

# Factors Contributing to Childbearing Intentions of Married Working Women in Korea

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## Abstract

*This study explores the factors contributing to childbearing intentions among married working women in Korea. Using the 2012 National Survey on Fertility and Families of Korea, a total of 1,408 respondents were selected based on marriage, work and age. By conducting a logistic hierarchical analysis, the study examines the relationships between economic, social and psychological factors and childbearing intentions based on three parities: women with no children, one child and two or more children. Findings show that age, income level and childcare shared with spouses were determinants of married working women's childbearing intentions. Also, findings indicate that government support for childcare significantly influences married working women's future childbirth intentions, while marital satisfaction serves as a mediator between various factors and married working women's childbearing intentions. Findings suggest that gender inequality should be addressed in both the labor market and the domestic sphere to encourage married working women to start families. Also, public childcare support should be expanded and diversified according to the needs of married working women since it may have a positive effect on their childbearing intentions.*

## Keywords

*Childbearing intentions; married women; gender inequality; child care; logistic regression analysis*

## Introduction

Increasing the nation's fertility rate has been a priority for Korea since 1996 when the government started to recognize the seriousness of prolonged low fertility rates. However, despite numerous efforts to implement improved policies, the country's total fertility rate (TFR) has continuously declined for the last two decades. According to Statistics Korea (2016), the population of Korea is expected to reach its peak by 2030 and sharply drop to half of the current population by 2060 under the current rate (TFR=1.19, 2016). Demographic Transition Model (DTM) has been used to explain a nation's population transition in terms of both birth rate and death rate

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associated with social and economic development over time. When compared to DTM, Korea is considered to be in Stage 4 and faced with a critical situation of a shrinking population, which may lead to various social and economic issues.

A recent study (Kim & Jeon, 2015) noted that Korea's fertility rate has changed over the years reflecting the DTM. In 1970, Korea's TFR was 4.5, but by 1984, it dropped well below the replacement level to 1.74 under the influence of a governmental population control policy. After a relatively stable period between the 1980s and early 1990s, Korea's TFR started to drop again, reaching its lowest fertility of below 1.2 in 2003, and has the downturn trend has not changed since. Given the trend, it is likely that Korea will face an overall population decline within a decade.

The prolonged low fertility rate and the dire forecast of a shrinking population in Korea indicate an urgent need for an empirical assessment of low fertility rate and childbearing intentions that can be used to develop policies promoting healthy population growth. While a growing body of literature on fertility of developed countries exists, little is known about the prolonged low fertility experienced in Korea. Accordingly, this study examines factors contributing to childbearing intentions among married working women in Korea based on data from the 2012 National Fertility, Family Health and Welfare Survey. The research team used logistic hierarchical analysis on variables reflecting the social, economic and psychological situations of the women participating in the survey. Previous studies were reviewed related to the following issues to draw meaningful factors of childbearing intentions for the logistic hierarchical analysis.

## **Cause of Low Fertility in Korea**

Becker (1985) was interested in how women's economic activity becomes a major cause of low fertility. He presented the view that balancing work and childbearing is difficult for woman in a social structure that assigns the responsibility of both childcare and housework to women. Lutz (2006) hypothesized that the reason that countries with similar economic development levels vary by fertility rate is because of differences in social structure, gender equality and family values. Among developed countries, Germany and Japan still show low levels of fertility after heavy investments and support for childcare and family policies because they still have paternalistic social systems that hinder women from raising children while pursuing economic and social progress. Meanwhile, McDonald (2000) further examined family values and cultural factors to explain low fertility among Asian countries where institutional inequality is strongly maintained in the family domain, even when gender equality is realized in the labor market and public education.

Considering the cause of low fertility in Korea in reference to these studies, it is important to note that low fertility among married working women is not only involved with economic factors, such as women's increased participation in economic activity and increased income, but it also relates to the fact that the labor market and institutions are not changing proactively to accept the current values and behaviors of married working women. Work-life balance among Korean women has become as important as marriage childbearing in their life cycle, deepening inequality in the labor market as well as at home making women delay marriage and childbearing or choose to live childless (Jang, Kim, Lee, Kim & Jang, 2002). This may perpetuate low fertility and imply that future childbearing encouragement policies should take into account the changed values and behaviors of married working women.

