

FERTILITY AND FAMILY PLANNING IN RURAL AREAS OF SAUDI ARABIA

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study covering rural areas of Saudi Arabia are to: (a) determine the perception toward fertility from the men's standpoint; (b) determine the respondents' perception toward family planning and birth control processes; (c) determine the respondents' attitudes toward fertility; and (d) determine the relationship between the respondents' characteristics and their fertility.

The study covered 923 heads of households living in 75 villages, chosen through random and cluster samples techniques, in six regions of Saudi Arabia. Data was collected by personal interviews using a questionnaire developed for this purpose. Central tendency measurements such as percentages and mean and simple correlation coefficients were used to analyze the data.

Results indicated that the respondents were in favor of having a large number of children and most of them were against the use of birth control. A high refusal rate of using family planning methods was recorded as well. The study concluded by encouraging the developers and planners to be aware of this desire for large families in order to provide the necessary services to these newcomers, who will fill the gap when the large number of expatriate workers leave the country.

INTRODUCTION

Supporting the demand for many children is the view that they form family assets. Such a generalization could easily be applied to developing countries, and particularly to rural areas of these countries. As indicated by Johnson and Keppel (1986), the reason behind this view is the lower cost of rearing a large number of children in rural areas as compared to urban areas. Another reason is that children are used as economic producers for the family, whether by working on the family farm or as agricultural laborers. Al-Ahmadi (2003) points out that expenditure on children's toys in the USA exceeds by three times that spent on toys in Japan. At the same time, a single child's expenditure in Japan is sufficient to cover ten children's expenditures in Sudan and Sierra Leone. Thus, the cost of child-rearing is increasing as the urbanization of the country increases.

One major indication that characterizes the rural family in developing countries is the inclination to have a large family, a decision which is always made by men. Davis (1998) argues that in rural areas, communication between husband and wife is reduced to a minimum-particularly with reference to sexual topics, for the woman is supposed to have no knowledge or initiative in such matters (Williams *et al.*, 2000, p. 486). Williams *et al.* continue their argument by indicating that Boserup (1998) agrees that in rural areas, the subordinate status of women is conducive to large family size.

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Women's dependence on the good will of their husbands and older family members makes them hesitant to practice contraception. Where labor force opportunities are limited, they risk becoming dependent on their children in old age, (Boserup, 1998, p. 486). Wickrama and Lorenz (2002) indicate that women's social status could be improved through three main factors, and these are: first, various means by which women derive their status, such as property ownership, occupational status and earnings, political participation, kinship, age, and knowledge; second, the context on which this status heavily depends, since high economic and occupational status does not necessarily reflect domestic and social status; and third, women's status, similar to men's, as a more important determinant of their well-being and health than their absolute economic and occupational status.

Nevertheless, in these patrilineal societies, men are proud of the number of their children, particularly sons, since they produce present and future benefits for the family. Children also confer a high sense of satisfaction or success upon a man, even if he is materially poor. Children, as denoted by Isiugo-Abanihe (1994), provide necessary help around the house and on the farm, and in the absence of social security and welfare programs, children constitute an important source of support for the parents in old age. He adds that children, particularly sons, are considered the agents of continuity of the family name, a reason that encourages both polygamy and prolific childbearing to ensure that sons survive to maintain the lineage. Children, in these societies mostly, enhance a man's status and the prestige of his descent, and his extended family also bears some of the burden arising from his high fertility.

This pioneering study aims to analyze fertility and family planning procedures in rural areas of Saudi Arabia, a society renowned as conservative, with strong belief in the religion of Islam, from the men's point of view.

