

An Research on Gender Differences in Fertility Intentions: Based on the Theoretical Perspective of "Work-life Balance"

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Abstract

Based on the database of the "Population Fertility and Public Services" group, firstly investigate the existence of significant differences between male and female fertility intentions through t-tests, and afterwards do the regression analysis by gender through econometric models. At length, the results revealed a significant difference between men's and women's fertility intentions ($p < 0.01^{**}$). With overtime hours significantly and positively correlated with fertility intentions for men, and housework hours and caregiving hours significantly and positively correlated with fertility intentions for women. At the individual level, it will lead to "work-life conflict", but at the family level, this gender-based division of labor will lead to "work-life balance". In the analysis of career choice, women are more family-oriented in their choice of occupation than men. Nevertheless, this "work-life balance" comes at the expense of women's development, which will result in lower fertility intentions among younger women and a significant difference with men's fertility intentions. Therefore, the government should protect the labors' legitimate rights to have more time to return to the family, especially for men, which will be conducive to improving "work-life balance" and increasing willingness to have children.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Male fertility intentions are significantly and positively related to weekly working hours and overtime hours.

Hypothesis 2: Women's willingness to have children is significantly and positively related to the time spent on housework and caregiving.

Hypothesis 3: Fertility intentions of men and women are significantly and negatively related to leisure time, near-travel time, and long-distance travel time, respectively.

Hypothesis 4: Women's fertility intentions are significantly and positively related to their consideration of family when choosing a career.

Method

Based on the database of the "Population Fertility and Public Services" group, firstly investigate the existence of significant differences between male and female fertility intentions through t-tests, then do regression analysis by gender through econometric models.

References

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- [2] Lan Zhu. (2020). Fertility policies, opportunity costs and fertility demand - Micro evidence from the China Integrated Social Survey. *Northwest Population* (02), 90-101. doi:10.15884/j.cnki.issn.1007-0672.2020.02.008. (In Chinese)

Results

Analysis results:

- In table 1 there is a significant difference between the ideal number of children for males and females and that the ideal number of children for females is lower than that of males.

Table 1 T-Test of Fertility Intentions on Gender

		Mean±Standard deviation	t	p
Fertility intentions	Male	2.85±0.702	3.278	0.001**
	Female	2.69±0.679		

- In the male sample, weekly working hours and overtime hours are each positively correlated with fertility intentions, with overtime hours being significantly positively correlated with fertility intentions.
- In the female sample, time spent on housework and time spent on caregiving are each significantly and positively associated with fertility intentions.
- In the female sample, fertility intentions were positively correlated with leisure time, long-distance travel time and time spent on excursions, with fertility intentions significantly correlated with long-distance travel time.
- Both males and females showed a positive correlation between greater consideration of family in choosing a career and fertility intentions, with the female sample showing a significant positive correlation between greater consideration of family in choosing a career and fertility intentions.
- In Table 3 Age is significantly and positively correlated with fertility intentions.

Table 3 Results of the Ordered Logit Regression of Age on Fertility Intentions

	Fertility intentions	
	Male	Female
Age	0.0167	0.058***
Annual personal income	0.1063	-0.168
Academic qualifications	0.178	0.320**

Conclusion

Based on the database of the Population Fertility and Public Services Group, this paper analyses the main factors affecting the fertility intentions of people of childbearing age from the perspective of "work-life balance" by gender, to explain the reasons for low fertility intentions. The results of the study show that: (1) in terms of work-life time commitment, men's weekly working hours and overtime hours are positively associated with fertility intentions, with overtime hours being significantly associated with fertility intentions. Women's time spent on housework and time spent on caregiving was each significantly and positively associated with fertility intentions. (2) To promote "work-life balance", women are more family-oriented in their choice of employment and therefore consider work-life combination in their choice of employment. (3) It is thus observed that as the decision to have children requires women to take on more of a family role at the expense of women's career development, in the long run the next generation of women will be influenced by this and there will be an intergenerational effect, as well as the spread of modern gender equality, that women will inevitably choose to delay the age of childbearing. There are therefore significant differences in the fertility intentions of men and women, and the ideal number of children for men is higher than the ideal number of children for women.