### **Childbearing Intentions of Married Working Women in Korea**

Childbearing intentions is the most important variable of childbearing, while common factors such as parity and marital status are significant variables of childbearing behavior. Childbirth is not an event that happens instantly but is a follow-up action taken when the desire to have a child is met (Jeon, 2012). Intentions and desire must exist prior to taking the action of actual childbearing (Park, 2009). Quesnel-Vallée and Morgan (2003) analyzed whether childbearing intentions surveyed in 1982 corresponded to the observed parity in 2000. They found that both women and men had similar number of children as they had intended in the past. However, women who were unmarried or were married but childless at the time of the first survey in 1982 had fewer children than intended by the year 2000.

Schoen, Astone, Kim, Nathanson and Fields (1999) also found in their four-year observation study that, while there are considerable discrepancies between childbearing intentions and actual childbearing, childbearing intentions adequately predicts actual childbearing behavior when certainty of childbearing intentions and demographic variables are controlled. Spéder and Kapitány (2009)'s Hungarian study also found that, while there are some discrepancies between intended fertility and actual fertility, age, parity and type of partnership (i.e., whether there is a spouse or partner) are important influencing factors for realizing childbearing intentions.

## Gender Roles

Traditional attitudes to gender roles in Korea assign women complete responsibility for housework and childcare. Although women's role in the labor market has expanded with growing egalitarian awareness, gender role ideology has remained contradicting when it comes to women's role in childrearing (Baik, 2009). Attitudes towards a married working woman may be rather flexible, expecting her spouse to share house chores, but her spouse's failure to live up to the expectation may lead to decreased marital satisfaction (Lee, 1997), and reluctance to childbearing. Several studies found that there is a relationship between attitudes regarding women's gender roles and marital satisfaction or childbearing intentions since married non-working women with traditional attitudes regarding gender roles have higher marital satisfaction (Park, 1983) compared to married working women, who manage a positive marital relationship when traditional attitudes towards gender roles are moderated (Cho, et.al., Yoon, 2006; Kim, 1990; Lee, 2002; Park, 2009). It is ironic that, despite the growth of women's status in the public domain, married working women are still forced to fulfill their role of full-time housekeeper in the private domain. Given the situation, it is hypothesized that women who adhere more to the traditional attitudes regarding gender roles have less conflict between work and housework, which may influence their satisfaction for spouse and marriage as well as their childbearing intentions in positive ways.

## Economic Conditions

The relationship between women's economic activity and fertility rate is not linear. Rather, it has changed in terms of direction and strength: a negative relationship was found until the mid-1980s, whereas a positive association was found since the 1990s (Lee, 2011). This is due to the complexity of the relationship between work and childbearing. In fact, multiple studies concluded that the institutional characteristics of employers and governmental labor market policies have positive effects on working women's childbearing intentions (Jang, 2015; Kim, 2006; Kim & Jeon, 2015; Lee & Choi, 2012). According to previous research, workers in the public sector with job security and women with full-time status were more likely to have children compared to workers in the private sector and women without job tenure. Unstable employment conditions for married working women create anxiety about supporting oneself, let alone children. This anxiety negatively affects childbearing intentions and eventually leads to low fertility within society at large.

## Family Values

Lee and Choi (2010) found that there is a positive relationship between young women's childbearing intentions and the marital relationship of their parents and siblings, as well as their satisfaction with family members. In Jeong's study (2006) on professional women, future childbearing plans were found to be influenced not only by economic factors, but also by religion, value of children and other social factors. Although income and greater government support for childcare may encourage women's desire for having a child, what influences women's childbearing intentions more strongly are their social interactions resulting from their relationships with other individuals, family members and their surrounding environment (Kong & Um, 2016; Kwon, 2014; Lee, 2008; Park, 2008).

