

# Study on the Delay of Marriage and Childbirth of Wenzhou Ouhai Population and its Influencing Factors

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**Abstract:** Marriage and fertility are important topics in population studies, where individuals establish families through marriage and carry on life through childbearing within the family. Marriage and fertility microscopically measure the life course of individuals and macroscopically reflect the marriage and childbearing attitudes and marriage and childbearing culture of population groups. Marriage and fertility patterns consisting of marriage and fertility patterns are usually described and analyzed through indicators such as average age at first marriage and average age at first childbirth. Data from the seventh population census of Ouhai District in 2020 and fertility data from the health commission show that the average age at first marriage for women in Ouhai District is 27.68 years old and the average age at first childbirth is 28.57 years old, while the average age at first marriage and the average age at first childbirth for women in Ouhai District at the sixth population census in 2010 was 23.11 years old and 25.40 years old respectively in the sixth census in 2010, an increase of 4.57 years and 3.17 years respectively in 10 years. The delay of marriage and childbirth of Ouhai District population is more significant. In order to understand the willingness of Ouhai population to marry and give birth, and to serve the long-term balanced development of the population, at the request of Ouhai District Bureau of Statistics, the research group carried out a special study on "the delayed characteristics of marriage and childbirth of Ouhai population and its influencing factors". Through a comprehensive and in-depth analysis and study of the sixth and seventh national census data and health commission fertility-related data, (the number of people in the census long form quoted in the article refers to the number of sample survey, not the actual number. The total number of people in Ouhai District in the seventh census is 963,238, and the number of people in the long-form sampling survey is 93,713, with a sampling ratio of 9.73%; the total number of people in Ouhai District in the sixth census is 996,870, and the number of people in the long-form sampling survey is 94,732, with a sampling ratio of 9.50%. (The two census sampling ratio is slightly different) The survey results show that: the Ouhai District citizens delayed marriage and childbirth, the willingness to have children is not high, by the education level, occupational factors, such as the influence of the larger, need to promote the implementation of existing policies at the same time, the system to introduce education, childbirth, parenting, housing, medical and other supporting measures to promote residents to marry at the right age, improve the willingness of residents to have children.

**Keywords:** Delay of Marriage and Childbirth; Wenzhou Ouhai Population; Influencing Factors.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Basis of Topic Selection

Policy Rationale: A moderate fertility level is an important prerequisite for deepening the country's long-term population development strategy. General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed that "the population issue is always a global, long-term, strategic issue facing China." Since the 18th Party Congress, the Party Central Committee and the State Council have scientifically grasped the law of population development, reviewed the situation and made major decisions and deployments such as two children alone, two children across the board, and the release of three children, vigorously promoted the development of higher education and the eradication of illiteracy among young adults, and promoted the positive results of population work. The report of the 20th Party Congress proposed "optimizing population development strategies, establishing a system of birth support policies, and reducing the costs of childbirth, child rearing, and education." The Second Plenary Session of the Twentieth Party Congress called for, "Improving the fertility support policy system." Optimizing the population development strategy and improving the fertility support policy system are of far-reaching significance in actively coping with the aging of fewer children, promoting long-term balanced population

development, and maximizing the dynamic role of population on economic and social development. The declining trend of births in China in recent years is related to the decline in the size of women of childbearing age, and is also affected by the continuing low fertility intentions of young people and the high cost of childbirth, parenting and education. In response, the National Health Commission and 17 other departments have jointly launched 20 specific measures to implement the fertility support policy, and each region has also introduced relevant measures in various aspects such as insurance, education, housing and employment, depending on local conditions. Optimizing the fertility policy is a systematic project, from the perspective of the whole life course, the whole family cycle and the whole element of society, establishing a policy system and institutional framework suitable for fertility, parenting and education, promoting relevant economic and social policies and fertility policy in the same direction, helping to further release fertility potential, slowing down the process of population aging, and providing a guarantee for promoting long-term balanced population development.

Problem-oriented: Wenzhou's population birth situation is not optimistic. From the latest published data, Zhejiang has the largest increase in resident population. However, the impressive performance of the population in Zhejiang Province is mainly due to the population growth in Hangzhou,

Ningbo and other cities. But the second largest city in the province's population, as the "birthplace of the private economy" Wenzhou has nothing to do with. Wenzhou people are the symbol of affluence and business acumen, and once the foreign population flocked to Wenzhou in search of development opportunities. Wenzhou's population fertility rate was also high due to traditional concepts. However, in the past 10 years, Wenzhou's fertility rate has declined at a rate much higher than the national average, and the population growth has not been significantly enhanced by the implementation of the "comprehensive three-child" policy. Therefore, it is urgent to study the fertility intention of Wenzhou population and its influencing factors.

This paper will take Wenzhou Ou Hai population as the research object, present the current situation of Wenzhou Ou Hai population fertility, analyze the causes of the current situation of Wenzhou Ou Hai population fertility, and explore the mechanism of mutual adaptation and support between fertility policy and marriage culture, in order to optimize the population structure of Wenzhou Ou Hai, alleviate the problem of population aging, and promote the long-term balanced development of population.

## 1.2. Current Status of Domestic and International Research

### 1.2.1. Fertility Intention

Demographers from various countries have studied fertility intentions from sociological, economic, and social psychological perspectives, and have also come up with certain research results, among which the findings of economics are the most respected by scholars from various countries and have been widely borrowed. In terms of economics, American population economist Harvey Leibenstein proposed the cost-benefit theory of children in the 1950s (John Wiley & Sons, 2022). He argued that when the cost of raising a child is less than the benefit of having a child, people will choose to have children and vice versa. In sociology, Arsene Dumont in France proposed the social capillary theory, he found that parents in high-information families choose to have fewer children in order to ensure their own professional development and the upbringing of their existing children (Dumont, 2022). Caldwell, an Australian demographic sociologist, proposed the theory of intergenerational wealth flows, arguing that by adding parents who determine that having children will make wealth elders, the parents' need for children will also increase, and conversely the parents' need for children will decrease (Caldwell, 2022). Davis, for the first time, correlated national demographic changes with changes in people's daily lives, suggesting that changes in the environment change people's willingness to have children (Davis, 2022). In social psychology, Smith and Edward proposed the individual decision theory, which argues that fertility decisions are determined by individual psychological activities of couples and individual fertility motivation, and that individuals weigh the pros and cons and make fertility decisions after judging the outcomes of various fertility models (Davis, 2022). Later, scholars proposed the social motivation theory, which argues that individual motivation to reproduce often depends on socially prescribed constraints (Rosenthal, 2022), and the individual-society binary motivational determinism, which argues that reproductive behavior is the result of individual-society interaction (Townsend, 2022).

