International Comparison on the Value of Children

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1 Research Background and Objective

1

Research Background and Objective ≪

The problem of low birth rates is becoming rampant worldwide and is spreading at an increasingly faster rate. Birth rates in most OECD countries are far lower than the replacement rate of 2.08. Currently, as of 2012, birth rates are 1.53 in Switzerland, 1.44 in Austria, 1.38 in Germany, and 1.41 in Japan (OECD, 2014). France has an exceptionally high birth rate of 2.0, which is relatively close to the replacement rate; this is followed by the UK, Sweden, and the US, with birth rates of 1.92, 1.91, and 1.88, respectively (OECD, 2014). In the same year, South Korea recorded a considerably low birth rate of 1.30. This low birth rate, with its trend of steady decline, is increasingly surfacing as a social problem.

Children have been traditionally regarded as a necessary factor in bridging between generations as well as a social support system for supporting aged parents (Neal et al., 1989). However, with phenomena such as the increase in women's education levels and employment rates, along with increased birth rates of extramarital children, openness in regard to sexual activity, and the rising prevalence of marriage postponement, perspectives on children have come to include their negative aspects in addition to their positive traits (Neal et al., 1989).

With the growth in women's participation in the labor force and resulting difficulties in managing both work and family, the ratio of married women choosing economic participation over childbirth has increased (Friedman et al., 1994). That is, not giving birth has become a rational choice in the labor market because of the opportunity costs associated with childbirth and parenting. Due to the high costs of forgoing employment over childrearing, women are choosing economic activity over giving birth.

In response to these problems, many countries have developed family policies to alleviate the burden of childcare. Work-family balance policies pertaining to, for example, parental leave, paternity-leave allocation, and strengthening childcare institutions are representative. Attitudes toward childbirth and parenting have changed with progress in family policy. Societies with well-established policies for supporting work-family balance are associated with a tendency of women to view childbirth positively, whereas societies without such policies exhibit a tendency toward having fewer childbirths to minimize costs. It has been proven that countries that provide greater childbirth and parenting support are associated with higher birth rates (Lee et al., 2005; Park, 2008: recited in Park, 2012).

The reason why the value of children is important is because it affects the number of children women decide to have. Many

studies have confirmed the value of children as having a direct effect on the number of children (Cha, 2008; Chung & Chin, 2008; Lee, 2009: cited in Park, 2012). A positive attitude towards children has a positive effect on childbirth and parenting while a negative attitude results in the avoidance or postponement of childbirth.

Accordingly, it is important to instill having children as a positive value before attempting to boost the birth rate and policies must be designed with this goal in mind. Each welfare state regime with different family policies may be expected to have different attitudes toward children. More conservative countries that follow a male-breadwinner model are likely to have traditional values regarding children. In Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, where defamilialization has progressed and a dual-earner model is supported, the existing foundation for work-family balance can be expected to result in a positive perspective on children. On the other hand, information is limited regarding this matter for East Asian countries. It is assumed that East Asian countries still maintain the conservative division of labor by gender and have weak family policies for supporting women's employment and childrearing. Therefore, difficulties in childrearing can be expected in such countries, contributing to the increase in the phenomenon of people opting not to have children.

This study aims to conduct an international comparison on

the value of children. By analyzing the 2012 module of the International Social Survey, it explores differences in the value of children among nine countries via comparing the factors affecting the value of children by country. Scandinavian welfare states were expected to have a positive view on children due to having strong family policies. Conservative and liberal welfare states are expected to view children negatively, as they tend to impose parenting responsibilities on women. Meanwhile, the value of children is expected to have lessened in East Asian countries as the importance of generational succession has weakened. In other words, it is assumed that heterogeneous characteristics would be shown regarding the value of children depending on the regime type of a welfare state and that countries of the same type would exhibit homogenous characteristics.

2

Literature Review

2 Literature Review 《

"Values" are individuals' and organizations' continuously held beliefs about what is appropriate, adequate, good, and bad (Namgung, 2002). This denotes a tendency towards favoring a certain condition or a standard of judgment (Cha, 2008). Values play an important role in determining behavior. Not only is it significant for the individual, but also for the society as a whole. This is because a society is affected by the values of individuals. As values affect human behavior, exploring the value of children may be a solution to the issue of low birth rates. Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) stated that the value of children is a factor that is necessary in the prediction of motivations and trends regarding childbirth. A study on the value of children that was conducted in six countries—South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, and Turkey—identified the value of children as a parameter that could determine whether an individual would give birth or not (Kwon and Kim, 2004).

Arnold et al. (1975) examined the economic, social, and psychological aspects of the value of children. the economic value refers to material advantages offered by having children when they become adults; the social value refers to the advantages and disadvantages obtained by having children. The psycho-

logical value denotes one's state of mind from having children. The desire for childbirth and childrearing can arise from these economic, social, and psychological values.

However, the value of children can vary according to one's agreement with the traditional way of thought and thus can change according to differences in the values of women. Jones et al. (1997) compared differences in the value of children among European countries by using ISSP data and found differences in the centrality of children among European countries. In Italy, the value of children was high, whereas it was low in the Netherlands; other European countries were at the midpoint. Women who had a progressive attitude toward women's work and role within the family regarded children as having negative value. In particular, more women than men in the UK and the Netherlands regarded children as having negative value. In this study, women's gender roles, age, religiosity, SES, employment status, and family type were used as independent variables.

Other studies have found that the value of children has changed over time. Kwon and Kim (2004) verified that there are similarities and differences in the value of children between different generations. With the passage of time, recognition of the instrumental value of children—carrying on the family line—has receded, while grandparents continue to regard children as having strong instrumental value. However, all generations

were found to view children as having positive value in general. In other words, although there are difficulties in childrearing, the positive value of children offsets their negative aspects.

Today, more women than men have been found to view children as having a negative value. Lee (2010) examined how environmental factors affected married women in terms of the value of children and childbirth behavior. The results indicated that married women with higher education levels, a weak communal sense of family, and those who believed that parenting support after childbirth increases birth rate had a negative perception of children. This study claims that a positive value of children can emerge by improving environmental factors. In other words, a positive value of children can be fostered by the transformation of environmental factors; this can lead to a greater number of children in the future. In contrast to existing studies, this study found that the availability of parenting support after birth has a negative effect on the value of children. This is because of the complex mix of social factors and the values of family and marriage, not because of policy factors.

The value of children varies by generation. According to Kim et al. (2012), who surveyed elementary and secondary school students' values of marriage and children, differences between boys and girls in attitudes regarding the need for children increased along with school year. Although recognition of the need for children still existed universally among South Korean

elementary and secondary school students, the attitude regarding the need for children was seen to be rapidly decreasing among female students. In their study, the ideal number of children was found to be two. In addition, elementary and secondary school students regarded becoming parents to be important.

Thus, the value of children varies by age, generation, and gender. In addition, women's perception of gender roles and religiosity were found to have an effect on the value of children (Jones & Brayfield, 1997). Those with a progressive perception of gender roles viewed children as having negative value, whereas religious women were likely to view children as having positive value.

