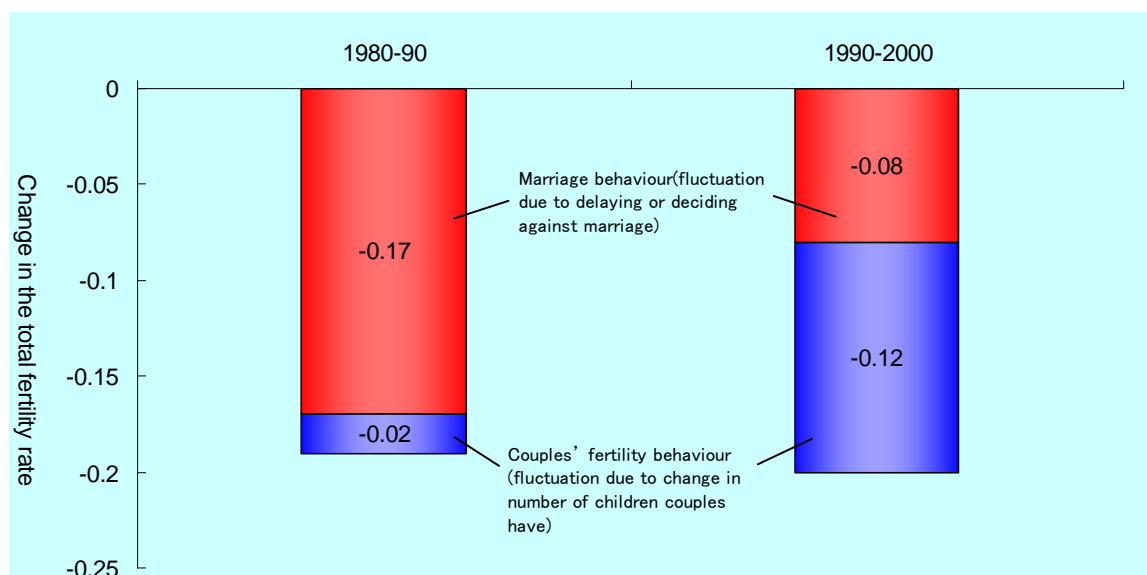


Chapter 1 Changes in marriage and birth trends

Section 1 Factors behind the recent drop in the fertility rate

- The long-term trend in the fertility rate is one of decline (from 1.75 in 1980 to 1.29 in 2004).
- The fall in the fertility rate in the 1990s was due to couples having less children as well as people delaying marriage or remaining single.

Fig. 1-1-7 Changes in couples' fertility behaviour from the 1990s onwards accounts for much of the falling fertility rate



