

Title Status of Women, Socio-Demographic
Characteristics and Fertility
Preference in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of status of women and selected socio-demographic characteristics on fertility preference in Indonesia. Specifically, this study aims to identify individual level determinants of desired family size, to identify status of women indicators that influence desired family size and to determine the relationship between women's status indicators and desired family size controlling for selected individual characteristics or socio-demographic characteristic of women in reproductive age such as actual number of children, age, age at first marriage, education, occupation, religion, and residence.

This study utilized data from the Indonesian Demographic and Health Survey (IDHS), which was conducted in May 1991 and

was completed in July 1991. The sample included urban and rural areas from 27 provinces of three regions of the country. The sample size was 22,909 ever-married women in reproductive ages (15-49 years old). Bivariate and multivariate analysis of desired family size was focused on quantitative responses.

All socio-demographic characteristics of women, with the exception of religion, have a significant bivariate relationship with desired family size. Number of living children, age of women, and non-agricultural occupation, have positive relationship with desired family size. Meanwhile, age at marriage, agricultural occupation, education and residence have negative relationship with desired family size. All women's status determinants were also significant and have negative bivariate relationships with desired family size. However, after controlling for socio-demographic or individual characteristics of women, joint decision making became not significant. The most important variables affecting desired family size are the number of living children, percentage of women in the province with non-agricultural job, percentage of highly educated women in the province level, and high education of individual women.

In multivariate analysis, most of the individual variables with the exception age of women and age at marriage have the same direction as in the bivariate relationships. Most of the variables exhibited a negative effect on desired

family size, but for number of living children, age at first marriage, and work in non-agricultural occupation exhibited a positive effect. The magnitude of relationship for socio-demographic variables such as number of living children, age, age at first marriage, agricultural occupation, and non-agricultural occupation decreased, but for education and religion the magnitude of relationships increased. The magnitude of relationship between the percentage of highly educated women in the province remained the same in both bivariate and multivariate analysis. However, the strength of the relationship between desired family size and the percentage of women in the province level with non-agricultural job decreased. The changes in direction and magnitude of relationships are attributed to the influence of adding other variables as controls in accounting for the relationships between variables.

This study revealed that women's status at the province level has significant effect on desired family size net of individual level predictors. Hence, improvement of the status of women may bring down fertility and population growth through its effect on desired family size. Future efforts to control the population growth should, therefore, focus on the fertility preference of women and the education and modern sector employment opportunities for women at the province level.