Factors influencing fertility desires among married men in rural areas of Tanzania: Evidence from the Tanzania Demographic Health Survey report (TDHS)-2022

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ABSTRACT

In Tanzania, high fertility rates continue to be a major significant obstacle to family welfare, public health, and socioeconomic growth, especially in rural areas, where currently married men still strongly desire large families. Understanding the determinants is essential for designing strategies to address the situation; research on specific drivers in rural areas is limited. This study aimed to assess the factors influencing fertility desires among married men in rural areas of Tanzania. Specifically, the study examines the prevalence of fertility desires among married men and explores the drivers of higher fertility rates in rural Tanzania. The study was guided by Becker's economic theory of fertility. The study employed a cross-sectional research design using the 2022 Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) report data. A total of 3961 cases were analyzed to answer the study's questions. Both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were used. The findings indicated that the fertility rate among married men in rural Tanzania is higher than among their urban counterparts. Such a high rate implies, among other effects, distorted family economic welfare, limited parental care leading to moral decay, increased maternal and child health problems, and greater pressure and depletion of resources. Men's desire for children is influenced by several factors, including age, education, knowledge of contraception, ideal number of children, number of living children, marital status, frequency of newspaper reading, and wealth index. Given the observed scenario, the study recommends that the government and non-governmental sectors establish comprehensive efforts to promote family planning and reproductive health for better utilization of available resources, encourage couple-based counseling at health facilities, and promote male contraceptive methods such as condoms and vasectomy.

Keywords: Family Size, Fertility Desire, Married Men, Rural Areas, Tanzania

I. INTRODUCTION

The growing rate of fertility is a global problem that affects not only household concerns but also costs governments and economies in terms of social services and allocation of resources (Fraser, 2020; Café et al., 2017; Bueno, & Pardo, 2023). International figures show that over 7 billion inhabitants on Earth, with over half in Asia and nearly one-quarter in Africa (Statista, 2024). Combined, Asia and Africa make up about 77% of the global total (Esteve et al. 2024; Worldometer, 2025). The projected population in the world in 2050 will reach about 11 billion people on the earth if the current growth rate continues (Worldostats, 2025). In Asia, the population is substantially decreasing while in sub-Saharan Africa maintains the highest growth rate (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), (2023); Statista, 2024). The annual growth in Africa is 2.32 compared to less than one (1) in Asia, Caribbean and Europe. Reproductive rate is noted as the primary factor of population growth with Africa leading the world at 4.015 while other regions remain below 2 (Robards, 2022; Worldometer, 2025). Despite a reduction from 5.16 in 2012 to 4.53 in 2022, this figure is still notably high, positioning the area as a primary source of Africa's inhabitants. East African nations are highlighted in sub-Saharan Africa for rates above 4, coupled with 2.6% annual growth and comprising 6.15% of the continent's total. Additional areas encompass West Africa and Central Africa.

Many strategies have been used in Tanzania to reduce high rates of reproduction particularly in rural areas where they are high fertility is prevalent. However, many programs focus on women while ignoring men's role in domestic reproductive decision (United States Agency for International Development [USAID], 2021; Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly, and Children [MoHCDGEC], 2021; World Bank, 2023). Investigations demonstrate that reproductive decisions tend to be more male-influenced than female (Osuafor et al, 2023; Kiani et al, 2024). Ignoring their involvement reduces potential impact and could leave the matter unresolved. Determining the drivers of children desire among married men is essential for planning and developing preventive measures. This study intends to determine the factors influencing married men to desire more children in Tanzania's rural areas and their effects for household prosperity

1.1 Statement of the Problem

All over the world, men's fertility preference continues to shape the reproductive outcomes and family size. Recent evidence highlights that femininities and gender role attitudes strongly influence reproductive health with men often desiring more children than women, that reinforce gender power dynamics in household decision making (Brennan-Wilson et al., 2024; De Jong et al., 2024). In Latin America, while fertility has declined overall rural communities still exhibit strong male driven desires for large families. Research shows that traditional gender role attitudes sustain fertility ideals particularly in rural areas in which agricultural labour and cultural traditions reinforce men preference for large families (Bueno & Pardo, 2023). The findings underscore the global and Latin American challenge of aligning men's fertility preferences with sustainable family planning goals.