In terms of the purpose of willingness to procreate,

comparable Yunfu (2022) argues that the traditional purposes of procreation are three: one is to achieve biological reproduction, the other is for family continuity, and the third is for spiritual solace. Nowadays, the purpose of childbearing is gradually changing to the satisfaction of kinship and family emotional needs, and the traditional purpose of childbearing, such as raising children for old age and passing on the family line, which is based on economic gain, is gradually replaced. In terms of willingness to have children, China has gradually developed a "low fertility culture" under the long-term influence of family planning policies. After the implementation of the "comprehensive two-child" policy, data from fertility intention surveys show that the average number of desired children has not changed significantly (Tan, K. J., 2022). In terms of willingness to have children by gender, Wenzhou has a more developed private economy and is deeply influenced by the traditional culture of "more children, more happiness" and gender preference. In terms of the timing of willingness to have children, in terms of the timing of willingness to have children, the current target population in China tends to marry later and have children later, and there are differences in the intervals between willingness to have children among different groups of people.

### 1.2.2. Fertility Policy

Peter (2022) and others have pointed out that many countries have faced or are currently facing a situation where social insurance does not cover their expenses, and suggest that each country should Jacqueline (2022), using a large amount of data on prenatal and postnatal costs, finds that prenatal checkups can help improve birth outcomes, and that every \$1 spent on prenatal checkups or health care can save \$1.30 in postnatal costs. In a study of the impact of length of maternity leave on women's return to work, Sylvia (2022) found that longer maternity leave had a positive impact on women's physical recovery and child rearing, which in turn helped women return to work more quickly. Laura (2022) argues that there is a legal and moral need to include women who are unemployed or injured in the workplace as a vulnerable group and to call for gender equality.

Since the implementation of the "comprehensive three-child" policy, many scholars have suggested the need to accelerate the construction and improvement of maternity-related education, medical care, public services, maternity insurance and social welfare systems. Government, business, social and community supporters should provide time, money, services and employment guarantees. By continuously introducing measures to encourage fertility, we can increase people's willingness to have children. Zhang Xingyue (2023) proposes to continuously improve policies on education, medical care, public services and social welfare to reduce the cost of childbirth and ease the pressure of female employment. Wan Li (2022) points out that the maternity insurance system needs to make certain adjustments, especially for the prevention of maternity risks for older mothers, to enhance the maternity protection for this group. Qingxiu Lou (2022) takes Jinhua City as an example to study the low fertility rate in the context of the "comprehensive two-child" policy, focusing on the need to improve the supervision of the preschool education market, ensure the teaching standard, and create a favorable social environment for optimal birth and childbirth. Zhu Liu-lin (2022) proposes to give full play to the power of community or social groups and implement social public service policies based on the theory of family support system. Yang Juhua (2021) defines the fertility support policy,

and believes that the main body of fertility policy support involves the government, enterprises, society and community, and the target of support includes parents, children, grandparents and other stakeholders, and the scope of support includes time, money, services and employment. Zhao and Li (2020) point out that Henan, Shaanxi, and Guangdong provinces have developed and improved a series of welfare policies on infant and child care, maternal medical checkups, and maternity insurance in order to encourage childbirth.

### 1.2.3. Fertility Culture

Studies on fertility culture have been conducted abroad, mainly by sociologists, anthropologists, economists and demographers, who have paid attention to and studied this phenomenon from different perspectives. The studies of scholars have shown the role of cultural characteristics contained in regional conceptual systems in determining fertility behavior. Cole (2021) mentions the possibility that cultural factors play a role in fertility in addition to socioeconomic factors. Friedman (2022) expresses a similar view that "sub-regions with a common culture tend to have similar patterns of fertility decline, even at different levels of development". Malinowski (2022) proposes a functional theory of culture, which explains fertility in terms of culture, arguing that culture arises to meet the real needs of people.

As the foundation of human society's reproduction and development, fertility culture has a long history in China. Domestic scholars have mainly focused their research on fertility culture in the fields of ethnology, sociology, anthropology and other disciplines. In the view of Ma Dongping (2023), to improve the current situation of China's continuous fertility decline and promote long-term balanced population development, multiple measures should be taken to cultivate a new culture of marriage and childbirth. Yao Ying (2023) believes that the culture of marriage and childbirth is an important factor influencing population development, especially fertility. Feng Xiaotian (2023) suggests that in constructing a population development strategy under the new situation, attention should also be paid to the changes in the culture of marriage and childbearing brought about by changes in fertility policies and the related sociological and anthropological consequences. The Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the State Council on Optimizing Fertility Policy for Long-term Balanced Population Development mentions the need to "strengthen the education and guidance of marriageable young people on the concept of marriage and family, and to combat bad social customs such as bad marriage practices and overpriced bride price", which is actually a request from the perspective of marriage culture.

Literature review: The above related studies at home and abroad can conclude that the current situation of low fertility level has attracted widespread attention at home and abroad. Western demographers have used the knowledge of sociology, economics, social psychology and other disciplines to explore the causes of individual fertility intentions and to carry out research on the theoretical framework of fertility intentions. Domestic research on fertility intentions is very comprehensive, not only deep vertical research using sociology, economics, psychology, demography and other theories, but also research on the characteristics of fertility intentions in different periods, regions and ethnic groups. However, there are still some limitations in the current research on fertility intentions at home and abroad. First, the previous studies on fertility intentions are basically based on

a single demographic variable of fertility policy, and basically no research involves the sociological variable of marriage culture, which is also closely related to the population's fertility intentions. Secondly, most of the previous studies on fertility intentions are still in the post-implementation of the "comprehensive two-child" policy, and the studies on whether the current fertility intentions of people have changed after the implementation of the "comprehensive three-child" policy, and what factors influence the fertility intentions of people of childbearing age. The "comprehensive three-child" policy can meet people's willingness to give birth to a child are pending systematic research. Thirdly, the empirical studies on fertility intention under the new "comprehensive three-child" policy at home and abroad basically do not incorporate the local characteristics of Wenzhou. As the second most populous city in Zhejiang Province and the birthplace of China's private economy, the study on the current situation of fertility and its influencing factors will help to make local suggestions on the current situation of fertility.

## 1.3. Research Significance

### 1.3.1. Academic Value

First, it is enlightening to enrich and develop the population theory system. By studying the fertility intention of Wenzhou population and its influencing factors, we can grasp the relationship between fertility intention and socio-economic development, humanistic environment and demographic changes, and can more accurately predict the trends of fertility intention, fertility behavior and newborn population after the change of fertility policy and marriage culture, thus enriching the population theory system.

