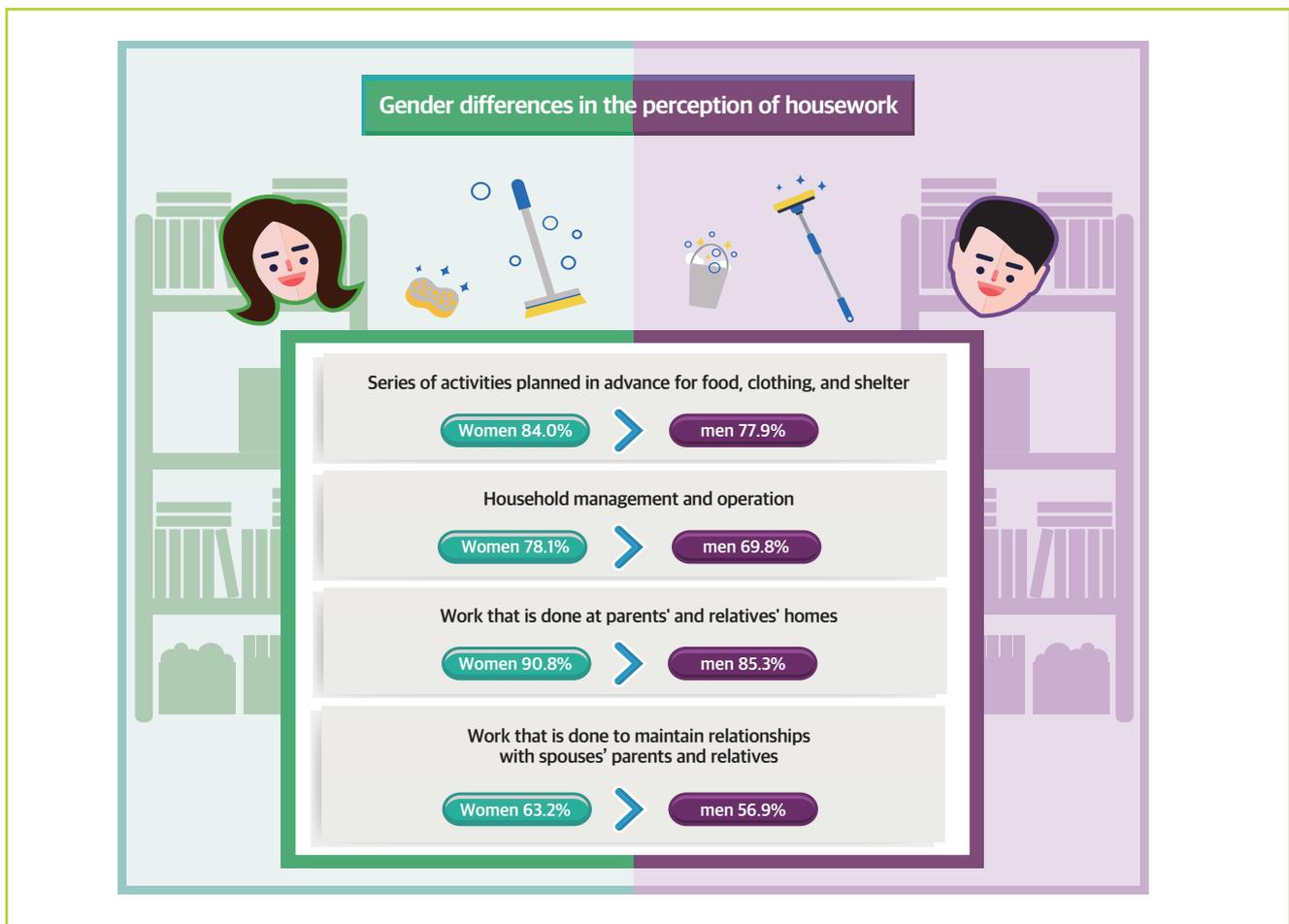


Research Title A Study on the Improvement of Gender Inequality in the Measurement of Time Spent on Housework
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Gender inequality in doing housework and plans to reconstruct tools for measuring time spent on housework

