

Figure 1 A Large Wage Gap Between Part-time and Regular Workers (Female)

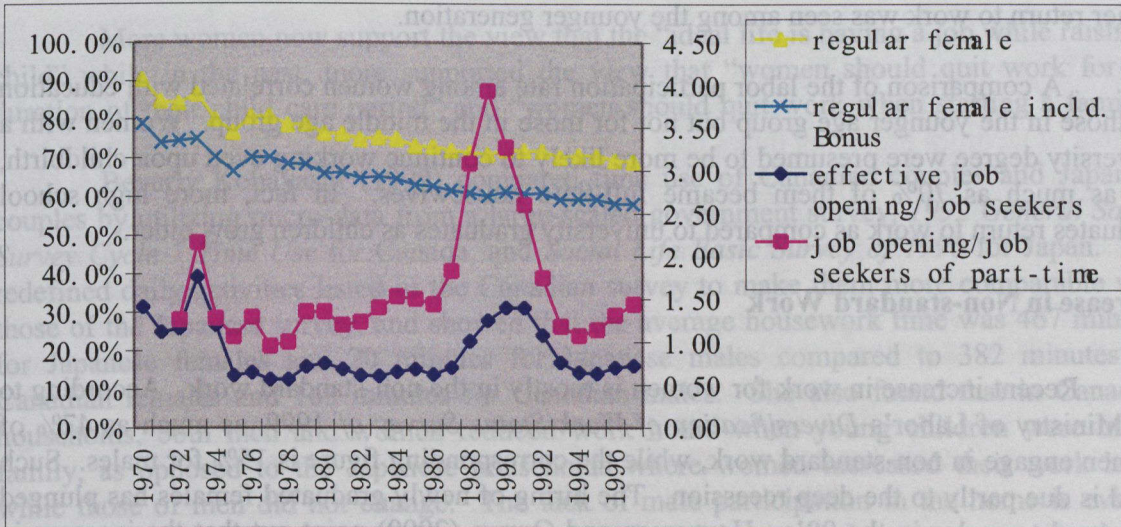


Table 2 Average Wage Difference between Sexes For Regular Workers

	wage difference				
	1980	1985	1990	1995	1998
Female/male	59%	60%	60%	62%	64%

Child Birth and Work Interruption

The *Eleventh Japanese National Fertility Survey* conducted in 1997 by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, which collects data on married women aged under 50 years, reveals married Japanese women's work and family patterns by retrospective questioning. It shows that 84% of females work in regular full-time employment after graduation from school. The remaining consists of part-time workers, the self-employed and non-labor participants. Those who work full-time with a standard work contract have high job security. The survey found that of the females with regular full-time employment status after school graduation, 46% of those born before 1962 became full-time housewives upon marriage. The younger generation showed a higher tendency to remain in the workforce, but the choice of becoming a housewife was still an option for the generation born after 1962, as 42% quit work upon marriage. For those who continued to work, another 40% resigned from their job to become a full-time mother upon their first childbirth. Therefore, the labor participation rate of women with a one-year-old child had only reached a mere 30% in Japan, with little change over the past three decades. On the whole, however, more mothers with young children stayed in the labor force in the early 1970's as opposed to a larger portion of women who were family workers working at home. As well, the portion of full-time mothers was larger in the cities than in local areas, higher in nuclear families than in extended families, and lower for women with less education.

Imada (1996), Nagase (1999), and Abe(2001), using different surveys, concluded that work participation of mothers with a child under three years did not rise in the past 20 years despite the fact that more women supported the view of maintaining a family while