Second, it provides some theoretical basis for the strong implementation of the local fertility policy system and the effective construction of the new marriage culture. This study can, to a certain extent, understand the fertility behavior of Wenzhou people of childbearing age according to the policy and the culture of marriage and childbearing, and grasp the patterns that exist between the current fertility policy, the culture of marriage and childbearing and the willingness to have children in Wenzhou, so as to provide some theoretical basis for promoting the strong implementation of the fertility system and the effective construction of the new culture of marriage and childbearing in Wenzhou.

### 1.3.2. Application Value

First, to judge the effect of the implementation of the fertility policy in Wenzhou. Taking the population of Wenzhou as a sample, the author investigates and analyzes the fertility intentions of the Wenzhou population and their influencing factors to understand the fertility dilemmas of married people of childbearing age in Wenzhou, so as to be able to analyze the problems and causes of the implementation of the "comprehensive three-child" policy in Wenzhou and to judge the effectiveness of the "comprehensive three-child" policy in Wenzhou. The survey will analyze the problems and causes of the implementation of the "comprehensive three-child" policy in Wenzhou, and determine the effect of the "comprehensive three-child" policy in Wenzhou.

Second, it provides some reference for the adjustment and optimization of the local fertility policy system and the construction of a new culture of marriage and childbirth, aiming at optimizing the population structure of Wenzhou, promoting balanced population development, and alleviating the problem of population aging.

## 1.4. Research Methodology

### 1.4.1. Literature Research Method

By searching resources such as China Knowledge Network, Wanfang and the Internet for information on fertility intention, population policy and marriage culture, collecting, reviewing and organizing materials such as relevant books, journal papers, news information, newspapers and magazines, we collected a large number of research results related to fertility policy and read these research results according to different types of categories, so as to grasp the fertility policy, marriage culture advanced concepts and practical experiences to provide the basis for this study.

### 1.4.2. Comparative Research Method

By comparing the same kind of things, we can get a more comprehensive and objective understanding of this thing. By comparing and analyzing the basic situation of Wenzhou and typical cities in China, the formulation of new fertility policies and the construction of a new marriage culture, we can identify the differences between the fertility situation in Wenzhou and typical cities in China, so that we can understand the specificity of the current fertility situation in Wenzhou in an objective way, which is conducive to the formulation of fertility policies that are suitable for the development of local population in Wenzhou according to local conditions and its own characteristics.

### 1.4.3. Questionnaire Survey Method

The questionnaire method was used to obtain the current situation of fertility intention of married people of childbearing age in Wenzhou under the "comprehensive three-child" policy and to analyze the factors influencing fertility intention.

### 1.4.4. Statistical Analysis Method

The survey data will be analyzed statistically, specifically by using the table method and the column method to provide scientific arguments for this paper.

## 2. Marriage and Childbirth Characteristics

### 2.1. The Overall Postponement of the Age of Marriage

According to the comprehensive estimation of the seven universal data, from 1980 to 2020, the average age of first marriage of Ou Hai population was postponed from 21 to 28 years old, among which, men were postponed from 23 to 29 years old and women were postponed from 21 to 27 years old (Figure 1). Compared with the Sixth Universal, the Seventh Universal reflected that the average age of men and women was postponed by 4 years, and the marriage age showed a trend of postponement (Figure 2). At the same time, Ou Hai population marriage age delayed this feature in urban and rural areas converge (Figure 3). According to "Marriage Law" and "Family Planning Regulations", 25 years old for men and 23 years old for women is the late marriage age. In accordance with the provisions of the Amendment to the Law of the People's Republic of China on Population and Family Planning, which was considered at the 18th session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the provision of incentives for late marriage and late childbearing couples was removed, and since January 1, 2016, late marriage and late childbearing couples will no longer have late marriage and late childbearing leave. But the following

chart can be seen, the deletion of late marriage reward provisions did not transform the trend of Ou Hai population marriage age postponement, Ou Hai population marriage age presents a continuous postponement trend.

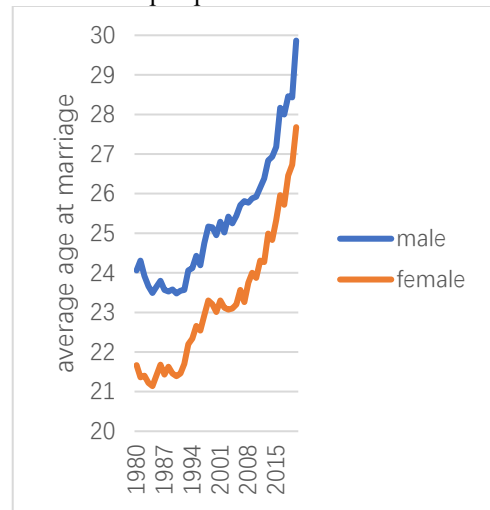


Figure 1. Trend of the average age of first marriage of Ou Hai population

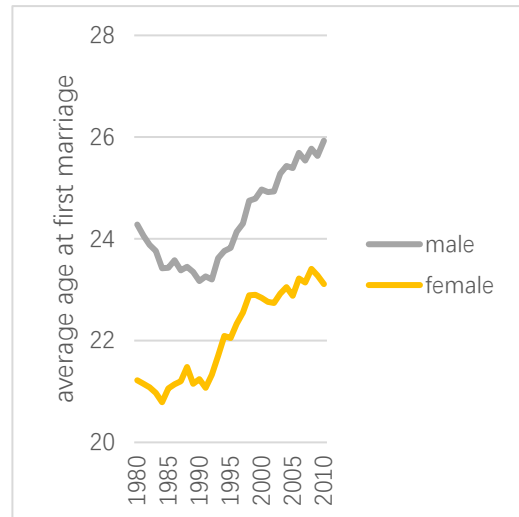


Figure 2. The trend of the average age of first marriage of Ou Hai population

Data source: Ou Hai District seventh census long form data  
Data source: Ou Hai District Sixth Population Census long form data

