

# The Effect of Women's Employment on Men and Women's Desire for Children in Japan

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The purpose of this article is to explore the relationship between women's employment and desire of Japanese married couples for children using the data of The Comparative Survey on Marriage and Families in Japan (2004). First, I review extant studies concerning the determinants of desire for children and of childbirth in industrialized societies. These studies indicate the importance of women's employment, family income and family values. Based on these studies, I construct four hypotheses. Second, I examine the empirical support for these hypotheses among married couples, which has not been studied thus far in Japan. Using Logit regressions, the following main results are obtained:

- 1) the determinants of desire for children vary by parity,
- 2) the determinants of desire for children vary by gender, namely, while low family income discourages and wives' employment encourages husbands' desire for children, women's employment lowers wives' desire for children with respect to a second child,
- 3) basically, family income substantially affects desire for children; in particular, men with low family income hesitate to have a second child, while women with low family income and high educational expenses tend to avoid a third child,
- 4) the positive perception of child rearing increases the desire to have children among both men and women, while perceived importance of children in marriage increases women's desire for children.

In sum, women's employment affects desire for children among married couples in contemporary Japan. Based on the results, I discuss policy implications from a gender perspective.