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Changes in the Perception of Marital Roles and Factors Associated with Work-Family Conflict



Eunjung Kim

Changes in the Perception of Marital
Roles and Factors Associated with
Work-Family Conflict

Eunjung Kim, Associate Research Fellow

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Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs
Building D, 370 Sicheong-daero, Sejong city
30147 KOREA

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1

Introduction

1

Introduction <<

Socioeconomic changes and a higher level of educational attainment have led to increases in Korean women's contributions to the labor market. Despite their increased economic participation, however, most housework and childcare responsibilities still lie with women, which often leads to work-family conflict. Work-family conflict occurs when the demands of family and work are incompatible. Not surprisingly, a majority of those who experience this conflict are married women working outside the home, upon whom the pressure of domestic responsibility and work responsibilities continue to mount. Research on work-family conflict so far has been conducted from the standpoints of sociology, psychology, and business management. Sociology has focused on analyzing patterns and causes of work-family conflict, while psychology has focused on the effects of the conflict on mental health; business management has focused on the effect on productivity and achievement (Yamaguchi, 2010). In Korea, work-family conflict started to draw increased attention as the nation's low birth rate became a national issue. It has been pointed out that the conflicting responsibilities of family and work that married working women bear are the major cause of Korea's low birth

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rate. In response, a considerable range of family friendly policies have been adopted to help these women balance family and work.

Tae Hong Kim et al. (2009) took the view that policy on work-family balance should address vacation time, leave, flexible hours, and childcare support (workplace daycare center, after-school care, etc.) Policies on these work-family balance matters focus on reducing the economic burden of childcare. Vacation time, leave, and flexible hours (reduced hours) provide time-based support, while childcare support provides service-based support. More specifically, vacation time, leave, and flexible hours allow parents to opt out of the labor market for a while to secure time for child rearing. For this reason, this policy approach cannot be considered direct childcare support provided by the society.

Despite the adoption of various family friendly policies, many working women still experience career interruption and work-family conflict imposed by childbirth and child rearing. It has been reported that most women who experience career interruption end up leaving the labor force altogether as they are unable to find reliable and affordable childcare, or otherwise continue to encounter difficulties balancing work and family life owing to rigid work hours and long work days (Young-Ok Kim et al. 2014; Yim Ryang Ryu, 2009; Gi Nam Park, 2009). To date, child birth and child rearing are major causes of

work-family conflicts for women. Korea's current ultra-low birth rate desperately demands adoption of effective policies to reconcile the conflict and boost fertility.

Another factor influencing work-family conflict is individuals' value system. According to existing research, family values, work-related values, and perception of gender roles are factors associated with work-family conflict (Eun Young Nah & Cha, 2010). Related Korean research has focused on attitudes regarding gender roles, work orientation, and familism (Young Mi Sohn & Park, 2015). Sohn's analysis was conducted from the two separate perspectives of work-family balance and work-family promotion. The analysis found that work orientation and extrinsic work value contribute to work-family conflict, while work orientation and family orientation contribute to work-family promotion. In other words, work orientation can at once intensify work-family conflict and contribute to work-family promotion. On the other hand, a study by Ji Sook Han and Ryu (2007) found that attitudes regarding gender roles and family orientation exerted a significant influence on work-family promotion, whereas their influence on work-family conflict was insignificant. These findings suggest that the level of work-family conflict experienced by working individuals is more or less stable across society, and that it is independent of the individual's family values and attitudes toward gender roles. So far, the suggested effects of individuals'

value systems on work-family balance vary across studies.

The notion that an individual's value system affects work-family balance is rooted in role theory. Role theory is typically used to explain the conflict an individual experiences while trying to fulfill his/her family role and work role. Various roles occupied by an individual can cause conflict, but they can also have a positive effect on successful fulfillment of those roles. An individual's resources are distributed according to the various roles he/she needs to fulfill. Although a variety of perspectives can be adopted in considering such resources, this study will focus on the time resource required for fulfilling domestic responsibilities (such as house work and childcare) in order to investigate its effects on work-family conflict.

With regard to the various research findings discussed above, the current study incorporates secondary data to examine the trends in value systems and work-family conflicts. Findings of the examination are subsequently analyzed to identify how perceptions regarding gender roles within a family and time spent on childcare affect the work-family balance.

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Changes in values and work–family conflict

1. Data
2. Changes in attitude toward having children and marital roles in a family
3. Work–family conflict and changes in the amount of time spent on housework and childcare

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Changes in values and work–family conflict <<

1. Data

The current study examined changes in values and trends in work-family conflict by analyzing the available secondary data. For this, we used data provided by the Korean Longitudinal Survey of Women and Families, the Panel study on Korean Children, the National Fertility and Family Health/Welfare Survey, and the National Family Survey. A total of 9,068 households containing female household members between 19–64 years of age was extracted for the Korean longitudinal survey of women and families, and the female members of selected households participated in the survey. Items in the survey are distributed across the three major areas of family, work, and daily life. For the current study, survey data collected in the first year (2007), second year (2008), third year (2009), and fourth year (2010) were used. “Two-income household” refers to a family where both parents work outside the home, and “single-income household” to a family where the female respondent stays home while her spouse works outside of the home.