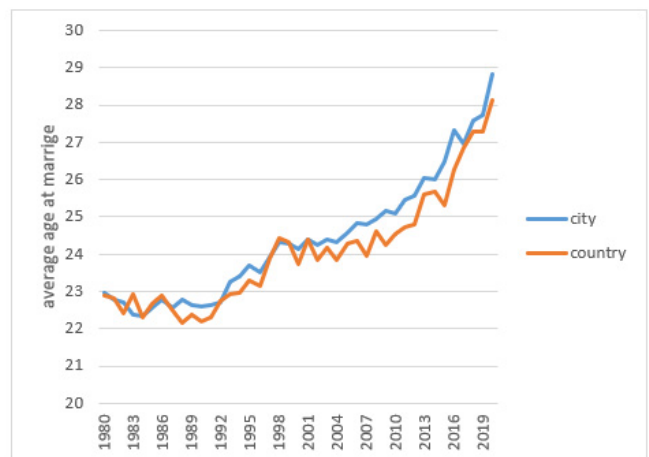
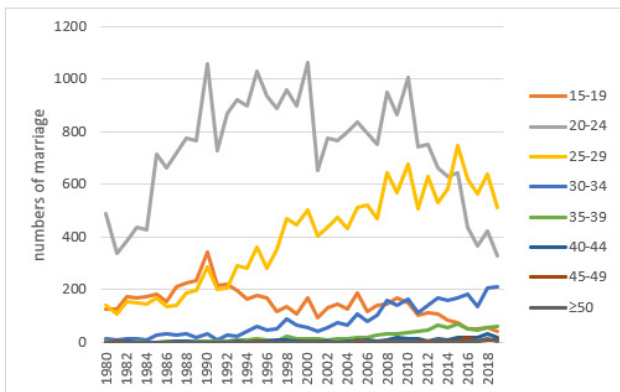


Figure 3. Ou Hai urban and rural population marriage age trend chart

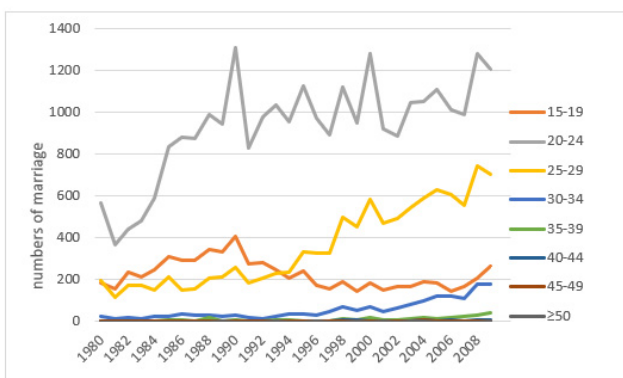
Data source: Ou Hai District seventh census long form data

## 2.2. The Number of People of Marriageable Age has Declined Significantly

Seven Poo data show that since 1980 to 2019, the number of marriages in different age groups vary greatly, the older age group in the number of marriages per year does not change much, the middle-aged group in the number of marriages per year has a small increase, but it is difficult to offset the age group in the number of marriages per year fell sharply, since 2000 to 2019, the number of marriages in the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups per year, respectively from 1064 to 328 and from 747 to 513, a decline of 69.17% and 31.33%, respectively (Figure 4). Comparing the data of the Sixth Census, we found that the change curve of the number of marriages in each age group in the Seventh Census from 1980 to 2010 was similar to that of the Sixth Census, but the number of marriages of marriageable age showed a gradual decline after 2010 (Figures 4 and 5). The number of marriages in the year before the census (2009) at the time of the six-person census was 2413, and the number of marriages in the year before the census (2019) at the time of the seven-person census was 1186, a decline of 50.85%; the number of marriages in the year before the census in the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups fell from 1208 and 702 in the six-person census to 328 and 513 in the seven-person census, respectively, a decline of 72.85% and 26.92% respectively. Because the census time point is October 31, the number of marriages in the census year is only counted for 10 months, so the data of 2020 is removed from the seven-person census, and the data of 2010 is removed from the six-person census.



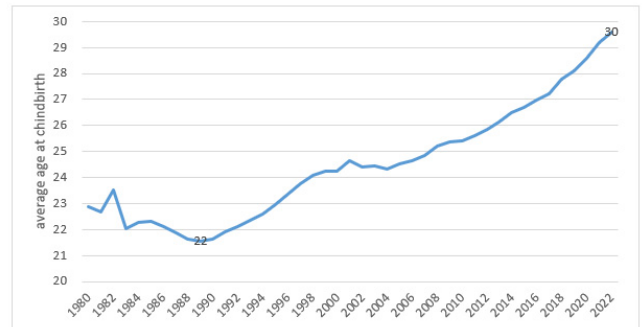
**Figure 4.** Ouhai by age group marriage trend chart  
Data source: Ouhai District seventh census long form data



**Figure 5.** Ouhai by age group marriage trend chart  
Data source: Ouhai District Sixth Population Census long form data

## 2.3. Overall Postponement of the Age of Childbirth

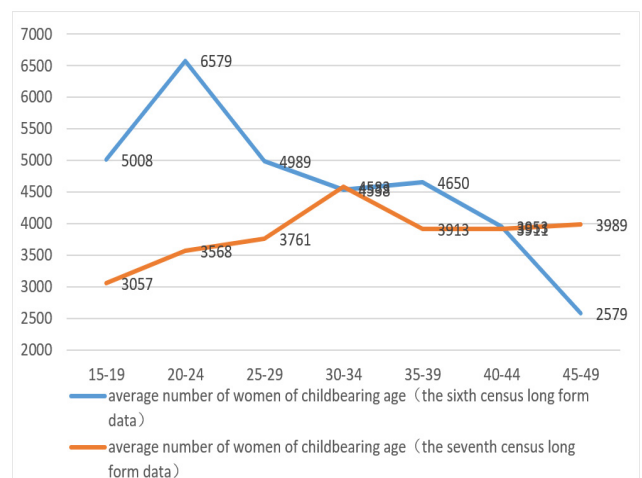
According to the data provided by the Health Care Commission, the average age of women giving birth in Ouhai District continues to rise, and from 1980 to 2022, the average age of women giving birth in Ouhai District is postponed from 22 to 30 years old (Figure 6). Marriage and childbirth have a certain sequence in time, and the postponement of the age of first marriage has a certain impact on the postponement of the age of first childbirth.



**Figure 6.** Average age of women giving birth in Ouhai District  
Data source: Ouhai District Health Committee

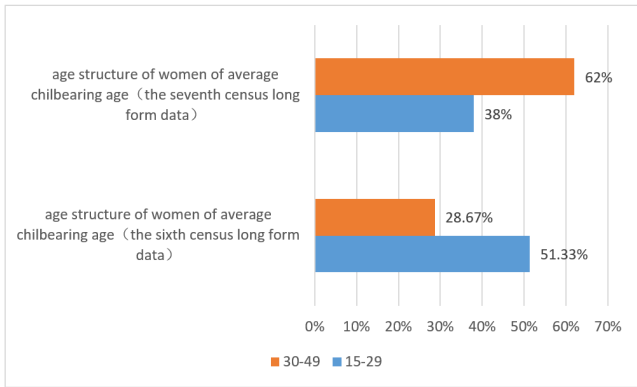
## 2.4. The Size of Women of Childbearing Age Decreases with an Aging Structure

Comparing the data from the Seventh and Sixth Census shows that the number of women of childbearing age in Ouhai decreased by 17%, and the average number of women of childbearing age before 30 years old decreased significantly (Figure 7). Comparing the age composition of women of childbearing age in the resident population in the seventh general population with the six general population data, it is found that the composition of women of childbearing age in the resident population is getting older as time goes by. Figure 8 shows that the original structure of women of childbearing age, which was dominated by the 15-29 age group, has shifted to a structure of women of childbearing age, which is dominated by the 30-49 age group, thus showing a significant delay in the age of childbearing.



