



Hakuhodo Institute of Life and Living

Japanese Families: 30 Years of Change (1988–2018)
—Married Couples’ Division of Housework and Childcare

Husbands’ willingness to participate in housework highest in 30 years, but wives still do the lion’s share

Percentage of husbands who agree with “Husbands should share in housework” soars from 38.0% in 1988 to 81.7% in 2018
13.7% of husbands and 97.1% of wives “often prepare meals”

Hakuhodo Institute of Life and Living has conducted its Family Survey of couples in households where the husband is a salaried employee every ten years since 1988 (1988, 1998, 2008, 2018). Aside from time-series analysis of 30 years of data, the survey enables a look at gaps between responses by spouses by asking husbands and wives the same questions.

Following the previous report on Spousal Power Relationships released on June 11, this second report is entitled Married Couples’ Division of Housework and Childcare. It provides key survey findings and shines a spotlight on changes in how families share housework and childcare as well as changes in attitudes on sharing housework and childcare between husband and wife.

The survey is part of Hakuhodo Institute of Life and Living’s Japanese Families: 30 Years of Change (1988–2018) study. These and other research findings will be presented at events and in reports as Summer Seminar 2018 Japanese Families: 30 Years of Change (1988–2018).

Survey design: Survey area: 40 km radius of Tokyo

Targets: Households with spouses living together and the wife aged 20–59 630 households (630 husbands, 630 wives, total 1,260 samples)

Survey method: Home visit and self-administered questionnaire

Survey period: Feb. 7–Mar. 12, 2018 See Page 6 for 1988, 1998, 2008 survey designs

Key findings from Japanese Families: 30 Years of Change (1988–2018)

Married couples’ attitudes on housework and childcare participation

Husbands’ willingness to participate in housework and childcare hits 30-year high

- A record-high percentage of husbands agreed with the statement: “Husbands should share in housework” (38.0% in 1988 versus 81.7% in 2018).
- A record-high percentage of husbands agreed with the statement: “Husbands should share in childcare” (45.8% in 1988 versus 88.9% in 2018).
- Husbands’ attitudes appear to have caught up with wives’ attitudes over thirty years (85.1% of wives in 2018 agreed with “Husbands should share in housework”).

Married couples’ actual participation in housework

While husbands’ participation in housework has climbed over thirty years, it does not compare to that of wives

- Husbands’ participation in such tasks as “preparing meals,” “doing laundry,” and “cleaning the house” hit record highs (husbands who often prepare meals rose from 3.7% in 1988 to 13.7% in 2018).
- Housework is still predominantly done by wives (97.1% of wives in 2018 often prepare meals).

Married couples’ division of labor (Surveyed only in 2018)

The majority’s ideal is “share work equally” and “whoever is available does the work,” but in practice, 70 percent follow the traditional division of labor

- In regard to the ideal division of labor, the majority of husbands and wives selected “share work equally” or “whoever is available at the time does the work.”
- But in regard to their actual division of labor, 70% selected “wife is responsible for domestic affairs and husband for affairs outside the home.”
- More husbands were satisfied with the current division of labor than wives (80.2% versus 68.3%).

Attitudes on work-home balance (Surveyed only in 2018)

One in four husbands “want to reduce work and engage more in housework and childcare”

- One in four husbands and one in five wives “want to reduce how much I work outside the home and engage more in housework and childcare.”
- Conversely, one in five husbands and one in three wives answered “I have given up work I wanted to do in order to balance work and domestic affairs.”

