

Influencing Factors and Coping Strategies of Women's Fertility Intention under the Guidance of China's Development Policy

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Abstract. With the rapid development of China's social economy, people's living standards continue to improve. However, the willingness to have children has shown a downward trend, and the fertility rate has also declined. This phenomenon has attracted widespread attention from all sectors of society. This study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the influencing factors of women's fertility intentions under policy guidance. A questionnaire survey was conducted to investigate and analyze the current influencing factors of women's fertility intentions. Research has shown that policy orientation significantly affects women's reproductive decisions. Individual factors such as age, education level, and occupation, as well as family factors such as family income and place of residence, are closely related to fertility intentions. The dissemination channels of the fertility policy affect women's understanding of the policy, which in turn affects fertility decision-making. Obstacles in career development also affect women's consideration of childbirth. The social environment, especially family support, has a significant impact on women's reproductive decisions. Meanwhile, the balance between family and career is also an important factor affecting women's willingness to have children. Based on this, this article suggests further optimization and adjustment of the current fertility policy, such as improving maternity leave benefits, introducing flexible work arrangements, providing career development support, supporting fertility assistance services, and breaking workplace discrimination, to better meet the diverse fertility needs of women and promote sustainable social development.

Keywords: Fertility intention, policy awareness, social support.

1. Introduction

With the changes in social structure, family values, and women's social status, women face unprecedented complexity and diversity in reproductive decision-making. In the context of this changing era, policy orientation has become one of the key factors affecting women's willingness to have children. As the willingness to have children decreases, the global fertility rate is continuing to decline. Data shows that the annual growth rate of the world population peaked at 2.1% between 1962 and 1965, followed by a sharp decline to less than 1% in 2020.

The United Nations predicts that due to the continuous decline in fertility rates, the global annual population growth rate may drop to around 0.5% by 2050. According to United Nations data, the global average fertility rate in 2021 was 2.3, which means an average of 2.3 children per woman in a lifetime. However, the fertility rate in 1950 was 5 and is expected to decline to 2.1 by 2050. In China, the decline in the birth rate has also become a serious problem. In 2021, the total fertility rate calculated by women of childbearing age and the number of births in China was only 1.15. In 2022, it further decreased to 1.07, which is equivalent to an average of slightly more than 1 child per couple [1].

As the willingness to have children decreases, the global fertility rate is decreasing. This will have a profound impact on future population structure and economic development. Fertility services and support centered on fertility intentions should become the core of fertility policies in low-fertility societies. Through the construction of modern fertility culture, ideological concepts should be transformed, social policies that improve fertility support should be improved to reduce fertility restrictions, and the preservation and support of fertility should help achieve fertility [2]. As a country with rich cultural traditions and complex social backgrounds, China is facing new challenges and opportunities in the adjustment of family planning policies and the evolution of social concepts for

women's reproductive choices. At the same time, there have been various changes in fertility policies worldwide, involving welfare systems, occupational equality, and family support, which have had a profound impact on women's fertility decisions. This study aims to understand the complex motivations behind women's fertility intentions under policy guidance, promote gender equality, balance between career and family, and provide women with more diverse and selective reproductive rights.

2. Research methods

2.1. Questionnaire Design

This study used a questionnaire survey to investigate the intuitive influence and personal feelings of the female population and obtained first-hand data. The existing research findings suggest that influencing factors can be divided into family parenting patterns, whether the family can provide support, age, marital status, different places of residence, spouse's educational level, etc. [3].

On this basis, this study combines the actual situation and sets the dimensions of the questionnaire to four dimensions: social background, policy awareness, career development, and family support. On this basis, 17 questions were involved to investigate the impact of social environmental factors, policy factors, and other factors on women's willingness to have children, including whether there is an impact and how it occurs. In addition, the questionnaire includes basic information research aimed at understanding the sample situation of women in different regions, professions, and age groups. This article adopts a random survey method, distributing questionnaires through Questionnaire Star pairs, and ultimately collecting 120 valid questionnaires.

2.2. Data Analysis

This article uses SPSS to conduct correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis on questionnaire survey data, to reveal the relationships between various factors.

2.2.1 Policy awareness

The results show that 41.67% of respondents believe that the implementation of the adjustment of the birth policy will have a direct impact on their willingness to have children. This indicates that the current fertility intention has an impact on the fertility policy and women's fertility intention. Therefore, in the process of policy design, it is necessary to consider people's actual situation to achieve a positive correlation between policy and intention. Women of childbearing age are the direct targets of the fertility policy. Whether the fertility policy can produce good results depends not only on the quality and implementation of the policy but also on the support and satisfaction of women of childbearing age. When women of childbearing age realize that childbirth policies are beneficial to themselves, they are more willing to have children. Specifically, women who have a clearer understanding of childbirth policies are more likely to express a positive desire to have children [4].