**Figure 7.** Comparison of the average number of women of childbearing age by age group in Ouhai  
Data source: Ouhai District, the sixth and seventh census long form data

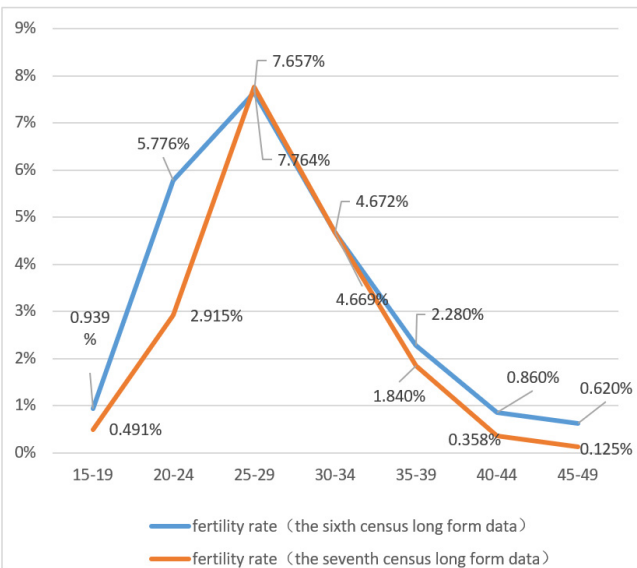




**Figure 8.** Comparison of the average age structure of women of childbearing age in Ou Hai  
Data source: Ou Hai District, the sixth and seventh census long form data

## 2.5. The Fertility Level of Women of Childbearing Age Declined Significantly

Comparing the data of the Seventh and the Sixth Universal Periods, the average fertility rate of women in Ou Hai District declined by about 6 thousand points in each age group, with the most significant decline concentrated in the 20-24 age group (Figure 9).



**Figure 9.** Comparison of fertility rate of women in Ou Hai  
Data source: Ou Hai District, the sixth and seventh census long form data

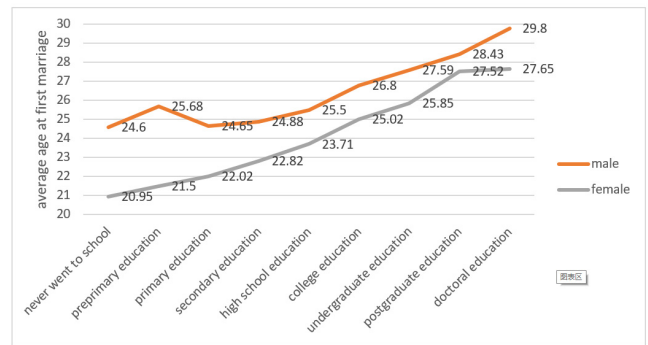
Through the above analysis, it can be confirmed that the phenomenon of postponement of marriage and childbirth in Ou Hai population. The impact of the postponement of marriage and childbearing age on the current fertility level cannot be ignored. The postponement of people's entry into marriage leads to a further delay in childbirth, which in turn leads to a decrease in fertility.

## 3. Analysis of Causes

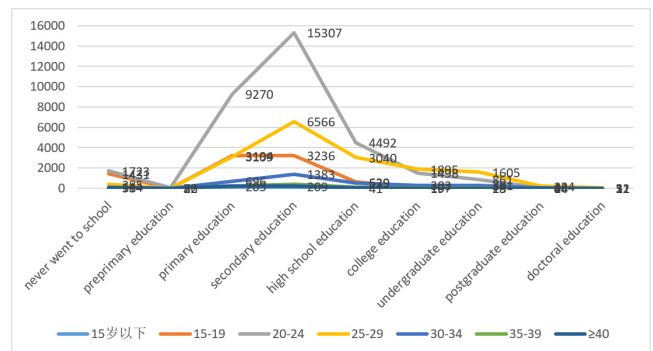
### 3.1. The Relationship between Delayed Marriage and Childbearing and Educational Level

In terms of the correlation between delayed marriage and education, the higher the education level, the higher the age at first marriage and the lower the number of births (Figures

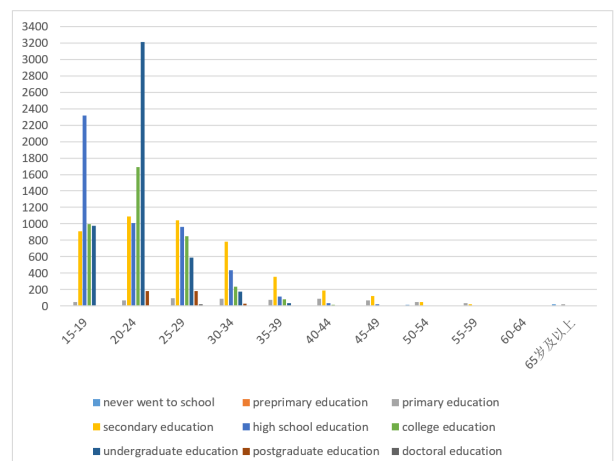
10 and 12). The number of marriages in each age group reached a maximum in junior high school and a minimum with higher education (Figure 11). Among the number of unmarried people, 15-19 and 20-24 age groups are in the age of high school and undergraduate study, respectively, and the largest number of unmarried people in the study stage is in line with the characteristics of students who are in school to focus on their studies; the largest number of unmarried people above 25 years old tend to be those with low education, which reflects that it is more difficult to get married with lower education as the age increases (Figure 12). From the data of the Seventh Poo, the number of births in Ou Hai population from 2019.11.1 to 2020.10.31 decreases with the rise of education level.



**Figure 10.** Average age of first marriage of Ou Hai population influenced by education level  
Data source: Ou Hai District seventh census long form data



**Figure 11.** The number of married people in Ou Hai population is influenced by education level  
Data source: Ou Hai District seventh census long form data



**Figure 12.** The number of unmarried people in Ou Hai is influenced by education level  
Data source: Ou Hai District seventh census long form data

With the improvement of the economic level and the intensification of employment competition, more and more people choose to study for higher education, and under the traditional concept of taking education as the priority, the concept of choosing a spouse with a reciprocal material basis, and the more realistic and rational view of fertility, the marriageable population prefers to choose to consider marriage and children after obtaining a diploma and having a stable job, thus postponing the time of marriage and childbirth.

