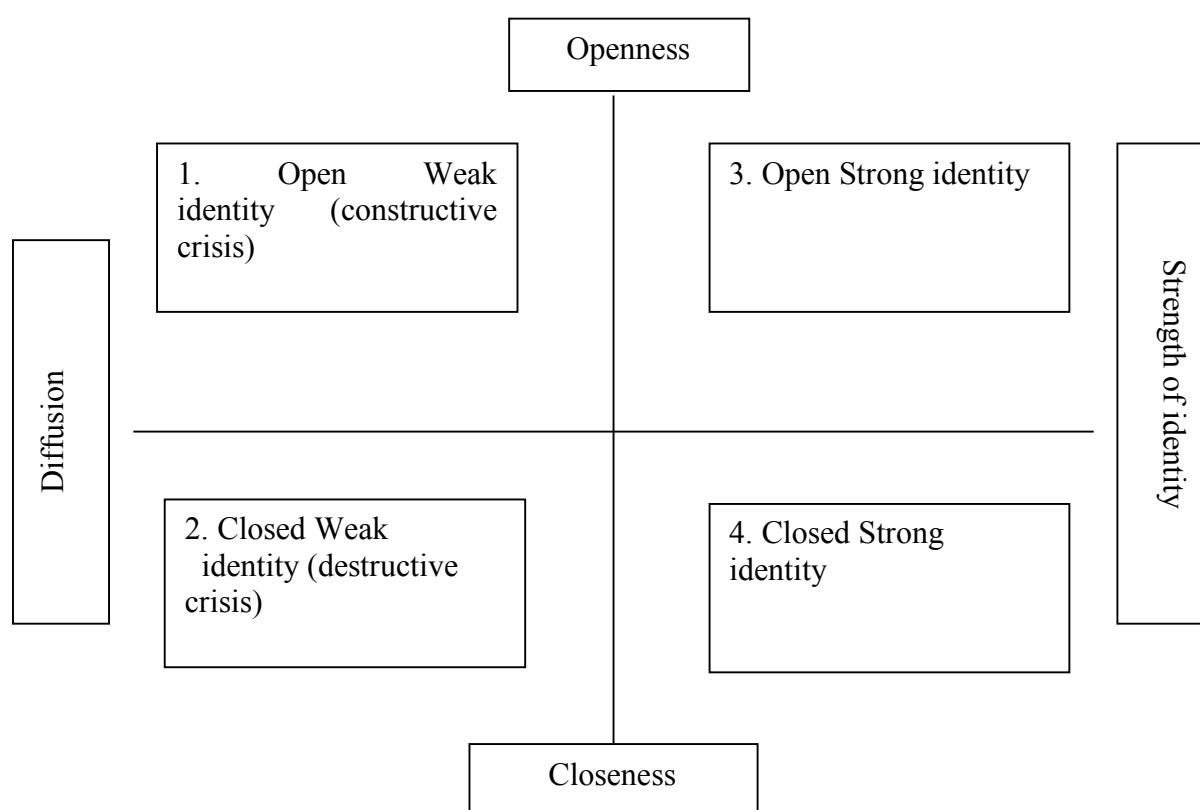
The above statuses are not stages and should not be considered as a consequential process.

Marcia believed that identity develops throughout a person's life (Marcia, 1980, 1970). He distinguished two ways to achieve identity:

- 1) Gradual realization of certain personal data (name, nationality, availability capabilities, etc.) – this path leads to the formation of the assigned or premature identity;
- 2) Independent human decisions about their lives – this way leads to the formation of the constructed or achieved identity. Identity crisis, as a rule, does not encompass the whole of human life, and focuses on a limited number of issues in specific spheres of life. Thus, in every moment of life a person has mixed state identity and its attribution to a particular status is rather arbitrary.

Based on Marcia's ego-identity status model, we developed our own typology of identity statuses (Antonova, 1997). We have identified two parameters that can be used to describe the state of identity: 1) the 'strength' of identity – which characterizes the degree of commitment, the degree of self-determination and self-awareness, 2) openness – willingness to change, to accept and take a new social environment. The combination of these parameters provides the following types (statuses) of identity (Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Identity Statuses Model (Antonova, 1997)



Types 1 and 2 are the crisis zones, but identity crisis can take place in different ways. While the person maintains the openness he starts looking for a new personal self-categorization, which is impossible without self-changing. In the case of enhancing the protection of existing ‘Self’, the personal closeness and rejection of change leads to the development of the crisis in a destructive direction with negative emotional consequences for the individual (depression, loss of meaning, etc.).

Types 3 and 4 are the regions of stable, strong, ‘achieved’ (by Marcia) identity, when identity units are formed, personal goals and values are realized. However, the identity cannot be ‘achieved’ once and for all: if the person stops further searches of himself, regress begins – and it is the way back to crisis. Thus, only identity type 3, while maintaining the openness, provides the actual stability. Identity type 4, while maintaining or enhancing closeness, sooner or later goes in type 2 – destructive crisis.

The process of self-determination occupies a key position in our model of identity, as in the model of Marcia (1980), and that is the ability to choose identity elements. The analysis of theoretical studies of self-determination and identity leads to the conclusion of their phenomenological proximity. Structural components of self-determination are actually repeated identity components. However, self-determination is considered to be a process, while identity a state that results from this process.

Based on the analysis of Marcia’s status model and different ideas of identity formation, self-awareness, and self-relation (Ivanova, 2007; Breakwell, 1986; Bosma, 1985), we have identified the following mechanisms of identity formation:

- Identification with significant others, which results in an uncritical, often unconscious acceptance of values, beliefs, attitudes of significant others (especially parents). This is the main mechanism of ‘identity foreclosure’ formation.
- Internalization of opinions, statements of others about themselves – this is a mechanism of forming a so-called ‘indirect’ or ‘mirror Self’, that is, representations of the persons about themselves, their qualities and characteristics, based on the opinion of others about themselves. This mechanism also works on the formation of ‘identity foreclosure’.
- Self-determination – making decisions about own qualities, beliefs, goals and values. Self-determination is the most complicated process; it starts during the identity crisis and results in the formation of identity. On an emotional level, self-determination may manifest itself in complex and ambivalent emotions, in which painful experiences of finding solutions to problems can be accompanied by a sense of creative inspiration.

Thus, the dynamics of identity can be represented as follows:

1. Diffuse identity is the starting point of identity development. However, it does not last long as a starting point of identity formation. A baby really does not know who ‘he’ is, but from birth he begins to explain it. This process includes identification processes (the earliest mechanism) and internalization; the ‘identity foreclosure’ is forming in this manner. We believe that in general, a three-year-old child already has identity foreclosure. However, this does not mean that diffuse identity disappears forever; this state is returning every time during identity crisis, though, apparently, on a different level. The state of diffusion may indicate the beginning of an identity crisis.

