

The Subjectivity Study on the Perception of Low Fertility in College Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the subjectivity of low fertility recognized by college students and the characteristics of each type, with application of Q methodology. 35 college students at H University in Chungcheongnam-do were asked to classify 59 statements on low fertility. The collected data were analyzed using QUANL PC Program. As a result, three categories were analyzed from the perception of low fertility among college students. The types include 'lack of social and government support' and individualistic life style'. This study aims to explore and understand the subjective perception of low fertility among college students and the aging population to provide data for the future plans of low fertility rate through the perception of university students and the intervention plans for the support policies.

Keywords: Low Fertility, College Student, Subjectivity, Q-methodology.

1. Introduction

1.1. Necessity of study

Despite the need to readjust women's role of child care in the family, due to the lack of fair role adjustment and support, working mothers experience a difficulty in working and childcare done at the same time [1][2].

So in order to resolve the low fertility rate, the government planned to create a social atmosphere and paradigm change through the 3rd Low Fertility and Aging Society Basic Plan in 2016, and focused on establishing an institutional basis for this. This has taken the form of blocking the rapidly increasing dangers and strengthening support from pregnancy to parenting [3]. However, there is no big difference in the contents with the existing policy and is evaluated as an unrealistic countermeasure against the low birth rate problem [4].

Even in academia such as demography, women's studies, administration, education, and economics, research is being done to identify causes and resolutions of low fertility. Main reasons of low birth rate in the previous studies were economic recession, increase in unemployment rate, increase in marriage age, pursuit of single life, financial difficulties such as overpayment and burden of private education expenses, difficulty in housing arrangement and lack of housing, independent life styles and spread of personal achievements, lack of child care facilities, and the increase of working women [3][7]. Thus, it can be seen that the

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phenomenon of low fertility is not merely an individual problem but a result of complex individual, organizational, and social factors.

Nurses not only take the largest part in the healthcare field, but also most contacts with key subjects, and must provide safe and high quality nursing care within a limited time in a rapidly changing healthcare environment [8]. Also, most of the nurses are women who have experienced marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childcare after college graduation. Therefore, nursing students' perceptions of low fertility can affect their attitudes on birth planning when they have become nurses.

This study will explore the perceptions of low fertility from nursing students and categorize the different types accordingly. The purpose of this study is identify characteristics and differences of perception of low fertility and to provide basic data needed for education.

1.2. Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to apply the Q-methodology and identify the subjective characteristics of low fertility perceived by college students. The objectives of this research are as follows.

- 1) The subjective perceptions of college students on low fertility are categorized.
- 2) The subjective perceptions of college students on low fertility are analyzed by category and explained.

2. Method of study

2.1. Design of study

Literature, media data and previous research on low fertility are examined to achieve the purpose of the study, and the opinions of college students are considered to discover the types of subjective perceptions on low fertility.

2.2. Q population and Q sample selection

The Q population was derived from domestic and international literature, open questionnaires, media, and individual in-depth interviews to receive a comprehensive statement on the low fertility perceived by college students. Open questionnaires were used to collect data. Various opinions on low fertility were gathered from college students. Purpose of the study was explained to the students in H University and those who wished to participate were gathered. Through this process, a total of 200 Q populations were extracted and a total of 70 Q populations were extracted from domestic and international reviews. To select the Q sample for this study from the 70 Q population under the premise that 20~100 or 40~60 is the universal sample, a Q methodology expert, 2 nursing professors, 2 nurses working in the delivery room, and 5 college students were reviewed and selected for a total of 59 Q samples.

2.3. P-sample selection methodology

Q-methodology is a qualitative research emphasizing the subjectivity of individuals centered on the difference of importance or significance, not on the individual itself; and as P-sample increases, the variable factors increase thus characteristics do not clearly show, which is based on the small sample doctrine. The P-sample was a total of 35 students from H University who agreed to participate in this study.

