

EFFECT OF EDUCATION ON THE FERTILITY BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN IN CALABAR MUNICIPALITY OF CROSS RIVER STATE NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This research work examined effect of education on the fertility behaviour of women in Calabar Municipality. Questionnaire was the instrument used in data collection. Five hundred copies of questionnaire were distributed randomly to women in Calabar Municipality. Two hypotheses were formulated which try to assess the women level of education and her fertility behaviour and to evaluate the relationship between income level and fertility behaviour among women in the study area. The Likert scale was used to collect information from the respondents which was design using variables such as strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The data obtained from the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents shows that women and those with thirty-six to forty-five constitute the population used for the study. The result from the data analysed revealed that there is a significant relationship between a woman's level of education and fertility behaviour in the study area. It was also noticed from the result obtained from the data analysed that there exists a significant relationship between level of income and fertility behaviour among women in the study area. It is on this note the study recommend that adequate measures be put in place to control the effect of education on the level of women fertility behaviour in the study area.

Keywords: Education, Fertility, Behaviour, women, income

Introduction

This study is based on the effect of education on fertility behaviour and the role of formal education in the determination of fertility level of women. Formal education in Nigeria has brought about various antecedent consequences such as decrease in the number of children desired or born. A woman's priority in young adulthood initially was to find a husband, and after doing so, raise a family and run a well-kept household. Women were not expected to harbor aspirations other than the acquisition of a husband, family, and a hoe (Henslin, 2006). Then women who sought for education were still rare. Today, the story is quite different, such that the goals of education for women is to breed confidence and empowerment. Once a woman begins to receive education, there is no going back because it changes their role in the society dramatically. Education was shown to affect a wide range of behaviours, most of which have a depressing effect on fertility (Henslin, 2006). Education contributes to the erosion of traditional practices, such as prolonged breast feeding and posh parlum abstinence ' Lestheregine, 2010).

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Rindfus et al (1988) have pointed out that a variety of events might make respondents alter their childbearing plans, and that single individuals have imperfect forecasting abilities, it is inconceivable that they would not adjust their plans as events in their lives unfold. In addition to the unrealistic and restrictive assumption, Becker's economic theory of fertility has been criticized for neglecting individual tastes and thus the psychological needs and motivations that influence fertility. Instead of explicitly modeling tastes, the assumption is made that all individuals have homogenous preferences (bagozziand vom Loo, 2008). An aspect that is also not considered by economists is the possibility of externalizing childcare.

Compared to the economic models, the objections that have been raised regarding the concept of a second demographic transition are more fundamental. Many critics have argued that the framework of a SDT is merely a description, not an explanation of recent demographic development. Some have even said they doubt that the changes were substantial enough to constitute a second demographic transition. Instead, they claim that the relational and productive shifts in behaviours that have been observed in most industrialized countries since the mid - 1960s, should rather be an accelerated continuation of the first demographic transition. Importance of healthcare services, coupled with the information given on the use of contraceptives has helped in the awareness of the need. Though this system is always hard for the rural women to adopt because they believe in having many children.

Economists and demographers contended that, the high population is the remote cause of excess labour supply compared to available resources, which leads to a high rate of dependency ratio. This problem no doubt, results to child dumping, juvenile delinquency, crime, poverty, armed robbery, and destitution as is bring experienced in our society today. However, some traditional cultural practices affect's fertility behaviours in Cross River State especially the Efik people. The most exciting gift one or a family could ever have is a child, especially a male child. In some cases, one might end up having too many (female) children unexpectedly for the sake of having a male child. However, even though several works have been conducted in this area globally, none has been able to highlight the subject on the study area. Besides, there still exists paucity of data on the subject matter which is the basis of this research work to evaluate the effect of education on fertility behaviour of women in Calabar Municipality.

Literature Review

Education remains the fulcrum on which any nation's economic, social, political, industrial and aesthetic development hinges. It is for this reason that no government, whether military, civilian or transitional can attempt to half the effective development of education without unleashing a wild protest from the masses. Education is an ongoing learning process designed to prepare a person to live effectively for himself and for the society in which he/she operates. This learning process is replete with choices and possibilities that can operate to maximize intellectual, social, occupational, psychological and development of an individual.

Education has long been recognized as a crucial factor influencing women's childbearing patterns. An extensive demographic literature is devoted to examining the role of female education in promoting sustained fertility decline (Davis, 2014). The accumulated evidence provides a compelling rationale for focusing on increased investment in education and the elimination of institutional and cultural barriers to women's schooling in policies aimed at promoting development and reducing fertility.