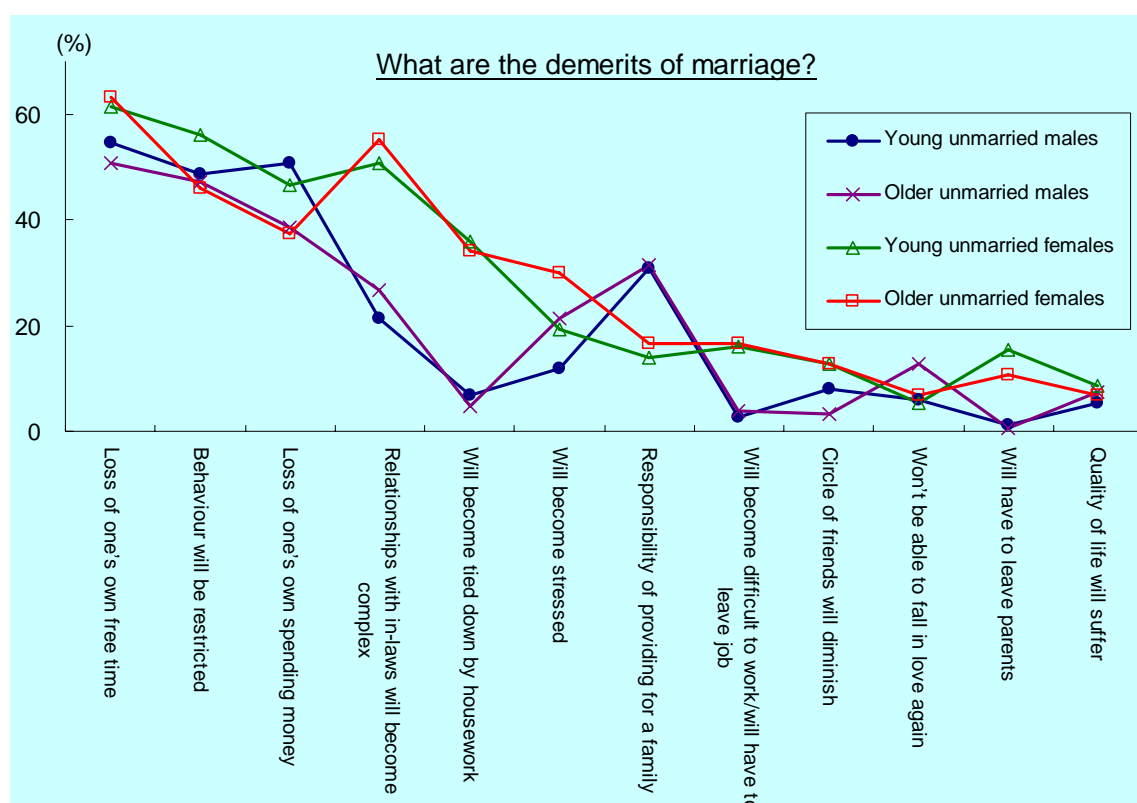
Notes

1. Adapted from Shigesato Takahashi's *The Falling Birthrate and Changes in the Shape of Marriage and Families*, in *Demography of the Declining Birthrate* (2004) (edited by Shigesato Takahashi and Hiroshi Obuchi).
2. The analysis above was made by taking the standard pattern of women born between 1940 and 1951, a group whose marriage and fertility behaviour were extremely stable, and running a simulation of the total fertility rate assuming that the marriage behaviour and fertility behaviour of the subsequent generation remained unchanged; the effect of each change in behaviour was measured by comparing the simulated total fertility rate with the actual rates. The numeric values employed in creating the graph were based on the calculations of Miho Iwasawa of the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.

