An Exploratory Analysis of Intimate Partnerships Using Data from a Nationwide Random-Sample Survey

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This study uses microdata from the 2021 National SOGI Survey to quantitatively examine the diversification of partner relationships in Japan. The analysis focuses on three aspects: (1) the choice between legal marriage and de facto marriage, (2) self-identification within de facto partnerships, and (3) the gender composition of partners.

A binary logistic regression analysis revealed that age, the presence of children, attitudes toward separate surnames for married couples, and normative beliefs about marriage significantly influenced the choice of relationship form. Younger individuals, those supporting separate surnames, and those rejecting the norm that "cohabiting couples should marry" were more likely to choose de facto marriage. In the multinomial logistic regression model, age was the strongest predictor: individuals aged 40 and over were more likely to refer to their partners as "spouse/husband/wife" or "partner," while those with positive attitudes toward "having children without marriage" also showed similar tendencies. Furthermore, about 1 percent of respondents (48 individuals) were identified as being in same-sex partnerships, and half of them were raising children.

These findings suggest that diverse partnership forms exist beyond the framework of institutionalized marriage. While legal marriage in Japan remains strongly tied to child-centered family norms, de facto and other partnerships represent emerging forms of intimacy that emphasize individual recognition and autonomy.

Keywords："National Survey of Family, Gender/Sexuality, and Diversity", intimate partnership, Same-sex couple(s), cohabitation without legal marriage, Quantitative analysis