Although the association between education and fertility was a "contempt", the availability of data for the large number of countries that participated in the World Fertility Survey (WFS) in the 1990s considerably improved our understanding of the relationship. The documentation of empirical patterns for a wide variety of settings inspired increasingly complex views, demographers no longer regard the effect of education on fertility as automatic, but as conditioned by the level of development, social organization, gender stratification and cultural milieu of the surrounding society.

There exist repeated arguments that there is possible causal connection between formal education and fertility behaviour (Rindfuss, 1980, Billari and Philipov 2004, Kravdal 2007). Only few scientists from the U.S. have investigated whether causality really runs in both directions. Rindfuss et al (1980) analysed the reciprocal relationship between education and age at first birth and concluded that it is dominated by the effect from education to age at first birth, with only a trivial effect in the other direction. In contrast, Hofferth, and Moses (2010) found a reciprocal causal relationship between educational attainment and age at first birth. Moreover, their findings indicated that the effect of age at entering motherhood on education is even stronger than the effect of educational attainment on age at first birth.

Marini (1994) examined these studies critically and discussed several factors that may account for the discrepant finding. She concluded that both studies exhibited substantial shortcomings, which probably biased the results. Marini (1994) demonstrated that education and age at entering parenthood causally affect each other. Again, she also showed that the causal attainment effect of age at entering motherhood on education is of significant magnitude, and that it operates independently of the effect of age at first marriage. Studies on the effect of fertility on education have primarily concentrated on the situation in the US and Nigeria and have mainly sought to investigate the consequences of an early first birth on a young woman's educational attainment. However, it has been shown that in the US early childbearing in general, and not just teenage motherhood, reduces the educational attainment of young women (McElroy, 1996). The explanations for this association have mainly focused on the barriers to further schooling caused by pregnancy and motherhood. In the past, the main barriers have been created by school system practices and policies that typically forced pregnant women to withdraw from regular classes (Ewer and Gibbs, 2012).

Today, most industrialized societies give special support to women who become pregnant at school age. However, the difficulty of managing school attendance and childcare, the burden of household tasks, and pressure from her parents, peers, or partners to spend as much time as

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possible with the child decreases the likelihood that an adolescent who has a child will continue in school. Bacon (2011) argued that role transitions that are accelerated, that is, transitions that take place early in a woman's life cycle - tend to cause stress and conflict which can result in social pathologies, such as marital instability, poverty and truncated educational careers.

Presser (2013) stressed the importance of the timing of the acquisition of the mother role for the development of a young woman's aspirations and goals. She pointed to the fact that early childbearing often closes other role options available to young women. Therefore, those who move directly from the role of a daughter to the role of a mother (and wife) have few opportunities to try non-traditional roles, and to experience satisfaction from non-familial activities. In this context, Asika (2011) concluded that the lack of exposure to non-traditional roles before motherhood might lead to longer families and less labour force activity, as well as less schooling, among women who entered parenthood at an early age.

Berthoud and Robson (2001) compared the educational attainment of women who became mothers before their 20th birthday with the educational attainment of those who became mothers later in life for 13 countries. Although the observed countries differ greatly in their social and educational systems, the authors showed that the findings on lower educational attainments among early mothers is consistent across countries. The explanations of women fertility through economic motives at the household level or through changes in the social structure and culture at the societal level have attracted a lot of attention and support. Despite the popularity, both theories exhibit several substantial shortcomings which limit their usefulness. The economic theory of fertility has been heavily criticized for its reliance on a set of unrealistic and restrictive assumptions. For instance, by assuming that households act rationally and only aim at maximizing utility, the possibility of both irrational behaviour and decision making based on considerations other than utility maximization are precluded. A further assumption that has been questioned is that couples decide on the final number of their children at a single point in time namely, at the outset of the marriage. Fertility decision-making appears to be a major dynamic process that is influenced by changing economic, childbearing and general life-cycle conditions (Bongozzi and vom Loo, 2008).

Methodology

The study examined the effect of education on the fertility behaviour of women in the study area. Five hundred (500) copies of questionnaire were used for this study, this constitutes the sample size for the study.

To carry out this research work, a structured questionnaire was used for the data collection. The questionnaire was structured using the Likert scale of measurement which includes thus, (SA, A, D, SD) for strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagreed respectively. Respondents were required to tick only on one of the options that conveyed their opinion. The demographic characteristics of the respondents and the problems of high fertility behaviour of women were captured in the questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered to the women

using purposive sampling technique. The rationale for using purposive sampling technique is based on the nature of data needed or involved in this study. Two hypotheses were formulated which include.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between a woman's level of education and her fertility behaviour.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between income level and fertility behaviour.

The stated hypotheses were tested using the chi-square and the formula is stated thus.

Chi-square is computed by the equation.