The value of children can be an independent variable as well as a dependent variable. Many studies have found that the value of children has direct and indirect effects on the birth rate. For example, Park (2012) found that the value of children has a direct effect on employed mothers' plans to give birth a second time. This means that employed mothers' intention to give birth a second time is directly affected by their perceived value of children. Thus, instilling a positive value of children is necessary. However, as the value of children is established from the conditions of raising one's first child—i.e., the prospect of achieving balance between work and childrearing as well as the economic and psychological burden of additional childbirths—

Park claims that it is critical to ensure that the first childbirth and childrearing experiences are positive for working mothers. Having a positive experience in childbirth and parenting can lead to the formation of a positive value of children and ultimately increase the possibility of subsequent childbirth. The value of children directly affects fertility; however, among the aspects in the value of children, "instrumental value and the value of stability in old age" were found to have a more significant effect on the expected number of children than the emotional value of children.

One study identified that the value of children has an indirect effect on the birth rate. By focusing on the mediating role of the value of children, Kang and Jung (2013) examined the effects of parents' life satisfaction in the pregnancy period and the value of children on the expected number of children. By dividing the value of children into four types, they examined their individual impact. The four types included emotional value, economic-normative value, family value, and stability in old age. The results of the analysis indicated that, regarding the value of children, only the sub-factors of economic-normative value and stability in old age were found to have a significant effect on the expected number of children. In other words, people for whom the instrumental value of children is stronger can be expected to have a greater number of children. Meanwhile, regarding the life satisfaction of parents in the

pregnancy period, family value among the sub-factors of the value of children had a significant effect, followed by emotional value, stability in old age, and economic-normative value. In other words, parents that exhibited higher life satisfaction in the pregnancy period tended to highly value children. In particular, higher life satisfaction was found to have a greater effect on the emotional and familial aspects of the value of children. Meanwhile, regarding the mediating role of the value of children, economic-normative value and the value of stability in old age were identified to partially mediate between life satisfaction and the expected number of children. In other words, parents' life satisfaction during pregnancy had an indirect effect through economic-normative value and stability in old age. That is, the number of expected children for parents in the pregnancy period increased with a higher level of awareness of the instrumental value of children, which includes economic help and stability in old age.

3

Research Method

1. Research problems
2. Research model
3. Measurement

3 Research Method «

1. Research problems

The research questions of this study were as follows.

First, what are the differences in attitudes toward children by country?

Second, how is the value of children different by demographic characteristics?

Third, what are the factors affecting the value of children and how are they different by country?

Ten countries were preliminarily selected; however, Spain was excluded as it was missing some items in the 2012 ISSP module "Family and Changing Gender Roles." Arrangement was performed based on the type of welfare state. Countries selected for this study included those that are often selected as subjects for comparison in the policymaking process of South Korea, as well as those in the cultural sphere of East Asia. Liberal welfare states (the US and the UK), conservative welfare states (Germany and France), a social democratic welfare state (Sweden), and East Asian countries (Japan, China, Taiwan, and South Korea), all of which participate in EASS, were included.

2. Research model

The research model illustrates the problems of this study; it is shown in the following figure.

[Figure 1] Research model
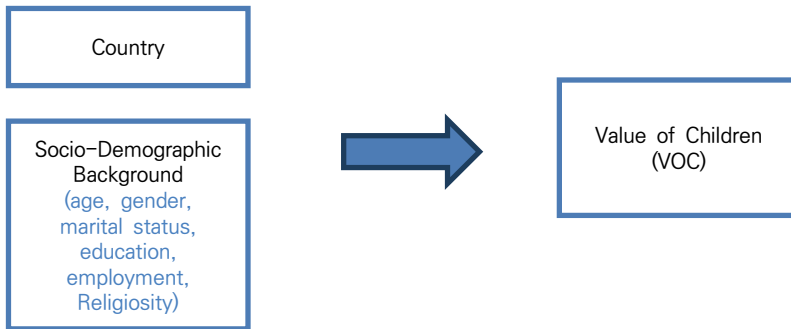
3. Measurement

The dependent variable of this study, the value of children, was measured by a total of seven items, half of which pertained to a positive value of children and the other half to a negative value of children. The items were as follows: "a. Watching children grow up is life's greatest joy," "b. Having children interferes too much with the freedom of parents," "c. Children are a financial burden on their parents," "d. Having children restricts the employment and career chances of one or both parents," "e. Having children increases people's social standing in soci-

ety," and "f. Adult children are an important source of help for elderly parents."

Responses were scored on a five-point scale. In the comparison between countries, a higher score was indicative of a positive value of children. However, when analyzing the value of children by individual items, and when comparing countries in dichotomic terms of positive (a, e, and f) and negative (b, c, and d) value of children, a higher score was indicative of a higher degree of positivity or negativity for the sake of readers' ease of understanding.

Referring to the model by Jones et al. (1997), country, age, gender, marital status, level of education, employment status, and religiosity were selected as independent variables. Countries were converted into dummy variables and the US was set as the standard. Age was divided into six groups as ordinal variables for a cohort-specific comparison. Male was set as the standard for gender, and unmarried was set as the standard for marital status among the types: unmarried, married, widowed, and divorced or separated. Cohabitation cases, which are rare in the East but widespread in the West, were excluded in the analysis. In fact, only 1.7% had the marital status of cohabitation among respondents in general and did not comprise a large proportion of responses. The educational level of respondents was measured as a continuous variable. Regarding employment status, economically active respondents were re-

garded as employed and those who are inactive were regarded as unemployed (standard). Thus, in this study, employment was a concept that encompassed all of part-time and temporary employment. Lastly, religiosity was dummy-coded. If respondents engaged in a religious activity more than once a month, they were considered to be religious; if not, they were considered not to be religious.

For comparing differences by country, mean comparison, cross analysis, and ANOVA (Tukey) were conducted, and multiple regression analysis was carried out in order to identify the factors affecting the value of children.

⟨Table 1⟩ Definition and measurement of variables

	Variable	Definition	Measure
DV	Value of children	To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statement? a. Watching children grow up is life's greatest joy. b. Having children interferes too much with the freedom of parents. d. Children are a financial burden on their parents. d. Having children restricts the employment and career chances of one or both parents. e. Having children increases people's social standing in society. f. Adult children are an important source of help for elderly parents.	Five-point scale (Strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree)
IV	Country	Target country for analysis	reference: US/ UK, Germany, France, Sweden,

Variable	Definition	Measure
		Japan, China, Taiwan, South Korea
Age	Age of respondents	reference: 18-24 years old/ 25-34 years old, 35-44 years old 45-54 years old, 55-64 years old, older than 65 years old
Gender	Gender of respondents	reference: Male
Marital status	Marital status of respondents	reference: Single/ married, widowed, divorced or separated
Educational level	Educational level of respondents	Continuous variable
Employment status	Employment status of respondents	reference: Currently unemployed
Religiosity	Religiosity of respondents	reference: Engagement in religious activities less than once a month

Notes: In the value of children, the + sign indicates a positive item and the - sign indicates a negative item. DV: Dependent Variable, IV: Independent Variable

4   Results

4

Results ≪

1. Characteristics of the distribution of respondents

The characteristics of the respondents are shown in the following table. Respondents in their late 40s comprised the largest group and the average age was in the late 40s. The UK and Sweden had the oldest average age, in the 50s, while Taiwan had the youngest (43). In the UK, Germany, France, Sweden, Japan, and South Korea, the percentage of those aged over 65 was much higher than 20%. The percentage of females was slightly over 50%, with France having the greatest percentage of females at 65% and China having the lowest at 48%.