This relationship shows a clear positive correlation in statistical analysis. By segmenting the samples, this article found that there are differences in the impact of policy orientation on women's fertility willingness across different age groups, educational levels, and regional backgrounds. This suggests that when formulating more targeted policies, it is necessary to consider the special needs of different groups.

Table 1 analyzes the distribution of the proportion of choices for multiple-choice questions using a one-card goodness of fit test. From the table below, it can be seen that the goodness of fit test shows significance ($\chi^2=62.299$, $p=0.000<0.05$), indicating significant differences in the selection ratios of each item, which can be specifically addressed through response rate or popularity. Specifically, official government channels, media coverage, and social media have significantly higher response and penetration rates.

Table 1. Channels for women to understand childbirth policies

Policy acquisition channels	responsibility	Penetration rate
Official government channels	26.56%	53.33%
media coverage	29.88%	60.00%
Sharing with family and friends	17.84%	35.83%
Social media	24.48%	49.17%
other	1.24%	2.50%

2.2.2 Career development

This study uses the Spearman correlation coefficient to represent the strength of the correlation relationship. From Table 2, it can be seen that the correlation coefficient value is 0.348 and shows a significant positive correlation at the 0.01 level, indicating a significant positive correlation between them. Data shows that women with higher career aspirations are more likely to delay childbirth. This indicates that under policy guidance, women invest more energy in career development, tend to delay childbirth in pursuit of career success and feel anxious about future fertility due to career goals [5].

Table 2. The impact of work on fertility intentions

correlation	Are you willing to suspend your career for the sake of childbirth	Does work hinder fertility decision-making
fertility desire	0.348	0.550

2.2.3. Family planning

Linking the needs of children with the income of parents and the cost of raising them, especially with the value of time spent on parenting and public policies that change the cost of raising children. Among them, per capita income, human capital, and material capital continue to grow, and the fertility rate has decreased to a relatively low level [6]. According to Table 3, economic factors are a priority consideration for childbirth, and women under greater economic pressure are more likely to prioritize economic factors for childbirth. Data analysis shows that women from high-income families are more likely to delay childbirth. This may reflect that in relatively affluent economic conditions, women are more inclined to pursue career development or enjoy more personal space. Women from low-income families may be more inclined to have children early, possibly due to greater economic pressure, and establishing a family early may be seen as a livelihood strategy. This may reflect that women are more inclined to postpone or adjust their birth plans during times of economic instability. Women with higher family economic security may be more willing to consider childbirth, indicating that economic security has a significant impact on fertility decision-making.

Table 3. The impact of various factors on fertility intention

Fertility considerations	Proportion
Economic factors: household income and the burden of raising children	63.33%
Policy factors: National policy support and related subsidies	10.00%
Occupational factors: work pressure and actual situation	9.17%
Family support: Family assistance (material and spiritual)	14.17%

2.2.4. Social context

Table 4 shows that over 50% of people feel that the surrounding society's attitude towards female fertility is that mothers are not easy. There is a common belief in society that in an environment where mothers are not easy, women may value their mother's efforts more and be more cautious in considering childbirth. In such a social atmosphere, women may be more susceptible to the influence of family values, making them more cautious when considering childbirth. In an environment where it is generally believed that female parenting is not easy, women may feel reproductive pressure from society, which may affect their choice of reproductive timing.

Table 4. Social attitudes towards female fertility

Social attitudes towards female fertility	Proportion
It is rightfully the task of women	24.17%
I think it's not easy for mothers, but it's still a matter for women	53.33%
Women's selfless dedication can sacrifice their own lives and work	22.50%

3. Suggestions

3.1. Clarify the Importance of Policy Guarantees

In the 1950s and early 1970s, the Chinese government encouraged childbirth and believed that having multiple children and grandchildren was the foundation of national prosperity. The policies during this period supported large families and did not set birth restrictions. From 1979 to 2015, facing rapid population pressure, China implemented the one-child policy in 1979, which restricted most urban couples from having only one child. This policy is relatively strict in urban areas and relatively lenient in rural areas. From 2016 to 2021, due to the pressure of the aging population and decreasing labor force, the Chinese government announced the comprehensive relaxation of the two-child policy. This policy adjustment aims to promote the optimization of population structure and sustainable development of society. And the three-child policy to date.

The population issue has always been a global and strategic issue that cannot be ignored. Studying contemporary China's birth policy under the new development concept aims to reveal its evolutionary laws, guide people's concepts of marriage and childbirth with innovative ideas, promote current institutional reform, establish sustainable population development methods, and use the new development concept to lead the implementation of the "three child" birth policy, which is of great practical significance for promoting long-term balanced population development [7].

This study found that under policy guidance, women's willingness to have children is significantly influenced by their level of understanding of childbirth policies. To enhance women's autonomy in childbirth decision-making, the government and relevant institutions should strengthen the promotion and interpretation of childbirth policies to ensure that women have a more comprehensive understanding of the policies. The government should pay attention to strengthening policy promotion and education, carry out more extensive and in-depth propaganda on childbirth policies, use various media and educational platforms to convey policy information to women and improve policy awareness. At the same time, it is necessary to implement economic incentive measures, such as maternity allowances, to support women in considering childbirth while maintaining economic independence and career development.