Abstract

- This paper is designed to reconstruct items for measuring tools for time spent on housework including plan-based and relationship-based work and to study how double-income couples aged 40 or younger do housework. The cycle of housework implementation is also included as one of the measuring tools for time spent on housework.
- The research results show that women spend about 10 hours a day doing housework and invest ten times more in plan-based work than men.
- The tools for measuring housework should be revised to include plan-based work and execution cycle



1. Background and issues

- ✔ Gender inequality in housework is universally recognized but specific realities have yet to be accurately revealed. Until now, housework has been very narrowly defined as cooking, cleaning, and doing laundry.
- ✔ General life planning that is required to maintain family life, as well as emotional activities required to maintain family relationships, belongs to the category of housework. However, plan-based housework that is not exposed as specific activities, family relationship-based work, and housework that goes beyond what is done on a daily or weekly basis, have yet to be studied.
- ✔ Gender inequality in housework time has been widely known but inequality in measuring housework has been overlooked. In order to effectively expose the true nature of housework, items for measuring housework should be revised and added, developing new measurement systems.
- ✔ Developing 64 detailed items including plan- and relationship-based work, this paper proposes a measurement system that can reflect the execution cycle of housework.

2. Survey & results

- ✔ **Exemplary surveys for measuring housework**
 - ▶ Time-Use Survey (Statistics Korea)
(Measurement items) home operation – eight items and 28 sub-items; family member care – seven items and 19 sub-items
(Measurement method) record time spent for specific activities for a total of three days (24 hours a day) every ten minutes.
 - ▶ National Survey of Families (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family): survey the number of times that specific activities are conducted, as well as time spent for such activities (eight items for home management); in the case of care, sharing work with husbands is used as a nominal variable.
- ✔ **Need for reconstructing the scope and measurement of housework**
 - ※ Results from focus group interviews with 32 citizens
 - ▶ (Concept of housework): Housework refers to all activities required for housekeeping, including not only activities that are repeatedly implemented on a daily basis, for which a significant amount of time is spent, and that are visibly exposed, but also activity planning that is accompanied until such activities are carried out. Also, housework means mandatory activities that should be done even though they are unwanted and that are accompanied by stress.
 - ▶ (Attributes of housework) Family relationship-based activities including family care, family events (birthdays, ancestral rites, holidays, etc.), and family gatherings, as well as emotional work for family members, are recognized to belong to the category of housework, so that the scope of housework is significantly expandable depending on circumstances. The same

activities may be either included in or excluded from the scope of housework in accordance with circumstances and individual characteristics.

- ▶ (Review of housework measurement methods) In order to identify how housework is done without any narrow scope or content, existing classification and measurement systems based on ‘entities who conduct fixed activities’ and ‘the time spent’ need to be reconstructed. Activities that can be included in the scope of housework but are measured separately, as well as existing activities not reflecting the implementation of housework, should be reviewed, at the same time proposing new classification and measurement systems reflecting diverse activities (regular and non-regular activities, invisible plan-based activities, family relationship-based activities, etc.) that are implemented in a family environment but are not identified by existing systems.

✔ **Reorganization of housework measurement tools**

- ▶ Sixty-four items in seven areas (dietary life, clothing habits, dwelling life, home operation, children-related activities, family exchange and events and family care)
- ▶ 21 plan-based work and 43 execution cycle
- ▶ Including expanded housework such as plan-based work, relationship-based work, and so forth.

✔ **Survey of the implementation of housework**

- ▶ Participants: 1,204 double income couples aged 40 or younger
- ▶ Method: online survey based on online panels by a professional opinion-testing agency
- ▶ Content:
 - 1) Scope and image of housework
 - 2) Implementation of housework surveyed by reorganized housework measurement tools

✔ **Scope and image of housework**

- ▶ Items that a high percentage of respondents think belong to housework are as follows: “activities relating to food, clothing, and dwelling life, which are required to maintain family life” and “activities that are conducted at parents’ and relatives’ houses (holidays, ancestral rites, cleaning, etc).”
- ▶ Items showing big gender differences are as follows: “a series of activities that are planned in advance for food, clothing, and dwelling life (women: 84.0%; men: 77.9%)”, “family affairs management, operation, and planning (women: 78.1%; men: 69.8%),” “activities that are conducted at parents’ and relatives’ houses (women: 90.8%; men: 85.3%),” and “activities that are carried out to maintain relationships with parents-in-law and relatives (women: 63.2%; men: 56.9%).”

