

The Study of Social Factors Affecting the Tendency towards Childbearing among Young Women in Mazandaran Province

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Abstract

Fertility behavior based on stimuli, decision making process, and related attitudes can be considered as social behavior that occurs in a social environment. The general objective of this research is to investigate the social factors affecting the tendency towards childbearing among married women in Mazandaran province. The sample size of this study is 100 people who were selected by purposive and non-random sampling. The data gathering instrument was a questionnaire in which the extracted variables were from the literature review and the conceptual framework of the research. The questionnaire consisted of a questionnaire of personal information and a childbearing tendency questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha has been used to investigate the reliability of the research instrument. In order to analyze the data, the SPSS software and related tests were used. To study the tendency toward childbearing, the variables of social engagement, social acceptance, gender socialization, religiosity, fashion, and marital satisfaction have been used which are measured by Likert scale. Findings of the research show that there is a significant relationship between religious orientation, gender socialization, social acceptance, and marital satisfaction and tendency to childbearing.

Keywords: Childbearing, Tendency to childbearing, Social factors, Fashion.

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1. Statement of the Problem

The population and its related issues are multidimensional and complex issues of human societies which are influenced by economic, social, cultural, and political factors, and also they affect these factors. It can be said that the demographic issues and related changes are so widespread and dispersed that they are not overshadowed by a particular formula, but rather specific demographic movements in a particular direction, possibly in different time and space conditions would have different, various, and opposed causes. In other words, the population and its related issues as a social issue are among the issues that governments have a variety of numerous demographic policies (Ziae Bigdeli et al., 2007).

Fertility behavior based on stimuli, decision making process and related attitudes can be considered as a social behavior that occurs in a social environment. Social relations between members of a community can organize the values and norms associated with fertility behavior, which is not only related to the birth of a child, but also includes all aspects of childbearing, such as marriage, interest in parenting, and attitudes toward incentives to regulate fertility (Hosseini, 2007, 148).

At present, Iranian society is in the transition phase of the age structure from youth to old age. The increase in the growth rate of the elderly population in the coming decades has increased the burden on the elderly and has expanded their needs. Demographic developments in Iran, especially in the last three decades, have attracted the attention of experts and demographic experts (Azizian Fam, 2012). Research shows that from 1922 to 1987, we witnessed two periods of demographic changes. From 1927 to 1967, for about 40 years, the population of Iran had a 2-fold growth rate, but during 1967 to 1987, the rate of population growth accelerated, that during the twenty years the population had doubled to reach the 50 million (Statistics Center of Iran).

Statistics show that in 2011, in most provinces, total fertility was below the substitution level. While demographic policies sought to freeze the population, generally, every single woman would have to have 1/2 children to replace their parents, at least two children after the death of their parents. Considering the decline in the current fertility rate, in the next four decades, Iran will become an aging country and it will face demographic collapse from within. Undoubtedly, the continuation of the fertility rates with the current course will reduce the active population and increase the cost of aging. It should be noted that compared to other countries, the fertility rate in Iran in 2010 was lower than most Asian, European and Latin American countries (Ayatollah 2012, quoted by Mobasheri et al., 2013).

According to the World Bank, Iran's population growth rate will be below 1% by 2025 (Kalantari et al. 2010, 104-83). Also, the fertility rate in Iran dropped from 7.7 in 1971 to 6 in 1977, and then reached 7 in 1359, but this high rate period did not last long. Fertility rates ranged from 6.8 in 1363 to 5.5 in 1981.

This decline was slow until the family planning program of the government in 1990 accelerated the decline in fertility, which dropped to 2.8 in 1374 over the period of six years. In 1378 the Iranian Center of Statistics stated that the rate was 2.6 for the whole country and 1.88 and 2.39 for urban and rural areas, respectively. In this regard, in 1996, in three regions of the five regions of country, the fertility rate was below the replacement rate, and this declining trend continued until the period from 2006 to 2007 it dropped to 1.19.

In 2013, four provinces of Southern Khorasan (2.48), Sistan-Baluchestan (2.26), Kohkiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad (2.2), and Kurdistan (2.14) experienced the highest fertility rates respectively. In the rest of the provinces, the lowest fertility rates are in the provinces of Tehran (1.8), Isfahan (1.37), and Mazandaran and Markazi (1.47).

However, according to the age pyramid of the population, which is one of the determinant factors of the fertility, the population of women who are at the fertility age has ascending trend. In 1365, the population of women at the fertility age was 10.5 million, which has reached to 22 million in 139. While the number of births from 2200000 people in 1987 dropped to 1250000 in 2012, (Khadivzadeh et al., 2015).