3.2. Balancing Career Development and Fertility Intentions

Research has shown that career development has a significant impact on women's reproductive decisions. Economic factors are the most direct and fundamental factors that affect fertility intentions. Women's choice to have children will inevitably have an impact on career development, including missing career advancement, devaluation of human capital due to training, and career interruption. However, modern women are influenced by the concept of gender equality, awakening their self-awareness, and more women choose to leave their families and enter the workplace. However, after observing the opportunity costs of re-employment and career development brought about by childbirth, women have a premonition that it will hurt their career, and that childcare issues may affect their expected work-life balance. Therefore, when facing fertility issues, the willingness to have children will be reduced to achieve the expected "work-life balance" and avoid a series of opportunity costs caused by childbirth, which can lead to a mother's job dilemma [8]. Policymakers should attach importance to creating a more flexible work environment and provide policy measures to support women's career development, to promote a balance between career and family. Promote educational equality: Strengthen investment in women's education, improve the level of women's education, and

encourage the provision of more vocational training to help them better balance their careers and families.

3.3. Emphasize the Guiding Role of Family Planning

Family planning plays a crucial role in shaping fertility intentions under policy guidance. Work-family conflict weakens the willingness to have a second child through negative impacts on cost attitudes, benefit attitudes, subjective norms of spouse, subjective norms of parents, and relationship control. From the size of the path coefficient, it can be seen that there is a high correlation between work-family conflict and relationship control, which reduces fertility intention by weakening relationship control; Compared to income attitudes, work-family conflicts to a greater extent reduce the willingness to have a second child by influencing cost attitudes; In terms of subjective norms, the mediating effects of parents and spouses are equivalent, reflecting the vitality of China's traditional fertility concept and the discourse power of intergenerational care [9]. It is recommended that the government strengthen the popularization of family planning services and provide relevant support measures to help women better plan their family life and reduce the pressure of childbirth. Family Planning Services: Provide comprehensive family planning services, including reproductive health counseling and introduction of family planning methods, to help women consider childbirth decisions more comprehensively.

3.4. Emphasize the Positive Development of Social Background Concepts

Considering the profound influence of social culture on women's reproductive attitudes, reproductive culture, and social interaction have dominated people's reproductive behavior in the past few decades. Subjective norms have to some extent promoted the reproductive willingness of women of childbearing age. However, this study shows that expectations and pressures from important others do not promote individual reproductive willingness when it comes to the willingness to have another child. It can be seen that nowadays, in the context of having a second child The balance between individualism and familialism in terms of the willingness to have three children has gradually tilted [9]. But the government and society should also take diversified measures to encourage equal sharing of family responsibilities, promote a shift in social attitudes, and promote gender equality. Policies should focus on guiding social public opinion. For example, policies should guide the media to present fertility topics more objectively and rationally and reduce stereotypes and negative impacts on women's fertility choices. In addition, the guidance of cultural concepts also plays an indispensable role. Through artistic works, public propaganda, and other means, guide the transformation of social and cultural concepts and encourage respect and understanding of women's diverse choices. In addition, enhancing the trust of the healthcare system through open and transparent medical information and improving the quality of medical services provided by medical personnel has a significant impact on enhancing women's sense of trust.

4. Conclusion

The decline in fertility willingness has had a significant impact on the development of Chinese society. With the development of the economy, urbanization process, and changes in social and cultural values, Chinese families are generally facing difficulties in making fertility decisions, leading to a decline in fertility rates. This will have a profound impact on population structure, labor supply, social pension security, and other aspects, challenging social stability and sustainable development. In addition to economic factors such as economic pressure and rising living costs, changes in social and cultural concepts, improvement in women's status, and education level, and pressure on children's education also affect fertility intentions and decision-making to varying degrees. The strategy to address the decline in fertility willingness requires comprehensive implementation. The government should increase the adjustment and optimization of population policies, formulate more flexible and targeted fertility policies, and encourage childbirth. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen the

construction of social support and security mechanisms, provide better childcare, education, medical and other services, and reduce the burden on families. In addition, it is necessary to promote the transformation of social and cultural concepts, advocate for the balanced development of family values, enhance the status and rights protection of women, and create a social environment that supports childbirth. Cross-departmental cooperation and policy collaboration are key to addressing challenges. The decline in fertility willingness and fertility rate is a complex social issue that requires close cooperation and coordination between governments at all levels and different departments. Government departments, social organizations, and professional institutions should strengthen information sharing, data analysis, and policy evaluation to form effective policy synergies and achieve the overall sustainable development of fertility policies.

This article also has certain limitations, as the research may not fully consider the diversity of social culture, resulting in certain limitations in the research conclusions on cultural concepts, making it difficult to adapt to women in different social and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, future research can be further explored from the perspective of cultural background.

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