

The Effects of Satisfaction with government policies on the Perception of Childbirth and Childrearing among South Korea Married Women

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The present study examines the perception level of childbirth and childrearing, the level of satisfaction with government policies, the relationships between related variables and perception of childbirth and childrearing among South Korea married women.

<Question 1> What are the relationships among demographic variables (age, education, income, occupation, years of marriage, number of children), the level of satisfaction with government policies, and perception of childbirth and childrearing?

<Question 2> After accounting for mediating demographic variables, does the level of satisfaction with government policies significantly predict on perception of childbirth and childrearing?

A cross-sectional survey design was used. We collected data from 341 married women who were living in Pyeong-teaksi, Gyeonggi Providence, Korea, via a paper-and-pencil questionnaire. Study participants were recruited through local newspaper advertisements. Participants ranged in age from 20s to 50s. Overall, 65.5 % of the participant had two or more children, whereas 32% had one child, and 0.9% had no children. A large majority (57.5%) of the sample had graduated from college or university, as this was greater than those who had high school degrees (32.3%). Housewives made up a substantial proportion (43.8%) of the occupation type, followed by full time (34.9%), self-employed (13.5%), and temporary job (7.9%). Those with a medium level of income made up the highest proportion (32.6%) of the subjects.

To examine the first research question on the relationships between socio-demographic variables and perception of childbirth and childrearing, a Pearson's correlational analysis was conducted. The number of children($r=-.12$), income($r=.11$) and kind of occupatin($r=.12$) were significantly associated with perception of childbirth and childrearing. The satisfaction with government policies($r=.54$) were also significantly associated with perception of childbirth and childrearing. After accounting for mediating variables of socio-demographical variables, the final research question asked whether the level of satisfaction with government policies regarding family planning predicts perception of childbirth and childrearing. After controlling for socio-demo-

graphic variables (adjusted $R^2 = 0.03$), the level of satisfaction with government policies had an effect on the perception of childbirth and childrearing ($\beta = .53$, $p < .01$), and accounted for an additional 27% of variance in perception of childbirth and childrearing (final adjusted $R^2 = 0.30$) and indicates that the level of satisfaction with government policies contribute significantly to perception of childbirth and childrearing among Korea married women.

The result of this study can be summarized in three key points. First, consistent with previous studies, number of children, family income, and type of occupation are significantly associated with perception of childbirth and childrearing (Park et al., 2008; Lee, 2009). Participants who have more children have relatively positive perception of childbirth and childrearing than participants who have fewer children or no children. A previous study reported that women with one child had a significantly higher intention for an additional child (Park et al., 2008; Jokela, 2010). The number of living children is also strongly associated with women's preference for an additional child, regardless of marital and economic status. Also, participants who were involved in full-time job expressed relatively negative perception of childbirth and childrearing. A possible explanation for the negative perception of childbirth and childrearing among fulltime workers is the lack of compatibility between work and childrearing. Finally, participants who have higher income expressed relatively positive perception of childbirth and childrearing. Financial support should be developed and implemented to change perceptions of childbirth and childrearing among Korea married women.

Second, the level of satisfaction with government policies contribute significantly to perception of childbirth and childrearing among Korea married women. This finding is consistent with prior studies (Choi & Kim, 2005; Chun, 2005; Lee, 2009). Participants who have higher satisfaction level with government initiated policies have expressed relatively positive perception of childbirth and childbearing.

Last, the most promising result indicated that no matter what socio-demographic variables were, the level of satisfaction with government policies is a significant predictor on the perception of childbirth and childrearing among Korea married women. Although some researchers argue that demographic, social, and economic factors, with interactive effect may influence on perception of childbirth and childrearing, the result of this study clearly indicated that satisfaction level of government initiated policy is the strongest predictor on perception of childbirth and childrearing (Lee, 2009). This means that it may be worth to put a more emphasis on developing fertility-friendly policies to increase the fertility rate to the sustainable level in the near future.