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum(Oe-e)^2}{E}$$

Where X^2 = chi-square

O = Observed value

e = expected value

$$\begin{aligned} \text{While degree of freedom df} &= (Tr - 1) (Tr-1) \\ &= (2-1) (2-1) \\ &= 1 \end{aligned}$$

Findings

Socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents

The demographic characteristics of the sampled respondents presented in table 1 indicate that male respondents were 211 representing 42.2% while female were 289 representing 57.8%. This variation is not unconnected with the issue under analyses that the data collected on marital status presented in table 1 revealed that 47 of the respondents representing 9.4% were single, 219 of them representing 43.8% were married, 100 of them representing 20% were widow, 98 of them representing 19% were divorced. In another perspective, 36 of the respondents, representing 7.2% were separated.

It was noticed in table 1 that those within the age bracket of 20-35 were 73 representing 14.6%, 208 of them representing 41.6% were said to fall between the age bracket of 36-45. Another 106 of the respondents representing 21.2% fall between the age brackets of 46-55 while 70 of them representing 14% fall between 55-65 years. And finally, 43 of the respondents, representing 8.6% fall between 66-75 years. The data obtained in table 1 based on occupation, it was observed that 68 of the respondents representing 13.6% were students. 99 of them representing 19.8% were civil servants. 126% of them representing 25.2% were Housewives while 101 of them representing 20.2% were into business and 103 of them representing 20.6% were said to be artisans. The educational status of the respondents revealed as follows; 57 of them representing 11.4% had no education while 98 representing 19.6% had FSLC. Another 149 of the respondents representing 29.8% had GCE/SSCE and 80 representing 16% had OND. Finally, 108 of the respondents representing 21.6% had HND/BSC. Table 1 also reveal that, 476 of the respondents representing 95.2% were Christians while 3 of the representing 0.6% were Muslim and 21 of them representing 4.2% were traditionalist.

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Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents

| Sex | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Male | 211 | 42.2 |
| Female | 289 | 57.8 |
| Total | 500 | 100 |
| Marital status | Frequency | Percentage |
| Single | 47 | 9.4 |
| Married | 219 | 43.8 |
| Widow | 100 | 20.0 |
| Divorced | 18 | 19.6 |
| Separated | 36 | 7.2 |
| Total | 500 | 100 |
| Age | Frequency | Percentage |
| 20-35 | 73 | 14.6 |
| 36-45 | 208 | 41.6 |
| 46-55 | 106 | 21.2 |
| 56-65 | 70 | 14.0 |
| 66-75 | 43 | 8.6 |
| Total | 500 | 100 |
| Occupation | Frequency | Percentage |
| Students | 71 | 14.2 |
| Civil servants | 99 | 19.8 |
| Housewife | 126 | 25.2 |
| Business | 101 | 20.2 |
| Artisans | 103 | 20.6 |
| Total | 500 | 100 |
| Qualification | Frequency | Percentage |
| No education | 59 | 11.8 |
| FSLC | 98 | 19.6 |
| * GCE/SSCE | 149 | 29.8 |
| OND/NCE | 86 | 17.2 |
| HND/BSc | 108 | 21.6 |
| Total | 500 | 100 |
| Religion | Frequency | Percentage |
| Christians | 76 | 95.2 |
| Moslem | 3 | 0.6 |
| Traditionalist | 21 | 4.2 |
| Total | 100 | 500 |

Source: Author's field survey (2022)

Problems of high fertility behaviour of women

The problems of high fertility behaviour of women in the study area presented in table 2 indicate that high standard of living and lack of education on women child spacing were the major problems of high fertility behaviour of women as observed with values of 24.2 percent and 25.8 percent respectively followed by encouragement of the use of contraceptive and lack of child spacing with values of 19 percent and 16.6 percent. It was also discovered that lack of free education was a problem of high fertility behaviour among women in the area with a value of 14.4 percent. The data collected in table 2 also indicate that the respondents strongly agree that the above-mentioned variables constitute the problems of high fertility behaviour of women in the study area with a high value of 37.6 percent followed by those that only agree with a value of 28.8 percent those with strongly disagree were on the least side with a value of 12.8 percent.

Table 2: Problems of high fertility behaviour of women

| s/n | Problems of high fertility | SA | A | D | SD | Total | Percentage |
|-----|---|------|------|------|------|-------|------------|
| 1. | Lack of child spacing | 30 | 21 | 17 | 15 | 93 | 16.6 |
| 2. | Lack of education on modern child spacing | 43 | 38 | 36 | 12 | 129 | 25.8 |
| 3. | Encourage the use of contraceptives | 35 | 29 | 15 | 16 | 95 | 19.0 |
| 4. | Lack of free education | 25 | 21 | 16 | 10 | 72 | 14.4 |
| 5. | High standard of living | 55 | 35 | 20 | 11 | 121 | 24.2 |
| | Total | 188 | 144 | 104 | 64 | 500 | 100 |
| | Percentage | 37.6 | 28.8 | 20.8 | 12.8 | | |

Source: Author’s field survey (2022)

Results analysis and Discussion of Findings

The result from the stated hypothesis which tries to show the relationship between women’s level of education and her behaviour as presented in table 3 indicate that the calculated value was greater than the critical value of 4.6213 at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This therefore implies that; there is a significant relationship between a woman's level of education and fertility behaviour.