Now, there are some questions that, in spite of the real desire of a human to have a child, what factors have led to the reduction of childbearing in Iranian society? Or what factors affect the willingness of the married women and men to childbearing? (Jean-Claude T. Scotland and Jean-Claude Shane, 1999). Therefore, any action to prevent birthrate decline among families requires an examination of the desires of women and men and its determinants. (Piltan & Rahmanian, 2016).

Understanding the areas of childbearing tendency can be important whilst increasing awareness of families and especially women at the fertility age. Childbearing caused by social, cultural, and economic factors is in deep relation with the knowledge and attitudes of women and men to the issue of childbearing (Piltan & Rahmanian, 2016). The decline of population in recent years indicates the declining birthrate, and one of the reasons for the decline in the birthrate is social factor. In this regard, considering the age of information, cyberspace is of particular importance. One of the things that can be effective in reducing the fertility rate is the advancement and development of technology (Bigdeli et al., 2007). An example of the growth of technology is the expansion of the communication industry, and particularly Internet,

which has resulted in speed and precision in works and the development of communications, making the planet a global village. Internet conveys millions of messages, a platform that influences the values, attitudes, and cultural identity of its users at the micro level and socio-cultural systems at the macro level (Shegerdi & Sayyadi, 2013).

With the advancement of these media, fluid and ambiguous period of negative consequences of the modern world and its innovative communication media are drawn for the contemporary human. Saraei et al., (2013) showed that in pre-revolutionary generations, the attitude toward marriage and the formation of a family were strong enough, it was moderate in the generation of revolution and war.

Generally, globalization could have an impact on the value of marriage in this generation (Sarari and Ojagloo, 2013).

2. Theoretical Background

A number of studies in this area and their results are mentioned:

Over the past few decades, in a research called the impact of family dimensions and changes on the fertility attitudes and behaviors, rapid changes have taken place in fertility behaviors and attitudes.

In a study named the influence of the media on the familiarity and use of contraceptives, decreased childbearing in the survey has been confirmed (Enayat and Parnian et al., 2007).

In a study named the relationship between the fertility level and the socio-economic development of different countries in the world, especially in the developing countries, we find that the higher the country's level of development, the less the birthrate and the growth of its population (Ziaei Bigdeli et al., 2007).

In a research named sociological study of the tendency to childbearing and some related factors in Tabriz city, there was a significant positive correlation between the tendency to childbearing and the social participation variable and there was no linear relationship between tendency to childbirth and social acceptance. According to the results of this research, there was a significant correlation between childbearing tendency and religious orientation (Kalantari et al. 2010).

In a research named the study of the trends and differences in fertility in Iran, urban and rural gaps in the fertility rates in many provinces were not significant (Abbasi Shawazi and Hosseini Chavoshi, 2012).

In a research named the impact of social networks on the national identity of the people of the world, virtual social networking of a lot of people around the world

interacting with each other has caused the loss of their national and religious identities (Tyler 3 2012).

In a study named investigating the relationship between innovative data communication technologies and tendency to childbearing, there is a negative and significant relationship between the new technologies of data and communication and the use of mobile and its derivatives with a tendency to childbearing (Enayat and Parnian, 2014).

In a research named study of the relationship between cultural globalization and tendency towards childbearing, among all the components of cultural globalization including new data and communication technology, attitude of gender role, awareness of contraceptives, the use of mobile and its derivatives and individualism, there is a significant and negative relationship with the tendency towards childbearing (Enayat & Parnian, 2014).

In a research named factors affecting the inclination to childbearing among women aged 15-49 referring to health centers in Jahrom city, There is a significant relationship between gender socialization and the desire to have a child (Pilten and Rahmanian, 2014).

3. Research Hypotheses

It seems that there is a relationship between fashion and childbearing tendency.

There seems to be a relationship between religious orientation and a tendency to childbearing.

It seems that there is a relationship between marital satisfaction and childbearing tendency.

It seems that there is a relationship between gender socialization and the tendency to childbearing.

It seems that there is a relationship between social participation and the tendency to childbearing.

There seems to be a relationship between social acceptance and the tendency to child-rearing.

4. Research Methodology

This study is a survey research because the main tool for collecting information is through the questionnaire of young married women in the age group of 19 to 39 years old in Mazandaran Province. The questions of the questionnaire are based on existing indicators in related theories, mainly by the researcher and some of the previous

research. In this research, 100 women from 19 to 39 years old were selected by means of Cochran's formula. 120 questionnaires were distributed in Mazandaran Province based on non-random sampling and the necessary data were collected.

4.1. Operational Definitions of Variables

Definition of concepts is used for understanding the concept with a scientific approach. In the operational definitions, the researcher seeks to identify the indices for each variable, and then the items are adjusted and the questionnaire is formulated.

4.2. Dependent Variable

Tendency is the combination of cognition, feelings, and readiness to act toward a particular thing (Karimi, 2006).