Section 2 The decision to marry

- The number of people who say that they will never marry is relatively low, about 6% for both sexes.
- In addition to a loss of freedom, many men cited the responsibility of providing for a family and many women the fear that personal relationships would become troublesome as drawbacks to marriage.

Fig. 1-2-3 Loss of one's free time is seen as the biggest pitfall of marriage



1. Adapted from MHLW's *Survey of Attitudes on the Falling Birthrate* (2004).

2. The graph shows the percentages responding to the following question: "What do you think about marriage? Please circle as many of the following statements that you agree with." (Q2. The demerits of marriage).

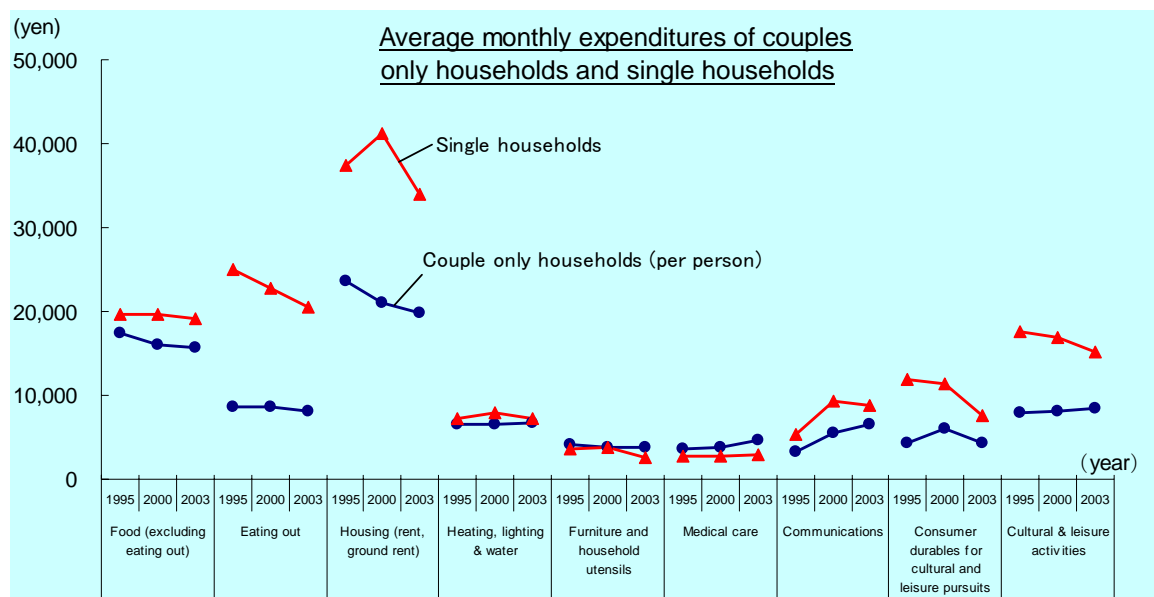
3. "Do not agree with any of the statements" was the other answer choice.