This finding lends credence to the work of Ewer and Gibbs (2012). They argued that today especially educated women tend to start childbearing at much higher ages. Under this condition, it seems unlikely that intervals between births would be longer for highly educated woman. In contrast, women with higher level of education are certainly aware of the shorter amount of time they have left before they reach the biological or socially sanctioned limit or fertility.

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Table 3: Result of Statistical analysis of hypothesis one

| Sex | SA | A | D | SD | TOTAL |
|--------|-----|-----|----|----|-------|
| Male | 119 | 63 | 19 | 10 | 211 |
| Female | 133 | 83 | 53 | 20 | 289 |
| Total | 252 | 146 | 72 | 30 | 500 |

Table 4: Chi-square descriptive analysis results of hypothesis one

| CELL | O | E | o-e | (o-e) ² | $\frac{(o - e)^2}{e}$ |
|-------|-----|--------|--------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 119 | 106.34 | 12.66 | 160.276 | 1.5072 |
| 2 | 133 | 145.65 | -12.65 | 160.023 | 1.0987 |
| 3 | 63 | 61.61 | 1.39 | 1.932 | 0.0314 |
| 4 | 83 | 84.34 | -1.34 | 1.796 | 0.0213 |
| 5 | 19 | 30.38 | -11.38 | 129.504 | 4.2628 |
| 6 | 53 | 41.61 | 11.39 | 129.732 | 3.1178 |
| 7 | 10 | 12.66 | -2.66 | 7.076 | 0.5589 |
| 8 | 20 | 17.34 | 2.66 | 7.076 | 0.4081 |
| TOTAL | 500 | | | | 11.0061 |

Source: Statistical analysis (2022)

The result obtained in the data analysis of hypothesis two presented in table 4 shows that there is a significant relationship between income level and female fertility behaviour of women in the study area. The result from the data analysis shows that, there is a significant relationship between income level and female fertility behaviour. This finding supported the work of Marini (1994) who maintained that socio-economic factors such as income level of a woman can also affect positively or negatively her fertility behaviour.

Table 5: Result from statistical analysis of hypothesis two

| Option | Female | Male | Total |
|-------------------|--------|------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 136 | 98 | 234 |
| Agree | 97 | 89 | 186 |
| Strongly disagree | 35 | 14 | 49 |
| Disagree | 21 | 10 | 31 |
| Total | 289 | 211 | 500 |

Source: Statistical analysis (2022)

Table 6: Chi-square descriptive results from hypothesis two

| CELL | O | E | o-e | (o-e) ² | $\frac{(o - e)^2}{E}$ |
|-------|-----|---------|---------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 136 | 135.252 | 0.748 | 0.560 | 0.0041 |
| 2 | 97 | 107.508 | -10.508 | 110.418 | 1.0271 |
| 3 | 35 | 28.322 | 6.678 | 44.596 | 1.5746 |
| 4 | 21 | 17.918 | 3.082 | 9.499 | 0.5301 |
| 5 | 98 | 98.748 | -0.748 | 0.560 | 0.0057 |
| 6 | 89 | 78.492 | 10.508 | 110.418 | 1.4067 |
| 7 | 14 | 20.678 | -6.678 | 44.596 | 2.1567 |
| 8 | 10 | 13.082 | -3.082 | 9.499 | 0.7261 |
| TOTAL | 500 | | | | 7.4311 |

Source: Statistical analysis (2022)

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study focused on the effect of education on the fertility behaviour of women in Calabar Municipality. It was observed from the data collected that there is a significant relationship between a woman's level of education and fertility behaviour.

It was also discovered that there is a significant relationship between socio-economic factors and female fertility behaviour. It is on this premise that the following recommendations are put forward:

1. There is need for child spacing method as recommended by-Government to be adopted by educated women and non-educated women alike.
2. Modern spacing method should be used to achieve desired results.
3. Sex education should be introduced in schools to enhance effective use of contraceptives.
4. Education should be made free at all levels to enable all women get access to education. For this will enhance their thinking on fertility behaviour.
5. Higher standard of living goals and higher educational aspirations for children should be enhanced that will lead to having a small family. This will enable resources to be allocated to each child.

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