**Working women in Japan and the complications**

**of hiring household help**

**Suzanne Kamata**

**Naruto University**

**Yoko Kita**

**Naruto Board of Education**

**Abstract**

Since former Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo announced his “Womenomics” initiative to increase the number of Japanese women in the workplace, the number of married working women aged 25-54 has risen from 58% in 2000 to 71% in 2016. However, most of these women are not engaged in career-track jobs; the number of women in executive or managerial positions, as well as high level government jobs, lags well behind that of other industrialized nations. This is partly attributed to the fact that Japanese working women who are married with children still bear the brunt of childcare, housekeeping, and caring for elderly relatives. Japanese teachers, especially, work long hours, and have little time for career development activities which might lead to advancement. Although outsourcing at least some domestic tasks might improve Japanese women teacher’s lives, few do so. In this paper, we examine the results of a survey on attitudes toward hiring help to better understand why female educators in Japan tend to not outsource domestic work, and suggest the development of an app which might help those who are seeking to find and employ domestic workers.

日本の安倍晋三総理大臣が、女性活躍社会「ウーマノミクス」を提唱してから，結婚後も働き続ける25〜54歳の女性労働人口が，2000年の58％から2016年には72％に増加した。しかしながら，先進国諸国と比較すると，企業における管理・経営職や政府の要職に占める女性の割合は極めて少ないと言える。これは，日本では，多くの女性が結婚後は育児や家事に主に従事するとともに，高齢化した家族や親族の介護をしている現状を反映していると考えられる。特に，教員の長時間勤務は問題視されており，キャリアアップを目指した自己研鑽に費やす時間を十分確保できない懸念がある。日本においても，女性教員の家事を軽減する多様な外部人材活用システムが改善されつつあるが，未だ十分とは言い難い。本論文では、日本における女性教員の家事従事の実態を調査し，外部人材活用が進まない原因を探ることを主たる目的とする。さらに，家事代行外部人材の活用推進をめざし，派遣会社の雇用者の就労状況に透明性を持たせるためのアプリの開発をも提案するものである。

**Introduction**

A few years ago, the first researcher of this paper attended a meeting of the women’s support/gender interest group at the Japanese public university where she was teaching at the time. The guest speaker was a renowned researcher from a prestigious Canadian university. She was a single woman in her sixties with no children and a very impressive career. During the question and answer period which followed the talk, a young, female medical doctor and university instructor who had small children at home, raised her hand. “When do you do your housework?” she asked. The visiting researcher looked slightly taken aback, as if she had not expected such a question. Then she replied, “I don’t. I hire someone.”

For some, this may seem like an obvious answer. In Singapore, for example, it is reported that one in five families employs a maid (Awang & Ting, 2019, ). Although hiring help can be problematic, it is becoming more and more common among middle class families in the West. In the United States, for example, a 2016 study revealed that there are two million domestic employers in California alone, 42% of whom have a household income of $50,000 or less (UCLA Labor Center, 2016). Furthermore, as of 2016, in the United Kingdom, one in three families outsourced domestic work (Livingston, 2016). As American author and mother Megan K. Stack has written:

Hiring domestic help is a stopgap and an evasion. The entire model does nothing for the middle class since only women wealthy enough to pay for domestic help, or women poor enough to regard these jobs in terms of social mobility or survival, are affected. But for those who can afford it, paid domestic help takes the pressure off parents and marriage; off employers and society at large.

Stack hired help to look after her children and perform housekeeping tasks while she was writing a book in another room at home. Even Western women who work only part-time hire people to do such work in order to free themselves to pursue their own interests and passions. As has been noted by intersectional feminists, women who are actually hired still have to perform their own childcare and housework and therefore may *not* have time to pursue their own interests and passions.

