RURAL-URBAN DIFFERENCES IN CHILD-BEARING DURING 1969–74: AN ANALYSIS OF THE 1974 KOREAN NATIONAL FERTILITY SERVEY

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Based on the 1974 KNFS survey data, this study examines the differential relationships between rural and urban areas, of socio-cultural, demographic, and birth control variables, with fertility in the later reproductive stage of women which is defined, due to the availability of data, as the fertility during the five years before the survey for women at ages 35 and upward. The results of the analysis clearly reveal that the reproductive pattern of Korean women differs greatly in terms whether they live in rural or urban communities, indicating that societal setting is the prime factor in fertility behavior of Korean women.

I. Introduction

One of the most basic sociological distinctions in the study of population is that of rural and urban areas. An immense literature has pointed to the presence of an inverse relationship between urbanization and fertility (Hawthorn, 1970: 16), although some studies show conflicting results (see for example Abu-Lughod, 1964).

Descriptive studies on fertility based on census data and vital registration have indicated higher fertility for rural than for urban areas in Korea (Kwon et al., 1975:17). Rural and urban residence has been understood as the major source of fertility differentiation. Various studies have suggested many possible factors in such differentials; age at marriage, educational attainment, occupation, and family size value, etc. (Kwon, 1982; Moon, 1972 & 73; S.T. Park, 1978; Shin et al., 1981). However there still remains a considerable gap in understanding in differential fertility between rural and urban residents, since most of the studies have dealt with the problem taking the rural-urban distinction as an independent variable, rather than viewing the two types of areas as different societal settings which govern the everyday life and behaviour of the residents. The objective of this study is to appraise the differential patterns of the socio-economic and demographic relationships of fertility in such different societal settings, based on the 1974 Korean National Fertility Survey (henceforth referred to as the KNFS) data.[1] It has long been recognized that the social and economic forces at work in the urban setting differ considerably from those operating in a rural context, which in turn result in different ways of life (Prachuabmoh et al., 1972: 3). The statistical analysis based on the multiple classification analysis (MCA) technique[2] is adopted to investigate the relationship of the selected variables with fertility, both in gross and net terms, and to measure the total predictive power of variables combined within each areal context.

1. In the 1974 KNFS data 'Urban' designates administrative areas with 50,000 or more people (city), whereas 'Rural' designates administrative areas with less than 50,000 residents, including town (Population size 20,000–49,999) and village (Population size less than 20,000).
2. For details, see Andrews et. al., 1973.

The number of children ever born during the 5 years before the survey is used as the indicator of fertility in this analysis, not toal number of children ever born as has been the case of most such studies. It is well known that fertility is the combined result of a series of dicisions and behavior which may occur over 30 years in the life of a woman. The stages of family building as well as socio-economic characteristics of individuals may be considered as the major source of variations in the pattern of fertility (Hermalin, 1972: 29). When using the cross-sectional data, studies on fertility confront some important limitations. Socio-economic differentials in fertility at one time point may suffer from a problematic assumption that the given socio-economic status of woman did not change over time, and thus the number of children ever born as an indicator of fertility may be somewhat misleading in asserting the relationship of socio-economic background with fertility in general (L.J. Cho, 1968: 199). The problems stated above can be minimized through a multivariate analysis of children ever born taking it as the analysis of 1) short duration age group each individual woman has passed, or 2) short marital duration groups each individual woman has passed (Kwon, 1982) after controlling the current age of woman, or 3) a relatively short period of reproductive span in reference to a specific time point. In this study, we have chosen the third strategy and taken the most recent period at the time of survey as the unit of analysis; that is during the 5 years before the survey. This interval is selected for convenience, and the results would not be greatly affected if it were shortened or increased by a couple of years.

Selection of the independent variables for this study is based on the first country report tabulations from the 1974 KNFS and the review of the previous literature on the determinants of fertility (for example, United Nations, 1973; N.H. Cho et al., 1977; S.T. Park, 1978). The framework proposed by Freedman (1967) has been employed to be a guideline for the current analysis. Independent variables are grouped into three categories; demographic characteristics, socio-cultural background, and birth control practice and attitudes. Each variable group is used as a unit of multivariate analysis. The analysis is confined to women aged 35–49 who are fecund, and have been currently married more than 5 years. The sample base consists of 1409 women, 788 in rural areas and 621 in urban areas.