4. 'Young unmarried males' are those between 20 and 32 years of age, 'older unmarried males' are unmarried, widowed or divorced men between 33 and 49 years of age, 'young unmarried females' are those between 20 and 30 years of age, and 'older unmarried females' are unmarried, widowed or divorced women between 31 and 49 years of age.

5. 150 people in each category replied. The replies of those responding "Do not agree with any of the statements" have been omitted.

- Marriage is becoming less financially attractive because women are now better educated and financially independent, and because the single lifestyle has become more convenient due to the wide availability of convenience stores, electrical appliances and information and communication technologies etc.

Fig. 1-2-7 Marriage leads to savings in some areas but not in others

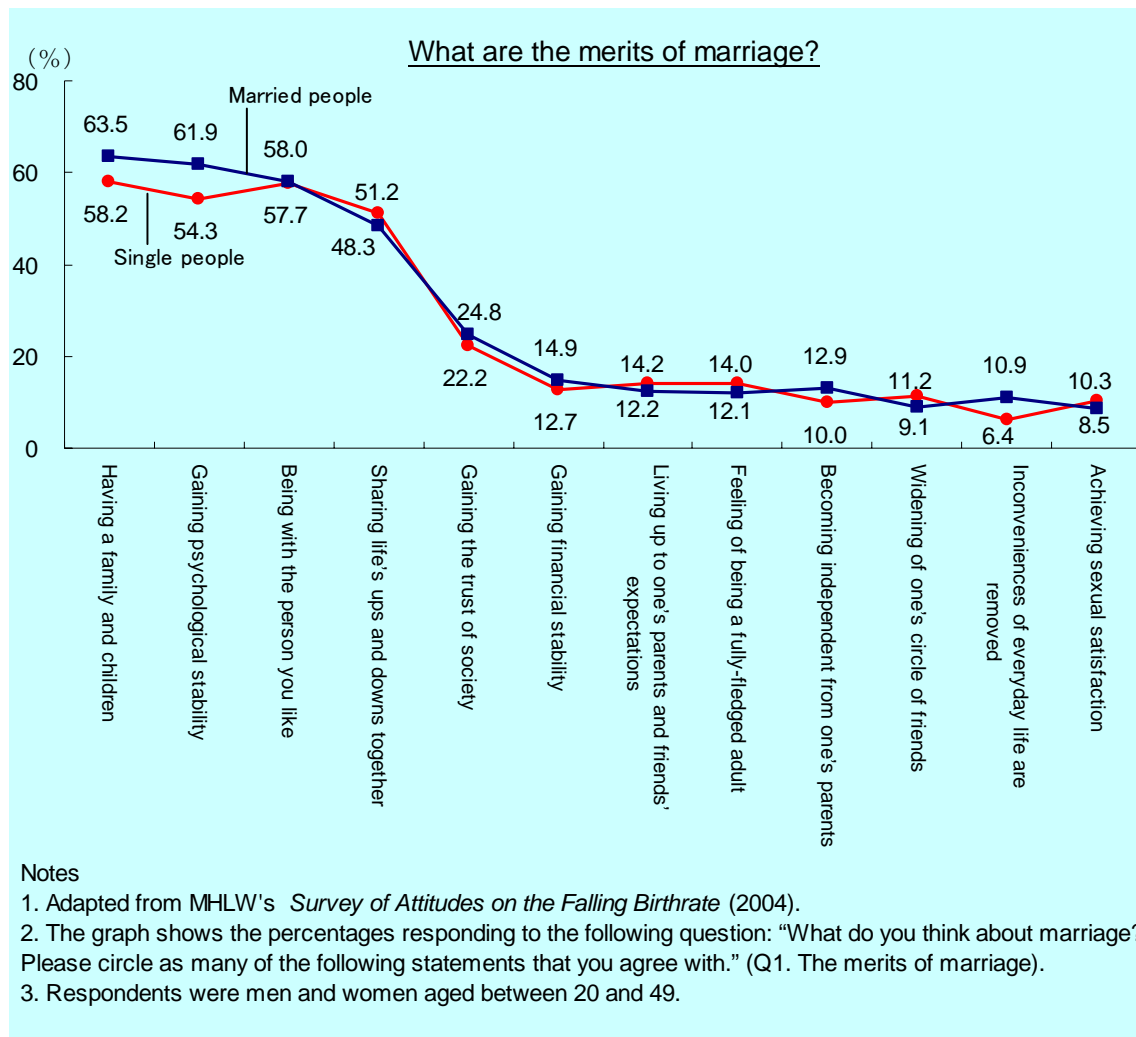


Notes

1. The data for couple only households was specially tabulated based on the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' (MIC) *Family Income and Expenditure Survey*. The data for single households for 1995 and 2000 was based on the MIC's *Income and Expenditure Survey for One-person Households*, and the 2003 data on its *Family Income and Expenditure Survey*.
2. The head of the household in both the couple only households and the single households was 34 years of age or younger. The average monthly expenditures were calculated for couple only households composed of wage-earners, with no children and no co-habiting parents, and single households (excluding households involved in agriculture, forestry or fishing, or university student households in the 1995 data, and excluding university student households in the 2000 and 2003 data). In the case of the couple only households the total figure was divided by two, the number of householders, to give the amount per person.
3. Consumer durables include: televisions, stereos, video tape recorders, personal computers, cameras, video cameras, musical instruments such as pianos etc., writing/studying desks, chairs, stationery, exercising goods, films, audio and video discs and tapes etc., pet goods, gardening goods, handicraft and craftwork materials, and books and other printed matter. Cultural & leisure activities include: accommodation and package tour costs, monthly tuition fees (for language, music or sports instruction etc.), television licenses, admission to cinemas, theatres, sports arenas and events and cultural facilities etc., and Internet provider fees.

- The benefits that the child-rearing generation seeks in marriage are psychological ones such as mental comfort rather than financial benefits.

