

# KICCE Policy *Brief*

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## An Analysis of Public Perception on the Low Fertility Policies in Korea

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# An Analysis of Public Perception on the Low Fertility Policies in Korea

## I . Introduction

- Since the establishment of the national agenda for low fertility and aging in 2004, the government has strengthened social responsibility for and investment in relevant policies such as the implementation of responsible child care, reinforcement of pregnancy and childbirth support, and expansion of work-family reconciliation systems.<sup>1)</sup>
  - ▶ In the meantime, the Basic Plan for Low Fertility and Aging Society was mainly expanding and modifying policy subjects for support of marriage, childbirth, child care, and work-family balance.<sup>2)</sup>
- In the Third Basic Plan for Low Fertility and Aging Society, a more comprehensive and structured approach was taken from the previous micro and phenomenistic approach in order to cope with the population crisis.<sup>3)</sup>
  - ▶ To this end, it is necessary to expand policy support through expansion of youth employment, support for housing and marriage, as well as reduction of childrearing burdens for married couples.
  - ▶ The government also focuses on social perceptual changes by eliminating blind spots, deregulation, and so on.
- The study was conducted in order to examine the public perception on the low fertility policies.
  - ▶ The subjects of this study were 3,000 men and women over 15 years old, who were sampled proportionally considering various characteristics such as gender, age, occupation, and parental status.
  - ▶ The data was collected via online surveys, emails, texts, and phone interviews by a specialized research institute that has a related panel pool.

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\*This manuscript is based on one of the KICCE's general projects in 2018: KICCE Poll for Establishing the Culture of Happy Child Care(II).

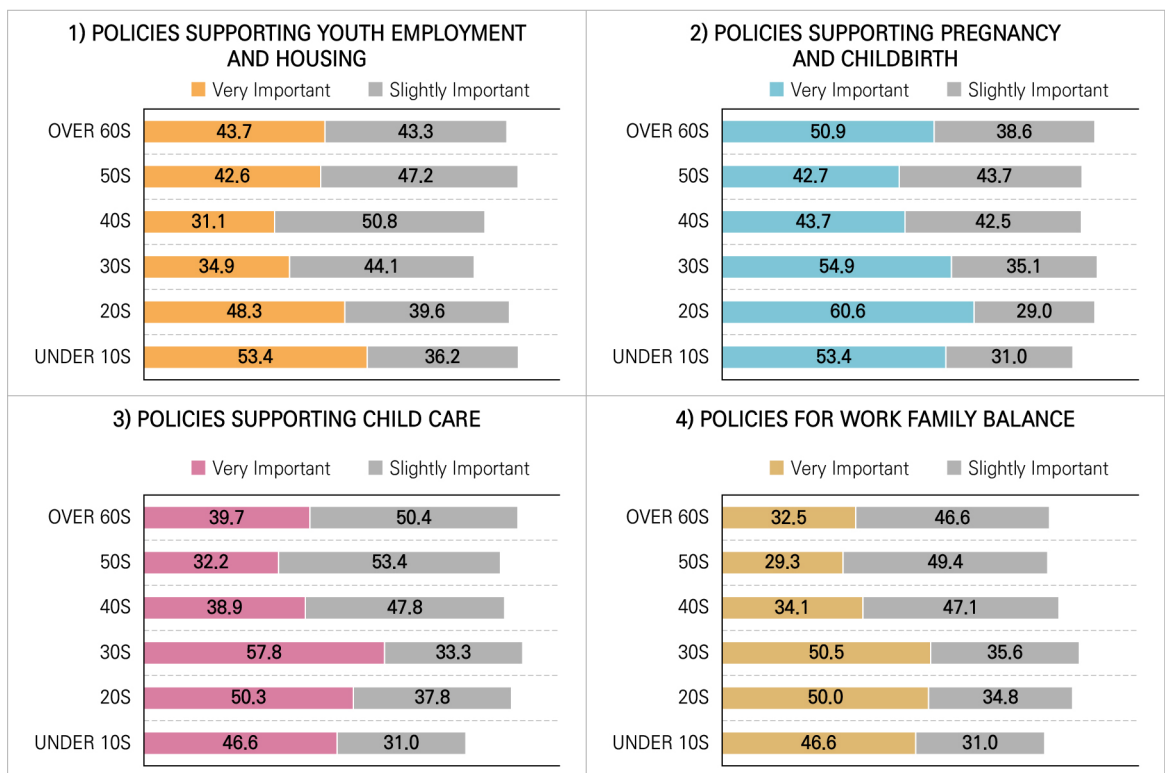
1) Government of the Republic of Korea (2015). The 3<sup>rd</sup> Basic Plan for Low Fertility and Aging Society, p. 18.

