

Cultural Perceptions of Gender Inequality: A Comparative Study of the U.S. and Japan

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This thesis titled  
Cultural Perceptions of Gender Inequality: A Comparative Study of the U.S. and Japan

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### **Abstract**

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Cultural Perceptions of Gender Inequality: A Comparative Study of the U.S. and Japan

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This study examines the differences in gender role perceptions between Japan and the United States, focusing on the influence of cultural, economic, and educational factors. Using survey data, the findings highlight significant contrasts between the two countries. In Japan, traditional gender roles are strongly supported across various demographic groups, reflecting deeply rooted cultural expectations. In the United States, attitudes toward gender roles are more progressive, shaped by generational changes and economic conditions. The study also reveals the impact of income and education, with higher income groups in the U.S. showing greater opposition to traditional gender roles—a trend less prominent in Japan. These results offer valuable insights into how societal factors shape attitudes toward gender roles in different cultural contexts, contributing to the broader discourse on gender equality and cultural influences.

## Dedication

*To all those who have supported me through this journey, your encouragement has meant  
the world to me. ありがとうございます。 Thank you.*

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## Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract .....	3
Dedication .....	4
Acknowledgments .....	5
List of Tables .....	8
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	9
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	11
Gender Roles in Family .....	11
Gender Bias Development and Age .....	12
Economic Aspects of Gender Roles in Workplace .....	14
Chapter 3: Methods .....	18
Datasets .....	18
United States .....	18
Japan .....	18
Variables .....	19
Dependent Variables .....	20
Independent Variables .....	22
Summary Analysis of Bar Charts for Dependent Variables .....	25
Limitation .....	26
Chapter 4: Analysis .....	28
First Dependent Variable: Men Work, and Women Stay at Home .....	28
Sex .....	28
Age .....	29
Income .....	30
Number of Children .....	31
Education .....	33
Second Dependent Variable: Preschool Kids Suffer if Mother Works .....	34
Sex .....	34
Age .....	35
Income .....	36
Number of Children .....	37
Education .....	39

Chapter 5: Discussion .....	43
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	49
References .....	51

## List of Tables

	Page
Table 1: Comparison of Statistics on Family, Education, Income, Gender, and Age .....	20
Table 2: Comparison of U.S. and Japan Responses to 'Better Men to Work, Women Tend Home' .....	25
Table 3: Comparison of U.S. and Japan Responses to 'Preschool Kids Suffer If Mother Works' .....	26
Table 4: Crosstab of Responses to 'Better Men to Work, Women Tend Home' in the U.S. and Japan .....	41
Table 5: Crosstab of Responses to 'Preschool Kids Suffer If Mother Works' in the U.S. and Japan .....	42



## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Japan and the United States have different historical and cultural backgrounds; accordingly, there are differences in social expectations and role divisions for men and women. I will focus on the differences in social expectations for men and women and the division of roles between men and women in Japan and the U.S.

According to the Gender Gap Index, the United States ranks 43rd globally, while Japan ranks 125th on that list (out of 146 countries) in 2023 (World Economic Forum, 2023). While Japan boasts very high standards in the areas of education and health, the numbers are significantly lower in the areas of politics and economics. Specifically, the U.S. ranks 21st in the economy, while Japan ranks 123rd. In the area of politics, the U.S. ranks 63rd, while Japan is 138th. In education and health, however, Japan ranks higher. In education, the U.S. ranks 59th, while Japan is 47th. In health, Japan is 59th, while the U.S. is 78th. Japan ranked low, especially in the areas of economy and politics.

According to Kamo (1994), in Japan, the division of roles between men and women is relatively clear, and traditional gender roles remain strong, with men succeeding at work and women taking care of the family at home. In the U.S., on the other hand, housework tends to be more evenly divided between men and women than in Japan. Because of this there are fewer opportunities for women to enter the workforce in Japan (Kamo, 1994)

Referring to this, the research question is: What are the differences in social expectations and role divisions with respect to gender in Japanese and the U.S. society? This study will use the General Social Survey (GSS) and the Japanese version of the GSS to examine differences in social expectations and role divisions with respect to gender between men and women in Japan and the United States.

Through this process, I will thoroughly examine the similarities and differences between the two cultures and clarify the impact of each culture on the way they think and act. Through their perspectives, I aim to deepen our understanding of the social expectations and role divisions between Japan and the U.S. and promote cross-cultural exchange and empathy. Through this approach, such as comparing figures on how the cultural and social backgrounds of Japan and the U.S. affect the gender gap, we can understand how different social structures and values affect the gap.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Gender Roles in Family**

Japanese expectations of gender roles persist (Belarmino & Roberts, 2019; Crabtree & Muroga, 2021). The pressure on Japanese women to conform to society's expectations for marriage, childbearing, and domestic responsibilities permeates many aspects of women's lives. Belarmino and Roberts (2019) examined the severe consequences of traditional gender role divisions, such as expectations that one should quit one's job after marriage to focus on raising children or demands for a certain femininity in appearance or behavior. Furthermore, statistically significant differences in attitudes between men and women persist, especially in men's beliefs about women's social and professional roles, where traditional ideas persist (Crabtree & Muroga, 2021).

Omori and Ota (2023) studied the links between the deep-seated nature of these expectations toward sexual violence and inequality and the impact of traditional gender roles on women's daily lives. Also in Japan, former Prime Minister Abe's "Womenomics" aimed to improve the economic status of women, but in reality, it was not successful, and it is stated that the percentage of women in management positions is less than 10% (Omori & Ota, 2023). Levey and Silver's (2006) cross-cultural analysis added a comparative lens, showcasing the influence of cultural differences on gender-related values while also highlighting the absence of gender differences in specific values across both Japan and the U.S. These studies have explored how gender dynamics in Japan impacted Japanese society from various angles, contributing valuable insights to the scholarly discourse.

In the United States, expectations between family members are becoming more diverse. In recent years, many Americans have come to support gender equality, and it has become common for women in particular to have careers while raising children (Parker, 2015). For example, mothers are expected to balance their careers and childcare, and fathers are also expected to be more actively involved in childcare. As a result, the division of roles within the home is gradually changing, and cooperation between men and women is being promoted. However, the influence of traditional gender roles still remains, and the “double burden” of women having to juggle both work and childcare is a problem that exists in Japan as well. Although in the United States, particularly since the 1980s, women have been making greater inroads into society, and policies to promote gender equality in education and the workplace have also progressed. According to Parker (2015), although many Americans support gender equality, there are still expectations for traditional gender roles in the workplace and at home, and the “double burden” on women in particular is seen as a problem. Many women are expected to balance their careers at work with childcare and housework at home, and this is a key factor in gender inequality.

### **Gender Bias Development and Age**

Awareness of gender roles is present from a young age in Japanese children, with 7-year-old boys already associating intelligence more strongly with their gender (Okanda et al., 2022). Research suggested Japanese children are more likely to have the "smart = male" prejudice at age 7 than as boys are more likely to associate intelligence with their gender (Okanda et al., 2022). The same research also suggested that Japanese girls do not show the same preference. Japanese culture and the educational system influence this

tendency, as children between the ages of 4 and 6 are less likely to hold the "smart = male" prejudice, and only boys are more likely to show this preference by the age of 7 (Okanda et al, 2022). The study found no association between parents' attitudes toward gender roles and their children's gender prejudice. The reason for this was thought to be that Japanese parents rarely discuss gender roles with their young children. This was substantiated by Yu and Kuo's study (2018), which found that fathers with daughters tended to support gender egalitarianism and support policies that promote gender equality, reversing previous research that found it depended on the presence or absence of children rather than the gender of the children. However, in studies conducted on children in other regions, including the United States, many were asked to respond to whether they thought girls or boys were superior, and as a result, the children thought that their gender was evaluated more positively by others (Halim, Ruble, & Tamis-LeMonda 2013).

