

# Outcomes and challenges of Japan's high school compulsory home economics: Insights from National-scale surveys conducted by JAHEE

The Japan Association of Home Economics Education

S.TAKAGI,N.ARAI\*, A.FUJITA , M.NONAKA,H.OGAWA,K.KONO,Y.ZAITSU,T.SUZUKI,M.SUZUKI,Y.NAKANISHI, Y.HIKAGE (\*chief)



## Background and Purpose

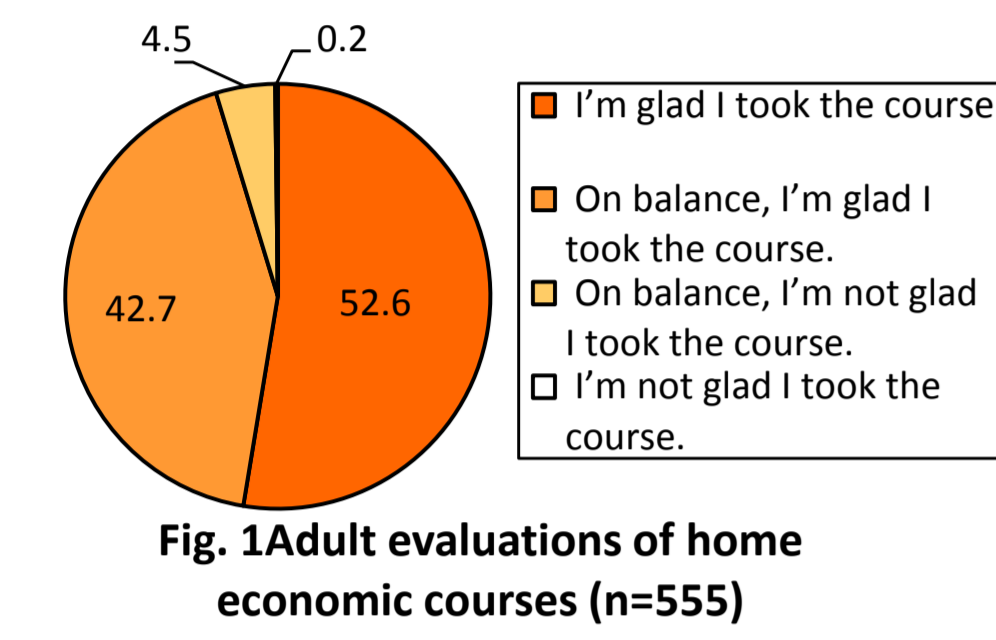
To mark the sixtieth anniversary of its founding, The Japan Association of Home Economics Education (JAHEE) conducted the National-scale Surveys on Awareness Concerning Family Life and High School Home Economics Education, targeting high school students and adults throughout Japan. The purpose of this study was to elucidate the outcomes and challenges of co-educational home economics 23 years after high school boys and girls began taking the subject together.

## Methods

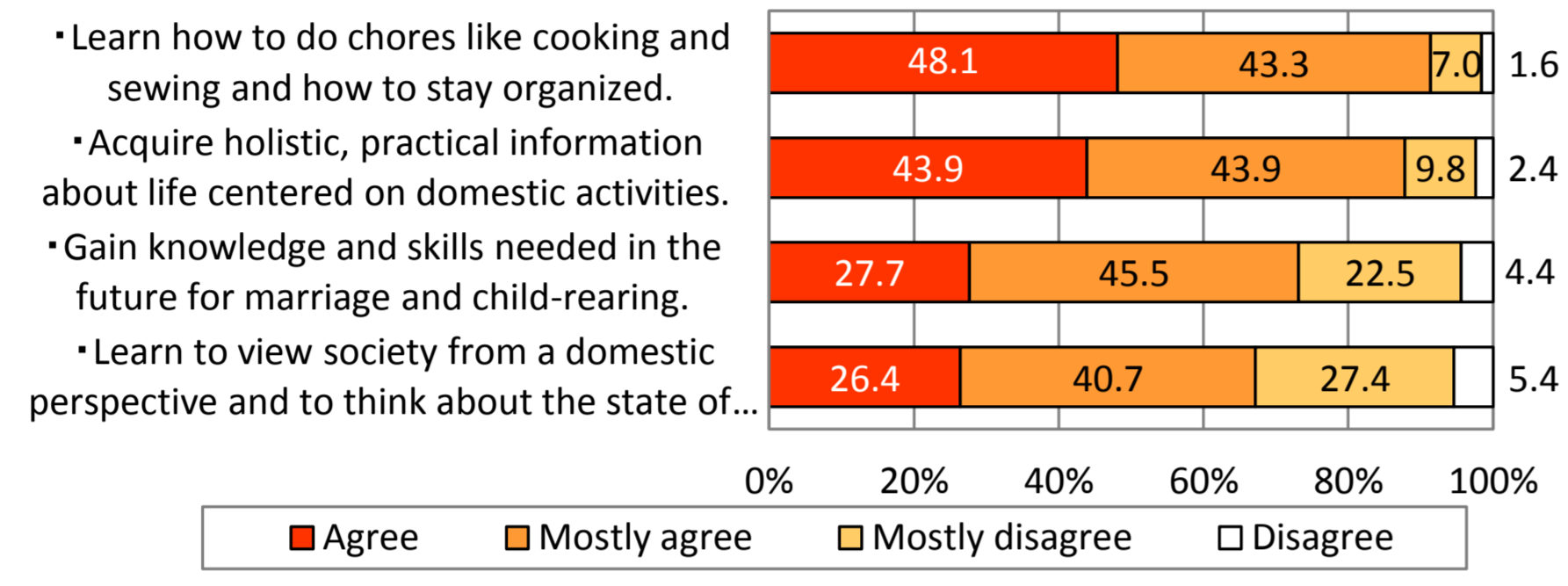
1. We assessed the outcomes and challenges of co-educational home economics based on the results of a national survey of 4,302 high school students and 827 adults aged from twenties to sixties who learn home economics. The survey was conducted from July 2016 to January 2017.
2. We analyzed the questionnaire survey results focusing on views regarding home economics, literacy respondents felt they gained from the courses, and awareness of domestic life and content they had put into practice.

## Results

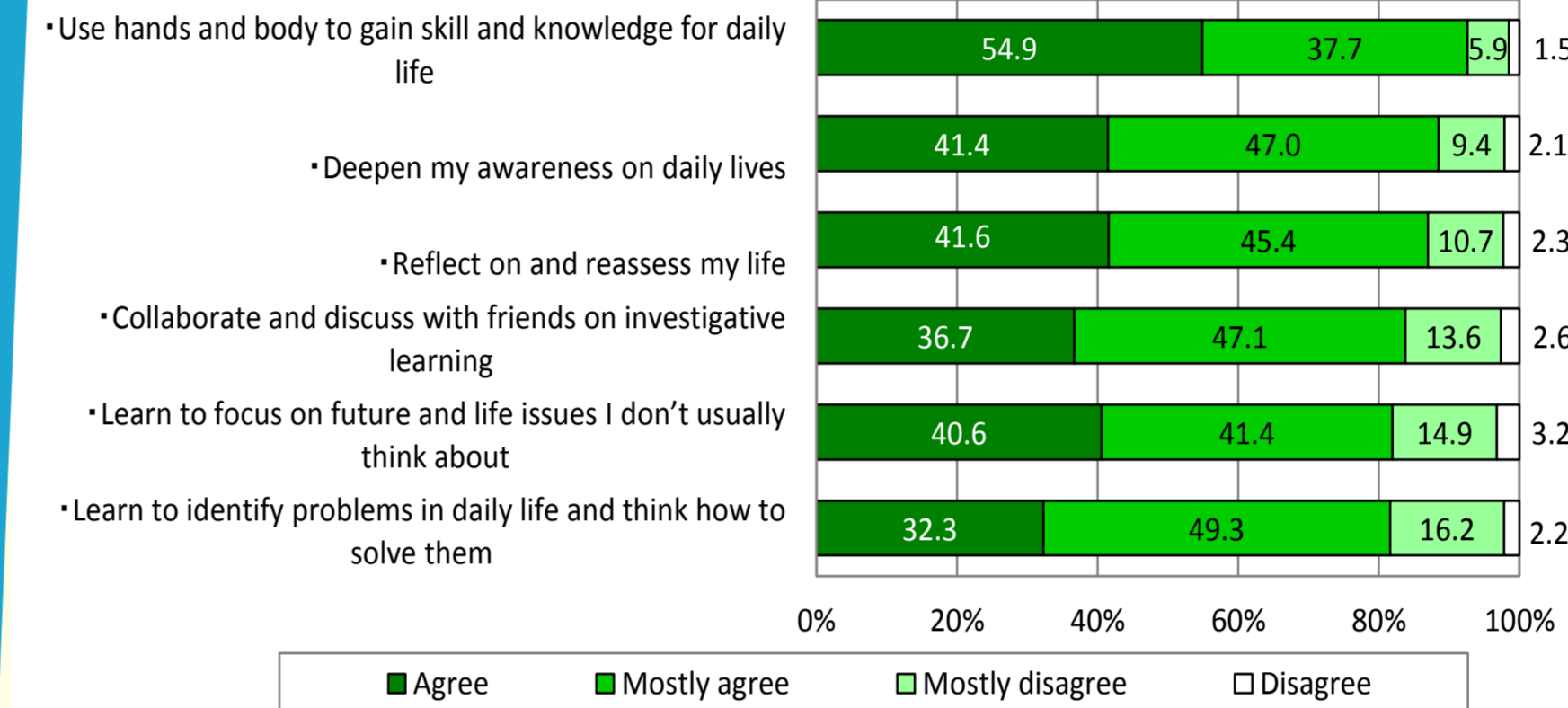
### (1) How did adults and high school students evaluate home economics courses?