2) National Assembly Legislative Investigation Office (2017). NARS Issues Report 302: Problems and Improvement Measures of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Basic Plan for Low Fertility and Aging Society, p. 15.

3) Government of the Republic of Korea (2015). The 3<sup>rd</sup> Basic Plan for Low Fertility and Aging Society, p. 37.

II. Perceived importance of low fertility policies

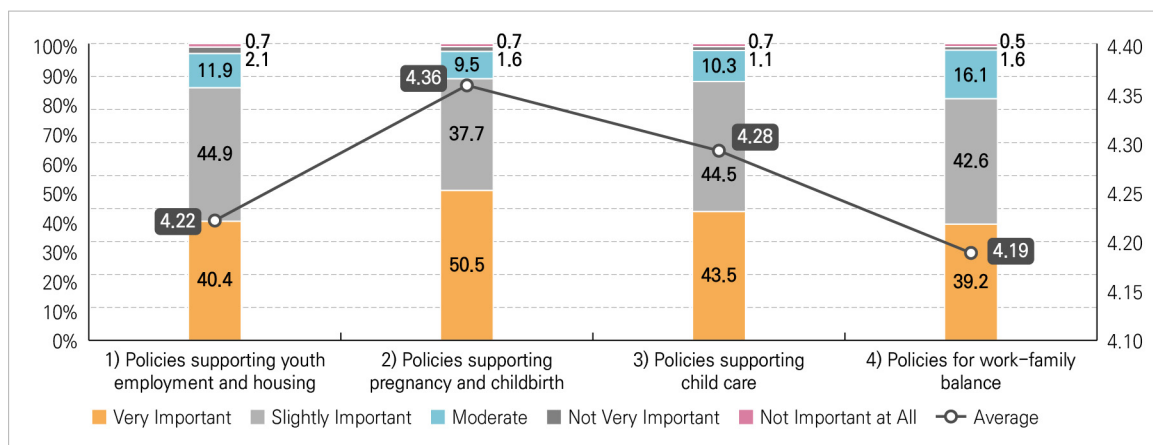
- When queried about the importance of youth employment and housing policies among the low fertility policies, 44.9% of respondents answered they were ‘slightly important.’
  - ▶ For the youth employment and housing policies, the lower the age, the higher the percentage of responses that they were important. The percentage of respondents in their 30s and 40s who answered that they were ‘important’ was relatively low.
- For pregnancy and childbirth policies, 50.5% answered they were ‘very important.’
  - ▶ The proportion of responses that they were ‘not important’ was relatively high among those under 10s.
- For child care support policies, 44.5% answered they were ‘slightly important.’
  - ▶ The percentage of responses that they were ‘important’ was relatively high among those in their 20s and 30s, who are more likely to be rearing children.
- For work-family balance policies, 42.6% answered they were ‘slightly important.’
  - ▶ The percentage of responses that they were ‘important’ was relatively high among those in their 20s and 30s.



Source: Eun-Young Choi, Hyo Mi Choi, & Hye Min Lee(2018). A Survey on KICCE Childcare Policies for the Establishment of a Happy Child Care Culture (II). Korea Institute of Child Care an Education.

[Figure 1] Perceptions on the importance of low fertility policies by age groups

- As a result of examining the low fertility policies in order of importance (5 points scale), pregnancy and childbirth support policies were the highest at 4.36 points, followed by child care support policies at 4.29, youth employment and housing policies at 4.22, and work-family balance policies at 4.19.