Rodriguez-Kiino's (2018) focus on higher education offers a glimmer of optimism, suggesting that female college graduates in Japan outpace their male counterparts in employment rates. Higher education provides women with opportunities to redefine themselves and increase their self-efficacy in college and career planning and suggests the potential to expand economic opportunities for women. Thus, the results suggest that Japanese women are more likely to challenge traditional gender roles as they navigate the complexities of child-rearing (Yu & Kuo, 2018). The interaction of early childhood experiences, parental attitudes, and shifting views of gender roles in Japanese society subtly emerges. It contributes to a comprehensive understanding of how gender attitudes evolve. In addition, the probability of women, especially those from families with low levels of education, agreeing with traditional gender roles decreases

significantly with an increase in the number of years of education, confirming that an increase of one year of education decreases the probability of women agreeing with traditional roles (Garrido, 2019). Those with more education tend to have a negative view of traditional gender roles.

### **Economic Aspects of Gender Roles in Workplace**

Gender-based disparities in the work environment still exist and affect workplace culture and career choices. Hsu et al. (2021) provide a stark portrayal of the challenges Japanese women face in the workforce, with the gender pay gap and societal expectations creating barriers to career advancement. Yamaguchi's (2000) analysis of gender role attitudes among married women further emphasizes the societal nuances that influence women's decisions in balancing work and family roles. Li et al. (2023) exploration of labor participation rates among married women in Japan and the U.S. adds a comparative dimension, revealing the impact of social norms on women's decisions to participate in the labor force. For example, wives tend to be more cautious about working in response to social norms in which husbands earn more than wives. In Japan, the labor participation rate of wives is about 64%, of which 65% work part-time. In the U.S., on the other hand, the labor participation rate for wives is 72%, and less than 25% of women work part-time (Li et.al, 2023). This makes married women more likely to choose to spend more time on household chores. Other studies have shown that the higher the income of the husband or other family members, the less likely the wife is to stay in the labor market. Sakamoto and Morita's empirical analysis (2023) extends the discussion to gender identity, illustrating how financial crises can amplify the influence of traditional beliefs, impacting women's choices to continue or leave the labor force. These studies suggest a challenging

landscape for women in Japan as they navigate societal expectations, workforce challenges, and the intricate interplay of education and career decisions. The dialogue between these studies underscores the need for holistic approaches to address gender inequality, recognizing the multifaceted nature of societal norms and their impact on women's lives. The first reason for the gender wage gap is primarily because complete working hours and seniority between men and women have an essential impact on wages but are shorter for women than for men. Second, there are significant differences in the assessment of complete working hours between men and women. Specifically, complete work experience and seniority affect wages for men but not women. These results suggest that these are the main factors that have a tremendous impact on the wage gap between men and women (Miyoshi, 2008).

In terms of income, the gender gap is undeniable (Hsu, 2021). Despite earning only 76.5% of men's median income, societal expectations strongly emphasize women as mothers and homemakers in Japan. Moreover, in Japan, married women and married men earn \$21,368 and \$68,308 per year, respectively. In the U.S., women average \$42,437 and men average \$70,105 (Li et.al. 2023). The traditional family system glorifies this role, leading many women to prioritize family obligations over their careers. The Japanese labor market, built on the premise of men as primary earners, tends to view employing women with children negatively. The impact of having children on women's careers is substantial, making it challenging for them to return to competitive jobs after maternity leave. Inadequate support for childcare in the labor market limits women's options, pushing many towards part-time jobs or prompting them to leave the workforce altogether. Yamaguchi's study (2000) explores the differences in pro-work and anti-work

attitudes in Japan and the U.S., specifically focusing on the compatibility or incompatibility of work and family roles. This study identifies latent classes representing traditional and non-traditional gender role attitudes. In the United States, education has been shown to have a strong effect on gender equality attitudes, with education having a strong effect on female non-traditional gender equality supporters. In contrast, in Japan, education tends not to have a strong impact on gender role attitudes. Higher education has a strong impact on gender role attitudes in the U.S., while it tends to have less of an impact in Japan. In addition, non-traditional gender equality attitudes tend to be stronger among married women with higher incomes. While there is general agreement that men are more strongly devoted to their careers than women, gender differences in the demands of work and family tend to shift women from a work-centered identity to a family-centered identity (Sweet et al., 2015). Cultural beliefs have also been shown to influence career-centeredness, particularly that traditional gender ideals may have different effects on men's and women's career-centeredness. Women tend to be less critical in their career identity than men (Sweet et al., 2015).

The difference is more pronounced when we focus on married women rather than just men and women. There are considerable differences in labor participation rates among married women between the U.S. and Japan (Li & Suga, 2022). Li and Suga's highlighted significant differences in the labor participation rates of married women in Japan and the United States despite improvements in social and economic conditions. A test was conducted using data from both countries to examine whether social norms contribute to these differences. The results indicated that in Japan, the labor participation rates of married women were lower when they were more likely to earn more than their



husbands, a correlation not observed in the U.S. data. Sakamoto and Morita's research (2023) investigates how gender identity regarding market and non-market work influences married women in Japan. Specifically, it examines the belief that wives should not earn more than their husbands. Empirical analysis using Japanese consumer panel survey data from 1993 to 2016 reveals that when a wife's share of a couple's income ratio exceeds 50%, wives tend to avoid earning more than their husbands.

In summary, it becomes evident that addressing gender roles, education, and work transitions in Japan requires a comprehensive understanding of the cultural, societal, and economic factors at play. Therefore, I suggest the following hypotheses: Traditional values still remain in Japan, and social expectations for women and their roles in the household tend to be more conservative than in the United States. On the other hand, in the U.S., gender equality is more advanced and social expectations and roles within the family are expected to be more diverse.

## Chapter 3: Methods

### Datasets

#### *United States*

The 2016 General Social Survey (GSS) was a national survey of adults in the United States and used a random sampling technique. The sample size was 2867 respondents. Specifically, stratified sampling methods were used to target adults living in residential areas of the United States. Stratified sampling divides the United States into various strata based on factors such as geographic area (state or region), urban or rural area, population density, age group of population, and race/ethnicity. Participants were then randomly sampled from each stratum to select participants for the survey; the GSS strove to include people from different geographic areas and sociodemographic to ensure that the sample was nationally representative. Eligible applicants are non-institutionalized, English- or Spanish-speaking residents of the United States who are 18 years of age or older.

#### *Japan*

The 2015 Japanese General Social Survey (JGSS) was a national survey of adults in Japan and used a random sampling technique. The survey was designed for non-institutionalized Japanese males and females, ages 20 to 89 years, nationwide. The sample size was 4,500 respondents, randomly selected based on a two-stage stratified sampling method. The number of sampling spots was 300, and the registration format was basic resident registration. Both interview and placement (self-administered) methods were used to conduct the survey, with 2,079 valid responses, for a response rate of 52.6%. The sampling process involved stratification by region and city/district

population size and used the basic unit area equidistant sampling method. Auxiliary targets were not used, and respondents completed questionnaires for nonresponse cases.

### **Variables**

For this study, I use two dependent variables available in the GSS in the U.S. and Japan (see table below). The first dependent variable asked respondents if they think agree that gender role that men should work, and women should stay at home. The second dependent variable asks respondents if they think preschool children will suffer if their mother works. For independent variables, I chose gender, age, income, the number of children, and education.

