**Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE)**

**Caribbean Studies School**

**Based Assessment**

***HEALTH***



***“An investigation into the various factors that have led to the decline in the fertility rate amongst young adults and how it affects their socio-economic well-being in the Community of Mannings Hill Road, St. Andrew, Jamaica.”***

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# Introduction

**Topic: Health**

**Research Problem:**

***“An investigation into the various factors that have led to the decline in the fertility rate amongst young adults and how it affects their socio-economic well-being in the Community of Mannings Hill Road, St. Andrew, Jamaica.”***

**Objectives:**

1. To ascertain the main cause(s) of the decline in fertility rate amongst young adults in the Community of Mannings Hill Road, St. Andrew, Jamaica.
2. To assess the implications of governmental assistance in maintaining the fertility in the Community of Mannings Hill Road, St. Andrew, Jamaica.
3. To what extent does the decline in the fertility rate affect the socio-economic well-being, of young adults in the Community of Mannings Hill Road, St. Andrew Jamaica?

**Purpose of the Research:**

Mannings Hill Road is a Community that is found in St. Andrew, Jamaica. There has been a gradual decline in fertility rate in the Community. Acquiring knowledge about exactly why this is happening can give meaningful insights into why this is occurring and how it can also affect the socio-economic well- being of young adults living in the Community. It is for this reason why the researcher has decided to focus her Caribbean Studies School Based Assessment (SBA) ; on the topic fertility management.

**Statement of the Problem:**

The decline in the fertility rate amongst several countries is a world - wide phenomena and Jamaica is no exception to this. The Community of Mannings Hill Road throughout the years has developed in terms of opportunities for work, places of residence, income generation, , and education. This has greatly influenced when couples want to have children and how many they want in the Community.

There are several factors that have led to the decline in fertility rate: improved standards of living, inflation, the need for higher education and infertility.

The aim of this research project is to find out if there is a direct correlation between the decline in fertility rate in Jamaica and the decline in fertility rate in the Community of Mannings Hill Road.

**Educational Value:**

It is hoped that a research of this nature will generate awareness amongst the necessary stakeholders in paying careful attention to fertility management, so as to maintain, the population birthrate at a standard rate, which will no doubt impact the human resource capital and potential and ultimately the development of the country. The Community of Mannings Road, St. Andrew, Jamaica is but, a micro-spec of Jamaica.

# Literature Review

Fertility refers to the actual birth performance, i.e the number of live births in the population and is one of the components of population growth; (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2021). The statistics for the fertility rate in Jamaica are as follows: 1.4% in 2018, 1.37% in 2019 and 1.36% in 2020 *(Statistical Institute of Jamaica,* 2021). This implies that the average number of birth per women in the reproductive age ( 15-49 years) are deciding; to only having one child in their lifetime. The continuance of this decline in births can lead to a steady decrease in the population.

The above source adds to the quality of research because it shows that women are raising their expectations as to when, where, why and, how they are planning to have and raise their children. It also a reflection that the birth rate is declining.

Birth, also called childbirth or parturition, is the process of bringing forth a child from the uterus, or womb (Beck & Huffman, 2023). Birth is a very important aspect of life as it can provide the continuation of life within populations. However, in recent years there has been a steady decline of births in the country of Jamaica. Both the Statistical Institute and Beck and Huff supports this claim.

There are several factors that contributes to the decline of births in Jamaica. Factors in Fertility decline: education, especially for women, economic development, improved standards of living, rising expectations and family income levels (Tulchinsky & Varavikova, 2015). This indicates that women are delaying when to have children because they value higher education and income first before having children for themselves.

This decline in births can lead to significant socio-economic implications. According to an article published in the (Loop Jamaica News, 2022) *"It means that it will affect our labour force, our competitiveness, and frankly speaking, it will undermine, as a society, our capacity to realise our full potential," stated Tufton. If there are not enough births to replace people of retiring age or decreased persons within a labor force, then the productivity within the country of Jamaica will decrease which in turns affects Jamaica’s competitiveness worldwide*. This will hinder the full potential of not only Jamaica but also the Community of Mannings Hill Road.

“A decline in fertility rates also leads to a shortage of workers in the labor force.

This affects the economy by limiting productivity and increasing the cost of labor. This will

hinder the full potential of not only Jamaica but also the Community of Mannings Hill Road.

This highlights what could happen to the population of Jamaica if birth declines are not addressed and proper strategies are not implemented to sustain the birth rates. However, on the other hand, birth declines can benefit the socio-economy of Jamaica. Fewer workers, in theory, can command higher wages. With a shortage of workers, they will be in a position to bargain for higher wages and enjoy higher living standards. This could help reduce the relative decline many workers have faced in recent decades”; (Pettinger, 2021)

. In contrast the newspaper article ; (Loop Jamaica News, 2022), states that ; “workers can obtain and earn better job satisfaction while the newspaper article is concerned about the productivity and performance within the country overall. This adds to the quality of research to show that there is a direct correlation between the decline in fertility rates and productivity as well as performance.

