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## Causal Relationship between Husbands' Work-Life Balance and Wives' Desire to Bear Children

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The purpose of this paper is to examine the effects in Japan of husbands' involvement in housework and their working hours on their wives' desire to bear children. In this analysis we used micro-data obtained from the International Comparative Survey on Marriage and the Family conducted in 2004 and 2007. The data was collected for men and women aged between 18 and 69 years of age. From this sample, we selected married women between the ages of 18 and 39, operationalized their husbands' work-life balance in terms of both working hours and involvement in housework, then analyzed the effects of these two variables on the selected women's desire to have children.

Causal analysis of this data using synchronous and cross-lagged effects models revealed that a husband's, involvement in housework has a statistically significant positive effect on a wife's desire to bear children and her ideal number of children. On the other hand, in this study we found that husbands' working hours per week had no substantial impact on wives' desire to have children. Furthermore, the results showed no clear positive correlation between husbands' working hours and their degree of participation in household chores. This result was consistent for datasets from both surveys (2004 and 2007). These findings may have implications for the formation or implementation of policies designed to increase the birthrate in Japan because the results hint at the importance of taking into account gender roles and divisions of labor along gender lines within the household, rather than merely looking at men's working styles, whenever considering men's work-life balance.