II. Demographic Determinants of Late Fertility

In this analysis, the number of living children at the time of five years before the survey is added into the demographic variables with age of woman and age at first marriage. Given the prevalence of the small family size norm, the current family size would be one of the most powerful factors affecting further childbearing of the couple in the later reproductive period. The results of the relationship between demographic variables and the late fertility[3] are shown in Table 1.

The grand mean of the number of children ever born during the 5 years before the survey is 0.8 in rural areas and 0.4 in urban areas. Such a considerable difference of fertility may have resulted from the increased use of contraception at the higher parities in the urban sector of population in this period of observation (1969–74). As expected, the negative impact of increasing age on childbearing during the recent period is prominent in both areas. Even when these are controlled for the other two demographic variables, the variations by current age reduce only slightly. The strongest negative influence of current age is undoubtedly related to the weakening fecundability of women with increasing age. In rural areas especially, almost all of the variations of the children born in the later reproductive

3. In this study the late fertility means the number of children ever born during the five years prior to the survey.

Table 1. **Relationships Between the Demographic Variables and the Children Ever Born During the 5 Years Before the Survey**

Variables	Rural			Urban		
	Number of Cases	Deviation from Grand Mean		Number of Cases	Deviation from Grand Mean	
		Unadj.	Adj.[a]		Unadj.	Adj.[a]
Current Age	($\eta = 0.27$;	$\beta = 0.25$)		($\eta = 0.28$;	$\beta = 0.23$)	
35–39	413	0.20	0.19	369	0.15	0.13
40–44	304	−0.18	−0.17	199	−0.20	−0.18
45–49	71	−0.40..	−0.38	55	−0.27	−0.21
Age at First Marriage	($\eta = 0.13$;	$\beta = 0.02$)		($\eta = 0.21$;	$\beta = 0.12$)	
−17	291	−0.13	0.00	120	−0.15	−0.03
18–19	243	0.02	0.02	147	−0.16	−0.12
20–21	148	0.11	0.00	164	0.07	0.04
22+	106	0.14	0.05	190	0.16	0.08
Number of Living Children	($\eta = 0.14$;	$\beta = 0.04$)		($\eta = 0.26$;	$\beta = 0.18$)	
− 2	72	0.15	0.06	135	0.31	0.23
3 − 4	368	0.09	0.02	344	−0.06	−0.07
5+	348	−0.13	−0.03	142	−0.15	−0.03
R Adjusted (%)		7.4			13.2	
Total Number & Grand Mean	788	0.75		621	0.43	

a. Adjusted for the other demographic variables.
Source: The 1974 Korean Fertility Survey Data (tape).

stage (5 years before the survey) are attributed not to differences in age at first marriage and the already achieved family size, but to differences in the current age when each relationship is controlled for the other demographic variables.

In urban areas, the late fertility shows a strong negative relationship with the current number of children surviving up to the five years before the survey. Although somewhat reduced when controlled for the other demographic variables, the effect of the number of living children upon the family size achieved during the five-year period prior to the survey remains significant in urban areas. It suggests a stronger tendency of urban women to control childbearing if they achieve their desired family size. The zero order coefficient of the relationship between the number of living children and the late fertility is not neglibigle in rural areas. However, when controlled for the other demographic variables, the variations in the fertility by the number of living children are reduced to an insignificant degree.

Age at first marriage without controlling other factors shows a strong positive relationship with the late fertility in both areas. However, when controlling them the relationship disappears almost entirely in rural areas, implying age at marriage per se has little effect on fertility in the later stage of reproduction. This clearly indicates that, the pattern of relationship between age at first marriage and completed fertility is reathr determined during the earlier span of reproduction.

In contrast, age at marriage is observed to be closely associated with the late fertility in the urban setting even after the relationship is controlled for the other demographic variables. It shows that women who married at a younger age and presumably already have higher average fertility in their respective age group tend to have fewer children during the later stage of reproduction, thus narrowing the fertility gap produced in the earlier years of

reproduction among different age at marriage groups.

