The Relationship between Family-friendly Policy and Intention of Childbirth

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Abstract

Low fertility is a new social risk that causes changes in the demographic structure and role of social institutions. The causes of low fertility have been important topic in social studies and researchers have been approached to the topic in various aspects such as socio - environmental factors and personal environmental factors, and the government 's efforts, especially to the family - friendly policy. However, the studies on low fertility focusing on the joint relationship among personal, social aspects, and government efforts are still rare.

This study aims to investigate the relationship between the causes of low fertility and the additional birth intentions, focusing on socio-environmental factors and personal environmental factors. To do this, we conducted a survey of 401 women aged 19 to 45 living in Jeonbuk province. The structural equation modeling was utilized to analyze the relationship between social environment factors such as family - friendly system, family life satisfaction, husband 's parenting participation, parenting stress, personal environmental factors and additional birth intention. The results showed that socio - environmental factors had no direct effect on additional birth intentions, but socio-environmental factors influenced birth intentions through individual environmental factors.

Keywords: Low fertility, Family-friendly policy, Intentions of childbirth, Family life satisfaction, Gender equality

1. Introduction

The worldwide decline in fertility has become a serious social problem. The decline in [1]fertility rate can be extended to the problems of generation conflict such as decrease of production population, slowing of economic growth [1], confusion of social system, burden of welfare costs such as old age pension [2]. According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) in February 2017, the total fertility rate is 1.17persons, which is 0.07persons (-5.6%) lower than 1.245persons in 2016. In addition, the age at which women are given birth is gradually increasing, leading to an increase in elderly births over the age of 35 [3]. This decline in the fertility rate is expected to lead to a decline in the total population and to the disappearance of local small towns, thus requiring more aggressive measures [4].

In response to the risk of low birthrate, the government enacted the Basic Law on Low Fertility and Aging in June 2005, and in order to increase the fertility rate from 1.19persons to 1.4persons in February 2015, (2016 ~ 2020), which includes the strengthening of the support

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for the aged society and the aging society [5]. The government's efforts have focused on reducing the burden of educational expenses for children, creating a gender-equal society environment, and strengthening the childcare environment [6]. Nevertheless, the government 's policy efforts to overcome low fertility have not shown a positive result of increasing fertility rate. Despite the government's diverse policy efforts, the fertility rate does not increase because the flow of the low birth rate is a phenomenon due to changes in social and family structural changes over time, and it is difficult to confirm or sustain the effect with effort [6].

To date, efforts to identify the causes of low fertility have been mainly focused on individual causes of socioeconomic factors, policy factors, and social and environmental factors such as corporate and community societies [7]. First, the tendency of low fertility - related researches has revealed various influencing factors on the increase of fertility rate through birth behavior and the final analysis of fertility rate. However, the analysis of the birth behavior and the birth rate limits the understanding of the past behavior. Therefore, it needs to be supplemented by the way of securing the prospects for the future through the analysis of the birth plan and the intention to give birth [8].

Second, in order to verify the policy effectiveness reflecting the government 's awareness of the cause of low birth rate in line with the government' s strengthening of the maternity policy, the influence of the family - friendly policy has been verified as a childbirth act. However, it is not consistently reporting the relationship between the establishment of a family - friendly policy and the expansion of the system directly affecting the birth behavior. There are some studies that suggest that the fertility rate increases due to the strengthening of social and policy support. However, there are no studies reporting consistent results but only a positive level of influence. This is because the decision of individual behavior is not related to the mere influence, but rather takes place in diverse and complex relationships.

Therefore, in this study, it is necessary to comprehensively consider the factors of socio-environmental factors and personal environmental aspects suggested by previous researches and to clarify the relationship of these influences to the additional birth intention affecting the birth behavior do. The results of this study will provide the information needed to solve the problem of low fertility in Korean society, which is getting more realistic approach to the theoretical, policy and practical discussion on low fertility in Korean society.

