

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILD LABOUR AND FAMILY SIZE
IN THE RURAL AREAS. A CASE OF MURANG'A
DISTRICT IN KENYA.

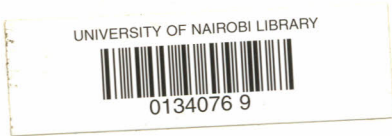
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ABSTRACT

This study is an analysis of child labour in relation to family size in Kandara division of Murang'a district, Kenya. Its main objective was to investigate the nature of the relationship between the value of child labour and family sizes in the area and to investigate factors that determine children engagement in various domestic and agricultural activities. It also aimed at examining whether there is any relationship between the economic status of mothers and family size. Other related variables such as mothers' age, education level, her occupation and the families' income are taken into consideration.

The sample was composed of women aged between 20 - 49 years who were either single, married, divorced or widowed. A total of 135 respondents were interviewed. They were selected using systematic sampling from the four divisions of the district.

The study had four major hypotheses. The first hypothesis stated that "the value of child labour within the family is positively related to the size of the family" while the second major hypothesis stated that "education level of the mother is related to family size in that the more educated mothers tend to have smaller families than the less educated ones". Other hypotheses investigated the relationship between occupation of the mother and participation of

children in the family labour, and lastly the family income in relation to family size.

The study's major finding was that a relationship exists between child labour and family size. A significant relationship was also found to exist between mother's education and family size. The more educated mothers tend to have smaller families. Age was partly responsible for an element of spurious relationship between mother's education and family size. The study found no significant relationship between income and family size, while occupation of the mother was found to be significantly related to the amount of labour contribution by children to the family.

At least two conclusions can be drawn from this study. Firstly, it is to be noted that improved income of the rural families has no effect on fertility. However, increased education of women has the effect of reducing fertility although age confounds educational effects to an extent. The major factors that may be associated with education that directly reduce fertility are delayed marriages and use of contraceptives. Secondly, it is noted that occupational status is associated with reduced fertility, in part because women in higher occupational status can hire labour to replace child labour. Thus reduced demand for child labour by women in formal occupations encourages them to adopt birth control methods in order to limit fertility.