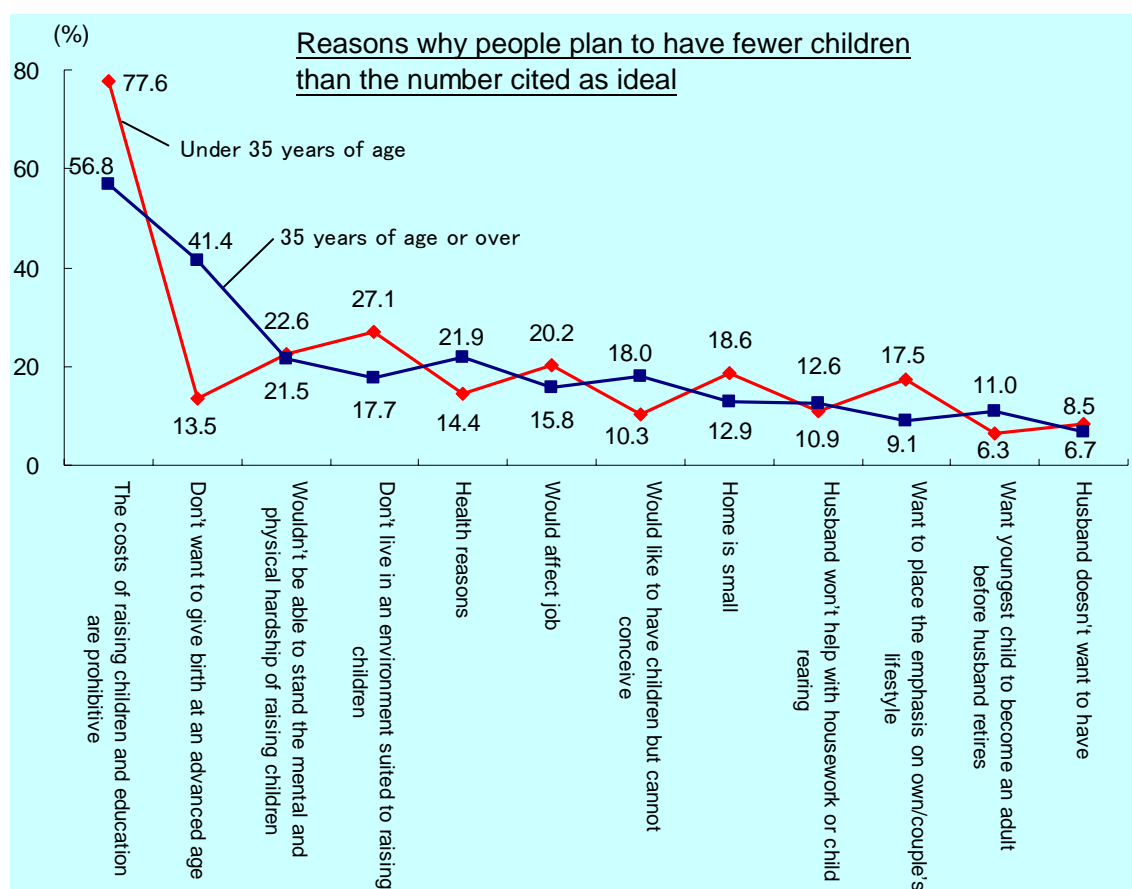
Fig. 1-2-10 People's hopes for marriage lie in psychological comfort rather than economic benefits



Section 3 The decision to have children

- The ideal number of children cited by couples is around 2.5, a figure that remains unchanged for the past 20 years.
- The financial cost of raising children is the biggest reason why the ideal figure is not being reached.

Fig. 1-3-5 The stumbling block in childbirth for younger wives is the expense, while for older wives it is age considerations

