Research Journal of Medical Sciences 10 (4): 256-260, 2016
ISSN: 1815-9346

The Comparison of Plans to Child Bearing among Employed Women and Housewives Based on the Perceived Need Model

[1]Nastran Asadi, [2]Marzieh Kaboudi and [3]Hossein Ashtarian and [2]Nader Salari
[1]Department of Counseling, School of Nursing and Midwifery,
[2]School of Nursing and Midwifery,
[3]School of Public Health, University of Medical Sciences, Kermanshah, Iran

Abstract: Fertility is the most important factor of demographic change which is affective on the number, size and structure of the population. Changing family pattern, full-time employment of women, the influence of modernity and Western lifestyles has led to changes in the role of women in all aspects of life, including childbearing. Attitudes toward childbearing, social pressure to bear children and the control over the needed facilities and support resources are three main factors of intent to fertility. Given the decision for bringing or not bringing the child isn't formed randomly as well as the need toperform a theory-based study on the employment and childbearing of women, in this study using the "perceived need" model, the childbearing intent in women is examined. This analytical cross-sectional study was done on 310 married employed and unemployed 18-45 years old women referred to clinics of the Asadabad city using perceived need questionnaireto childbearing. The results showed that there is no significant difference between the intention of childbearing, perceived need to childbearing, subjective norms about childbearing as well as attitudes to childbearing outcomes in the two groups of employed and unemployed. But in the perceived control about childbearing, there is significant difference between the two groups. The intention of childbearing among working women and housewives (unemployed) is similar in theemployed and unemployed women and the employment do not have a negative impact on childbearing plans.

Key words: Women's employment, the perceived need, intention of childbearing, plan, Iran

INTRODUCTION

Iran in recent decades has experienced great changes in demographic. A known indicator of childbearing is general fertility tune. In simpler words to the general fertility tune isdetermining the number of children who will substitute parents, if this indicator is at 1.2 children or less means the gradual reduction and eventual extinction of generation. Fertility transition in Iran non-continuously in the time interval of three decades (from early 1350 to late 1370 [in Persian date]) took place. Referring to figures of Statistical Center of Iran and the United Nations in 1385 [in Persian date] the country's fertility rate is 1.8 children. This figure in 1389 [in Persian date] has been 1.6 children per mother. The proof of the authenticity of the mentioned figure despite the critics, the issue of the gradual extinction of generation is proposed and also considering the migration factor is reinforced and undoubtedly that for its improvement the measures with appropriate methods should be done. Based onscenario of low population growth which has been published by United Nations in 2010 if Iran continues to do so to replace the population and does not have any program to balance it, in the next 80 years will experience a population of 31 million people that 47% of people would be older than 60 years.

Althoughm some scholars believe the speed of fertility transition in Iran is influenced by family planning, but emphasize on the role of social and intellectual changes in the fertility transition.In the current social and political conditions of country, childbearing not only as a social challenge but also is considered as a crisis for next decades. Giventhe most important institution of the field of demography is family the study of the factors that has led to change in the style and structure of the family and thus reduction in fertility seems necessary. Today, reduce the desire to procreate (childbearing), delayed marriage and thereby increase the average age at marriage has been placed on the list of social issues of country (Abbasi *et al*., 2005). Iran is now among the 10 countries that is moving quickly toward old age and is the sixth largest country in the world that its people closing to old age (Marzieh *et al*., 2013). The changing pattern of

Corresponding Author: Marzieh Kaboudi, School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Medical Sciences, Kermanshah, Iran