Home economics is a class where students...



● Adults viewed home economics as “a class where students learn how to do chores like cooking and sewing and how to stay organized” and “acquire holistic, practical information about life centered on domestic activities.”



● High school students found home economics courses meaningful because they gained skills for daily life, reflected on their lives and future plans, and thought about problems on daily life and solutions. They also recognized the uniqueness of home economics courses.

● 95% of adults viewed home economics as a useful subject.

Fig. 2 Adult views of home economics courses (n=827)

Fig. 3 The Meaning for students to learn Home Economics(n=4,302)

### (2) What competencies did respondents feel they acquired in home economics classes? How did those competencies relate to awareness and actions in daily life?

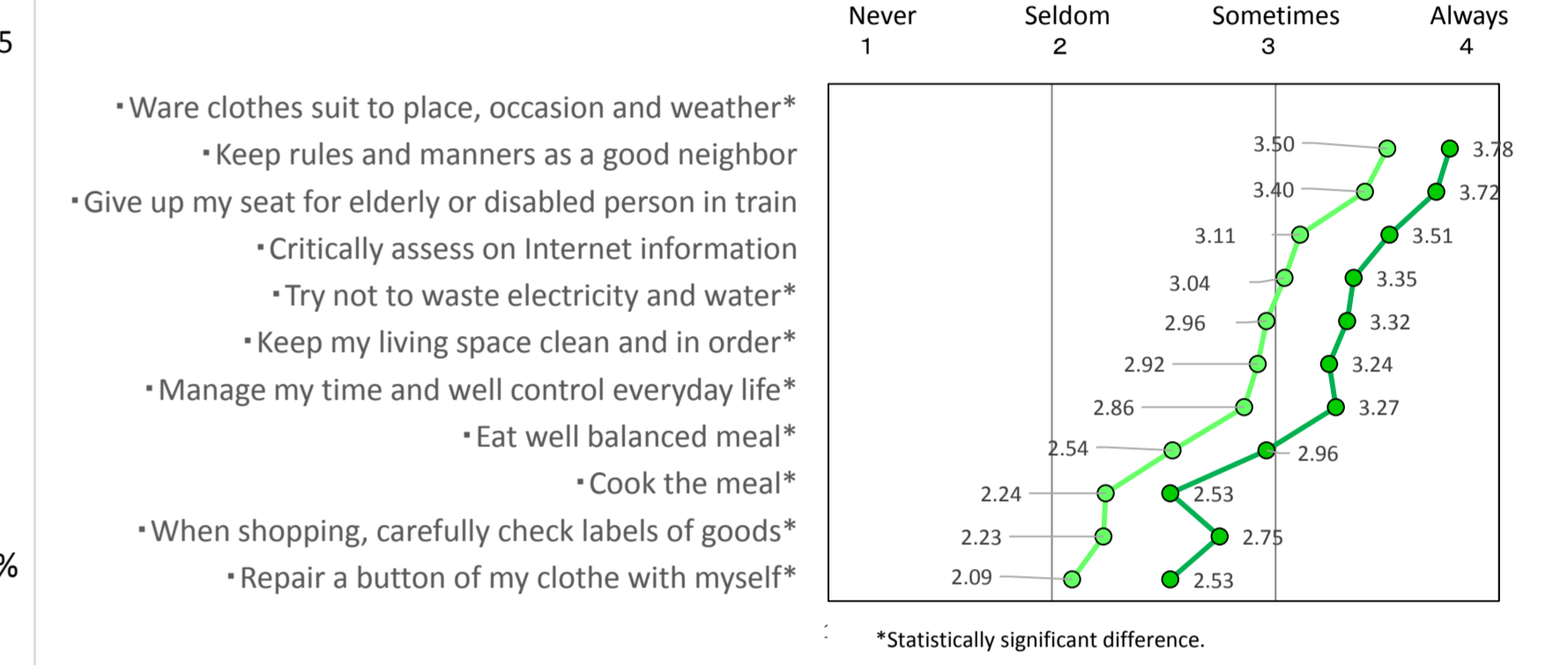
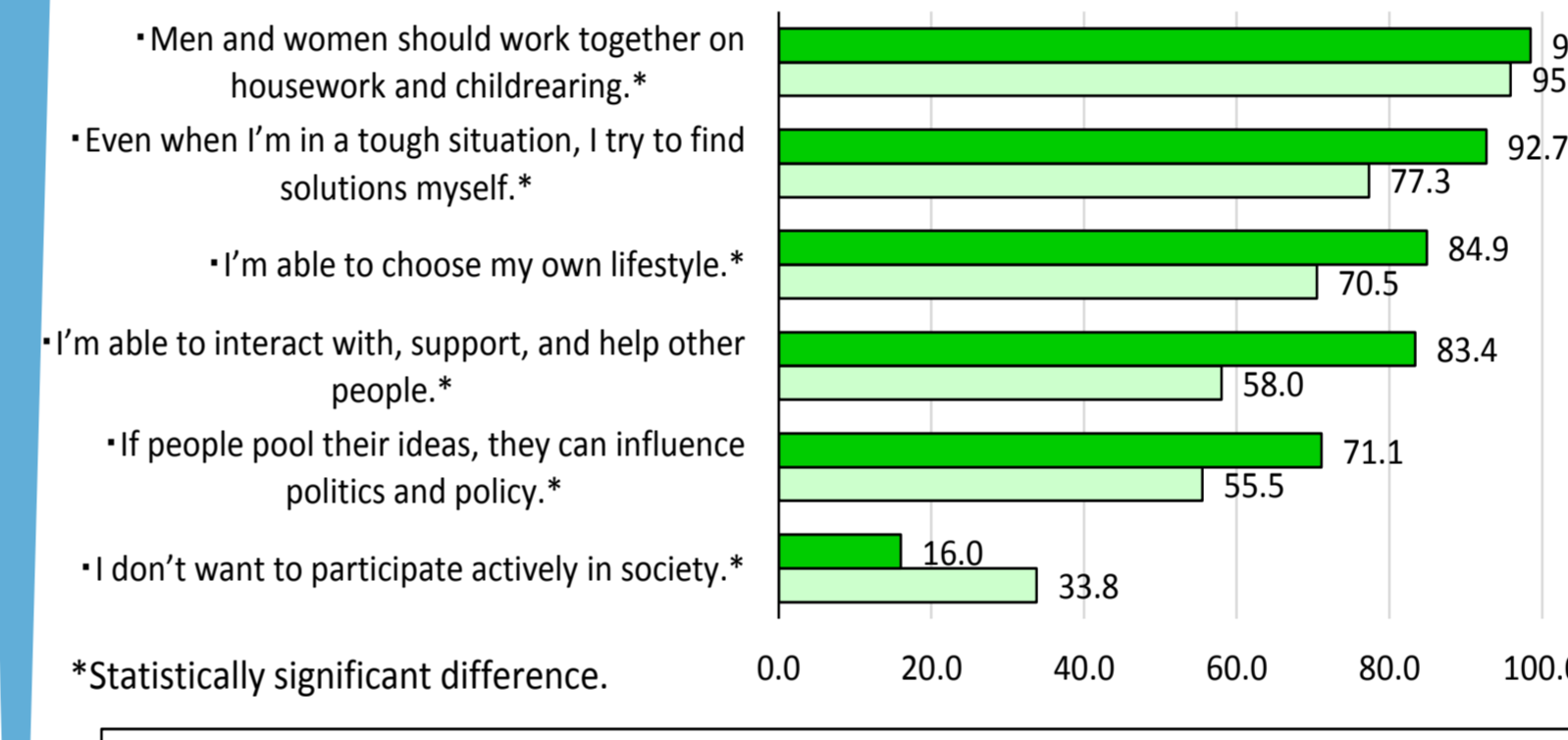
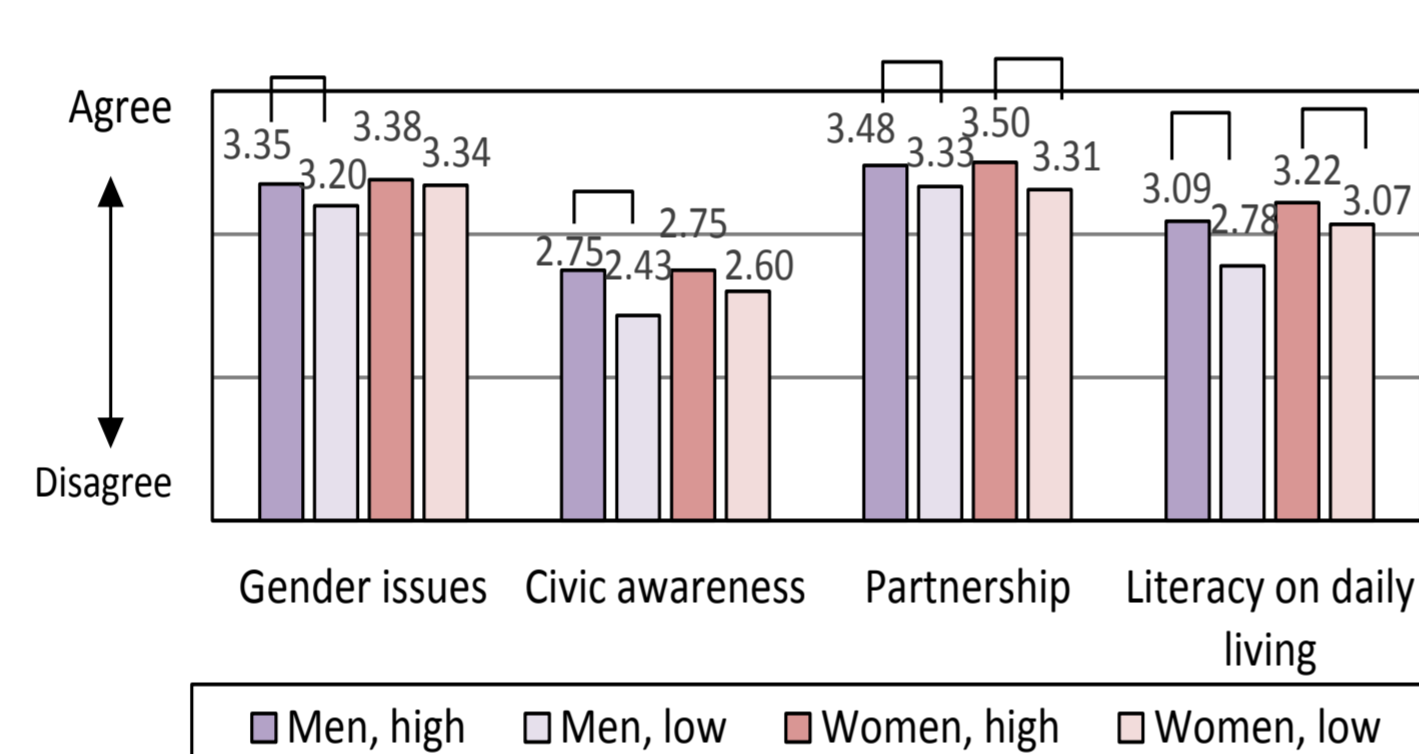
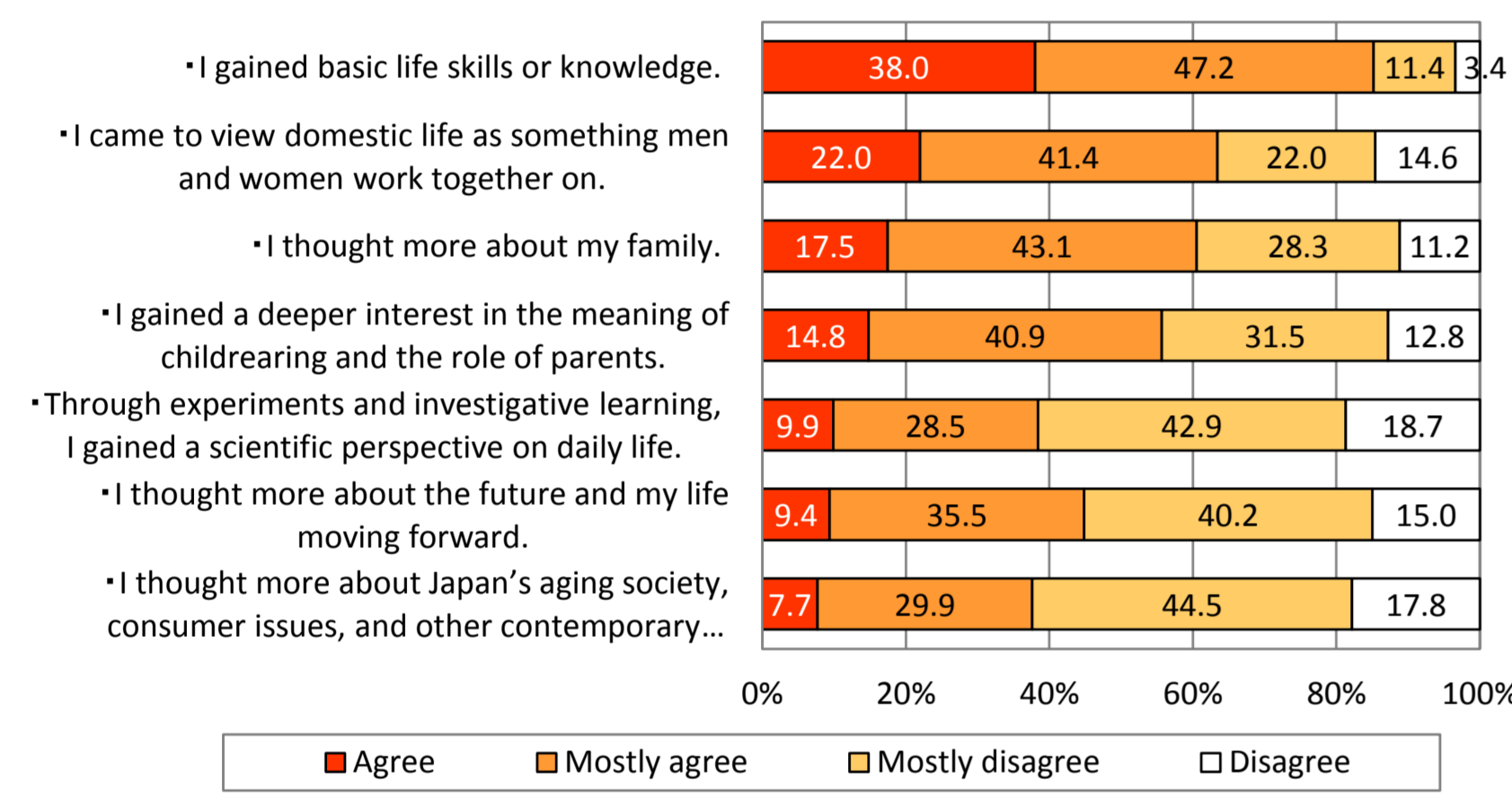