Childbearing is the tendency and desire to have a child socially and biologically among the families (Polanceter, 2010).

Tendency towards childbearing: This variable has been measured by indices such as family happiness based on the existence of the child, the only purpose of marriage is to produce a generation, to stay away from social activities due to childbearing, being away from environments full of children. The start of problems with childbirth, increase of pressure and a range of diseases with the presence of the child, the existence of a child as a sign of life, the desire to have a child under any circumstances (by surgery, etc.), the improvement of the mutual relationship of the spouses with the existence of child, and the warmth of the child in life. Table 1 describes its operational definitions.

Table 1. The operational definition of the dependent variable of the tendency to childbearing

Row	Variable	Item
1		Having a child is the help of aging years
2		Having a child entertains the family
3		Families with fewer children live more easily
4	The variables of Tendency to childbearing	Those who have more children have more power among people
5		The problems of families with fewer children are less
6		Families with more children are more satisfied with their lives
7		I think that families with fewer children are far more promising
8		I feel happy with the kid in marital life
9		The motto "less children, the better life" is perfectly correct.
10		In any case, even if I want surgery, I want to have a baby.

Table 2. The operational definitions of independent variables

Row	Level	Item
1		I work in charity organizations
2		I feel responsible for the cultural and social issues of my country
3	Social	I have been known as a participant in family planning
4	participation	I participate in associations or group activities
5		I am interested in various discussions with family, friends and colleagues
6		If my neighbor faces a problem, I'll definitely try to fix it
7		Women should ask for permission from their husbands in different matters
8		Women should ask for permission from their husbands in order to go out
9	Gender	Childbearing is more important than women's employment
10	socialization	Girls should not play boys' games
11		There is no difference between men and women
12		In the way of make-up, I would like more Western models
13		I am interested in people who are fashionable
14	Fashion	Whenever I want to make new clothes, I'm looking for the newest one
15		I tend to wear brand clothing
16		The home decoration and its accessories must be new and up-to-date
17		I feel delighted to wear a new dress every day
18		I know God observes my actions and deeds all the times
19		All actions that are performed in this world are investigated in the hereafter
20	Religiosity	Sometimes I feel regret and I ask God for help to compensate my sins
21		Whenever I go to the holy shrines, I feel a deep spiritual feeling
22		If I have earned a lot of profit, I will donate one fifth or one tenth of it
23		I have never regretted my relationship with my spouse for even a moment
24	Marital	I wish my spouse was more eager to talk with me about his/her feelings
25	satisfaction	I do not enjoy when my spouse is not with me
26		I am very pleased with how my love and feelings are expressed to my spouse
27		Childbearing is just to avoid being accused of sterility
28	Social	Having a child is very valuable
29	acceptance	Childbearing makes you the to be endeared
30		Without child my spouse divorces me
31		The appearance of my limbs is more important to me than pregnancy

4.3. Validity and Reliability of Tools

In this research, to determine the reliability of the questionnaire at the beginning of the study, 30 questionnaires were designed in accordance with the conceptual framework of the research for 30 women. In the questionnaire of the present study the Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the sections. The values, in Table 3, show that the reliability of the questionnaire is acceptable for the research.

Table 3. Cronbach's alpha for the studied scales

Row	Variables	The number of items	Cronbach's alpha
1	Social participation	6	87%
2	Gender socialization	5	73%
3	Religiosity	5	65%
4	Fashion	6	74%
5	Marital satisfaction	4	73%
6	Social acceptance	5	87%
	Tendency towards childbearing	10	72%

5. Data Analysis Method

After completing the questionnaires and coding, the data extraction was performed and transferred on the computer. After completing the data-processing, statistical analysis (descriptive and inferential) was performed using SPSS-22 software. Data analysis was performed in two sections: descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, including the following.

5.1. The Results of Descriptive and Inferential Analysis of Data

Undoubtedly, the results of the independent and dependent frequency table will sometimes answer some of the researchers' questions and will be able to analyze. It will be discussed generally in the following.

The average age of respondents in the study was about 29, and the maximum age was 39 and the minimum age was 19. For this variable, the mode was 33, and the median was 30. 83 participants (83%) were resident in the city and 16 (16%) in the village. Also, 1 person (1%) lived in both places. The number of family members of the respondents was about 3 or 4. The level of education was 9% primary, 7% guidance school, 35% high school, 19% associate degree, 27% bachelor's degree, and 3% higher literacy level than BA. 73 participants (7%) of the 100 respondents surveyed, reported their income. In this regard, the average income of respondents was 1.362.328 Tomans per month. The job of the respondents' husbands was 66 percent free, 24 percent employee, 9 percent unemployed, and 1 percent student.

The level of education of respondents is often diploma and bachelor's degree. Since most people are in the age group of 24 to 33, according to the increase in the level of education of people in the society, these statistics are reasonable. The largest age group of respondents is 29-33.