### 3.2. The Relationship between Delayed Marriage and Childbearing and Occupational Factors

From the correlation between marriage and childbirth postponement and occupational factors, professional and technical personnel, marriage and childbirth postponement is the most obvious (Figure 13, 14). At the same time, it will be found that unlike other occupations, the number of unmarried women is higher than men in the professional and technical professions (Figure 15). Professional and technical personnel such as programmers, medical and nursing personnel, news media practitioners, etc. devote more time to their work, and there is even a 996-working system, which seriously affects their dating, marriage and childbirth. the highest percentage of unmarried citizens above 14 years old are manufacturing employees, social production services and living services employees (Figure 15). The above two occupations are also the occupations with concentrated distribution of Ouhai population (Figure 16), which should be carried out in a targeted way when implementing policies to encourage marriage and childbirth.

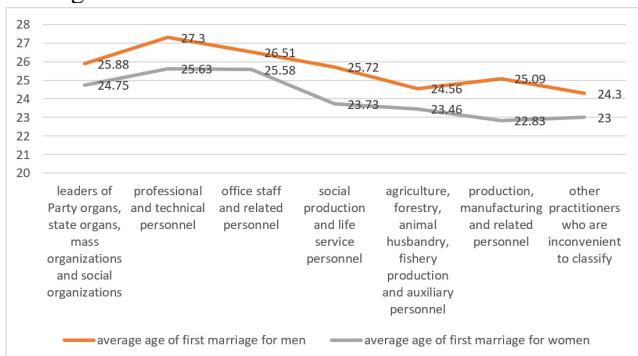


Figure 13. The average age of first marriage in Ouhai is influenced by occupation

Data source: Ouhai District seventh census long form data

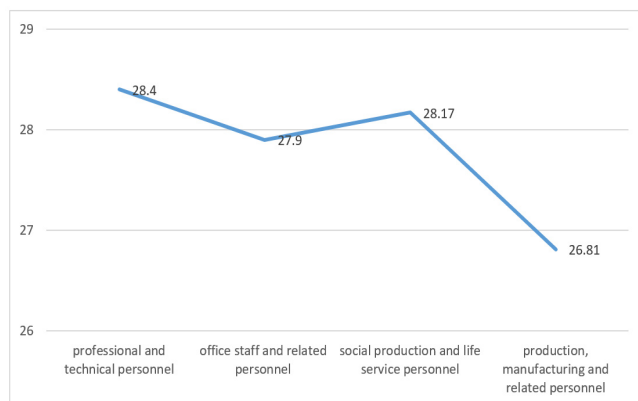


Figure 14. 2019.11.1-2020.10.31 Ouhai average age of first childbirth influenced by occupational factors

Data source: Ouhai District seventh census long form data

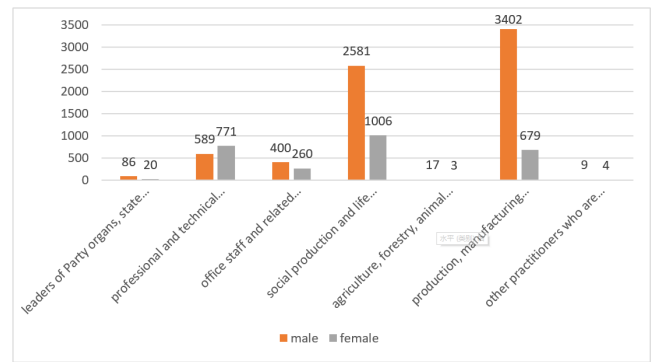


Figure 15. The number of unmarried people over 14 years old in Ouhai District is influenced by occupation

Data source: Ouhai District seventh census long form data

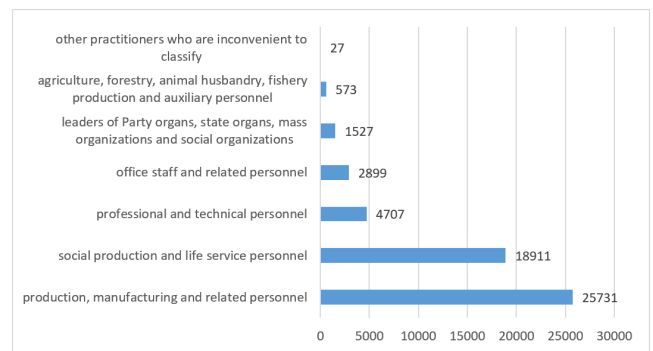


Figure 16. Occupational distribution of Ouhai's population

Data source: Ouhai District seventh census long form data

### 3.3. The Relationship between Marriage Postponement and Urban-Rural Differences

The correlation between marriage postponement and urban-rural differences shows that the urban population has a higher proportion of unmarried people compared to the rural population (Figure 17). At the same time, the number of women in agriculture has the highest average number of live births, although the number is the lowest compared to other sectors (Figures 18, 19). The lack of employment security for women of childbearing age in the urban workplace, the difficulty of employment for women over 35 years of age, and the difficulty of changing jobs have an impact on women's willingness to have children. Therefore, it is especially critical to promote age-appropriate marriage and childbearing among urban working women when implementing marriage and childbearing policies.

