

LMF2.1: Usual working hours per week by gender

Definitions and methodology

This indicator presents information on usual working hours by gender through the distribution of employed men and employed women across five hours bands for usual weekly working hours:

- i. 1-19 hours per week
- ii. 20-29 hours per week
- iii. 30-34 hours per week
- iv. 35-39 hours per week
- v. 40 hours or more per week

Data for most countries concern usual weekly working hours in the main job and cover all employed (both employees and self-employed) of all ages. The definition of usual weekly working hours includes overtime if it occurs systematically, but irregular or unusual overtime is not included. Data for Australia and New Zealand refer to usual weekly working hours in *all* jobs, rather than just the main job, while data for Japan and Korea refer to *actual* weekly working hours in all jobs. For China and Singapore, the specific hours bands sometimes differ slightly from those defined above (see the notes to Chart LMF2.1.A for more detail).

In addition to the information on usual weekly working hours, this indicator also provides supplementary information on commuting times and the additional time that workers spend travelling to and from work in Box LMF2.1.A. Data are presented through one main measure:

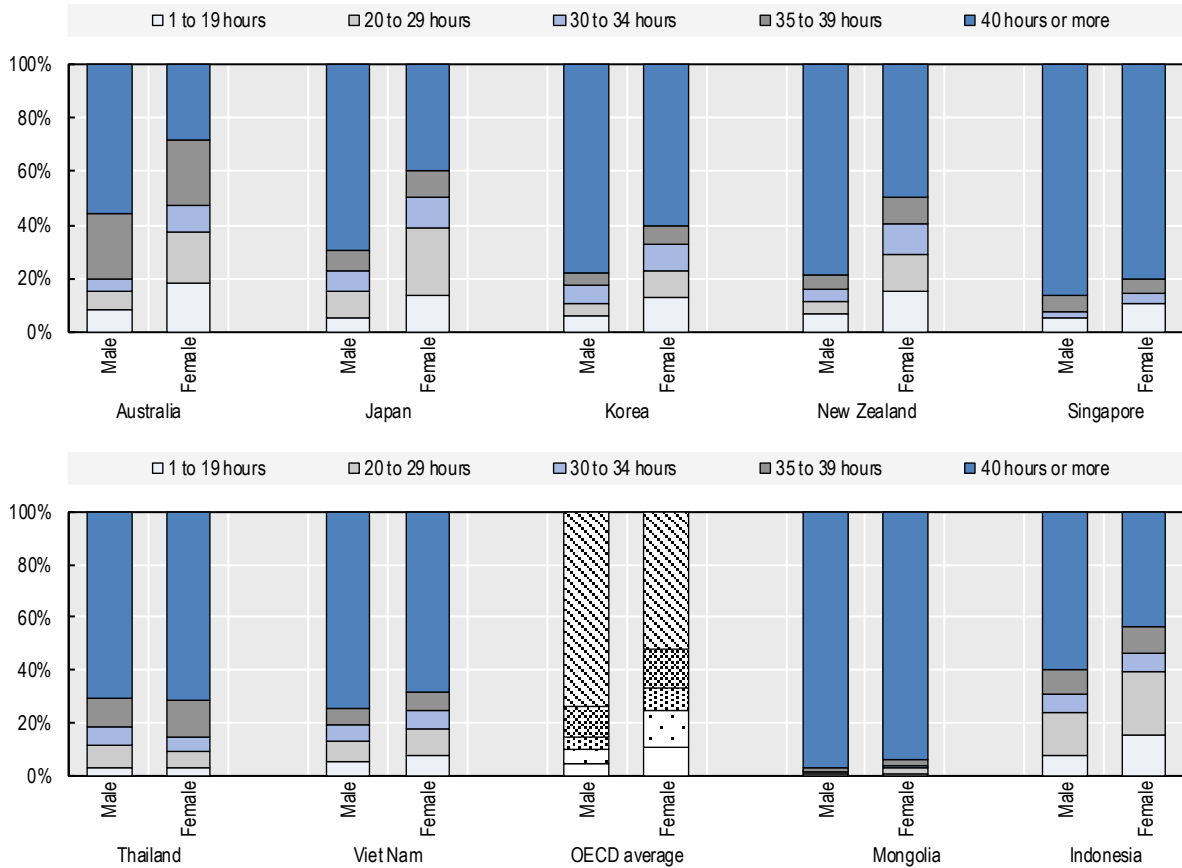
- *Average time spent travelling to and from work or study by sex, in minutes per day, 15-64 year-olds.* Data come from national time use surveys, and cover the average daily time (in minutes) men and women spend commuting/traveling from home to their place of work or, where relevant, study. Data cover all men and women in the given age range regardless of whether or not they are employed or actively engaged in education. Data for Australia refer to 15+ year-olds and for China to 15-74 year-olds, rather than 15-64 year-olds.