These results are of great interests in view of the similar findings of McDonald, Ruzicka and Caldwell (1981) from the World Fertility Survey data for various countries including Korea. According to them women of the same birth cohort have a similar level of completed fertility irrespective of their age at first marriage except for women married at a relatively high age, which was explained by the so-called 'catching up' effect. The explanation postulates that, when education is controlled, women who marry later try to catch up the fertility level of those who marry earlier. They found the effect was very evident in Indonesia (Java-Bali) even at the time when modern contraceptive measures were most uncommon. Although our data are insufficient to examine the 'catching up' effect, the result shown in Table 1 suggests that the analysis needs a further detailed study on the impact of increasing age at marriage on cumulative marital fertility with regard to the level of societal development as well as the socio-economic environment of the society.

In the above, we have examined to what extent each selected demographic variable is related to the recent fertility and how the pattern differs between rural and urban areas. The differential pattern of the relationship between demographic variables as a whole and the late fertility is however in question. This can be easily seen by examining R-squared values, which are found to be 7.4 percent for rural and 13.2 percent for urban areas. This large difference between rural and urban areas is mainly explained by the stronger explanatory power of age at first marriage and the number of living children in the part of urban areas.

III. Socio-Economic and Cultural (SEC) Factors

Table 2 shows the effects of the SEC variables on the late fertility. Because of significant interactions between the level of educational level and material property in rural areas, and educational level and husband's occupation in urban areas, each of the two sets of variables were combined into a composite variable. Thus, the total number of SEC variables for the current MCA runs turns out to be four.

In rural areas, a marked difference in the late fertility is observed in terms of the educational level/material property composite variable. The difference between the lowest and highest values amounts to 0.4 child. The higher the status in the composite variable, the fewer number of children is born in the later stage of reproduction. Even after the relationship is controlled for the other SEC variables, the difference remains substantial, though some what reduced. Exposure to mass media shows a strong negative relationship with the late fertility regardless of its status of control for the other SEC variables. Husband's occupation in rural areas appears to have little independent effect on the fertility as is clear in Table 2. Similarly, work experience reveals hardly any relations with the late fertility.

It is interesting to note in rural areas that two education related variables (educational level/ material property and exposure to mass media) manifest strong impacts on children ever born during the 5 years before the survey, whereas husband's occupation shows a weak influence. The effect of education on fertility tends to be stronger at higher parities, and to have increased over time. According to a similar analysis using the total number of children ever born during the entire marriage duration of women as dependent variable (Yoo, 1982: 69), the occupation of husband reveals much stronger explanatory power than the woman's educational level and exposure to mass media in rural areas. The stronger negative influence of education on total cumulative fertility in urban areas unlike in rural areas is generally assumed to have been related to the earlier introduction of modern contraceptive measures in urban areas (Kwon, 1980: 68). If it is true, the negative effects of

Table 2. **Relationships Between the Socio-Economic and Cultural Variables and the Children Ever Born During the 5 Years Before the Survey to Fecund and Currently Married Women, Aged 35–49**

(Rural)

Variables		Number of Cases	Deviation from Grand Mean		
			Unadj.	Adj.1[a]	Adj.2[b]
(1) Educational Level	Material* Property	($\eta = 0.22$;	$\beta^1 = 0.18$;	$\beta^2 = 0.18$)	
No education	Low	166	0.31	0.24	0.27
Primary school & Over	Low	136	0.06	0.07	0.04
No education	Middle & High	169	−0.13	−0.19	−0.08
Primary school & Over	Middle & High	314	−0.12	−0.06	−0.11
(2) Exposure to Mass Media**		(η 0.17;	$\beta^1 = 0.12$;	$\beta^2 = 0.12$)	
Low		475	0.11	0.08	0.08
Middle & High		310	−0.17	−0.12	−0.12
(3) Husband's Occupation***		($\eta = 0.11$;	$\beta^1 = 0.05$;	$\beta^2 = 0.07$)	
Farmer		560	0.04	0.02	0.03
Labourer		126	−0.02	−0.02	−0.07
Professional		99	−0.22	−0.09	−0.10
(4) Pattern of Work		($\eta = 0.10$;	$\beta^1 = 0.07$;	$\beta^2 = 0.06$)	
Currently Working		608	0.04	0.03	0.02
Previously Worked		61	−0.13	−0.05	−0.05
Never Worked		116	−0.15	−0.13	−0.10
R^2 Adjusted (%)				7.0	15.4
Total Number & Grand Mean		785		0.75	

education in rural areas should be strengthened with the wide spread of modern contraceptive methods among rural women. The result shown in Table 2 clearly demonstrates that the negative effect of education on fertility becomes stronger when family planning practices prevail. This may reflect the implications of recent socio-economic changes for the emerging pattern of socio-economic relationship with the level of fertility in rural Korea. It suggests that the changes will play an important role in fertility decline.