Review of Literature

Family life in Saudi Arabia is guided by Islamic principles and values that play a major role in the formation of the life of husband and wife and in their relationship. Among these values are the size of the family and the tools that are used to control this size. The adoption of artificial birth control methods has faced strong resistance from Islamic regulations. The main characteristic of the Saudi family is its large size, which is considered among the largest in the world. Al-Matri (1998) estimated the Saudi family size in the first quarter of the twenty first century to be 5.57 persons. Subsequently, this size was estimated to be about six persons in the 1992 census, and rose to seven by 1999. According to the Islamic values that characterize the Saudi family, men play an important role as heads of households; they are the protectors and providers of their families, and they are, therefore, the ones who make the majority of decisions concerning family life and the society in general. A man takes the initiative in selecting a partner and pays the dowry before his bride moves into his house. The late 1999 demographic survey showed that the population of Saudi Arabia was 19,898,232, and that Saudi nationals constituted about 74.8% of this total. 83.5% of Saudi nationals

were under 40 years of age, while 3.1% were over 60. Youth less than 15 years of age composed 46.2%, clearly indicating that Saudi Arabia from a demographic standpoint is a young society. The illiteracy rate in the country was 18.1% in 1999. Al-Zidan (2002) indicated that the High Commission of Riyadh Development estimated the Saudi population would increase by 720,000 individuals every year, from the year 2000 to the year 2005. This means that the Saudi population will be about 23.5 million in the year 2005, with an annual growth rate of about 3.6%.

Demographic literature offers many standards for measuring fertility. The total fertility rate (TFR) is now used more often than any other indicator. The TFR is defined as "the average number of births a woman would have if she were to live through her reproductive years (age 15-49) and bear children at each age at the rates observed in a particular year or period" (Bongaarts and Feeney, 1998, p. 271). The earliest socioeconomic theories of fertility focused, as Plutzer (1986) points out, on urban-rural differences in family size and emphasized the lower cost of raising children in rural families, while other early fertility research found occupational differences to be associated with fertility. He adds that most recent research has been influenced by the microeconomic model of fertility, which considers children as consumer durables that can be a source of psychic income or satisfaction, as well as of material income. Plutzer concludes his argument by saying that the cost of children is a child's contribution to family income minus the amount that must be spent for basic necessities, opportunity cost involved in childcare, and other expected expenses. On the other hand, where children's value as producers exceeds their costs, the demand for children is expected to approach or exceed the supply, yielding large families. In an interesting work, Rosenzweig (1977,) after using U.S. aggregate data for 1939-1960 to examine the effect on fertility of new technical inputs into agricultural production, found that declining birth rates following World War II were primarily the result of a reduction in the financial returns from children within the agricultural sector, combined with capital-based technical change. Katz and Stark (1986) echoed Rosenzweig's results by stating that a reduction in the attractiveness of children as assets is likely to induce a reduction in fertility as other assets are substituted for children. Hence, the Western fertility rate has declined in general, since the economic value of children has been progressively undermined by urbanization, compulsory schooling, legislation restricting the exploitation of minors, and the kind of employment available in an advanced industrial system (Caldwell, 1999). Dadoo and Tempenis (2002) highlighted the reasons behind the high level of fertility in rural areas in Africa compared to urban areas in terms of supply and demand and linked them to variations in socioeconomic development. Explanations from both the supply and demand sides attribute higher rural fertility to poorer access to family planning services, inferior educational and health facilities, and the like. They add that recent research in this area exceeds the conventional supply-demand explanations acknowledging the cultural context in which decisions are made. This shift in analyzing fertility makes the sociologists stress the importance of the behavioral variability across contexts and the macro level structures that produce this variability. The focus here is

on the role of culture as embodied in patriarchal institutions, since individual fertility behaviors are structured by different levels of cultural and social context (Morgan and Niraula, 1995; Axinn and Fricke, 1996).