In Asia, male-controlled norms and cultural expectations continue to drive men's desire. Evidence from longitudinal studies across 28 Asian and African populations demonstrated that men's fertility preferences significantly predict subsequent childbearing often perpetuating high fertility rates despite women's growing interest in smaller family size (Cleland et al., 2023). Across Africa, fertility desire remains markedly higher than in other regions. According to Church et al., (2023) portrays that tradition supports like cultural norms, lineage continuation and agricultural labour needs sustains high fertility desire among men, while contemporary disrupters like education and family planning programs struggle to reduce them.

In east Africa, men's fertility preferences are closely tied to cultural expectations of masculinity, social prestige and economic security. Studies in Kenya and Uganda show that men's desire for large families often hinders progress towards family planning goals and exacerbates resource constraints in rural settings (Namasivayam et al., 2024). In Tanzania, disparities between men's and women fertility preferences remain a pressing issue. Experimental evidence from rural Tanzania demonstrates that men's stronger desire for more children combined with gender intra household bargaining power, significantly influences household fertility outcomes, undermining family welfare and sustainable development (Herrera Almanza & McCarthy, 2025). Addressing these disparities is essential for aligning reproductive health policies with community realities and achieving sustainable development in rural Tanzania

1.2 Research Objective

The study focuses on the factors influencing fertility desire among married men in rural areas of Tanzania. The objective highlights the interplay between personal characteristics, community norms and economic realities in determining fertility preferences among married men in rural areas of Tanzania

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Becker's Economic Theory of Fertility

The study is guided by the Economic Theory of fertility. The Economic Theory of Fertility was introduced by the American economist Becker, S.G., in 1960. The theory portrays that fertility decisions are not purely biological but are shaped by economic reasoning, where families weigh the cost of raising children against the perceived benefits. The core idea is that children can be viewed as both "consumption goods" by providing emotional satisfaction and "investment goods" in which children are regarded as offering economic returns such as labour or old age support. The theory has been used by different scholars. In an agrarian household, fertility preferences are influenced by intra-household bargaining power and economic value of children, Herrera-Almanza and McCarthy (2025). Similarly, Onofri et al., (2026) used Becker's ideas in Latin America to determine fertility decline linked to cohort dynamics, education and economic constraints, yet traditional gender roles still sustain higher fertility ideals among men. The theory is relevant in Tanzania context as it explains the reasons why rural married men continue to desire large families despite economic challenges, children are seen as economic assets and social status. This makes the theory a strong foundation for analyzing fertility desires and designing male inclusive family planning policies

2.2 Empirical Review

Several studies have been conducted across the world about fertility desire among married men with different findings. Fertility desire is shaped by socioeconomic development, cultural and gender dynamics. While fertility rates have declined globally, men's reproductive preference often remains higher than women's reflecting traditional expectations of masculinity, family continuity and economic utility of children (United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), 2025). In Europe, despite persistently of low rates, gaps remain between intended and realized family size with men frequently desiring more children than achieved due to structural and socioeconomic barriers such as employment insecurity and delayed marriage (Friedrich & Bujard, 2024,2025)

In Latin America, fertility has declined with rates falling below replacement level since 2015. The decline is largely driven by younger, less educated women, yet traditional gender role attitude continues to sustain higher fertility ideals among men, showing a tension between demographic transition and cultural persistence (Bueno and Pardo, 2023;

ECLAC, 2025; Onofri et al., 2026). In Asia, cultural norms remain influential, as seen in India where younger married men express stronger fertility desire compared to older cohorts, reflecting the role of children in demonstrating social status (Chauhan et al., 2021). Broader analysis link fertility preferences to rising infertility burdens and socioeconomic constraints, highlighting how biological and economic realities reshape reproductive intentions (Maqsood et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2025)

Moreover, Africa presents a contrasting picture with persistently high fertility desires among men particularly in rural settings. Studies in Niger and Ethiopia emphasize the roles of socioeconomic status and male involvement in family planning for shaping fertility intentions (Ahinkorah et al., 2021; Assefa et al., 2021). Evidence from Kenya reveal that education and income are key determinants of fertility preferences among young married men (Wangari, 2020). The findings collectively suggest that African men's fertility desire are strongly influenced by cultural norms, economic utility of children among agricultural economies and limited access to family planning service.