<Table 1> Scope of housework (percentage of respondents agreeing that each item belongs to the scope of housework)

Item	All	Female	Male	Statistics (χ^2)
(1) Activities relating to food, clothing, and dwelling life to maintain family relationships	89.4	90.7	87.9	2.57
(2) A series of activities that are planned in advance for food, clothing, and dwelling life (menus, item purchase, home repair, etc.)	81.1	84.0	77.9	7.30**
(3) Activities to manage and plan family affairs (financial planning, children's education planning, etc.)	74.2	78.1	69.8	10.55**
(4) Activities that are conducted at parents' and relatives' homes (holidays, ancestral rites, cleaning, etc.)	88.2	90.8	85.3	8.35**
(5) Taking care of children physically	79.9	80.5	79.2	0.36
(6) Children's education, cultural activities, experience-based activities, etc.	69.2	70.1	68.3	0.42
(7) Taking care of parents physically	72.9	71.6	74.4	1.35
(8) Taking care of parents-in-law physically	75.8	77.0	74.4	1.12
(9) Activities that are conducted to maintain relationships with parents and relatives (making a phone call, gatherings, etc.)	58.0	59.0	56.8	0.61
(10) Activities that are conducted to maintain relationships with parents-in-law and relatives (making a phone call, gatherings, etc.)	60.3	63.2	56.9	5.05*

Note: 1) Percentage of respondents agreeing that each item belongs to the scope of housework

2) P* < 0.05, P** < 0.01, P*** < 0.001

Data: Results from the Survey on the Perception and Status of Housework conducted for this study.



Results from the survey on the implementation of housework conducted by using reorganized housework measurement tools

1) Gender differences in doing housework by the housework execution cycle

- ▶ Among items that are regularly conducted, those that 50% or more of respondents regularly implement every day or every week are extracted and compared.
- ▶ Among 21 items, 19 items excluding 'taking out trash' and 'taking out recyclable materials' are conducted by more women than men.
- ▶ For 21 items that a high percentage of respondents carry out regularly every day or every week, the average gender difference is estimated at 27.4%p.

※ (Comparison) In the case of 14 items that 50% or more of respondents implement irregularly, the gender difference in implementation is estimated at 6.14%p.

<Table 2> Gender differences in implementation for items that are conducted every day and every week.

(unit: %, %p)

Area	Item	Execution cycle		Gender difference (%p)
		Every day	Every week	
Clothing habits	(2) Doing laundry	26.6	64.7	28.8
	(5) Arranging clothes	20.7	40.1	25.6
Dietary life	(1) Making general decisions on food (menus, etc.)	52.0	31.7	46.0
	(2) Planning shopping and preparing a purchase list	9.0	69.5	48.7
	(3) Preparing meals	70.2	20.8	48.2
	(4) Preparing refreshments	45.5	38.0	46.9
	(6) Doing the dishes after meals	74.3	18.7	13.5
	(7) Putting food reserves back in their spaces	38.6	46.3	39.8

Area	Item	Execution cycle		Gender difference (%p)
		Every day	Every week	
Dwelling life	(1) Deciding on the number of times that the house is cleaned up, as well as how to clean it	23.5	48.8	33.0
	(2) Daily cleaning	52.0	39.1	24.0
	(4) Cleaning rest rooms	7.1	59.2	13.1
	(5) Taking out trash	22.1	68.3	- 12.0
	(6) Separating and taking out recyclable materials	14.7	74.2	- 15.4
Home operation	(6) Taking care of pets	46.6	18.5	28.4
	(7) Taking care of plants	22.6	48.2	33.6
	(9) Doing offline shopping	0.2	46.4	25.0
	(10) Doing online shopping	6.3	45.0	25.7
Children-related activities	(4) Helping children commute to school (driving them to school or home)	37.5	20.9	29.5
	(8) Helping children do homework and study	31.3	27.4	42.9
	(9) Reading books to children and playing with them	46.2	26.7	21.7
	(10) Taking care of children physically (helping children wash their face, take a bath, brush their teeth, and have their meals)	59.8	15.2	28.7
		21		Average 27.4

Note: Negative values indicate that the percentage of men is higher than the share of women in terms of implementation.

