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An Examination of Factors Affecting Fertility Rate Differentials as Compared Among Women in Less and More Developed Countries

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ABSTRACT The fertility rate among the Less Developed Countries (LDC's) is at least triple as high as among the More Developed Countries (MDC's). The main objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between fertility rate differentials and child mortality, female life expectancy, age at the first marriage for women, Mean years of women education, and participation of women in labor force among LDC's and MDC's Countries. The study tries to determine empirically which of these factors are most significant in affecting fertility rate differentials. The interpretation of data is based on the demographic transition theory. The sample was involved 106 countries. According to World Bank report (1999), 53 of these countries are considering as LDC's, low-income group, while others 53 are considering as MDC's, high-income group. The statistical methods used in this study are descriptive analysis, correlation coefficients, and multiple regression analysis. The results of descriptive analysis show that the mean of total fertility rate for LDC's was 6.1, while the mean in MDC's was 2.1. The results suggest that increase total fertility rate in LDC's are more occur among women who are have more children die, more number of years of life expectancy, more participate in labor force. R^2 , .727, regard to LDC's group explains 72.7 % of the variance in total fertility rate. Moreover, the result implies that total fertility rate decrease among women's in MDC's that have more number of years of female life expectancy and more participation in labor force. The R^2 for MDC's model was .590, meaning that the set of independent variables included in this equation explained 59.0 % of the variance in total fertility rate.