“A recommendation would be to incentivise couples in various ways to have children.

Factors in increasing longevity such as: medical care services with improved access and quality, improved conditions of employment and recreation, economic and social well-being, adequacy of safe food and water, sewage and garbage disposal, adequate housing conditions and increasing family income, education level and standards of living.”; (Science Direct, 2023).

In order to stabilize the number of births in Jamaica, we should motivate the citizens with the means to have no more than 2 children. A maxim run by the, *Ministry of Health* Jamaica, in the 1970’s and 1980’s when there was population explosion in the country ; *“two is better than too many !”*; This supports the claim made by ; (Tulchinsky & Varavikova, 2015), as they suggest factors that can increase the fertility rate in a country. This adds to the quality of research in providing solutions in maintaining a healthy, stable population. Stakeholders should take note of these and implement strategies to stabilize the fertility rate as neither having a high fertility nor a low fertility rate can have real implications for the development of the country. Mannings Hill Road is a mirage of Jamaica.

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# Methodology/ Research Design

The type of research conducted was qualitative. It is a scientific method of research used to collect non-numerical data in nature through methods of observations, one to one interview, conducting focus groups and similar methods. The reason why the researcher chose qualitative research is because it offers several advantages. They are as follows: it allows for flexibility; techniques and methods that do not work can be changed to suit the circumstances. The questions being asked can be changed if the responses do not fit the researcher’s expectations. The researcher can also get clarity on the questions asked to them.

There are disadvantages as well. The disadvantages are as follows: It can be difficult to set a date and time to have the research done if they have busy schedules to fill out or answer the questions. This leads to it being time-consuming since less people are usually being studied and you must wait on them individually to answer the questions. It can also be hard to interpret the data given in an objective way because the researcher might have a biased interpretation of the responses.

Despite the disadvantages it offers, it is more suitable to use for this type of investigation because it is more people oriented.

For this research, the researcher has decided to use both primary and secondary sources of data collection.

A questionnaire was used as the primary source to collect data. A questionnaire is a set of printed or written questions with a choice of answers, devised for the purposes of a survey or statistical study. It was used to collect valuable information from my Community, based on the factors that cause and contribute to the decline in births. Specific people were selected from approximately twenty persons using the convenience sampling method so that the researcher could ensure that the questionnaire was filled out as quickly as possible. It is distributed using online questionnaire software known as ; *“Google Forms”* with links to the questionnaire. The sample size was 20.

Secondary sources gave the researcher the background information on the key term used “Birth”. The sources that were used are books, newspaper article, and internet source such as Britannica. Britannica was the secondary source used to gain the definition of birth.

# Presentation of Data

**Figure 1:** Bar Graph represents responses to the question,” Do you plan to have child/children in the future?” Based on the three choices that were given in the questionnaire, 10% of residents chose “Not Sure”, 15% of residents chose “No”, while 75% of residents chose “Yes”.

**Figure 2:** Column Graph represents responses to the question, “At what age do you plan to have child/children?” Based on the six options that were given in the questionnaire, 0% of residents chose “20-24 years old”, 40% of residents chose “25-29 years old”, another 40% of respondents chose “30-34 years old”, 5% of respondents chose “35-39 years old”, 10% of respondents chose “Never”, and 5% of residents chose the option “Not Sure”.

**Figure 3:** Column Graph represents responses to the question in the questionnaire, **“**Based on question 5, why do you want to delay having a child/children until you reach that specified age?” From the four options presented, 40% of respondents chose the option “I’ll be financially stable”, 35% of respondents chose “I’ll be mentally prepared”, 15% of residents chose “To finish my career/study”, and 10% of residents chose “Not Planning on having a child”.

**Figure 4:** Bar Graph representing the responses to the question, “How many child/children do you plan to have in your lifetime?” Based on the seven options in the questionnaire, 0% of residents responded with “One”, 55% of residents chose “Two”, 15% of residents chose “Three”, 10% of residents chose “Four”, another 10% of respondents chose “None”, while 5% of respondents chose “Not Sure”, while 5% of residents chose “One but No More Than Two”.

**Figure 5:** Bar Graph represents responses to the question in the questionnaire, “The decline in births will affect our labour force, our competitiveness and our capacity to realise our full potential in Jamaica..." How do you feel about this statement? 5% of residents chose the option “Strongly Disagree”, another 5% of residents chose “Slightly Disagree”, 35% of respondents chose “Neutral”, 30% of respondents chose the option “Slightly Agree”, and 25% of respondents chose the option “Strongly Agree”.