The panel study on Korean children collected a preliminary sample consisting of a total of 2,562 consenting households

with babies born between April-July 2008 in medical institutes nationwide whose annual delivery count was 500 or higher as of 2006. Of these, a final sample of 2,150 households was extracted. For the current study, data collected from the first year (2008) through the fourth year (2011) were used. The survey tracks the babies' growth and development; babies included in the first year's survey were between the ages of four and ten months. From a longitudinal perspective, they can be understood as babies who were less than one-year-old in the first year (2008), one-year-old in the second year (2009), two-years-old in the third year (2010), and three-years-old in the fourth year (2011).

The national fertility and family health/welfare survey collects data required to identify trends in family relationships and family responsibilities to prepare relevant policy measures. Following the initial survey in 1982, the survey has been conducted every three years. The study population consists of married women between the ages of 15-59 years based on the national population and housing survey data. For the current study, data from 2003 and 2006 were used.

The national family survey provides foundational data with which to measure trends in Korean families so as to prepare effective family policies. Beginning with the initial survey of 2005, the survey has been conducted every five years. For the current study, data from 2005 and 2010 were used.

2. Changes in attitude toward having children and marital roles in a family

Sociocultural changes accompany changes in family values and child-related values. Table 1 and Table 2 display changes in attitudes toward child bearing, which are analyzed according to the Korean longitudinal survey of women and families, and the panel study on Korean children, respectively.

As shown in Table 1, there was a little decrease over the years in the proportion of respondents who replied “I strongly agree” for the survey item “I think it is beneficial to have children early in the marriage.” However, the proportion of respondents who answered “I tend to agree” also increased a little, suggesting that child-related values did not change significantly between 2007 and 2012. On the other hand, in the case of the survey item “I think children are necessary in a marriage,” the proportion of respondents who answered “I strongly agree,” or “I tend to agree” decreased a bit, whereas the proportion of respondents who answered “I tend to disagree,” or “I strongly disagree” increased a bit, which suggests that respondents’ attitudes toward child bearing made a slight shift in the direction of voluntary childlessness.

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〈Table 1〉 Attitudes toward child bearing I (2007, 2008, 2010, 2012)

(unit: %, persons)

Category		I strongly agree	I tend to agree	I tend to disagree	I strongly disagree	No. of persons
It is beneficial to have children early in the marriage	2007	22.6	47.0	25.7	4.7	9,980
	2008	22.4	51.9	22.7	3.1	8,364
	2010	22.1	52.7	22.2	3.0	7,999
	2012	21.9	52.8	22.3	2.9	7,658
Children are necessary in a marriage	2007	-	-	-	-	-
	2008	35.6	47.3	15.1	2.0	8,364
	2010	33.5	48.5	15.7	2.3	7,999
	2012	33.6	47.6	16.2	2.5	7,658
Divorce is still possible even when there are children involved	2007	8.8	39.5	34.0	17.7	9,977
	2008	6.7	39.9	38.5	14.9	8,364
	2010	5.0	40.0	38.6	16.4	7,999
	2012	7.5	40.6	37.7	14.2	7,658

Source: Korean Longitudinal Survey of Women and Families, Korean Women's Development Institute

The panel study of Korean children conducted during the same period shows that the proportion of respondents who answered affirmatively (I tend to agree, I strongly agree) to the survey item “Married couple should have children” decreased in 2008 and 2011 to 63.4% and 61.5%, respectively. Also, the proportion of respondents who answered “Having children is a must to retain the family line” decreased from 26.9% to 18.4%. The findings are similar to those of the Korean longitudinal study of women and families, which suggests that attitudes toward having children are changing. In addition, the proportion of respondents who answered affirmatively to the survey item “Being a parent is a valuable life experience” decreased from

96.3% to 93.5%. As for the survey item “Children can provide financial safety net when I am old and retired,” the proportion of affirmative responses decreased significantly from 17.1% to 9.6%, indicating a precipitous decline in the economic value of having children. Nonetheless, the proportion of affirmative responses regarding the survey item “Having children is my social duty” increased from 24.7% to 28.0%, which suggests that despite the wavering attitudes toward having children at the individual level, attitudes at the social level are increasing. Such a change is thought to be attributable to the Korean society’s various efforts to spread awareness regarding the severity of the nation’s low birth rate while highlighting the importance of robust future generations for sustainable growth.