Foster-Carter (1989) highlighted the biggest survey ever concerning the population of the Third World, which started in 1972 through the World Fertility Survey (WFS). This involved sampling 42 developing and 20 developed countries, whose populations constitute around 40% of the world's total. In each of these countries several thousand women were interviewed and the interviewers were mostly women too, so that the total global sample numbers some 340,000. Most of this research was done between the late 1970s and the mid-1980s. The significant results of this survey showed that fertility had begun to decline slowly. Women who had been used to having 4-5 children each in the past, had now lowered their reproductivity to an average of one child per woman. Although both men and women are considered important contributors to bringing children into life, demographic studies of fertility and family planning have mainly focused upon the role of women only in fertility. According to Adamchak and Adebayo (1987), little research has been conducted exclusively on male fertility attitudes in Africa and other parts of the world, whereas those on women are numerous. They continue their argument by stating that policies based on female fertility research do not appear to solve the problem of rapid population growth in Nigeria and other African countries. They point out that Nigeria, like most African nations, is a patrilineal society, in which the male is very important in decision-making concerning the reproductive behavior of women. Isiugo-Abanihe (1994) reiterates Adamchak and Adebayo's idea concerning this issue, and states that for several years demographers working in Africa have focused their attention largely on women's attitudes and behavior in matters concerning reproduction, despite the fact that men and women are biological partners in the reproductive process. Great emphasis has been placed on the role of women in the fertility process; the reproductive motivation of African men has been minimized, thereby ignoring the social significance of the men, who are dominant not only within the family, but also at community and government levels.

To close this argument, Green and Biddlecom (2000) state that demographic research on men's role in reproduction has grown in the 1990s, and there is an insistent push from within research and policy-oriented circles to include men in studies on fertility and family planning. They conclude that several factors account for this rising interest. First, feminist thinking has had a major effect on how demographers view men, since feminism has had more influence on demography indirectly through its impact on health and population policy and its definition of what is to be studied. Accordingly, feminism has called attention to areas neglected in demographic research by identifying policy issues such as child support and women's reproductive health. Therefore, women have been given special and usually exclusive attention in fertility research, and one of feminism's contributions has been to promote the study of the genders in contrast with each other, not just the analysis of women's characteristics as determinants of fertility. Second, the women's health movement has directed more demographic attention to men.

This movement was especially influential at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) by shifting the focus from family planning programs to reproductive health. This movement stresses the need to make men more aware of their responsibilities to the family and the wider community in the matter of family planning and reproductive health. Third, for decades the focus of demographic research has been demographic transition theory, a theory of population change that supported an interference perspective in international population work by pointing to a path of mortality and fertility decline that eventually every country should take. The failure of this classic demographic theory to explain fertility has raised much criticism, which has stimulated more culturally specific research on reproductive behavior and on the varied reproductive roles of men and women in different cultural contexts. Finally, recent methodological developments have also catalyzed an interest in men and the social relations between men and women. The development of analytic models in economics, anthropology, and sociology that successfully enclose more than one factor in fertility has been among the major changes.

Objectives of the Study

To gain understanding of fertility and family planning processes in rural areas of Saudi Arabia from the men's standpoint will be the main aim of this study, and will be achieved through the following objectives:

- 1- To determine the respondents' perception toward fertility.
- 2- To determine the respondents' perception toward family planning and birth control processes.
- 3- To determine the respondents' attitudes toward fertility.
- 4- To determine the relationship between the respondents' characteristics and their fertility.

Methodology

The study was conducted in 75 villages chosen through the cluster sample technique from six administrative regions randomly chosen from the thirteen in the Kingdom (Bailey, 1982). Nine villages were chosen from Al-Madinah Al-Monawrah region; 15 villages were chosen from each region of Jazan, Hail, and Al-Qassim; 12 villages were chosen from Al-Jouf; and 10 villages were chosen from Al-Baha. The total targeted sample of this study was 1200 married heads of households distributed equally among these regions. Absence of some of the respondents during the time of interviews, and the refusal of some respondents to cooperate resulted in a final total of 923 respondents, with a response rate of 77%. A questionnaire designed particularly for this study was used to analyze rural fertility and family planning procedures. This questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first one included questions seeking personal information from the respondents, such as age, education, work, monthly income, number of wives and their education, family size (size of family of procreation), and size of family the respondent grew up in (size of family of orientation). The second part consisted of questions dealing with the respondent's desired number of