## Socio-Psychological Factors

According to Parr's study (2010) that examined factors leading to subsequent fertility in Australia, overall life satisfaction has a positive effect on fertility. In a study on childbearing behavior in Germany, findings showed that individual subjective wellbeing positively predicts childbearing of the second child (Le Moglie, Mencarini & Rapallini, 2015). Similarly, Lee and Choi (2012) analyzed married working women's conflict between family satisfaction and childbearing plans, and discovered that women's marital satisfaction is affected when they are faced with conflict in balancing work and family. Consequently, unhappy wives were less likely to plan for an additional child. An international comparative study found a similar result. Jeong & Choi (2013) used data of OECD countries and examined the relationship between fertility and life satisfaction among women of childbearing age. The study reported that there is no clear association between the level of life satisfaction and fertility rate. However, the life satisfaction of the age group between 35 and 49 was found to be significant in explaining medium-level fertility rate. The study suggested that social policies including family allowance and child support can affect a nation's fertility rate as it mediates the relationship between fertility and levels of life satisfaction.

In summary, previous studies reveal four major factors influencing women's childbearing intentions: (1) traditional gender roles, (2) economic conditions (income and work position), (3) family values and (4) social psychological factors. Using a set of variables retrieved from the literature, this study examines the following three points through logistic regression analysis: what factors contribute to married working women's fertility and childbearing intentions; how economic factors such as income and work status or social and family values affect childbearing intentions of married working women; and whether spousal satisfaction, a psychological perspective variable, serve as a mediator between independent variables and future childbearing intentions.

## Method of Study

### Study Subjects

This study was a secondary analysis based on data from the 2012 National Fertility, Family Health and Welfare Survey conducted by Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs (KIHASA). The survey was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board within KIHASA. The 2012 Survey was conducted by probabilistic, multistage clustered sampling techniques. From the original data set including 11,009 participants, a total of 1,408 women were selected for this study based on three criteria: (1) marriage status (married), (2) working status (currently working) and (3) age (between 15 and 49).

### Measurements

This study examines variables from economic factors, family support and values, and psychological factors that are expected to influence future childbearing intentions of the study subjects. Income and work position were included as economic factors. Family support is measured by the respondent's perception of level of support for childbearing and childcare (government support, workplace support). Attitude about gender roles (such as spouse's participation and sharing of housework, aspects of housework assistance, aspects related to children) and psychological factors (marital satisfaction) are measured as family value factors. Hence, variables measured in this study include one dependent variable and groups of independent variables.

First, regarding demographic factors, variables consisted of age, level of education, income and work position. Variables such as age and education level were converted into categorical variables since they are used in the logistic regression analysis for the proposed model testing. For instance, age was divided into four ranges; 'ages  $\leq 29$ ', ' $30 \leq \text{age} \leq 34$ ', ' $35 \leq \text{age} \leq 39$ ', and ' $40 \leq \text{age} \leq 44$ ' while education level is divided into two groups: women who graduated from two-year colleges or lower level educational institutions and women who graduated from four-year universities or higher level of educational institutions. Based on a self-reported survey which asked for respondents' average monthly household income before tax deduction, income was divided into three ranges; 'income  $\leq 3$  million won', ' $3 \text{ million won} < \text{income} \leq 5 \text{ million won}$ ', and ' $5 \text{ million won} < \text{income}$ '. Work position is categorized into three groups: full-time job referring to regular employees; part-time job including temporary or daily employees; and self-employed workers including employers, owner-operators, or women working for family-operated business.

Second, level of support for childbearing and childcare was measured by the level of support from the government and the workplace. Third, gender roles were measured by the level of spouse (husband) sharing six types of housework: cooking, dish-washing, laundry, grocery shopping, house cleaning, and other household chores. Fourth, housework assistance was measured by help from husband's mother (mother-in-law) and help from mother.

## **Method of Analysis**

Data collected for this study were statistically analyzed using the SPSS 20.0 program. First, descriptive statistical analysis and frequency analysis were conducted to understand the general characteristics of the subjects. Second, correlation analysis was conducted between related variables. Lastly, logistic regression analysis was performed to determine the relationships between independent variables and the dependent variable to see how these hypothesized factors influence future childbearing intentions. Variables that have influence over future childbearing intentions were confirmed through correlation analysis. Based on three parities (0, 1 and 2 or more children), the influence of each variable was verified with an analysis model with independent variables such as social and family factor variables (Model I), and with another analysis model constructed with marital satisfaction included in addition to social and family factor variables (Model II).