〈Table 2〉 Attitudes toward child bearing II (2008–2011)

(unit: %, persons)

Category		I strongly disagree	I tend to disagree	Neutral	I tend to agree	I strongly agree	No. of persons
Becoming a parent is a valuable life experience	2008	0.1	0.4	3.2	20.7	75.6	1,863
	2009	0.1	0.5	4.9	32.4	62.1	1,896
	2010	0.1	0.5	5.0	36.3	58.1	1,772
	2011	0.0	0.5	6.0	37.7	55.8	1,702
Children strengthen marital relationship	2008	0.1	1.3	9.0	32.3	57.3	1,862
	2009	0.4	1.6	9.0	41.2	47.8	1,895
	2010	0.1	1.4	8.4	44.9	45.3	1,770
	2011	0.2	1.6	8.8	42.7	46.7	1,702
Children can alleviate loneliness in old age	2008	0.4	4.1	12.8	39.9	42.9	1,862
	2009	0.4	5.6	16.5	45.7	31.7	1,890
	2010	0.3	5.6	17.5	46.1	30.5	1,770
	2011	0.6	3.0	14.2	47.5	34.6	1,701
Children can provide a financial safety net in old age	2008	6.3	34.4	42.3	14.1	3.0	1,862
	2009	6.4	38.0	41.4	11.9	2.3	1,894
	2010	7.8	37.5	41.9	10.2	2.5	1,769
	2011	12.2	42.9	35.3	7.9	1.7	1,700
Married couples must	2008	3.0	14.2	19.5	36.9	26.5	1,862

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Category		I strongly disagree	I tend to disagree	Neutral	I tend to agree	I strongly agree	No. of persons
have children	2009	3.3	16.2	20.3	37.0	23.2	1,895
	2010	3.0	15.0	21.7	38.1	22.2	1,772
	2011	3.8	14.9	19.9	38.5	23.0	1,702
Having children is necessary to keep the family line	2008	16.7	29.6	26.7	19.5	7.4	1,862
	2009	15.7	33.9	28.3	16.2	5.8	1,894
	2010	17.9	34.5	28.1	15.1	4.4	1,770
	2011	21.3	32.3	28.0	13.9	4.5	1,702
Having children is my social duty	2008	14.9	27.9	32.5	18.6	6.1	1,861
	2009	12.7	26.0	35.1	20.4	5.9	1,894
	2010	10.9	26.4	35.0	21.1	6.6	1,771
	2011	11.3	24.4	36.3	21.4	6.6	1,699

Source: Panel Study of Korean Children, Korea Institute of Childcare and Education

Table 3 displays results regarding changes in the perception of gender roles. The proportion of respondents who answered affirmatively to the survey item “The ideal arrangement is for men to go to work and for women to stay home to take care of the home” was 50.6% in 2007 and 52.8% in 2012. The proportion of respondents who answered affirmatively to the survey item, “Women having a career outside of home equalize the marital relationship” was 55.2% in 2007 and 51.4% in 2012. The proportion of affirmative responses to each respective survey item in 2010 was 57.4% and 54.4%. This indicates that the change in perception regarding gender roles was negligible during the period, and that a great number of women still hold traditional values when it comes to gender roles within a family. On the other hand, the proportion of affirmative responses to the survey item “Mothers of pre-school-aged children working outside of the home have a negative effect on children’s development” was 60.4% in 2007 and 62.5% in 2012.

The slight increase in the opinion that working mothers will negatively affect children's development suggests that mothers are still expected to bear a significant load when it comes to childrearing and education. The overemphasized role of a mother in children's education is likely to be attributable to Korea's current educational environment, which requires diligent pursuit of information and heavy reliance on private education.

〈Table 3〉 Perception of gender roles within a family (2007, 2008, 2010, 2012)

(unit: %, persons)

Category		I strongly agree	I tend to agree	I tend to disagree	I strongly disagree	No. of persons
The ideal arrangement is for men to go to work and for women to stay home to take care of the home	2007	15.3	35.3	40.0	9.4	9,981
	2008	13.1	39.6	39.9	7.5	8,364
	2010	12.6	44.8	35.8	6.9	7,999
	2012	13.6	39.2	40.3	6.9	7,658
Women having a career outside of the home equalizes the marital relationship	2007	11.6	43.6	39.4	5.3	9,980
	2008	10.3	43.4	41.6	4.7	8,364
	2010	8.8	45.6	40.6	5.0	7,999
	2012	9.7	41.7	44.0	4.6	7,657
Mothers of pre-school aged children working outside of home will have a negative effect on children's development	2007	11.6	48.8	33.9	5.6	9,976
	2008	9.7	52.5	33.7	4.1	8,364
	2010	8.7	55.1	32.4	3.8	7,999
	2012	10.7	51.8	33.5	4.0	7,658

Source: Korean Longitudinal Survey of Women and Families, Korean Women's Development Institute

3. Work-family conflict and changes in the amount of time spent on housework and childcare

Because work-family conflict experienced in two-income households occurs in the two separate domains of workplace and family, it is necessary to examine the demands of both. For this reason, potential causes of conflict present at work and those present in family life are examined separately.