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children, sex preference of children, who makes the decision concerning the desired number of children, methods used to determine the child's sex, and questions dealing with respondent's behavior towards birth control and family planning programs. This part concluded with questions dealing with the respondent's exposure to the mass media. The third part of the questionnaire consisted of twelve attitudinal statements (attitudinal scale), designed after the Likert scale, dealing with the issues of fertility and family planning. The response to each item ranged from "agree" to "neutral" to "disagree" on a three-point scale. Thus, the highest possible number of points one could reach was 36 in the overall fertility attitudinal scale. The twelve items of the fertility attitudinal scale include:

1. The frequency of child mortality in the family is a main motive behind high family fertility.
2. A large number of children are considered a burden in their rearing.
3. A large number of children are considered security for the parents in their old age.
4. A large number of children make it difficult to provide them with good education and good health care.
5. A large number of children benefit the family financially.
6. A large number of children are considered an economic burden on the family.
7. A large number of children provide the man with high social status among his colleagues.
8. The cost of living in these days makes it difficult to have a large number of children.
9. A large number of children provide the man with the satisfaction that the failure of one of these children could be overridden by the success of another.
10. It is better for a person to have a small number of children in order to provide them with a good upbringing.
11. A large number of children make the strong ones among them help the weak ones.
12. Having a large number of children requires complete dedication to their rearing.

The reliability coefficient for part three of the questionnaire (attitudinal statements) was calculated and its value reached 0.87, reflecting high reliability of the attitude scale and consistency of its items. At the same time, before using the questionnaire of the current study, it was refereed by five jurors (three rural sociologists, and two professors in the area of agricultural extension and education). Their requests and suggestions were met. Facilities of the statistical lab in the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine at King Saud University, Qassim Branch, were used to analyze the data and appropriate statistical tools, such as percentages, means, cross tabulations and simple correlation coefficient (r) were used.

Measurement of the Variables:

1. **Age:** measured by asking each respondent about his age in years.

- 2. Education:** measured by asking each respondent about his last degree, if any, and these degrees being classified as: 0 = illiterate, 1 = read and write without degree, 2 = primary degree, 3 = intermediate degree, 4 = high school degree, 5 = high school technical degree, 6 = college degree and higher.
- 3. Work:** obtained by asking each respondent about his work and classified as: 1 = student, 2 = retired, 3 = work in his own business, 4 = in private sector, 5 = in government sector.
- 4. Monthly Income:** measured by asking each respondent to mention his monthly income, and classified as: 1 = less than SR 3000, 2 = from SR 3000- less than SR 5000, 3 = from SR 5000- less than SR 7000, 4 = from SR 7000- less than SR 10,000, 5 = more than SR 10,000.
- 5. Wives' Education:** obtained by using the same technique as used with the husbands.
- 6. Size of Family of Procreation:** measured by asking each respondent about the size of his family, and classified as: 1 = fewer than five members, 2 = from 5 members – fewer than 11 members, 3 = more than 11 members.
- 7. Size of Family of Orientation:** measured by using the same technique used in calculating the size of family of procreation.
- 8. Exposure to the Mass Media:** this variable determined the respondents' use of the several types of media, such as TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, books and health pamphlets. This was classified as: 0= no use of the mass media, 1= respondent seldom exposed to the mass media, 2 = respondent sometimes exposed to the mass media, 3 = respondent always exposed to the mass media.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I. Personal Characteristics of the Sample:

Figures displayed in Table 1 show that respondents were almost equally distributed among these three age groups. More than one third of the respondents (34.9%) had high education (secondary degree and higher), with a large proportion of them (69.1%) having more than five children (family of procreation), compared to (67.1%) of them who grew up in families (family of orientation) that had more than five children. The table also shows that more than half of the sample (55.0%) worked in the government sector, and fewer than a third of the sample (30.0%) worked in their own businesses. The average monthly income for the respondents ranged from less than SR 3000 to more than SR 10,000, with more than half of the respondents (53.3%) earning between SR 3000 to less than SR 7000. The aim of the study was to analyze the fertility and family planning among the rural people from the men's point of view, so to achieve this goal all the chosen respondents were married, and more than a third of them (33.9%) had more than one wife. Furthermore, 261 respondents had two wives, 44 of them had three wives and eight of them had four wives. As seen in Table 1, more than half of the first, second and third wives (53.3%, 63.2%, and 68.2%) were illiterate.