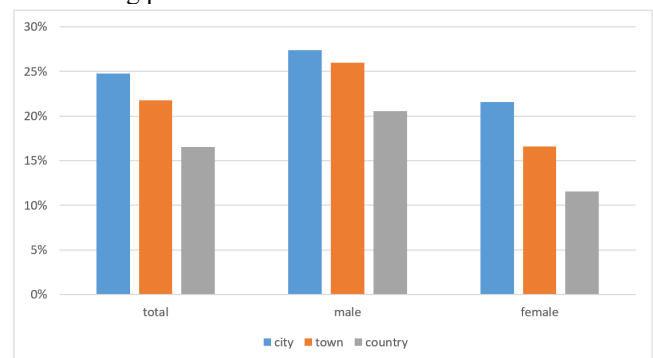
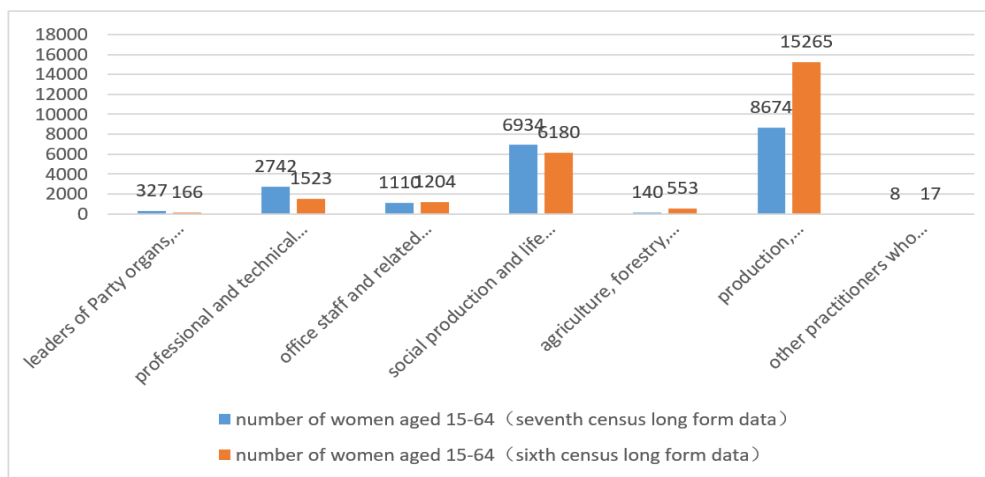
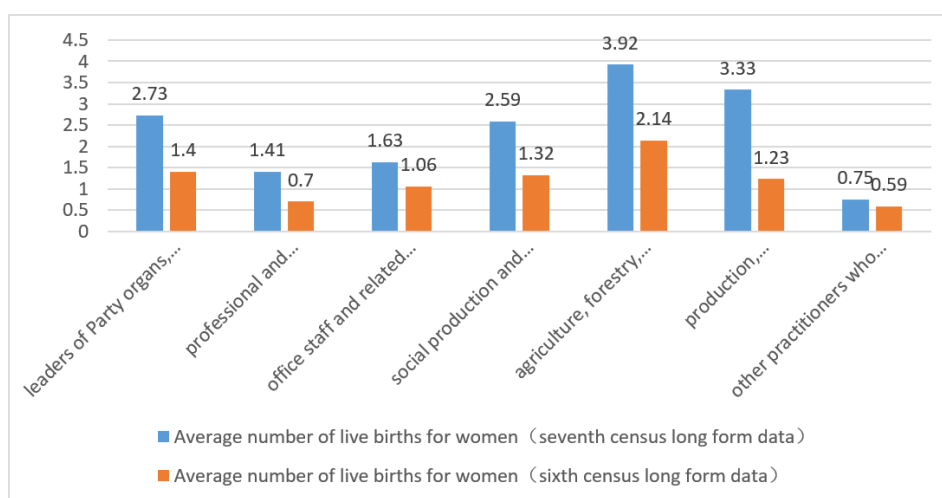


Figure 17. The proportion of unmarried people in Ouhai towns and villages

Data source: Ouhai District seventh census long form data



**Figure 18.** Number of women aged 15-64 by occupation in Ou Hai  
Data source: Ou Hai District seventh census long form data



**Figure 19.** Average number of children born alive to women by occupation in Ou Hai  
Data source: Ou Hai District seventh census long form data

### 3.4. Delayed Marriage and Childcare are Related to Insufficient Time for Childcare and Limited Childcare Resources

The lack of time between school and work, the lack of elderly people at home to help take care of them, the lack of childcare resources, and the high cost of living for childcare make it difficult to take care of infants and children, which is another blockage that affects residents' willingness to get married and have children. Due to the lack of resources for 0-3 years old childcare, parents have too much energy to take care of their children, which affects their willingness to have children

### 3.5. The Relationship between Delayed Marriage and Childbirth and the Housing Problem

The housing problem is a hurdle in front of the residents to get married and give birth, so some people do not consider getting married and giving birth, and some people delayed getting married and giving birth. In terms of the current housing prices in Wenzhou city, many new houses in Ou Hai district have exceeded 30,000 a flat, the average price of new houses in Lucheng district is already above 30,000 a flat, and most new houses in Longwan district are already 20,000 a flat. In March 2022, in order to support the rigid housing needs of

Wenzhou city workers, according to the Municipal People's Government's "notice on supporting real estate enterprises to reduce the burden and increase efficiency to do a good job of stabilizing the economy", the new policy makes the first suite first the down payment ratio for loans was reduced from 30% to 20%; the maximum amount of CPF loans was increased to 1 million yuan under certain time limits, etc. On May 20, 2022, the central bank lowered the LPR again, and the lowest first suite can be executed at a mortgage rate of 4.25%. Assuming a loan of 1 million at 4.25 interest rate, the monthly payment will be about 6,192 yuan if the loan is for 20 years, and 4,919 yuan if the loan is for 30 years. Although the mortgage interest rate decreases, the monthly payment amount decreases in the same period, but according to the analysis of the income of urban and rural residents in Ou Hai district in 2021, the per capita wage income of residents in the district is 30,533 yuan, in front of the mortgage, the per capita wage income of Ou Hai is still a drop in the bucket. If enterprises, especially private enterprises do not contribute to the provident fund for employees, in Ou Hai to buy a house is still a hurdle in front of the residents to marry and give birth.

### 3.6. The Epidemic Brings a Lot of Uncertainty

Song Jian, deputy director of the Population and Development Research Center of Renmin University of China, pointed out that the impact of the epidemic on fertility is mainly direct and indirect in two aspects - for example, the



increase of insecurity and uncertainty about the future makes families may be hesitant to have children in the future, and also reduces people's willingness to have children. In addition, a new crown pneumonia outbreak can directly or indirectly reduce the income of household members, making the impact of childcare costs on fertility even more pronounced. There are many businesses, especially micro and small business units, that do not do well during the New Crown pneumonia outbreak, which not only affects family members' income, but also increases work and family conflicts in the household, adding to the fear or trepidation of childbearing. Of course, there are also those who fear that routine services such as maternal and child health care and maternity checkups will be affected during the epidemic. All of these factors may prompt the public to choose to postpone or even cancel their childbirth plans.

In conclusion, in terms of group characteristics, the age group of citizens who postpone marriage and childbirth is mainly concentrated in the age group of 20-29 years old, and the practitioners are mainly concentrated in professional and technical personnel, highly educated urban population, and also influenced by the employment pressure of working women, childcare problems, housing problems, and many uncertainties brought by the epidemic.

## **4. Policy Recommendations**

The issue of marriage and childbirth not only concerns the long-term development of the country, but also affects the immediate interests and long-term happiness of each family, which is an extremely complex systemic issue. Combined with the Ou Hai District citizens of marriage and childbirth delayed characteristics and its impact factors of the study, in order to change the delay in marriage and childbirth, improve the willingness to marry and raise, and promote long-term balanced development of the population, it is recommended to explore the introduction of a series of public service system arrangements, marriage and childbirth policy support supporting measures, the establishment of a sound family social friendly policy system.

