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Educational Pursuit and Income as Correlates of Family Size in Ondo State, Nigeria

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KEYWORDS Educational Attainment. Socio-economic Status. Number of Children

ABSTRACT This study investigated the relationship between couple's education and income with their family size. The study identified educational pursuit and income as correlates of family size in Ondo State. The design for this work was a survey. The result of the study revealed that education and income had significant relationships with family size. Based on the findings, It was recommended that guidance counsellor and social health workers should help married people in planning for their families. Sex and martial counselling programmes should include factors that could influence family size as found in the study.

INTRODUCTION

Family size in Africa is about the highest in the world thus confirming the extreme increase in Africa population survey. For example, according to an evidence submitted by African Foundation For Population and Development AFPODEV (2005), Nigeria is the tenth most populous country in the world, and the largest in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria has one of the fastest population growth rate in the world. The Nigerian population has more than double since she attained nationhood in the 1960. With the data obtained from the past censuses, the Nigerian population increased sharply from 54 million in 1963 to 88 million in 1991. Presently the Nigerian population is estimated to be about 133 million and it is projected to be about 178 million by 2015. This has a significant impact on the economy and the society in general. Despite the deliberate effort made by some bodies such as UNICEF, World Population Bureau and Family Health Survey to control population growth, the growth rate still remains high most especially in African Countries.

The researchers observed that people with low level of income have more than a wife and large families. In the Nigerian Tribune Tuesday, October 18,2005, under the caption "Nigeria to eradicate poverty by 2010", Dr Kpakpor, the coordinator of the National Poverty Eradication Programme submitted that people with large family size are those who were illiterates. He further explained that a family of about twenty members would likely have a poverty rate of 90%. This means that there is an increase in poverty prevalence as family size determined by number of children increases.

Family background, parental education and income have been found as factors that could affect family size. A lot of researches had been carried out on education and most studies revealed that women with higher education had fewer children than those with less schooling.

Due to the value attached to education most especially in Ondo State, there has been a drastic expansion in school enrolments of primary, secondary and University in Ondo State.

Womens' quest for knowledge has also improved drastically, they tend to delay childbearing in order to pursue education. The clamour for women's education made it mandatory for women to want to pursue education. This occurs because of economic development, The higher education one has the better the income.

This also tends to promote the health condition and of course, the general well-being of members of the family. It could be accepted that while trying to improve him/ herself educationally, the fertility rate could be improved. The researchers have earlier observed that some married undergraduates in Nigerian Universities who tried to combine childbearing with education do have miscarriages or complications due to stress during delivery hence, they had their babies by caesarian operations. The ones for fear of fertility

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problems after their education tend to combine childbearing with education and this could affect the size of the family. In the area where this study is carried out, it appears that women without schooling tend to have more children and they also experience early entry into motherhood and frequent pregnancies than educated women.

According to Population Reference Bureau (2000), women who achieve a relatively high level of education are more likely to enter labour force before they marry or begin child bearing and ultimately have smaller families than women who marry in their teens.

It is necessary to state that some women are of the opinion that their family size is up to God. This belief is common among illiterates. They seem to believe that it is not for women to control fecundity Cochrane (1979) in a study on fertility in Nigeria noted that only 10 percent of married men and women with education beyond primary school level believed that it was God who determines family size. In the same study, it was revealed that 50 percent of the uneducated held that belief in most research studies.

In Ondo State, it seems as if the educated people have fewer children than the uneducated ones, the researchers' observation revealed that illiterates seems to keep on breeding ceaselessly without having the resources to cater for them by the age of fourteen, they have started driving motorcycles, taxis, buses and working as bus conductors. Children of tender age that are supposed to be at school learning have been turned to house maids and hawkers of petty items. Most parents that are illiterates appear not to have value for their children's education.

Moreover, children in small families tend to be better educated and healthier because parents with fewer children invest more one each child than those with large families. The money and the care that is supposed to be shared among five or seven children when spread on just three will have much effect than five or seven children.

Cochrane (1979), observed that pursuit of education could affect family size through a number of inter-related factors including women's social and economic status within the house hold, age at marriage, family size desires, access to family planning information services and use of contraception.