Table 1: Personal Characteristics of Respondents*

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
Less than 40	342	37.1
40-less than 60	293	31.7
More than 60	288	31.2
Husband's Education		
Illiterate	224	24.3
Read & Write	57	6.2
Primary Degree	173	18.7
Intermediate Degree	147	15.9
Secondary Degree	117	12.6
Technical Degree	79	8.6
University Degree & Higher	126	13.7
Family Size (Family of Procreation)		
Fewer than Five Children	285	30.9
5-11 Children	400	43.3
More than 11 Children	238	25.8
Family Size (Family of Orientation)		
Fewer than Five Children	304	32.9
5-11 Children	487	52.8
More than 11 Children	132	14.3
Work		
Student	30	3.3
Retired	83	9.0
Work in own business	277	30.0
In Private sector	25	2.7
In Government Sector	508	55.0
Income (per month)		
Less than SR 3000	300	32.5
SR 3000-4999	304	32.9
SR 5000-6999	188	20.4
SR 7000-9999	83	9.0
More than SR 10,000	48	5.2
Exposure to Mass Media		
No use of mass media	51	5.5
Seldom exposed to mass media	328	35.5
Sometimes exposed to mass media	365	39.5
Always exposed to mass media	179	19.5
First Wife's Education		
Illiterate	492	53.3
Read & Write	34	3.7
Primary Degree	114	12.4
Intermediate Degree	104	11.3
Secondary Degree	82	8.9
Technical Degree	37	4.0
University Degree & Higher	60	6.5
Second Wife's Education		
Illiterate	165	63.2
Read & Write	21	8.0
Primary Degree	24	9.2
Intermediate Degree	23	8.8
Secondary Degree	12	4.6
Technical Degree	5	1.9
University Degree & Higher	11	4.2
Third Wife's Education		
Illiterate	30	68.2
Read & Write	-	-
Primary Degree	7	15.9
Intermediate Degree	4	9.1
Secondary Degree	3	6.8
Technical Degree	-	-
University Degree & Higher	-	-
Fourth Wife's Education		
Illiterate	3	37.5
Read & Write	-	-
Primary Degree	2	25.0
Intermediate Degree	1	12.5
Secondary Degree	1	12.5
Technical Degree	-	-
University Degree & Higher	1	12.5

*. Sample size = 923

II. Respondents' Perception toward Fertility:

Respondents were asked directly about their desired number of children. As seen in Table 2, more than three quarters of the sample (84.1%) indicated that five or more children are seen as the ideal family size. The average desired number of children in the sample is about ten children.

Table 2: Desired Family Size

Number of Children Desired	Frequency	Percentage
Fewer than 5 children	147	15.9
More than 5 children and fewer than 11	493	53.4
More than 11 children	283	30.7

The average number of desired children for the sample " \bar{x} " = 9.8

Table 3 shows that 66.1% of older respondents (60+) desired a large number of children (5+) compared to the other two groups. Such findings are consistent with reality since these older people mostly grew up with large extended families and are considered as conservative from a social point of view, where large families are admired. However, the question raised here is whether time will allow these people to have such families. The answer is yes, since the data indicated very clearly that these people already had large families, even if they grew up in families with small numbers of children. In contrast, several studies have shown the effect of education on reducing fertility (Pick *et al.*, 1989; Dodoo, 1992; Renne, 1993; Isiugo-Abanihe, 1994; Kannae and Pendleton, 1994, and Li and Lavelly, 2003). The data in Table 3 indicate that respondents who have acquired higher education desired a smaller number of children, compared to those attaining a lower education or no education at all. The effects of education on reducing fertility are not only seen from the male point of view, but the figures in the study also indicate that respondents with wives who have attained a higher education also look for a smaller number of children. The effect of education in reducing fertility is seen in a study conducted in Riyadh, the capital city of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which points out that 48.5% of women who engaged in jobs outside the house are having only one child (Al-Khorbush, 1998). The study indicated that the more education the woman gets, the lower the fertility rate becomes, since 36% of the working women with college degrees had one child, compared to 77% of the illiterate women who had three children. As indicated earlier, people with low incomes tend to have a large number of children, as is the case of Third World countries, due to the economic benefits that the family can get from those children. The study denotes that men with low monthly incomes desired a large number of children compared to those who had high monthly incomes. On the other hand, when the respondent worked in a stable job that provided him with life's necessities, like working in the government sector or working in his own private business, he was disposed to have a large number of children, as is seen in the study.

