
Tammy Sunju Lee

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics

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Education

University of Michigan, Department of Economics

Ann Arbor, MI

2020–2026 (EXPECTED): *Ph.D., Economics*

FIELDS: Labor Economics, Public Economics, Family Economics

Advisor: Prof. Basit Zafar

Duke University, Department of Economics

Durham, NC

2016–2018: *M.A., Economics*

Ewha Womans University, Department of International Studies

Seoul, South Korea

2012–2016: *B.A., International Studies*, Rank: 1/97

Job Market Paper

“Mandated Paternity Leave and Fertility: Evidence from South Korea” (With Jungmin Lee)

This paper studies a 2017 policy at a major Korean conglomerate that mandated one month of fully paid paternity leave for all male employees. Using administrative data and an event study design, we show that the mandate sharply increased leave uptake, extended leave duration, and spilled over to uncovered fathers through greater use of federal leave. The policy raised the annual probability of having a child by 1.4 percentage points from a pre-policy average of 9.5%, representing a 15% increase. Relative to Korea’s national fertility rate during the same period, this amounts to an 8.2% increase. Effects were strongest among dual-earner households, while women’s employment remained unaffected. Complementary survey evidence further suggests that the mandate helped shift workplace norms, reinforcing the household-level responses.

Research in Progress

1. “Beliefs about the Career Costs of Children and Family Formation” (With Bongseop Kim)
2. “Family-Friendly Firms and the Motherhood Penalty” (With Jungmin Lee and Hyunseung Lee)
3. “Unconditional Cash Transfers and Youth Labor Supply: Evidence from South Korea”
(With Jungmin Lee and Sohee Jeon)
4. “Workplace Childcare and Labor Dynamics within Firms: Evidence from Korea
Mandate in Korea” (With Jungmin Lee and Ross Chu)

Grants, Fellowships, and Awards

Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant (\$3,000), University of Michigan	2026
SYLFF Fellowship, University of Michigan	2026
Pre-Doctoral Traineeship in Economic Demography, Population Studies Center	2022–25

Small Grant Award (\$6,000), Population Studies Center	2023
Research Support Fund (\$750), Population Studies Center	2023
Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant (\$1,500), University of Michigan	2022
William Haber Graduate Fellowships, University of Michigan	2020–21
M.A. Merit Scholar Award, Duke University	2017
Dean’s List, Ewha Womans University	2012–2015

Research Experience

University of Michigan

Graduate Student Research Assistant to Joel Slemrod	2022
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Project: Group Equity and Implicit Gender Discrimination in the U.S. Income Tax

Graduate Student Research Assistant to Basit Zafar	2021–2022
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Project: COVID-19 Impact on Gender Differences in Willingness to Pay on Job Amenities

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Pre-doctoral Fellow to Christopher Palmer	2018–2020
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Teaching Experience

Graduate Student Instructor, Principles of Microeconomics, University of Michigan (Fall 2021, Winter 2022).

Presentations

Population Association of America Annual Meeting, KER International Conference	2025
World Congress of the Econometric Society, ISR-Zwerdling Seminar (Michigan)	

Public Finance Lunch Seminar (Michigan), Labor Lunch Seminar (Michigan)	2024
H2D2 Seminar (Michigan), BEE Lab Meeting (Michigan)	

Labor Lunch Seminar (Michigan), H2D2 Seminar (Michigan)	2023
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Service

Referee. Journal of Public Economics.

Skills

Languages: English, Korean

Programming: STATA, MATLAB

Other Information

Citizenship: South Korea and United States

Dissertation Committee

Professor Basit Zafar (chair)
University of Michigan
Department of Economics
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Professor Sarah Miller
University of Michigan
Ross School of Business
mille@umich.edu

Professor Ana Reynoso
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