Although, many authors and demographers over the last three decades have re-affirmed the causal impact of education on family size, some believed that education affects family size directly while others believed that education affects family size indirectly.

Jejeebhoy (1995) is of the opinion that education for the most part operates indirectly through the various channels, through the supply of and demand for children as well as through the cost of regulation.

The Demographic Health survey of fourteen countries in which the most Urban data set are Botswana, Cameroon, Mali, Niger, Ondo State (Nigeria), revealed that women schooling was associated with lower fertility in all the countries and this has a greater negative effect on family size. It has been found that desired family size becomes smaller with the increase in women's educational studies (Cleland et al. 1996; Jejeebhoy 1996).

Another prominent factor considered in deciding the number of children a couple could have is the economic condition and income of couples. Couples seem to be increasingly worried about the cost of living and the expense of providing for a family.

A change in income may have a variety of effects on parents' demand on children. The state of South African's Population Report (2000) revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between family size and income. Contrary to this view in Nigeria, it appears as if the illiterate couples are the ones having children indiscriminately without having resources to cater for them. For example, a typical illiterate farmer or an unschooled artisan may have large family size without minding whether there is increase in his or her income level.

Although, anthropological literature documented on the African Women sees women as having a level of financial independence through control over income from independent economic activities (Amadiume 1987; Kritz et al. 1991). Time is a factor militating against working moth-ers. In Nigeria, the current practice by working mothers most especially, those with time consu-ming jobs such as banking, secretaries, nursing, medicine is to leave their children as early as three months after maternity leave in a day care center or in care of house maids or older siblings due to their inability to get sufficient time for child care which may affect their family size.

The decision to have children, the number and the timing is a critical issue which may involve a trade off of the family scarce resources against

a large family size. Due to the high level of care feeding, housing and clothing children, parents most especially the educated ones perceive costs to be high because they have to arrange for better education for their children. In order to achieve this, their income level must be put into consideration which will affect their decision on number of children. In the light of the above, there is need for a study like this at this point in time in Nigeria where an average family can hardly afford three square meals. Children seem not to be properly cared for due to the megre income spread on many children. There are instances of children stepping down for others to be educated while some are given out as maids to people because parents can not afford to pay school fees thereby, becoming a burden on other family members.

According to a study conducted by ILO-IPEC (2002), in Nigeria on child labour, with increase in the number of children within family, which led to incidences of child abuse, hawking, child trafficking, child abandonment and child labour.

UNICEF (2005) reported that about one billion children worldwide were deprived of any semblance of a normal childhood facing the effect of poverty, war, hunger and HIV.

These children would not only continue the growth of the country population problems but also the inability to take care of their own children. Hence, a vicious cycle of poverty. Moreover, this rapid growth rate appears to have caused a lot of socio-economic problems such as high crime rate, prostitution, unemployment, drop out of school, over-congestion, premarital sex and pregnancies.

In the light of the above, this study therefore, is an attempt to find out if education and income of married people could predict their family size in Ondo State Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Two hypotheses were generated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between education and family size.
2. There is no significant relationship between couples income and family size.

Multi-stage random sampling technique was used in selecting towns fron the four Local Government Areas purposively selected from the eighteen (18) Local Government areas of the State. The Local Government Areas selected are: Akure South Local Government, Ondo West Local Government, Akoko North East Local Government and Ifedore Local Government Area. The population for this study was made up of all married men and women in Ondo State.

Random-Sampling technique was used in selecting four towns from the four Local Government Areas of the State.

The sample consisted of four hundred (400) subjects comprising 208 females and 192 males. Fifty eight (58) females and fifty two (52) males were selected in Akure, fifty four (54) females and forty eight (48) males were selected in Igbara Oke. Forty six (46) females and forty four (44) males were selected in Ondo, fifty (50) females and forty eight (48) males were selected in Ikare Akoko.

Two categories of people were used based on their educational level. The first category of people were people with low education such as, primary six certificate and secondary school certificate while the other level are the people with higher educational qualifications such as

NCE, OND, HND, B.ED, B.SC, LLB, B.A, M.ED, M.SC, Ph.D.