〈Table 2〉 Demographic distribution of respondents

Category	US	UK	Germany	France	Sweden
Total	1,300	949	1,761	2,409	1,060
Age (mean)	(45.1)	(50.3)	(47.6)	(49.9)	(50.2)
18–24	9.6	5.9	9.7	4.9	6.5
25–34	18.8	13.5	13.1	14.6	12.5
35–44	19.0	17.5	14.7	17.3	14.9
45–54	17.2	16.1	20.9	18.5	20.2
55–64	15.6	16.8	18.1	19.4	17.9
65+	19.8	30.2	23.5	25.4	28.0
Female ratio (%)	54	54	51	65	54
Marital status					
Unmarried	27.6	25.6	27.7	22.0	29.8
Married	44.7	46.7	55.3	54.7	52.0
Widowed	8.4	10.7	7.3	9.6	6.2

Category	US	UK	Germany	France	Sweden
Divorced or separated	19.2	16.9	9.7	13.7	12.0
Education (year)	13.6	12.4	12.2	13.9	12.8
Employment (%)	58	50	58	56	65
Religiosity (%)	50	22	20	14	10
Ideal number of children (number)	2.55	2.34	2.26	2.43	2.41

Notes: Cohabitation was excluded from marital status.
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

〈Table 2〉 Continued

Category	Japan	China	Taiwan	South Korea	Total
Total	1,170	5,946	2,072	1,396	18,063
Age (mean)	(49.7)	(47.4)	(43.1)	(47.7)	(47.5)
18–24	6.1	6.6	12.1	10.4	7.7
25–34	12.6	14.5	19.1	11.5	14.7
35–44	20.2	20.6	18.4	16.6	18.4
45–54	15.7	20.1	18.7	19.6	19.1
55–64	18.7	20.2	15.7	16.0	18.3
65+	26.8	18.0	16.0	26.0	21.8
Female ratio (%)	55	48	49	56	53
Marital status					
Unmarried	22.9	8.6	29.7	20.3	20.0
Married	65.6	80.1	57.7	59.7	63.3
Widowed	6.6	9.0	8.6	14.9	9.0
Divorced or separated	5.0	2.3	4.1	5.0	7.7
Education (year)	12.7	8.3	11.6	10.8	11.2
Employment (%)	63	39	64	54	52
Religiosity (%)	15	6	13	36	18
Ideal number of children(number)	2.65	1.80	2.38	2.72	2.25

Notes: Cohabitation was excluded from marital status.
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

By marital status, the percentage of married people was the greatest in all countries. The US had the highest divorce and separation rates. China had the highest percentage of married people (80.1%) and the lowest percentage of unmarried people (8.6%). China also had the lowest percentage of divorced people (2.3%). South Korea had a high percentage of widowers (14.9%). The average years of education were 11.2 years worldwide, with respondents in France and the US having the most years of education at over 13 years and China having the least at 8.3 years. South Korea had the second lowest years of education after China with 10.8 years. The average employment rate was 52%, with Sweden having the highest rate at 65% and China with the lowest rate at 39%. Religiosity was 18% overall, and it was highest in the US at 50%, followed by South Korea at 36%. China had the lowest rate at 6%. South Korea and Japan had the highest ideal numbers of children with 2.72 and 2.65 respectively, followed by the US with 2.55. China had the lowest with 1.81 followed by Germany and the UK with 2.26 and 2.34, respectively.

2. Comparison by item pertaining to the value of children

The value of children was analyzed by country and by item, as presented in the following table and six figures. The item

"Watching children grow up is life's greatest joy" had the highest mean score at 4.34 compared to other items. For all countries, the mean score was greater than four points; in particular, countries such as Sweden, Germany, and France had high averages.

The mean for the item "Having children interferes too much with the freedom of parents" was 2.84, which was lower than the midpoint. In the comparison between the nine selected countries, South Korea had the highest mean at 3.30, followed by Taiwan, China, France, and Japan. On the other hand, Sweden had the lowest value. The mean for the item "Children are a financial burden on their parents" was in the middle at 3.09. The country that had the highest ratio was France (3.84) and the country that had the lowest ratio was Sweden (2.51). Taiwan had a high ratio of 3.38 and was followed by South Korea with 3.26.

The total mean for the item "Having children restricts the employment and career chances of one or both parents" was in the middle at 3.00. Germany, South Korea, Taiwan, and France had high averages. On the other hand, the US, China, Sweden, and Japan had low averages. The mean for the item "Having children increases people's social standing in society" was at the middle with a value of 3.02. Sweden had the highest mean at 3.29 and South Korea had a mean of 3.17, whereas the UK had the lowest mean at 2.73. Lastly, the mean for the item

"Adult children are an important source of help for elderly parents" was high at a value of 3.74. In particular, the US had the highest mean (4.00) followed by China, Japan, Sweden, and Germany. On the other hand, the UK and Sweden had low averages.

〈Table 3〉 Comparison of the value of children by country

(Mean, SD)

Item	US	UK	Germany	France	Sweden	Japan	China	Taiwan	South Korea	Total
Joy ***	4.27	4.16	4.42	4.41	4.43	4.30	4.35	4.29	4.26	4.34
	.67	.69	.66	.71	.62	.97	.56	.62	.82	.65
Freedom ***	2.24	2.23	2.59	2.95	1.99	2.76	3.00	3.26	3.30	2.84
	1.02	.91	1.01	1.23	.96	1.28	1.10	1.08	1.05	1.16
Financial burden ***	2.56	2.74	3.14	3.84	2.51	2.86	2.96	3.38	3.26	3.09
	1.15	1.15	1.18	1.06	1.15	1.42	1.15	1.04	1.14	1.20
Employ ment ***	2.78	2.90	3.29	3.18	2.87	2.88	2.81	3.21	3.25	3.00
	1.11	1.14	1.10	1.20	1.09	1.38	1.05	1.07	1.11	1.13
Social standing ***	2.95	2.73	2.96	2.90	3.29	3.03	3.06	3.05	3.17	3.02
	.97	.95	1.07	1.13	.96	1.31	.98	.97	.98	1.03
Help for elderly ***	4.00	3.48	3.83	3.22	3.87	3.91	3.94	3.63	3.54	3.74
	.72	1.00	.95	1.10	.81	1.08	.78	.96	1.19	.96

Notes: Five-point scale (Higher scores are associated with positivity)/*** $p < .001$
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