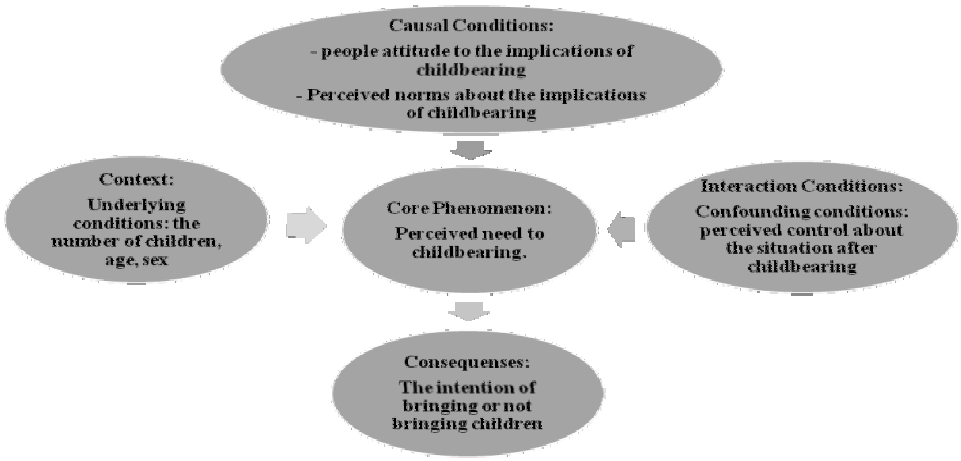

Fig. 1: The perceived need model (in Persian data)

family, individualism, full-time employment, especially for women, the cost of maintaining the children, urbanization are the causes of population reduction in Western societies. In Iran, the influence of modernity and Western lifestyles has led to certain changes in women's roles in all aspects of life, including childbearing. Partial improvement of women's status and position in recent years and the simultaneous rapid fertility decline has created this question what has been the women independency in reduced fertility in Iran (Eshaghi *et al*., 2012). It seems that tend to have fewer children is the sign that women have achieved to new discoveries including those that have come out of their small family environment, continue their education are active in social relations and active in all areas and of course they have plans to be better mothers to their less children. In fact, women today seedtheir female identity in other places other than home and motherhood. Among women, a kind of change in attitudes towards marriage and the roles of wife and mother and even domestic work have been occurred that somehow have followed by humiliation of these roles.

Based on previous studies the women's employment is one of the effective variables on fertility. Employment of women is affected by the social, economic, cultural structureand personality of women and there is significant and positive relationship between activity and marriage age and thus women fertility with the activity. Fertility rate has been increased by reducing the activity (Hossein 1983). Working women with earning income and financial independence will have more freedom and authority in individual and family decision-making and also will power in determining the time and the number of childbearing. But at the same time working women face many challenges in the field of child bearing that affect their decisions in this context (Eshaghi *et al*., 2012). It seems that the process of fertility decline in Iran over the past three decades, resulting developmentswhich has taken place in the key component of people behavior and attitudestoward fertility that is dependent on factors which impact the decisions of couples in formation of family and an ideal family. It seems that women who are planning to enter the world of work expect fewer children, marry later and are more likely to remain childless but sometimes thislow childbearing actionamong working women is contrary to their desire and they have adopted e act of "emergency little child" assessing their conditions of employment and labor law (Eshaghi *et al*., 2012). Reproductive (fertility) behavior is influenced by factors of micro and macro levels.On the other hand, the fertility behavior as individual action is influenced by factors like employment status and education and on the other hand, given that fertility behavior of any group of women is happened in their special social context, so is also influenced by the macro level factors such as economic status and the availability or lack of contraception. Based on this conducting research that show people inner motivations of childbearing and decision making processes in the field, it seems necessary.

Choosing a template isthe first step in the process of planning of any health education program that keeps the program in the right direction (Guvenc *et al*., 2011). The perceived need model is a new modelsimilar to planned behavior which is the result of a PhD thesis in reproductive health that 1392 [in Persian date] has obtained in the result of a qualitative research and presented (Fig. 1). Based on the funda mental assumptionthe humans beings are meaning-making creatures and give order and meaning to the around world and human actions are based on subjective choices and

individual reasons. Accordingly, the decision to bring or not bringing the child isn't formed randomly but its basis is the elimination or reduction of perceived needs (Kaboudi, 2013).

Perceived need to childbearing means an individual feels that having children can decrease a part of a person's perceived needs. After creating this need, if a person decides who is able to control the circumstances and aftermath of childbearing in his "intention childbearing" is created but if the amount of the control is improper, the person decide to not have the child. Behavioral intention is the most important determinant of individual behavior as well as the beginning of the treatment process (Kaboudi, 2013).