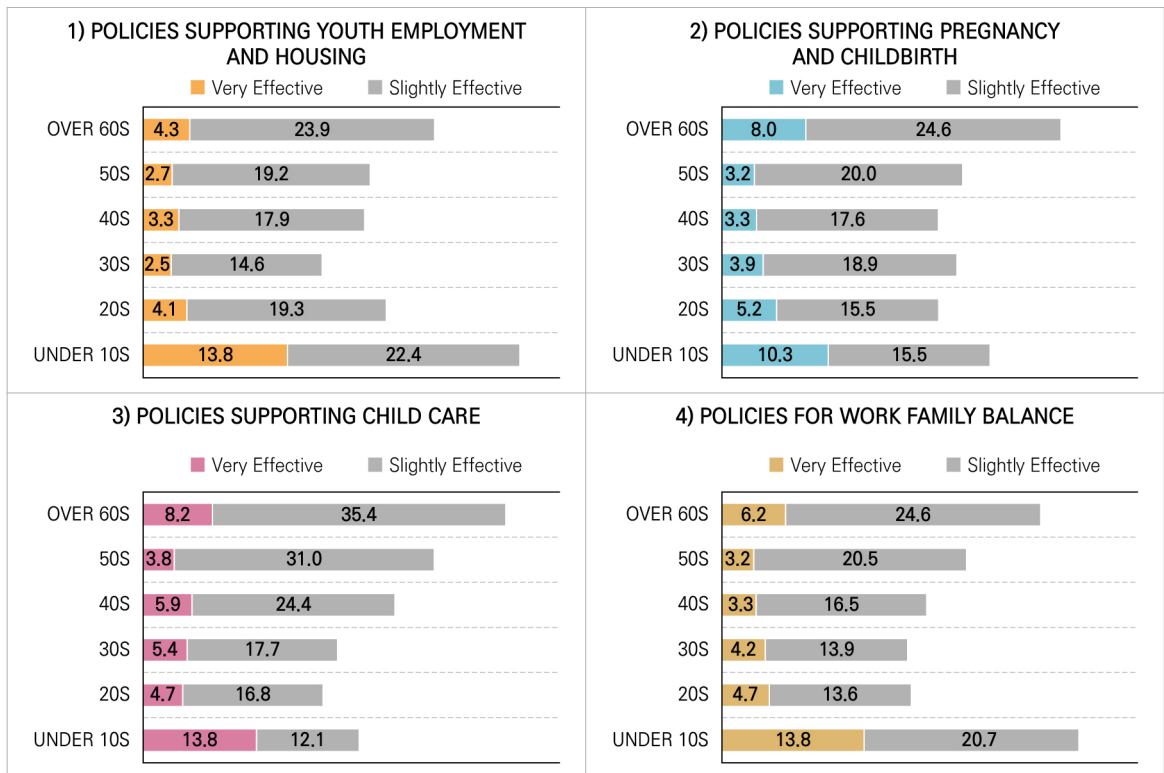


Source: Eun-Young Choi, Hyo Mi Choi, & Hye Min Lee(2018). A Survey on KICCE Childcare Policies for the Establishment of a Happy Child Care Culture (II). Korea Institute of Child Care and Education.

[Figure 2] Perceptions on the importance of low fertility policies

### III. Perceived effectiveness of low fertility policies

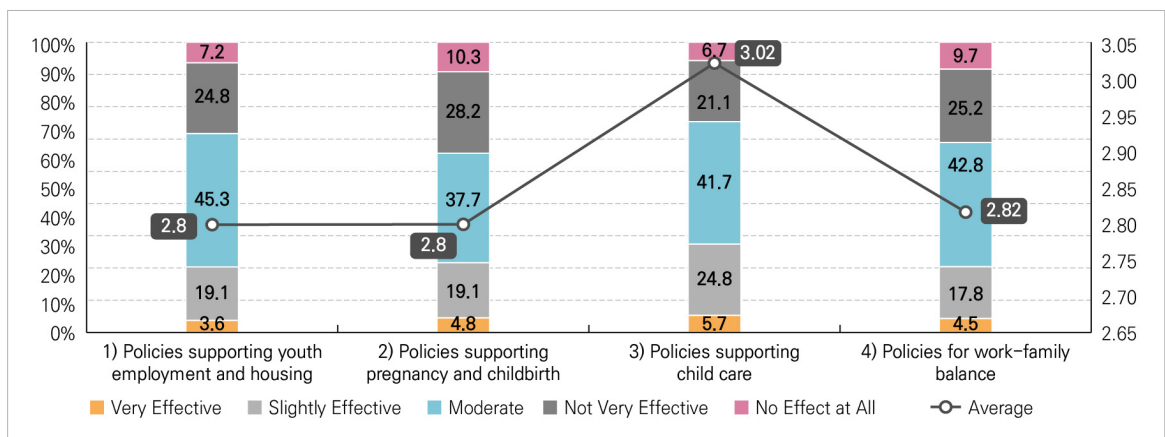
- Regarding the effectiveness of youth employment and housing policies among the low fertility policies, 3.6% responded they were 'very effective.'
  - The proportion of responses that they were 'not effective' was higher among those in their 30s, who would be most sensitive to such policies.
- For pregnancy and childbirth support policies, 4.8% answered they were 'very effective.'
  - The percentage of responses that they were 'not effective' was relatively high among those in their 20s, 30s, and 40s who would be highly sensitive to the policies.
- For child care support policies, the rate of responses that they were 'very effective' was the lowest at 5.7%.
  - The percentage of responses that they were 'not effective' was relatively high among those in their 20s and 30s with higher sensitivity for the policies.
- For work-family balance policies, 4.5% responded that they were 'very effective.'
  - The proportion of responses that they were 'not effective' was relatively high among those in 20s and 30s.