[Figure 2] Watching children grow up is life's greatest joy
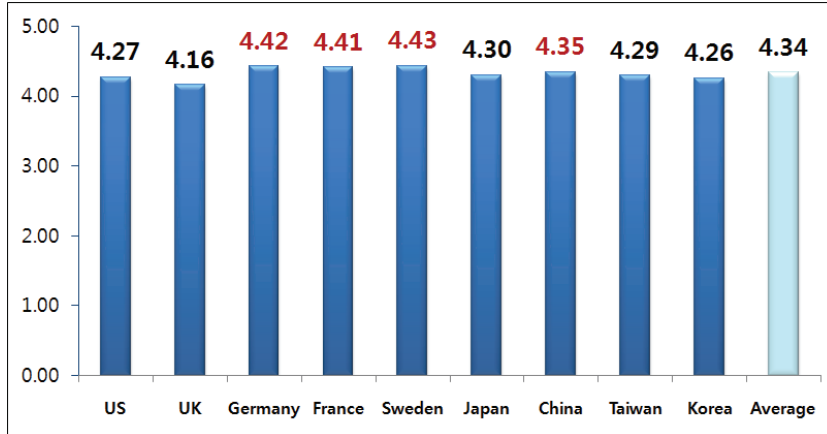
Notes: Five-point scale (Higher scores are associated with positivity)/F=20.360***
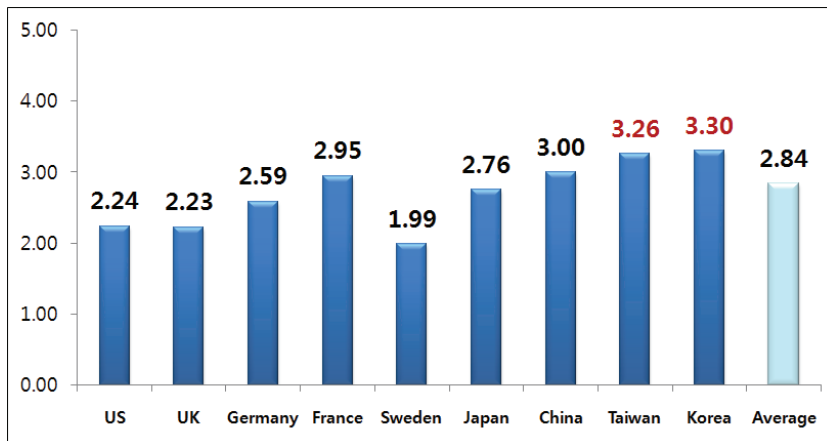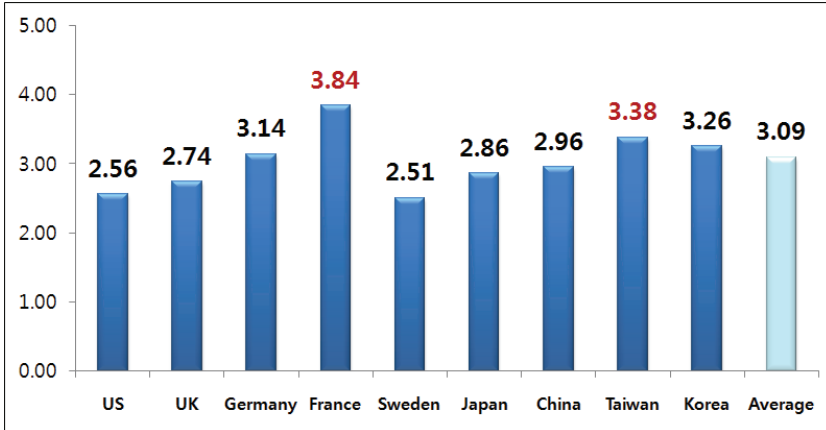Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

[Figure 3] Having children interferes too much with the freedom of parents

Notes: Five-point scale (Higher scores indicate negativity)/F=258.227*** (*** p<.001)
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

[Figure 4] Children are a financial burden on their parents

Notes: Five-point scale (Higher scores indicate negativity)/F=244.654*** (*** p<.001)
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

[Figure 5] Having children restricts the employment and career chances of one or both parents

Notes: Five-point scale (Higher scores indicate negativity)/F=74.744*** (*** p<.001)
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

[Figure 6] Having children increases people's social standing in society

Notes: Five-point scale (Higher scores indicate positivity)/F=26.544*** (*** p<.001)
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

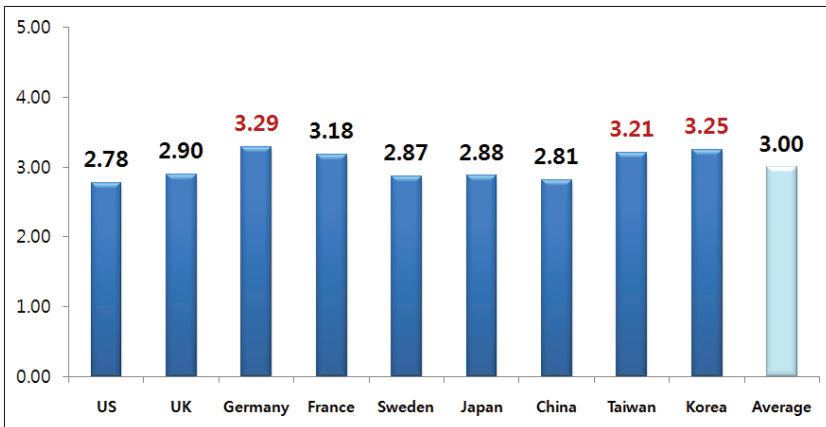[Figure 7] Adult children are an important source of help for elderly parents

Notes: Five-point scale (Higher scores indicate positivity)/F=158.735*** (*** p<.001)
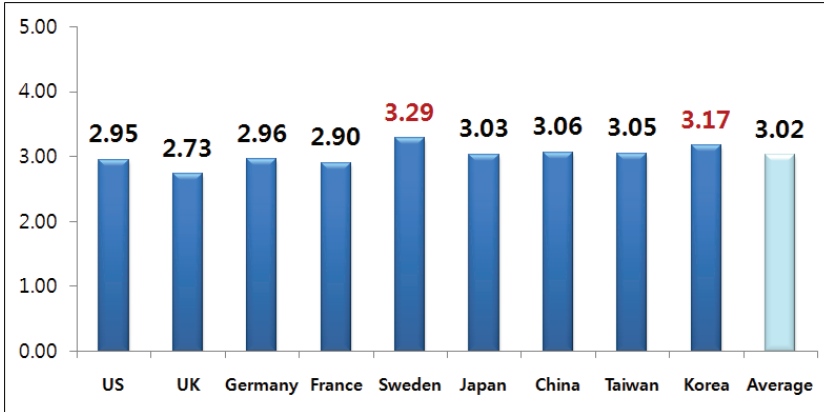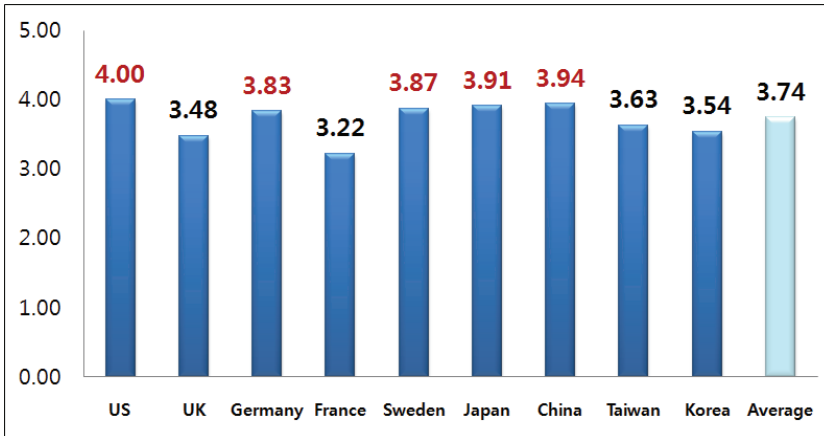Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

The value of children was compared across nine countries by its positive and negative aspects by adding three items. The results showed that the country with the highest positivity was China, followed by the US and Sweden; the country that had the highest negativity was France, which was followed by South Korea and Taiwan (see Figure 8). The US and Sweden were countries that had high positivity and low negativity while South Korea and Taiwan were countries in which both positivity and negativity were high.