2. Identity foreclosure, as already noted, is formed by the action of identification and internalization processes, and can survive for quite a long time. Most authors following Erikson believe that the identity crisis is a mandatory characteristic of adolescence. But it is possible to see both adolescents and adults retaining their identity foreclosure without any attempts of self-determination. Perhaps this is due to certain violations of family education (e.g. hyperprotection) or some personal characteristics (conformity, high level of self-monitoring, etc.), but these assumptions need empirical verification.

3. Identity crisis is a special state of the individual, which is based on a conflict between the particular elements of identity or between identity elements and the elements of the environment (including the biological organization of the individual). These contradictions can for some time not be realized by the individual, because of action of protective mechanisms (e.g., denial), helping to restore and maintain emotional balance. Any controversy in cognitions, according to the balance theories, cause negative emotional states, as it requires changes in the cognitive structure.

Identity crisis inevitably arises in every human life, as both individual and environment are constantly changing, and these changes occur unevenly in different areas of the individual and the environment. Thus, the emergence of contradictions is inevitable. However, the crisis could lead to different results in terms of the identity dynamics. The key personal feature, in our opinion, is the ‘openness’, that is the ability of the person to be open to changes. Usually openness decreases with age and with the acquisition of professional stereotypes (Antonova,

1997). That is why the identity crisis usually proceeds more difficultly for people who are older.

The first option of coping strategies is to eliminate the contradiction by eliminating dissonant elements (for example, by isolation a person can eliminate the contradiction between his own values and the values of the social environment).

The second option of coping with crisis is including the mechanisms of protection and denial of the crisis. It can occur when a person is closed to changes. In some cases, an individual can save former state of identity for a long time. In this case, we name the identity status 'closed stable identity'. But over time, the contradictions can intensify and a time of 'breakthrough' of the crisis in the sphere of consciousness may come – while maintaining of closeness in this case sets the status 'closed unstable identity', or a destructive crisis. Unwillingness to change with all the growing tensions, which are subjectively experienced as a 'problem', leads to increased negative emotional states up to depression and even suicide.

The third option is switching on the processes of self-determination as 'problem-solving' patterns. This raises other emotional dynamics: along with negative emotions, which accompany the rejection of former identity elements, the individual may experience moments of emotional recovery, knitted with creative search of himself, his goals and values. We call this option the constructive crisis, as it leads to the formation of new units of identity. The earlier described identity state we call 'unstable open identity'.

4. Achieved (strong open) identity can be formed only by the passage of a constructive crisis. But as this is kept open, there is willingness and even a tendency to change, so it is impossible to talk about stability in the sense of long-term existence of such a state. Rather, this identity status could be called 'constructive stable identity crisis' that is a constant self-transformation associated with the work on own self, the decision for all emerging problems, but not accompanied by negative emotional states.

In the situation of increasingly accelerating social changes, which we have seen in recent decades in Russia, only such identity status can provide the proper functioning of a person in society, and at the same time the fullest realization of a person's potential. Thus, the introduction of 'openness' as a dimension of identity allows us to overcome the contradiction noted by Ermolaeva (2011), between the need to maintain a stable identity and subjective well-being of the person on the one hand, and the need to adapt to the changing conditions of the social environment on the other.

This assumption is especially true with regard to people working in business, as this is an area where most people experience uncertainty and the need for decision-making at high risk (Ivanova, 2009, 2011).

Gender and Identity

Gender determines the kind of social identity called gender identity. Gender identity is most stable and one of the most important among all kinds of social identities. Once the person determines himself/herself as a man (e.g. masculine) or a woman (e.g. feminine), he or she begins to internalize the gender demands of the society.

Various studies have revealed that the male role has traditionally been considered as instrumental and active, and the female as expressive and communicative. It was found in experimental studies that men tend to the instrumental style (focus on problem solving), and women are more emotional, with a tendency to focus on feelings, emotions, the desire for the manifestation of emotions and sharing them with others (Bendas, 2006). However, it is believed that the female style of work is more flexible; women are more open and sociable than men. Men are often dismissed from leadership positions because of the lack of flexibility in dealing with subordinates, while women generally praised for their good interaction with the staff. Ilyin showed that the 'real woman' is rather weak, vulnerable, unstable, and more impulsive; and the 'real man', on the contrary, is super normative, emotionally stable and completely pleased with himself (Ilyin, 2002).

Gender studies have appeared also in organizational research. Currently, business involves more women, and they often become successful entrepreneurs and competitors for men, but female managers often face specific difficulties. Employees do not recognize them as leaders, and male employees oppose them. Women face more obstacles in career advancement than men. There is the possibility of gender conflict in organizations: for example, between the female and male chief subordinates, who do not recognize her right for leadership. Evaluation of the managers' effectiveness is based on male criteria, which leads to the imposition of masculine norms on women's business styles. But the emergence of a large number of women in the business world is changing attitudes towards masculine values, and they are more likely to be re-evaluated.

Gender can be connected with some identity features which are important factors of career development in management. Identity is an important component of self-consciousness, which largely determines the behavior of the individual, and his or her thoughts and feelings.

Some investigations give the evidences of gender differences in identity features. In the study of college students (Bilsker & Marcia, 1991), researchers showed that women may have a greater disposition towards adaptively regressive experience. The authors believe that these gender differences might reflect a greater reliance on subjectivism among women, allowing greater access to adaptive regression as a means of identity formation. The results also show evidence that the identity status Moratorium is more typical for women than men, but the differences are not statistically significant. In another investigation (Farhana et al., 2010), the results showed that males scored highest in identity achievement status, while females scored highest on the moratorium identity status. An investigation of Russian medical students (Cerkovsky, 2008) showed that young women have more mature identity, and more often than young men of the same age have the status of achieved identity. At the same time, gender identity is more important for women than for men as another attribute of global identity, but they determine themselves mostly emotionally and subjectively, while men determine themselves using more objective criteria. Thus, these results suggest that there is a significant association between gender and identity status, though the conclusions are rather contradictory.

All the described investigations were made from samples of adolescents and college students, but we supposed that among adults there may also be gender differences in identity status and self-determination.

In our study, based on the model of identity dynamics described above, we are investigating the gender differences in identity status and self-determination among people working in business. So the purpose of our investigation is to identify and describe these differences.

The hypotheses are:

- 1) Women are more oriented to personal identity features than men;
- 2) Women have, more often than men, the identity status ‘strong open identity’; and
- 3) The self-determination process among women is determined by higher orientation of women to family values and interpersonal relations.

Method

Participants

The participants were people working in different business organizations in Russia (Moscow), 45 people (31 women and 14 men).

The recruitment was carried out among people visiting personal coaching sessions and groups from a so-called ‘business incubator’ which was created to support business startups. Participation was voluntary; all respondents gave the permission for using their data in the investigation. The age of participants was 18-50 years, (average 28.6). The professional status was mostly managers in business companies and six people were business owners. We didn’t consider the type of business in this investigation. The participants’ work experience was one-19 years (average 6.7).