Fig. 4 Competencies respondents felt they acquired in home economics class (n=555)

Fig. 5 Awareness and actions (comparison based on perceived competencies)

Fig. 6 Level of perceived competencies acquired and awareness of issues in daily life

Fig. 7 The relation between students' practice and their perceived competencies

● Awareness and actions

Both men and women who felt they had acquired more competencies put more of what they had learned into practice (partnership, actions in daily life). Men who felt they had acquired more competencies were also more aware of issues in daily life (gender issues, civic awareness).

● Relationship with awareness of issues in daily life

High school students with high perceived competencies acquired were more aware of issues related to gender, self-awareness, self-esteem, independence, and coexistence with others.

● Implementation

High school students with high perceived competencies acquired were not only aware of the changes caused by taking home economics, but also used their competencies in daily life.

### (3) How did adults and high school students understand gender roles and partnership between the sexes?

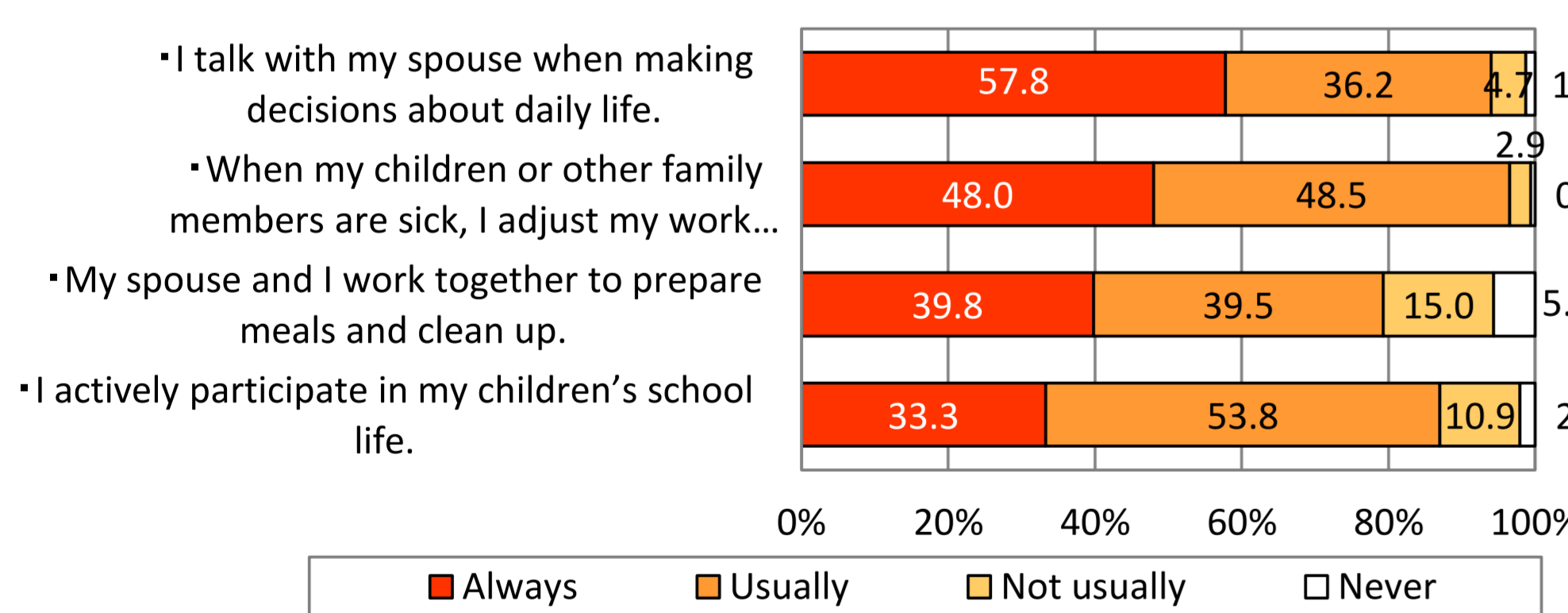


Fig. 8 Adult partnership (n=827)

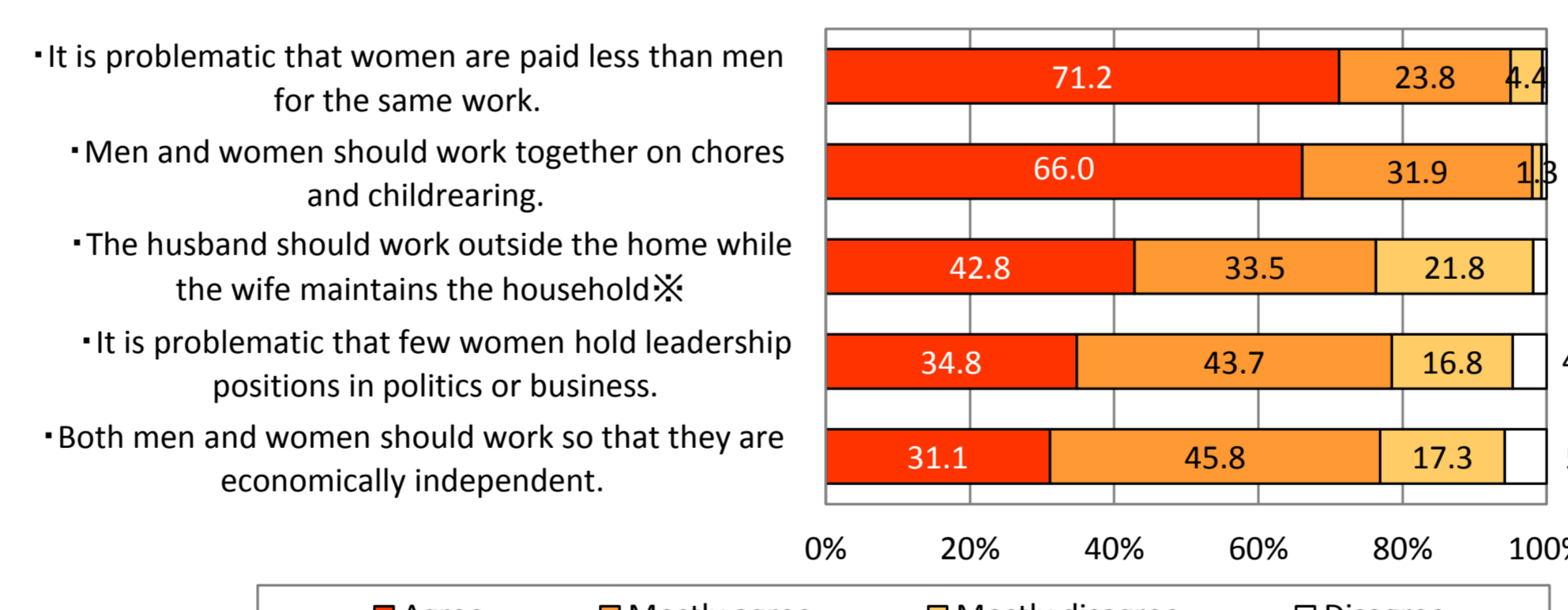


Fig. 9 Adults' views of gender (n=827)

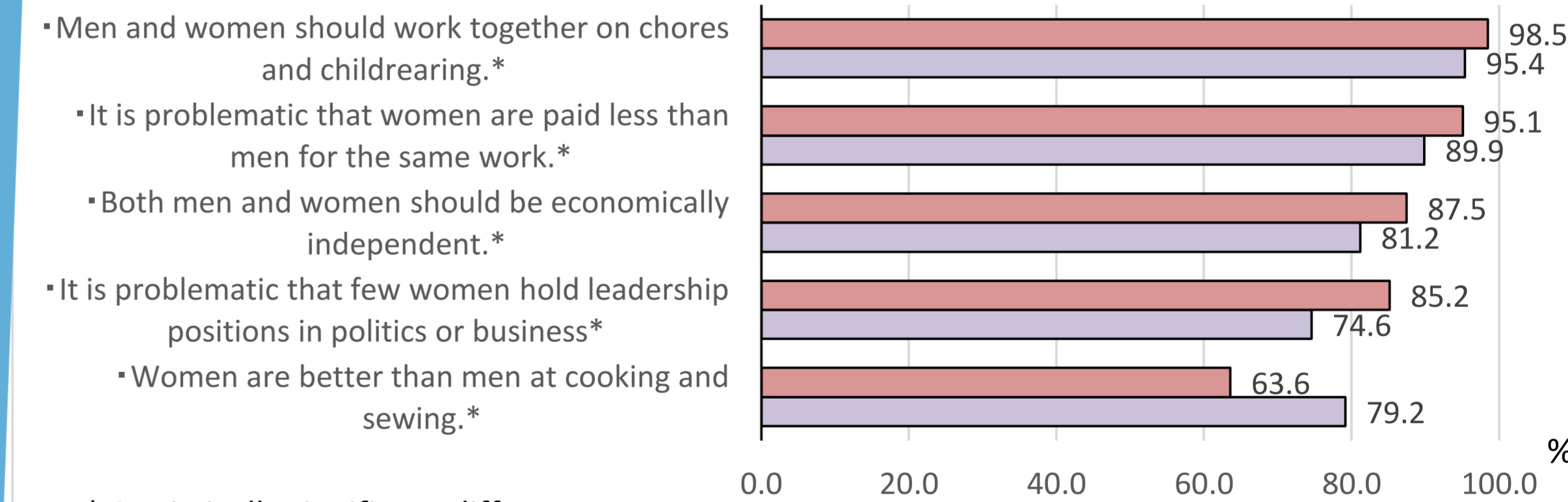


Fig. 10 High school students' views of gender

Adult comments on gender roles

Thanks to taking home economics, I think it's commonsense for men and women to work together to run the household. (Male, compulsory co-ed) It gave me a chance to think in concrete terms about the domestic roles of men and women as collaborative and not determined by gender. I'm glad I took the course. (Male, compulsory co-ed) Recently, when I look at young employees from the co-ed generation, the men are often proactively involved. I think it's the result of making the class a requirement for both sexes. (Male, compulsory for girls)

● Over 95% of both male and female high school students agreed that “men and women should work together on chores and childrearing” and wanted economic equality and independence for both men and women.

## Discussion

High school students viewed home economics as a subject in which they could attain skills needed for domestic life as well as reassess their daily life, plans for the future, and consider solutions to life problems. Adults also viewed home economics as a useful subject they could learn how to do housework, keep their personal affairs organized, and gain wholistic understanding of human life. Both high school students and adults also felt home economics had given them knowledge and skills needed in their daily life. In addition, ninety percent of high school students and sixty percent of adults felt they had gained awareness of cooperation between the sexes. The students who felt they had gained skills had a high awareness of domestic issues, and the adults who felt they had gained literacy on daily living by home economics put those skills into practice. The above results demonstrate co-educational home economics courses increase awareness and implementation of partnership, give students skills necessary for daily life, and influence awareness and practical skills after graduation. However, gaps were observed in attainment of “perspectives on societal problems related to daily life” and “scientific perspectives on daily life.”