The value of children in each country was examined in terms of total averages. Scores were recorded in a way that higher scores represented a positive value of children. As shown in Table 4 and Figure 9, the total average was slightly above the midpoint at 3.29. The countries that had the highest scores for the value of children were the US and Sweden, which were followed by China and the UK. On the other hand, countries that had the lowest scores were France, Taiwan, and South Korea; Germany and Japan placed in the middle.

[Figure 8] International comparison of the value of children based on the two aspects of the value of children

Notes: 1) Five-point scale (Higher scores indicate greater positivity or greater negativity) 2) Positivity F=48.582*** Negativity F=72.305*** (*** p<.001)
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

〈Table 4〉 Comparison of the value of children by country

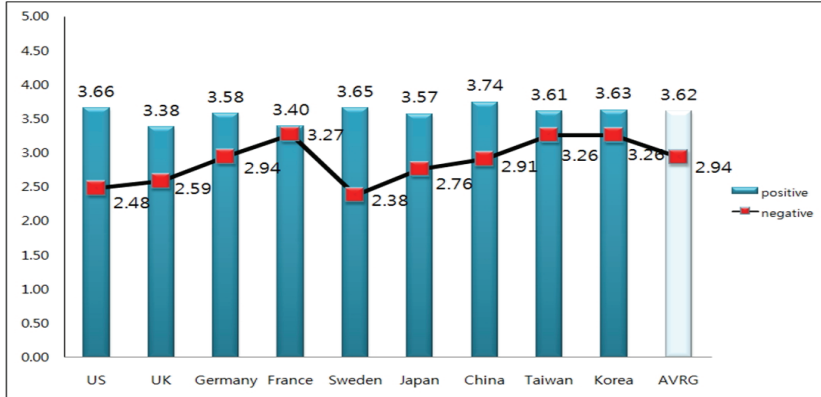| Country	N	1	2	3	4	5	6
France	2,387	3.00	.	.	.	.	.
Taiwan	2,070	.	3.15	.	.	.	.
South Korea	1,394	.	3.17	.	.	.	.
Germany	1,754	.	.	3.25	.	.	.
Japan	1,198	.	.	3.31	3.31	.	.
UK	936	.	.	.	3.34	3.34	.
China	5,926	.	.	.	.	3.40	.
Sweden	1,045	.	.	.	.	.	3.51
US	1,295	.	.	.	.	.	3.52

Notes: Five-point scale (Higher scores indicate positivity)/F=160.670*** (*** p<.001)
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

[Figure 9] Total international comparison of the value of children
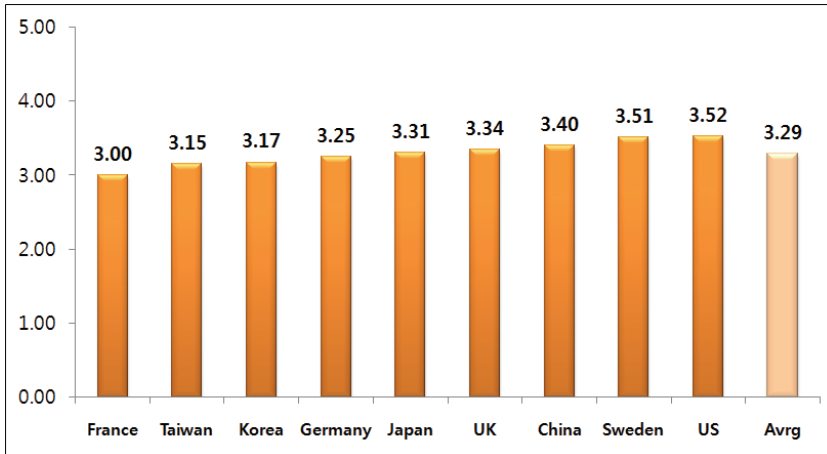
Notes: Five-point scale (Higher scores indicate positivity)/F=160.670***
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

3. Analysis of countries' position in regard to the relationship between the value of children and total fertility rate

Each country's position in regard to the relationship between the value of children and total fertility rate (TFR) was explored. First, in the analytic results for each country's position in regard to the relationship between the item "Watching children grow up is life's greatest joy" and TFR, Sweden and France had high TFRs while Germany had a low TFR. Despite the fact that the US and the UK had below-average scores for "Watching children grow up is life's greatest joy," they had high TFRs. Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan were in a group of countries

that exhibited relatively low rates for both.

Next, in Taiwan, South Korea, China, and France, it was considered that children limit the freedom of parents. The first two countries had low TFRs while the latter two had high TFRs. In other words, although children are perceived to limit the freedom of parents in China and France, this does not seem to have affected their TFRs.

[Figure10] Each country's position in regard to the relationship between the item "Watching children grow up is life's greatest joy" and TFR
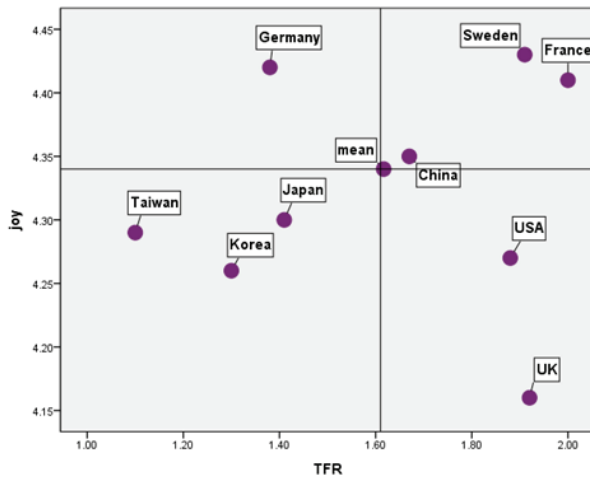
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

[Figure 11] Country-specific location in the relationship between "Having children interferes with the freedom of parents" and TFR
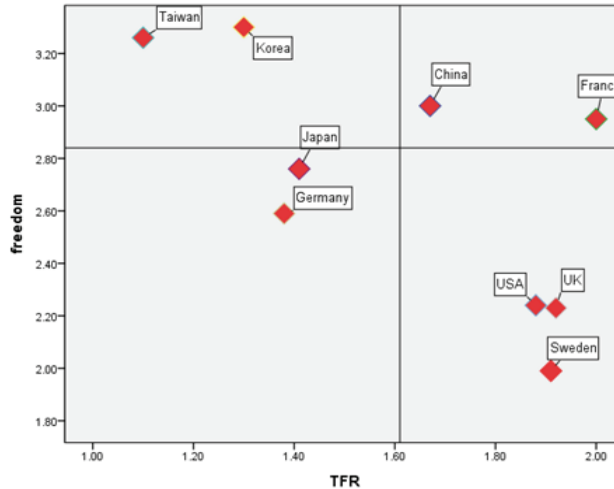
Source: ISSP (2012).Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

The analytic results for country-specific position in the relationship between the item "Children are a financial burden on their parents" and TFR showed that in France, children were regarded as a financial burden; in Taiwan, South Korea, and Germany, children were regarded as a financial burden to a greater extent compared to the average. However, France's TFR was much higher than those of Taiwan, South Korea, or Germany. This was another aspect in which France was different from other countries. In other words, in France, although children were regarded as a financial burden to parents, this did not affect the number of children to which French women gave birth. China, the UK, the US, and Sweden were in a group

of countries in which children were not considered a financial burden and TFRs were high.

