

# Korean Influencer Describes Spouse as "Just a Housewife"

Them's fighting words, my clueless sir.

JAE-HA KIM

FEB 17, 2026

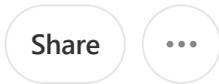
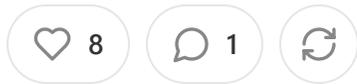


Photo by [RDNE Stock project](#)

According to the Nobel Prize-winning economist Claudia Goldin, one of the reasons why South Korea has the second lowest birth rate <sup>1</sup> in the world is because of the imbalance of household chores between married couples. In her research paper *Babies and the Macroeconomy*, the Harvard professor noted:

- Policies such as governmental financial incentives to have more children can't fix a problem that's based on the disparity between men and women at home.

- Even if they work full-time, Korean women are expected to handle the majority of household chores and child care, with women spending three hours more *daily* taking care of their homes than their male partners.
- Goldin points out that like South Korea, countries like Italy and Japan — which also have low birth rates — are addressing traditional gender roles at a snail’s pace.

*“When a country experiences such fast economic growth, it doesn’t give generations enough time to adapt to modern realities. You end up thrusting people into modernity without changing the structures around them. In South Korea, gender roles within households remain stuck in the past.” — Claudia Goldin, quoted in the Washington Post*



Photo by [An chi heung](#) (안치흥)

In 2016, Cho Nam-Joo addressed gender inequality in her bestselling book *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982*.<sup>2</sup> It became the first Korean novel in seven years to sell more than a million copies. It’s a short book that you can finish in one sitting, and one that I highly recommend.

What I remember the most about the novel is the powerfully depressing ending. That portion of the book is told from the perspective of Ji-young's male psychiatrist, who offers a perfunctory analysis of some of her medical issues. But as he continues, it's clear that he neither likes or respects women. He is even conflicted about Suyeon, a therapist at his practice, who quit her job due to a high-risk pregnancy:

*I was displeased by the news at first, wondering why she couldn't just take a couple months off instead of quitting altogether, but I guess this is for the best since she'll be going on maternity leave soon anyway, and then causing inconveniences at the clinic by taking sick days for herself, for her child, etc.*

*Suyeon has undoubtedly been a great employee. ... She even remembers how I take my coffee and brings it in on the way to work. ... Unfortunately, because of her suddenly leaving, more patients have decided to terminate therapy rather than be referred to another counselor at our clinic. That's a bottom-line loss for the clinic.*

*Even the best female employees can cause many problems if they don't have the childcare issue taken care of.*

*I'll have to make sure her replacement is unmarried.*

It doesn't occur to this man that after the birth of the baby, maybe the husband should stay home to care for the child instead. The assumption pretty much worldwide is that no matter how educated, ambitious, or skilled a woman is in the workforce, *she* is the one who is expected to make sacrifices for the family.<sup>3</sup>



But then, my wife starts talking about "relative strength" and market trends.

Which leads me to the Korean male influencer referenced in the headline. Woody speaks in a droll voice and eats food on camera. He's a tour guide and also has some kind of office job. According to people who have been on his tours, he is not a stockbroker or a trader. This is important to remember.

A few days ago, he made a video that started off with a couple of benign comments:

1. He went out drinking after work.
2. He was happy because he made money in the stock market.
3. He told his wife about it, and then got annoyed when she began talking about stock market trends. That's fine. Spouses get annoyed with each other every day. That's life.
4. But then he disregarded her thoughts because, "*She's a full-time housewife.*"
5. He ended the video by saying that she probably won't make him breakfast in the morning because she is upset by his attitude. <sup>4</sup> And his minions were hyucking it up in the comments.



wookeunshin  Original audio [Follow](#) 

 wookeunshin  2d  
#wife #husband #marriage  
#happywifehappylyfe #funny

 goawaywithjae  1d  
You are looking down on her because she's "just a housewife." You shouldn't invest money that you can't afford to lose anyhow and the market is always a gamble, regardless of whether you're the primary breadwinner or "just a housewife."