Table 4 shows work-related factors affecting family life. The proportion of respondents who answered affirmatively to the survey item “Long working hours interferes with family life” was 38.8% in 2007 and 34.8% in 2012, indicating a slight decline. The proportion of affirmative responses to the survey item “Irregular schedule interferes with family life” also decreased from 31.4% to 23.9% during the same period. The slight decline in work-family conflict may be attributable to improved working environments, or to changes in people’s perceptions regarding work-family conflict in the absence of such improvement.

〈Table 4〉 Effects of work on two-income family life (2007, 2008, 2010, 2012)

(unit: %, persons)

Category		I strongly agree	I tend to agree	I tend to disagree	I strongly disagree	No. of persons
Work energizes me and gives me a sense of reward	2007	28.7	58.8	11.5	1.0	4,278
	2008	25.6	66.0	7.6	0.8	3,953
	2010	25.1	66.3	7.8	0.8	4,160
	2012	22.8	68.0	8.5	0.7	4,198
Work validates my status in my family	2007	24.2	58.7	16.1	1.0	4,276
	2008	20.3	65.4	13.4	0.9	3,953
	2010	18.3	65.1	15.3	1.3	4,160
	2012	16.9	67.5	14.9	0.8	4,198
Work makes my family life more satisfying	2007	22.0	58.8	18.1	1.2	4,274
	2008	19.9	65.0	14.2	0.9	3,953
	2010	18.5	66.8	13.6	1.1	4,160
	2012	18.2	68.0	13.2	0.7	4,198
My working outside of home has a positive effect on my children	2007	-	-	-	-	-
	2008	-	-	-	-	-
	2010	11.8	55.5	23.2	9.5	4,160
	2012	11.5	57.9	24.0	6.6	3,823
Long working hours interferes with family life	2007	6.1	32.7	47.9	13.2	4,275
	2008	4.9	34.9	44.6	15.5	3,953
	2010	3.7	34.4	44.6	17.3	4,160
	2012	3.2	31.6	44.3	21.0	4,198
Irregular schedule interferes with family life	2007	4.8	26.6	51.9	16.7	4,276
	2008	3.8	27.1	51.1	18.0	3,953
	2010	2.3	26.9	49.7	21.2	4,160
	2012	2.0	21.9	51.6	24.5	4,198

Source: Korean Longitudinal Survey of Women and Families, Korean Women's Development Institute

Table 5 shows how family life affects work life. The proportion of respondents who answered affirmatively to the survey item “The burden of housework often makes work life more difficult” decreased from 39.1% in 2007 to 32.9% in 2012. On the other hand, the proportion of affirmative responses to the survey item “Childcare burdens often make it difficult to balance work and family” decreased from 48.5% in 2007 to 44.2% in 2012. These results indicate that work-family conflict caused

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by long working hours improved over time, as well as work-family conflict associated with domestic chores and childcare burden. In short, work-family conflict has more or less decreased overall. However, the decreasing trend will not likely be sustained because the survey year's socioeconomic characteristics can influence the responses. For this reason, it is difficult to generalize the positive change across the entire society. It is suspected that employees in the public sector and mega-scale private businesses saw a significant improvement in work environment and subsequent work-life balance. Unfortunately, the assessment is that the work environment of many small to medium size businesses remains the same.

〈Table 5〉 Effects of two-income family life on work life (2007, 2008, 2010, 2012)

(unit: %, persons)

Category		I strongly agree	I tend to agree	I tend to disagree	I strongly disagree	No. of persons
My sense of responsibility for my family encourages me to work harder	2007	21.7	48.8	24.0	5.5	4,071
	2008	21.0	51.3	23.6	4.1	3,757
	2010	18.8	52.2	23.9	5.1	3,851
	2012	17.4	54.2	24.2	4.2	3,847
My family's acknowledging my hard work encourages me to work harder	2007	16.5	56.3	23.9	3.3	4,273
	2008	15.5	61.9	20.7	1.9	3,953
	2010	13.1	61.6	21.9	3.4	4,160
	2012	12.9	62.2	22.2	2.7	4,198
The childcare burden often makes it difficult for me to balance work and family	2007	9.3	39.2	34.3	17.2	3,380
	2008	9.4	38.7	34.9	17.0	2,935
	2010	8.6	43.1	33.5	14.8	3,012
	2012	6.8	37.4	38.6	17.2	3,079
The burden of housework often makes it difficult for me to balance work and family	2007	5.4	33.7	40.2	20.7	4,274
	2008	4.7	34.0	42.3	19.0	3,953
	2010	3.6	35.6	41.3	19.5	4,160
	2012	2.9	30.0	43.4	23.7	4,198

Source: Korean Longitudinal Survey of Women and Families, Korean Women's Development Institute