The ages of the subjects range from 15 to 49 years

Instrument

The instrument used for the study was a self-designed questionnaire titled "Determinant of Family Size," (DOFS) it has two sections, sections A and B. Section A consisted of personal data of the respondents such as age, sex, religion, denomination, highest educational qualification, occupation and marital status. Section B consisted of items on education and income to determine their relationship with family size.

The subjects were required to respond to items with agree or disagree. One point was assigned to agree and two points was assigned to disagree in scoring.

The face and content validities of the instrument were ascertained by some experts in guidance and counselling tests and measurement as well as some professional psychologists in the Faculty of Education, University of Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria.

The reliability of the instrument was determined by using a test re-test method at two weeks interval. A reliability co-efficient of 0.82 was obtained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. This result was found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Education and income as factors of family size in percent.
UNICEF (2005) State of the World's Children.

Factor	*N*	*No. Agree*	*% Agree*	*No. Disagree*	*% Disagree*
Education	400	242	60.5	158	39.5
Income	400	246	61.5	154	38.5

The data collected were analyzed using percentages, frequency counts and Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows that out of the 400 respondents, 242 (60.5%) agreed that education was a determinant of family size while 158 (39.5%) disagreed. As regards the contribution of couples income to family size, 246 (51.5%) agreed that income was a determinant of family size while 154 (38.5%) disagreed.

Table 2 also shows that there is a significant relationship between family size and education. (r =.318) It also revealed that there is a significant relationship between income and family size. (r =.639) all correlations were significant at 0.05 level.

Table 2: **Correlation matrix on education and income with family size**.

Variables	*Education*	*Income*	*Family size*
Education	1.000	.318	.318
Income	.639	1.000	.639

To determine whether or not education and income could predict family size, the data were subjected to Multiple Regression analysis.

The contributions of education and income to family size were 0.256 and 0.310 beta weight respectively. The results were significant at 0.05 level. This indicates that though education and income were both significant predictors of family size, income had a better predictive value. The study revealed that both education and income have significant relationship with family size.

DISCUSSION

The result of this study shows that both education and income are significantly related to family size. This result is consistent with Caldwell 1992 and population Reference Bureau 2000, which state that formal education has been a major determinant of family size. The result may be so because recently, there has been increase in school enrolments. People are thirsty for more knowledge and since the years spent in school tend to stretch the period of childhood to adulthood thereby extending the period of entering into childbearing period which may affect couples family size.

Moreover, people's superstitious belief and ignorance that couples number of children are up to God and also the role played by children in the traditional socio-economic life of people where large retinue of children were seen as a huge asset and source of cheap and available labour was gradually fading away. People tend to be involved more in a white collar job than farming. Therefore, changing the role of children from available hands to till the ground to that of dependants.

The results support the data from the Cochrane (1979) which revealed that access to education and health can affect family size. In Ondo State educated people tend to understand the importance of family planning and the use of contraceptives more than the uneducated ones most uneducated women may not be aware of family planning services due to the fact that most of them resolve into giving birth at church missions because they can not afford hospital bills and also because of ignorance those that are aware may not see the importance of using it.

This results are consistent with the State of South Africa Population Report (2000) which states that there is significant positive relationship between family size and income. A change in income may have a variety of effects on parents demand on children.

It is surprising to find out in this study that income is a better predictor of family size than education. A possible explanation for the better predictive power of income as observed in this study could be that in Ondo State, some women that do not have time for child-rearing may be making use of substitutes such as house maids, personal mothers or mothers-in-law, day care facilities younger sisters and so on. Those without gainful employment may have husbands with lucrative jobs or other sources of income.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was concluded that education and income

are significant indices that affect family size in Ondo State, Nigeria but income was a more predictor of family size than education.

Seminars and work shops should be organized by Ministry of Health (Family Planning Unit) to bring awareness to people on influence of education and income on family size.

The less-educated couple should be enlightened on the consequences of having more children than their income can cope with.

It is also recommended that the government should implement policies on controlling the number of children in a family.

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