Furthermore, in rural areas of Tanzania fertility desire among married men is strong with children valued as both economic assets and symbols of social status. Evidence reveals that intra household bargaining power strongly shapes reproductive outcomes with men often exerting greater influence over family size decisions (Herrera-Almanza, & McCarthy, 2025). This shows the importance of considering male perception of reproductive health interventions, as male centered preferences significantly affect household wellbeing and resource allocation

Despite these insights, existing research focus on how cultural norms and socioeconomic pressures shapes men's children desires in various areas leaving the rural areas of African context unexplored. The gap highlights the need for localized studies in Tanzania that center male reproductive preferences providing evidence for male inclusive family planning interventions and policies

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Design

The study employed a cross-sectional research design, using data from the Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey [TDHS]) 2022 report. The design captures information at a single point in time, allowing analysis of associations between socioeconomic factors (such as age, education, wealth index and occupation) and married men's desire for children in Tanzania. The design is effective for identifying correlations and providing nationally representative evidence while it does not establish causal relationships. This represents the seventh Tanzanian DHS examination under the DHS initiative: the 2022 Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey and Malaria Indicator Survey [TDHS-MIS, 2022]. Information collection occurred from February to July 2022. The research covered the entire Tanzanian mainland and Zanzibar. Datasets were acquired via the DHS program at https://www.dhsprogram.com.

3.2 The Study Population and Sample Size

The focus group included males aged 18 to 55. From the dataset, pulled from men's personal recode files (TZBR81DT), 32817 persons aged 18-55 were picked. This analysis incorporated males responding to the query on additional children preference (mv605), resulting in 3961 respondents.

3.3 Sampling Design

The 2022 TDHS-MIS sampling involved two stages to generate estimates for the nation, Zanzibar, and mainland urban/rural areas. First, clusters were selected from enumeration areas (EAs) defined in the 2012 Tanzania Population and Housing Census (PHC). In all, 629 clusters were chosen: 418 rural and 211 urban. The second stage selected 26 households systematically per cluster, aiming for 16,354 households. This yielded a probability sample of 40394 males aged 18-55, from which 32817 were utilized.

3.4 Study Population and Sample Size

The study population comprised men aged 18–55 years. From the men's recode file (TZBR81DT), a total of 32,817 men were identified. The final analytical sample included 3,961 married men who responded to the question on fertility preference (mv605).

3.5 Sampling Design

The 2022 TDHS-MIS employed a two-stage stratified sampling design. In the first stage, 629 enumeration areas (EAs) were selected from the 2012 Tanzania Population and Housing Census, including 418 rural and 211 urban clusters. In the second stage, 26 households were systematically selected from each cluster, yielding a total sample of 16,354 households. This design ensured nationally representative estimates for urban and rural areas.

3.6 Variables

3.6.1 Dependent Variable

The outcome variable was men's desire for additional children, derived from responses to fertility preference questions. Responses were recoded into a binary variable; 1 desires more children and 0 = does not desire more children

3.6.2 Independent Variables

Following literature examination, the study incorporated categorical predictors like age, education attainment, wealth category, residence type, preferred children number, partnership status, living children count, contraception awareness, and radio exposure frequency.

