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CONTEXTUAL DETERMINANTS OF CHILDREN EVER BORN AMONG WOMEN OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE IN SELECTED SOUTHWEST STATE IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Purpose: Sub-Saharan Africa still faces high fertility rate among other sub regions globally. This study examined the contextual determinants of children ever born (CEB) among women of reproductive age in selected Southwest states in Nigeria.

Methodology: A total number of one thousand, one hundred and eighty-seven (1,187) women of reproductive ages (15-49) were randomly drawn from Southwest states using multi-stage sampling technique. Questionnaire method was used to collect relevant data from the field. Three levels of data analysis were undertaken to achieve the study objectives. Frequency distribution was used at the univariate level of analysis while linear regression methods were employed at the bivariate and multivariate level of analyses at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings: The result shows that education, age at marriage and employment negatively significantly predict children ever born (CEB) while age of respondents is positively significantly related to children ever born (CEB) in Southwest Nigeria.

Unique Contribution to Practice and Policy: Government specific policies that will encourage female education and give room for their widespread employment should be implemented to control fertility in the country.

Keywords: *Contextual determinants, children ever born, reproductive age.*

Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa is still facing fast population growth. About half a century ago, the region comprised of 7.3 percent of the world's inhabitants. Nevertheless, the population has grown by more than 2.5 per cent per annum in the past forty years and has already exceeded 967 million by 2015 as projected by United Nations and currently stands at 1.122 billion (World Population Review, 2021). By 2050, it is estimated that 21 percent of the world's population will dwell in sub-Saharan Africa. The implication of this is that the area faces massive tasks both to social and economic progress, as well as continuity of natural resources. The region's growth is aggravated by sustained high fertility in the face of declining mortality. The region's total fertility rate (TFR), though diminishing ranged from 6.45 in 1960, to 4.28 in 2016 and marginally went up to 4.4 in year 2019 (World Population Review, 2019).

On a regional basis, Central Africa has the highest total fertility rate in sub-Sahara Africa (TFR) with 5.7 in 2019 after previously declining from 5.93 in 1960 to 4.47 in 2016. This is followed by total fertility rate (TRF) of 4.8 in West Africa and which is closely followed by East Africa with total fertility rate of 4.5 in 2019. Southern African region has the lowest rate in the region because of improvement in socio-economic status (Table 1) (World Population Review, 2019). This high rate will continue to drive population growth in the region if nothing is done to reverse the ugly situation.

On a country by country basis, many countries such as Angola, Burkinafaso, Burundi, Niger, Chad, and Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda still have total fertility rates (TFRs) of above 5.0 (World Population Review, 2019). In Nigeria, fertility rate has remained high in excess of 5.0 for decades. The total fertility rate though declining is still high ranging from between 6.0 in 1990 to 5.3 in 2018 (National Population Commission, 2019). The country currently ranks as number seven on the list of the ten most populous countries in the world (World Population Review, 2019) and is projected to add additional 68 million people by 2030, and a further addition of 63 million people by 2050, which will make her the fifth most populous nation in the world behind Pakistan, United States, China and India (British Council of Nigeria, 2010).

On region by region basis in the country, the story is the same. Total fertility rate (TFR) ranges from 3.9 in Southwest to 6.6 in Northwest (NDHS, 2018). With the estimated growth rate of approximately 2.7% per annum and ineffective government policies to mitigate the growing population, the possibility of achieving meaningful reduction in fertility rate in the country may be a mirage. The study examined contextual determinants of children ever born among women of reproductive age in Southwest, Nigeria.