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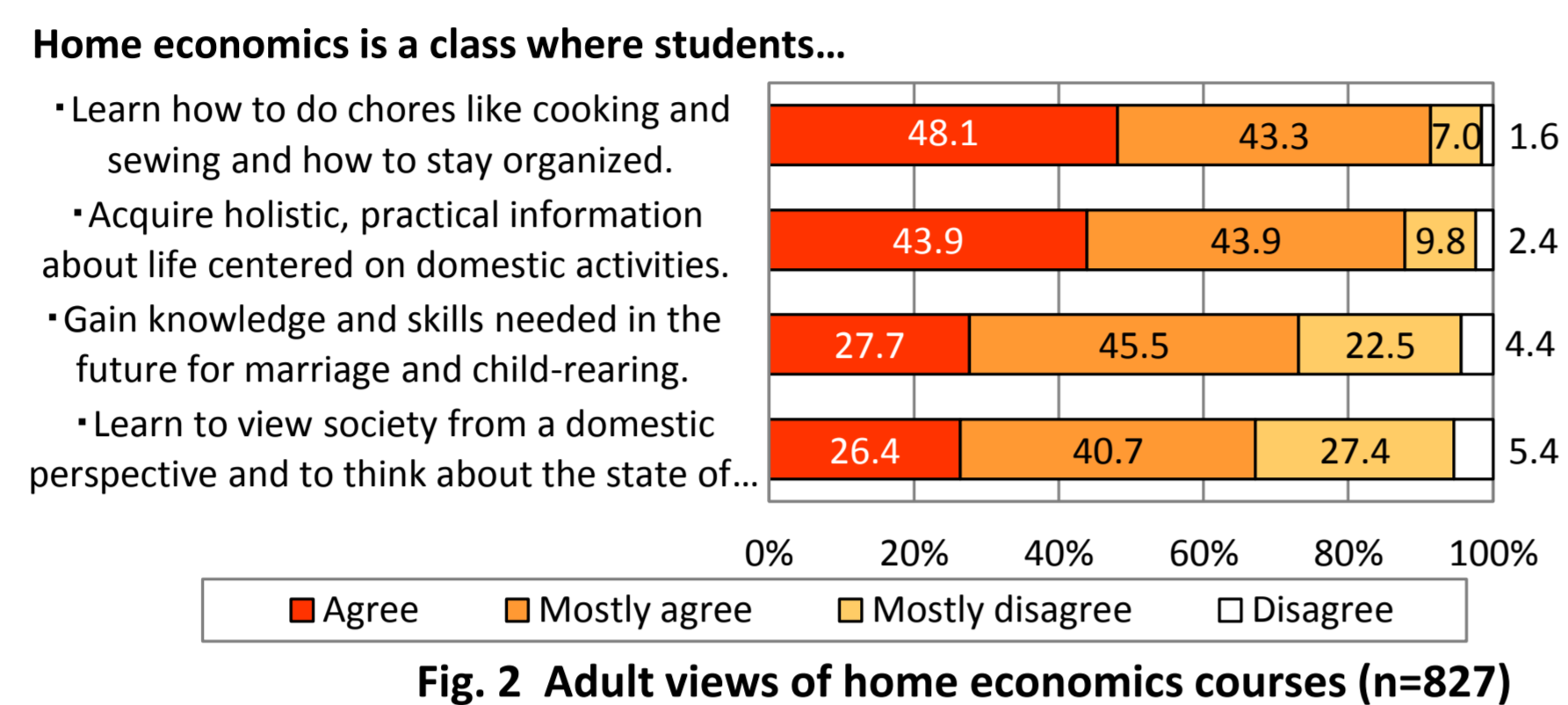
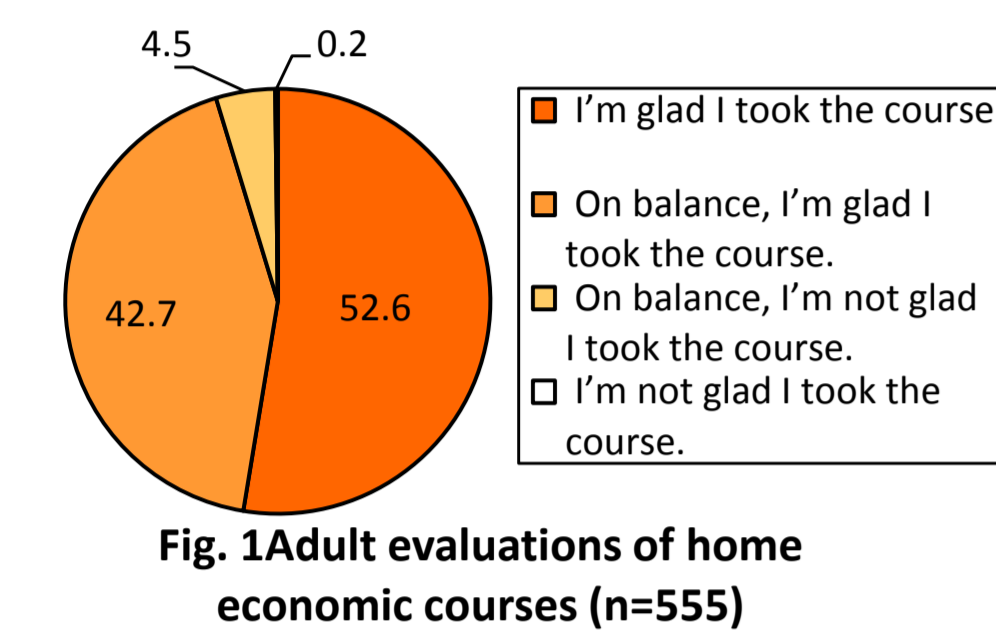
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