Variables	US	Japan
First Dependent Variable	FEFAM: Better for man to work, woman tend home	Q4WWHHX: A husband's job is to earn money; a wife's job is to look after the home and family
Second Dependent variable	FEPRESCH: Preschool kids suffer if mother works	Q4JBMMCC: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? A preschool child is likely to suffer if his/her mother works.
Independent Variable	Sex of respondent	Sex of respondent.

Independent Variable	Age of respondent	Age of respondent.
Independent Variable	Respondent's income	Respondent annual income: main job
Independent Variable	Number of children	Number of children
Independent Variable	Highest degree of education EARNED	Highest degree of education

Table 1: Comparison of Statistics on Family, Education, Income, Gender, and Age

	US			Japan		
	Total	Median	SD	Total	Median	SD
FEFAM	1860	Disagree	0.8471888	2020	Somewhat disagree	0.8794673
FEPRESCH	1860	Disagree	0.7520087	2020	Somewhat disagree	0.8868719
SEX	2867	Female	0.4970596	2079	Female	0.4983454
AGE	2857	49.16(mean)	17.69279	2079	53.43(mean)	17.36577
INCOME	2433	\$30000 to 34999	6.100697	1716	4.5 million yen - 5.5 million yen	4.465945
CHILDREN	2859	1.852(mean)	1.669344	2076	1.617(mean)	1.14798
EDUCATION	2859	High school	1.22212	2079	High school	1.068245

### *Dependent Variables*

The following are the breakdowns of the dependent variables used.

#### 1. United States

Better for man to work, woman tend home:

Strongly agree	5.9%
Agree	21.6%
Disagree	45.6%
Strongly disagree	26.9%

### 1. Japan

A husband's job is to earn money; a wife's job is to look after the home and family:

Strongly agree	8.9%
Agree	33.2%
Disagree	38.6%
Strongly disagree	19.3%

### 2. United States

Preschool kids suffer if mother works:

Strongly agree	3.8%
Agree	23.9%
Disagree	53.3%
Strongly disagree	18.9%

### 2. Japan

A preschool child is likely to suffer if his/her mother works:

Strongly agree	9.2%
Agree	29.7%
Disagree	41.2%
Strongly disagree	19.9%

### ***Independent Variables***

#### Sex

- Male/female

#### Age

- Respondents responded by entering their own age.

#### Income

- United States

In which of these groups did your total family income, from all sources, fall last year before taxes, that is?

(1) Under \$1000, (2) \$1000 to 2999, (3) \$3000 to 3999, (4) \$4000 to 4999, (5) \$5000 to 5999, (6) \$6000 to 6999, (7) \$7000 to 7999, (8) \$8000 to 9999, (9) \$10000 to 12499, (10) \$12500 to 14999, (11) \$15000 to 17499, (12) \$17500 to 19999, (13) \$20000 to 22499, (14) \$22500 to 24999, (15) \$25000 to 29999, (16) \$30000 to 34999, (17) \$35000 to 39999, (18) \$40000 to 49999, (19) \$50000 to 59999, (20) \$60000 to 74999, (21) \$75000 to \$89999, (22) \$90000 to \$109999, (23) \$110000 to \$129999, (24) \$130000 to \$149999, (25) \$150000 to \$169999, (26) \$170000 or over.

To simplify the analysis and ensure that each category contains a roughly equal number of individuals, I consolidated them into broader groups: '\$0 - \$9,999', '\$10,000 - \$19,999', '\$20,000 - \$29,999', '\$30,000 - \$49,999', '\$50,000 - \$99,999', and 'over \$100,000'."

- Japan

Which one of the following best describes your annual household income last year? Please answer the income before deducting taxes. Include income not only from your jobs, but also from all other sources such as stock shares, pensions, and real estate.

(1) None, (2) Less than 700,000 yen, (3) 700,000 yen - 1 million yen, (4) 1 million yen - 1.3 million yen, (5) 1.3 million yen - 1.5 million yen, (6) 1.5 million yen - 2.5 million yen, (7) 2.5 million yen - 3.5 million yen (8) 3.5 million yen - 4.5 million yen, (9) 4.5 million yen - 5.5 million yen, (10) 5.5 million yen - 6.5 million yen, (11) 6.5 million yen - 7.5 million yen, (12) 7.5 million yen - 8.5 million yen, (13) 8.5 million yen - 10 million yen, (14) 10 million yen - 12 million yen, (15) 12 million yen - 14 million yen, (16) 14 million yen - 16 million yen, (17) 16 million yen - 18.5 million yen, (18) 18.5 million yen - 23 million yen, (19) 23 million yen or over

To compare, I calculated as 1 dollar 108 yen (average in 2016)

#### Number of children

This variable is chosen because prior research conducted by Yu, 2018, suggests that it may be controlled by the number or presence of children.

- United States

How many children have you ever had? Please count all that were born alive at any time (including any you had from a previous marriage).

- Japan

How many children have you had? Please include those who have left home and are deceased.

### Education

- United States

(1) Less than high school, (2) High school, (3) Junior college, (4) Bachelor, (5) Graduate

- Japan

For Japan, the educational categories were aligned with those of the U.S. to ensure consistency in the comparison. The old Japanese system categories, such as 'Ordinary elementary school in the old system' and 'Junior high school/girls' high school in the old system,' were converted to their modern equivalents, such as 'High school' or 'Junior college,' based on their closest counterparts in the current system. This standardization allows for a direct comparison between Japan and the U.S., ensuring that each educational level corresponds accurately across both datasets.



### Summary Analysis of Bar Charts for Dependent Variables

Table 2: Comparison of U.S. and Japan Responses to 'Better Men to Work, Women Tend Home'