Table 1; Total Fertility Rates for Sub-Sahara African and Regions, 1960, 2016, 2019

SN	REGION	1960	2016	2019
Sub-Sahara Africa		6.45	4.28	4.4
1	Southern Africa	6.27	3.41	2.4
2	East Africa	7.06	4.38	4.5
3	Central Africa	5.93	4.47	5.7
4	West Africa	6.57	4.89	4.8

Source: World Bank, 2019; World Population Review, 2019

Literature Review

Sub-Saharan Africa has been identified as a region with high fertility and family size. Among factors responsible for the reduced but sustained high fertility are education, ethnicity, employment, income, religion, type of marriage, age, age at marriage and place of residence (Ariho & Kabagenyi, 2020; Amusa &Yahya,2019; Rim, 2018; Odusina, 2017; Michael & Scent, 2017; Kabagenyi, Reid, Ntozi & Atuyambe, 2016; Olatoregun, Fagbamigbe, Akinyemi, Oyindamola & Bamgboye, 2014). Studies have shown that women who are educated, employed and have more knowledge of contraception have reduced cumulative fertility than those who are not educated (Nyarko, 2021; Amusa & Yahya, 2019; Alaba, Olubusoye & Olaomi, 2017). Goldstone, Korotaev, Shulgin & Zinkina (2018) found that there was a stall in fertility in sub-Saharan Africa due majorly to weak economy and pro-natalist culture despite improvement in education, infant mortality and urbanization. They observed that women in the region with greater income, living in urban centres and with higher education have lower fertility. Further studies showed that demand for children for reasons such as old age security, son preference, status symbol, security against widowhood, gender choice & living children make-up and security against divorce were some of the factors that have been sustaining high fertility in the region (Inyang-Etoh, & Ekanem, 2016; Lambert & Rossi, 2016; Adebowal & Palamuleni, 2015; Westoff, Bietsch & Koffman, 2013 ; Izugbara & Ezeh, 2010).

Goujon, Lutz and Samir (2015) opined in their study that the way out of this fertility challenge is for the government to empower women and girl child by improving their health, enhance their human capital through increased spending on education and skills and provide them with greater market, social and decision making power at family, community and national level.

Methods

Data

The data used for this study was collected with the use of structured questionnaire, from married women of childbearing age bracket (15-49) in three selected states (Ekiti, Osun and Lagos state) in Southwest Nigeria

A total number of One thousand and two hundred (1,200) respondents were sampled for the study. However, only one thousand, one hundred and eight seven questionnaires were duly completed and returned. The 2006 Census population figure was used to arrive at the number of respondents for each state. A multi-stage probability sampling technique was embraced to select eligible participants for the survey. The first stage was the selection of 3 states out of the 6 states in the region. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select 3 of the states in the region which are Lagos, Osun and Ekiti state. Lagos state represents Lagos/Ogun because the two states share some similarities. Osun state represents Oyo/Osun because of cultural similarities. Osun was created out of old Oyo in 1991. Ekiti state represents Ondo/Ekiti due to history of cultural affiliation and genealogy.

The second stage was the selection of towns in each of the state. Purposive sampling method was adopted to select the state capital as the urban component and other towns representing rural locations in the 3 selected states. Thus, the capital city was chosen in each state. Itamaja in Ikorodu local government was chosen as the remote town in Lagos. Tonkere in Ife Central Local Government area was chosen as the remote town in Osun State. In Ekiti state, Ido-Ile in Ekiti West

local government was chosen as the remote town. This means that in each of the states, two towns (urban/rural) were chosen.

The last stage was the selection of the respondents using simple random sampling technique. The same procedure was replicated in Itamaja, Tonkere and Ido-Ile in Lagos, Osun and Ekiti State respectively. Four hundred and thirty seven (437) respondents were randomly sampled in Ikeja while two hundred and ninety two (292) were randomly sampled in Itamaja in Ikorodu LGA. One hundred and sixty six (166) respondents were randomly sampled in Osogbo while one hundred and eleven (111) were chosen in Tonkere in Ife Central LGA. In Ekiti State, one hundred and sixteen (116) respondents were chosen in Ado Ekiti while seventy-eight (78) respondents were chosen in Ido-Ile in Ekiti West LGA.

Data Analysis

Frequency distribution was employed to describe the socio-demographic and environmental features of the respondents at the univariate level while multiple linear regression model was used to investigate the relationship between the independent variables such as education, ethnicity, employment, income, religion, type of marriage, age, age at marriage, place of residence and the dependent variable children even born (CEB). The choice of multiple linear regression was occasioned by the nature of the dependent variable, children ever born, which is quantitative in nature and a mixture of the independent variables that are quantitative and qualitative in nature.