Procedure and Instruments

All participants filled out the questionnaires that included two sections. The first section was ‘Who am I?’ by Kuhn and McPartlend (1954), which we used to study the identity status. For the purposes of our investigation, we modified the processing procedures for the results (Antonova, 1997). The instruction for the test ‘Who am I?’ was the following: “You have to give 20 different answers to the question ‘Who am I?’” After the respondents wrote all the answers, they were asked to note the modality of each statement: + if I like this feature, I take it as a positive; - If I do not like it; 0 – if I’m neutral to this characteristic.

For processing the results, we used content analysis of the texts, and counted the total number of statements (respondents could give both less and more than 20 characteristics), as well as the number of positive, neutral, and negative characteristics. The categories of content-analysis were the following: 1) social roles (they were divided into general, gender, family, professional and other roles); 2) individual personal statements (appearance, communication, love, interests, goals, personal features, and emotional state). We also counted the indicators of crisis of diffusion such as: negative emotions (‘I’m depressed’); indicators of diffusion (for example, such phrases as ‘I don’t know who I am’); personal search (“I’m trying to understand what I need and who I am”), and the adjectives which are, according to Kuhn and McPartlend (1954), the indicators of crisis (especially if they are used as the first answers).

We used the expert survey to determine what statements can be indicators of each of the identity statuses according to our model. As the result of this survey, we allocated the following indicators of the identity statuses:

1) The level of identity differentiation, which is the measure of the total number of statements. High differentiation (15-20 statements) indicates a strong identity. A low level of differentiation (1-5 statements) may indicate the presence of a destructive identity crisis. A very high level of differentiation (more than 20 statements, while respondents often asked ‘can I still write more?’) usually shows people in a state of constructive identity crisis, ‘the search for self’ (this is very common among teenagers).

2) The ratio of social-role and individual personal statements. Social-role statements include: general roles (‘man’), family roles (‘mother’, ‘son’), professional roles (‘manager’), other roles (‘passenger’, ‘reader’). The predominance of role characteristics may indicate a predominance of social identification, which can be a sign of being closed to changes. The predominance of individual personality characteristics, especially in the form of adjectives (‘smart’, ‘kind’, ‘caring’) may indicate, on the contrary, the predominance of personal identification and opening a new search for identity elements. However, the presence of personality characteristics in the form of the adjectives in the first three positions in the list of qualities may indicate the presence of a crisis, which requires confirmation by other methods.

3) The ratio of positive and negative self-descriptions. People usually use no more than 1/3 of negative self-characteristics of all the statements (Kuhn & McPartlend, 1954). Having more negative statements may indicate the presence of low self-esteem and a destructive crisis.

4) Timing parameters of identity. People usually write answers in this test in the present tense. Answers ‘in the past’ (called ‘prospective identity’) – for example, “I was once a happy man” – may indicate negative trends of crisis. In contrast, the presence of characteristics ‘in the future’ (perspective identity) may indicate strong time perspective and a ‘strong’ identity.

5) The presence of words indicating a crisis, even if they are rare, may indicate the presence of an identity crisis. A constructive crisis is accompanied by an active search for identity elements (“I do not know who I am”, “I’m looking for myself”, “I’m trying to understand who am I”) while a destructive crisis is accompanied by closeness and negative emotional states, especially when social-role statements dominate. A typical example of this type: the last statement of one respondent's answers after a dozen professional roles (“I am a manager”, “I’m an administrator”, etc.) was “I am an unhappy woman”.

6) The presence of words indicating ‘identity work’ (characteristics of beliefs, goals, values) usually imply the presence of a strong open identity.

All of these indicators are analyzed in the aggregate, and only after a deep qualitative and quantitative analysis is it possible to form conclusions about the prevalence of a particular identity status (Table 1).

Table 1: Indicators of Identity Statuses

Identity Status	Indicators
1. Strong open identity	High differentiation; predominance of personality characteristics, prevalence of positive characteristics, indicators of "identity work", perspective identity indicators.
2. Strong closed identity	High or medium level of differentiation, the prevalence of social-role statements, the prevalence of positive self-characterization.
3. Weak open identity (constructive crisis)	High or very high differentiation, the prevalence of personal characteristics, the presence of crisis indicators or indicators of "identity work", the presence of perspective identity.
4. Weak closed identity (destructive crisis)	Low differentiation, the prevalence of social-role statements and negative self-characterization, the presence of the words "crisis indicators".

The second method, 'Significant problems and solutions', was elaborated by Antonova (1997) on the basis of the methodology used in the thesis of Bosma (1985). This method to study was utilized for the processes of self-determination.

This method includes open-ended questions aimed at exploring the following measurements of the self-determination process: a) the existence and content of the actual spheres of identity formation units, shown by significant problems ("What are the three problems you are now concerned about?"), b) the existence and nature of activity in terms of resolving these problems ("What are you doing to resolve these problems?").

The methodology is based on Marcia's assumptions that the processes of self-determination starts when the person begins resolving the actual problems in a particular area of life. The respondents' answers were analyzed using content analysis. We counted the statements in two categories: a) sphere of problem (family, business, money, health, well-being); b) kind of activity to resolve the problem (passive – active behavior). The method 'Significant problems and solutions' allows to indicate the leading spheres of identity formation, and the presence of problem resolution activity as an indicator of the self-determination processes. The significance of differences was established using the Mann-Whitney coefficient.

Results and Discussion

The results of the answers to the question "Who am I?" show that there are significant differences in the features of self-determination and identity between female and male managers. They are as follows:

1) The proportion of social and personal identity components in the total identity structure of men and women differs (Table 2). The social identity component dominates in the structure

of males, whereas the personal identity prevails among women. Professional identification is much less pronounced among women than among men. Women used more indicators of crisis in their self-descriptions, especially the indicators of search (such as ‘I’m looking for myself’, ‘I’m trying to understand who I am’).

Table 2: Gender-specific identity features (in % of the total number of statements for each sample; Professional Identity and Crisis Identity are a subset of Social Identify and Personal Identity).

Identity Component	Social Identity (SI)	Personal Identity (PI)	Professional Identity (PrI)	Crisis Indicators (CI)
males	62*	37*	20*	6*
females	42*	55*	9*	10*

* ($p < 0.05$)

2) The identity status indicates the presence or absence of an identity crisis, as well as readiness to changes. We found the following differences in the identity statuses of men and women (Table 3). The closed strong identity is more common for men, and the open strong identity is more often among women. In general, men are more closed and are not likely to change. At the same time, these results may reflect the fact that men tend to displace problems and to demonstrate a socially desirable image of a stable and successful person. Women are more open to change, while at the same time, their identity is less stable, and they are more prone to structural crises of identity (status ‘open unstable identity’).

Table 3: Identity status: gender differences (in % of the total number of people in each sample).