### **4.1. Enhance the Education Service System**

First, establish a more flexible higher education system. Drawing on international experience, students who have completed their credits after 2 years of enrollment can apply for graduation, reforming the previous rigid requirement that graduation can only be achieved after completing the required number of years of study. For those who are unable to complete the credits within the academic period due to marriage, childbirth, internship, etc., we provide a convenient mechanism of "suspension-restoration". Secondly, the mandatory requirement of "fresh graduates" in recruitment should be abolished to promote the employment of female college students with childbirth arrangements. The current model of "graduation-employment-family" will be broken by extending the retention period of "fresh graduates" from 2 years to 5 years, encouraging female college students to arrange marriage and childbirth according to their own wishes after graduation, and providing equal competition for female employment after childbirth. The government should encourage female students to arrange marriage and childbirth according to their own wishes after graduation, and provide equal competition for women's employment after giving birth, and promote women to marry at the right age. Third, compulsory education should be of high quality and balanced.

Ouhai District Education Bureau released "2021 Ou Hai District compulsory education school enrollment implementation methods", Ou Hai District two groups of schools officially implement multi-school enrollment. However, because several schools are not considered hot schools, so the impact on housing prices is limited. To explore the decoupling of compulsory education and household registration, housing, etc., to promote the equalization of basic public education services, and efforts to crack the "school choice fever". By increasing the number of public primary and secondary schools, optimizing the allocation of quality educational resources and teacher resources, narrowing the gap in educational resources between urban and rural areas and regions. Fourth, to extend the number of years of compulsory education, reduce the fees of private schools, and effectively reduce family education expenses.

### **4.2. Optimize the Birth Service System**

First, strictly implement the decision of the State Council of the Party Central Committee on optimizing the fertility policy to promote long-term balanced development of the population, and link household admission, school enrollment and job entry with the birth of "second" and "third" children to promote the implementation of the task of optimizing the fertility policy. The second is to establish a system of sharing the cost of childbirth. The cost of childbirth should be shared by the government, enterprises and families, to support employees to give birth to two children, three children enterprises, especially those involved in professional and technical, manufacturing, social production services and living services, to give a certain percentage, ladder tax incentives and local government subsidies. Third, to protect women's reproductive rights. Ou Hai District places the promotion of women and children's cause in a prominent position in the work of the government, and the municipal indicators of the Women's Development Plan are all in the forefront of the city. Ou Hai District Women's Federation, in the context of digital reform, designed and built the "Women's Wealth" women's exclusive entrepreneurial employment platform to achieve the overall improvement of women's entrepreneurial and employment capabilities. However, the stability of women of childbearing age needs to be improved, starting from the maternity leave time, maternity insurance, pregnancy health care, psychological guidance and other aspects, the formation of the whole process of protection and care mechanism to eliminate the doubts of women of childbearing age, to ensure that women after maternity leave smoothly return to their original positions, positions and income will not be affected. Encourage units to extend maternity leave, nursing leave and parental leave, improve maternity benefits, and increase the amount of maternity allowance. Fourth, strengthen supervision and inspection and crack down on violations of laws and policies. It is recommended that the human resources system monitor the "996" work system and that the procuratorial authorities initiate public interest litigation for the workers concerned. A comprehensive and systematic inspection of the implementation of maternity policies and employment security policies will be carried out, focusing on enterprises involved in manufacturing, social production and living, etc. For violations of policies, rectification will be carried out through interviews, fines and notifications to ensure that all maternity incentives are put into practice.

### 4.3. The Establishment of Parenting Services System

First, do a good job in compulsory education after-school services, September 2021, ouhai district to carry out compulsory education after-school services, to provide various types of hosting services, to solve the compulsory education students after school, evening study, summer and other time periods of hosting, while the school after-school care services reflect the public welfare inclusive, for students from economically disadvantaged families to participate in after-school care services, to give fee waivers or subsidies, it is recommended that the The children of "two" and "three" families to participate in after-school care services, to give greater reductions or subsidies. Second, the development of inclusive child care service model. since 2019, ouhai district to explore new paths of child care reform and innovation, but the coverage of inclusive infant and child care service institutions in the region still needs to be improved, to achieve close to the child care service coverage of urban communities, townships (streets) infant and child care service institutions basic full coverage. In new commercial housing, relocation housing concentrated development and construction areas and areas with a large number of children aged 0-3 years old, arrange land for the construction of public child care services for infants and toddlers, configure and build child care facilities; encourage and support kindergartens that have the conditions to open nursery classes, and vigorously develop embedded kindergarten nursery classes in industrial parks; support domestic enterprises to expand child care services, provide full nursing care, door-to-door services, short-time custodial nursing care, etc. Flexible and diversified care services to increase the supply of resources for childcare services. To develop special plans and action plans in accordance with the service radius, service population, service scope, and really put them in place. Strengthen the education and training of teachers, pediatricians, and infant and toddler caregivers in childcare institutions.

### 4.4. Stabilize Housing Prices and Prices, and Strengthen Policy Incentives

First, families who give birth to two or three children are given preferential policies on home purchase and rental, and when buying ordinary commercial houses, they are given priority in the lottery, preferential housing prices, preferential bank interest rates, and increased provident fund loan amounts, etc.; when allotting public rental housing, they can be included in the priority allocation and given appropriate care in the choice of household type, etc.; when approving residential bases, they can be given priority in approval and enjoy preferential treatment, etc. Second, increase the policy incentives for the birth of two children, three children of the family to improve the birth of subsidies, the issuance of special subsidies, "for each additional birth of a woman to set a special birth incentive" to study and demonstrate, as appropriate, into the birth incentive subsidy mechanism; early childhood education and compulsory education for two children, three children to issue parenting subsidies.

### 4.5. Improve the Medical Security System

First, the opening of the epidemic and other public health emergencies under the maternity green channel, simplify and optimize the maternity process, reduce maternal concerns brought about by the epidemic. Second, improve the maternity insurance system, improve the reimbursement ratio for maternity, pregnancy and infant health checkups, increase the amount of maternity allowance and maternity medical subsidy, simplify the reimbursement procedures and shorten the reimbursement time. For items such as assisted reproduction examination and treatment, postpartum repair, artificial insemination, painless childbirth, and child rehabilitation, consider including them in medical insurance or increasing the reimbursement ratio to reduce the cost of childbirth for the public. Third, improve the children's medical insurance system, expand the scope of participants, lower the starting standard, increase the reimbursement ratio, and expand the scope of reimbursement. Fourth, expand the childhood immunization program and expand the scope of free vaccines for infants and children.

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