In this study, the dependent variable was children ever born while the independent variables were education, ethnicity, employment, income, religion, type of marriage, age, age at marriage, place of residence. The Regression model that explains the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables is stated below;

$$Y = b_0 + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + b_4 X_4 + b_5 X_5 + b_6 X_6 + b_7 X_7 + b_8 X_8 + b_9 X_9$$

Where:-

Y=children ever born

X_1 = Education

X_2 = Ethnicity

X_3 = Employment

X_4 = Income

X_5 = Religion

X_6 = Type of Marriage

X_7 = Age

X_8 = Age at marriage

X_9 = Place of residence

b_0 = the intercept.

b_1 = coefficient of education

b_2 = coefficient of ethnicity

b_3 = coefficient of employment

b_4 = coefficient of income

b_5 = coefficient of religion

b_6 = coefficient of type of marriage

b_7 = coefficient of age

b_8 = coefficient of age at marriage

b_9 = coefficient of place of residence

Result

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by socio-demographic characteristics. 61.1% of the respondents had post - secondary education, 17.2% had secondary education while 11.5% and 10.2% had below secondary education and no formal education respectively. 74.6% of the respondents were Yoruba, 18.4% were Igbos while 7.0% were Hausa.

In the employment category, 88.6% had employment while only 11.4% did not have. 96.8% of the respondents earned below N150,000 while 3.2% earned above N150,000. 69.2% were Christians, 28.4% were Muslims while only 2.4% were into traditional religion. In the type of marriage category, 90.6% were into monogamous marriage while only 9.4% were into polygamous union.

The mean age of the respondents was 33.7years with a standard deviation of 7.7. More than half of the respondents (55.8%) were aged between 15 and 34 years of age while close to half of the respondents (44.2%) were 35 years and above. The mean age at marriage was 24.02 while the standard deviation was 4.45 years

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Socio-demographic Characteristics.

Variables	Category	Frequency (%) N=1187
Education	Non Formal/Quranic	121 (10.2)
	Below Secondary	137 (11.5)
	Secondary	204 (17.2)
	Post-secondary	725 (61.1)
Ethnicity	Yoruba	885 (74.6)
	Hausa	83 (7.0)
	Igbo	219 (18.4)
Employment	Yes	1052 (88.6)
	No	135 (11.4)
Income	Below N150,000	1149 (96.8)
	N150,001-N300,000	34 (2.9)
	Above N150,000	4 (0.3)
Religion	Christianity	821 (69.2)
	Muslim	337 (28.4)
	Traditional	29 (2.4)
Type of marriage	Monogamy	1075 (90.6)
	Polygamy	112 (9.4)
Age of respondents	15-24	116 (9.8)
	25-34	546 (46.0)
	35-44	385 (32.4)
	45 and above	140 (11.8)
	Mean Age	33.66
	Std Dev.	7.66
Age at first marriage	15-24	631 (53.2)
	25-34	529 (44.6)
	35 and above	27 (2.3)
	Mean	24.02
	Std Dev.	4.45

The analysis shows that about 97.8% of the women married below age 35 years while only 2.3% got married at age 35 years and above.

Table 3 shows the distribution of the respondents by environmental characteristics. The distribution shows that about two-fifth of the respondents were living in urban areas while roughly two-fifth of the respondents were rural dwellers.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Environmental Characteristics

Variables	Category	Frequency (%) N=1187
Place of residence	Urban	713 (60.1)
	Rural	474 (39.9)

Table 4: Multiple Linear Regression showing the Relationship between Socio-demographic, Environmental Characteristics and Children Ever Born

	B	Std Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Confidence Interval	
Constant	3.610	0.443		8.158	0.000	Lower	Upper
Education*	-0.279	0.044	-0.168	-6.378	0.000	-0.364	-0.193
Ethnicity	-0.011	0.056	-0.005	-0.200	0.842	-0.122	0.099
Employment*	-0.647	0.138	-0.121	-4.673	0.000	-0.919	-0.375
Income	-0.314	0.211	-0.037	-1.486	0.138	-0.728	0.101
Religion	0.006	0.083	0.002	0.074	0.941	-0.157	0.169
Type of Marriage	-0.158	0.147	-0.027	-1.076	0.282	-0.447	0.130
Age*	0.942	0.055	0.458	17.221	0.000	0.835	1.050
Age at Marriage*	-0.942	0.086	-0.238	-8.676	0.000	-0.911	-0.575
Place of residence	-0.021	0.093	-0.006	-0.229	0.819	-0.205	0.162