Source: Eun-Young Choi, Hyo Mi Choi, & Hye Min Lee(2018). A Survey on KICCE Childcare Policies for the Establishment of a Happy Child Care Culture (II). Korea Institute of Child Care an Education.

[Figure 3] Perceptions on the effectiveness of low fertility policies by age groups

- Among the policies to cope with low fertility rates, the most effective (5-point scale) policies were child care support policies at 3.02 points, followed by work-family balance policies at 2.82 points, youth employment and housing policies at 2.8 points, and pregnancy and childbirth support policies also at 2.8 points.



Source: Eun-Young Choi, Hyo Mi Choi, & Hye Min Lee(2018). A Survey on KICCE Childcare Policies for the Establishment of a Happy Child Care Culture (II). Korea Institute of Child Care an Education.

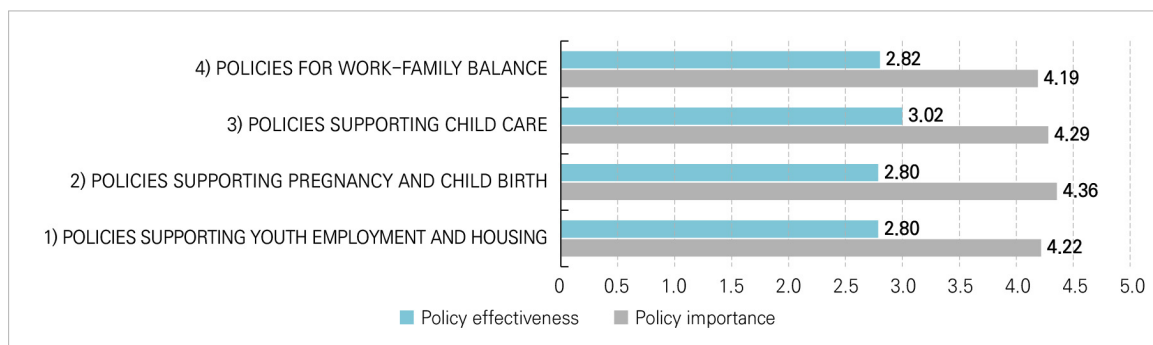
[Figure 4] Perceptions on the effectiveness of low fertility policies

- The overall policy effectiveness was considered to be lower than the policy importance.
  - ▶ In particular, given the low policy effectiveness perceived by those in their 20s and

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30s, who would be most relevant to the policies, it is necessary to reconsider whether the low fertility policies are fulfilling the needs of the direct consumers of such policies.



Source: Eun-Young Choi, Hyo Mi Choi, & Hye Min Lee(2018). A Survey on KICCE Childcare Policies for the Establishment of a Happy Child Care Culture (II). Korea Institute of Child Care an Education.

[Figure 5] Perceptions on the importance and effectiveness of low fertility policies

#### IV. Suggestions

- As a result of examining the importance and the effectiveness of low fertility policies, pregnancy and childbirth support policies were shown to be highly important among other policies. Also, child care support policies appeared to be highly effective among other policies.
  - ▶ It is necessary to expand the policies from financial support for kindergarten and child care centers to a more comprehensive support plan, which covers pregnancy, childbirth and care.
  - ▶ Along with the increase in non-marriage and marriage, child support after marriage is an important variable for further fertility. Therefore, the whole-life parenting policy needs to be comprehensively redesigned.
- As a result of the survey on priorities of child care policies at national level in this study, the priority of financial support design was high in discriminatory support considering national finances.
- In order to solve the problem of low fertility, it is necessary to focus not only on micro-raising policies but also on policies for creating an overall culture of a happy society.
  - ▶ It is necessary to review the trend and direction of the current policies considering the level of policy needs.

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