Regarding country-specific position in regard to the relationship between "Having children restricts the employment and career chances of one or both parents" and TFR, both were high in France while they were low in Japan. Sweden, the UK, and the US had high TFRs and a low ratio of people that perceived that children limit parents' opportunity for economic activity. In Taiwan, South Korea, and Germany, TFRs were low and it was accepted that children limit parents' opportunity for economic activity.

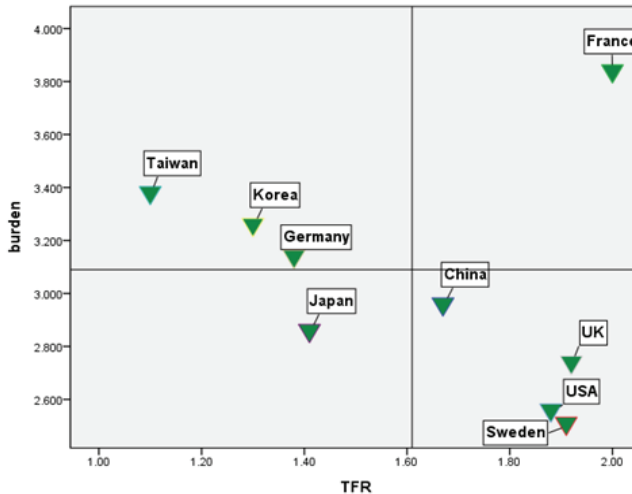[Figure 12] Country-specific location in the relationship between "Children are a financial burden on their parents" and TFR

Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

[Figure 13] Country-specific location in the relationship between "Having children restricts the employment and career chances of one or both parents" and TFR
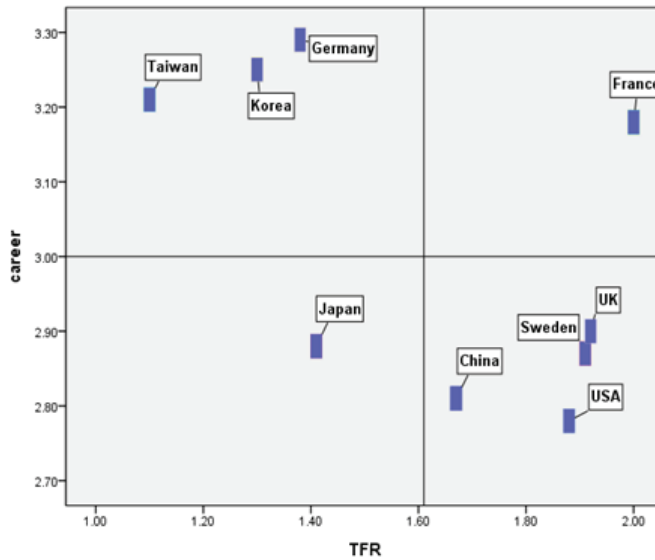
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

As for country-specific position in regard to the relationship between the item "Having children increases people's social standing in society" and TFR, the countries in which both were high were Sweden and China. The US, France, and the UK had high TFRs although they were still below average. In South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan there was agreement with the statement, but low TFRs were recorded. Both the score for the item "Having children increases people's social standing in society" and TFR were low in Germany.

As for country-specific position in regard to the relationship between the item "Adult children are an important source of help for elderly parents" and TFR, both were high in the US, China, and Sweden. Although the UK and France had low positive acknowledgment of this item, they had high TFRs. Japan and Germany had high positive acknowledgment of this item, although their TFRs were low. Taiwan and South Korea comprised the countries in which both were low.

[Figure 14] Country-specific position in regard to the relationship between the item "Having children increases people's social standing in society" and TFR
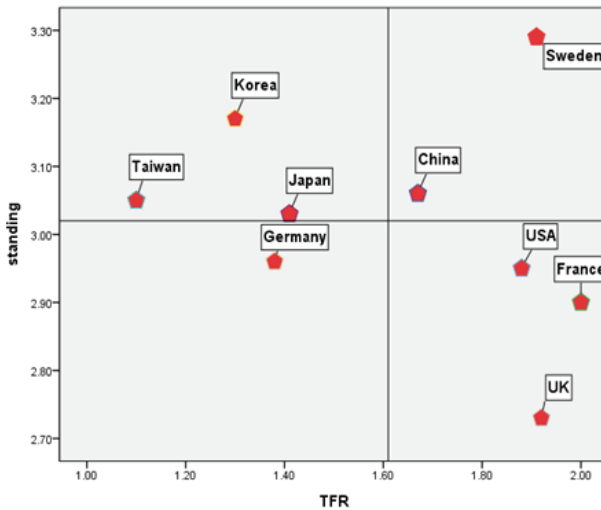
[Figure 15] Country-specific position in regard to the relationship between the item "Adult children are an important source of help for elderly parents" and TFR
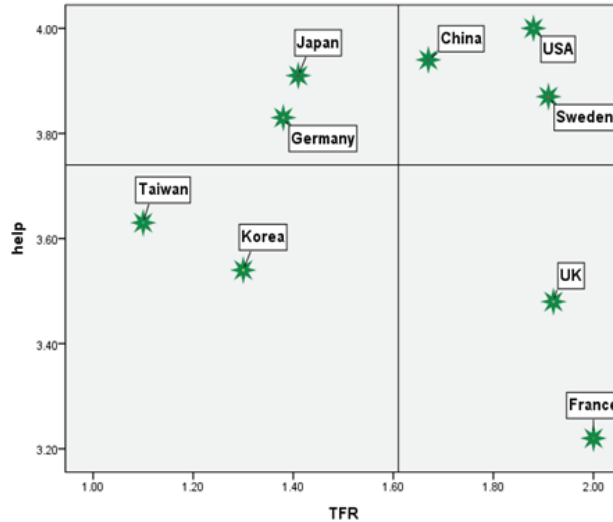
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

An examination of intersecting country-specific positions in regard to the six items for the value of children and TFRs was conducted. The results indicated that both the value of children and TFRs were high in the US, Sweden, China, and the UK. Although the value of children in France was low, it was the only country that had a high TFR. In other countries—Taiwan, South Korea, Germany, and Japan—both were low. That is, these countries had a relatively more negative view toward children and exhibited low TFRs. In general, the value of chil-

dren and TFR had a positive relationship. However, France was an exception.