Identity Status	Open Strong	Closed Strong	Open Weak	Closed Weak
males	14*	72*	7*	7
females	34*	30*	30*	6

* ($p < 0.05$)

3) As for affective component of identity, negative and ambivalent self-relation is more typical for women, although these differences were not statistically significant in our sample. The analysis of problems and solutions identifies the significant areas in which identity formation is going on, and the availability of decision-making processes, which are indicators of the self-determination process (Table 4).

Table 4: Problems and their solutions: gender differences (in % of the total number of statements by groups).

Types of problems	Professional problems	Personal problems		Societal problems
		Financial problems	Family and personal problems	
males	37	2*	39	22*
females	35	27*	39	0*

* (p < 0.05)

Women are much more concerned about financial problems than men (lack of money, renovating apartment, buying a new car or apartment, etc.). For men, however, this kind of problem is almost non-existent, or they do not perceive it as a problem (in the questionnaire, we used the word ‘problem’), but as everyday tasks that require solutions. At the same time men, unlike women, are concerned about the problems of society and the country (the political situation in the country, the environment, the degradation of society, the future of Russia, etc.); they use definitions like ‘citizen of Russia’ more often than women. Perhaps a strong civil identity is more typical for men than for women. However, the emphasis on the problems of society (usually listed issues actively discussed in the media) can be a way of escaping self-disclosure.

In general, the personal sphere (including financial problems) is more important for women than the professional sphere. But personal problems for women primarily concern others, meaning problems in relationships and family as well as health, while men are more concerned about their own personal problems (time-management; lack of self-confidence, lack of personal self-development). Decision-making processes are more active among women, while among men the proportion of respondents giving passive answers (“do nothing”, “I can’t do anything about it”) is higher than among women.

We can conclude that the self-determination process is more difficult for female managers than for males in Russia. Perhaps it is caused by the contradictions between social demands for female managers. On the one hand, they should be more masculine and active as they work in business; while on the other hand, they should be good mothers and wives, and that implies more feminine behavior. That contradiction may launch a more active process of self-determination. The open identity status that most women have is apparently caused by the same circumstances. Openness of identity means readiness for changes which are necessary for the best adaptation to the social situation. Very surprising for us was the result that women are much more concerned about financial problems than men. Maybe it is due to the specific Russian situation where women play the leading position in the family, and often manage the family budget.

Limitations of the research study can be connected with cross-cultural factors. For example, differences between men and women in identity statuses and problems can be determined by cultural attitudes and stereotypes to family, work, and profession, which are specific for Russia in this study. Due to the small sample, we couldn’t follow the influence of professional status, age, work experience and other demographic factors. Another limitation concerns empirical methods, which cannot cover all aspects of the self-determination process. That is why, the results are more useful for understanding personal and life self-

determination, but for analyzing professional self-determination, additional methods should be used.

Conclusion

According to the Tajfel and Turner approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), every personality can be defined on different levels of self-categorization: social, organizational, national, local etc. We can see that male and female managers have different foci of self-categorizations and it's important for understanding the self-determination process as well. We can conclude that the processes of self-determination proceed more precisely among women working in business. Women are more prone to change, looking for themselves and for possible solutions to problems, and their leading spheres of the formation of new identity elements are family, personal relationships, and material status. It can be assumed that the material welfare of the family is the main stimulus of self-determination for women in business. For men, however, the self-development as a specialist and as an individual is more significant. We suppose that men are developing business for the sake of self-development and to achieve status in society, rather than for the welfare of the family.

In conclusion, the hypotheses were confirmed:

1. There are gender differences in the identity features of people working in business: a) the personal component predominates in the identity structure of women, whereas in the identity structure of males, the social component prevails; b) men have a stronger professional identity than women; c) the presence of crisis indicators is more frequent for women than for men.
2. There are gender differences in the identity status: the closed strong identity is more typical for men, and the open strong identity is more common for women. In general, the degree of openness to changes is higher among women than in men. Men have a higher degree of stability of identity. This suggests that men working in business are less likely to change anything in their life.
3. The process of self-determination related to making decisions about themselves and their lives is more active among women. For women, the main stimulus of self-determination in business is their family's welfare, and for men the main stimulus is self-development and achievement of status in society.

The results can be used in coaching and therapy. We can assume that when working with men, the coach should pay more attention to the development of openness to change while maintaining stability of identity, whereas for women it is more important to stimulate forming units of professional identity, overcoming crises of identity, and to create and maintain a balance between the personal and professional spheres of life.

Implications for Future Research

This research was conducted in a single geographic location. In order to generalize the findings, further studies are required in different locations and countries with wider samples. Other factors – including, for example, age, professional status family status and others – which can influence identity and self-determination features could also be considered if the sample size were to be increased.

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Examining Migrants' Notions of “Home,” “Nation,” “Identity,” and “Belonging”

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Abstract

This paper examines migrant workers' transnational experiences as they take on varying tendencies and trajectories that take place in both their host country and homeland settings. By introspectively looking at their non-economic personal issues, this paper explores how migrant workers construct/reconstruct themselves, seen through their notions of “home,” “nation,” “identity,” and “belonging.” Such notions are further filtered by locating them against the nexus of gender ideologies, concepts of family and parenthood, and religious affiliation.

Keywords: identity formation, migrant workers, transnationalism

There is no denying the fact that diasporic movements have tended to take on different tendencies in the past few years, compared to those that took place in the 20th century. While the earlier waves of labor-related migration saw the 20th century being propelled by economic issues within both the household and at national levels in the homeland and heavily concentrated on the contributions of male migrant workers, scholars found the said trend to be disturbing (Boyd & Grieco, 2003; Boehm, 2008; see also Lucassen & Lucassen, 2015). It encouraged later explorations of other often-underexplored trajectories. As such, investigations have started to look into issues that bring scholars into a more introspective approach in the hopes that their findings would provide them clearer answers to some non-economic personal issues that confront overseas workers. This paper is an attempt at examining some of the notions deeply intertwined with migrant workers' understanding of their "selves", and the relationships they either create or maintain while engaged in overseas work. This paper posits that a study on the notions of "home," "nation," "identity," and "belonging" vis-à-vis the nexus of gender ideologies, concepts of family and parenthood, and religious affiliation confronts not only scholars, but also migrants regarding the needed social lenses through which one can examine and understand the shifting diasporic tendencies. The paper makes a general discussion of the notions at hand and cites a specific Filipino migrant worker's experience, allowing a much closer examination of the relevant issues.