Data: Results from the Survey on the Perception and Status of Housework conducted for this study.

2) Time spent on housework by the execution cycle

- ▶ Time spent on housework conducted regularly every month: women → about 301 hours; men → 99 hours (a month)
- ▶ Time spent on housework conducted regularly every year: women → about 24 hours; men → 14 hours 42 minutes (a year)
- ▶ Time spent on housework conducted irregularly: women → 31 hours; men → 9 hours 19 minutes (a year)
- ▶ (Implications) Women spend about 10 hours on housework a day. If housework that is done on a yearly basis is added, the time will further increase. For this study, whether to do the housework (by item), the number of times that housework is done, and time spent per round are surveyed, calculating time on a monthly and yearly basis. In other words, rather than relying on the Time Diary system, time spent by item is calculated. This means that the housework measurement system based on 24 hours a day and activities fails to measure 'plan-based work' or 'housework with the cycle of one week or longer.'

<Table 3> Frequency and minutes by the execution cycle

(unit: frequency, minutes)

Cycle	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Minutes	Frequency	Minutes
Regular activities - monthly	483.8	18,061.7	216.7	5,937.7
Regular activities - yearly	23.0	1,442.2	18.6	883.0
Irregular activities	37.1	1,857.2	25.1	985.2

Note: The average time spent on regular activities is calculated on a monthly basis while the average time spent on yearly and irregular activities is calculated on a yearly basis.

Data: Results from the Survey on the Perception and Status of Housework conducted for this study.

3) Time spent on housework by characteristic

- ▶ Monthly regular activities: Women do four times as much plan-based housework and twice as much implementation-based housework as men.
- ▶ Yearly regular activities: plan-based housework → women: 8 hours 35 minutes; men: about five hours; implementation-based housework → women: 15 hours 32 minutes; men: 9 hours 28 minutes. Gender differences in housework time are smaller than those for monthly regular activities.

<Table 4> Frequency and minutes by the characteristic of housework - regular activities (monthly)
(unit: frequency, minutes)

Item	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Time	Frequency	Time
(1) Planning (21 items)	86.0	2,482.4	33.5	667.9
(2) Implementation (43 items)	399.5	15,504.9	189.0	5,226.2

Note: Whether to do the housework → Yes; the cycle of implementation → every day, every week, and every month. Daily and weekly figures are translated into monthly data. The number of times is multiplied by time spent per round to calculate the time.
Data: Results from the Survey on the Perception and Status of Housework conducted for this study.

<Table 5> Frequency and minutes by characteristic of housework - regular activities (yearly)
(unit: frequency, minutes)

Item	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Time	Frequency	Time
(1) Planning (21 items)	12.6	515.2	9.9	300.6
(2) Implementation (43 items)	12.5	932.3	11.4	586.8

Note: Irregular activities refer to those whose cycle of implementation is not regular. The average number of times is based on data for the previous year. The number of times is multiplied by time spent per round to calculate the time.
Data: Results from the Survey on the Perception and Status of Housework conducted for this study.