Table 6 shows findings regarding the amount of time spent on housework and childcare. Between 2007 and 2012, the amount of time spent on housework and childcare gradually decreased. Because the survey does not distinguish between housework and childcare, however, it is not clear where the decrease occurred. In terms of housework, various home appliances may have contributed to reduction in time spent doing housework, while availability of childcare centers and heavier reliance on private education may have contributed to reduction in time spent on family-based childcare. If 2012 saw a reduction in time spent on childcare, it would be attributable to the free infant/toddler care made available nationwide. However, due to the limitations of the data, it is difficult to present a conclusive result regarding changes in the amount of time spent in childcare. Although the overall time spent on housework and childcare decreased, as did gender discrepancies, the amount of time spent doing housework and childcare still differs greatly between men and women.

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〈Table 6〉 Time spent in housework and childcare (2007, 2008, 2010, 2012)

(unit: minute, persons)

Category		Weekdays			Weekend		
		Average	Standard deviation	No. of persons	Average	Standard deviation	No. of persons
2007	women	249.0	222.7	8,737	227.2	224.9	8,739
	men	22.3	52.5	7,842	41.0	77.3	7,842
2008	women	224.3	190.9	7,507	214.4	198.4	7,507
	men	19.6	40.6	6,724	38.7	72.8	6,724
2010	women	209.0	160.6	6,376	211.0	177.9	6,375
	men	17.4	38.0	6,356	34.1	64.8	6,356
2012	women	161.1	86.9	5,964	153.4	103.5	5,964
	men	16.3	31.7	5,961	25.6	37.1	5,961

Source: Korean Longitudinal Survey of Women and Families, Korean Women's Development Institute

Results of the analysis conducted by separating two-income households and single-income households indicated that, while the amount of time spent doing housework and childcare by working women decreased slightly over the years, the gender gap has not reduced much (Table 7).

〈Table 7〉 Time spent in housework and childcare(2007, 2008, 2010, 2012)

(Unit: minute, persons)

Category			Weekdays			Weekend		
			Average	Standard deviation	No. of persons	Average	Standard deviation	No. of persons
2007	two-income households	women	179.9	147.0	2,946	180.3	166.7	2,946
		men	26.3	52.4	2,943	35.2	68.5	2,943
	single-income family	women	336.2	266.1	3,914	297.5	269.2	3,914
		men	18.2	48.3	3,906	47.7	85.8	3,906
2008	two-income households	women	167.1	108.3	2,748	175.1	135.5	2,748
		men	22.2	41.4	2,741	34.8	66.5	2,741
	single-income family	women	303.0	237.1	2,898	280.6	242.9	2,898
		men	15.9	38.9	2,893	45.9	83.3	2,892
2010	two-income	women	160.9	97.8	2,918	176.1	131.1	2,918

Category			Weekdays			Weekend		
			Average	Standard deviation	No. of persons	Average	Standard deviation	No. of persons
2012	households	men	19.2	37.2	2,900	31.6	63.2	2,900
	single-income family	women	266.8	197.7	2,687	258.9	214.8	2,687
		men	13.6	37.0	2,673	39.8	70.9	2,673
	two-income households	women	168.1	125.9	2,725	182.7	171.8	2,725
		men	25.6	50.8	2,714	42.3	81.3	2,714
	single-income family	women	282.0	240.6	2,039	263.4	264.8	2,039
men		18.3	46.1	2,034	53.9	97.7	2,034	

Source: Korean Longitudinal Survey of Women and Families, Korean Women's Development Institute

Against this backdrop, we examined the respondents' perceptions regarding division of labor in terms of housework and childcare. The results are shown in Table 8. The proportion of both men and women who indicated that the burden of housework and childcare was distributed fairly between spouses decreased in 2010 from 2005. In particular, there was an increase in the proportion of those who indicated that women bore an unfair burden of housework and childcare, suggesting that the perception of unfair division of labor is increasing without significant improvement measures being put in place.

<Table 8> Perception regarding division of labor-childcare (2005, 2010)

(unit: %, person)

Category		Pretty fair	Unfair to husband	Unfair to wife	No. of persons
2005	total	44.3	4.2	51.2	1,602
	men	45.8	2.9	51.1	799
	women	42.9	5.5	51.4	803

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Category		Pretty fair	Unfair to husband	Unfair to wife	No. of persons
2010	total	32.8	3.3	63.9	2,741
	men	34.8	2.2	62.9	1,418
	women	30.7	4.3	65.0	1,323

Source: Ministry of Women and Family: National family survey (2005 National family survey 211 p; 2010년, KOSIS)