The family that the person was raised in (family of orientation) has a most important effect on the individual's attitudes and behavior in the future, particularly in the rural areas. Therefore, about 79% of the respondents who grew up in large families (five children or more) indicated that they wanted a large number of children (five children or more). In contrast, the data show that 85% of the respondents who already had a large number of children and who grew up in large families, pointed out they wanted a large number of children. About half (49.8%) of the respondents who were never or seldom exposed to the mass media declared that they were looking for a large number of children. While the majority of the respondents (68.0%) who were always or sometimes exposed to the mass media were apt to have a smaller number of children (fewer than 5). The study revealed the unexpected findings that the respondents who had lost many children (three or more) due to death, indicated that they preferred a smaller number of children. The reason behind this phenomenon could be attributed to the feeling that large numbers of children will not allow the respondents to spend much time on rearing these children. Therefore, the loss of these children produced an interest in these respondents in having a smaller number of children in order to provide them with a good upbringing.

III. Respondents' Perception toward Family Planning:

Among the sample's respondents no child preferences were cited, since the majority of the respondents (87%) declared they preferred to have children from both sexes. What has been said by Davis (1998), that in rural areas communication between husband and wife is reduced to a minimum, particularly with reference to sexual topics, was not applied in this study. The data show that 63.4% of the sample pointed out that husband and wife always discussed and decided the number of desired children, while less than a quarter of the sample (23.9%) revealed that the husband was responsible for this decision. The latter response can be attributed to the role that the man plays in such a patrilineal society due to the absence of good social security and welfare programs. On the other hand, only 2.9% indicated that the wife was responsible for this decision, and 9.6% referred this to God's gifts and the will of other members of the family. A large majority of the respondents (83.1%) indicated no interest in knowing the sex of the baby during the pregnancy. Those who were interested in knowing the sex of the baby (16.7%) depended on the physician's knowledge and experience.

Discussion between spouses concerning the issue of family planning is still rare in Saudi Arabia in general and in the rural areas in particular.