Despite the fact that studies have investigated the relationship between employment and fertility behavior, the underlying factors of shaping this behavior as to individual behavior has not been studied. Thus, the aim of this study is to compare and examine the working women and housewives attitudes towards childbearing, perceived need, subjective norms and perceived control implications that makes up the themes of their the plan and desire to bear children.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this cross sectional study, two groups of employed and unemployed women referred to health centers of Asadabad City are selected. The sample consisted of 310 subjects who selected based on inclusion criteria from among them and were divided into two groups of 155 people of employed and unemployed. Sampling was stratified. For the sampling, first the population of the Asadabad City based on geographic area was divided into 4 sections. In each region there is a clinic. Then with quota for each clinic, working women and housekeeping (unemployed) who had the inclusion criteria were selected conveniently who referred to clinic. Inclusion criteria included married women 18-45 years old who are not educating.

The instrument used in this study is perceived need to childbearing questionnaire which has been designed in a doctoral dissertation in health and its validity and reliability have been studied (Kaboudi, 2013). The questionnaire contains 48 questions. The first section consists of 24 questions that examine the information related to demographic characteristics such as age, education, employment and housing. In the second part there are questions related to 5 structures ofattitude, subjective norms, perceived need, perceived control and intention of childbearing. For data analysis Software SPSS Version 21 was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that the mean age of employed womenis 34/28±6/16 years and the mean age of the housewives (unemployed) is 30/92±5/974 years. The investigation of job status of studied working (employed) women group shows that 83/2% of employees had government jobs, 16/1% self-employed and 0/6% seasonal job. The results of the analysis of the monthly salary of family showed that monthly salary mean of employed people is 1533935 Tomans (in Persian). The fertility rate of employed women showed that 36/8% were without fertility, 27.7% once, 27.7% twice, 7.8% three times with pregnancy. These values in housewives group (unemployed) was 20/7, 35/5, 30/9 and 10/3%, respectively. In addition, 2/6% in this group had fourth fertile that in employed women was zero (Table 1).

The main results showed that intention ofchildbearing which is the main objective of the study in theemployed and unemployed women had no significant difference ($p<0.703$). The intention of childbearing among employed women and housewives (unemployed) was estimated 67/9 and 68/2%, respectively. Also, in the perceived need to fertility in both groups there was no significant difference ($p<0.617$). Thus, the perceived need to fertility in both employed women and housewives (unemployed) (62/2 and 63/6, respectively) looks the same and this findings show that employed women's need to bearing child isn't less than housewives (unemployed).

Between attitudes toward childbearing implications in the employed and unemployed people in both groups there was no significant statistical difference ($p<0.380$). The basis for this assessment is formed by ideas, beliefs and values accepted about consequences (implications) of childbearing. In the field of subjective norms about childbearing there was no significant difference between employed and unemployed women ($p<0.189$). This means that important people in individual's live and its impact on decisions regarding fertility (childbearing) whether inemployed or in the unemployed women is similar. But the perceived behavioral control about childbearing between the two groups was statistically significant ($p<0.000$) (Table 2 and 3).

According to Hijazi's study who had examined the attitudes of employed women toward second child in the Isfahan City, yet desire to have second child in employed women is high, although with raising job rank and level of education this desireis reduced. But in our study, despite the employed women education is significantly higher than housewives nonetheless intention of childbearing is the same in both groups. Two variables of employment status and literacy which in the previous studies, their

Table 1: Some of the demographic variablein both employed and unemployed women

	Mean (SD)		
Variables	Employed women	Unemployed women	Statistical test
Individual (%)			
Women's age	34.28±6.16	30.92±5.97	0.000 (Mann-Whitney U)
Husband's age	37.86±7.37*	35.81±6.28	0.018 (Mann-Whitney U)
Mean of children	0.99±0.85	1.20±0.77*	0.006 (Mann-Whitney U)
Duration of marriage	10.22±7.68	10.60±6.60	0.640 t-test
Women's education			
0-5	4 (2.6%)	31 (20.0%)	0.000
6-12	25 (16.1%)	95 (61.3%)	Pearson Chi-square
>12	126 (81.3%)	29 (18.8%)	
Husband's education			
0-5	2 (1.3 %)	27 (17.4%)	0.000
6-12	36 (23.3%)	90 (58.1%)	Pearson Chi-square
>12	117 (75.5%)	38 (24.8%)	
Number of children			
0	57 (36.8)	32 (20.6)	
1	43 (27.70)	55 (35.5)	
2	43 (27.70)	48 (31.0)	
3	12 (07.70)	16 (10.3)	
≥4	00 (0000)	04 (02.6)	