3.7 Data Analysis

In this study, initially the analysis began with a descriptive review of participants' characteristics, followed by bivariate assessment to examine associations between predictor variables and fertility desire. Factors that demonstrated statistical significance in the bivariate stage were subsequently incorporated into a multivariate logistic regression model to evaluate their relative contribution to married men's preference for additional children. Logistic regression was used as the analytical approach because the dependent variable was dichotomous, distinguishing between those expressed a desire for children and those who did not. Specifically, the outcome variable was coded as $y = 1$ for men who desired more children and $y = 0$ for those who did not. This model provided estimates of likelihood that a married man would express fertility desire based on the identified predictors. To enhance clarity and interpretation, the results were presented in both figures and tables. All data processing and statistical analysis were conducted using Stata version 16, which offered robust tools for managing the regression procedures and generating the outputs.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Prevalence of Fertility Desires Among Married Men

Findings (Figure 1) reveal that household establishment rates among married males in rural Tanzania reach 69.03%, far exceeding the 30.07% in urban settings. This exceeds the 44% average reproductive rate in developed nations (Cheng et al., 2022). Additional scrutiny shows an 86.7% rate in male-directed households, indicating children's importance in economic roles like farming and cultural continuity common in rural environments (Odusina et al., 2020; Church et al., 2023). Comparisons by household leadership gender and partnership type indicate male-directed households and wedded males favor larger families over female-directed or cohabiting males. This highlights wedded males' and male-directed households' substantial control over family scale (Osuafor et al., 2023; Kiani et al., 2024; Ling & Tong, 2017; Menashe et al., 2023; Saya et al., 2021). These insights collectively demonstrate markedly high reproductive rates among partnered rural males, influenced by socioeconomic and cultural factors.

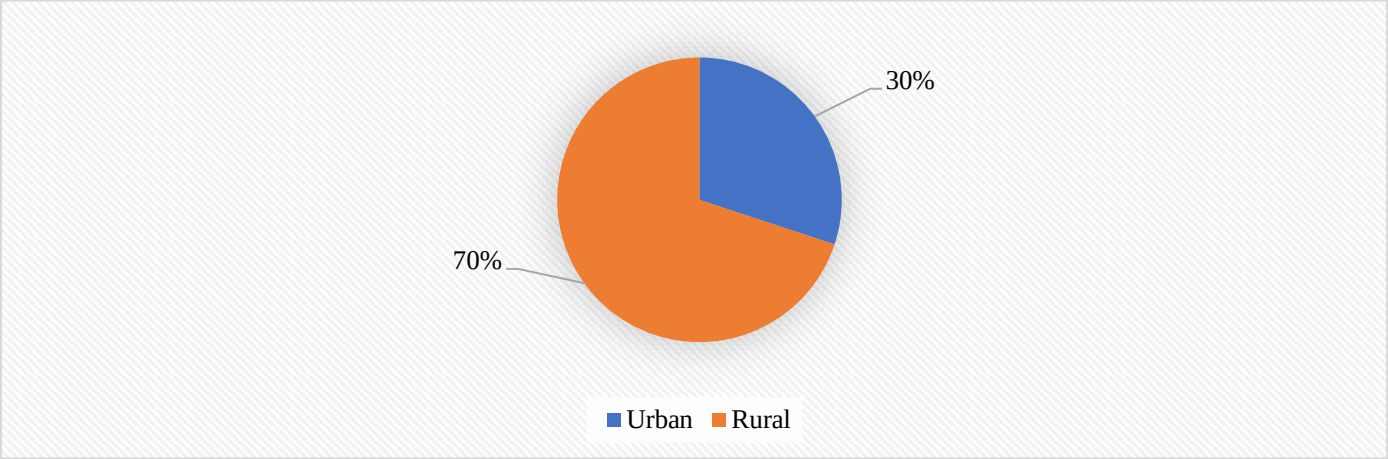

Figure 1: *Fertility Desire in rural and Urban Areas of Tanzania*
Source: TDHS-2022

