

ABSTRACT

Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Women's Fertility Levels in Jamaica

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In Jamaica, the total fertility rate (TFR) declined drastically from 4.5 in 1975, to 2.4 in 2008 and to below-replacement level fertility of 1.9 in 2017. This is indicative of the pace of Jamaica's movement to the advanced stage of the demographic transition, which is characterized by low fertility and mortality rates. In this research, the Second Demographic Transition (SDT) theory was used as a guide to identify appropriate predictors from the data and inform steps to discern their impact on variations in the outcome variable. This research paper examines socio-cultural factors such as, education; contraceptive use and gender-based violence (GBV); influencing women's (15–49 years) fertility levels in Jamaica, controlling for women's age. A secondary research, utilizing quantitative techniques was employed to examine and test predictor variables that impact variations in the outcome variable. A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted on data from Jamaica's 2016 Women's Health Survey (WHS). The results provide evidence that well-educated women were more likely to have lower fertility levels and were also more likely to use a contraceptive method, which essentially contributes to the overall reduction in fertility rates below replacement level. Fertility levels among female victims of GBV were estimated to be higher than observed among non-victims based on evidence from the 2016 Jamaica WHS. Among others, sustained fertility decline is usually associated with population ageing. These factors can have a profound impact on regulating population dynamics, based on population policy prescriptions.

Keywords: fertility; replacement level fertility; gender-based violence; education; contraceptive use; second demographic transition (SDT) theory, Jamaica.