Table 2: Prevalence and rate of perceived need to plan (intention) of childbearing and perceived need to childbearing in both employed and unemployed women

	Perceived need to childbearing		Childbearing plans		
Variables	Does not have	Has it	Does not have	Has it	Total
Employed					
Number	59	96	50	106	155
Percent	37/8	67/2	32/1	67/9	100
Housewife (unemployed)					
Number	57	98	49	105	155
Percent	36/4	63/6	31/8	68/2	100
Total					
Number	115	195	99	211	310
Percent	37/1	62/9	31/9	68/1	100

Test: Mann-Whitney U; 11632/000; 11721/500; the significance level; 0/617; 0/703

Table 3: t-test in two groups in terms of attitudes, subjective norms and perceived control over childbearing

	t-test				
Variables	Values	df	SE	MD	Sig.
Attitude	0/879	287/950	0/81429	0/71613	0/380
Abstract norms	1/317	307/588	2/28377	2/98085	0/189
Perceived control	10/852	270/648	2/77943	30/16129	0/000

significant effects on the fertility behavior of women had been revealed, more macro variables such as the level of development of the province, contraceptive prevalence and age at first marriage are also affective (Gilan and Sadeghi, 2015). Given the low variance of inter-provincial fertility and reduction of fertility in all provinces, the subject shows the spreading of a specific type of fertility behavior among women in our country. "Diffusion model" describes the acceptance of change or innovation by people over time. According to this theory, fertility decline resulting from increasing the attitudes and behaviors which earlier in the community have been very rare or do not exist and the increasing prevalence of them is the consequences of the spread of the attitudes and behaviors from a part of population to another (Casterline, 2001). Given the women through mass media and friend groups be familiar with a lot of classesand educational and recreational facilities and cultural communities and even with lack of education and attend in these places social and to operate; this in itself makes women spend more time outdoors and to have the opportunity to perform these activities and avoid losing them, bring fewer children (Jalal *et al*., 2013). Therefore, this decrease in fertility in the housewives (unemployed) has been seen appropriate with employed women and could close their intention of childbearing (fertility) than can bedue to approaching their attitude to each other. John Klubas in his study showed that taking into account positive and positive attitudes towards fertility make easier creating fertility programs among parents. When positive attitude towards the consequences of having a child is stronger, more likely in the short term they're going to have childbearing. Ajzen also in study showed that the dominant factor in the decision of parents to have a

second child is their belief on the subject of whether having other child males their lives better or worse (Ajzen and Klobas, 2013). Our country is in a transition phase and childbearingis changing as many believe in the country so as neither follow the traditional society nor modern society. As a result the fertility behavior change in the couples could be the result of major changes in their attitudes towards ideals and beliefs about fertility and childbearing (Mansourian and Khoshnevis, 2006). I the category of "social norms" the results also showed that in both groups there was no significant difference between two groups and women's employment has not been the cause of less or more effect of this factor. Social support means that the person is interestedto others and others feel value for her/him. The fact that he/she belongs to a social network is the most powerful strategies to deal with stressful situations. Social capitalshave a direct and positive correlation with trends in fertility (childbearing) and provide a kind of valuable resource in people's lives. Despite social interaction, help exchange and social support, people will achieve their aspirations and therefore all of these factorshave a decisive impact on tent to fertility (childbearing) and increases tends to childbearing. But in perceived control factors such as family income, individual's health, available child care or parents for foster and care and levels of confidence of the of stability in these factors had been raised. Based on the results the rate of perceived behavioral control between employed and unemployed women was significantly different. This means that these factors have controlling and different role in the employed women. Based on the results, the mean of income of employed women's husbands is more than housewives (unemployed) as well as the majority of employed women in response to the housing status have chosen property option that may indicate that more control in employed women than housewives (unemployed). But according to the results in this study, although there are differences between women's perceived control but ultimately there is no difference in the intention of having children. This is similar to the results of Klubase's study.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that the intention of childbearing among employed women has no statistically significant difference with housewives (unemployed women) and their intention of childbearing is almost identical and a kind of convergence in attitudes, needs and childbearing intentions can be seen between the two groups.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study is finishing a graduate degree in midwifery counseling, so all the people who helped us to achieving the conclusion of this research are appreciated, especially participated women.

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