[Figure 16] Country-specific position in regard to the relationship between the total value of children and TFR
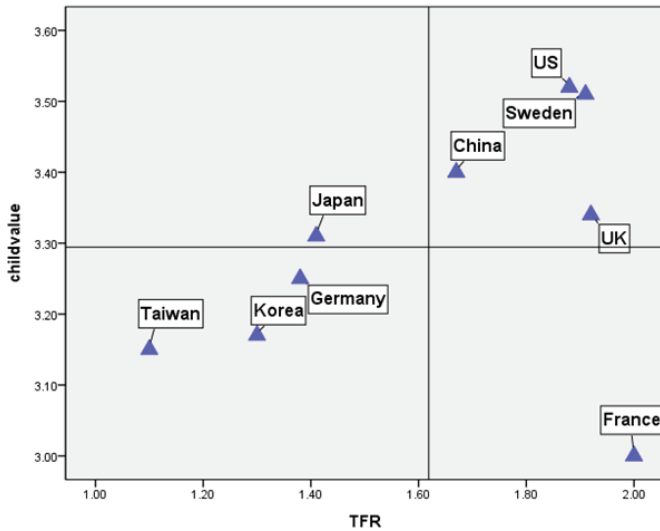
Notes: Correlation coefficient r=.046***, ***p⟨.001 (excluding France: r=.184***)
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

Based on the results, the nine countries were divided into two groups. The first group included the US, Sweden, the UK, China, and France; this group exhibited a high value of children and high TFRs. The other group comprised Germany, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan; this group exhibited a low value of children and low TFRs. Thus, both the value of chil-

dren and TFRs were generally low in East Asian countries and high in liberal and Nordic countries as well as in some continental countries. Accordingly, there were limitations in formulating an explanation based on the combination of welfare state type, the value of children, and the TFR. On the other hand, however, it seems appropriate to group Germany, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan into one category, as they all follow a conservative welfare model.

[Figure 17] Results of group analysis on the total value of children and TFR
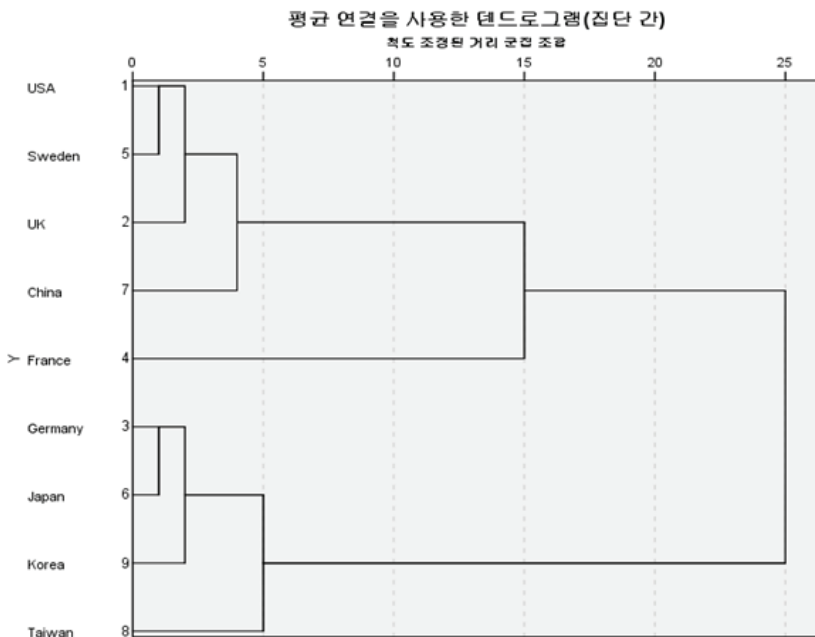
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Raw data analysis.

In countries that have introduced a social welfare insurance scheme and followed a male-breadwinner model, women naturally take responsibility for raising children and are burdened by parenting; it is likely that this aggravates the phenomenon of opting not to have children.

4. Analysis of factors affecting the value of children

The results of multiple regression analysis on the factors affecting the value of children are shown in Table 5 and Table 6. The effect of each factor was examined by designing three models. In Model 1, only countries were included in analyzing the differences in the value of children among countries; in Model 2, age was input to verify the significance of differences in the value of children by cohort. In Model 3, other independent variables including gender, marital status, years of education, employment, and religiosity were input in order to confirm whether their effects were significant.

First, from an examination of Model 1, the differences in the value of children among the countries were shown to be significant in all countries with the exception of Sweden. In other words, all other countries' figures for the value of children were low compared to the US, which was set as the base country. This indicates that the US had the most positive value of children. The results of adding age in Model 2 were also found to be significant. The age cohort of 18-24 years was standard;

all cohorts but three had high scores for the value of children. Older cohorts had a positive value of children, more so than the younger cohorts. Even with the addition of age in the model, the significance of differences in the value of children among countries did not disappear.

This shows that the value of children differed by country even when age was controlled. As a result of adding other independent variables in Model 3, the last model, age was not significant except for in the group aged 65 and older and the independent variables were all determined to have significant effects. The significance of the differences between countries was maintained from Models 1 to 3. Women regarded children more negatively than men and unmarried women regarded them more negatively than married, widowed, divorced, and separated women. Among unemployed atheists, increasing years of education were associated with the increase in perceiving children as a negative value.

⟨Table 5⟩ Regression analysis of the factors affecting the value of children

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
(Constant)	3.523***	3.392***	3.430***
Country (US=0)			
UK	-.178***	-.191***	-.142***
Germany	-.277***	-.284***	-.235***
France	-.519***	-.533***	-.462***
Sweden	-.012	-.026	.041
Japan	-.215***	-.224***	-.197***
China	-.125***	-.133***	-.126***
Taiwan	-.369***	-.365***	-.340***
South Korea	-.350***	-.357***	-.357***
Age (18-24=0)			
25-34		.077***	.004
35-44		.134***	.014
45-54		.159***	.017
55-64		.170***	.015
65+		.186***	.031
Female			-.030**
Marital status (Single=0)			
Married			.147***
Widowed			.141***
Divorced or separated			.096***
Education			-.008***
Employment			.046***
Religiosity			.136***
N	18,005	18,005	15,070
F	160.670***	110.885***	75.83***
R^2	0.067	0.074	0.092

Notes: Figures are non-standardized regression coefficients. ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

As shown in Table 6, the effects of independent variables were verified by dividing them by country. Similarities and differences are shown based on country-specific models. One similarity among countries was that age differences were not significant in any country with the exception of Sweden.

〈Table 6〉 Comparison of the value of children by country

	US	UK	Germany	France	Sweden
(Constant)	3.333***	3.265***	3.354***	3.043***	2.675***
Age (18−24=0)					
25−34	.034	.154	.044	.080	.400***
35−44	-.001	.193	-.027	.063	.565***
45−54	-.075	.280	-.122	.023	.661***
55−64	-.048	.111	-.005	.013	.561***
65+	-.117	.159	-.062	-.031	.647***
Females	.075*	-.020	-.038	-.021	.114*
Marital status (Single=0)					
Married	.108*	.013	.171***	.109**	.173**
Widowed	.061	-.065	.209*	.136*	.089
Divorced or separated	.129*	-.018	.158*	.040	.113
Education	-.002	-.006	-.013**	-.012***	-.001
Employment	.018	-.056	-.055	.026	.188**
Religiosity	.217***	.163**	.083*	.207***	.044
N	1,167	680	1,410	1,854	847
F	5.127***	1.454	3.801***	4.618***	8.821***
R^2	0.051	0.025	0.032	0.029	0.113

Notes: Figures are non-standardized regression coefficients.
$*p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

Gender differences were significant only in four countries: Sweden, Japan, China, and South Korea. In the case of Sweden, more women than men regarded children as having positive value, in contrast to the other countries. In almost all countries, more married people than unmarried people regarded children as having positive value. The UK and South Korea were the exception in this case. In these two countries, differences in the value of children between married and unmarried people were not significant.