4.1.2 Socio-Demographic Factors Associated with Fertility Desire Among Married Men in Rural Areas of Tanzania

Table 1 shows the association between the desire for more children (dependent variable) and the independent variables used in this study in which several demographic and media related factors are statistically significantly associated with children desire ($p < 0.05$). Independent variables that were statistically significant and associated with

the desire for more children at the 5% level of significance were age, education, use of a contraceptive, the ideal number of children, number of living children, frequency of listening to radio, frequency of watching television, frequency of reading a newspaper or magazine, wealth index combined, frequency of using the internet, meanwhile, the place of residence was not significantly associated with the desire for more children. Young men aged 15-24 and respondents with no living children are considerably more likely to express a desire for children compared to older individual and those already have children

Moreover, marital status shows a strong association whereby respondents who never married reported to desire children compared to married and cohabiting individuals who reported no desire reflecting being completed or near to completed family size demand. Furthermore, respondents who reported a higher ideal number of children (six or more) were less to express current desire which suggest that they have achieved or are nearly achieving their preferred family size. Media exposure variables including listening to radio, reading newspaper, watching television, and internet use are also significantly related to fertility desire, with more frequent exposure to media generally associated with a slightly lower desire children due to increased awareness, access to information about family planning or shifting life style.

In contrast, place of residence does not show a statistical significant association with desire for children ($p > 0.05$). The pattern of responses is relatively similar between urban and rural residents, suggesting that fertility desire in this context is not strongly differentiated by residential location.

Table 1: *Description of Socio-Demographic Factors Associated with Children's Desire Among Married Men of Rural Areas of Tanzania*

Variable	Category	Yes n (%)	No n (%)	Total n (%)	Chi square value (χ^2)	P-value
Age	15–24	1,126 (28.3)	211 (5.3)	1,337 (33.75)	1286.34	<0.001
	25–34	181 (4.57)	932 (23.53)	1,113 (28.1)		
	35–49	499 (12.60)	1,012 (25.55)	1,511 (38.15)		
Education Level	Preschool/Early childhood	166 (4.19)	267 (6.7)	433 (10.93)	68.63	<0.001
	Primary	878 (22.16)	1,221 (30.83)	2,099 (52.99)		
	Secondary	721 (18.20)	597 (15.07)	1,318 (33.27)		
	Higher	41 (1.04)	70 (1.76)	111 (2.8)		
Wealth Index	Poorest	240 (6.06)	373 (9.42)	613 (15.48)	25.49	<0.001
	Poorer	305 (7.70)	410 (10.35)	715 (18.05)		
	Middle	413 (10.43)	429 (10.83)	842 (21.26)		
	Richer	405 (10.22)	507 (12.80)	912 (23.02)		
	Richest	443 (11.18)	436 (11.01)	879 (22.19)		
Place of Residence	Urban	568 (14.34)	623 (15.7)	1,191 (30.07)	2.9	0.082
	Rural	1,238 (31.25)	1,532 (38.68)	2,770 (69.93)		
Ideal Number of Children	0–3	521 (13.15)	273 (6.89)	794 (20.04)	213.99	<0.001
	4–5	681 (17.19)	746 (18.84)	1,427 (36.03)		
	6+	604 (15.25)	1,136 (28.68)	1,740 (43.93)		
Marital Status	Never in union	1,188 (29.99)	0 (0.00)	1,188 (29.99)	2029.75	<0.001
	Married	561 (14.16)	1,871 (47.24)	2,432 (61.4)		
	Living with partner	57 (1.44)	284 (7.17)	341 (8.61)		
Number of Living Children	0	1,208 (30.50)	160 (4.04)	1,368 (34.54)	1651.53	<0.001
	1–3	191 (4.82)	1,224 (30.90)	1,415 (35.72)		
	4+	407 (10.28)	771 (19.46)	1,178 (29.74)		
Contraceptive Knowledge	Knows no method	240 (6.06)	44 (1.11)	284 (7.17)	195.27	<0.001
	Knows only folkloric method	0 (0.00)	1 (0.03)	1 (0.03)		
	Knows only traditional	8 (0.20)	1 (0.03)	9 (0.23)		
	Knows modern	1,558 (39.33)	2,109 (53.24)	3,667 (92.58)		