In Japan, mid-career teachers who work full time earn above-average salaries, but they work long hours. A 2019 survey conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development found that Japanese junior high school teachers spent an average of 56 hours per week at work. This far exceeds the total average of 38.3 hours among the 14 other countries and regions which participated in the survey. Furthermore, elementary school teachers in Japan spend on average 54.4 hours at work. The survey also found that, among those surveyed, Japan ranked last in “total hours spent a week on professional development activities to improve individual skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as teachers” (Yajima, 2019), with less than an hour on average for both elementary and junior high school teachers. These career-enhancing activities might include language lessons, writing and publishing papers, engaging in networking events, and studying for exams to become vice principal or principal – all of which must be completed during a teacher’s “free time.” As many teachers, especially those who are female, are expected to also take on domestic labor at home, hiring outside help seems like an obvious potential solution for generating free time and reducing stress. Even so, few do.

This paper will attempt to begin to

.

**Positionally**

Discussions on domestic help have centered upon negative issues such as disparities of economic and social status between household employer and employee, issues of white privilege (De Matos, 2009; Land, 2019; Livingston, 2016; Stack, 2019), exploitation and/or abuse (Austin, 2017; Haynes, 2014; Sarkar 2020; Suryomenggolo, 2019), and the ethics of hiring someone to do one’s housework (Bromwich, 2014; Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003). Legal issues concerning foreign domestic workers such as illegal immigration (Hon & Chong, 2006; Menjívar & Kanstroom, 2013; Nyíri & Saveliev, 2018) and worker protection (Henderson, 2020; Sarkar, 2020) have also received attention.

In spite of the above, we hold the position that hiring household help is not implicitly bad. In fact, domestic work is frequently essential for those who perform it, providing income and opportunities (Killias, 2018; Suryomenggolo, 2019; Ueno, 2013), and beneficial to many who pay for it. Hired help for household tasks is often crucial for those with disabilities living independently (Heumann, et al. 2020).

Although historically, engaging in domestic work for others has been seen as dirty and demeaning in a Western context (Ashforth & Blake, 1999; Sarkar, 2020), cleaning does not seem to have carried the same stigma in Japan. Pre-World War II, young women of middle-class Japanese families often served aristocratic families as maids or “etiquette apprentices” in order to improve their marriage prospects (Lebra, 1990). In the present day, as the Western press often marvels, Japanese school children clean their own schools and serve each other lunch as part of their education. A local newspaper published an essay by a student on life lessons learned from cleaning the school toilet. Additionally, “sengyo shufu,” or ”full-time housewife,” has long been considered a respectable and desirable role for Japanese women. In pre-modern Japan, housewives were often considered heads of their households, and controlled the distribution of the staple food, rice, and in many middle-class families, women continue to be in charge of family finances (Ueno, 1987). As Ueno writes, “Women’s power in the domestic sphere is not negligible and sometimes compensates for their low status in the public sphere” (1987, ). Even as government policies seek to encourage more women to enter the workplace, “charisma housewives” such as Harumi Kurihara – and more recently Marie Kondo -- continue to promote the idea that housework is fun and satisfying (Goldstein-Gidoni, 2018; Kondo, 2014)—while being fully employed themselves.

**Background**

Since former Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo announced his “Womenomics” initiative to get more Japanese women into the workplace, the number of working married women aged 25-54 increased from 58% in 2000 to 71% in 2016 (Shambaugh, Nunn & Portman, 2017). However, most of those women are not engaged in career-track jobs, and the number of women in executive or managerial positions, as well as high level government jobs, lags well behind that of other industrialized nations (Shim, 2018). This is partly attributed to the fact that Japanese working women who are married with children still bear that brunt of childcare, housekeeping, and caring for elderly relatives. According to a report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Japanese men spend less time on household chores than men in other wealthy nations including Australia, Belgium, France, and Finland. Additionally, Rich reports that “according to an analysis of government data by Noriko O. Tsuya, an economics professor at Keio University in Tokyo, women who work more than 49 hours a week typically do close to 25 hours of housework a week. Their husbands do an average of less than five.”