## Results

General socio-demographic characteristics of the subjects are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Explanation	Frequency (%) Mean (Median)	Standard Deviation
Age	15- 29	141 (10)	0.98
	30-34	322 (22.9)	
	35-39	450 (32)	
	40-44	495 (35.2)	
	Central Tendency	29.2 (30)	
Income	Annual household income	2.19 (2.0)	0.67
Educational level	University (four years) and more	662 (47)	
Work position	Full time	835 (59.3)	
	Part time	312 (22.2)	
	Self-employed	261 (18.5)	
Help with housework from mother	Received	1,200	85.2%
Help with housework from mother-in-law	Received	1,019	72.4%
Current number of children	No children	146	27.6%
	One child	316	22.4%
	Two or more children	946	67.2%
Level of government support		1.72 (2.0)	0.52
Level of workplace support		1.74 (2.0)	0.48
Sharing housework (Chronbach 0.881)		3.92	0.76
Marital satisfaction	2.16	0.72	1,408 (n)
Childbearing intentions (Dependent variable)	I will have a child	279 (19.8)	1,129 (80.2)
	I will not have a child		



## **1. Correlation Analysis of Variables that Influence Future Childbearing Intentions**

Prior to conducting a logistic regression analysis, Pearson correlation coefficients were confirmed to identify collinearity between the independent variables and future childbearing intentions. As shown in Table 2, age, educational level, work position, all gender role factors, spousal satisfaction and current number of children had statistically significant correlation with childbearing intentions. Average monthly income, perceptions toward government and workplace support, and help from mother-in-law also significantly correlated with childbearing intentions. Respondents were more likely to have children when they thought the government and the workplace should completely support childbearing and when their husbands were more involved in sharing housework. Also, women were likely to show childbearing intentions when they had higher spousal satisfaction. Except for level of education and help from mother-in-law, all other variables showed positive correlation with childbearing intentions.

## **2. Variables Influencing Married Working Women's Future Childbearing Intentions (no children)**

Based on the subject group with no children (1. number of children: 0, 2. Number of children: 1 or more), the influence of each variable over future childbearing intentions was analyzed with Model I and Model II. Results are shown in Table 3. In Model I, age and current number of children (0) showed significant outcomes ( $p < 0.001$ ). Job position was found to be significant ( $p < 0.01$ ), while level of government support, educational level and help with housework (from mother-in-law or mother) were also found to be significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). In other words, married working women were more likely to say they will have children when they are younger, but were more likely to say they will not have children when they have lower educational level and hold part-time jobs or are self-employed. In addition, they were more likely to say they will have children when the level of government support for childbearing and childcare is higher. In terms of housework assistance, women were more likely to say they will have children when both mother-in-law and mother provided more help with housework. These variables indicated a success rate of 89.1 percent in predicting future childbearing intentions.

Factors Contributing to Childbearing

**Table 2:** Correlation between measurement variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1	1																
2	0.31***	1															
3	-0.128***	-0.056*	1														
4	0.053*	0.069**	-0.019	1													
5	0.140***	0.055*	-0.071**	0.008	1												
6	0.092**	0.037	-0.014	-0.042	-0.019	1											
7	0.078**	0.023	-0.055*	-0.004	0.034	0.511**	1										
8	0.145***	0.064*	-0.069**	0.023	0.083**	-0.001	0.003	1									
9	0.192***	0.076**	-0.113***	-0.012	0.146***	0.028	0.018	0.654***	1								
10	0.221***	0.083**	-0.082**	0.001	0.139***	0.040	0.009	0.570***	0.656***	1							
11	0.189***	0.079**	-0.103***	-0.009	0.062*	0.059*	0.037	0.507***	0.522***	0.542***	1						
12	0.222***	0.098***	-0.117***	0.001	0.117***	0.045	0.048	0.448***	0.566***	0.604***	0.607***	1					
13	0.192***	0.082**	-0.108***	0.028	0.084**	0.027	0.019	0.520***	0.580***	0.587***	0.627***	0.682***	1				
14	-0.054*	0.020	0.017	-0.012	-0.029	-0.037	-0.071**	0.019	-0.022	-0.082**	0.007	-0.063*	-0.093**	1			
15	-0.051	0.003	0.150***	-0.040	-0.048	-0.073**	-0.053*	0.027	-0.064*	-0.062*	-0.043	-0.057*	-0.098***	0.387***	1		
16	0.232***	0.095***	-0.176***	0.021	0.094***	0.038	0.014	0.214***	0.263***	0.257***	0.291***	0.294***	0.281***	-0.026	-0.031	1	
17	0.716***	0.429***	-0.125***	0.051	0.131***	0.038	0.038	0.117***	0.181***	0.209***	0.205***	0.228***	0.193***	0.014	-0.035	0.236***	1