2.4. Classification and data analysis method

The Q classification is the process of creating a self-definition of the hospital where the research subjects chosen as the P sample identify the Q sample as a forced normal distribution method with the statements of the Q sample. First, a day of data collection for research was selected. Then, the college students selected as the P-sample collected data by deciding on the time to give response. The place for data collection was selected by the subject, where it was quiet and the participant's privacy could be kept, and the time was decided by negotiating on a desired time without affecting the fatigue of the subject. Data was collected from the college students participating in the study using Q - card. The time used by one subject to complete Q-classification was mostly 25-35 minutes.

Data collected were scored on the card of the distribution chart of the Q sample from -6 to 1, 7 as neutral, and 6 to 13. The assigned conversion scores were coded in Q sample order and processed through main factor analysis by QUANAL PC program. To determine the ideal number of factors, the number of factors was input based on the Eigen value of 1.0 or more, and the two types considered ideal were selected based on the calculated results.

Data analysis was done using QUNAL pc program and Q-factor analysis was done by principal component factor analysis. The mean and standard deviation of the factors were analyzed using the SPSSWIN 21.0 program.

2.5. Ethical considerations for the subject

After voluntary consent from all subjects of the study, they were given explanation that they could stop anytime during the study. In order to respect the rights of the subjects and ensure confidentiality of the subject's privacy and personal information, all collected data through this study was protected by Q-sorting in secret.

3. Result of study

The Q-factor analysis of the subjectivity of low fertility perceived by college students revealed two types by the QUANL pc program.

-Lack of social and government support :The first factor includes a total of 24 subjects[Table 1]. The highest factor weight in the first factor is the 28th weight (1.40). The lowest factor weight is the 21th person (weight; .17). The most agreeable statements of type 1 is Statement 3, 'difficulty in maintaining stable work life due to childbirth' (Q = 1.84). Statement 12, (Q = 1.83) "Overlap of work task of women and excessive housework, resulting in fatigue due to physical exhaustion.". Statement 4, "Excessive child support expense compared to income " (Z = 1.73). Statement 14, 'A lack of national childcare support measures' (Z = 1.65). Statement 15 'Lack of parental care and economic support in the community' (Z = 1.46). Statement 19 'Social considerations and insufficient understanding of working hours of the workplace selectively'. ('Z = 1.26') Statement 16 'Lack of national policy and social consideration to encourage childbirth' (Z = 1.20), The most disagreeable statements in the first type was the Statement 29, 'Adoptees continuously sent overseas.' (Z = -1.96)', Statement 46 'The higher the income level, the lower the fertility rate' (Z = -1.96)', Statement 51 'Avoid breastfeeding' (Z = -1.92), Statement 43 'Decreased pregnancy rate due to development of contraception' (Z = -1.58)', Statement 31 'Changes in social awareness about cohabitation culture' (Z = -1.56)', Statement 44 'Contraception is common and selected as necessary value' (Z = -1.38)', Statement 26 'Increased income from women's economic

activities leads to a higher fertility rate for a second child' ($Z = -1.33$)[Table 1]. Based on this, it was named as lack of social and government support.

- Individualistic life Styles: The subjects categorized into the second factor were a total of 11.[Table1]. The highest factor weight from the second factor was Subject 14 (weight:1.47) with the lowest as Subject 4 (weight;.09). The most agreeable statements in the second factor was Statement 55 'High economic and mental burden on women regarding childbirth and childcare' ($Z=2.44$). Statement 51 'Avoiding breastfeeding' ($Z=1.96$). Statement 49 'Old-age is changed from child's responsibility to self-help'(Z=1.87). Statement 12 'Overlap of work task of women and excessive housework, resulting in fatigue due to physical exhaustion.' ($Z=1.75$). Statement 46 'The higher the income level, the lower the fertility rate' ($Z=1.70$). Statement 47 'The higher the income, the higher the possibility of low fertility due to social advancement and focused investment in children.'($Z=1.59$). Statement 48 'Increased low fertility due to women's professional entry and expansion' ($Z=1.46$). The most disagreeable statement in the 2nd factor was Statement 21 'Future uncertainties lead to childbirth anxiety' ($Z=-1.88$), Statement 37 'Uneasy married life or marital conflicts'(Z=-1.83)', Statement 36 'Trends of personal and leisure time'(Z=-1.82)', Statement 39 'Marriage costs increase due to housing expenses'(Z=-1.53)', and ($Z=-1.00$) with Statement 1 'Delayed marriage due to longer repayment of student loans'[Table 1]. This was categorized as the Individualistic Life Style.