The lack of Japanese women in leadership positions is partly blamed on Japanese men for not helping out around the house more (Rich, 2019; Rich, 2020; Zimmerman, 2020). In fact, even in North America, “although the research over the last few decades points to a decreasing gap in division of labor in the home, it doesn't necessarily translate to more equitable labor in the home” (Craig, 2020, para. 6). As Canadian feminist motherhood scholar Andrea O'Reilly points out, “mothers are taking on less by ‘outsourcing’ some of their load. Instead of cooking every night, they might get takeout, or they may hire help with domestic duties like cleaning the house or tutoring the children” (Craig, 2020, para. 7).

Japanese workplace expectations may also discourage women from pursuing positions with greater responsibilities. Japanese employees work on average 2,000 hours per year (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2015). According to Ono, these long working hours make it difficult to balance work and private life, and impede diversity in the workforce (2018). Persistent cultural norms such as Japan’s input-oriented society, emphasizing quantity over quality; group awareness and hierarchical relationships, which discourage workers leaving before their superiors; ambiguous job descriptions, and gender division of labor contribute to this trend. Furthermore, Ono writes:

Nemoto (2013) gives a detailed portrayal of the context of Japanese male-centered workplaces, based on interview surveys. Long working hours are seen as a sacrifice to the company, and women are criticized as disloyal if their time commitments are not on par with the men’s. Many women drop out because they cannot keep up with the time demands of the male-centered work culture. From interviews with female employees, on the other hand, Nemoto points out that the Japanese work culture offers women a way to “opt out.” Some female employees explain that, if anything, men’s careers are more constrained because men cannot opt out, and that they sympathize with men because most continue to work long hours until they retire (2018).

On top of long working hours, those professional women who opt in are expected to do most of the housework. Not only are Japanese women expected to do most of the domestic work, but these expectations go above and beyond those of the average North American woman. Whereas the popular American magazine *Good Housekeeping,* a source of recipes and cleaning tips which dates back to 1885, later encouraged readers to strive for good *enough* housekeeping, Japanese women in the 21st century are still pressured to make elaborate bentos for their children (Nakanishi, 2015; Stephens, 2015), sew aprons and shoe bags, prepare multiple dish meals–no casseroles!—for their families (Nakanishi, 2015; Rich, 2019), and keep a tidy house (Goldstein-Gidoni, 2018, Kondo, 2014). Japanese women typically shop daily for groceries, buying only what is needed to make that evening’s and the next day’s meals. After the meals are eaten, many Japanese women wash the dirty dishes by hand (Brasor & Tsukubu, 2012; Rich, 2019). Even in Tokyo, washed laundry can be seen hanging outdoors to dry on balconies. Here, in the land of robots, it seems that much domestic labor is still done by hand—by women.

While interviewing harried Japanese mothers, Rosenberger remarked, “I thought of my Hong Kong and Thai friends who worked full-time and came home to neat homes, warm dinners, and children cared for by maids from rural Thailand or the Philippines.” Japanese women, she points out, don’t have that option. Beyond ideological considerations, Rosenberger (2013) suggests that this is partly due to a lack of immigrant labor. Stereotypically, Indonesian or Filipina nannies take care of children and household chores for clients abroad, and wealthy New York women hire staff from less affluent countries such as Mexico and Jamaica. It should be noted, however, that such arrangements in these and other countries, such as Singapore, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, have sometimes led to human rights violations (AlTaher, 2019; Carvahlo, 2019; Henderson, 2019; Henderson, 2020; O’Neill, 2001; Sarkar, 2020; Tsujigami, 2019).