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

1=Childbearing intentions, 2=Age, 3=Educational level, 4=Average monthly income, 5=Work position, 6=Level of government support, 7=Level of workplace support, 8=Cooking (Preparing meal), 9=Dish-washing, 10=Laundry, 11=Grocery shopping, 12=House cleaning, 13=Other housework, 14=Help from mother-in-law, 15=Help from mother, 16=Spousal satisfaction, 17=Current number of children

In Model II, age and number of children were found to have the strongest influences on future childbearing intentions with statistically significant outcomes ( $p < 0.001$ ). Educational level, job status and housework assistance were found to have significant influence ( $p < 0.05$ ). Different from Model I, level of government support was found to be insignificant, while the newly added variable of spousal satisfaction was found to be significant in explaining future childbearing intentions ( $p < 0.05$ ). This corresponds to the multiple regression analysis presented earlier indicating that level of government support for childbearing and childcare is not correlated with spousal satisfaction.

According to Model II, married working women were more likely to say they will have children when they are younger, have higher levels of education, work as regular employees, receive more help from their mother-in-law as well as their mothers, currently have no children, and have higher spousal satisfaction. These variables indicated a success rate of 89.0 percent in predicting future childbearing intentions, which is slightly lower than the success rate in Model I. In conclusion, variables that have influence over future childbearing intentions were age, level of education, work position, housework assistance and current number of children. In accordance with previous studies, findings from this study showed that these variables are factors determining future childbearing intentions. It was found, however, that spousal satisfaction does not serve a mediating role in predicting future childbearing intentions since the prediction success rate dropped in Model II when spousal satisfaction variable was included. It appears that gender role factors do not have significant influence over future childbearing intentions, since they mainly influence spousal satisfaction, which does not serve as a mediator when there was no child in the household.

**Table 3:** Regression Analysis of Determinants of Childbearing Intentions When There is No Child in the Household (N=1,408)

Dependent Variable		Childbearing Intentions		I will have a child=0	
				I will not have a child=1	
Explanatory Variable		Model I		Model II	
		B (S.E.)		B (S.E.)	
Constant		-10.00***	-1.07	-10.17***	1.08
Demographic factors	Age	0.43***	0.09	0.43***	0.09
	Educational level	-0.43*	0.18	-0.37*	0.18
	Income	0.06	0.13	0.05	0.13
	Work position	0.33**	0.13	0.32*	0.13
Childbearing and childcare support recognition factor	Level of government support	0.40*	0.20	0.39	0.20
	Level of workplace support	0.17	0.21	0.16	0.21
Gender role factors	Cooking	0.23	0.16	0.22	0.16
	Washing dishes	0.02	0.16	0.01	0.16
	Laundry	0.23	0.15	0.22	0.15
	Grocery shopping	0.04	0.16	0.03	0.16
	Cleaning	0.07	0.16	0.04	0.16
	Other housework	0.05	0.18	0.04	0.18
Housework help factors	Help with housework from mother-in-law	-0.56*	0.24	-0.54*	0.24
	Help with housework from mother	-0.42*	0.21	-0.43*	0.21
Child-related factor	Current number of children (0)	4.29***	0.35	4.21***	0.35
Parameter	Marital satisfaction			0.29*	0.14

**Table 3:** Regression Analysis of Determinants of Childbearing Intentions When There is No Child in the Household (N=1,408)

Dependent Variable	Childbearing Intentions	I will have a child=0
		I will not have a child=1
Explanatory Variable	Model I	Model II
	B (S.E.)	B (S.E.)
Prediction success rate	89.1%	89.0%
-2LL	872.169	867.880
Chi-Square	529.725	534.015
Degrees of freedom	15	16