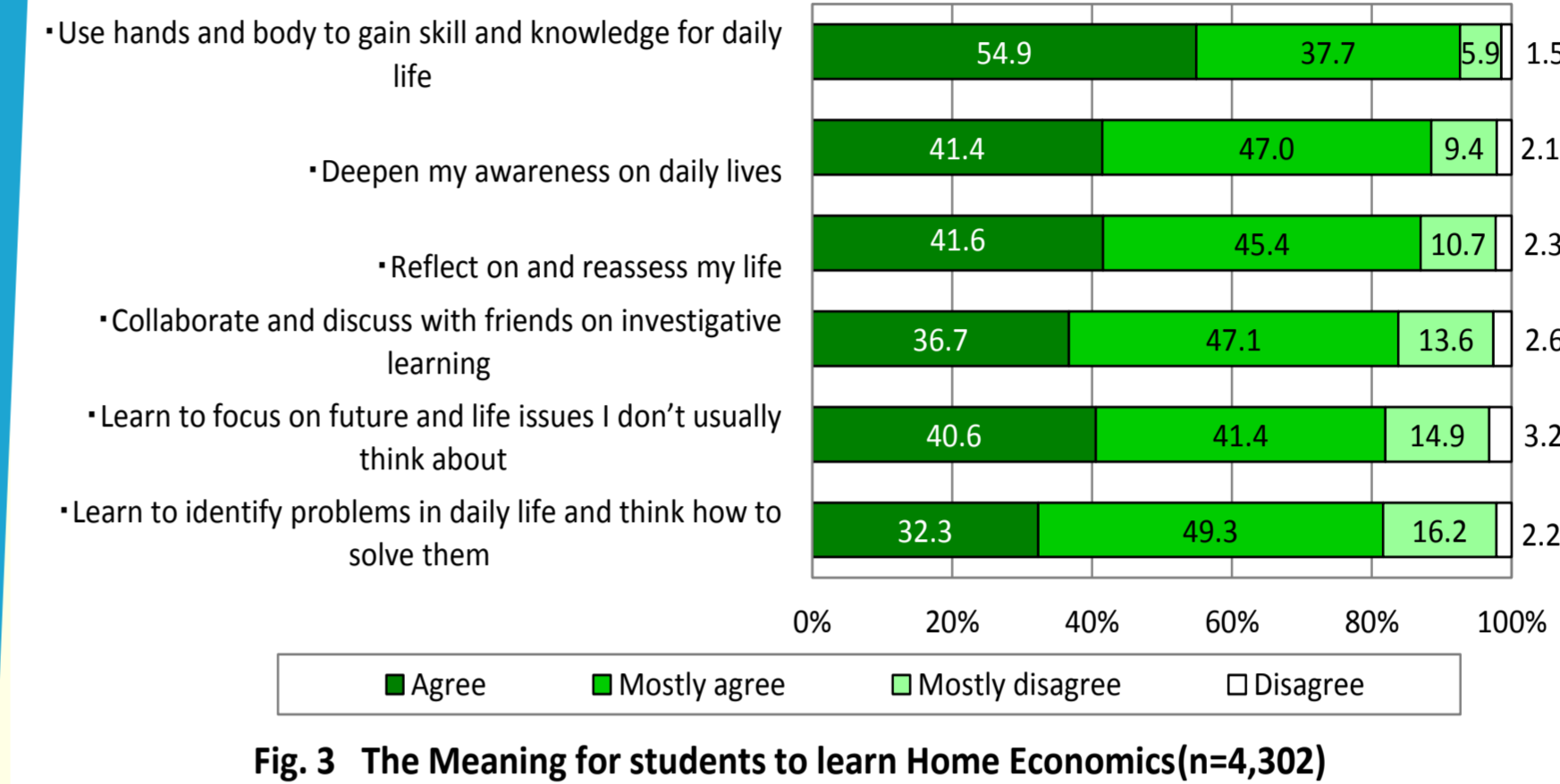
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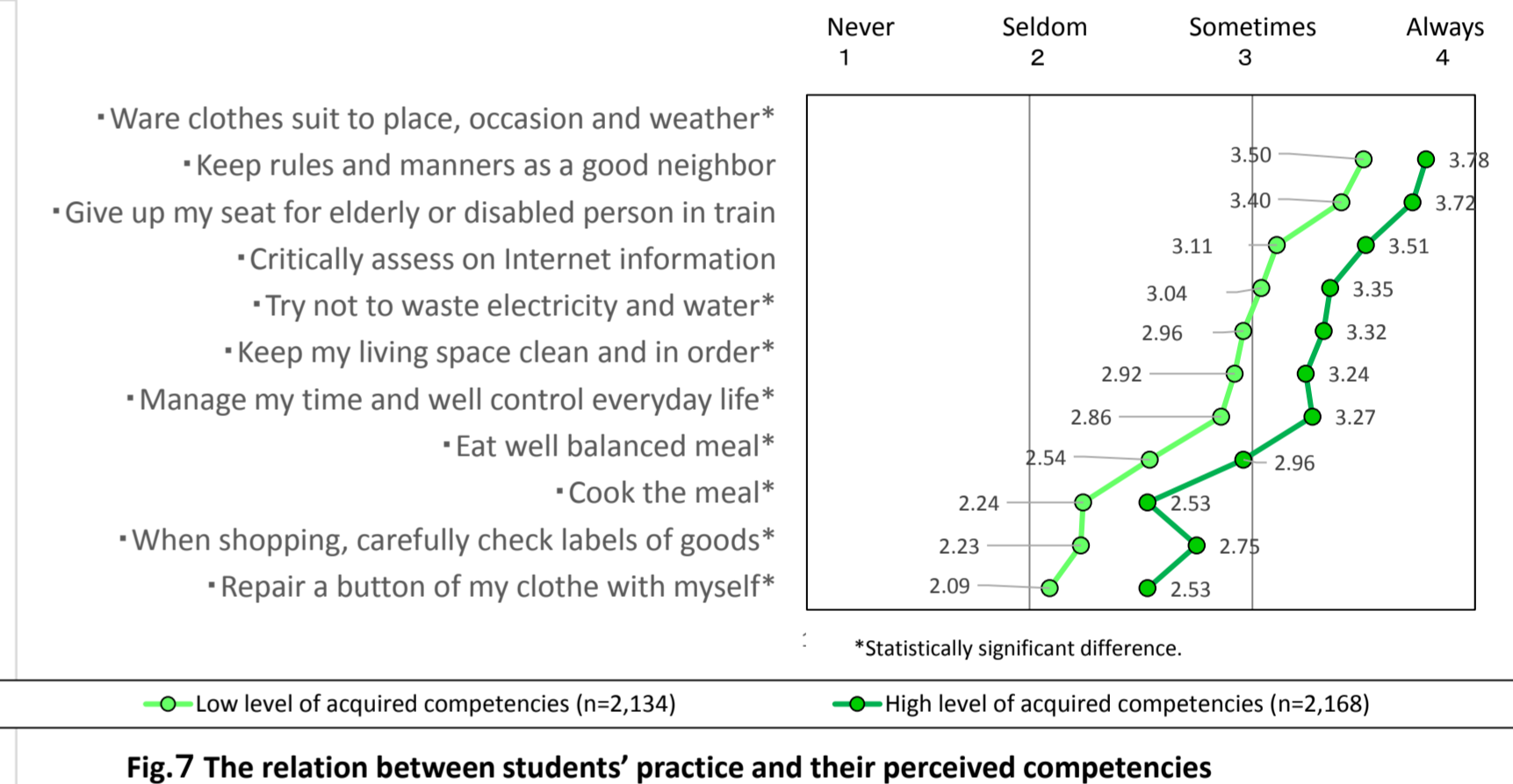
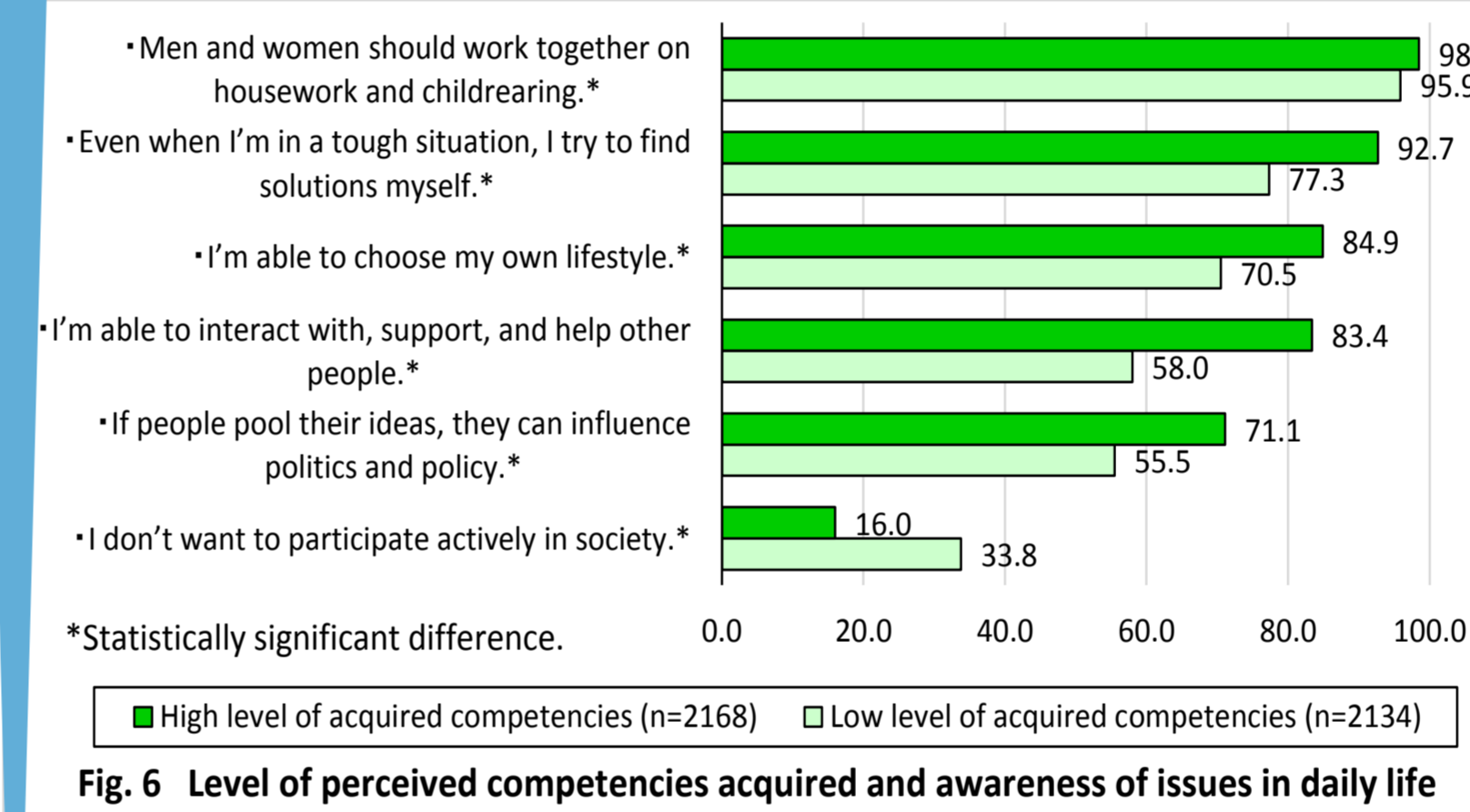