Japan, meanwhile, has long imposed limits on immigration. Recently immigration laws have changed, allowing foreign health care professionals to train to become eldercare workers. The rigorous licensing process involves two years of training, followed by a national board exam. If they pass, these workers can live and work indefinitely in Japan caring for the elderly and disabled. At present, however, immigrant workers have yet to fulfill the need for eldercare workers; there is a severe shortage of help available in Japan for those who require long-term care (NHK, 2020), let alone for women who work. Concerns have also been raised about the abuse of short-term immigrant laborers in Japan (Kyodo, 2018; Slodkowski, 2014; Tabuchi, 2010). However, although it is true that there are not enough immigrant workers in Japan to keep up with the demand for domestic labor, the theory discounts the possibility that Japanese women – or men -- such as university students (not to mention permanent residents of other nationalities) might perform domestic work for other Japanese. Not all domestic workers are immigrants. In fact, local Japanese governments oversee Silver Human Resource Centers (Roberts, 1996), at which citizens can employ registered retired workers and other senior citizens for part-time house cleaning, babysitting, gardening, and other services at reasonable rates. Additionally, more and more affordable professional cleaning services such as Benry (at an average rate of 1500 yen per hour) are emerging.

**Methodology**

A qualitative approach was used in this study. The participants were a convenience sample of 91 women (47 Japanese, 38 Western) who were located through a university inter-office email system, as well as through the researchers’ personal Facebook pages, Line and email contacts. We especially targeted working women who live in Japan, however, a few respondents were non-Japanese women who had previously lived in Japan and who were married to Japanese men. Because both researchers are language teachers, a high proportion of our respondents were language teachers, or former language teachers in Japan.

The survey questions were written both in English and Japanese, in the form of a Google document. Participants were sent a QR code linking to the questions, which enabled them to reply anonymously. Initially, questions about age, nationality, country of residence, household income, and number of occupants per household were included. Others were: “How many hours per week do you spend on housework?” “Do you hire someone to help with housework? If yes, which tasks do they perform?” “Would you consider hiring someone to help with housework? If no, why not?” The responses to the survey were gathered between June 2019 and August 2020.

**Demographics**

The majority of the participants were forty years old and above. (See table 1 below) .

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table1. *What is your age?*** | | |
| Age | N | % |
| 20-29 | 3 | 3.3 |
| 30-39 | 18 | 19.8 |
| 40-49 | 43 | 47.3 |
| 50-59 | 18 | 19.8 |
| 60~ | 9 | 9.9 |
|  | n=91 |  |

Over half (51.6%) of the participants were Japanese. The remaining participants’ nationalities varied, with Americans living in Japan making up the greatest percentage (23.1%). (See table 2 below).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 2.  *What is your nationality?*** | | |
| Nationality | N | % |
| American | 21 | 23.1 |
| Australia/Italian | 1 | 1.1 |
| Australian | 5 | 5.5 |
| British | 7 | 7.7 |
| Canadian | 6 | 6.6 |
| German | 1 | 1.1 |
| Ireland | 1 | 1.1 |
| Japanese | 47 | 51.6 |
| New Zealand | 1 | 1.1 |
| Romanian | 1 | 1.1 |
|  | n=91 |  |

The country of residence of participants was mainly Japan with eighty-six (94.5%). (See table 3 below).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 3.  *What is your country of residence?*** | | |
| Residency | N | % |
| Japan | 86 | 94.5 |
| Australia | 2 | 2.2 |
| Canada | 1 | 1.1 |
| Spain | 1 | 1.1 |
| United States | 1 | 1.1 |
|  | n=91 |  |

Table 4 indicates the number of members per household. (See table 4 below).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 4. *How many people live in your household?*** | | |
| person/people | N | % |
| 1 | 11 | 12.1 |
| 2 | 23 | 25.3 |
| 3 | 13 | 14.3 |
| 4 | 28 | 30.8 |
| 5 | 13 | 14.3 |
| 6 | 2 | 2.2 |
| 7 or more | 1 | 1.1 |