Key findings

The distribution of working hours (and gender differences in the distribution of working hours) differs considerably across Asia/Pacific countries (Chart LMF2.1.A). In all countries included here the large majority of workers (both male and female) usually work 40 or more hours per week. In Singapore and Thailand, more than 70% of employed men and women are in paid work for 40 or more hours per week. and in these two countries, the share of men working 40 hours or more per week is not much higher than the share of women doing so (less than 6.5pp). By contrast, in Australia, Indonesia, Japan and New Zealand, less than half of the women are in paid work for 40 hours or more. In New Zealand, almost 30% of employed women work fewer than 30 hours per week and almost 40% of women do so in Australia, Indonesia, and Japan.

<i>Other relevant indicators:</i> LMF1.4 Employment profiles over the life-course; LMF1.6 Gender differences in employment outcomes

Chart LMF2.1.A. Distribution of the employed by usual weekly working hours bands and gender, 2021 or latest available
 Distribution (%) of male and female employed (all ages) by usual weekly working hours bands



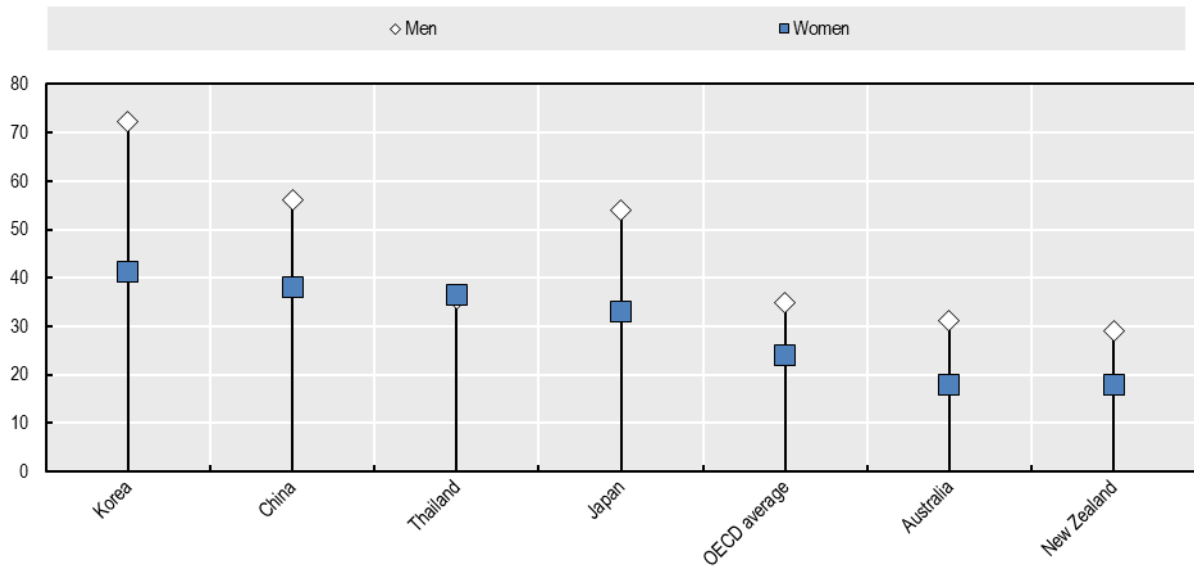
Notes: Data refer to 2019 for Australia and Mongolia. For Japan and Korea, data refer to actual weekly working hours rather than usual weekly working hours. For Australia, Japan, Korea and New Zealand, data refer to all jobs rather than the main job. For China, usual weekly working hours bands refer to 1-19, 20-34, 35-39, and 40 hours or more. The band labelled '20 to 29 hours' refers to 20 to 34 hours. For Singapore, usual weekly working hours bands refer to less than 30, 30-34, 35-39, and 40 hours or more. The band labelled '1 to 19 hours' refers to 1 to 29 hours. The OECD average is a weighted average and does not include Israel or Slovenia.