The differences in the late fertility by the SEC variables are smaller in urban areas than in rural areas. The variations by the composite variable (educational level / husband's occupation) are not distinctive and consistent. They are even reduced when a control is introduced for the other SEC variables. When controlled for the demographic as well as the other SEC variables, however, the effect of the composite variable is much increased, implying that its effect is underestimated due mainly to its association with the demographic variables. The negative relationship of the exposure to mass media is also shown in urban areas when the controls are introduced. The pattern stands regardless whether the control is made for the other SEC variables or an additional control is introduced for the demographic variables. These observations clearly indicate that, in urban areas as well as in rural areas, education-related variables have had a noticeable influence on fertility during the later stage of reproduction.

Ownership of material property shows a strong negative relationship with the recent fertility in urban areas. Although the strength itself is very much reduced when controlled for demographic variables as well as the other SEC variables, the relationship does not

Table 2 (Cont.) (Urban)

Variables		Number of Cases	Deviation from Grand Mean		
			Unadj.	Adj.1[a]	Adj.2[b]
(1) Educational Level	Hubsand's*** Occupation	($\eta = 0.10$;	$\beta^1 = 0.01$;	$\beta^2 = 0.12$)	
Primary School & below	Farmer & Labourer	236	0.06	0.01	0.08
Primary school & below	Professional	177	−0.03	−0.03	0.00
Middle school & over	Farmer & Labourer	58	0.07	0.08	0.00
Middle school & over	Professional	142	−0.10	−0.01	−0.12
(2) Exposure to Mass Media **		($\eta = 0.11$;	$\beta^1 = 0.06$;	$\beta^2 = 0.08$)	
Low		184	0.10	0.06	0.07
Middle		279	−0.01	−0.01	−0.02
High		150	−0.09	−0.05	−0.06
(3) Material Property*		($\eta = 0.15$;	$\beta^1 = 0.13$;	$\beta^2 = 0.07$)	
Low		170	0.11	0 09	0.04
Middle		263	0.03	0.02	0.02
High		180	−0.15	−0.12	−0.07
(4) Place of Childhood Residence		($\eta = 0.05$;	$\beta^1 = 0.05$;	$\beta^2 = 0.04$)	
City		155	0.04	0.06	0.04
Town		55	−0.09	−0.05	−0.04
Village		403	−0.00	−0.01	−0.01
R^2 Adjusted (%)				3.1	16.2
Total Number & Grand Mean		613		0.43	

a. Adj.1 is adjusted for the other SEC variables.

b. Adj.2 is adjusted for the demographic variables as well as the other SEC variables.

* Number of items owned; low(0–2), middle(3–4), and high(5+).

** "Low" represents women who cannot read or never read newspapers and never use radio or TV. "Middle" represents women who read or use them once in a while. "High" represents women who read or use them every day. *** "Labourer" includes skilled labourer, unskilled labourer, and household worker. "Professional" includes clerical, sales and service, occupations which have a strong modern characteiristics.

Source: The 1974 Korean National Fertility Survey data

vanish at all. This is distinguished from the relationship between material property and total number of children ever born for the entire reproductive span women have passed (Yoo, 1982: 64). This observation also contradicts to the American pattern. Based on the data collected in 1975 from approximately 1500 Americans aged 18 years and older, Thornton (1979) found that a comfortable family income is negatively related to current family size but positively related to the additional numbers intended, suggesting that the level of fertility at the later stage of reproduction would be higher for the higher income group.

This observation that, in urban areas, the ownership of material property is positively related with the total number of children ever born but negatively related with the number of children ever born in the later stage of reproduction needs interpretation. Though not sufficient, our data seems to suggest that that would be a mixed result of the positive impact of income upon the progression ratios at the lower birth parities and the negative impact

of income upon those at the higher parities in urban Korea. The positive impact at the lower parities may be related to a better nutrition of the higher income group. On the other hand, the negative impact at the higher parities may be rleated to the differential family limitation practice and its differential efficiency in terms of income. As Bernhardt (1972) suggested based on the Swedish data, some families in the lowest income group are likely to be somewhat inefficient family planners.