3

Factors influencing work–family conflict

1. Analysis data and variables
2. Findings

3

Factors influencing work–family conflict <<

1. Analysis data and variables

Data on the married female respondents below 50 years of age who participated in the fourth longitudinal study of women and children (2012) were examined in order to analyze how gender role perception, housework, and childcare influence work–family balance. Table 9 shows the general characteristics of the sample. A total of 604 married women below 50 years of age who were working outside of the home, were included in the analysis. The average age of the sample was 41 years. The slightly high average age is thought to be attributable to the fact that those who opted out of the labor force because of childbirth and childcare were excluded from the sample. In terms of mothers' education level, 48% of the sample had a high school degree or less, whereas 34% had a bachelor's degree or more. As for employment type, only 51% were permanent employees, indicating that a great number of women were temporary workers. The average monthly income of these women was KRW 1.77 million, with a standard deviation of KRW1.05 million. In terms of fathers' characteristics, the average age was 43 years, with 11% being unemployed. Their average monthly income was KRW 3.01 million, with a standard de-

viation of KRW 1.39 million, suggesting that men's earnings were 1.7 times greater than their spouses.

For analysis of household characteristics, household income, availability of outside help with housework, time spent doing housework, and time spent on childcare were examined. The average yearly household income of the sample was KRW 55.83 million, with a standard deviation of KRW 24.80 million. Of the sample households 11.3% were getting outside help with housework, indicating that most households took on the responsibility on their own. Women spent an average of 448 minutes per week (7 hrs 28 mins) on housework, while men spent 102 minutes (1 hr 42 mins) per week on average, indicating a big gender gap. A similar pattern was found in terms of childcare, with women spending an average of 185 minutes per week, while men spent only 1 hour and 15 minutes weekly, on average. It is noteworthy that the gender gap was greater with respect to housework than childcare.

〈Table 9〉 Characteristics of the sample

(Unit: person, KRW10,000, %)

	Category	Frequency/a verage	%/SD
Mother's characteristics	Education level		
	High school graduate	289	47.8
	Associate degree	111	18.4
	Bachelor's degree and beyond	204	33.8
	Total	604	100.0
	Age	41	5.4
	Average monthly income	177	105
	Average daily work hours	7.79	1.58
	Employment type		
	Permanent	310	51.3
Temporary	294	48.7	
Total	604	100.0	
Father's characteristics	Age	43	6.3
	Employment status		
	Employed	538	89.2
	Unemployed	65	10.8
	Total	603	100.0
	Husband's average monthly income	301	139
Household characteristics	Average yearly household income	5583	2480
	Gets help with housework		
	Yes	68	11.3
	No	536	88.7
	Total	604	100.0
	Weekly hours spent on housework (in minutes)		
	Wife	448	250
	Husband	102	107
	Weekly hours spent on childcare (in minutes)		
Wife	185	462	
Husband	75	195	

Table 10 presents the variables used in the analysis of work-family conflict. In the current study, a logistic regression analysis was conducted regarding three dependent variables. The analysis looked at work interference with family, and family interference with work, followed by the two domains' inter-

ference with one another. To examine work interference with family, four items were measured while using a four-point Likert scale. The scores were combined to represent the level of conflict which work imposes on family life. A greater level of negative response to the item indicated a greater level of conflict. As for family interference with work, two items were measured using a four-point Likert scale. A greater level of affirmative response to the item indicated a greater level of conflict. Finally, the level of work-family conflict was measured by combining the conflict scores of the two domains.

Perception of traditional gender roles, which was used as an independent variable in the analysis, was measured by the four items presented in the table below. Each item was assessed with a four-point Likert scale, and the item scores were combined. A higher combined score indicated a greater level of agreement regarding traditional gender roles.

<Table 10> Perceptions regarding fair distribution of childcare responsibility between spouses (2005, 2010)

Variables	Category	Measure
Independent variable	Perception regarding traditional gender roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ideal arrangement is for men to go to work and for women to stay home to take care of the home - Women having a career equalizes the marital relationship - Mothers of pre-school aged children working outside of the home will have a detrimental effect on children's development - In two-income families, the burden of housework must be distributed fairly between spouses

Variables	Category	Measure
Dependent variable	Work interference with family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work energizes me and provides me with a sense of reward - Work validates my status in my family - Work makes family life more satisfying - My working outside of home has a positive effect on my children
	Family interference with work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Childcare burdens often interfere with work life - The burden of housework often interferes with work life
	Work–family conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work interference with family Family interference with work

2. Findings

As previously mentioned, work–family conflict was analyzed in terms of work interference with family, family interference with work, and a combination of both. For each dependent variable, two models were applied for the analysis. The first model included single-income households and incorporated husbands' employment status and household income as variables. The second model included two-income households only and incorporated husbands' income as a variable, instead of household income.

Findings regarding work interference with family are presented in Table 9. In both models 1 and 2, women's average monthly income, average daily work hours, and traditional gender roles were found to be significant variables. Work interference with family life decreased as the average monthly income increased. On the other hand, work interference with family life increased as the average daily work hours and tradi-

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tional gender roles increased. Meanwhile, household income, the husband's employment status, and the availability of outside help with housework were found to have less than significant influence.

