



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

The Social Science Journal

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/soscij



Influencing factors to have an additional child by working women in Korea

Insu Chang^a, Brian H.S. Kim^{b,*}

^a Social Insurance Research Department, Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, Building D, 370 Sicheong-daero, Sejong City 30147 Republic of Korea

^b Program in Regional Information, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, Program in Agricultural and Forest Meteorology, Research Institute of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Seoul National University, 1 Gwanak-ro, Gwanak-gu, Seoul 08826, Republic of Korea

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 6 June 2017
Received in revised form
25 September 2017
Accepted 9 November 2017
Available online xxx

JEL classifications:

J13
J16
R23

Keywords:

Low fertility
Additional child birth plan
Hierarchical generalized linear model
Heckman 2-stage model
Working women

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the effects of individual and regional characteristics on working women's intention of additional childbirth in Korea. Since most the individuals generally revolve within their own hierarchically structured regions, data from 2012 Population and Housing Census Statistics are utilized in the analysis. The hierarchical generalized liner model is employed to find out the effects of individual and regional factors, while comparisons of these results are made using the binary logistic model. And finally, Heckman 2-stage model is applied in order to determine if selection bias is present. The results indicate that the working women ultimately deal with economic aspects on their decision for additional childbirth. Regional characteristics variables, namely unemployment rate, city type, private education cost, workplace daycare facilities and government budget for childcare, reflect economic aspects in households. These findings address important policy implications to overcome low fertility rate in the era of increasing number of working women.

© 2017 Western Social Science Association. Published by Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The problem with low fertility is serious because it is not simply a problem on an individual level, but it is a problem that would ultimately lead to low labor productivity on a national level. As the low fertility rate continues to increase, it will eventually lead to reduction in economically active population. As reported by the OECD in their "Economic Policy Reforms 2016" (2016), "Per capita productivity of business service sector in Korea was merely 40% compared to that of manufacturing sector – which is the lowest rate among OECD nations." This can be viewed as a

clear indication of seriousness of low fertility rate problem. It has been 10 years since Korea adopted *the Plan for Ageing Society and Population* in efforts to overcome its problem with low fertility rate. Some positive results – in child-care and education, especially in preventing interruption of experience of working women (Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2015) – had been realized through the adoption of first and second versions of the Plan that helped create favorable environment for individuals to have and raise children for gradual recovery of higher fertility rate. However, the success of the Plan was limited because it focused mainly on numerical data such as total fertility rate (TFR), while failing to view the problems of low rate of birth and aging population as complex social phenomena. In other words, in order to solve low fertility problem,

* Corresponding author.
E-mail address: briankim66@snu.ac.kr (B.H.S. Kim).

it needs to be approached in various structural ways; the Plan's limitations were exposed when it failed to do so. This research began with the recognition of such problems and focused on the fact that many factors considered as the causes of low fertility are in fact socio-economic and socio-structural facets that have complex effects. That is to say that although women's role in the society has increased as women's rights continued to strengthen, in reality, the society currently does not sufficiently provide conditions that encourage childbirths. The amount of childcare benefit provided by the Korean government is currently between KRW 220,000 (about USD 200) and KRW 394,000 (about USD 360), depending on the age of the child per month. As for child home care allowance, the amount assisted is in the range of KRW 100,000–KRW 200,000 per month, also paid on a graded basis depending on child's age. However, it cannot be said that these amounts are high enough to encourage childbirths. In this research, the problem of low fertility rate was approached under the following perspective: the most important thing to consider in order to stop current trend of low fertility rate is to induce childbirths from those households that already have a child or children, rather than from those who have no intention of having children at all. Furthermore, considering the current trend in which women's participation in society is increasing, the problem associated with these working women giving births should be recognized as a social problem that needs to be addressed immediately. In other words, it is important to create a certain social environment – even amidst growing participation by women in the society – that would encourage women to have more children.

Throughout this research, efforts were made to maintain the basic premise, of considering both temporal (time) and spatial coherence of the policies promoting childbirth based on the arguments presented so far. As for temporal coherence, taking working women into consideration – in line with the latest societal trend where the number of working women is ever so increasing – was necessary. In addition, with macroeconomic variables in mind, considering the fact that fertility rate could vary depending on the nation's economic condition, either in upswing or in downswing was also essential. For spatial coherence, it was keeping microeconomic and regional characteristics that encourage childbirths in mind. Consequently, based on the analysis of these results, it was determined that such regional characteristics should be considered in adopting and implementing social welfare as well as regional policies. Especially, taking spatial aspects into consideration can be deemed very different from other prior researches. It is also necessary to consider all these aspects in crafting *the Third Plan for Ageing Society and Population*. As mentioned earlier, the first two Plans had been criticized for failing to fundamentally approach the problems of low fertility and aging society; they failed to broadly perceive various aspects surrounding the issues. Therefore, it was concluded that the approaches needed to be taken in order to resolve low fertility require broad directionality that encompasses various perspectives, and especially, that they must consider the fact that the regional characteristics will indeed influence childbirths.

2. Literature review

As if to validate the fact that the problem with low birth rate in Korea – the lowest among 34 OECD nations in 2015 – is a serious and urgent national issue, there had been many researches made on factors that may influence childbirth; And many of them dealt with having additional children (Joung & Choi, 2013; Kim, 2007; Kang & Kim, 2011; Suh, 2010; Shin, Choi, & Kim, 2009; Yeom, 2013; etc.) A common similarity exists among these studies in that all their analyses had been carried out and their results substantiated mainly focusing on factors such as household income, whether both spouses worked, the age of woman at the time she married, her current age, and availability of either nannies or childcare facilities.

While heeding to the relationship between women's participation in society and giving additional childbirths, and since the sample subjects were limited to working women, this report aims to look closely into women's economic contribution in a household, women's age, and household income, – three factors that had been closely discussed in many previous researches.

First of all, the relationship between the decision to work and the birthrate is as follows. Generally, the factors that affect the decision to work can be said to be closely related to major household decisions such as how to raise children, how to educate them, and marriage itself, etc. Although it had been debated recently that no negative relationship can be found between working women and childbirth when applied to Granger Causality – as suggested by Lee and Lee (2014), the consensus suggested by many earlier studies is that women having occupation is negatively related to childbirths (Becker, 1985; Connelly, 1992; Daniela, 2002; David, Canning, Fink, & Finlay, 2007; Mishra & Smyth, 2009). Such tendency is especially more apparent in wife-dominant and egalitarian families than from husband-dominant couples (Weller, 1968) The negative relationship between working women and additional childbirths may lead to the following argument. The reason for these working women being less inclined to give additional childbirths, despite having steady income and despite being in economically more superior situation than non-working women, may be because they consider opportunity costs involved in giving birth and raising children. As evidenced by Willis (1973), this can be interpreted in a way that, as income increases for a working woman, the relative value of her child(ren) also increases. This perspective can also be understood in a similar context with the findings by Connelly (1992), who, by applying Probit model on working structure of females, suggested that there is a negative relationship between the cost of raising children and participation in the labor market. This means that as more and more women enter into labor market, the likelihood of them raising children – which comes with heavy economic burden – decreases. In addition, as mentioned by Joung and Choi (2013), the probability of working women having a second child is less than that for full-time housewives. This can be understood to be consistent with the view that economic loss would be generated in terms of experience time lost due to childbirth and childcare. Although approached a bit differently, Walker's (1995) suggestion, which stated

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6575939>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6575939>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)