Out of all ninety-one respondents, forty-seven were employed in the educational sector, accounting for 51.6%. This number includes elementary, junior and high school teachers, lecturers, university instructors, English teachers, ALTs, and part-time teachers. Other occupations included office workers -- six (6.6%); housewife – five (5.5%); and civil servant – five (5.5%). The household income ranges of the participants are indicated in Table 5 below. The majority earned a middle-class income of 500 million yen or more per year.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 5 . *What is your household income?*** | | |
|  | N | % |
| Less than 3 million yen | 14 | 15.4 |
| 300~399 million yen | 8 | 8.8 |
| 400~499 million yen | 4 | 4.4 |
| 500～599 million yen | 12 | 13.2 |
| 600～699 million yen | 16 | 17.6 |
| 700～999 million yen | 20 | 22.0 |
| 1000 million yen or more | 17 | 18.7 |

In response to the question “How many hours per week do you spend on housework?” only one (1.1%) spends less than thirty minutes; twenty-four (26.4%) spend ten or more than ten hours (See table 6 below).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 6. *How many hours per week do you spend on housework?*** | | |
| time | N | % |
| less than 30 minutes | 1 | 1.1 |
| less than 1 hour | 8 | 8.8 |
| 1~2 hours | 9 | 9.9 |
| 2~3 hours | 13 | 14.3 |
| 3~4 hours | 11 | 12.1 |
| 4 or more than 4 hours | 14 | 15.4 |
| 7 or more than 7 hours | 11 | 12.1 |
| 10 or more than 10 hours | 24 | 26.4 |
|  | n=91 |  |

**Discussion**

Out of all 91 respondents, only ten (10.9%) hired someone to help with housework or had done so in the past. Of the ten, nine were Western women living in Japan, whereas the remaining one was a German woman married to a Japanese man living in Spain. However, 39 respondents (42.9%), a number comprising both Western and Japanese women, replied that they would consider hiring someone to do their housework. Of those who had engaged domestic workers, all said that they had hired someone because they didn’t have enough time to do it themselves, and they wanted to have time to do other things. Five replied that they didn’t like doing housework. Among the tasks completed by hired help were vacuuming, cleaning the toilet, cleaning the bathtub, dusting, mopping floors, hanging out laundry, making beds, ironing, and replacing screens.

Several respondents hired help through their local silver human resource centers:

“I have a silver helper that comes twice a month (I want to increase to 4x a month). She comes during soccer time for the kids on Fridays, so I meet and let her in and then do the soccer run (watch for two hours!) and get home to a cleaner house than I left.”

Some respondents were interested in hiring someone from Silver Human Resource Centers, but were unable to due to demand:

“I tried to find one where I live but was told nobody wanted to do housework. People looked mainly for office work. I may try again.”

An associate professor, who had initially hired someone from the Silver Center, later hired a neighbor through private arrangements:

“I used Silver Service, but the local one here is crap. I hired the time of a neighbor. K San comes twice a week for cleaning and every day for letting the dogs out to pee at lunchtime. K San helps us because I am always at work, so she has her own key.”

Another associate professor hired students for various tasks:

I hired 3 students regularly. I'll call them A, B and C. A was a male 2nd year student who lived next door and supervised both children for an hour after school until I got home. His main task was to help [my son] with his homework (R. was in 3rd and 4th grade). A also sometimes babysat when I had to work weekends. B and C were two female students I selected from the ESS club after we moved house. I hired them mostly on weekends when I had to work at events such as Open Campus or EIKEN interviews (usually around 5-6 hours). They played with the kids and made their lunch. I paid 1,000 yen per hour.

One woman hired a cleaner in spite of opposition from her Japanese parents-in-law:

“Our cleaner originally came twice a month and now comes every week. MIL and DH had an absolute cow when they found out I planned to give this stranger a key to our house and let her clean alone here, but now they’re 1000000% on board.”