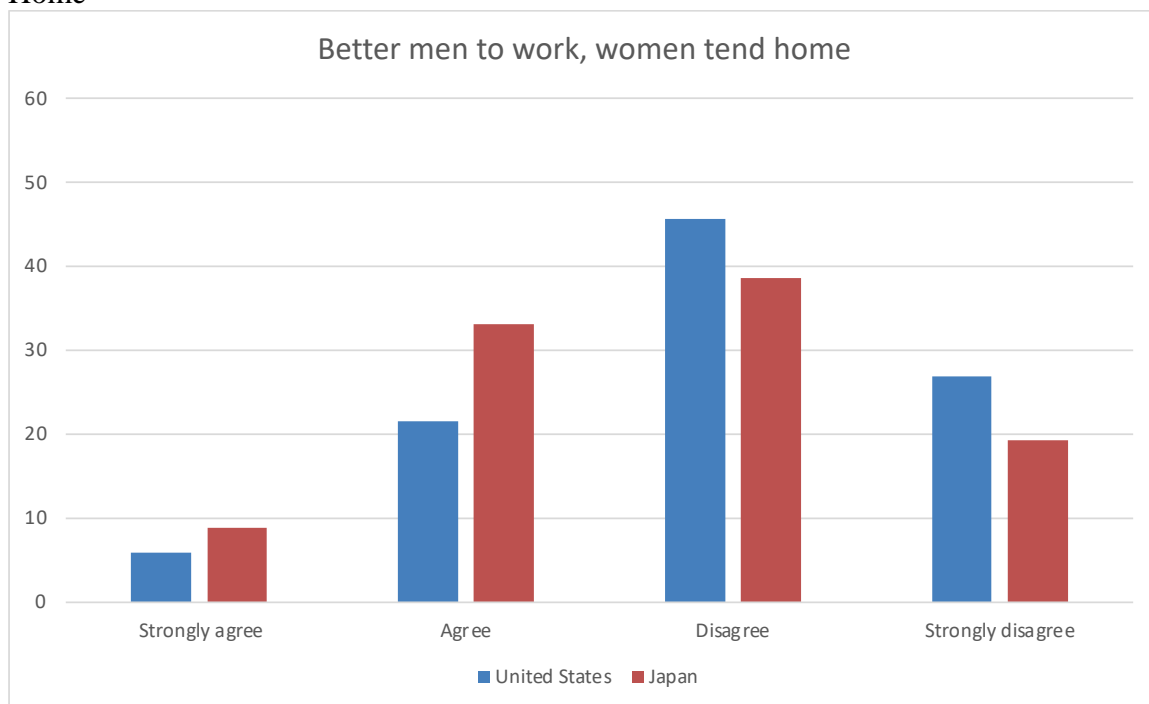
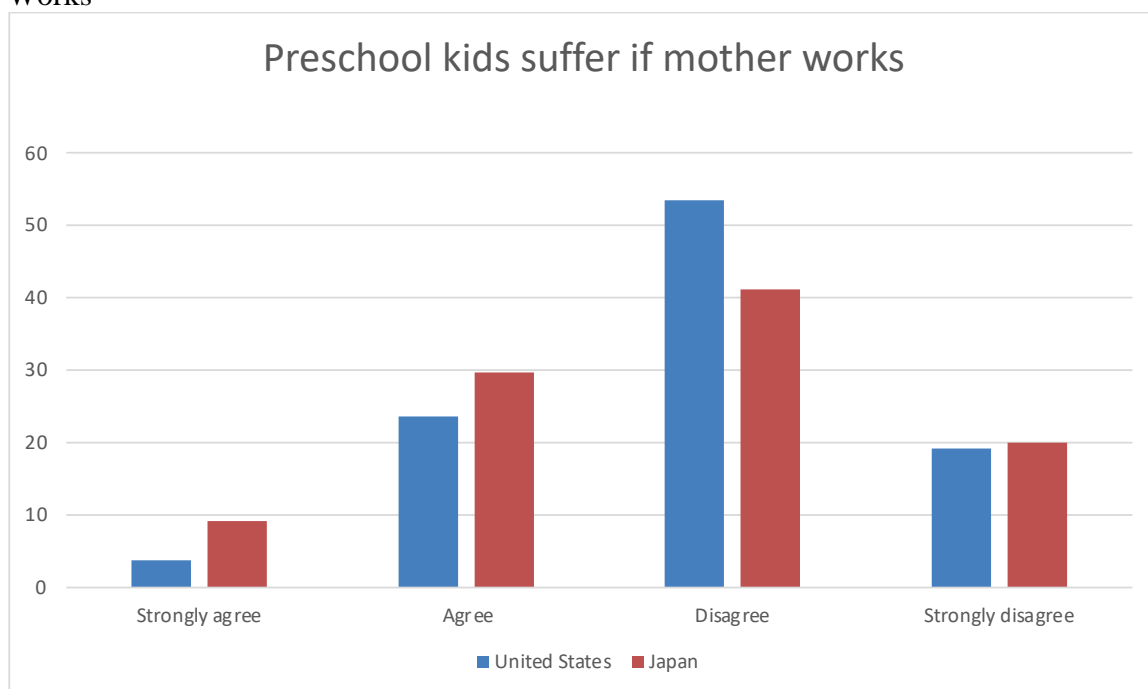


Table 3: Comparison of U.S. and Japan Responses to 'Preschool Kids Suffer If Mother Works'



### Limitation

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the dependent variables used in the analysis were limited to only two items that were directly comparable between Japan and the United States, potentially restricting the scope of the findings. Second, while this study considered factors such as income, education, and age as independent variables, other significant influences—such as religion and political orientation—were excluded. These factors may play an essential role, particularly in the U.S. However, I have not included them to account for Japan's unique cultural context, where such variables might have less direct impact or are more challenging to measure consistently. Additionally, regional differences, such as those between urban and rural areas, were not explored, despite the possibility that these contexts could significantly

influence gender role perceptions. Future research could address these limitations by including a broader range of dependent variables, examining additional independent factors, and investigating regional disparities to provide a more nuanced understanding of gender perceptions across both countries.

## Chapter 4: Analysis

Using the above variables, I will do crosstab analyses to compare the United States and Japan. I will use chi-square tests to test for significant differences between the two countries.

### **First Dependent Variable: Men Work, and Women Stay at Home**

#### *Sex*

The data shows a significant difference in the acceptance of traditional gender roles between Japan and the U.S., specifically in relation to the statement that "men should work, and women should stay at home." Among men, 47.58% in Japan either strongly agree or agree with this traditional viewpoint, compared to only 27.84% in the U.S. This contrast suggests that traditional gender roles are more deeply ingrained in Japanese society, particularly among men. The higher level of agreement among Japanese men may reflect cultural and societal expectations that have remained persistent over time, despite changes in global attitudes toward gender roles.

The perspective among women also reflects a similar pattern, although the difference between the two countries is less pronounced. In Japan, 37.42% of women agree with this traditional view, while only 27.25% of U.S. women share this sentiment. The fact that a substantial portion of Japanese women supports these traditional roles may indicate the strong influence of societal pressures and the persistence of gender norms that encourage conformity to traditional roles. In contrast, the lower level of agreement among U.S. women suggests a broader acceptance of more egalitarian roles, which may be influenced by changing societal values and increased support for gender equality in the workplace and at home.

The chi-square test results further support these observations, showing statistically significant relationships in both countries. In the U.S., the p-value of 0.00359 is well below the standard threshold of 0.05, indicating that the relationship between gender and agreement with the statement is unlikely to be due to random chance. Similarly, in Japan, the p-value of 6.944e-06 confirms a statistically significant association, further emphasizing the stronger impact of traditional gender norms in Japanese society. These findings suggest that while gender significantly influences attitudes toward traditional roles in both countries, the effect is more pronounced in Japan, where traditional expectations remain more deeply entrenched.

### *Age*

When analyzed by age group, the data reveals that younger generations in their 20s in both Japan and the U.S. exhibit similar levels of disagreement with the traditional view that "men should work, and women should stay at home" (75.62% in Japan and 77.99% in the U.S.), although Japan shows slightly lower levels. This trend may suggest that traditional gender roles are gradually weakening among younger populations in both countries, indicating a shift toward more progressive attitudes. As we move to middle-aged individuals in their 40s and 50s, the disparity between the two countries becomes more pronounced, particularly in Japan, where nearly 40% of individuals in their 50s strongly agree with traditional roles. This pattern may reflect the societal expectations and norms that shaped the upbringing of this cohort, highlighting the influence of the social environment during their formative years.

Among older adults (those in their 60s and 70s), the gap between Japan and the U.S. becomes even more significant. In Japan, the agreement rates increase sharply with

46.5 % in the 60's and 62.4% above 70. In addition, the percentage of individuals who "strongly agree" with traditional roles rises notably. This likely reflects the deep-rooted gender norms of the older generation in Japan, as these individuals were socialized during a period when gender roles were much more rigid and strictly defined. The persistence of these attitudes among older Japanese individuals underscores the lasting influence of the societal norms prevalent during their upbringing, in contrast to the more egalitarian views observed in the U.S. across age groups.

The chi-square test supports these findings, with a p-value of  $<0.001$  for both Japan and the U.S., indicating statistically significant relationships between age and traditional gender roles in both countries. This significance suggests that age is indeed an important factor influencing attitudes toward gender roles, and that views evolve systematically across different age groups in each country.