**Figure 6:** Pie Chart represents responses to the question in the questionnaire, “Do you think the current programs implemented by the government to motivate adults to have children are effective?” 65% of respondents chose the option “No” while 35% of respondents chose “Yes”.

**Figure 7:** Pie Chart responses to the question in the questionnaire**, “**What measure/s or programs can be implemented by the government to motivate adults to have child/children?” 25% of residents chose “No programs can motivate adults to have children.”, 35% of residents chose the option “Implement incentives to help to pay for the children's expenses.”, another 25% of respondents chose “Educate people how to take care of children.”, and 15% chose “Allow easier access to the therapy and healthcare.”

# Discussion of Findings

The aim of this study is to find out the cause and effects of a decline in the fertility and how it affects the socio-economic well-being of young adults living in the Community of Mannings Hill Road, St. Andrew, Jamaica.

An adult can make their own independent decision as to when or how many children they want in their life according to their own ideology and beliefs. In response to an questionnaire that was conducted at Mannings Hill Road, it is stated in the report that 10% of residents chose “Not Sure”, 15% of residents chose “No”, while 75% of residents chose “Yes” to the question, “Do you plan to have child/children in the future?”. The researcher was pleased with these results as most residents are planning to have children to continue life in the community. Fertility is a complex issue influenced by cultural, social, economic, religious, and even political factors. (Tulchinsky & Varavikova, 2015). These aspects can determine when people plan to have children and eventually give birth to a child.

When most individuals want to have children at one reproductive age range, it can cause changes to the demographic structure of a country. In the report 0% of residents chose “20-24 years old”, 40% of residents chose “25-29 years old”, another 40% of respondents chose “30-34 years old”, 5% of respondents chose “35-39 years old”, 10% of respondents chose “Never”, and 5% of residents chose the option “Not Sure” to the question “At what age do you plan to have child/children?” It became clear that majority of individuals want to have children in the age range of their late twenties and early thirties. Signs of population ageing are the decline in the under 15 age group and the increased percentages in the older age groups and particularly 65 and over (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2021). This indicates that the Community is becoming an ageing population according to the report since there is a decline for having children within the younger age groups and an increase for having children in the older age groups.

An ageing population can be caused due to the increase in standards of living, change in economic status, etc. In the report, 40% of respondents chose the option “I’ll be financially stable”, 35% of respondents chose “I’ll be mentally prepared”, 15% of residents chose “To finish my career/study”, and 10% of residents chose “Not Planning on having a child” to the question, **“**Based on question 5, why do you want to delay having a child/children until you reach that specified age?” This indicates that most residents are not financially stable to support a child nor fully mentally prepared for the responsibilities of having a child currently, which are some of the few reasons for the decline in births for young adults.

The population can grow based on the number of live births in a country. In the report, 0% of residents responded with “One”, 55% of residents chose “Two”, 15% of residents chose “Three”, 10% of residents chose “Four”, another 10% of respondents chose “None”, while 5% of respondents chose “Not Sure”, while 5% of residents chose “One but No More Than Two” to the question, “How many child/children do you plan to have in your lifetime?” The ideal number (of births per women ) should be just about two or a little over two (Loop Jamaica News, 2022). The researcher was both surprised and pleased that over half of the respondents want to have more than one child in their lifetime. This means that despite the decline in births for younger adult age groups, there are still an ideal number of children that each resident wants to have.

However, if these ideal numbers were to be dropped down lower than two due to circumstances, it can lead to an eventual decrease in the population. In the report, 5% of residents chose the option “Strongly Disagree”, another 5% of residents chose “Slightly Disagree”, 35% of respondents chose “Neutral”, 30% of respondents chose the option “Slightly Agree”, and 25% of respondents chose the option “Strongly Agree” to the question, "The decline in births will affect our labour force, our competitiveness and our capacity to realise our full potential in Jamaica..." How do you feel about this statement?Most residents chose “Neutral” which means that they both agree and disagree with certain points or do not know how to feel about the statement. The researcher thinks that more Jamaicans need to be informed about the consequences of decline in births.

Due to the concern of birth declines, the government would have measures in place to reduce the effect of it. In the report, 65% of respondents chose the option “No” while 35% of respondents chose “Yes” to the question, “Do you think the current programs implemented by the government to motivate adults to have children are effective?” The researcher was fairly satisfied with these results as most residents thought that the programs implemented by the government to motivate adults to have children are effective thus far. On the other hand, the percentages of “Yes" could be higher.

Suggestions would have to be made by Jamaicans as to how the government should improve their services to motivate them to have children. In the report, 25% of residents chose “No programs can motivate adults to have children.”, 35% of residents chose the option “Implement incentives to help to pay for the children's expenses.”, another 25% of respondents chose “Educate people how to take care of children.”, and 15% chose “Allow easier access to the therapy and healthcare.” to the question, **“**What measure/s or programs can be implemented by the government to motivate adults to have child/children?” The researcher deduced that the government should pay at least some percentage of expense for the child when and before they are born. “We are incentivizing the efficient approach to infant, free and post - natal care." (Jamaica Loop News, 2022) This shows that the government is showing an to motivate Jamaicans to have child in providing some free services to them.