(Table 11) Work interference with family (WIF)

	Category	Model 1	Model 2
Mother's characteristics	education level (high school graduate)		
	associate degree	.03615356	-.14446165
	bachelor's degree or more	-.32290828	-.30017867
	age	-.02942864	-.03120837
	average monthly income	-.0023232*	-.00219782*
	average daily work hours	.15931128***	.14131582**
	employment type (permanent)		
temporary	.07315454	.13845013	
traditional gender roles	.30704316***	.3188677***	
Father's characteristics	age	-.01989834	-.01577957
	employment status (employed)		
	unemployed	.00392323	
Household characteristics	husband's average monthly income		-.00070992
	household income	-.00003142	
	gets outside help with housework (yes)		
	no	-.11102046	-.19277153
	weekly hours spent on housework (mins)		
	wife	.00022605	.00007005
	husband	-.00024742	.00005963
weekly hours spent on childcare (mins)			
wife	.0003568	.00031529	
husband	-.00004411	-.00008756	
Model	R ²	.12156647	.11521078
	N	590	527

Notes: * p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Next, findings regarding family interference with work are presented in Table 10. It was found that respondents with a greater level of educational attainment (high school graduation or greater) reported a lower level of work-family conflict. The level of conflict also increased as the mothers' weekly hours spent on childcare increased.

Examination of the models found that average daily work hours and husbands' weekly hours spent on childcare were significant variables in model 1. Longer work hours increased the level of work-family conflict, while longer weekly hours spent on childcare by the husband also contributed to a greater level of conflict. As for the latter, we can presume a variety of situational factors. For instance, there may have been spousal conflict that led to the husband's increased participation in childcare, or the family's housework and childcare demands may be particularly demanding. However, these are mere predictions and, as such, it is difficult to identify the specific mechanics as to how husbands' sharing of childcare responsibilities affects wife's family interference with work. In model 2, the variable was found to be insignificant when husband's income was controlled. Therefore, it would be beneficial to conduct a follow-up study which further examines the correlation between husband's weekly hours spent on childcare and wife's family interference with work.

In model 2, age was found to be an additional variable exert-

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ing a significant influence. That is, the level of family interference with work was found to decrease as the mother's age increased. Although mother's age did not appear to be a significant variable when household income was controlled, it was found to be a significant variable in the model which incorporated two-income households and controlled for husband's income. This may reflect the typical trend that child-birth and the childcare burden decrease as women grow older. Perceptions regarding traditional gender roles, household income, husband's income, availability of outside help with housework, and hours spent on housework did not appear to have a significant effect.

<Table 12> Family interference with work (FIW)

	Category	Model 1	Model 2
Mother's characteristics	education level (high school graduate)		
	associate degree	-.0925896	-.04589915
	bachelor's degree and more	-.2831749*	-.2876337*
	age	-.01681245	-.03854604*
	average monthly income	.00068224	.00074326
	average daily work hours	.07894327**	.0494127
	employment type (permanent)		
	temporary	-.05735201	-.13468502
Father's characteristics	perception regarding traditional gender roles	.03166287	.02226322
	age	-.02576393	-.00481805
	employment status (employed)		
	unemployed	.19894712	
	husband's average monthly income		-.00050385

	Category	Model 1	Model 2
Household characteristics	household income	-.00001074	
	gets outside help with housework (yes)		
	no	.00263974	-.06749086
	weekly hours spent on housework (mins)		
	wife	.0001518	.00014274
	husband	-.00031815	-.00096324
	weekly hours spent on childcare (mins)		
wife	.0003531**	.00040169**	
husband	.00084503**	.00037548	
Model	R ²	.11915144	.10569126
	N	558	502

Notes: * p <.1; ** p <.05; *** p <.01

The final analysis incorporated the results of previous analyses and examined the factors influencing work-family conflict (Table 11). In both models, parents' education level, mother's average daily work hours, perceptions regarding traditional gender roles, and mother's hours spent on childcare were found to be significant variables. Respondents with college education and greater reported experiencing a lower level of work-family conflict than those with high school graduation. Additionally, the level of work-family conflict was found to increase as the mother's average daily work hours increased, attitude for traditional gender roles strengthened, and mother's childcare hours increased. Similar to the findings of previous analyses, model 2 found that work-family conflict tended to decrease as the mother's age increased. Other variables, including household income, husband's income, availability of out-

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side help with housework, and hours spent on housework did not appear to have a significant effect.