### ***Income***

The survey results on opinions regarding traditional gender roles by income level reveal notable differences between Japan and the U.S. In the low-income bracket (\$0-\$9,999), Japan exhibits a slightly higher level of agreement with traditional roles, 35.71%, while the U.S. shows a marked tendency toward strong disagreement, 27.72%. This pattern continues in the \$10,000-\$19,999 income bracket, where the U.S. again displays a stronger aversion to traditional roles compared to Japan. As we move to the \$20,000-\$29,999 bracket, both countries reflect high levels of disagreement, with the U.S. showing particularly strong opposition: 76.51% of people disagree or strongly disagree, while in Japan only 68.62%. However, in the income range of \$30,000-\$49,999, Japan stands out with a higher rate of agreement, 36.64%, contrasting sharply with the

prevailing disagreement in the U.S., with 21.78% of people disagreeing. In the \$50,000-\$99,999 bracket, there is a slight increase in Japan's rate of agreement with traditional gender roles, 41.44%, while the U.S. continues to exhibit high levels of disagreement, with 35.14% strongly disagreeing and 45.5% disagreeing. This trend persists in the high-income bracket (\$100,000 or more), where both countries display strong disagreement with traditional gender roles, though the U.S. shows an even clearer rejection of these norms.

Statistical analysis supports these observations, with Japan's p-value  $<0.001$ , indicating strong evidence against the null hypothesis, while the U.S. has a p-value of 0.3613, suggesting weak evidence. This disparity highlights that income levels correlate differently with opinions on gender roles in the two countries, revealing a more entrenched adherence to traditional views in Japan, particularly among lower and middle-income groups, compared to the greater acceptance of egalitarian roles in the U.S.

### ***Number of Children***

The analysis of perceptions of gender roles based on the number of children reveals significant differences between Japan and the U.S. When families have few children (0-1), the percentage of agreement with traditional gender roles in Japan exceeds that in the U.S. by more than 10%. This indicates that traditional gender role expectations are deeply rooted in Japanese society, persisting regardless of family size. There is a clear link between the number of children and opinions on whether men should work, and women should stay at home, with families with more children tending to support traditional gender roles. Specifically, the proportion of respondents who "Strongly agree" increases gradually in both countries as the number of children increases, with

particularly high figures for families with four or five children. On the other hand, the percentage who “Strongly Agree” was the lowest, 3.45% in households with no children, suggesting that many people disagree with traditional gender roles.

In addition, the percentage of “Disagree” was low in households with children, especially in households with three or more children, 34% or less in Japan. This indicates that as families grow, more people tend to accept traditional gender roles. Furthermore, in households with fewer children (0 to 1 child), the difference between the percentage of agreement (28.02% in total) and the percentage of strong disagreement (47.18% in total) is large, whereas in households with two or more children, the percentage of agreement often exceeds the percentage of strong disagreement. This suggests that in households with more children, there is a tendency to support traditional gender roles. As the number of children increases, the gap in agreement widens further, particularly when families have two or more children. In these cases, Japan shows a markedly high approval rate for traditional gender roles, suggesting that larger family sizes reinforce existing expectations about gender roles in the Japanese context.

Interestingly, the trend in the U.S. presents a different dynamic; while the approval rate for traditional gender roles increases with family size, it only surpasses that of Japan when there are six or more children. The proportion of respondents who “Strongly Agree” tends to increase as the number of children in the household increases. In particular, the proportion of households with six children is the highest at 17.14%. In addition, households with seven children show particularly high support at 30.77%. These results suggest that households with many children tend to be more accepting of traditional gender roles. On the other hand, the percentage of people who “Strongly



Agree” is low in households with no children or with one child. This indicates that there is a possibility that more diverse opinions exist in households with no children. This suggests that in the U.S., traditional views may strengthen as family size grows, indicating that larger families may prompt a return to more conventional roles, albeit to a lesser extent than in Japan.

Statistical analysis confirms the significance of these trends, with both countries yielding less than 0.001 p-value. This indicates strong evidence against the null hypothesis, reinforcing the idea that the number of children is a crucial factor influencing perceptions of gender roles in both Japan and the U.S. Overall, the findings highlight how cultural norms shape attitudes toward gender roles, with Japan exhibiting a more consistent adherence to traditional expectations, especially as family size increases.

### ***Education***

When examining perceptions of gender roles by education level, the differences between Japan and the U.S. are stark. In the U.S., there is a slightly higher agreement rate for traditional views on gender roles among individuals with lower educational attainment, particularly among those who have not graduated from high school: 40.27% agreed in the U.S., while 32.8% of people agreed in Japan. Conversely, among those with a medium level of education, such as junior college or university graduates, Japan exhibits a higher approval rate for traditional gender roles than the U.S., with the gap being particularly substantial among junior college graduates. For instance, 77.3 % of people who graduated college disagreed with traditional gender roles in the U.S. but 66.83% of people agreed in Japan. This trend reflects the persistence of traditional views

even among educated women in Japan, highlighting a cultural inclination toward conservative gender norms that may not diminish with higher education.

The disparity grows even more pronounced among those with advanced educational backgrounds. In this group, the percentage of individuals agreeing with traditional gender roles in Japan is more than three times that of their U.S. counterparts, with a particularly high rate of "strong agreement." The agreement rate is higher for those who have graduated from graduate school, but there are only 40 people with a graduate school degree or higher. This finding may indicate that conservative values regarding gender division of labor remain deeply ingrained in Japanese society, even among the highly educated, however, the reliability of these figures may be questionable.

In contrast, in the U.S., higher levels of education correlate with decreased support for traditional gender roles, suggesting a trend toward more egalitarian views as education levels rise. Statistical analysis supports these observations, with Japan's p-value  $<0.001$ , indicating strong evidence against the null hypothesis, while the U.S. shows an even more significant p-value  $<0.001$ , suggesting that the relationship between education level and attitudes toward gender roles is robust. Overall, these findings illuminate how education interacts with cultural norms to shape attitudes toward gender roles, revealing a stark contrast between the two countries.

## **Second Dependent Variable: Preschool Kids Suffer if Mother Works**

### ***Sex***

When analyzing responses to the statement "preschool kids suffer if their mother works" by sex, a notable disparity emerges between Japan and the United States. In Japan, male respondents exhibit a substantial agreement rate of 41.78% (combining those

who strongly agree and agree), which stands in stark contrast to only 32.65% in the United States. This significant difference suggests that Japanese males have a heightened level of concern regarding the implications of working mothers on preschool children compared to their U.S. counterparts.

Similarly, female respondents in Japan also demonstrate greater agreement, with 36.53% expressing concern about the issue, while only 23.8% of U.S. females share this sentiment. This pattern underscores a broader trend where both genders in Japan are more likely to voice concern about the potential negative impacts of working mothers on young children than individuals in the United States.

Statistical analysis further reinforces these findings, with the U.S. yielding a p-value  $<0.001$ , indicating extremely strong evidence against the null hypothesis. In contrast, Japan's p-value of 0.02293 also suggests significance, albeit to a lesser extent. These results highlight a cultural divergence in attitudes towards working mothers, revealing that traditional concerns about gender roles and child-rearing responsibilities are more pronounced in Japan, affecting both male and female perspectives.