2. Relationship between Family-friendly Policy, Family Life Satisfaction, and Additional Birth Intention

Family - friendly policy is a policy that is implemented with the aim of restraining low birth rate and increasing fertility rate in the extension line of the low birth rate and basic aged society plan to cope with low birthrate. Based on the 'Family Friendly Social Environment Promotion Act', active and diverse policies such as 'work-family reconciliation policy' and 'family-friendly certification system' have been implemented through government and business cooperation [9]. The contents of the family-friendly policy consist of women's pregnancy, childbirth and childcare facilities. The "family-friendly certification system" of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family is divided into 'maternity and childcare support', 'flexible work plan' and 'family-friendly workplace culture' [9]. The intent and purpose of this policy will be to increase the fertility rate through a work environment where childcare and childcare are possible. The study of the relationship between marital intentions of unmarried workers and the family-friendly system and the marriage incentive policy of the workplace shows that the marriage incentive program and the family-friendly system have a positive effect on marital intent [9]. This suggests that the precondition for giving birth is very positive considering the birth

characteristics of Korean society. There are also studies in which the family-friendly system influences the child's intentions of childbirth through more aggressive synchronization. Previous studies [6] that have positive effects on the birth and parenting motives of unmarried women, there are many studies that report that family-friendly systems have a positive influence [6] [10] [11].

However, unlike the results of family-friendly policies that have positive effects on marriage, parenting, and further birth intentions of unmarried women, few studies have reported that family-friendly policies have negative consequences on childbirth intention. The relationship between support-related family-friendly policies and childbirth is not consistent [10],[11],[12],[13],[14]. The reason why the policy effectiveness of the family-friendly system is inconsistent is analyzed as the result of analyzing the direct effects of the policy and the results of the research that cannot consider the policy effects and the psychological effects mediating it [15]. In particular, Min Yeo-kyung and Lee Myung-seok interpreted the reasons why women's work environment and family environment had a negative impact on the birth rate as a lack of perspective as a woman, not a mother, as a family-friendly system [16]. In other words, it provides an environment for childbirth and childcare based on the improved family-friendly system, but it has limitations in reducing the burden of women such as interruption of career due to childbirth, childbirth and childcare, and domestic labor. On the other hand, when the family and social support sharing the psychological stress and childcare burden of the woman shows satisfactory results, a positive attitude toward the birth of the woman is formed. Therefore, it is reasonable to examine the psychological and environmental factors of women in a complex way.

Therefore, this study examines the effectiveness of the policy by examining the direct relationship between the family - friendly system of the corporation and the intention to give birth to women. In addition, we examine the mediating effect of family life satisfaction on the relationship between family - friendly policy and the intention to give birth to women

3. Method

3.1. Study Subjects and Data Collection

This study is done from May 1, 2017. to May 16, 2017. subjects are from 19 to 45 years old, who lives in Jeollabuk - do. It is done though the housewives' online communities in Jeollabuk – do. It has been explained the purpose of this survey and asked the women to fill out the online form and survey questionnaire. We have distributed 401 surveys online and asked to be responded directly to the surveys by self-enrolling. 251 copies were used for the final analysis, we have excluded the people that did not answer the questions carefully

3.2. Analysis Method

The data collected in this study were analyzed using SPSS 20.0 and Amos 20.0. First, to analyze the demographic characteristics and characteristics of the variables, descriptive statics statistics were conducted. Second, to verify the construct validity of the scale, exploratory factor analysis was utilized, and then confirmatory factor analysis was performed to verify the measurement model. Finally, structural equation model analysis was employed to confirm the fit of the research model and to verify the research hypothesis.

4. Results

4.1. Characteristics of Study Subjects

Table. 1 Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

Variables	Max	Min	Average	SD	skewness	kurtosis
Relationship between Family-friendly Policy	0	115	41.56	20.68	1.031	1.076
Parenting stress	11.0	59.00	29.25	7.99	.071	-.123
Marriage feet	10.0	50.0	33.89	8.20	-.220	265
Husband's child care	6.0	30.0	20.88	5.05	-.288	.128
Additional maternity intent	2.0	12.0	4.80	2.41	.995	.074
Number of children	0	5.0	2.16	.775	.378	.723

4.2 Measurement Model, Structural Model Analysis

The fit of the measurement model showed a good fitness level of $\chi 2 = 21.997$ (df = 17), p = .185, CFI = .992, GFI = .979, TLI = .987 and RMSEA = .034. The factor loadings of the variables that measure latent factors were found to be .395 ~ .933, and all of them were significant.