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

### 3. Variables Influencing Married Working Women's Future Childbearing Intentions (one child)

Based on the group of subjects with one child (1. number of children: 1, 2. Number of children: 0 or 2 or more), the influence of each variable over future childbearing intentions was analyzed with Model I and Model II. Results are shown in Table 4. In Model I, age, work position, perception of level of government support and current number of children (1) indicated statistically significant outcomes ( $p < 0.001$ ). Educational level and husband sharing the housework of cleaning were found to be significant ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $p < 0.05$  respectively). In other words, married working women were more likely to say they will have children in the future when they are younger, have higher educational levels, hold full-time jobs, consider that the level of government support for childbearing and childcare is high, house cleaning is shared by spouse or currently have one child. Unlike the results in Model I based on no current child, gender role factors had influence over future childbearing intentions, while help with housework from mother-in-law or mother did not. Model I indicated a success rate of 80.6% in explaining future childbearing intentions.

In Model II, age and current number of children (1) were found to be the greatest determinants of future childbearing intentions with statistical significance ( $p < 0.001$ ). Next, work position showed significant influence over future childbearing intentions ( $p < 0.01$ ), while educational level and perception toward the level of government support for childbearing and childcare were significantly influential ( $p < 0.05$ ). Compared to Model I results, significance level decreased for these three variables. In addition, unlike Model I results, doing laundry was found to be significantly

influential ( $p < 0.05$ ). The newly entered spousal satisfaction variable also served as an important determinant of future childbearing intentions ( $p < 0.001$ ) along with age and current number of children (1). According to Model II results, married working women were likely to say they will have children in the future when they are younger, have higher educational levels, hold full-time jobs, consider that the level of government support for childbearing and childcare should be expanded, share laundry responsibilities with their spouses, currently have one child or have higher spousal satisfaction. These variables indicated a success rate of 83.0 percent in predicting future childbearing intentions, which is higher than the success rate in Model I.

In conclusion, variables that have influence over future childbearing intentions were age, educational level, work position, level of government support, gender role factors, current number of children and spousal satisfaction. Noteworthy in this logistic regression analysis based on one current child is that the spousal satisfaction variable served as a mediator. This can be explained by the increase of prediction success rate from 80.6 percent in Model I to 83.0 percent in Model II.

**Table 4:** Regression Analysis of Determinants of Childbearing Intentions When There is One Child in the Household (N=1,408)

Dependent Variable		Childbearing Intentions		I will have a child=0	
				I will not have a child=1	
Explanatory Variable		Model I		Model II	
		B (S.E.)		B (S.E.)	
Constant		-5.99***	0.83	-6.74***	0.86
Demographic factors	Age	0.67***	0.08	0.66***	0.08
	Educational level	-0.45**	0.15	-0.33*	0.16
	Income	0.18	0.11	0.17	0.11
	Work position	0.38***	0.11	0.35**	0.11
Childbearing and childcare support recognition factor	Level of government support	0.39***	0.17	0.37*	0.17
	Level of workplace support	0.09	0.18	0.08	0.18
Gender role factors	Cooking	-0.07	0.13	-0.08	0.13
	Washing dishes	0.09	0.13	0.07	0.13
	Laundry	0.27	0.12	0.24*	0.12
	Grocery shopping	0.17	0.14	0.13	0.14
	Cleaning	0.25*	0.13	0.20	0.13
	Other housework	0.04	0.15	0.02	0.15

**Table 4:** Regression Analysis of Determinants of Childbearing Intentions When There is One Child in the Household (N=1,408)

Dependent Variable		Childbearing Intentions		I will have a child=0	
				I will not have a child=1	
Explanatory Variable		Model I		Model II	
		B (S.E.)		B (S.E.)	
Housework help factors	Help with housework from mother-in-law	-0.33	0.22	-0.29	0.22
	Help with housework from mother	0.20	0.19	0.21	0.19
Child-related factor	Current number of children (1)	1.03***	0.16	1.08***	0.17
Parameter	Marital satisfaction			0.63***	0.12
<b>Prediction success rate</b>		80.6%		83.0%	
-2LL		1120.921		1092.671	
Chi-Square		280.974		309.223	
Degrees of freedom		15		16	