<Table 13> Work-family conflict (WFC)

	Category	Model 1	Model 2
Mother's characteristics	educational level (high school graduate)		
	associate's degree	-.12708816	-.25670122
	bachelor's degree and higher	-.63903524*	-.6355996*
	age	-.05093589	-.08199607*
	average monthly income	-.00128332	-.00123689
	average daily work hours	.24988678***	.2088253**
	employment type (permanent)		
	temporary	.02338818	.01969874
Father's characteristics	perception regarding traditional gender roles	.35597227***	.35265595***
	age	-.04563015	-.01574221
	employment status (employed)		
Household characteristics	unemployed	.18875818	
	husband's average monthly income		-.00125557
	household income	-.00005541	
	availability of outside help with housework (yes)		
	no	-.15233062	-.27495712
	weekly hours spent on housework (mins)		
	wife	.00042579	.00027117
	husband	-.00041472	-.00064954
Model	weekly hours spent on childcare (mins)		
	wife	.00073388*	.00073656*
	husband	.00076184	.00022358
	R ²	.14058178	.12630507
	N	558	502

Notes: * p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

4

Conclusion

4

Conclusion <<

The current study found that Korean's attitudes regarding childbearing weakened at the individual level while they strengthened at the societal level, indicating a clash in values. The analysis regarding the perception of roles within the family and hours spent on housework and childcare, found a negligible change in terms of traditional gender role perception, and that a significant number of women still valued traditional gender roles within a family. Moreover, the perception that mothers of pre-school aged children working outside of homes will have a deleterious effect on the children has strengthened, which suggests that women still bear a great load when it comes to childcare and children's education.

In the current cultural environment which presents a big gender gap in terms of domestic responsibility including childcare, it can be said that women's traditional gender roles are still strong and Korean society still maintains traditional family values. However, the fact that awareness of the unfair division of childcare responsibility is increasing in the society, is promising. It can be said that although our society currently adheres to traditional gender roles, it is willing to change.

The analysis regarding trends in work-family balance found a

reduction in the conflict associated with work, housework, and the childcare burden, indicating an overall reduction in work-family conflict. Such a finding may be suggesting that work culture has improved from before, or that people's perceptions regarding work and family have changed in the absence of such improvement.

Results of the analysis, which examined work-family conflict in terms of work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW) (Table 12), found that work domain variables influencing family life were women's average monthly income, average work hours, and perceptions regarding traditional gender roles. On the other hand, family domain variables influencing work were education level, age, and hours of childcare, indicating that the characteristics of the variables influencing WIF and FIW were slightly different. Work-family conflict is not a unilateral relationship, but rather a bilateral relationship between the two domains, which suggests differentiated approaches for the two.

<Table 14> Work-family balance

Category	WIF		FIW		WFC	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
mother's educational level (high school graduate)						
bachelor's degree and more			* (-)	* (-)	* (-)	* (-)
mother's age				* (-)		* (-)
mother's average monthly income	* (-)	* (-)				
mother's average daily work hours	*** (+)	** (+)	** (+)		*** (+)	*** (+)
mother's attitude regarding traditional gender roles	*** (+)	*** (+)			*** (+)	*** (+)
mother's weekly hours spent on childcare (mins)			** (+)	** (+)	* (+)	* (+)
father's weekly hours spent on childcare (mins)			** (+)			

Results of the analysis which examined the work-family conflict associated with variables of both domains pointed to mother's education level, age, work hours, perceptions regarding traditional gender roles, and weekly hours spent on childcare as significant variables. However, father's characteristics were not found to have a significant influence. The fact that the amount of time husbands spend on childcare and housework did not have a significant effect appears to be attributable to the variables' very small standard deviations, which prevents them from exerting significant influence. Also, adherence to traditional gender roles appears to intensify the work-family conflict. Considering that father's variables have a negligible influence on mother's work-family balance and that work-family conflict is intensifying because of adherence to traditional gender roles, it appears that increasing men's contribution to

housework and childcare appears to be necessary for a fair division of labor.

Considering that hours spent on childcare exert a more significant influence on women's work-family conflict than hours spent on housework, it appears that policies on work-family balance with regard to providing childcare support will be more effective. In conclusion, policy approaches to providing in-home childcare support and improving work hours appear to be priorities based on the current study's findings.

When looking at childcare in terms of childrearing only, Korea's current childcare support entails free daycare centers, financial support (reimbursement), and parental leave. Service-based support (free daycare centers, etc.) is provided universally across the society. However, the lack of a differentiated approach for two-income families does not effectively address the work-family conflict. More differentiated support is needed for two-income households to help alleviate the particular work-family conflict they experience.

Although childcare support is available in the form of parental leave and flexible hours, such policies are currently being implemented without much success. Adoption of flex hours is on the increase along with a growing demand for family friendly policies. However, the number of working women actually taking advantage of the policy is negligible. Mee Hwa Lee et al. (2011) surveyed a total of 1,338 businesses and found that only

14.1% of them offered reduced work hours for childcare to employees, and only 56.6% of them actually used the policy, indicating that the policy was nominal. More effort will have to be made to change the current social environment where policies are in place but are underused by the employers. Furthermore, securing a flex-hour policy and changing the current culture of long daily work hours will have to be discussed.

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