

Master's Thesis Abstract

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The Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences

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- Cultural Arts Course
- Modern Inter-Cultural Studies Course
- Policy Science Course

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Title

Factors Affecting Women's Fertility Behavior
-An Analysis of Data by Prefecture-

Japan's total fertility rate fell to 1.25 in 2005, the lowest after South Korea among OECD countries. It is expected that the decline of the population will lead to the imbalance between the working-age population and the ratio of dependent population in the future, and the problem of labor shortage will become more and more serious in the future.

In order to deal with the problem of having fewer children, it is necessary to raise the birth rate. However, Japan is faced with the reality that there are many couples who want to have children but can't. According to the "Married Couples' Childbearing Attitudes Survey 2022," a record 75.8% of respondents said that they have a "second child barrier," which discourages them from having a second or subsequent child. In order to raise the birth rate, it is important to clarify the factors that affect the birth behavior of the second child. If women are able to continue working after childbirth by increasing the second child birth rate, it will help address future labor shortages due to population decline. It is also expected to create an environment in which it is easier for women to balance work and child rearing.

In order to elucidate the various factors that affect second childbirth behavior, we designed a panel data for each prefecture and conducted an econometric analysis based on the published data. First, hypotheses regarding childbearing behavior were summarized, and previous studies on each factor were summarized. Then, factors affecting second childbearing behavior were categorized after reviewing the previous studies, and regression equations were constructed. Next, the publicly available data were used to create the panel data of 47 prefecture for three years (2010, 2015, and 2020). The second child birth rate was set as the explained variable for the analysis, and individual attributes, opportunity cost, market conditions, husband's time distribution, and fertility policy were set as explanatory variables. The results show that the husband's income increase has the effect of suppressing the second child. In addition, it has been proved that the policy to support the low birth rate has the effect of raising the birth rate of second child. In terms of market conditions, a higher ratio of job offers to job seekers has the effect of suppressing the second childbearing behavior, while an increase in the female employment rate has the effect of promoting the second childbearing behavior.

The results of the analysis in this paper indicate that the second child fertility rate tends to increase as the employment environment for women improves, rather than as the overall market employment environment improves. In addition, the promotion of the low birth rate policy will have a positive impact on the rise of the second child birth rate. However, in terms of the number of people taking childcare benefits, the percentage of men taking childcare leave is still extremely low. Therefore, it can be said that apart from developing measures to support the declining birthrate and promoting the active participation of women in the workforce, the Japanese government should also take approaches to promote the usage rate of child-care leave by men.