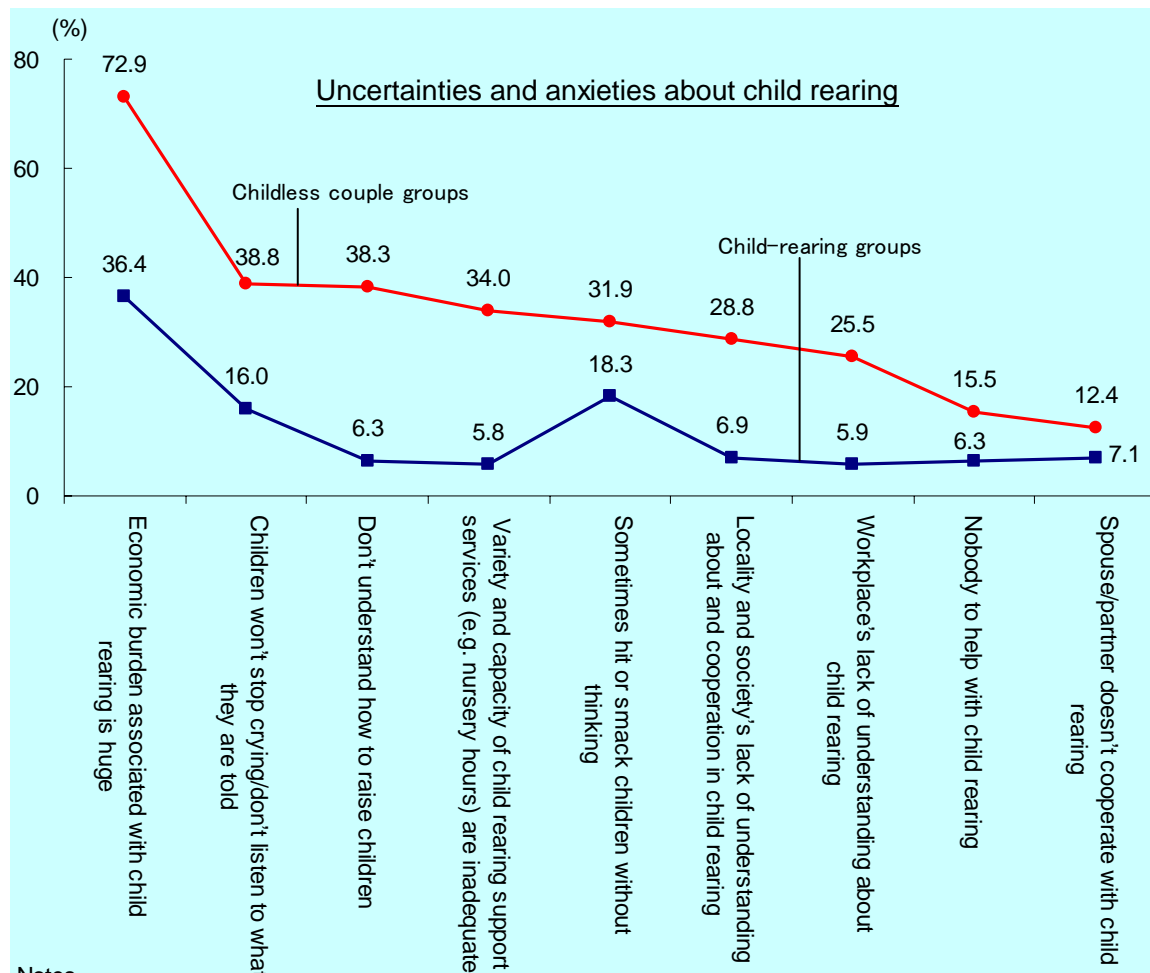


Notes

1. Adapted from the 2002 edition of National Institute of Population and Social Security Research's *Japanese National Fertility Survey*.
2. The graph shows the percentages of those people who plan to have fewer children than the number cited as being ideal, in response to the following question: "Why do you plan to have fewer children than the number cited as being ideal? Please circle the appropriate response(s) from the reasons below, and circle the most important reason twice."
3. 'Other reason(s)' was the other answer choice.
4. Respondents were 2,134 wives under 50 years of age from across Japan. They were all in a marriage which was the first for both partners. The response 'Other reason(s)' has been omitted.

- Couples with no children tend to have more severe estimates of the financial and psychological costs of raising children than couples with children.

Fig. 1-3-10 Childless couples regard the costs of child rearing as a severe burden