Sources: [Australia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and OECD average: OECD Employment Database](#); Indonesia: ILOSTAT Data; Mongolia; Labour Force Survey (2021); Singapore: Ministry of Manpower (2022), Labour Force in Singapore 2021; Thailand: Labour Force Survey (Quarter 3, 2021); Viet Nam: General Statistics Office (2022), Labour Force Survey 2021.

Box LMF2.1.A: Time spent commuting

In addition to the time spent at work, many employed men and women spend a considerable portion of their day commuting and travelling between work and home. Comparable data on time spent commuting are available for only a few Asia/Pacific countries, but the data that are available suggest large differences in commuting times across countries (Box Chart LMF2.1.C). In Australia and New Zealand, for example, the average time individuals devote to travelling to and from work is relatively short. In these two countries, men spend an average of about 30 minutes each day traveling back and forth from work or study, and women 18 minutes - averages that are just a little short of the respective cross-country averages for OECD countries (35 minutes and 24 minutes). In China, Japan, Korea and Thailand, by contrast, the average time spent commuting is far longer. In Japan and China, men spend, on average, 54 and 56 minutes per day traveling to and from work or study, respectively. In Korea, this average rises to as high as 72 minutes per day. Women also spend an average of 41 minutes each day traveling to and from work or study.

Box Chart LMF2.1.C: Average time spent travelling to and from work, latest available year
 Average time spent travelling to and from work or study, in minutes per day, 15-64 year-olds

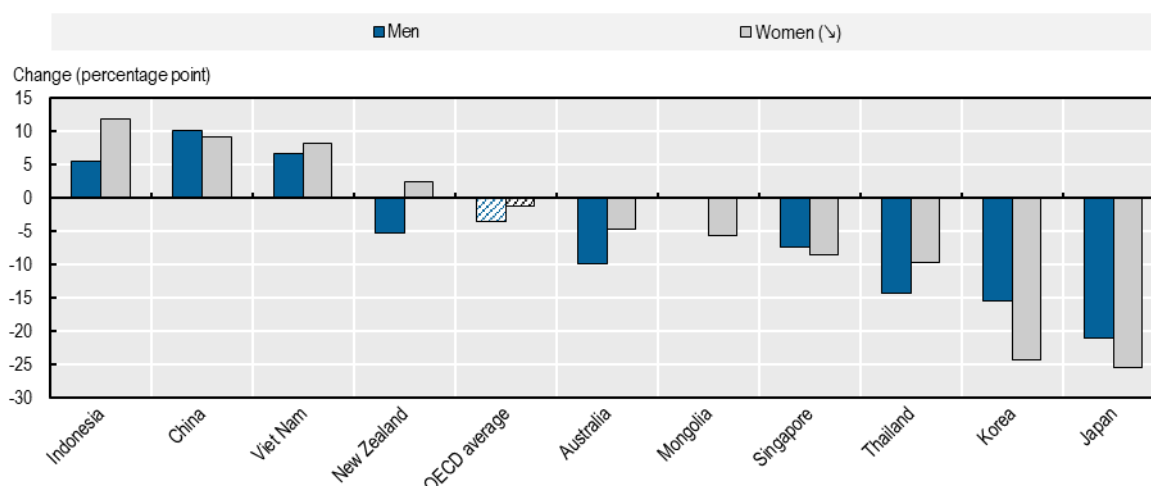


Notes: Data for Australia refer to 2006, for China to 2008, for New Zealand to 2009-10, for Korea to 2014, for Japan to 2016, for Thailand to 2017. Data for Australia refer to 15+ year-olds, and for China to 15-74-year-olds. Data for Thailand refer to the employed only. The OECD average refers to the unweighted average across OECD member countries.