Table. 2 Measurement model

Factors	Measurement variable	Estimate		SE	CR
		B	β		
Relationship between Family-friendly Policy	Family Friendly Work Culture	1	.768		
	Flexible Work Scheme	1.040	.801	.081	12.789***
	Childbirth and Childcare Support	1.275	.905	.096	13.307***
Family Life Satisfaction	Parenting stress	1	.395		
	Husband's child care	1.866	.649	.328	5.683***
	Marriage satisfaction	2.616	.933	.520	5.033***
Additional Birth Intention	Number of children	1	.667		
	Additional maternity intent	3.935	.842	1.024	3.844***

$\chi^2=21.997$(df=17), p=.185, CFI=.992, GFI=.979, TLI=.987, RMSEA=.034, ***p<.001

4.3. Path coefficients and model fit of structural models

The relationship between family-friendly policies and the intention to give birth to children is not statistically significant (C. R = -. 088, p = .930). Family-friendly policies do not affect the intention to give birth. However, the path toward family life satisfaction was statistically significant (C. R = 2.713, p <.05). The higher the degree of family-friendly policy, the higher the satisfaction of family life. The relationship between family life satisfaction and childbirth

intention was also statistically significant (C.R = 2.954, p <.01), indicating that the higher the family life satisfaction, the higher the childbirth intention.

Table. 3 The Results of Structural Equation Modeling

Route	Estimate		SE	CR
	B	β		
Relationship between Family-friendly Policy→Additional Birth Intention	-.005	-.007	.053	-.088
Relationship between Family-friendly Policy →Family Life Satisfaction	.087	.224	.032	2.713*
Family Life Satisfaction→Additional Birth Intention	.591	200	0.53	2.954**

$χ^2$=21.997(df=17), p=.185, CFI=.992, GFI=.979, TLI=.987, RMSEA=.034, ***p<.001

5. Conclusion and Implications

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the family - friendly policy and how it applied to women of childbearing age and the childbirth intention and to verify the mediating effect of family life satisfaction. The results of the analysis were as follows: Family - friendly policies applied to women of childbearing age, child - birth intentions, and family life satisfaction.

First, we cannot conclude the hypothesis that 'the higher the family - friendly policy is, the higher the inclination of childbirth.' These results support the research of Lee, Ju-young and Park, Jae-wan [15] that the intervention effectiveness of the 'family-friendly policy' does not report consistent results as revealed in previous studies. It can be understood that the policy intervention cannot have any influence on a person's private life and complicated decision making.

Second, it is proven that at a childbearing age, women with an increased family life the 'family - friendly policy' level is also increased. In other words, as the level of family affinity for women increases than the utilization of the 'family friendly system' is proven to performed well. The increase of support for childbirth and child care has positively encourage the life satisfaction of the family, which leads to reduce the stress level of parenting and increases the satisfaction of family life.

Third, family - friendly policies have positive effects on childbirth intention through mediation of family life satisfaction. Although the 'family-friendly policy' does not directly affect the child-birth intentions, it is shown that the higher the level of 'family-friendly policies' is, the higher the family life satisfaction will be, which than increases the child's intention to give birth.

The suggestions based on the results of the analysis are as follows.

First, it is necessary to change the social atmosphere and social consciousness of utilization of the system, to increase the intention of childbirth and birth rate, by securing the policy effectiveness of the 'family - friendly policy'.

Second, the assumption that the 'family - friendly policy' reaches the goal of increasing the intention to give birth is not as simple as it was said to be. However, family relationship condition plays a very important role. Family relations such as the family relationship condition and the psychological condition is confirmed. Therefore, the male plays an important role on marital satisfaction, and male participation in childcare has a positive effect for women. This

positive psychology effect is likely to lead to an improvement in the marital relationship. Therefore, the consideration for men to participate on child care and housework activities also the improvement of social recognition system is crucially needed. Third, a structural design is needed for the social to contribute to a family responsibility and caring, in which the sharing of child care and housework depending on the resources the family can afford.

Fourth, because it is necessary to develop and apply an active program to emphasize the family life satisfaction, it than needs to provide learning opportunities for married couples to learn relationship skills and marriage life through counseling and married couple education support of advance married couples, It is necessary to build a support system that can cope with changes in the family life cycle.

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