Factors influencing fertility preferences of currently married men in Kenya

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http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/11380
Date: 2012

Abstract:

In recent decades fertility has declined at a rapid pace in a majority of developing countries including Kenya. Kenya's population size has grown from 5.4 million in 1948 to 38.6 million in 2009 with the total fertility rate ranging between 4.9 in 2003 and 4.6 in 2008/9 revealing a stall in fertility. Studies have shown that fertility preference can be useful as an indicator of the direction that future fertility may take. Studies have also documented a significant effect of men's preference in regard to the family matters which may eclipse women's preference for the family decision-making. Understanding the fertility preference of married men in Kenya is of paramount importance given the effect it has on future fertility when the preferences are implemented. It is also important to family planning programmes because it helps determine the need for contraception, whether for spacing or limiting births, and the extent of unwanted and mistimed pregnancies. The main objective of this study was to determine the factors that influence fertility preference of currently married men in Kenya. The specific objectives were: to establish the effects of socio-demographic factors on fertility preference of currently married men in Kenya; to establish the effect of socio-economic factors on fertility preference of currently married men in Kenya; and to establish the effects of socio-cultural factors on fertility preference of currently married men in Kenya. The data was obtained from a sample size of 1,757 married men aged 15-54 years who were asked questions on various topics including fertility preference and more specifically their desire to have additional children during the 2008/9 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey. Pullum (1980) conceptual framework was employed in study. The dependent variable was desire for additional children which was dichotomized as 1 'desire' and 0 'Non-desire' whereas the study variables were age, number of living children, education, place of residence, wealth index, region, occupation, type of marriage and number of living sons. From the descriptive analysis, the results revealed that about 57 percent of currently married men in Kenya are likely to desire additional children. The results also showed that, age, number of living children, education, place of residence, wealth index, region, occupation, type of marriage and number of living sons were all significantly associated with the desire for additional children. The results of multivariate analysis indicated that age, number of living children, education, region, occupation, type of marriage and number of living sons were significant factors associated with the desire for additional children at 0.001, 0.01 and 0.05 significance level. This study recommends that education for men should be emphasized because education was discovered to have a highly significant effect on the fertility preference. Promotion of information that creates awareness on the value of children irrespective of sex should be focused upon so as to minimize son preference. Policies that aim at integrating population into development should be encouraged so as to foster socio-economic development in all the regions and hence minimize the regional disparities as it relates to fertility preferences. In terms of research, further studies, both qualitative and quantitative, to be carried out in order to explore the socio-cultural and religious beliefs, norms and attitudes of men in regards to the value of children.