Transnationalism

To better understand and appreciate the diasporic experiences overseas workers go through in their host country, it is important to examine closely their transnational experience, so as not to confuse it with a simple *change* that only takes place in a single milieu or spectrum. Defined as a "social transformation spanning borders" (Vertovec, 2009, p. 4), *transnationalism* can be better understood under the prism of long-term changes. This is but fitting as Vertovec (2009) further calls transformations a popular motif within the context of globalization. "Stated more strongly, change that occurs only at the micro level of people or only at the macro level of collectivities, rather than at both levels, is likely to be a momentary fad rather than an enduring transformation" (Rosenau, as cited in Vertovec, 2009, p. 22). In looking at modern research on transformations that occur in societies, Ulf Hannerz demonstrates that those that take shape in the transnational context influence societies at national, local, and personal levels (as cited in Vertovec, 2009). Likewise, Vertovec commends David Held et al's (1999) *Global Transformations* for advocating the "transformationalist" approach to changes that heightened interconnectedness via globalization has brought about. Transnational activities, Portes (1999) maintains, refer to regularly occurring conditions spanning state boundaries, marked by the actors' genuine allegiance to fulfilling them. Performed by authoritative actors, such as those from the national government and multinational companies and "more modest individuals, such as immigrants and their home country kin and relations" (p. 464), transnational activities are distinguished as *transnationalism from above* and *transnationalism from below*, respectively (Portes et al, 1999, p. 221). Portes et al's mapping of transnational activities includes not only the normative approach to migration that is purely economic, but also those that have political, cultural, and religious dimensions. This explains, to a large extent, why a discussion on the notions of "home," "nation," "identity," and "belonging" and their intersectionality with the three other earlier-mentioned notions proves significant.

Transnational Spaces and “Imagined Communities”

Roger Rouse’s concept of “alternative cartography of social space [refers to] transnational spaces... [that] are envisioned as multi-sited ‘imagined communities’ whose boundaries stretch across the borders of two or more nation-states” (Gutierrez & Hondagnue-Sotelo, 2008, p. 504). In the article “Asian brands and the shaping of a transnational imagined community,” Cayla and Eckhardt (2008) explain how *transnationalism from above* exploits these “imagined communities.” The same authors maintain that regional Asian brand managers have started capitalizing on people’s common understanding of global and multicultural experiences, playing a part in the production of “an imagined Asia as urban, modern, and multicultural” (p. 216). A look at Filipino migration, on the other hand, requires the need to look at *transnationalism from below*, exploring “the interstitial social spaces traversed and occupied by migrants in their sojourns between places of origin and places of destination” (Gutierrez & Hondagnue-Sotelo, 2008, p. 504). In this context, Gutierrez and Hondagnue-Sotelo further assert that global companies continually adapt to a changing international market and, as such, technological innovations in the transportation and communication sectors facilitate exchanges within transnational networks. These transnational engagements are a combination of “both population settlement and population circulation,” calling for a reconstruction of the meaning of *local community* and the emergence of “translocal as another way to conceive of human migration and demographic change” (p. 505). Gutierrez and Hondagnue-Sotelo (2008) also claim that transnational scholarship undergirds social (re)formations that have an impact on one’s identity, a discussion to which I will go back in the later part of this paper. For Aihwa Ong (1999), this has a bearing on *flexible citizenship* defined as the “cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions” (p. 6). Clearly, this prompts thinking about *identity* and *belonging*.

The Notions of “Identity” and “Belonging” vis-à-vis Religion/ Faith

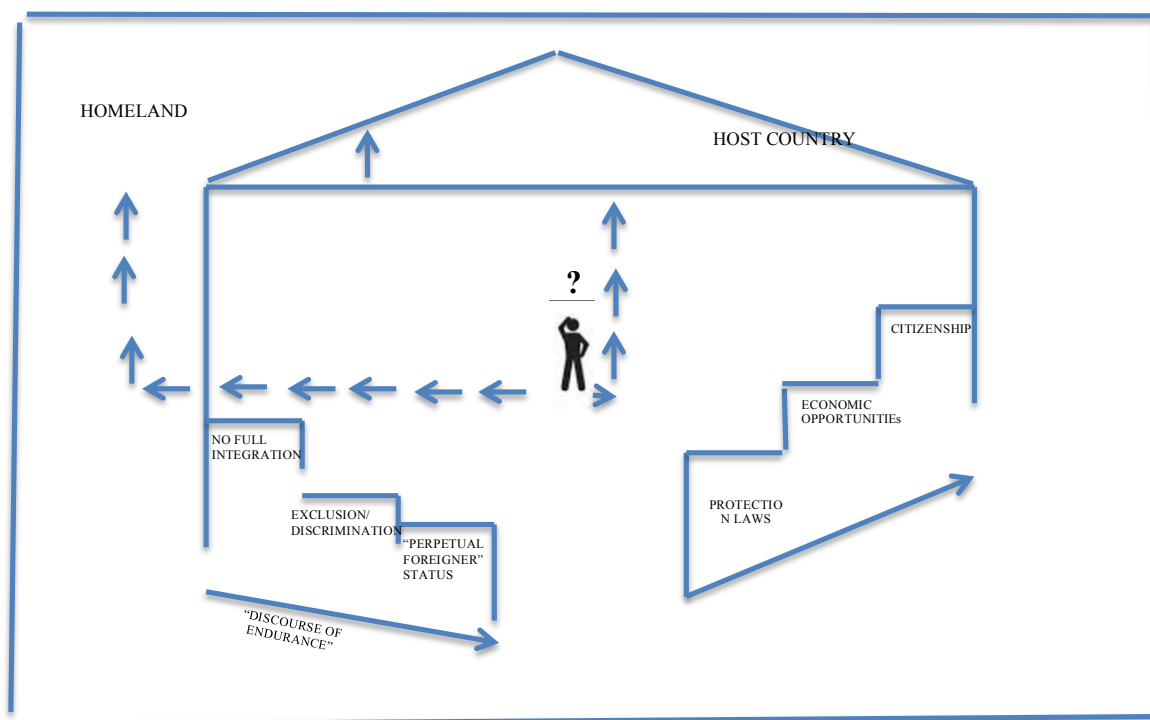
In their quest to accumulate capital and social prestige in the global arena, subjects emphasize, and are regulated by, practices favoring flexibility, mobility, and repositioning in relation to markets, governments, and cultural regimes. These logics and practices are produced within particular structures of meaning, family, gender, nationality, class mobility, and social power (Ong, 1999, p. 6).

One of the key features of Aihwa Ong’s (1999) flexible citizenship most relevant to this essay is her problematization of the identity, underscoring who “belongs.” This concept is a two-pronged process: social and political (Ong, 1999; Gutierrez & Hondagnue-Sotelo, 2008; see also Castles & Davidson, 2000). Social processes include, but are not limited to, the need to assimilate; political processes, on the other hand, originate within the host-country-homeland axis. More specifically, host-country political processes include, but are not limited to, exclusionary practices (De Genova, 2002; Bosniak, 2006), whereas homeland political processes include, but are not limited to, the sending country’s act of “disciplining” its migrant workers by way of capturing monetary remittances sent home (Miralao, 2007; Pécoud, 2009; Lorente, 2011).

The need to assimilate has led to the notion of acquiring a particular citizenship (Ong, 1999; Gutierrez & Hondagnue-Sotelo, 2008). As illustrated in Figure 1 below, migrants recognize

that acquiring citizenship is a necessity. In the figure below, an overseas Filipino worker's (OFWs hereafter) migratory experience is further explored.