Table 1. Q-statements on new nurse images type of representative items and Z-scores.

(N=30)

Factor	No	Description	Mean (SD)	Z-score
Factor 1 (N=24)	3	Difficulty in maintaining stable work due to childbirth	9.67 (3.43)	1.84
	12	Overlap of work task of women and excessive housework, resulting in fatigue due to physical exhaustion.	10.13 (1.65)	1.83
	4	Excessive child support expense compared to income	10.00(3.24)	1.73
Factor 2 (N=11)	50	High economic and mental burden on women for childbirth and childcare	10.17 (3,54)	2.44
	51	Avoid breastfeeding	9.50(2.81)	1.96
	49	Old-age is changed from child's responsibility to self-help	8.67 (4.03)	1.87

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to provide basic data for an intervention plan for the support policy of low fertility through subjective data which college students perceive. Results of this study aim to discuss characteristics of low fertility such as 'cooperative and well - welfare hospitals' and 'hospitals with more holidays and less accommodation expenses'.

The first type shown in the study was 'Lack of social and government support. Subjects of the first type were a total of 24 [Table 3]. The highest factor weight in the first factor is the 28th subject (weight;1.40) 25th subject(weight;1.20). The lowest factor weight is the 21th person (weight;.17). The most agreeable statements of type 1 is Statement 3, 'difficulty in maintaining stable work life due to childbirth' ($Q = 1.84$). The most disagreeable statement in the first type was the Statement 29, 'Adoptees continuously sent overseas.' ($Z = -1.96$). The most agreeable statement selected by the 28th subject was Statements 57, 58 with a score of 13. With a score of 12, statements 19, 37, and 59 were selected. Comments on the selected statements were "Support and awareness of the society on women's childbirth is generally low, and government support is greatly needed to prevent low fertility." "If the work culture regarding childbirth and childcare doesn't change, the society and family activities of women who actively participate in economic activities will be difficult to maintain and they will feel mental disappointments." Statements with 1 point were 28, 41, and with 2 points were 21, 29, and 43. Comments on selected statements include "If the nation creates a good environment for marriage and childbirth, contraception and adoption do not become a problem, and the burden of childbirth and childcare of women doing economic activities must be put to priority than dealing with the problem of abortion."

The second type is the 'individualistic life style'. In the second type, the subjects with the highest factor weights were 14 (weight: 1.47). In the second type, the most agreeable statement is the Statement 55' ($Z = 2.44$) that the economic and psychological burden on women is high for childbirth and childcare. The most agreeable statement of the subject 14 was the Statements 1, 34, 12, 51, 53, 55 for 13 points. Statements 35 and 52 for 1 point. At 2 points, there were statements 40, 41 , and 58.

As a result of this study, main causes of the low fertility perceived by college students are excessive burden on women's family and social life, lack of government support, overpayment of childcare expenses, interruption of career due to childbirth, increase of economic and psychological burden of women on childcare, lack of support for childcare expenses, increase in women's social advancement, and burden of private education expenses for their children. On the other hand, the least influences on low fertility are shown to be sending adoptees abroad continuously, development of contraception, avoidance of breastfeeding, abortion, and increase in income.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the characteristics of low fertility perceived by college students and provide basic data for future social support direction and intervention plan for government support. As a result, the subjectivity of low fertility was categorized into two factors. It is possible to provide basic data for solving the problems faced in an era of low fertility and aging society by understanding the perception of college students. It can also be used to develop human resource development programs to prevent low birthrate through policies and support.

Based on the results of this study, the following can be proposed. First, it is necessary to develop diverse support programs to prevent low fertility by awareness of low fertility by

each type in this study. Second, the organizational, social and government support policies are needed to prevent female career disruption by awareness of low fertility by each type in this study. Third, socio-cultural change is needed to participate in childcare for both men and women through the awareness of low fertility by each type in this study.

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