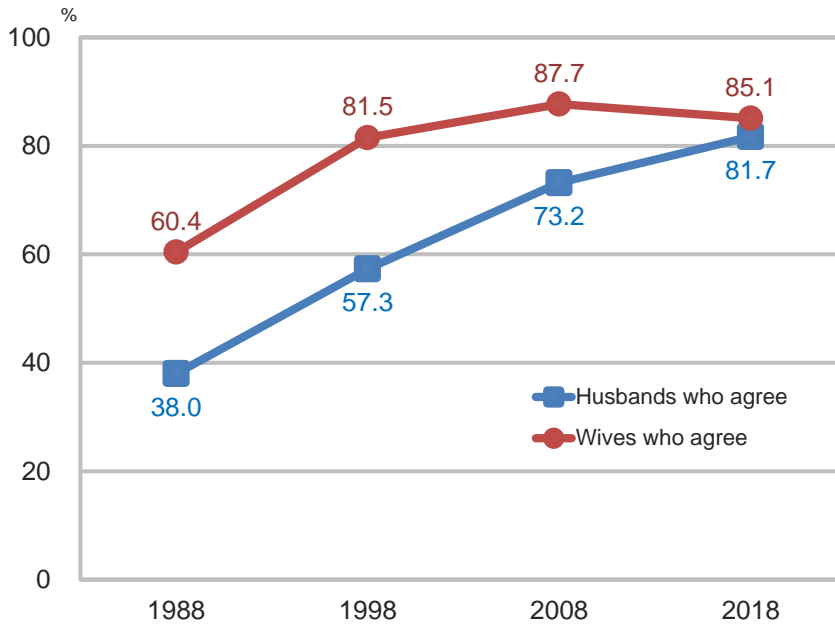
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Married couples' attitudes on housework participation