Figure 1: An illustration of the Filipino migrant workers' dilemma involving the presence/absence of citizenship in a host country.



First, it affords them protection from deportation, “the ultimate means of emphasizing ‘the borders demarcating the included’” (Kumar & Grundy-Warr, as cited in Derks, 2013, p. 223). Second, it provides them economic opportunities that non-citizens may be denied. Mobility creates many paths for migrants. In the case of OFWs, for instance, cognizant of the fate that other OFWs have suffered from in the past in various work destinations, they understand that their settlement condition controls their sense of identity and belonging, and even security, within the host country (see San Juan, E. Jr., 2000; Constable, 2007). However, while acquiring citizenship guarantees protection from deportation and provides economic opportunities that may be elusive to non-citizens, it is important to note that this form of assimilation is often a highly contested process in many host-societies. Prejudicial treatments propel Filipino migrants to take on the identity of *transmigrants* who, despite being stable in their new country, insist on “maintaining multiple linkages to their homeland” (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995, p. 48) and

generating and sustaining multistranded relations between the Philippines and the United States...In so doing, they have created and maintained fluid and multiple identities that link them simultaneously to both countries (as cited in Tyner & Kuhlke, 2000, p. 239).

As mentioned earlier, a host country's exclusionary practices impinge on migrants' notions of identity and belonging. Aihwa Ong (1999) views this as another form of “flexible citizenship.” Political by nature, exclusionary practices are a form of contestation and prejudicial treatment which Tyner and Kuhlke (2000) argue Filipino migrants will encounter in other destinations. While households of top destination countries, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, allow Filipina migrants entry into their most intimate domestic spheres, these OFWs, most of whom work as domestic helpers (DHs hereafter) and nannies, are denied

full integration and belonging in host-countries' societies, thus making them "perpetual foreigners" (Parreñas, 2001). Filipina DHs in Hong Kong (HK hereafter) are restricted from obtaining citizenship and/or permanent residence regardless of the number of years of stay in said host country. In addition, household rules and regulations that DHs are made to abide by are another form of concretization of one's "perpetual foreigner" status. Meant to "discipline" Philippine OR FILIPINA and Indonesian maids, the household rules and regulations that their HK employers impose on them impact on

Her body, her personality, her voice, and her emotions [which] may be subject to her employer's controls, marking her status and identity as that of someone who is physically present, but who does *not* belong (Constable, 2007, p. 90).

An International Labour Organization report asserts, "laws and policies play a significant role in how employers treat workers" (Pearson et al, 2006, p. xxiv). Many times, however, an HK employer's "'rule' inaccurately represents government policy" (Constable, 2007, p. 96). Despite the legal status of Filipina DHs in HK as contracted migrant workers, and the supposed presence of laws and legal contracts to protect them, they remain shadowed, excluded, and discriminated in their very own migrant work social space. This is demonstrated as well by Constable in the accounts below:

What I did then was to keep praying to our Almighty God that He will change the attitude of my employer because I really believe that only God can change their attitude towards me (Marie, as cited in Constable, 2007, p. 192).

Indeed, we are degraded, humiliated and discriminated against.... Let's prove that we are not here to disgrace our country but to work and earn money...let's lift our hands to God, for God is mightier than anything (Padua, as cited in Constable, 2007, p. 193).

The *discourse of endurance* commonly uttered back home when one reaches a point of emotional dispiritedness is articulated in the local language as *ipasa-Diyos nalang* literally means "to pass (*pasa*)[matters] to God (*Dios*)" or simply put, "one should just leave things in God's hands."

In both accounts, migrant workers are seen using and depending on prayers and religion to help alleviate their work conditions. Guevarra (2010) argues that this religious ideology is well entrenched in the Philippine national psyche and is seen to have been imbued with the values brought about by Roman Catholicism, introduced to and imposed on the Filipinos by the Spaniards for more than 300 years. Accordingly, the migrants' invocation of the Bible and prayers demonstrates their ability to engage in *creative management* as they treat religion and its attendant practices (use of the Bible and prayers) in a utilitarian manner, helping them deal with or attempt to overcome problems and difficulties encountered on the job.

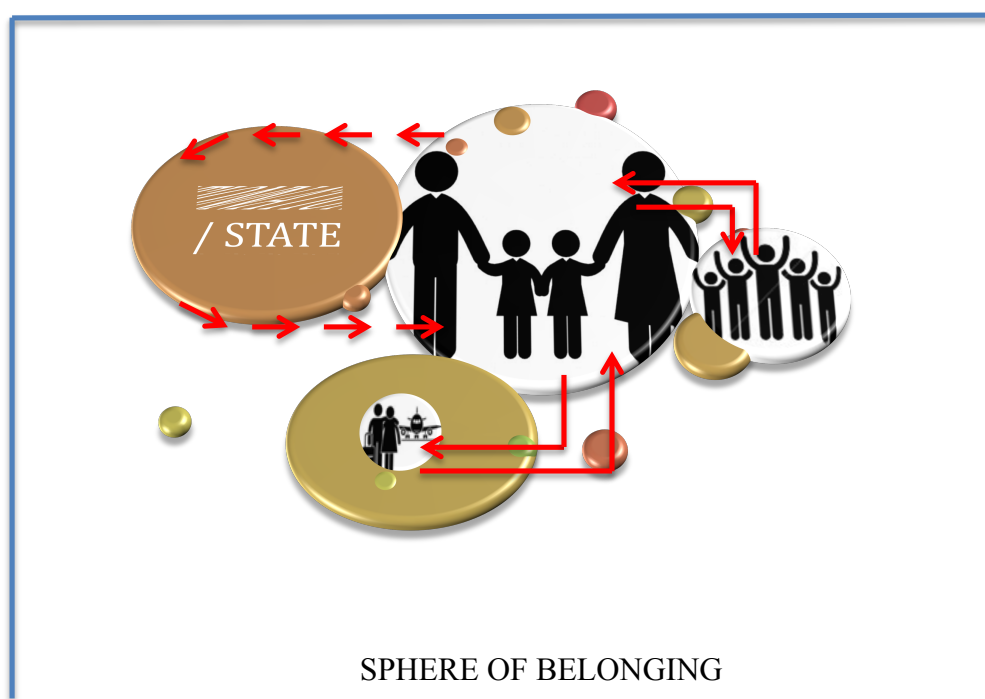
The Notions of "Home" and "Nation" vis-à-vis Family and Parenthood

The concept of "home" proves to be essentially significant to allow one to understand how its members, in this case the Filipino migrants, and their familial experiences impact them individually, and the society, collectively. Kenyon's study underscores the centrality of the concept of the "right to return" in defining "home" (as cited in Petridou, 2001). Birdwell-Pheasant and Lawrence-Zuñiga further discuss Kenyon's "right to return", stating that it

results from a recurring pattern of being on a journey and then coming back (as cited in Petridou, 2001). “There cannot be a home without a journey as much as there cannot be a self without an ‘other’” (p. 87).