59% of the respondents have a population of three and less, that the economic condition, previous cultural advertising, parents' educational status, have influenced this number of members in the family.

Table 4. General results of correlation tests

Row	Hypothesis	First variable	Second variable	P	r	H0	H1
1	It seems that there is a relationship between modality and child-centered tendency	Fashion	Tendency to parenting	0/896	-.013	H0: r=0	H1: $-1 \leq r < 0$, $0 < r \leq +1$
2	There seems to be a relationship between religious orientation and a tendency to child-rearing.	Religiosity	Tendency to parenting	000/0	.345**	H0: r=0	H1: $-1 \leq r < 0$, $0 < r \leq +1$
3	It seems that there is a relationship between marital satisfaction and parenting tendency	Marital satisfaction	Tendency to parenting	0/016	.670*	H0: r=0	H1: $-1 \leq r < 0$, $0 < r \leq +1$
4	It seems that there is a relationship between gender socialization and a tendency to child-rearing.	Gender socialization	Tendency to parenting	0/006	.273**	H0: r=0	H1: $-1 \leq r < 0$, $0 < r \leq +1$
5	It seems that there is a relationship between social participation and the tendency to child-rearing	Social participation	Tendency to parenting	0/697	.039	H0: r=0	H1: $-1 \leq r < 0$, $0 < r \leq +1$
6	There seems to be a relationship between social acceptance and the tendency to child-rearing	Social acceptance	Tendency to parenting	0/001	.528**	H0: r=0	H1: $-1 \leq r < 0$, $0 < r \leq +1$

6. Findings

The findings of present study is in line with the study carried out by Parnian & Enayat (1392) which showed that there is a negative and significant relationship between the new technologies of data and communication and the use of mobile and its related devices with the tendency to childbearing, as well as with the study of Ghorbani (1395), Social networking and tendency to childbearing among students of Mashhad University of medical sciences and Ferdowsi, which showed that the use of virtual social networks has not affected the decline in the tendency towards fertility. However, based on Kalantari et al. (2005) and Ruidiran et al. (2006), there is no significant relationship between the use of media and fertility behavior.

There is a direct relationship between religiosity and tendency to childbearing. Kerrez and White believed that cultural factors have led to a dramatic drop in fertility and documented the reasons for it in the modern ways of worldly life. They believe that the shift of values and culture from two directions, family movement from family-

orientation to childbearing, and the other moving from religious affiliation to secularism guarantees the reducing fertility. Perhaps the results of this research could be confirmed. The results of this study are similar to those of Kalantari et al. in Tabriz. In the theoretical debates, Davis and Blake also emphasize that religion has an impact on fertility within the determinants of socio-economic structure. Because religious affiliation acts and influences through the norms related to the size of the family, the number of children, and so on. The results of this study contradict the ideas of Peterson, but reinforce Goldscheider's ideas. Since the religious issues are accessible to public both culturally and politically in the Iranian society and awareness and tendency to religion is the characteristic feature of the Iranian society, most of the respondents are with strong religiosity. The present research is in line with research by Rad and Savabi that showed that religious beliefs are the most important factors in the tendency towards childbearing.

In the present study, based on statistical results, it was revealed that by increasing the level of activism in virtual social networks, the tendency to childbearing also increases. The results of this study were not consistent with the study by Mazinani (2013), Kerser et al. (2009), Mansiski et al. (2003), and Sarayi et al. (2013).

The study by Mazinani (2013) showed that the more active the users (activists) of virtual social network are, the weaker their religious identities become. The more inactive they are, the more authentic religious identity they have, because religion has a positive and direct relationship with fertility and the value of marriage, and as a result, decrease in religiousness and religious identity will reduce the tendency to marriage and fertility.

7. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, every human being, especially Iranian people, tends to have a child. Therefore, in recent years, many people who were born in the early years of the revolution with regard to the incentive policies of birthrate have already reached the age of marriage and fertility. If conditions of employment with decent salaries and housing are considered for them, this would be synonymous with the formation of the family and the increase in fertility and the growth of population in near future. As a result, a massive increase in population based on this analysis will not be without difficulty and its implications should not be ignored. However, recalling that childbearing is one of the major currents of the population that plays a significant role in the process of economic and social development. On the other hand, the results of this research are effective in childbearing tendencies to various influential variables

such as religiosity, gender socialization, marital satisfaction, and social acceptance. (Palinton & Rahmanian, 2015)

Although the level of fertility in Iran has not yet reached a very worrisome level, as in some European countries, it is essential to formulate long-term solutions to maintain child-rearing levels at a moderate level, at least an alternative level. This approach will not be realized unless it focuses on planning, policy makings, and demographic interventions on the most important factors affecting childbearing, which were explored in this study.

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