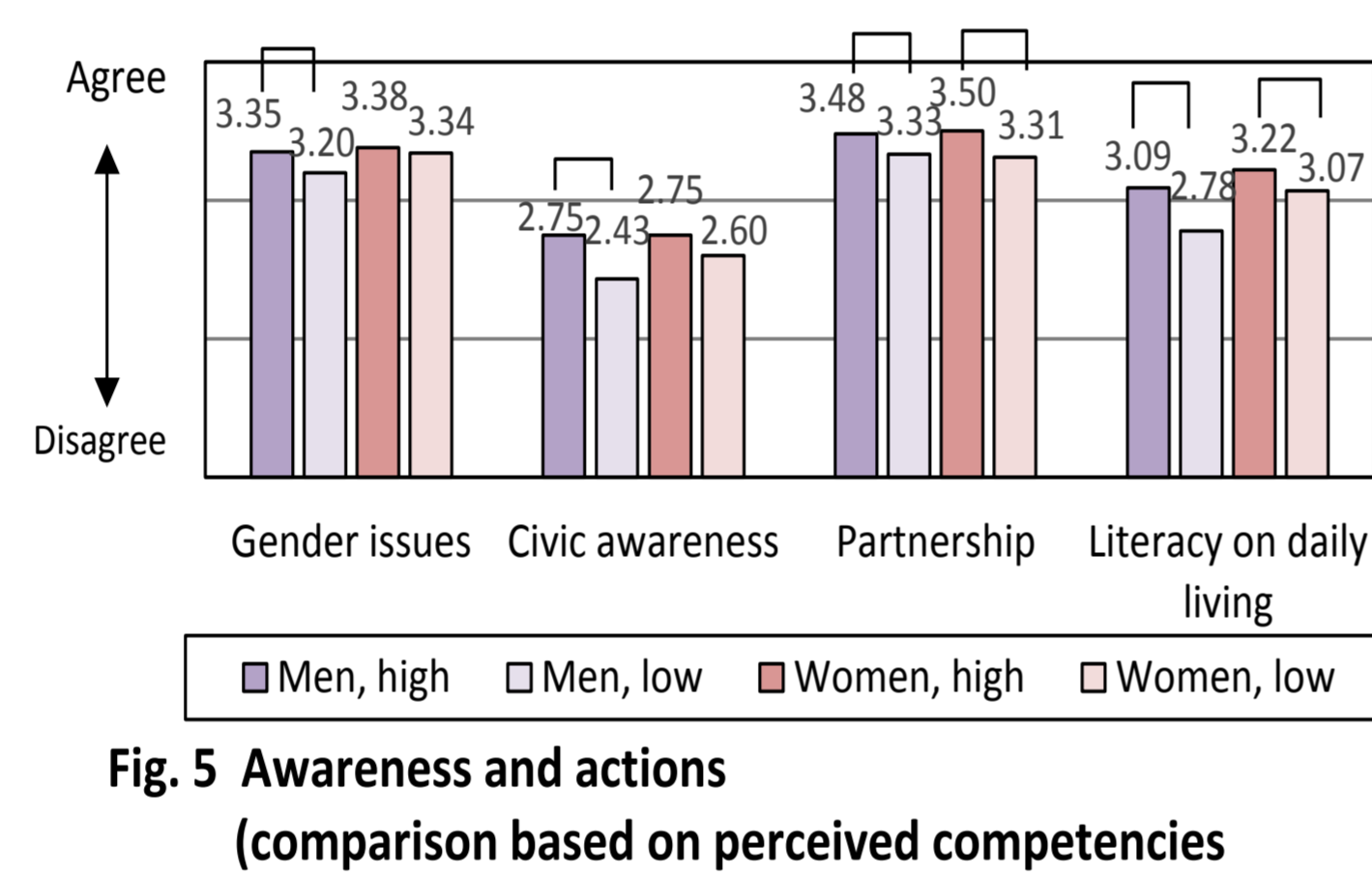
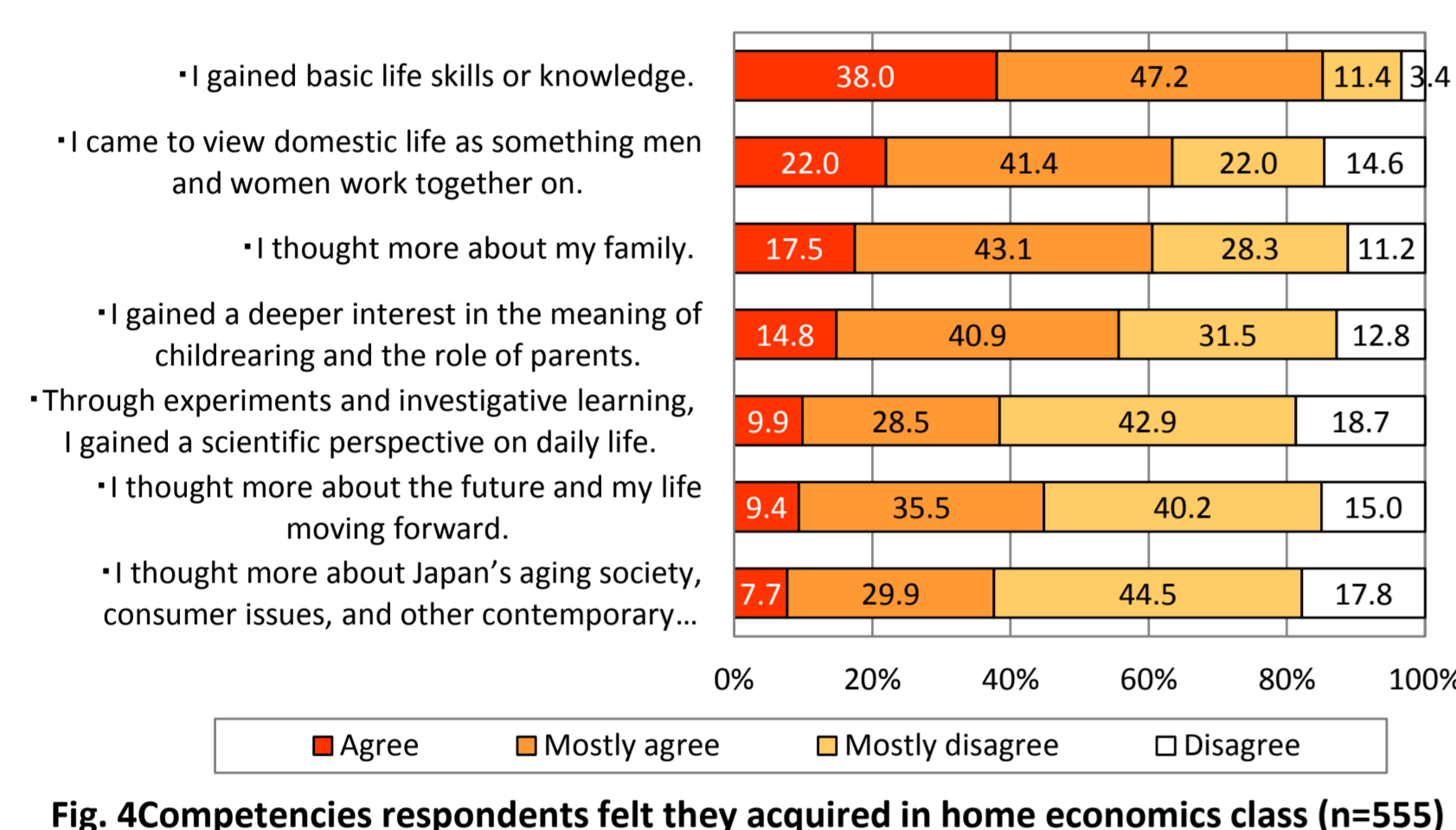
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#### ● Awareness and actions