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

#### 4. Variables Influencing Married Working Women's Future Childbearing Intentions (two or more children)

Based on the group of subjects with two or more children (1. number of children: 2 or more, 2. number of children: 1 or less), the influence of each variable over future childbearing intentions was analyzed with Model I and Model II. Results are shown in Table 5. In Model I, current number of children (2 or more) was statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). Age, educational level, work position, level of government support and help with housework from mother-in-law showed significant influence over future childbearing intentions ( $p < 0.05$ ). In other words, married working women were likely to say they will have children in the future when they are younger, have higher educational levels, hold full-time jobs, think that the level of government support for childbearing and childcare should be higher, receive more help with housework from their mothers-in-law, or currently have one or no children. Model I showed a success rate of 87.4 percent in predicting future childbearing intentions.

In Model II, current number of children (2 or more) was found to be the greatest determinant of future childbearing intentions ( $p < 0.001$ ). Age, work position, perception of level of government support and level of help with housework from mother-in-law showed significant influence over future childbearing intentions ( $p < 0.05$ ). According to Model II, married working women were likely to say they will have children in the future when they are younger, hold full-time jobs, think that the level of government support for childbearing and childcare should be higher, receive more help with housework from mother-in-law, currently have one or no children or have higher spousal satisfaction. These variables had a success rate of 88.8 percent in predicting future childbearing intentions, showing an increase of prediction success rate from Model I.

In conclusion, in Models I and II based on two or more current children, variables that have influence over future childbearing intentions were age, educational level, work position, level of help with housework from mother-in-law, current number of children and spousal satisfaction. Corresponding to the result from the analysis based on one current child, the result from the logistic regression analysis based on two or more current children showed that the spousal satisfaction variable serves a mediating role. This is explained by the increase of prediction success rate from 87.4 percent in Model I to 88.2 percent in Model II.

**Table 5:** Regression Analysis of Determinants of Childbearing Intentions When There are Two or More Children in the Household (N=1,408)

Dependent variable		Childbearing Intentions	I will have a child=0		
			I will not have a child = 1		
Explanatory variable		Model I		Model II	
		B (S.E.)		B (S.E.)	
Constant		3.47**	1.04	2.87**	1.05
Demographic factors	Age	0.22*	0.09	0.20*	0.09
	Educational level	-0.37*	0.19	-0.25	0.19
	Income	0.14	0.13	0.14	0.14
	Work position	0.27*	0.13	0.25*	0.13
Childbearing and childcare support recognition factor	Level of government support	0.53*	0.20	0.50*	0.20
	Level of workplace support	0.13	0.21	0.13	0.22



**Table 5:** Regression Analysis of Determinants of Childbearing Intentions When There are Two or More Children in the Household (N=1,408)

Dependent variable		Childbearing Intentions		I will have a child=0 I will not have a child = 1	
Explanatory variable		Model I		Model II	
		B (S.E.)		B (S.E.)	
Gender role factors	Cooking	0.03	0.16	0.02	0.16
	Washing dishes	0.08	0.16	0.06	0.16
	Laundry	0.25	0.15	0.25	0.15
	Grocery shopping	0.02	0.17	-0.02	0.17
	Cleaning	0.20	0.16	0.12	0.17
	Other housework	-0.03	0.18	-0.03	0.18
Housework help factors	Help with housework from mother-in-law	-0.59*	0.27	-0.57*	0.27
	Help with housework from mother	0.38	0.22	0.39	0.22
Child-related factor	Current number of children (2)	-3.68***	0.25	-3.67***	0.25
Parameter	Marital satisfaction			0.49**	0.14
<b>Prediction success rate</b>		87.4%		88.2%	
-2LL		787.548		775.192	
Chi-Square		614.347		626.703	
Degrees of freedom		15		16	

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

## Discussion and Conclusion

The most significant finding from this study is that childbearing intentions among married working women is likely to increase when they are younger, have attained higher education and hold full-time jobs in the labor market. Importantly, future childbearing intentions of married working women with two or more children is likely to increase when they receive complete government support for childbearing and childcare. These findings imply that both governmental support for childcare

and workplace support for married women may have strong influences on married working women's decision to have additional children. Findings also suggest that marital satisfaction along with husband's active involvement in sharing housework have meaningful associations with married working women's future childbearing intentions. It should also be noted that the marital satisfaction serves as a mediator when married working women currently have one or more children, which was confirmed by the increased prediction success rate when the marital satisfaction variable is introduced in the model.