Epifanio San Juan Jr. (2000) claims that because the Filipinos’ international dispersal is from “family or kinship webs in villages, towns, or provincial regions first” and that the Filipinos’ mobility is due mainly to perceived economic growth, “the origin to which one returns is not a nation or nation-state but a village, town, or kinship networks” (p. 236). San Juan Jr. further argues that the Filipino migrants’ notion of “home”, that is heavily attributed to family and kinship, eclipses their affinity to the Philippines as a “nation” because “the state is viewed in fact as a corrupt exploiter, not representative of the masses, a comprador¹ agent of transnational corporations and Western (specifically US) powers” (p. 236). Having said this and in keeping with San Juan Jr.’s argument, the figure below maintains that a migrant’s memories of the homeland do not exactly result from the peremptory power one’s birthplace can have over him/ her.

Figure 2: An illustration of the Filipino migrant workers’ notions of “home” and “family,” eclipsing one’s affinity to the State.



Constable’s (1999) study involving HK-based Filipina DHs aptly echoes San Juan Jr.’s statements. Her narratives below illustrate a Filipino migrant’s notion of “home” (Emphasis mine).

Every one of us dreams of **going home** to the Philippines **to be with our loved ones**—far from the daily toil of cleaning toilets, washing other

¹ Acts as a negotiator for foreign organizations that are engaged in transnational investments, trade, economic or political exploitations.

people's clothes, living with strangers who look down on us ("Are you preparing for your future?" as cited in Constable, 1999, p. 205).

In consonance with what San Juan Jr. claims, the text above indicates that going home to the Philippines is synonymous with returning to one's family or kin with whom one finds a sense of "belongingness." Notably, the discourse of going home *to* a nation is absent in the text. In addition to San Juan Jr.'s explanation, such an absence of the "nation" in the migrants' imagining of "home" can be understood in view of the fact that the State has failed its citizens in a number of significant ways. Poor care resources for the Filipino family, unstable political economy, lack of quality health care, and poor labor market state are the primary reasons that place Filipino families at a disadvantage, driving them to seek higher wages abroad (Tyner, 2004; Parreñas, 2005; The Ibon Report, 2010; Guevarra, 2010). All these certainly contribute to the eventual absence of the concept of "nation" in the migrants' notion of "home."

It is antithetical, however, that given the migrants' notion of "home" to be closely attributed to family and kin more than to anything else, family and parenthood have turned out to be the first ones to be heavily implicated by the ill effects of migration. The Philippine society does *not* approve of transnational families as the ideal fundamental social unit – "the more the transnational family diverges from the construction of the right kind of family...the more dysfunctional the family is considered to be. [T]he dominant perception of transnational families in the Philippines holds that children are much better off in traditional nuclear families with a mother and father both living at home" (Parreñas, 2005, p. 35).

Parreñas (2005) posits that in the Philippines, family refers not only to its composition as the smallest social group, but also to the *experience* its members live and share with each other. However, separated by migration, its members lack the "temporal and spatial proximity [that] are necessary ingredients to a family" (p. 33). Article 211 in the Philippine Family Constitution states, "The father and the mother shall jointly exercise parental authority over the persons of their common children" (1987). In reality, however, either the father or the mother is absent and engaged in transnational parenting instead. Even among families that have either the father or the mother around to personally supervise their children, parenthood still suffers (Parreñas, 2005):

I would tell him that that is his job. 'I wish you were here. You, you just bring home the bacon, while me, I am the one dealing with all the problems with your children' (Gosalves, as cited in Parreñas, 2005).

Interfacing the Notions of "Home" and "Identity" with the "Narrative of Ambivalence" and "Gender Ideologies"

In the text below, a Filipina's description of her return, particularly the first two to three lines, speaks of a similar notion of "home" (Emphasis mine).

This is how it always is. When I **go back home** for a week or ten days, **we [she and her husband] get along very well. He is attracted to me, and we are very happy.** But any longer than that and I am thinking...I just want to come back here again (Acosta, as cited in Constable, 1999, p. 210).

For Acosta, going home means being back into the arms of her loved ones. Returning home means compensating for one's prolonged absence, hence the happiness it gives both the left-behind family and the migrant is understandable. However, Acosta's narrative, starting from

the third line onwards, reveals another dimension to her notion of “home.” Just like Torrefranca, “home” is not what it used to be.

After being away from home for eight years now, Diane **felt like a stranger** in her parents’ home. The whole **house was no longer the same haven** which she **used to derive so much comfort** (Torrefranca, as cited in Constable, 1999, p. 205).

In both accounts, the Filipina migrants’ notions of “home” carry an ambiguous nature. In as much as San Juan Jr. argues that the notion of “home” is bonded with family and kin and not with “nation,” such familial relation, however, is challenged by the migrants’ desire to return to HK, their “home away from home.” As Constable (1999) argues in the accounts below, their migration experience has reconfigured their notion of “home” eventually leading to their articulation of a certain level of ambivalence toward return.

Ahhh...Hong Kong, we have managed to mingle with your flow of life like a home away from home (Mendoza, 1996, as cited in Constable, 1999, p. 205).

This is a piece of home...I come here each week and it doesn’t feel so bad to be away from home (*Manila Chronicle*, 1997, as cited in Constable, 1999, p. 206).

Beyond the migrants’ economic motivations, however, are pretexts propelling me to raise other questions: How does an imagining of “home” involving family and kin in the homeland get reconstructed, gradually being supplanted with an imagining of the other “home”? How does a Filipina migrant’s narrative of ambivalence relate to her own identity as a worker and as a woman, impacting the gender ideologies of the society she lives in?

The text below is Acosta’s narrative, a confession of why she cannot stay any longer than a week or 10 days in their home in the Philippines with her husband.

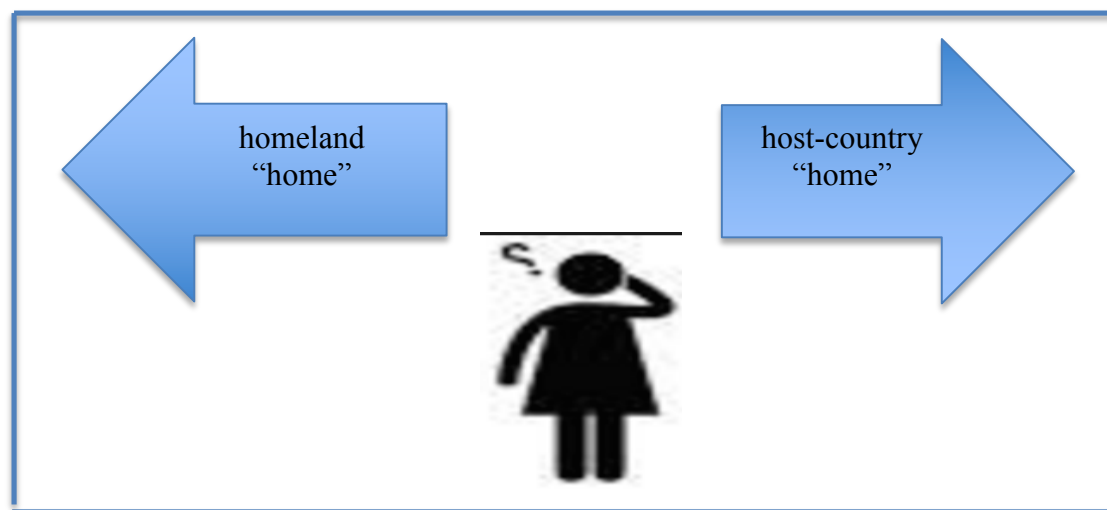
On trips home, she becomes ‘**just a nagging wife**, and we **fight** a lot. He **always wants to know where I am going**, and I get angry.’ **Unlike in Hong Kong**, ‘I have to tell him where I am going all the time.’ Life was ‘**not exciting back home**’ (Acosta, 1997, as cited in Constable, 1999, p. 210).