### ***Age***

When analyzed by age group, younger generations (in their 20s and 30s) in both countries show similar levels of disagreement with the statement that "preschool kids suffer if their mother works," with Japan displaying slightly higher levels of agreement. In Japan, 68.85% of individuals in their 20s and 73.14% in their 30s opposed it, while in the United States, 80.88% of those in their 20s and 77.42% in their 30s expressed opposition. This trend might suggest that traditional gender roles are slowly eroding among younger populations in both countries, potentially reflecting changing societal

norms. However, as we move to middle-aged individuals (those in their 40s and 50s), the gap between the two countries widens, particularly in Japan, where a higher percentage of individuals in their 50s strongly agree: 9.34% with traditional roles while 4.68% in the U.S. This shift could be reflective of societal expectations prevalent during the upbringing of this cohort, suggesting that people's views on gender roles are shaped by the social norms in place when they were growing up. Among older adults (those in their 60s and 70s), the difference becomes even more marked. In Japan, agreement rates increase sharply with age, likely reflecting deep-rooted gender norms of an older generation that was socialized in an era with much stricter gender roles: 55.18% of people over 70 agreed with mothers working will negatively affect their kids.

While this narrative is interesting, the chi-square test adds another layer of analysis. In the U.S. data, the p-value is 0.001499, which is well below the standard threshold of 0.01, meaning the results are statistically significant. This indicates that the relationship between age and agreement with the statement that "preschool kids suffer if their mother works" is not due to random chance in the U.S. data. The statistically significant chi-square test suggests that age is indeed an important factor influencing attitudes toward this issue in the U.S., and that views change across different age groups in a systematic way.

### ***Income***

The opinions regarding the statement that "preschool kids suffer when their mothers work" reveal distinct trends when analyzed by country and income level. In the lowest income bracket (\$0-\$9999), the majority of respondents in both Japan and the United States express disagreement with this view: 63.4% in Japan, 73.08% in the U.S.

However, Japan shows a slightly lower percentage of disagreement compared to the U.S. This trend continues in the \$10,000-\$19,999 income bracket, where, although more individuals disagree, Japan still has a marginally higher agreement rate. As we move to the \$20,000-\$29,999 bracket, while the majority in both countries oppose the statement, the percentage of agreement in Japan exceeds that of the United States. In the \$30,000-\$49,999 income bracket, strong opposition is observed in both nations, yet Japan's agreement rate remains higher than that of the U.S. A notable shift occurs in the \$50,000-\$99,999 income bracket, where the percentage of individuals supporting the notion in Japan rises significantly, 39.8%, while the U.S. continues to exhibit strong opposition, 23.64% agreed and 76.37% disagreed. In the high-income bracket of \$100,000 or more, Japan experiences a slight increase in support for the view that working mothers negatively impact children, especially among high-income earners. It was 40.74 %. Conversely, support in the U.S. remains low, indicating an opposing trend. 73.38 % have disagreement.

Statistical analysis further elucidates these patterns, with Japan reporting a p-value is well below the standard threshold of 0.01, suggesting strong evidence against the null hypothesis. In contrast, the U.S. shows a p-value of 0.2364, indicating weak evidence, which highlights the growing support for traditional views regarding mothers' roles in Japan, particularly among higher-income groups, while the trend in the U.S. remains one of skepticism towards these views.

### ***Number of Children***

The analysis of agreement rates regarding the statement that "preschool kids suffer when their mothers work" based on the number of children reveals significant

differences between Japan and the United States. In families with fewer children (0-1), Japan shows a notably higher agreement rate, often exceeding the U.S. rate by more than 10%. In Japan, the percentage of households with no children who “Strongly Agree” was 5.78%, but in the U.S., it was low at 3.17%, with more people answering “Disagree”. Specifically, 42.58% of families with no children in Japan answered “Disagree,” while the figure was higher in the U.S. at 55.49%, showing that many people think that kindergarten children will not suffer even if their mothers work. For families with one child, 6.77% of Japanese respondents “Strongly Agree” with the statement, compared to 3.19% in the U.S., but 53.19% of U.S. respondents “Disagree,” indicating a stronger negative opinion. This trend suggests that traditional views surrounding working mothers persist strongly in Japan, even in smaller families.

As family size increases, the gap in agreement rates widens further. For families with two or more children, the agreement rate in Japan is even higher, reflecting a robust endorsement of traditional gender roles. Among families with four or more children, Japan continues to maintain a high agreement rate. Interestingly, however, the U.S. begins to show a different trend, with agreement rates being slightly higher among families with six or more children. 10.79% of Japanese respondents who have 2 kids “Strongly Agree” with the statement, compared to a much lower 3.73% in the U.S. In Japanese households, 41.36% of respondents “Disagree,” while in American households, 51.66% of respondents hold the same opinion. In households with three children, the percentage of “Strongly Agree” in Japan is 12.04%, while in America it is 3.31%. The percentage of agreement and disagreement in Japan is 29.58% and 41.36%, whereas in the U.S. the figures were 27.48% and 51.32%. For families with four children, the

“Agree” rate was 40.91% in Japan, compared to 26.53% in the U.S., showing that concerns about mothers working are stronger in Japan. Furthermore, in American families with five children, 5.17% of respondents “Strongly Agree” and 58.62% “Disagree,” but in Japan, this trend is reversed, with 12.50% “Strongly Agree,” highlighting the differing opinions on the impact of mothers working on their children. This suggests that larger families in the U.S. may hold distinct perspectives on the implications of working mothers, possibly indicating a shift in attitudes as family size increases.

Statistical analysis supports these findings, with Japan recording a p-value of 0.001499, indicating strong evidence against the null hypothesis, while the U.S. shows a p-value of 0.004998, also suggesting significant results. This comparison emphasizes the persistent traditional views on gender roles in Japan, especially among families with fewer children, while highlighting the potential for differing attitudes in larger families in the U.S.

### ***Education***

When examining the responses to the statement that "preschool kids suffer if mother works" based on education level, distinct trends emerge between Japan and the United States. In Japan, even among the educated, there is strong support for traditional gender roles. In the United States, on the other hand, awareness of gender equality increases as the level of education increases. Among individuals in the low-education group, which includes those with less than a high school education and high school graduates, the U.S. exhibits a slightly higher agreement rate, 40.27%, particularly among those who have not graduated from high school while 35.49% in Japan. This suggests

that traditional views on gender roles may still hold some weight among less educated individuals in the U.S.

In contrast, individuals with medium education levels, specifically junior college and university graduates, show a higher agreement rate in Japan, with a particularly significant difference among junior college graduates: 38.74% agreed in Japan, however, 25.82% agreed in the U.S. who completed junior college. This indicates that even among those with some level of higher education, traditional perspectives on gender roles remain relatively strong in Japan. Although not to the same extent as in the U.S., a higher percentage of educated people in Japan also disagree with the traditional gender role divisions and the opinion that mothers working is detrimental to their children.

Statistical analysis supports these observations, with Japan recording a p-value is well below the standard threshold of 0.01, meaning the results are statistically significant, while the U.S. p-value is below 0.01, which also demonstrating statistically significant results. This comparison underscores the persistence of traditional views on gender roles in Japan across various educational backgrounds, particularly among those with higher education, contrasting with a more varied perspective in the U.S.