I think husbands should share in housework

Base: 630 responses from husbands, 630 responses from wives

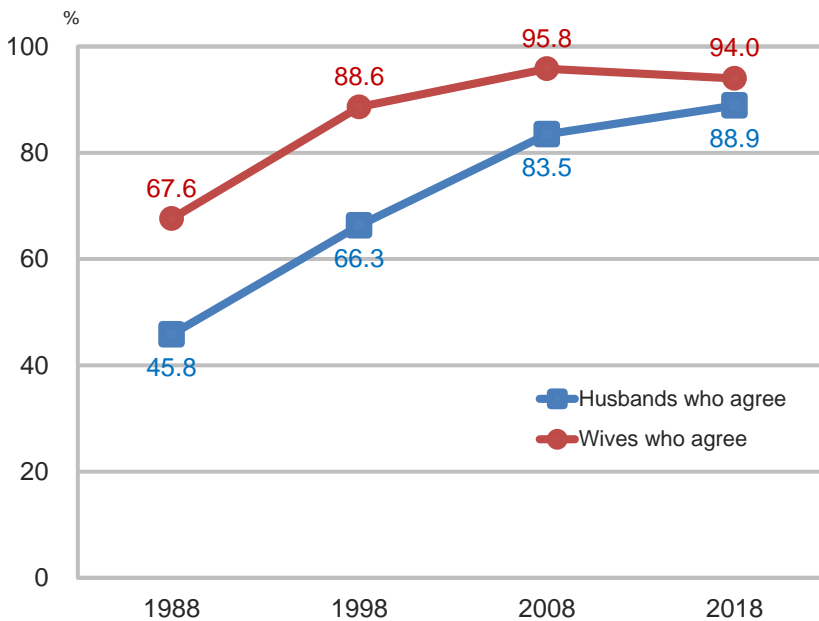


Married couples' attitudes on childcare participation



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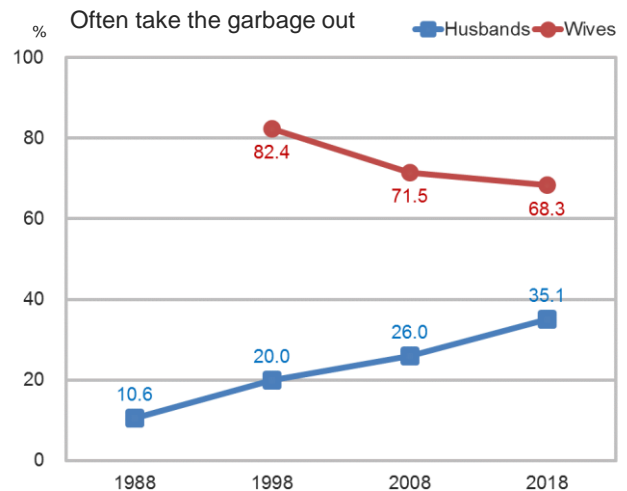
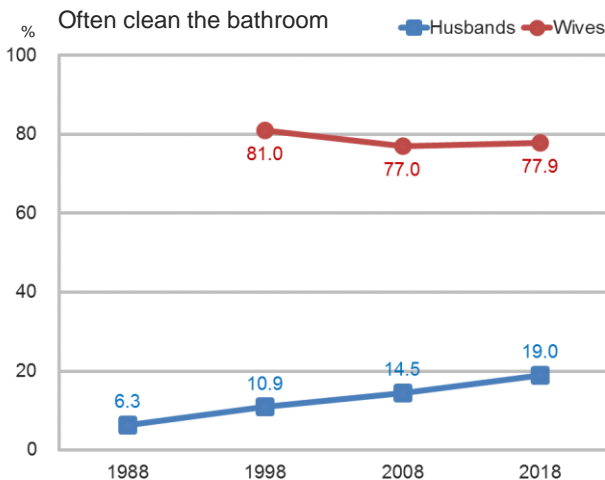
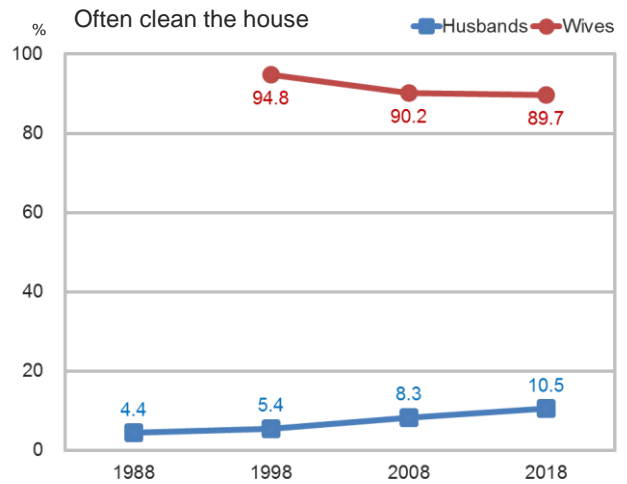
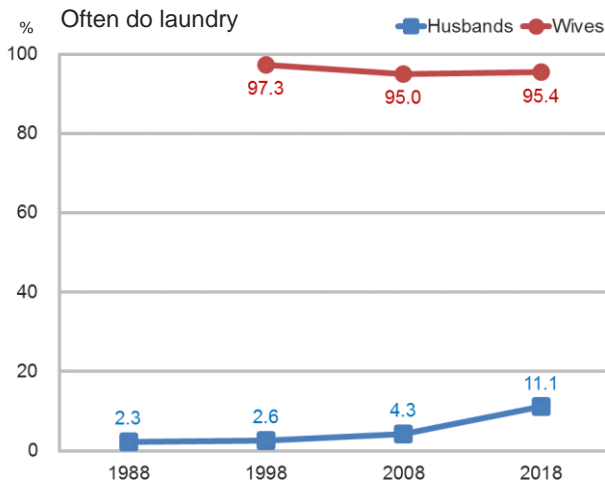
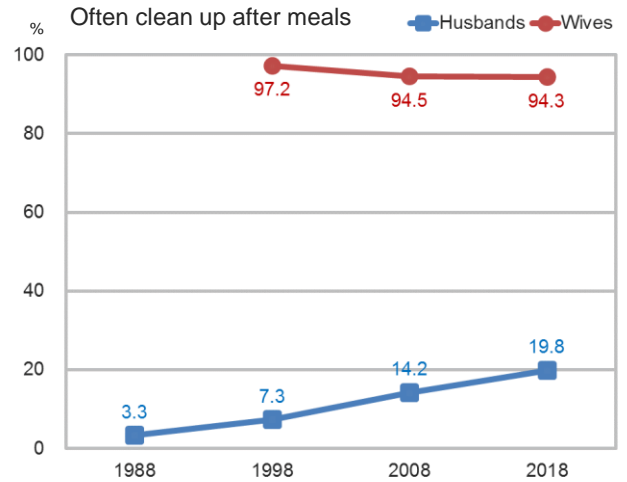
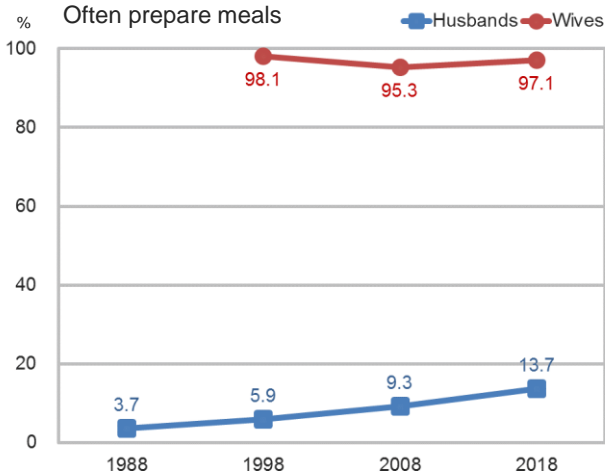
Married couples' actual participation in housework