Unlike other SEC variables, the place of childhood residence appears to have hardly any relationship with the late fertility regardless of the status of variable control. The result is consistent with what is observed for the total fertility (children ever born throughout the entire marriage span at survey) (Yoo, 1982: 98).

As a whole, the SEC variables together show a greater influence on fertility of the later stage of reproduction in rural areas than in urban areas. The value of R-squared, the coefficient of determination, shows that the four SEC variables together explain 7.0 percent of the total variation in the children ever born during the past 5 years before the survey in rural areas, whereas the equivalent is 3.1 percent in urban areas.

IV. Birth Control Practice and Attitudes (BCA) and Late Fertility

Table 3 shows that the practice of family planning is associated with fertility at the later stage of reproduction in a negative direction in both rural and urban areas, contrary to the pattern observed for the total fertility (Yoo, 1982: 73). The family planning practice can be clearly regarded as an important intervening mechanism in reproduction of human beings. It is well documented in Korea that women are using contraception at the later reproductive stage to terminate childbearing (B.T. Park et al., 1979: 192), and thus the practice of family planning becomes a direct contributor to the reduction of fertility in this reproductive stage.

The negative relationship between family planning practice and the late fertility is stronger in rural areas than in urban areas, but the pattern of relationship is similar for both. The magnitude of variations by the status of family planning practice in both areas does not change even when the impact of the number of children desired on the relationship is eliminated. The observation may indicate that fertility desires may respond to the spread of family planning practices rather than *vice versa*. On the contrary, when controlled for demographic veriables, the relationship between family planning and the late fertility is strengthened though not much. This suggests that although there is some evidence of association between demographic variables and contraceptive use, its effect on the relationship between family planning and the fertility is rather negligible when infecund women are excluded from the sample. The degree of the relationship is weakened noticeably if a control for the SEC variables is added in both areas, indicating that the SEC variables, presumably the education-related variables, can be considered as factors in contraceptive use in the later reproductive stage.

As expected, the number of children desired shows a positive association with the number of children ever born during the 5 years before the survey in both rural and urban areas. However, the relationship is relatively minor in rural areas. It appears odd to see that family planning practice has a strong explanatory power for individual variations in the late fertility, whereas family size preference possesses only a weak power. This finding somewhat contradicts the general hypothesis that even if contraception is widely practiced, the level of fertility may remain high if the number of children wanted remains substantially above the replacement level (Coombs and Freedman, 1979: 359). One explanation can be found in the fact that the family planning program of Korea has been concentrated in rural areas. Ross (1968: 3) once noted 'a remarkable pace of (fertility) change in rural areas, where the

Table 3 **Relationships Between the Birth Control Practice and Attitudes and the Children Ever Born During the 5 Years Before the Survey to Fecund and Currently Married Woman, Aged 35–49**

Variables	Rural					Urban				
	Number of Cases	Deviation from Grand Mean				Number of Cases	Deviation from Grand Mean			
		Unadj.	Adj. 1[a]	Adj. 2[b]	Adj. 3[c]		Unadj.	Adj.1[a]	Adj.2[b]	Adj.3[c]
Practice of Family Planning	($\eta = 0.22$; $\beta^1 = 0.22$; $\beta^2 = 0.33$; $\beta^3 = 0.20$)					($\eta = 0.15$; $\beta^1 = 0.15$; $\beta^2 = 0.16$; $\beta^3 = 0.13$)				
Never Practised	195	0.31	0.31	0.33	0.28	99	0.23	0.22	0'25	0.20
Ever Practised	590	−0.10	−0.10	−0.11	−0.09	517	−0.04	−0.04	−0.05	−0.04
Number of Children Desired	($\eta = 0.08$; $\beta^1 = 0.05$; $\beta^2 = 0.09$; $\beta^3 = 0.09$)					($\eta = 0.10$; $\beta^1 = 0.09$; $\beta^2 = 0.16$; $\beta^3 = 0.15$)				
Two and Less	73	−0.06	−0.06	−0.07	−0.06	151	−0.06	−0.05	−0.12	−0.10
Three	275	−0.07	−0.05	−0.09	−0.08	271	−0.04	−0.03	−0.04	−0.04
Four and Over	437	0.06	0.04	0.07	0.06	194	0.09	0.08	0.15	0.14
R^2 Adjusted (%)			5.2	14.6	19.8			3.1	17.5	19.7
Total Number & Grand Mean	785		0.75			616		0.43		