20 likes Reply 

— Hide all replies

 savoringwithsami 25m  
@goawaywithjae my "housewife" mom kept my family together financially.

 39.8K  370  

2 days ago

 Add a comment... 

If someone like billionaire Warren Buffett had made this comment, it would still be obnoxious, sexist, and wrong. But coming from a man who's an *influencer/tour guide/office worker*?<sup>5</sup> The audacity to downplay her views (regardless of whether she knows nothing about the stock market or whether she's a master-of-the-universe-in-training) because she — *checks notes* — stays home to take care of *their* two young children.

Maybe Woody was pandering to his audience, and maybe his wife wasn't offended by his *take-my-wife-please* sense of humor, such as it is. But in my head, I kept thinking, "Women, stop marrying men who clearly don't respect you, much less like you!"

The fact is, statistics show that married men are happier, healthier, and wealthier than unmarried men.<sup>6</sup> But the opposite is true for women, to the point where married women — and divorced men — have the **highest rates of suicide**, according to Avrum Geurin Weiss's 2021 book *Hidden in Plain Sight: How Men's Fears of Women Shape Their Intimate Relationships*.<sup>7</sup>

## **South Korean Women Are Better Educated, But Less Employable Than Men**

Approximately 71 percent of South Koreans between the ages of 25 and 34 have attained higher education.<sup>8</sup> Korean women in their 20s and 30s are more educated than their male counterparts, according to a 2024 report conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation (OECD). Yet the employment rate for women was 76 percent, compared to the 83 percent for men.

What Harvard economist Claudia Goldin said appears to be true. When you thrust a nation into modernity without changing the structures around them, “gender roles within households remain stuck in the past,” regardless of who is better educated or suited to work outside the home.

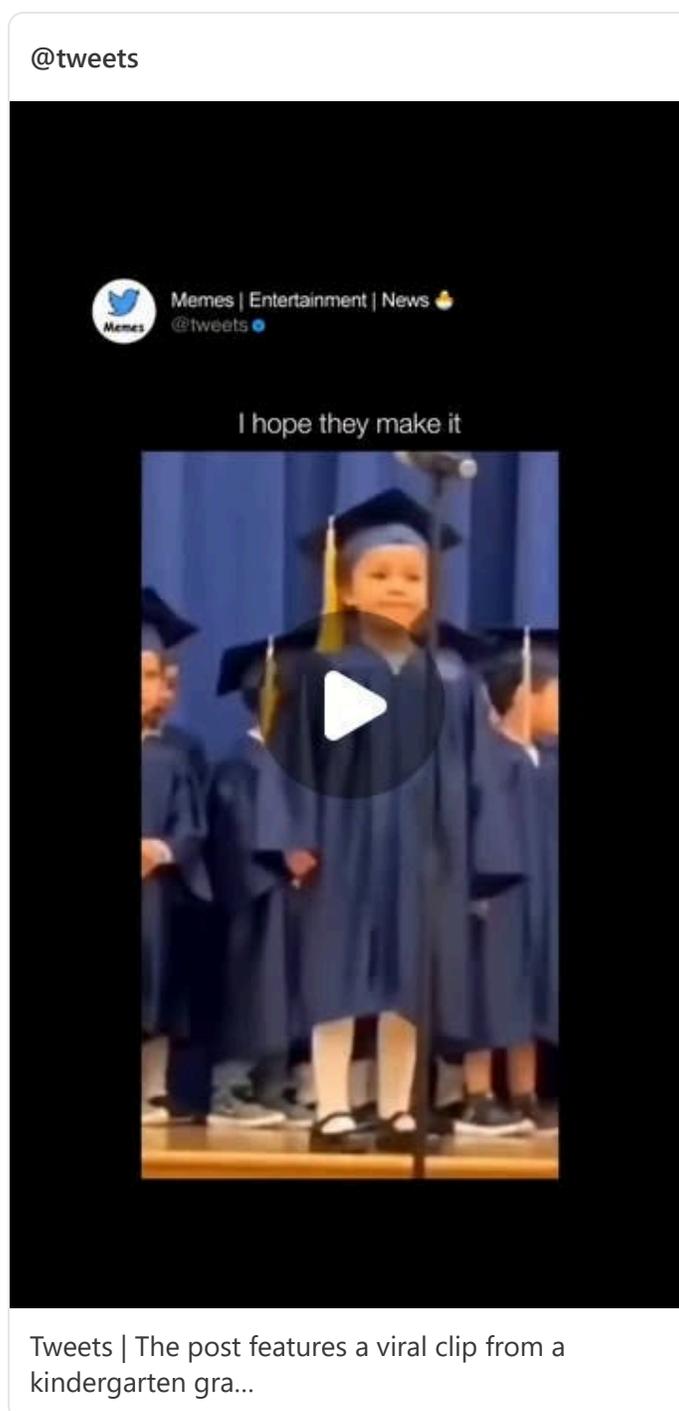
There is absolutely nothing wrong with parents deciding that it's beneficial for both of them to work outside the home and hire a third party to watch the children. And there is absolutely nothing wrong with a couple deciding together that it's best for the family if the woman stays home to handle all the thankless day-to-day details.