Based on the findings, it is safe to say that Mannings Hill Road is showing signs of an ageing population and the majority of them want two or more children.

# Conclusion

This research project was a qualitative study about the decline in fertility rate amongst individuals and how it affects their socio-economic well-being, in the Community of Mannings Hill Road, St .Andrew, Jamaica. Some of the factors that contribute to the decline in births are because adults want to wait until they are within the reproductive age range of 25-34 years old to be financially and mentally stable to support a child. Based on the findings, it can be summarized that the Community of Mannings Hill Road is showing signs of an ageing population. As a result, the government needs to implement financial incentives that can accommodate some of the children’s expenses which would stabilize the number of births.

# Limitations

1. Due to time constraints, the sample size was small. Which meant that the data had less diverse results.
2. Some areas of the Community were inaccessible due to it being dangerous to go to.
3. Some residents did not fill out the questionnaire simply because they feared their information would be somehow leaked.
4. The data collection instrument used in this research was unable to provide elaborations on their responses.
5. Lastly, due to the nature of the research, there could have been several different angles the research could have taken which would have produced more favorable results.

# Recommendations

1. Implement programs to teach adults how to budget and manage their money when preparing to have a child in case the government is unable to provide the financial incentives.
2. The government should implement a community outreach program in Mannings Hill Road to identify the existing problems and challenges of adults within the Community.
3. The government should have promotions on social and cultural values that support marriage and child-rearing to encourage people to have children. This can include initiatives to promote the importance of family, parenting, and community.
4. Addressing economic inequality can also help encourage people to have children. This can include policies to reduce poverty, provide affordable housing, and increase access to education and job training.
5. All community members should play their part in encouraging and helping each other to make the community a welcoming and safe place to live and have children by using all the resources available to do so. Vision 2030.

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# Appendices

**Questionnaire**

**Letter to Respondents:**

**Dear Residents,**

My name is Chevannese Ellis, and I am in Upper Six Form Student, at the Mona High School in St. Andrew, Jamaica. I am doing, ***“An investigation into the various factors that have led to the decline in the fertility rate amongst individuals and how it affects their socio-economic well-being, in the Community of Mannings Hill Road, St. Andrew, Jamaica.”*** It is being conducted in the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the writing of the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE ) in Caribbean Studies, in June/July 2023. You are required to answer the questions honestly.. You will be remain anonymous and the information you give will be kept confidential.

Thank you.

Chevannese Ellis

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**INSTRUCTIONS: Please place a tick in the boxes provided and or write on the lines where applicable**.

1. What is your gender?

☐Male

☐Female

1. What is your age?

☐Under 20 years old

☐20-24 years old

☐25-29 years old

☐30-34 years old

☐35-39 years old

1. Do you plan to have child/children in the future?

☐Yes

☐No

☐Not Sure

1. If you answered no in ***question 3***, please state why you don't want to have child/children. (Skip if you answered yes or otherwise)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. At what age do you plan to have child/children?

☐20-24 years old

☐25-29 years old

☐30-34 years old

☐35-39 years old

☐Never

☐Not Sure

1. Based on question 5, why do you want to delay having a child/children until you reach that specified age?

☐I’ll be financially stable.

☐I’ll be mentally prepared.

☐To finish my career/studies

☐Not planning on having a child

1. Rate on a scale of 1-5 of how prepared you are to have a child at the specified age you selected in ***question 5***. (Consider 5 Extremely Prepared and 1 Not Prepared at all)

☐5

☐4

☐3

☐2

☐1

1. How many child/children do you plan to have in your lifetime?

☐1

☐2

☐3

☐4

☐None

☐Not Sure

☐One but not more than 2

1. " The decline in births will affect our labour force, our competitiveness and our capacity to realise our full potential in Jamaica..." How do you feel about this statement?

☐Strongly Agree

☐Slightly Agree

☐Neutral

☐Slightly Disagree

☐Strongly Disagree

1. Do you believe that most adults decide to have children when they are in their thirties?

☐Yes

☐No

1. Do you have knowledge of how to take care of a child if you decide to have one for yourself?

☐Highly Knowledgeable

☐Fairly Knowledgeable

☐Little Knowledge

☐No Knowledge

1. Do you think the current programs implemented by the government to motivate adults to have children are effective?

☐Yes

☐No

1. What measure/s or programs can be implemented by the government to motivate adults to have child/children?

☐No programs can motivate adults to have children.

☐Implement incentives to help to pay for the children's expenses.

☐Educate people how to take care of children.

☐Allow easier access to therapy and healthcare.