Findings from this study correspond to results of previous studies (Kong & Um, 2006; Lee, 2007; Lee & Choi, 2012) in that gender roles play a significant part in marital satisfaction. The increase of prediction success rate from including spousal satisfaction in the analysis model for women with one child and those with two or more children support research by Lee and Choi (2012). Overall, findings from the present study confirm that factors of childbearing intentions that have been discussed in previous studies and theories – including age, educational level, perception toward level of government support for childbirth and childcare, gender role attitude, current number of children and spousal satisfaction – have statistically significant influence on future childbearing intentions of married working women. These findings coincide with study results by Lee and Choi (2012) and Kong and Um (2006). Meanwhile, this study suggests that income does not influence spousal satisfaction nor future childbirth intentions. This finding does not correspond to results from previous studies and the theory of differential fertility. This may be attributed to the way income was divided for this study.

Based on these findings, the following suggestions are made for the development of interventions or policies encouraging childbirth: First, couple counseling or family empowerment programs that will contribute to the improvement of marital satisfaction are recommended. It is also important to build a social environment that encourages men and women to equally share housework and childcare, and help husbands effectively increase their level of sharing housework. Such an environment is possible only when the working environment of both men and women change to support equal sharing of housework and childcare. Maternity leave and childcare leave exist within the current employment system, but women primarily use them. Moreover, the full term of maternity or childcare leave approved by law is rarely used by women except for those working at public institutions or as government employees. Although childcare leave is available for men as well, it is reported that the percentage of men taking childcare leave is remarkably low.

Second, it is necessary to implement policies that are designed to meet specific household needs based on current number of children. The Ministry of Social Welfare of Korea recently adopted a system that supports public childcare based on actual needs of parents. The system gives parents more choices in time and types of services. However, since this individualized childcare system is in an introductory stage, more empirical studies on maximizing childcare satisfaction are necessary.

In order to raise the fertility rate at a national level, various and differentiated approaches are required of each household depending on their current number of children. For instance, households without children may have greater interest and needs for economic support, thus making the offering of cash allowances a more effective means for promoting childbearing intentions. Households with children, on the other hand, might benefit from increased childcare and spousal support. Lastly, given that childbearing intentions is positively influenced by how married working women think the government should support childbearing and childcare, a family empowerment policy should be implemented. While it is important to support families that plan for multiple children, it is more important to focus on a policy that creates a supportive environment for married couples with no children or only one child.

This study is significant in that it presents empirical evidence for understanding childbearing intentions among married working women in Korea, and thus contributes to the development of improved policies that may lead to healthy population growth. An analysis based on three parities particularly offers an in-depth understanding on how women differ in their needs for childcare support or childbearing intentions. Based on this study, the importance of government support for childcare and family-friendly workplace environments can be realized through more effective and diversified policies at the national level. However, this study does have a few limitations in terms of methodology. First, data used for the analyses was a selective part of the original survey. Due to the nature of the secondary data analysis, generalizability of the study findings are limited. Next, results from this study indicate that income does not influence spousal satisfaction or future childbirth intentions, which contradicts the literature. Acknowledging that this may be involved with the way income was divided into three ranges for analysis, further examination is called for to verify the effect of income on childbearing intentions. Another subject recommended for further research is how and why housework assistance from mothers-in-law and mothers affect the childbearing intentions of married working women differently. According to the regression model testing based on parity 1 and 2, housework help from mothers-in-law had a negative effect on women's childbearing intentions, while assistance from mother indicated a positive effect. On the other hand, according to the regression model testing based on parity 0, assistance from both mothers-in-law and mothers showed negative effects on children intentions. These findings may be attributed to Korean family culture, the differing levels of stress married working women feel when getting help from their mothers-in-law vs. their mothers, and how that stress might differ by the women's age. A more in-depth analysis might offer some valuable insights into childbearing intentions of married women in Korea. In addition, examining factors on childbearing intentions among unmarried, co-ed or young couples in long-term relationships is recommended for future studies since these couples often indefinitely postpone marriage and childbearing due to employment instability, low paying jobs and lack of family and social support.

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