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Married couples' actual participation in housework

Q In your daily life, to what extent does your husband / your wife normally participate in the following tasks? (Often, Occasionally, Rarely, Never)
The graphs below depict the "Often" responses
Base: Wives only (630 responses)



- In regard to the ideal division of labor, the majority of husbands and wives selected "share work equally" or "whoever is available at the time does the work."
- But in regard to their actual division of labor, 70% selected "wife is responsible for domestic affairs and husband for affairs outside the home."
- More husbands were satisfied with the current division of labor than wives (80.2% versus 68.3%).

Ideal division of labor

Q Which statement is the closest to your ideal roles of husband and wife in the home?
Base: 630 responses from husbands, 630 responses from wives



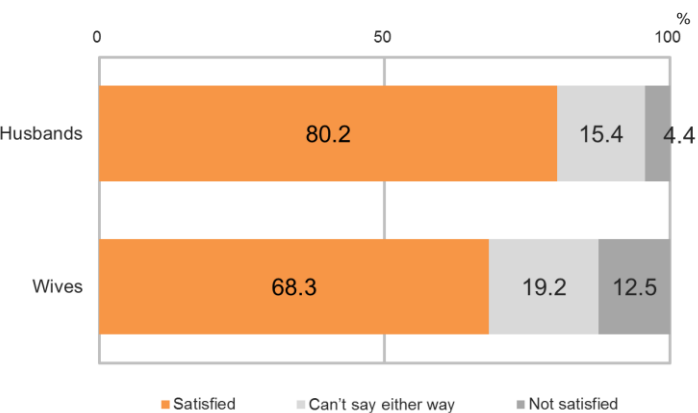
Actual division of labor

Q Which statement is the closest to the actual roles of husband and wife in your home?
Base: 630 responses from husbands, 630 responses from wives



Satisfaction with current division of labor

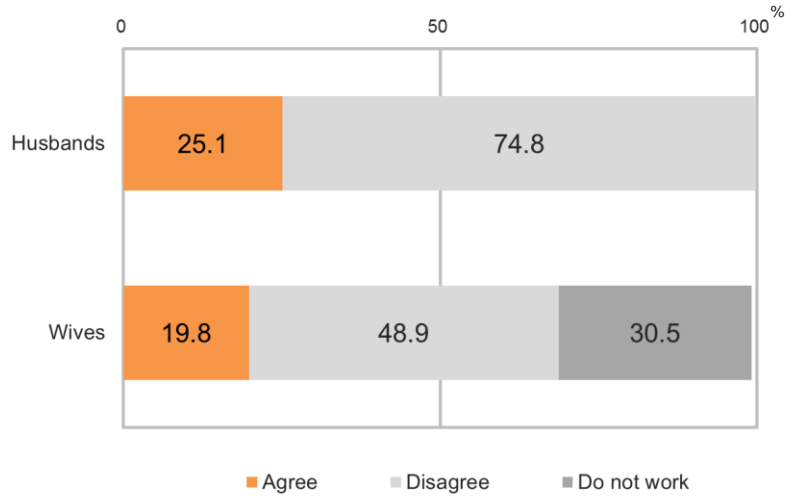
Q How satisfied are you with the current division of labor in your daily life?
Base: 630 responses from husbands, 630 responses from wives



