

Trends and Changes in Participation by Husbands in Housework and Childcare in Japan

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The frequency of participation by husbands in housework and childcare in Japan has been extremely low. According to data from time-use surveys conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication in Japan and the Eurostat, husbands in Japan spent only one hour and fifteen minutes per day on housework and family care, the least among ten developed countries including the US, Belgium, Germany, and France. However, recent national surveys indicated a slight increase in participation in housework and childcare by Japanese husbands.

In this paper, we investigated trends and changes in the frequency of participation by husbands in housework and childcare in Japan. Micro data was used from the 2nd to 5th National Survey on Family in Japan (NSFJ) conducted by the National Institute of Population Problems and Social Security Research (IPSS) in 1998, 2003, 2008, and 2013. Housework and childcare performed by husbands engaged in full-time employment who had children aged three years or below were analyzed.

The results were as follows.

(1) The frequency of participation by husbands in childcare was higher than that in housework. While husbands participated in childcare on both weekends and weekdays, they performed housework only on weekends.

(2) The results of the multiple regression analysis indicated a modest increase in the frequency of participation by husbands in housework, but no change for childcare.

(3) The results of the multiple regression analysis also indicated that the frequency of participation by husbands in housework and childcare was associated with factors related to husbands' time restrictions. The later the husbands came home from work, the lower the frequency. Furthermore, the longer the husbands' working hours, the lower the frequency.

According to the above results, we discuss the need for a work-family balance policy, especially to improve labor conditions.