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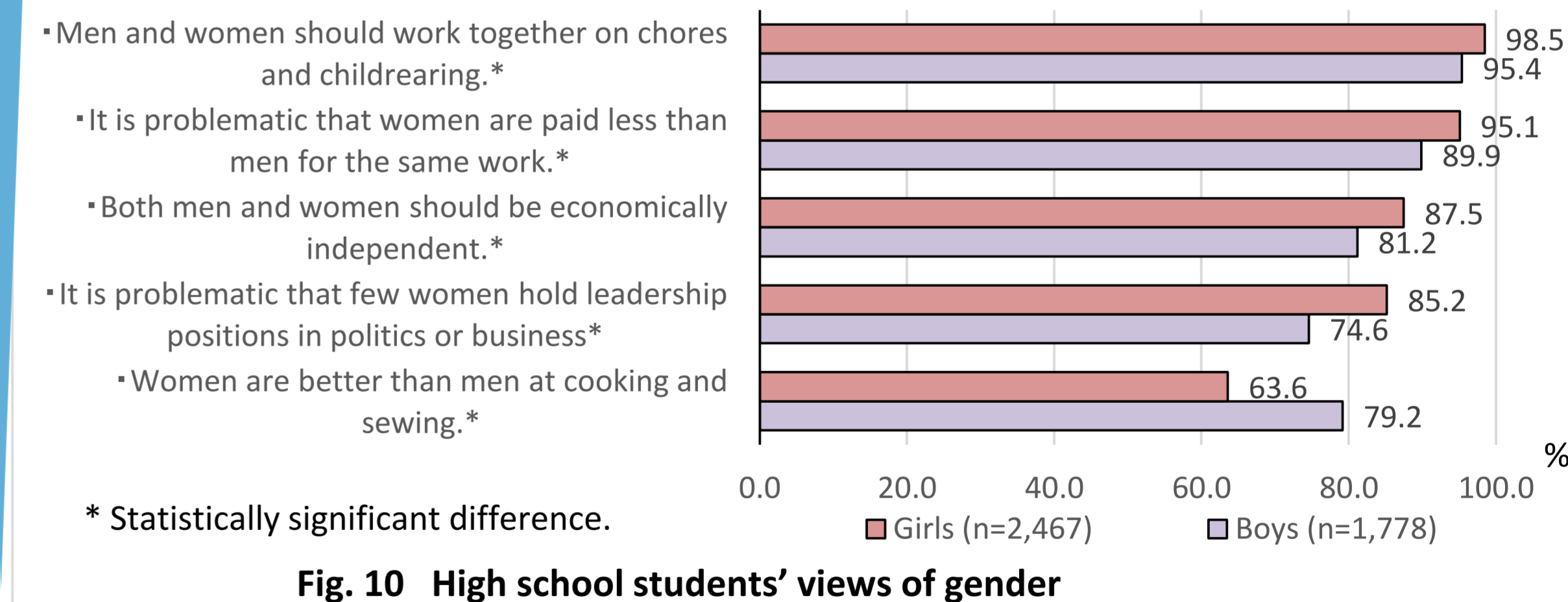
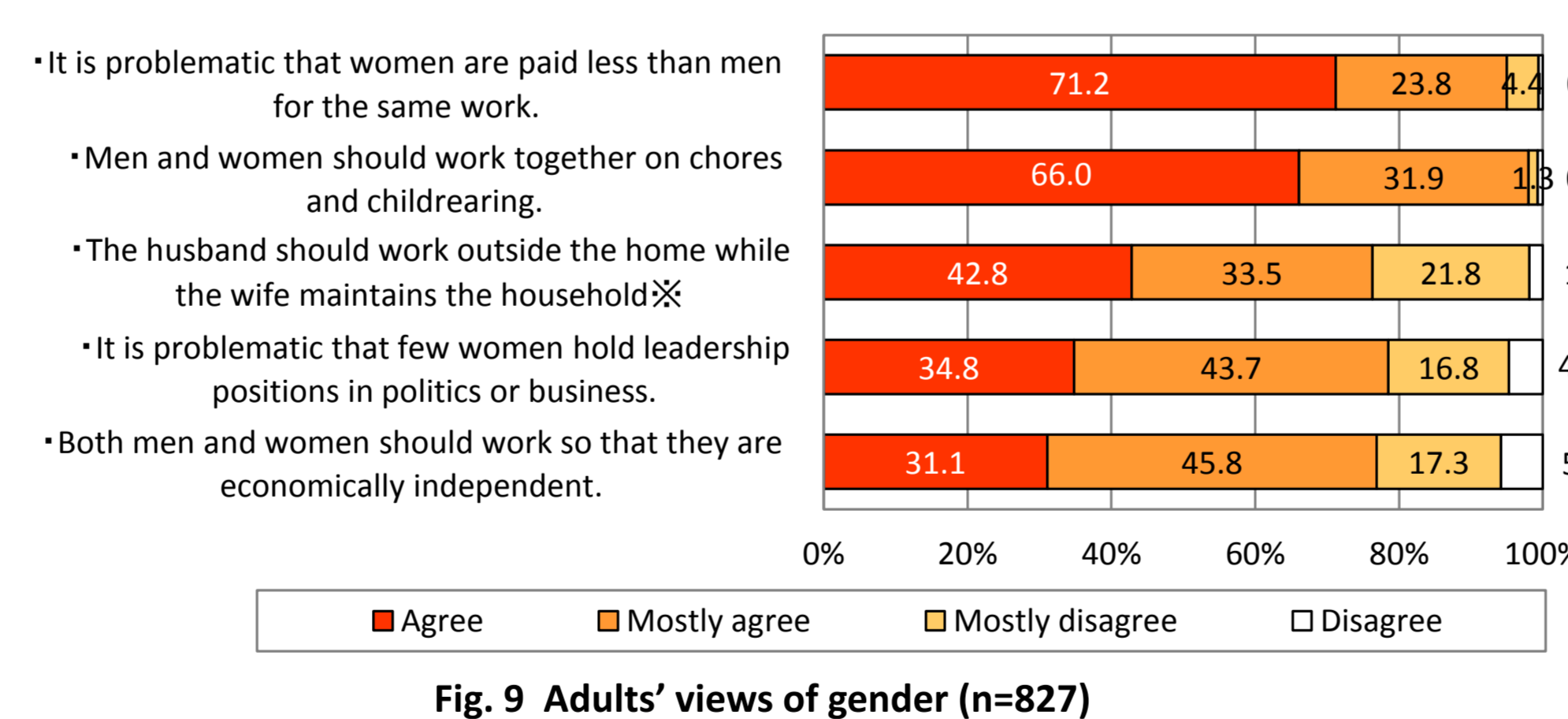
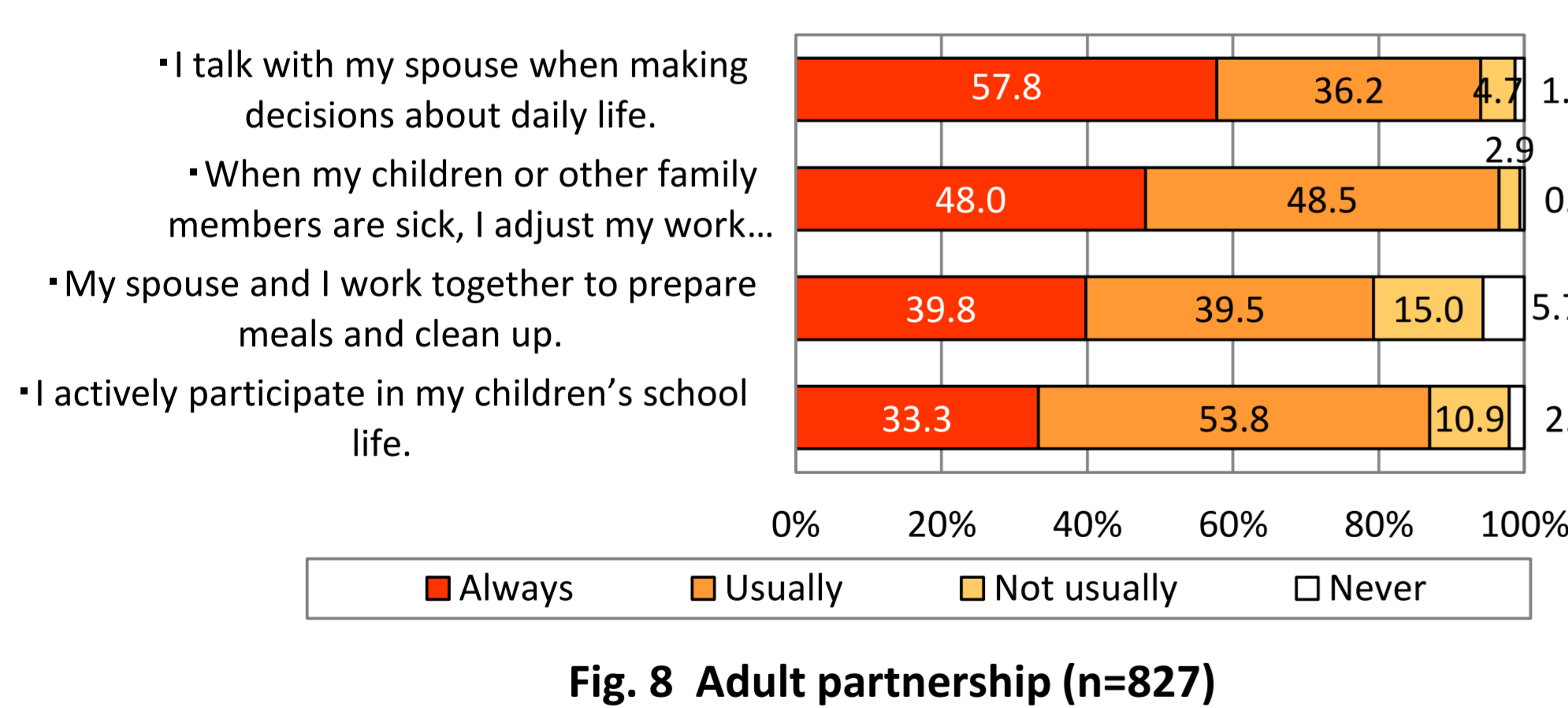
#### ● Relationship with awareness of issues in daily life

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