

A Study of Socio-Economic Status of Married Women and Its Relationship to Their Fertility

By: Linnie Landoy Layag

The main purpose of this study was to find out the relationship of fertility to (1) place of residence (2) means of livelihood and (3) socio-economic status as indicated by the variables of educational attainment, income, professional status and other SES indicators, whether separately or all together.

For statistical purposes of this study, seven null hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance.

The subjects of this study were 460 women whose ages ranged from 14 to 44 years randomly chosen from three selected towns and the city of Iloilo.

The instrument used to measure the socio-economic status of the family was section 13 and 14 of "The Family Life Interview Schedule" of the Central Philippine University Research Center, of which the investigator was a contributor in its preparation.

The entire interview schedule was administered by the investigator to randomly selected women in the barrios and poblacion of Lambunao. The other sampling areas were taken care of by two other members of the research team formed for this special study on population.

The samples were classified according to the total number of points they got on the socio-economic questionnaire.

Those who got a score of 87 and above were classified as belonging to the "High SES," those with scores from 53-86 were classified as belonging to the "Middle SES" and those having scores of 52 or lower were classified as belonging to the "Low SES."

The profile of the respondents, score for each item were converted into percentages and the mean. The standard deviations and the standard error of the mean were computed. The median was also used in the comparative study since it was found out that most data were skewed.

For measures of relationship, the *eta* coefficient of correlation was used to find out the relationship between fertility and communities classified as to major source of livelihood. An intra class coefficient of correlation was also used to determine the percentages of variance attributed to these independent variables.

For the relationship of the socio-economic variables to fertility, partial correlations were computed to find out the "real" relationship between the variables under study. Finally, multiple correlation values were also solved for to find out the combined "influence" of all the independent variables on the dependent variable.

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FINDINGS

Profile of the Respondents Number of Pregnancies and Socio- economic Status

The median pregnancies of the whole group was four. The median pregnancy of the "low SES" group was higher than the "middle SES" or "high SES" group. The median differences between the low and middle, low and high were significant at 1% level.

Number of Pregnancies and Place of Residence

Women in the sample barrios tended to have more number of children than those in towns or in Iloilo City. This was shown by the higher median pregnancy of women in the barrios as compared to those residing in either towns or Iloilo City. The median differences in the number of pregnancies between the barrios and Iloilo City were significant at 5% level.

Number of Pregnancies and Commu- nities Classified According to Major Source of Livelihood

The median pregnancies were highest in an agricultural community followed by the fishing community, semi-industrial community and service community, in that order. The difference between the medians of the agricultural and the service community was found to be significant at 5% level.

Number of Pregnancies and Educa- tional Attainment

Those respondents who had not gone through school had the highest median pregnancies, while those who were Bachelor's degree holders had the lowest median pregnancies. Median differences found to be significant at 1% level were the median differences between:

- Primary and Intermediate
- Primary and High School
- Primary and College Undergraduate

No Schooling and Bachelor's Degree
Primary and Bachelor's Degree
Intermediate and Bachelor's Degree
High School and Bachelor's Degree

The trend showed that as the educational attainment went higher, the number of pregnancies decreased.

Number of Pregnancies and Occupa- tion of the Husband

The wives of the farmers had the highest median pregnancies followed by the wives of the craftsmen and production process workers and by the wives of the fishermen. The median differences found to be significant at the 5% level were the median differences between the professional and farmers groups, between workers in transport and farmers group and also between workers in transport and craftsmen and production process workers group.

Correlation Findings

Number of Pregnancies and Place of Residence

An obtained *eta* correlation of .13 showed that the association between number of pregnancies and place of residence was significant but very low. Only .04 per cent of the variance in the number of pregnancies among the sample was attributed to the respondents' place of residence.

Number of Pregnancies and Means Community Livelihood

An *eta* correlation of 0.17 showed that the relationship between the number of pregnancies and means of community livelihood was also low but significant. The intraclass correlation of .003 means that only .3% of the total variance in the number of pregnancies among the sample could be attributed to the respondents' means of community livelihood.

Number of Pregnancies and Educational Attainment

Fertility tended to decrease as educational attainment increased. A correlation value of -0.35 was obtained even when the influence of all the other variables was controlled.

Number of Pregnancies and Income

There seemed to be no relationship between fertility and income. The correlation value of -0.06 was not significant.

Number of Pregnancies and Other SES Indicators

Fertility was not highly associated with the SES indicators like kind of house owned, subscription to books and magazines, appliances in the home, etc. The relationship, which was low and negative but significant, turned out to be no longer significant when all the effects of the other variables were controlled. The third order partial correlation value obtained was only 0.05.

Number of Pregnancies and Professional Status

Fertility was not highly associated with professional status of husband and wife. The zero order correlation of -0.12 which is low but significant, turned out to be no longer significant and lower when the influence of the other variables was controlled.

Relationship Between Fertility and Socio-Economic Status as a Whole.

The socio-economic status of the family as a whole is poorly associated with fertility. The obtained correlation coefficient was only -0.20. Although this correlation coefficient is significant, it is very low.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the above-mentioned findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The wives from the barrios tend to have more number of pregnancies than the wives in the towns and the city.
2. The wives from the agricultural

community tended to higher fertility than the wives living in a community where most people do service jobs,

3. Socio-economic status in general tended to be negative and poorly associated with fertility. The obtained coefficient of correlation of -0.20 is very low.
4. Of all the socio-economic variables selected for this study, namely, educational attainment, income, professional status and other SES indicators, education was the only variable which could be said to be significantly correlated with fertility. This correlation was inversed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since wives from the barrios tended to have higher fertility than wives in the towns and the city, it is recommended that the family planning workers should give more attention to the barrio wives. More contraceptive and medical assistance should be made available to them at minimum expense.

2. Development programs of the government should be directed towards improving the educational opportunities of the barrio people, more particularly in the agricultural communities. Changes in attitudes and values which can only be brought about by education may in the long run cause the wives to limit the number of their children.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. A replication of this study on a much wider population should be undertaken.

2. Another promising study should be longitudinal studies on the effects of improved socio-economic status on the wife's fertility.

3. Since SES can account for only 13 per cent of the variances in fertility, another study should be conducted on the other factors relating to fertility.