Table 4: Crosstab of Responses to 'Better Men to Work, Women Tend Home' in the U.S. and Japan

First Dependent Variable: Men Work and Women Stay at Home

Variables	Values	Japan					United States				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Statistical Significance	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Statistical Significance
Sex	Male	11.25%	36.33%	36.12%	16.29%	***	5.81%	22.03%	49.27%	22.88%	***
	Female	6.94%	30.48%	40.76%	21.82%		5.93%	21.32%	42.64%	30.11%	
Age	18-29	1.99%	22.39%	51.24%	24.38%	***	4.40%	17.61%	45.91%	32.08%	***
	30-39	4.19%	30.32%	40%	25.48%		5.51%	14.78%	46.96%	32.75%	
	40-49	3.89%	29.04%	42.51%	24.55%		4.18%	17.87%	49.43%	28.52%	
	50-59	5.80%	32.60%	40.06%	21.55%		5.79%	20.11%	47.66%	26.45%	
	60-69	11.34%	34.76%	38.29%	15.62%		6.19%	22.80%	43.00%	28.01%	
	70+	20.57%	41.87%	28.23%	9.33%		9.77%	40.23%	40.23%	9.77%	
Income (\$)	0-9999	5.10%	30.61%	41.84%	22.45%	***	6.84%	20.88%	45.60%	27.47%	NS
	10000-19,999	5.54%	28.99%	41.37%	24.10%		7.38%	18.03%	45.90%	28.69%	
	20000-29999	8.03%	23.36%	43.07%	25.55%		6.04%	17.45%	44.97%	31.54%	
	30000-49999	3.88%	32.76%	37.93%	25.43%		4.44%	17.34%	53.63%	24.60%	
	50000-99999	6.63%	34.81%	40.88%	17.68%		2.70%	16.67%	45.50%	35.14%	
	over 100000	14.81%	22.22%	48.15%	14.81%		2.17%	12.32%	47.10%	38.41%	
Number of children	0	3.45%	24.57%	44.72%	27.26%	***	4.10%	14.53%	44.13%	37.24%	***
	1	8.76%	32.27%	39.04%	19.92%		3.19%	21.28%	43.97%	31.56%	
	2	10.87%	36.71%	37.44%	14.98%		6.21%	23.40%	44.51%	25.88%	
	3	11.69%	37.14%	34.03%	17.14%		6.33%	23.67%	49.67%	20.33%	
	4	13.64%	34.09%	29.55%	22.73%		8.84%	29.25%	48.98%	12.93%	
	5	12.50%	37.50%	25%	25%		10.71%	19.64%	60.71%	8.93%	
	6	0%	50%	50%	0%		17.14%	42.86%	31.43%	8.57%	
	7	--	--	--	--		30.77%	30.77%	30.77%	7.69%	
	8	--	--	--	--		6.67%	60.00%	33.33%	0.00%	
Education	Less than high school	4.86%	27.94%	43.32%	23.89%	***	4.98%	35.29%	49.32%	10.41%	***
	High school	2.50%	22.50%	45.00%	30.00%		4.00%	25.05%	53.58%	17.37%	
	Junior college	8.76%	34.23%	38.31%	18.71%		3.97%	21.85%	54.97%	19.21%	
	Bachelor	2.88%	30.29%	43.27%	23.56%		2.59%	20.11%	54.02%	23.28%	
	Graduate	21.65%	41.58%	27.84%	8.93%		3.98%	13.43%	54.73%	27.86%	

Note: Statistical Significance - \*\*\* &lt;0.001, \*\* = &lt;0.01, \* = &lt;.05, NS = not significant

Table 5: Crosstab of Responses to 'Preschool Kids Suffer If Mother Works' in the U.S. and Japan

Second Dependent Variable: Preschool Children Suffer if Mother Works

Variables	Values	Japan				Statistical Significance	United States				Statistical Significance
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Sex	Male	9.99%	31.79%	40.92%	17.29%	*	4.32%	28.33%	54.62%	12.73%	***
	Female	8.52%	28.01%	41.34%	22.12%		3.45%	20.35%	52.30%	23.90%	
Age	18-29	2.51%	28.64%	41.71%	27.14%		3.45%	15.67%	58.31%	22.57%	**
	30-39	5.50%	21.36%	44.66%	28.48%		2.57%	20.00%	51.71%	25.71%	
	40-49	6.89%	27.54%	43.71%	21.86%		4.58%	22.14%	55.34%	17.94%	
	50-59	9.34%	26.92%	44.51%	19.23%		4.68%	27.27%	49.31%	18.73%	
	60-69	10.69%	31.30%	41.73%	16.28%		3.27%	27.12%	52.29%	17.32%	
	70+	15.90%	39.28%	32.53%	12.29%		4.91%	32.45%	54.34%	8.30%	
Income (\$)	0-9999	9.28%	27.32%	45.36%	18.04%	***	5.49%	21.43%	52.75%	20.33%	NS
	10000-19,999	7.24%	24.01%	46.38%	22.37%		2.44%	25.20%	55.28%	17.07%	
	20000-29999	5.15%	28.68%	40.44%	25.74%		3.36%	20.81%	27.05%	18.79%	
	30000-49999	4.31%	25.00%	41.38%	29.31%		3.19%	20.72%	52.99%	23.11%	
	50000-99999	13.02%	26.78%	45.90%	15.30%		1.82%	21.82%	49.55%	26.82%	
	over 100000	3.70%	37.04%	48.15%	11.11%		2.88%	23.74%	51.80%	21.58%	
Number of children	0	5.78%	26.01%	42.58%	25.63%	**	3.17%	20.67%	55.49%	20.67%	**
	1	6.77%	29.88%	40.24%	23.11%		3.19%	20.57%	53.19%	23.05%	
	2	10.79%	31.76%	40.36%	17.09%		3.73%	24.07%	51.66%	20.54%	
	3	12.04%	29.58%	41.36%	17.02%		3.31%	27.48%	51.32%	17.88%	
	4	6.82%	40.91%	38.64%	13.64%		6.12%	26.53%	55.10%	12.24%	
	5	12.50%	12.50%	50%	25%		5.17%	29.31%	58.62%	6.90%	
	6	0%	0%	100%	0%		2.86%	37.14%	54.29%	5.71%	
	7	--	--	--	--		15.38%	30.77%	46.15%	7.69%	
	8	--	--	--	--		20.00%	26.67%	46.67%	6.67%	
Education	Less than high school	5.27%	30.22%	42.60%	21.91%	***	4.98%	35.29%	49.32%	10.41%	***
	High school	7.50%	25%	32.50%	35.00%		4.00%	25.05%	53.58%	17.37%	
	Junior college	9.61%	29.13%	41.84%	19.42%		3.97%	21.85%	54.97%	19.21%	
	Bachelor	7.62%	16.19%	40.00%	26.19%		2.59%	20.11%	54.02%	23.28%	
	Graduate	15.97%	34.03%	38.19%	11.81%		3.98%	13.43%	54.73%	27.86%	

Note: Statistical Significance - \*\*\* &lt;0.001, \*\* = &lt;0.01, \* = &lt;.05, NS = not significant

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

My hypothesis is that traditional values still remain in Japan, and social expectations for women and their roles in the household tend to be more conservative than in the United States. On the other hand, in the U.S., gender equality is more advanced and social expectations and roles within the family are expected to be more diverse. An alternative hypothesis is "There is a significant difference in the social expectations and household roles for women between Japan and the United States, with Japan tending to have more conservative and traditional views compared to the more diverse and gender-equal expectations in the U.S." The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is "There is no significant difference in the social expectations and household roles for women between Japan and the United States."

Through my analysis on gender, there is a cultural divergence between Japan and the United States regarding attitudes towards gender roles, particularly concerning working mothers and traditional family structures. In Japan, both men and women demonstrate a higher level of agreement with traditional views, reflecting the persistent influence of societal norms that prioritize maternal presence in child-rearing and reinforce gender-specific roles. These attitudes suggest that, despite global trends towards gender equality, Japanese society remains more conservative, with cultural expectations that emphasize traditional family dynamics. Crabtree & Muroga's (2021) work supports these observations, indicating that while there are gender differences in attitudes within Japan, they are less pronounced compared to the United States. This suggests that Japanese cultural norms have a consistent influence across genders, creating a relatively uniform perception regarding traditional gender roles and the responsibilities associated

with child-rearing. The shared perspective among Japanese men and women underscores the strong societal pressure to conform to traditional expectations, even as global attitudes evolve.