⟨Table 6⟩ Continued

	Japan	China	Taiwan	South Korea
(Constant)	3.036	3.298	3.193***	3.287***
Age (18–24=0)				
25–34	.211	-.067	-.130**	-.124
35–44	.149	-.008	-.132*	-.188*
45–54	.126*	-.042	-.028	.009
55–64	.316	-.067	-.064	.095
65+	.290	-.046	-.015	.082
Female	-.207***	-.038*	-.033	-.131***
Marital status (Single=0)				
Married	.228*	.198***	.150***	.089
Widowed	.368*	.204***	.041	.116
Divorced or separated	.170	.095	.120	.023
Education	-.005	-.005**	-.008*	-.015**
Employment	.017	.050**	.039	.049
Religiosity	.284***	.134***	.034	.102**
N	596	5,547	1,785	1,184
F	5.305***	9.693***	5.936***	10.801***
R^2	0.098	0.021	0.039	0.100

Notes: Figures are non-standardized regression coefficients.
  *$p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, ***$p<.001$
Source: ISSP (2012). Family and Changing Gender Roles Module. Analysis of raw data.

Education had a negative effect in five countries: Germany, France, China, Taiwan, and South Korea. Employment status was significant only in Sweden and China, where those who were employed had a more positive value of children. Religiosity had a significant effect except in Sweden and Taiwan. Those who were more religious had a more positive value of children.

5 Conclusion

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A comparison of the value of children in nine countries was conducted. There were distinct differences by country in the value of children. Contrary to expectations, the analytic results implied that the value of children deviated according to country-specific values, family policy, and socio-cultural differences rather by welfare state regime. Even countries that can be categorized under the same type of regime were different in terms of their value of children. Sweden and the US had the most positive value of children. These two countries' TFRs were high, with 1.91 and 1.88, respectively. The country with the most negative value of children was France. Ironically, France's TFR was the highest among the countries compared at 2.00. France, which has a very generous family policy, very actively provides cash and service for families to ensure that there are no barriers or difficulties to raising children. Nevertheless, compared to other countries, French people had a strong negative consciousness in regard to children and considered child-rearing a financial burden. Therefore, it can be inferred that the effect of economic burden—which is included in the perception of children and childrearing as having a negative value—on actual birth rate is weakened through family policy.

The US and Sweden were assumed to have a social environ-
ment that is supportive of childrearing. In particular, these
countries did not have a negative value of children because the
institutions in these countries, combined with families' eco-
nomic power, ensure that childrearing does not add to parents'
economic burden or limit their economic activities. In addi-
tion, in these two countries, women regarded children as hav-
ing a positive value more so than men. This implies that child-
rearing for women is relatively easy in these countries.

South Korea and Taiwan are countries with a poor environ-
ment for raising children. In particular, this implies that ex-
panding systems to help parents overcome the burden of child-
rearing, which results in the high negative value of children, is
urgent. These two countries' TFRs were very low at 1.30 and
1.10, respectively. In South Korea and Taiwan, the value of
children of those aged between 35 and 44 was significantly
lower than that for those aged between 18 and 24. In other
words, those of childbearing age had a negative value of
children. Taiwan faces a more troubling situation as those aged
25-34 also had a more negative value of children compared to
younger generations. This suggests that childrearing is a bur-
den to those of the age for marriage and childbirth.

Although Germany and France are both continental coun-
tries, their results were different. Germany's TFR was 1.38,
which was significantly lower than that of France; however, the

value of children in Germany was high compared to in France. Germany and Japan were similar in regard to the value of children. The low birth rate in Germany was assumed to have resulted from difficulties in childrearing likely caused by the male-breadwinner model, in which childrearing overburdens women.

Although East Asian countries had their differences, they also had similarities. In particular, women had a more negative value of children than men in all countries with the exception of Taiwan. China was an exception as it had both a high value of children and TFR. As a socialist country, it has a high ratio of women's social advancement as well as a well-equipped childcare system that supports parenting. Despite the implementation of the one-child policy, the way of thinking in Asian families that consider children as a necessity is seen as the foundation for its higher birth rate compared to other Asian countries. On the other hand, in the other three countries, where familialism is taken as a model, the responsibilities of childbearing are imposed on the family and especially on women rather than on society; thus, they have a negative value of children and have low TFRs.

Religiosity had a positive effect in all countries with the exception of Taiwan. This was consistent with the results of previous studies. Despite the fact that South Korea has a high ratio of religious people, it has a negative value of children and a

low TFR. This indicates that the costs and difficulties of raising a child are accumulating.

In almost all countries, including Germany, France, China, Taiwan, and South Korea, education had a negative effect on the value of children. In particular, among the highly educated and women, this negative value of children indicates that employed women face difficulties in economic activity due to childrearing. A negative value of children among those who are highly educated reflects the low birth rate of the related socio-economic class of people. Only when the distribution of the birth rate becomes generally balanced regardless of social class will society be stabilized and the cost of childcare not over-burden the vulnerable class. In contrast to expectations, the effects of employment were not significant in many countries; in cases where they were, this effect was positive. This is likely the result of employment alleviating the economic burden of childrearing. In addition, the effects of family policy are very critical and were not included in this study. An in-depth study that considers this aspect is needed.

To foster a positive value of children, which has a direct effect on the expected number of children, policies supporting families and the economic activity of highly educated women need to be established first. In consideration of the fact that women in the US and Sweden have a positive value of children and also high birth rates, a policy that actively supports wom-

en's childbirth and parenting is needed.

Second, family policy needs to be strengthened. France is a country that has overcome a negative value of children with an active family policy. Rather than forming an ideology to control behavior, it formed a sufficiently supportive environment through a social policy that has ensured that families face no difficulties in giving birth.

Third, given that only those of the age for childbirth and parenting have a negative value of children in South Korea and Taiwan, a supportive mechanism that alleviates the costs of childcare is needed for these age groups. While a policy spanning all age groups can be expensive, intensive aid for a specific age group is cost effective. A necessary policy for childbirth and childrearing for those aged between 35 and 44 must be discovered; intensive support directed at this group can be expected to yield a change in the value of children.

Lastly, the role of religious people can be expected to bring positive changes. In all countries excluding Sweden and Taiwan, religion had a positive effect on the value of children. Thus, religious people need to influence surrounding people in such a way that they can disseminate a positive value of children among others. Alternatively, a campaign may be held to promote their active participation in social movements, in which they could voluntarily provide information regarding their openness to having multiple children and the positive val-

ue of children, highlighting the fact that giving birth is essential for the sustainability of a society. Currently, South Korea has the third lowest birth rate in the world; thus, religious people should take up the social responsibility of leading to change the value of children.

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