Acosta’s experience demonstrates a complex web of identities: Acosta’s and her husband’s. As Boehm (2008) argues,

migration results in a complex interplay between males and females—a series of negotiations through which women are exercising increased power in some circumstances but also facing the reassertion of male dominance (p. 18).

Acosta’s story establishes the power relations between her and her husband and their struggles within, as Boehm (2008) explains. Acosta has found increased power in her stay overseas, but her husband continues to assert his authority over her whenever she is back in the Philippines, which Acosta resents.

Figure 3: An illustration of a migrant worker's narratives of ambivalence.



In reference to Kenyon's definition of "home," it can be said that the significance of "home" lies in "places." Places are those that provide the necessary human conditions that are created through people's "movement, memory, encounter and association" (Tilley, as cited in Petridou, 2001, p. 88). Petridou (2001) paraphrases Mary Douglas, defining "home" as "a kind of place" whose significance is acquired from exercises that form part of one's daily routine, defining (and even re-constructing) one's self. In Acosta's case, she has found for herself a new meaning of "home" in HK. She has found significance in that "place" resulting from her day-to-day activities, eventually both defining and re-defining her. Additionally, Acosta's migrant experience has also allowed her to re-conceptualize her notion of "home" away from the physical structure of her house in her home country, but not necessarily away from its material culture. As the material culture of her house in the Philippines has been economically/ materially sustained by her earnings as a migrant worker in HK, the material culture of her house has helped her

examine realizations of the self by focusing on the self-creation of the subject [Acosta] through interaction with the object [called the] process of objectification. This is particularly important in contemporary societies that are characterized by high levels of mobility and blurring of geographical boundaries (Petridou, 2001, p. 88).

Acosta's overseas work was instrumental in making her (re)create herself via the variegated daily experiences she has had in the host country, and it is this same process of self-(re)creation that has made her not only want to leave the Philippines, but also want to remain and keep on coming back to HK. As a number of studies indicate, migration affects gender relations as mediated by a number of strands (Itzgsohn & Giorguli-Saucedo, 2005).

First, Acosta's remark – "Unlike in HK, I have to tell him where I am going all the time. Life was not exciting back home" – demonstrates her preference for the degree of freedom that she enjoys in HK. Acosta knows that for as long as she stays in HK, she will never have to comply with her husband's constant asking about her whereabouts. What does this imply?

Women adapt faster than men to the norms and values of the receiving country. Furthermore, immigrant women fear that returning to their countries will result in a loss of their independence and a return to traditional gender roles. Hence, women favor settlements in the host country as a way to protect their advances (Itzgsohn & Giorguli-Saucedo, 2005, p. 897; see also Cole & McNulty, 2011).

Thus, having grown accustomed to her new lifestyle in her “home away from home”, Acosta’s life in HK has helped transform her gender subjectivities. She knows the situation will change as soon as she returns home for good, hence her resistance.

Second, Acosta knows that back in her home in the Philippines, she will be jobless. Should she find a job in her home country, her earnings will be neither enough nor comparable to what she was earning in HK. With her earnings from doing overseas work, she has not only secured financial independence, but she has also enjoyed reaping positive experiences bolstered by her ability to send monetary remittances back home. Acosta’s financial remittances and felt financial independence confirm that migration “can destabilize rigid gender roles – it is generally positive for women” (Boehm, 2008, p. 18). Acosta knows that the traditional gender roles she and her husband observed in the past in the Philippines have already changed – *destabilized* – and that their current situation works to her advantage. From being a housewife in the Philippines, whose role was limited to that of being a care-giving and nurturing mother, she has been given the chance to negotiate and transform her role, thus shifting her identity to that of an income-earner, a role often attributed to the sphere of men. Matthew Gutmann contends that as Acosta’s femininity and her husband’s masculinity “...are not...embalmed states of being,” it is natural to witness the couple’s gender subjectivities to be constantly shifting and this eventually makes “themselves into whole new entities” (as cited in Boehm, 2008, p. 17). To be sure, other couples do not necessarily go through exactly the same experience as Acosta and her husband did. Boehm (2012) posits, however, that gender role shifts are a natural general tendency, especially within the context of migration and transnational living.

Conclusion

In keeping with the context of Filipino migration in Asia, I end this paper by positing a few suggestions. For one, I maintain that to deeply understand the concept of “home” and “nation” of other Filipino overseas workers from other destinations, specific migrant work contexts should be factored in, as host countries’ employment conditions vary from one country to another. Doing so should be helpful in determining the specific reference points they might have. This is mainly due to the fact that a host country’s labor conditions are considered as one of the main determinants affecting the actions and decisions a worker engages in. Secondly, as a migrant’s concepts of “identity” and “belonging” vary in terms of levels/degrees and intensity, I hold that such notions be identified early on, if only to effectively make sense of their specific experiences within the migrant social space whose sense of affiliation impinges on their engagements, actions, identity construction/reconstruction, and other personal decisions enacted. Thirdly, I suggest that for a more effective understanding of a migrant’s overseas labor experience, developing a heightened sense of awareness of a migrant worker’s gender dynamics, ideologies, subjectivities, and other gender-based concepts should be undertaken. Within the same vein, I hold as well that a migrant worker’s concepts of family, parenthood, and family relations be made central in ensuing discussions and analyses. As discussed in this paper, a Filipino

migrant worker's concept of family cannot be sidelined mainly because it is, in fact, the one that a person returns to and considers "home," and not the nation/state. Doing so is also considered appropriate because although the family is deemed as a private institution, the actions families engage in/ transact with cannot be fully severed from the public space. Lastly, I maintain as well the pervasiveness of religion in understanding a migrant's experience. While migration, for the most part, has been directly correlated to fulfilling a person's economic agenda, a migrant worker's religious affiliation, such as the case of the Filipino migrant workers cited in this study, nevertheless, plays a crucial role. Religion may concern a people's expression of faith, but it also relates to how they utilize it for practical reasons.

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