

Household Income, Gender Role Attitudes and Fertility Intentions in Australia.

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Work plays a crucial role in couples' fertility decisions, yet the impact of each partner's employment characteristics on family planning remains underexplored. This study examines how work hours, income, and occupational status - reflecting broader family-friendly job characteristics - are associated with the realization of short-term fertility intentions among dual-income, no-kids couples in Australia, where high childcare costs and limited welfare support pose unique challenges for family planning.

Using longitudinal data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey (2005–2022) on 1432 women (ages 18–47) and their male partners, I ask two questions: (1) How do work hours, income, and occupational status impact fertility intentions and realization? (2) How do these employment characteristics, distributed between partners, affect fertility intentions and realization?

Findings reveal gendered effects: while 67% of couples desire children, only 26% realize these intentions. Increases in individual income by AU\$10,000 correlate with a 6% higher likelihood for men and 7% for women in realizing fertility intentions. Notably, high-status jobs boost women's likelihood of realization, with a comparable effect for men only in certain age ranges, and no significant impact from intra-couple dynamics.