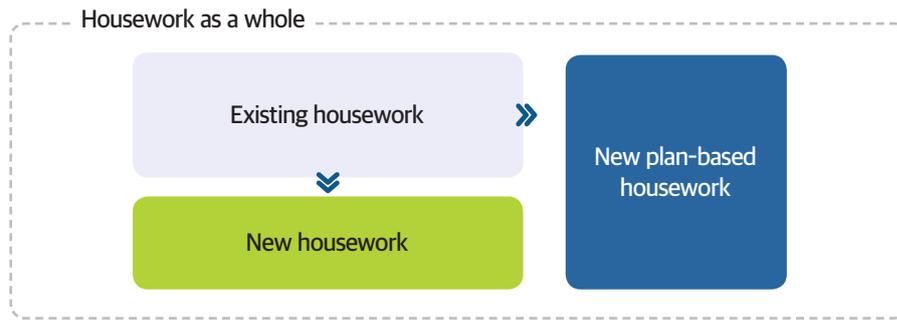
3. Policy suggestions



Reorganization of housework measurement tools

- ▶ As <Figure 1> shows, the scope of housework needs to expand. Therefore, housework classification systems and measurement tools should be reconstructed to include new housework and implementation systems.
- ▶ This paper proposes the specific revision of existing housework items, as well as housework measurement tools including expanded housework such as plan-and relationship-based activities and others.
- ▶ Sixty-four specified housework items in the seven areas of food, clothing, shelter, family management, children-related activities, family gatherings/events, and family care are presented and classified into plan-and implementation-based activities.

<Figure 1> Expansion of the scope of housework



<Table 6> Housework measurement items

Classification	Planning	Implementation
Clothing habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devising clothes purchase plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doing laundry Taking care of and making textiles and shoes for family use Receive services for textiles and shoes for family use Arrange clothes
Dietary life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deciding how to have meals including menus Devise shopping plans and prepare a purchase list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing food Preparing non-daily food such as kimchi-making for the winter and preserving foods Washing dishes after meals Arranging food reserves Receiving food-related services (receiving food deliveries)
Dwelling life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deciding on cleaning frequencies and methods Devising home appliances and housing goods purchase plans (information gathering/comparison, listing, etc.) Devising home care plans (house and home appliances repair) and gathering information Controlling home care and maintenance costs (living expenses) Devising dwelling-related plans and gather information (relocation, etc.) Gathering home operation and maintenance-related information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doing daily cleaning Doing general cleaning Cleaning rest rooms Taking out trash Separating and taking out recyclable materials Managing and manufacturing household goods Receiving dwelling-related services (home-related maintenance services such as electricity, plumbing, etc.) Receiving household goods-related services (home appliances maintenance services) Managing housing affairs (lamp replacement and other home maintenance)
Home operation & others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing family finances (yearly spending, investments, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing family-related financial affairs Managing public office affairs Managing vehicles Receiving vehicle services Taking care of pets Taking care of plants Receiving pets-and plants-related services Doing offline shopping Doing online shopping
Family gatherings & events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing schedules for family events and birthdays and planning events Managing schedules for family events and birthdays and planning events (in-laws) Selecting gifts for family events, birthdays, and others Preparing shopping list and planning for holidays and ancestral rites Planning family trips in which parents and relatives participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing for holidays and ancestral rites (cooking and others) Interacting with parents (making a phone call, making a visit, and others) Interacting with parents-in-law (making a phone call, making a visit, and others)

Classification	Planning	Implementation
Children-related activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deciding on children's education • Gathering information on children's education (private institutes, private lessons, home-school materials, and others) • Managing children's education and child care expenses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing matters involving children with teachers (schools and private institutes) • Helping or driving children to commute to school or private institute • Participating in school-related activities and events (instruction inspection, invigilation, bazaars, school arts festivals, sports events, volunteer services, etc.) • Participating in kindergarten-and day care center-related activities and events (presentations, one day teacher services, sports events, picnics, volunteer services, etc.) • Participating in parents gatherings (online/offline) • Helping children study (homework, performance evaluation, learning, etc.) • Reading books to and playing with children • Taking care of children physically (face washing, bathing, brushing teeth, etc.) • Taking part in cultural events for children

✔ Housework measurement systems

- ▶ It is proposed that the cycle of implementation by item, frequency by cycle, and time spent should be measured.
- ▶ It's because housework is done not only every day but also every week, every month, every quarter, and every year.

✔ Regular survey based on reorganized housework measurement tools

- ▶ How housework is done should be identified regularly and continuously by using housework measurement tools and systems that are proposed.
- ▶ How housework is done should be newly studied by securing budget. However, considering budget constraints, some items can be added to the National Survey of Families conducted by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family every five years. Or, it can be separately measured through an additional survey.

Project Management Ministry : Family Policy Division, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family

Affiliated Ministry : Work-Life Balance Promotion Team and Cultural Innovation Team, Presidential Committee on Aging Society and Population Policy.