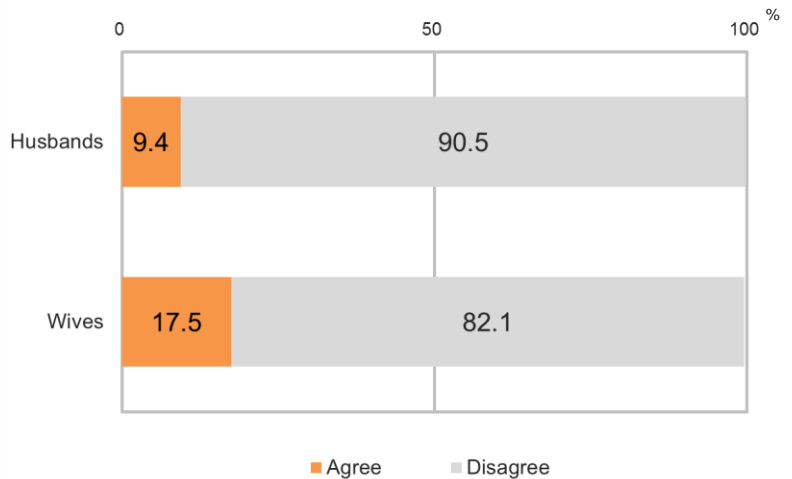
- One in four husbands and one in five wives “want to reduce how much I work outside the home and engage more in housework and childcare.”
- Conversely, one in five husbands and one in three wives answered “I have given up work I wanted to do in order to balance work and domestic affairs.”

Attitudes on work-home balance

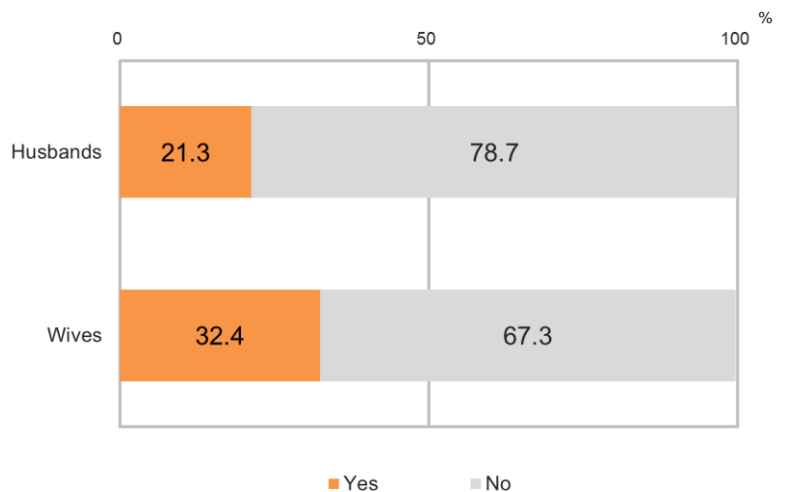
Q I want to reduce how much I work outside the home and engage more in housework and childcare
(Agree, Disagree, Do not work)
Base: 630 responses from husbands, 630 responses from wives



Q I want to reduce the amount of housework and childcare I do and engage more in work outside the home
(Agree, Disagree)
Base: 630 responses from husbands, 630 responses from wives



Q I have given up work I wanted to do in order to balance work and domestic affairs
(Yes, No)
Base: 630 responses from husbands, 630 responses from wives



Family Survey survey design

- Survey area: 40 km radius of Tokyo
- Targets: Households with spouses living together and the wife aged 20–59
Target conditions: Households to which both of the following apply
(1) Husband is salaried employee (2) Husband and wife live together (with or without children)
- Survey sample: 630 households (630 husbands, 630 wives, total 1,260 samples)

	Wife 20–29	Wife 30–39	Wife 40–49	Wife 50–59	Total
2018	41	184	238	167	630
2008	57	208	173	162	600
1998	146	323	422	309	1,200
1988*	149	446	366	223	1,185

*1988 total includes one household where the wife's age was unknown

- Survey method: Home visit and self-administered questionnaire
Two questionnaires
 - Wives questionnaire: Consisting of Household Questionnaire about the family and home to be completed by wives only, and Individual Questionnaire to be filled in by both husband and wife
 - Husbands questionnaire: Individual questionnaire to be filled in by both husband and wife only
- Survey periods: February 7–March 12, 2018
June 12–July 7, 2008
January 8–February 2, 1998
August 3–22, 1988
- Planning & analysis: Hakuhodo Institute of Life and Living
- Survey implementation: Tokyo Survey Research Inc.