Frequency of Listening to Radio	Not at all	489 (12.35)	440 (11.11)	929 (23.46)	39.34	<0.001
	Less than once a week	568 (14.34)	620 (15.65)	1,188 (29.99)		
	At least once a week	749 (18.91)	1,095 (27.64)	1,844 (46.55)		
Frequency of Reading Newspaper	Not at all	1,204 (30.40)	1,350 (34.08)	2,554 (64.48)	7.57	<0.023
	Less than once a week	339 (8.56)	436 (11.01)	775 (19.57)		
	At least once a week	263 (6.64)	369 (9.32)	632 (15.96)		
Frequency of Watching Television	Not at all	490 (12.37)	510 (12.88)	1,000 (25.25)	6.29	<0.043
	Less than once a week	572 (14.44)	709 (17.90)	1,281 (32.34)		
	At least once a week	744 (18.78)	936 (23.63)	1,680 (42.41)		
Frequency of Using Internet (Last Month)	Not at all	1,492 (37.67)	1,629 (41.13)	3,121 (78.79)	30.32	<0.001
	Less than once a week	24 (0.61)	53 (1.34)	77 (1.94)		
	At least once a week	92 (2.32)	151 (3.81)	243 (6.13)		
	Almost every day	198 (5.00)	322 (8.13)	520 (13.13)		