In contrast, the lower agreement rates in the United States indicate a shift toward more progressive and egalitarian views, particularly among women. This may reflect societal changes and increased support for gender equality, which have influenced attitudes toward balancing work and family life. The larger gap between men and women in the U.S. suggests that while traditional views persist among some men, women are increasingly challenging these norms, reflecting a broader acceptance of diverse family roles and gender equality.

Overall, these patterns underscore the stronger entrenchment of traditional gender expectations in Japan, where societal pressures and cultural norms continue to shape perceptions more uniformly across genders. The statistical evidence further reinforces the idea that these attitudes are not due to random chance but rather reflect deep-seated cultural beliefs that influence both male and female perspectives in Japan more uniformly than in the United States. As Crabtree & Muroga (2021) showed, although there were differences in gender views between men and women in Japan, the differences were not as great as those in the United States.

In terms of age, the data provides quantitative evidence that age groups in the U.S. hold different views on traditional gender roles and child-rearing. This supports arguments about generational shifts in attitudes toward working mothers. In Japan, even though the statistical results for age might show a different trend, comparing these two countries provides valuable insights into how traditional gender norms persist or erode in

different cultural contexts and how these norms are internalized differently across age cohorts. In Japan in particular, despite many years of economic growth and social change, traditional views of the family and gender roles remain deeply ingrained. This shows that the values formed during the period of rapid economic growth after the war have been passed on to the current generation, and the idea that men should be the main financial supporters of the family and women should play a central role in the family still prevails among many people. These values are particularly prominent among the older generation, and it is thought that the social expectations of the time in which they grew up have had an impact.

On the other hand, the fact that the agreement rate between Japan and the U.S. is similar among the younger generation suggests that future generations may have more progressive views of gender. This is thought to be due to the increased opportunities to meet different cultural values brought about by globalization and the spread of the Internet. In the United States in particular, there is a lot of activity in the movement for gender equality, and the whole of society is becoming more aware of this issue, which may be bringing about a change in perceptions of the role of women.

I also found that attitudes varied according to income level. In particular, I found that in Japan, there is a strong consensus on traditional roles among the low-income and middle-income groups, while in the U.S., there is a greater acceptance of more equal roles. This suggests that cultural background and social values may have a significant impact on the formation of opinions based on income. Furthermore, an analysis of opinions on the view that young children suffer when their mothers work also shows a marked difference in the way people think in the two countries. It was confirmed that

support for this view is increasing even among the higher income group in Japan, while it remains low in the U.S. This indicates that the traditional view of the family may still have a strong influence even among the higher income group in Japan.

These results indicate the importance of economic status in shaping views on gender roles. They show that in Japan, increasing income does not necessarily promote a shift towards equal roles. Conversely, in the U.S., there is a trend towards more pronounced opposition to traditional roles as income increases. These differences may reflect the differing impact of social change and policy in each country.

Overall, understanding how income levels affect opinions on gender roles can provide insights for future policy formation and social approaches. In particular, in Japan, it may be necessary to change attitudes towards traditional roles through education and awareness-raising activities. This could contribute to the realization of a society that accepts a wider range of values.

Regarding opinions on gender roles based on the number of children reveals a striking difference in perceptions of traditional gender roles between Japan and the United States. In particular, Japan shows a high level of approval for traditional gender roles regardless of family size, suggesting a deep-rooted cultural tendency. The fact that support for traditional roles is dominant even in families with one or no children indicates that expectations regarding gender roles are firmly established in society.

In the United States, on the other hand, there is a tendency for support for traditional gender roles to increase as family size increases. Families with six or more children show a higher approval rate than in Japan, and large families may be a factor in strengthening support for traditional roles. Japanese families have fewer children and thus

family size may not make much of a difference. This change is more gradual than in Japanese culture, reflecting the diversity and flexibility of American opinions. This difference suggests that America has room to accept the diverse values of individuals and families from different cultural backgrounds. Yu (2018) suggests that when the number of children increases, the burden on the mother tends to increase disproportionately. In this case, the mother may feel a stronger sense of inequality in her role in the family, and it has been shown that mothers move away from traditional values and adopt more non-traditional ways of thinking.

The analysis of gender role perceptions based on educational level reveals a striking difference between Japan and the United States. In the United States, approval of traditional gender roles is slightly higher among those with lower educational levels, particularly among those who have not graduated from high school. This suggests that there is a certain level of support for traditional gender roles even among those with low educational levels.

In contrast, in Japan, the approval rate for traditional gender roles is higher among those with a medium level of education, particularly among those who have graduated from junior college or university, and the difference is particularly pronounced among junior college graduates. This trend reflects the fact that traditional values remain deeply ingrained among Japanese women with an education, and there is a cultural tendency for conservative gender norms not to change even with education. In addition, university graduates are more likely to oppose traditional gender roles than high school graduates. In Japanese society, it is expected that the highly educated will become increasingly resistant to traditional gender roles. However, as there is a lack of data on postgraduates

in Japan, and the sample size of around 40 people is not very reliable, it is difficult to discern any specific trends, but it has been shown that the proportion of people agreeing with traditional gender roles is more than three times higher than for a similar group in the U.S. In contrast, in the United States, there is a trend of decreasing support for traditional gender roles as education level increases. This supports Garrido's research (2019), which found that an increase in years of education significantly reduces the probability of agreeing with traditional gender roles. These results show that education plays an important role in shaping views on gender equality. This suggests that the higher the level of education, the stronger the desire for gender equality and the more people move away from traditional values.



## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

The goal of this study was comparing U.S. and Japan in gender perceptions. The results of this study show how cultural, economic, and educational factors shape attitudes toward gender roles in Japan and the United States. In Japan, support for traditional gender roles remains strong, and cultural expectations are deeply ingrained, particularly regardless of family size or age group. In contrast, in the United States, attitudes toward gender roles are more diverse and progressive, influenced by generational changes in attitudes and economic conditions. The influence of income level and education was also significant, with the results showing that, in Japan, even among the higher income groups, there was still strong support for traditional gender roles, while in the U.S., there was a tendency for opposition to gender roles to increase as income increased. The number of children and differences between generations also had a significant impact on perceptions of gender roles.

These findings suggest that education and awareness-raising activities are necessary to promote the transformation of gender roles in Japanese society. In the future, policy formation that consider cultural background and economic factors will be required. Understanding the differences in gender role perceptions between Japan and the United States provides critical insights into how cultural, economic, and societal factors shape attitudes. This knowledge is essential for designing targeted interventions to promote gender equality. In Japan, where traditional norms remain deeply ingrained, the findings highlight the importance of culturally sensitive approaches tailored to specific demographics, such as education and policy reforms. In the United States, the data underscores the progress toward gender equality while pointing to areas where traditional

attitudes persist, such as among older generations. By identifying these patterns, this research informs policymakers, educators, and advocates about where efforts are most needed, contributing to the global discourse on achieving gender equity and empowering individuals to challenge outdated norms.

This study suggests significant differences between Japan and the United States in attitudes toward traditional gender roles. However, several questions remain for future exploration. First, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how attitudes evolve, particularly as social and economic contexts shift. Second, qualitative research focusing on individual experiences and cultural narratives could complement quantitative findings, offering a more nuanced understanding of why traditional gender norms persist in certain demographics. Finally, as mentioned in the Limitations section, by including other independent variables such as region and family size, it will be possible to conduct a wider range of comparative analyses, which will be useful for identifying universal and culture-specific factors that promote changes in gender perceptions. In addition, future research should also explore the effectiveness of education and policy interventions aimed at reshaping gender norms, particularly in Japan, where traditional values remain deeply ingrained.

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