a Adj. 1 is adjusted for the other BCA variable.
b Adj. 2 is adjusted for the demographic variables as well as the other BCA variable
c Adj. 3 is adjusted for the SEC variables, the demographic variables as well as the other BCA variable

Source: The 1974 Korean National Fertility Survey data tape.

density of (family planning) fieldworkers is high (one per 1,250 married women compared to one per 2,980 in cities).' The result shown in Table 3 suggests that readiness to limit family size is not necessarily causally prior to adoption of contraception. As Debavalya and Knodel (1978) pointed out, awareness of the potentiality of contraception and the satisfactory experience of a particular method may themselves increase the desire to avoid further births.

V. Summary of Findings

Multivariate analyses on children ever born during the five years before the 1974 KNFS survey have been conducted to ascertain the differential relationships between rural and urban areas, of various socio-cultural, demographic, and birth control variables, with fertility in the later reproductive stage of women. Education-related variables (educational level and exposure to mass media) appear to have strong negative effects on the late fertility in rural areas. The negative effect of education in rural areas is found to have been higher with widening of the family planning program and growing exposure to contraceptives. This finding may be interpreted by the fact that the stronger negative effects of education on the total number of children ever born in urban than in rural areas is related to the earlier introduction of modern contraceptive measures in urban areas. The increasing effect of education along with the declining effect of husband's occupation in rural areas needs to be noted, since the changing patterns of their relative importance as determinats of the late (or recent) fertility of individuals would reflect the significant changes in reproductive behaviour of rural women in relation to their socio-economic status.

The current analysis also indicates that rural women married at a younger age tend to have higher completed fertility than those of the same birth cohort married at an older age. On the other hand, in urban areas, the difference of age at marriage may not result in a different size of completed fertility.

A pronounced association is observed between family planning practice and late fertility in both rural and urban areas, much greater than that between socio-economic or cultural variables and fertility. The relationship is found to be stronger in rural than in urban areas. The number of children desired shows a positive influence on children ever born in the late reproduction span in both areas, although it is not so strong in rural areas. Considering the strong negative effect of family planning in rural areas, it may suggest that readiness to limit family size is not necessarily a prior condition for the adoption of contraceptives. From the above discussions it may also be concluded that urbanization in general has a depressing impact on the level of late fertility in Korea. However, a growing level of educational attainment appears to be an important factor in reducing late fertility in rural areas by increasing the prevalence of contraceptive use.

In sum, this study clearly reveals that the reproductive pattern of Korean women differs greatly in terms whether they live in rural or urban communities, indicating that societal setting is the prime factor in fertility behavior. Taking the facts into accounts that the rural-urban distinction is the basic unit of all kinds of demographic observation and that these two types of areas usually represent two more or less contrasting community or societal settings within a larger society, the current findings can be interpreted to have significant implications for population research and policy in Korea.

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<國文要約>

1969~74의 도시—농촌간 출산력 차이 : 1974년도 「한국 출산력 조사」 분석

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이 연구는 1974년도 한국 출산력 조사 자료에 의거하여 농촌지역과 도시지역에서 상이하게 나타나는, 사회문화적·인구학적변수 및 출산통제 변수들과 후기 생식단계에 있는 여성들의 출산력과의 관계를 고찰한 것이다. 여기서 후기 생식단계에 있는 여성들의 출산력은 이용가능한 자료의 한계 때문에 조사 이전 5년 간의 35세 이상 여성들의 출산력이라고 규정된다. 분석 결과는 거주지역이 도시인가 농촌인가에 따라 한국 여성들의 생식 유형이 크게 달라진다는 것을 명확히 보여준다. 이것은 한국 여성의 출산행위에 있어서 사회환경이 가장 중요한 요인의 하나임을 알려 주는 것이다.