Some respondents indicated that they worked alongside their hired helpers:

“When my kids were small, I hired Silver help in the house and garden. I also worked with them and had a snack with them at 10 am and 3 pm. It motivated me to get more done (my work was essentially tripled) but I never felt comfortable just watching them work so we always did it side by side.”

Of those who had never hired someone to help with domestic tasks, 54.7% replied “I can do it by myself,” while 17% answered that they enjoy doing housework. (Multiple responses were accepted.)

Regarding the more negative responses, twenty-five respondents (47.2%) cited privacy and not wanting a stranger in their house as a reason for not hiring domestic help. This response is expected, since even inviting friends into one’s home may not be as common in Japan as it is in the United States and other Western countries.

Nine, including seven Japanese, worried about theft, in spite of Japan’s low crime rate, perhaps reflecting an aversion to risk and uncertainty. It is worth reiterating that among those who did hire household help, some remained at home and cleaned alongside their helpers. If a householder and helper were working together, or if they householder was at home, theft would be unlikely.

Twenty-two (41.5%) felt that it would be too expensive:

“When my kids were small, I hired Silver help in the house and garden. I tried to hire them again a few years ago, btw, but could not get them. The waiting list is really long. What a pity. Duskin and Merry Maids are WAY too expensive.”

Although many Americans find babysitters, house cleaners, and other workers through word of mouth, often hiring a neighboring teenager (UCLA Labor Center, 2016), there is no such custom in Japan. Therefore, it is possible that Japanese respondents, especially, may have assumed that “hiring help” means employing a professional cleaner through an agency such as Duskin or Merry Maids, as mentioned above. To be sure, these services can be expensive. According to a recent brochure for a professional house cleaning service in Shikoku, the rate for toilet-cleaning starts at 7,500 yen. The cost for having a kitchen range cleaned is 13,500 yen or more. Depending on location, there are cheaper alternatives such as Benriya-san and Pinay Housekeeping Service in the Tokyo area, which offers three hours of cleaning bimonthly for 19,800 yen. However, a local luxury hotel which employed foreign post-graduate students at the first researcher’s university pays its housekeeping staff 800 yen per hour. Also, the going rate for home tutors, who are typically high school or university students hired privately through word-of-mouth, is about 1,500 yen per hour. If cost is the main factor preventing professional women from hiring a cleaner, it seems as if they could consider more affordable options.

While concerns about cost, theft, and privacy are not particularly surprising, it is interesting to note that nine responded that they were deterred from hiring someone by disapproval from a partner, in-laws, or neighbors. One replied, “I’d love [to hire someone to help with housework] and could afford it, but my husband would never go for it.” Of those who had hired someone, at least two had done so secretly:

“It is a secret from my husband that I hire help, although he knows that I did in the past.”

Other reasons given for not hiring help are as follows:

“When I was single, I had a cleaner. If I didn’t have a DH who loves cleaning, I would again.”

“I’d have to tidy up the house before help came.”

“Home too small!”

“Embarrassing.”

For the record, although it was not an explicit option, no one cited ethical considerations as a reason for not hiring help.

**Limitations and Areas for Further Study**

There are some limitations to this study. For example, we failed to distinguish between urban and rural dwellers. Considering anecdotal evidence, it is likely that women living in urban areas are more likely and willing to hire household help, and have greater access to it, than those in rural areas. Additionally, although both researchers know of Japanese women who have hired help while living abroad, no such women responded to the survey. Women who have lived for an extended period of time in a culture which has normalized outsourcing domestic tasks would more likely have a different attitude than those who have not. Further research might also consider what, exactly, householders consider to be essential tasks, and how often they should be performed. Finally, questions about the division of labor in multi-generational households were not asked. It is possible that in-laws, who are retired and living in the same household, or nearby, help to ease the burden of household labor, and that children help with cooking and cleaning. These factors may have affected the results of our preliminary survey. A wider, more comprehensive study would yield more detailed data.

