

Happiness and the Household Division of Labour

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Abstract

Dramatic changes in family formation has been experienced such as declining marriage and birth rates in Japan at the same time improvements of women's socioeconomic status have been observed. In this study, I attempt to investigate motivations of Japanese women behind these changes by applying happiness (subjective well-being) measures. More specifically, I estimate the effects of marriage, children and employment status on happiness. I also consider the effect of the household division of labour on happiness in relation to the issue of work-life balance. Using a nine-waves of Japanese Panel Survey of Consumers, I find that the household division of labour is an important factor to influence happiness of Japanese women. Given the household division of labour, there are happiness gains from marriage and part time employment, but reductions in happiness from the number of children and particularly from children under three. These results suggest important policy implications in recent changes of family formation behaviour of women with regard to work and life balance.

JEL classification: J2, J12 and I31

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