Sources: [Australia, China, Japan, Korea and New Zealand: OECD Time-Use Database](#); Thailand: National Statistical Office, Migration Survey 2017

In most Asia/Pacific countries, the share of the workforce working 40 or more hours per week is declining (Chart LMF2.1.B). In all covered countries with available data other than China, Indonesia and Viet Nam, the proportion of both employed men and employed women working 40 or more hours per week has fallen over the last two decades and a half, sometimes substantially. In Japan and Korea, for example, the share of employed men working 40 or more hours per week has fallen by more than 15 percentage points (pp) since 1995, and the share of employed women by around 25pp. In contrast, in China, Indonesia and Viet Nam, the share of employed men working 40 or more hours per week has increased by more than 5pp since 1995, and by more than 8pp for women. In New Zealand, while the share of men working 40 or more hours has decreased by 5pp, it increased by 2.5pp for women.

Chart LMF2.1.B. Percentage point change in the proportion of the employed working 40 hours or more, by gender, 1995 to 2021 or latest available
 Percentage point change in the proportion (%) of the employed (all ages) with usual weekly working hours equal to 40 hours or more



Note: Instead of 1995, data for Australia refer to 2001 and for Mongolia to 2009. Data for 2021 refer to 2020 for China; and to 2019 for Australia, Indonesia and Mongolia. For Korea, data refer to actual weekly working hours rather than usual weekly working hours. For Australia, Japan, Korea and New Zealand, data refer to all jobs rather than the main job. The OECD average is a weighted average and does not include Israel or Slovenia. For Mongolia, data refer to Employment in excessive working time (more than 48 hours per week, percentage).

Sources: [Australia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and OECD average: OECD Employment Database](#); China: China Population and Employment Statistics Yearbook, 2016, 2020; Singapore: Ministry of Manpower (2022), Labour Force in Singapore 2021; Thailand: Labour force survey (Quarter 3) 2020; Vietnam: Labour and Employment Survey 2018; Mongolia: Labor Force Survey.

Comparability and data issues

Most of the data on working hours used in this indicator are taken from or are based on information from national labour force surveys or household surveys or, in the case of China, the national population census. Organisations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) set out and define numerous [standards and guidelines](#) that should be followed by countries when conducting labour force surveys and producing labour statistics, which should help reduce comparability issues. However, one main issue should still be noted:

- For Charts LMF2.1.A and LMF2.1.B, information on the distribution of working hours is based on a standard definition of ‘working hours’ as usual weekly working hours in the main job. However, for Japan and Korea the data used are *actual* hours worked. For Australia, Japan, Korea and New Zealand the jobs covered are *all* jobs. Relative to other countries, these differences may lead to an overestimation of the share of the employed working longer hours and an underestimation of the share of the employed working shorter hours in Australia, Japan, Korea, and New Zealand.

The data on time spent travelling to and from work used in Box Chart LMF2.1.C all come from the OECD’s harmonised time-use database, which itself extracts data from national time-use surveys. Efforts have been made to harmonise definitions and ensure the comparability of concepts and definitions across countries, but several factors – such as differences in sample composition, the categorisation of activities, the sampling of diary days, and the reference year – may still affect comparability. For more information on the OECD’s data on time use, please see Miranda (2011), OECD (2011), and [OECD Family Database Indicators LMF2.5 and LMF2.6](#).

Sources and further reading: ILO, Geneva; International Labour Organization (2023), *Standards and guidelines on labour statistics*, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/about/standards/>; OECD (2023), OECD Labour Force Statistics 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1787/dc0c92f0-en>.