**Conclusion**

Although more than a third of the respondents are willing to consider hiring household help, none of the Japanese women surveyed have done so. The most prevalent reason for not hiring someone was cost, but it can also be inferred from replies that there is a shortage of Silver workers willing to perform domestic tasks, and that it may be difficult for householders to locate someone to hire in some areas of Japan. This may represent opportunity.

A database of younger workers willing to clean on a flexible part-time basis would be one possible solution. High school and university students may be eager to work at part-time jobs, and would probably be willing to clean, cook, hang out laundry, and do other household chores at a reasonable rate. We can also envision a service similar to Uber or Airbnb enabling householders and domestic workers to rate each other’s conditions and competence. This system would be a safeguard against employee abuse, and also ensure accountability, and might be one way to set the minds of those concerned about theft at ease. It would also enable householders to easily locate willing domestic workers.

Unsurprisingly, among survey respondents, only Western women had hired household help. Foreign women in Japan, who are already considered atypical, may be less susceptible to bullying or ostracization for not following cultural norms. They tend to be resourceful when seeking help, asking each other in person and via social networks about hiring options.

A more complicated barrier to hiring household help in Japan is disapproval from family members or neighbors. However, perhaps this will change as an aging population necessitates an increase in home health care workers, both foreign and Japanese, to care for the elderly. As people become more accustomed to care-workers in theirs and their neighbors’ homes, it is possible that they will be more open to having non-family members perform other helpful tasks. This practice might also be normalized through positive representations of domestic workers in media and entertainment. For example, perhaps a Japanese version of the popular American Netflix production of “The Babysitters Club” would introduce young Japanese people to the appeal and possibility of child care work. Public discussions and forums might also have an impact, and would help raise awareness of the potential for abuse, as well as guidelines and legislation needed to protect domestic workers from abroad.

In short, in conditions that are mutually beneficial, hiring domestic workers could ease the burdens of female language teachers in Japan. With more free time, instructors would be able to pursue career advancement, if they so desire, or have more time to spend on personal interests. Until male partners and Japanese work culture adapt, and/or until the perfect affordable robot maid/butler/nanny/husband/partner is developed, getting help from others may be the best solution.

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**Appendix**

Questions on Hiring Help for Housework

1. What is your age?

2. What is your nationality?

3. What is your country of residence?

4. What is your occupation?

5. What is your household income?

6. How many people live in your household?

7. How many hours per week do you spend on housework?

8. Do you hire someone to help with housework, or have you hired someone in the past?

If yes, which tasks do they perform?

9. If yes to question 8, why did you hire someone to help with housework?

a. I don’t have time to do it myself.

b. I want to have time to do other things.

c. I dislike housework.

d. I am physically incapable of doing housework due to illness, injury, disability, etc.

e. Having a housekeeper is a status symbol.

f. I believe housework should be paid work.

g. Other

10. Would you consider hiring someone to help with housework?

If no, why not?

a. I can do it by myself.

b. I enjoy housework.

c. Privacy./I don’t want a stranger in my house.

d. I would be worried about theft.

e. It’s too expensive./I don’t want to spend money on a housekeeper.

f. My partner would disapprove.

g. My in-laws would disapprove.

h. I would be worried about what my neighbors would think.

i. Other

Would you be willing to answer further questions?

If yes, please submit your email address.

**Suzanne Kamata** is an Associate Professor in Global Studies at Naruto University in Tokushima, Japan. Her articles have been previously published in *Critical Perspectives on Wives: Roles, Representations, Identities Work* (Demeter Press, 2019) and *Foreign Female English Teachers in Japanese Higher Education: Narratives From our Quarter* (Candlin and Mynard, 2020).

**Yoko Kita** is a teacher trainer at the Naruto Board of Education. Her articles include an essay on Ruth Bader Ginsburg*.* A former Fulbright Scholar, Kita earned an MA in TESOL from Seattle Pacific University. Her research interests include the use of ICT in language teaching and learning gaps.