Women earning less than men isn't shocking, sadly. But according to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family's 2023 analysis of about 3,000 companies, South Korean men earn 30.7 percent more than women. And, women's earnings have *dropped* by 6.7 percent, compared to only 0.8 percent for men. Sometimes, working women don't even necessarily *want* to quit their jobs to be the stay-at-home parent, but the inequity between men and women's salaries is set up so that it makes fiduciary sense for her to stay home.

In both the novel and its film adaptation, the female protagonist of *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982* was cajoled by her husband to have a child. He promised her that he would help raise the baby and convinced her to quit the job that she loved. Of course, reality

dictated that his long hours at work kept him in the office more than at home. Ji-young didn't have the luxury of lunching with friends and colleagues or going out for after-work drinks (like the influencer Woody). And when she took her baby for a stroll and enjoyed a cup of coffee on a park bench, she overheard a group of office workers derisively describing her as a lazy woman living the good life by leeching off her hard-working husband.

They don't care that she can hear them. In fact, they want her to hear them, because *she's just a housewife ... much like their own mothers, most likely.*



In this [possibly fabricated]<sup>9</sup> video above, a little girl says that she wants to be a housewife when she grows up. And her little friend says that his dream is to marry her when he grows up. I would like to believe that both children grew up with parents who treated each other with love and respect. It's all about choices and working together as a team, isn't it?

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*If there are any factual errors, please let me know and I will make the necessary corrections. If you simply disagree with my opinions, I can live with that and hope that you can, too. Cheers!*

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## K-DRAMA INDEX

JAE-HA KIM • FEB 1



These are some of my reviews and essays about K-Dramas (and also Korean films and other Korean-centric projects). You may also read more about my take on Korean pop culture in outlets such as Rolling Stone, Mashable, Victoria & Al...

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- 1 As of this year, Taiwan has the lowest birth rate in the world.
- 2 *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982* was made into a film in 2019.
- 3 I remember a kinda/sorta situation occurring at a newsroom I worked at many years ago. Only this time around, it was the women in power who pushed a talented journalist out. They knew she was a single mom who had to leave work at a certain time to pick up her children from daycare. So they changed her schedule to make her work later.
- 4 Are you a child? Make your own breakfast.
- 5 There's nothing wrong with being an influencer, tour guide, or office worker. My point is that there's nothing wrong with being a homemaker, housewife, stay-at-home-mom (or dad).
- 6 Sources are everywhere, but you can check out this [Psychology Today piece](#) from 2022.
- 7 "Hidden in Plain Sight: How Men's Fears of Women Shape Their Intimate Relationships" is an American non fiction book and didn't center specifically on South Korea.
- 8 Two-year colleges, four-year universities, graduate schools.
- 9 Both the little girl and boy are wearing the same white tights and the Mary Jane shoes. They also look almost identical.



8 Likes

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