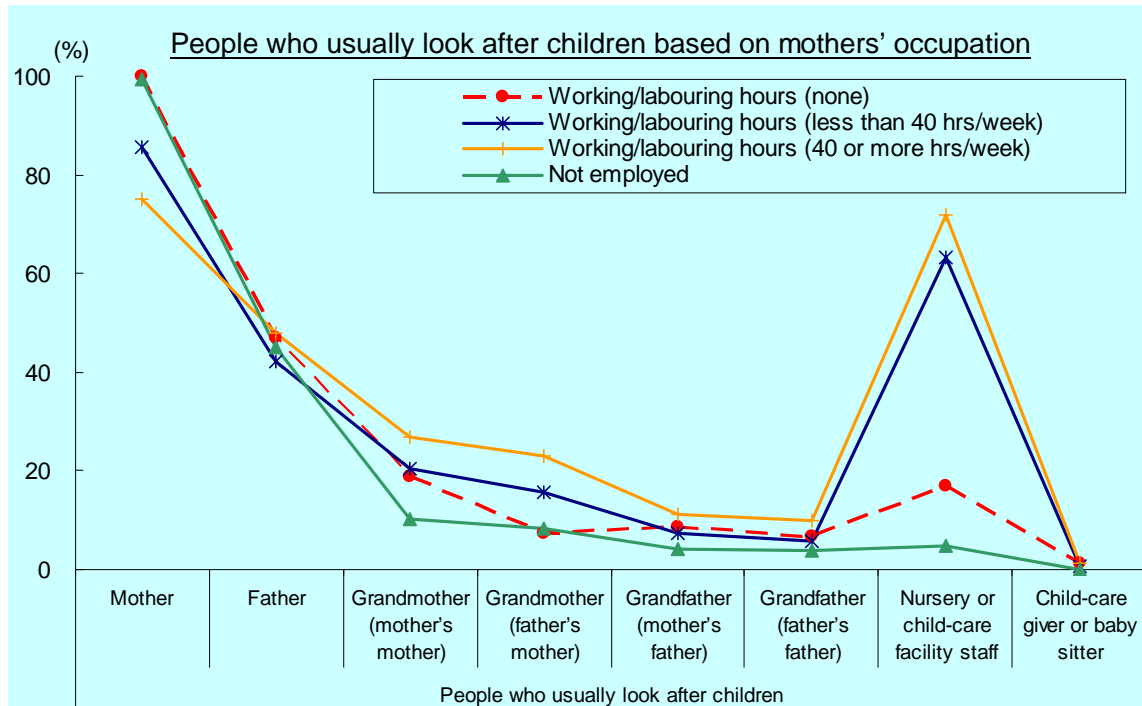


Notes

1. Adapted from the *Research Report on Child Rearing Awareness Survey* of the Foundation for Children's Future, 2004.
2. The graph shows the answers of respondents to two questions: those rearing children were asked "What aspects of child rearing do you feel uncertain or anxious about? Please choose the appropriate response(s) from the following" and those without children were asked "What do you feel anxious about concerning child rearing in the future? Please choose the appropriate response(s) from the following."
3. The other answer choices were 'Other(s)' or 'None in particular'. The possible responses for those rearing children also included 'Children's illness and growth', 'Not enough time spent with children or talking to them', 'Don't know how to deal with children', 'Nobody to consult with about child rearing' and 'Feel isolated whilst rearing children'.
4. The childless couple groups are 18-29-year olds, 30-35-year-olds and people aged 36 or over with no children; the child-rearing groups are the fathers and the mothers of children up to high school age.
5. The respondents were composed of 209 men and 211 women in the childless couple groups, and by 564 men and 602 women in the child-rearing group. These responses have been omitted: 'Other(s)' and 'None in particular', and these responses from those rearing children: 'Children's illness and growth', 'Not enough time spent with children or talking to them', 'Don't know how to deal with children', 'Nobody to consult with about child rearing', 'Feel isolated whilst rearing children'; those not offering a response have also been omitted.

- The trend for full-time housewives not to ask other people for help raising children is particularly strong.
- Couples raising children and who find the burden heavy are less likely to want more children.

Fig. 1-3-13 Full-time housewives tend not to ask other people for help in child rearing



Notes

1. Adapted from MHLW's *Longitudinal Survey of Babies in the 21st Century*, 2003.
2. The graph shows the responses of people with infants aged around 2 and-a-half-years who were asked: "Who looks after your children born between January and July 2001? Please circle all the appropriate answers." The data was tabulated by each employment situation of the mothers.
3. The other answer choice was 'Other(s)'.
4. 'Mother' means the child's mother; 'father' means the child's father.
5. The subjects of the research were children born between January 10th and 17th 2001 and July 10th and 17th 2001; their situation was examined on August 1st 2003 (when the children who were born in January were 2 and-a-half) and on February 1st 2004 (when the children who were born in July were 2 and-a-half). The respondents were 42,200 parents of children living with their mother (excluding details of their working hours, whether or not they work, and who usually looks after the child.) The response 'Other(s)' has been omitted.