*P<0.001

The regression model using the b coefficients in first column of table 3 above is stated below;

$Y= 3.61 -0.279X_1 -0.011X_2 -0.647X_3 – 0.314X_4 +0.006X_5 -0.158X_6 + 0.942X_7 -0.942X_8 -0.021X_9$

Table 4 presents multiple linear regression showing the relationship between the dependent variable (children ever born) and the independent variables. Findings indicated a significant negative relationship between education and children ever born. This means that the higher the level of education of women, the lower the number of children ever born and vice versa. In the analysis above, it is evident that a year increase in education of women, leads to a reduction in the number of children ever born by 0.279. The analysis further showed that employment has a significant negative relationship with children ever born. Women who were employed were more likely to have fewer number of children ever born than those who were not employed. In the analysis, a unit increase in employment leads to 0.647 reduction in the number of children ever born at 0.05 level of significance. Moreover, there is a significant positive relationship between age of respondents and children ever born. This means that the higher the age of respondents, the higher the number of children ever born. The analysis shows that a year increase in age will lead to 0.942 increase in children ever born. The analysis further shows that age at marriage is significantly negatively related to children ever born. This mean that the higher the age at marriage, the lower the number of children ever born. A year increase in the age at which a woman marries will lead to 0.942 reduction in the number of children ever born.

Discussion of findings.

The objective of the paper was to examine the contextual determinants of children ever born among women of reproductive age in Southwest states in Nigeria. The study examined socio-demographic and environmental factors that determine children ever born in the study area. Factors that significantly predicted children ever born were education, employment, age and age at marriage while other factors such as ethnicity, income, religion, type of marriage and place of residence were not significant.

The finding showed that women who were educated were more likely to have fewer number of children ever born than their counterpart who were less educated or not educated at all. The reason for this could be that education empowers women to take decisions that affect their lives especially

reproductive health. This finding is supported by Amusa and Yaya (2019) in their study of factors that influence women's family size in Nigeria where it was discovered that better educated women want fewer children than their colleagues who have slight or no education. This outcome is also supported by Alaba, Olubusoye, and Olaomi (2017) who discovered that secondary or higher education of women in Nigeria lead to reduced fertility.

Further finding showed that women who were employed were less likely to have more children than their colleagues who were not employed. This finding is supported by Wusu (2012) who discovered that female employment especially the ones that take them away from their homes negatively affect their fertility. The finding is also supported by Jammeh (2020) in his study of impact of education on fertility in Gambia. However, according to Obiyan, Fagbamigbe, Adetutu & Oyinlola (2017) women's employment does not necessarily reduce fertility but increase household wealth. Ajefu (2019) also showed that there is positive relationship between women who are into self-employment and their fertility.

Furthermore, finding also revealed that there was significant positive relationship between age and children ever born in the study. The higher the age, the higher the number of children ever born. The finding is supported by Solanke (2017) in his study of older reproductive age and childbirth preferences in Nigeria where he found a strong relationship between older reproductive age and childbearing choices as most of the women interviewed had large ideal family sizes.

Finally, age at marriage is shown to be negatively significantly related to children ever born. Women who got married at early age are more likely to have more children than those who married at later age. This finding is supported by Ariho and Kabagenyi (2020) who discovered that percentage of women who got married at age 20 and above increased in Uganda while ladies who got married at age 15 and below reduced which will lead to significant fertility reduction if sexual activity is restricted to within marriage in the country.

Conclusion

The study concludes that women's education, employment, age at marriage and age significantly predict children ever born (CEB) in Southwest Nigeria.

Recommendation

Government and relevant stakeholders should invest in female education and provide employment opportunities which will enhance their status and impinge on their space for fertility reduction. In addition, Government should enforce compliance to the minimum age at marriage of 18 years in the country to prevent child marriage and consequent fertility increase.

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