Source: TDHS-2022

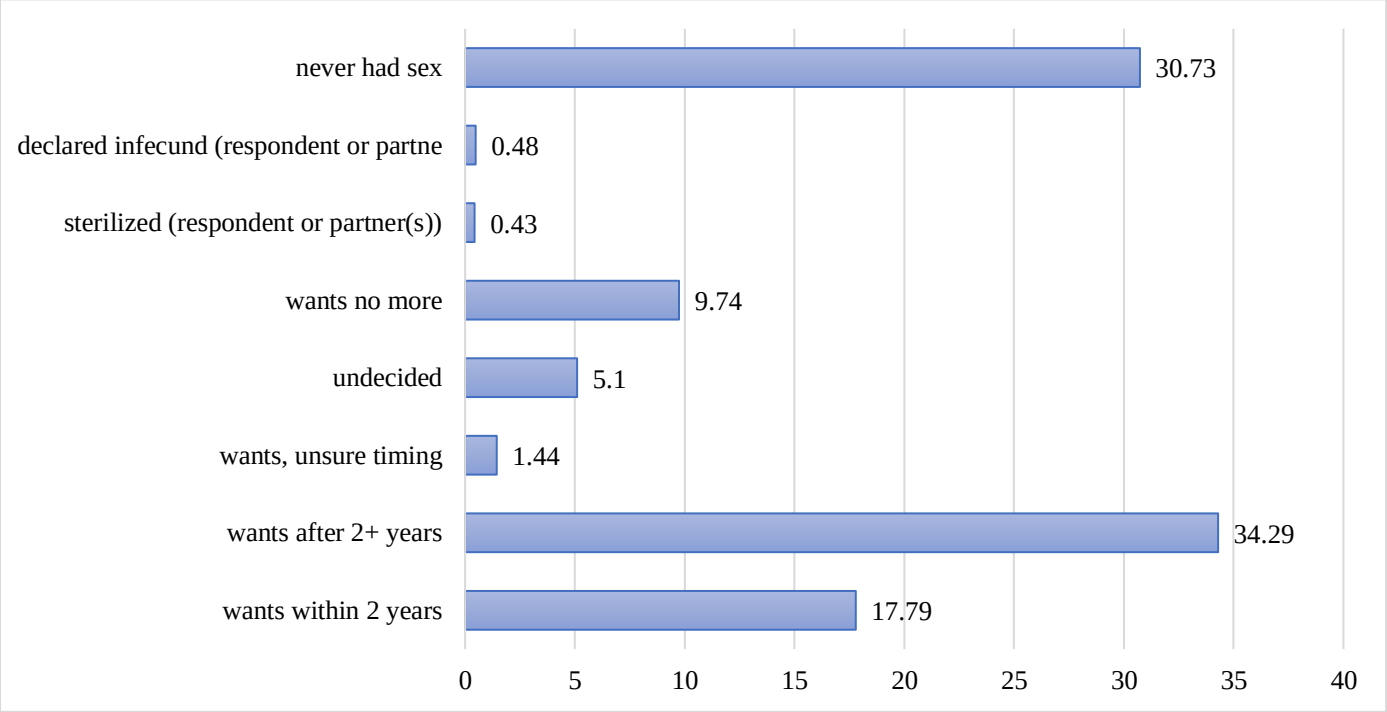

Figure 2: *Distribution of Participants*

4.1.3 Socio-Demographic Factors Influencing Fertility Desires

Multivariate logistic regression outcomes for predictors of additional children preference among males appear in Table 2. Regarding age, 35-45-year-olds (OR:0.399, 95% CI: 0.236-0.67888, p<0.0001) exhibited lower chances of preferring more children than 15-24-year-olds. Secondary-educated males (OR:2.0756, 95% CI:1.37957-3.12301, p<0.0001) showed higher chances versus uneducated or advanced-educated. Middle and rich wealth groups (OR:0.70238,95% CI: 0.50268 – 0.98141, p<0.0001) and (OR:0.57789, 95% CI: 0.38364-0.87049, p<0.0001) had elevated chances compared to poor and richer. Males deeming 4-5 (OR: 1.54058; 95% CI: 1.14962 – 2.06449, p<0.0001) and 6+ (OR: 4.55803; 95% CI: 3.33386-6.23172, p<0.0001) ideal had higher chances than 1-3. Wedded males (OR:0.66508; 95% CI: 0.47806 – 0.962526, p<0.015) had increased chances over cohabiting or unmarried. Those with 4+ living children (OR:0.27828; 95% CI: 0.15996-0.48412, p<0.0001) had reduced chances versus none or 1-3. For contraception awareness, modern method knowers (OR:0.36862; 95% CI: 0.14429-0.94169; p<0.037) had lower chances than no-knowledge or traditional. Males reading newspapers less than weekly (OR: 1.317171; 95% CI: 1.00505-1.726222, p<0.046) had decreased chances versus non-readers or weekly.

Table 2: *Multivariate Logistic Regression for Men's Children's Desire in Rural Areas of Tanzania*

Variable & category	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	z	P>z	95% Confidence	Interval
Age						
15-24	Reference					
25-34	1.04003	0.27975	0.15	0.884	0.6138865	1.761983
35-49	0.39990	0.10738	-3.41	0.001	0.236261	0.6768857
Education level						
No education	Reference					
Primary	1.03572	0.16250	0.22	0.823	0.7615393	1.408605
Secondary	2.07568	0.43263	3.5	<0.001	1.379576	3.123011
Higher	1.55537	0.55081	1.25	0.212	0.7769539	3.113662
Wealth index						
Poor	Reference					
Middle	0.70238	0.11988	2.07	0.038	0.5026835	0.9814177
Richer	0.88378	0.15871	-0.69	0.491	0.6215639	1.25663
Richest	0.57789	0.12079	-2.62	0.009	0.3836455	0.8704897
The ideal number of children						
0-3	Reference					
4-5	1.54059	0.23009	2.89	0.004	1.149629	2.064494
6+	4.55804	0.72735	9.51	0	3.333861	6.231722
Marital Status						
Never in union	Reference					
Married	0.66508	0.11204	-2.42	0.015	0.4780673	0.9252625
Living with partner	1	(omitted)				
Number of living children						
0	Reference					
1-3	1.09027	0.29230	0.32	0.747	0.6446608	1.843911
4+	0.27829	0.07862	-4.53	<0.001	0.1599641	0.4841285
Contraceptive Knowledge						
Knows no method	Reference					
Knows only folkloric	1					
Knows modern	0.36863	0.17640	-2.09	0.037	0.1442984	0.9416968
Frequency of listening to radio						
less than once a week	Reference					
At least once a week	0.86594	0.13116	0.95	0.342	0.6435145	1.165248
Frequency of reading newspapers						
Less than once a week	Reference					
At least once a week	1.48321	0.22088	2.65	0.008	1.107749	1.985942
Frequency of watching television						
less than once a week	Reference					
At least once a week	0.83603	0.12989	1.15	0.249	0.6165574	1.133614
Frequency of using internet last month						
Less than once a week	Reference					
At least once a week	1.02695	0.22757	0.12	0.904	0.6651583	1.585533
Almost every day	1.09770	0.20767	0.49	0.622	0.7576292	1.590428
_ons	18.01693	10.67557	4.88	0	5.640515	57.54969

Source: TDHS-2022

4.2 Discussion

Study results indicate that younger males have substantially higher probabilities of preferring more children than older males. This aligns with Chauhan et al. (2021) in India, where over 54% of young married males (20-29) sought at least one more, versus 22% and 5% for 30-39 and 40-49. However, male reproductive capacity decreases with age, and patterns shift later with spans shortening. Results suggest rural Tanzanian cultural norms value large families, especially among young males who demonstrate virility and status through children. Additionally, higher- educated males showed greater preferences, consistent with Nisén et al. (2018) in Finland, where advanced education and favorable life traits correlated with more children. This implies educated rural males may uphold traditional large- family ideals as status or cultural symbols. Moreover, middle- and richer-wealth males had higher preferences than poor or richest, suggesting affordability boosts preferences, with middle/rich viewing children as economic helpers in activities like agriculture, unlike salaried richest (Maina, 2017, Ololade, et al. 2023). Furthermore, males considering 4-5 and 6 + ideal had higher preferences than 1-3, similar to Odusina, et al. (2020) and Paudel, et al. (2018), where males preferred more than partners (7. 7.2 vs. 6. 1 average), and polygamous males favored larger. Reasons might include seeing children as economic assets in agrarian rural Tanzania for labor, reinforcing large- family desires despite strains. Also, married males had higher preferences than cohabiting or unmarried, aligning with Odusina et al. (2020), Matovu et al. (2017), and Church et al. (2023), where husbands preferred more, and polygyny linked to high preferences for size/composition. This indicates married males' relationship stability encourages large families, while cohabiting males are more cautious due to lesser commitment. Males with 4 + living children had low preferences versus fewer, suggesting constraints limit further desires, opposing Mashara, (2016) in Kenya, where living children (sons) increased preferences. Results showed modern method knowledge tied to lower preferences versus none or traditional, matching Ololade et al. (2023), Bishwajit (2017) and Assefa et al. (2016), where awareness reduced preferences through planning acceptance, education, and services. Opposing Mwaisaka et al. (2020) in Kenya, where knowledge failed to lower preferences due to cultural/family pressures and method misconceptions.

The study shows males reading newspapers less than weekly had significantly lower preferences than non-readers or weekly, consistent with Dewi et al. (2018) in Indonesia, where media (newspapers) exposure decreased preferences. This implies less frequent reading exposes challenging content promoting smaller families over non-reading.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

In Tanzania rural areas, the study findings reveal that married men have significant reproductive preferences. According to the results, male reproductive choice is influenced by a number of factors including; age, education, usage of contraception, ideal number of children, number of living children, media effect and wealth index. Based on the size and family preferences of rural families, the results emphasize the need for provision of reproductive health education and family planning. Furthermore, results suggest the development of awareness campaigns about gender balance, reproductive health and the importance of planning especially in rural areas; resource distribution to Tanzania's high reproductive rural areas that lack planning including hiring population planning experts at the management levels. The study enhances theories on behavior, notably socioeconomic, financial, and cultural influences on reproductive preferences and choices among rural married males in Tanzania.

5.2 Recommendations

The study suggests that health initiatives monitor media (radio and digital) to ensure proper planning, distribution and inform communities and couples about the advantages of contraception for intended family planning. The emphasis is on preference of more children but it might not full address factors related to unplanned pregnancy that also affects the fertility scale. It provides a time specific population perspective devoid of causality based on cross-sectional data.

Declaration of Interest

The authors declare that they do not have any known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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