Table 3: Desired Number of Children with Respondents' Characteristics

Characteristics	Number of children desired					
	Fewer than 5		5-11		More than 11	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Age						
Less than 40	73	49.7	200	40.6	69	24.4
40-59	35	23.8	152	30.8	106	37.5
More than 60	39	26.5	141	28.6	108	38.1
Education						
Illiterate	23	15.6	115	23.3	86	30.4
Read & Write	7	4.8	26	5.3	24	8.5
Primary Education	28	19.0	80	16.2	65	23.0
Intermediate Education	17	11.6	92	18.7	38	13.4
Secondary Education	16	10.9	69	14.0	32	11.3
Technical Education	19	12.9	45	9.1	15	5.3
University Education	37	25.2	66	13.4	23	8.1
Work						
Student	4	2.7	19	3.9	7	2.5
Retired	10	6.8	32	6.5	41	14.5
In own business	35	23.8	137	27.8	105	37.1
Private Sector	7	4.8	10	2.0	8	2.8
Government Sector	91	61.9	295	59.8	122	43.1
Income						
Less than SR 3000	45	30.6	149	30.2	106	37.5
SR 3000-4999	29	19.7	183	37.1	92	32.5
SR 5000-6999	39	26.5	102	20.7	47	16.6
SR 7000-9999	21	14.3	38	7.7	24	8.5
More than SR 10,000	13	8.9	21	4.3	14	4.9
First Wife's Education						
Illiterate	56	38.1	246	49.9	190	67.1
Read & Write	7	4.8	20	4.1	7	2.5
Primary Education	13	8.8	70	14.2	31	11.0
Intermediate Education	14	9.5	69	14.0	21	7.4
Secondary Education	19	12.9	43	8.7	20	7.1
Technical Education	10	6.8	19	3.9	8	2.8
University Education	28	19.1	26	5.2	6	2.1
Second Wife's Education						
Illiterate	19	61.2	56	64.4	90	62.9
Read & Write	7	22.6	3	3.4	11	7.7
Primary Education	1	3.2	5	5.8	18	12.6
Intermediate Education	2	6.5	12	13.8	9	6.3
Secondary Education	-	-	3	3.4	9	6.3
Technical Education	-	-	2	2.3	3	2.1
University Education	2	6.5	6	6.9	3	2.1
Third Wife's Education						
Illiterate	1	100	7	70	22	66.7
Read & Write	-	-	-	-	-	-
Primary Education	-	-	1	10	6	18.2
Intermediate Education	-	-	2	20	2	6.0
Secondary Education	-	-	-	-	3	9.1
Technical Education	-	-	-	-	-	-
University Education	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fourth Wife's Education						
Illiterate	1	50	-	-	2	33.3
Read & Write	-	-	-	-	-	-
Primary Education	-	-	-	-	2	33.3
Intermediate Education	-	-	-	-	1	16.7
Secondary Education	1	50	-	-	-	-
Technical Education	-	-	-	-	-	-
University Education	-	-	-	-	1	16.7
Family of Orientation						
Fewer than 5	49	33.3	175	35.5	80	28.3
5-11	70	47.7	263	53.3	154	54.4
More than 11	28	19.0	55	11.2	49	17.3
Family of Procreation						
Fewer than 5	75	51.0	188	34.1	42	14.8
5-11	47	32.0	259	52.5	94	33.2
More than 11	25	17.0	66	13.4	147	52.0
Use of Mass Media						
No use	11	7.5	19	3.9	21	7.4
Seldom	36	24.5	172	34.9	120	42.4
Sometimes	61	41.5	199	40.3	105	37.1
Always	39	26.5	103	20.9	37	13.1
Number of Dead Children						
1 child	29	61.7	74	62.7	57	50.4
2 children	8	17.0	37	31.4	30	26.6
3-5 children	10	21.3	7	5.9	26	23.0

A woman does not stand alone in confronting her husband; usually she confronts him only when supported by her husband's relatives, especially his parents. Due to the Islamic values and beliefs that characterize the Saudi society, severe restrictions are imposed concerning the family planning and birth control processes and their use is allowed only under certain conditions.

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The study points out that more than half of the sample (59.7%) had heard about family planning and birth control processes, but only 42.5% and 12.7% respectively agreed in the use of these processes. When the question became more specific and the respondents were asked clearly if such processes were used, only 17.4% and 4.6% respectively declared using these processes, as is seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Questions toward Family Planning and Birth Control Processes

Questions	Family Planning Process				Birth Control Process			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Heard about the process	551	59.7	372	40.3	551	59.7	372	40.3
Agreed in using the process	392	42.5	531	57.5	117	12.7	806	87.3
Used the process	161	17.4	762	82.6	42	4.6	881	95.4

Respondents who admitted using family planning processes revealed five reasons for doing so, the top reason, with a majority of 65.8%, being to give the family and children a good upbringing. Respondents who admitted using birth control processes revealed two reasons only, and to provide the family and the children with a good upbringing was mentioned by 92.3% of the respondents, as is seen in Table 5. The majority of respondents who practiced family planning and birth control methods, 77.6% and 71.4% respectively, used contraceptives, while the rest used the condom or loop.

Table 5: Reasons for Using Family Planning and Birth Control Processes

Reasons	Family Planning			Birth Control		
	F	%	Total	F	%	Total
To provide good upbringing	258	65.8	392	108	92.3	117
To provide ease for the couple	70	17.9		-	-	
To save money to provide good upbringing	32	8.2		-	-	
To provide family harmony	30	7.6		-	-	
To protect the wife's health	2	0.5		-	-	
To provide children with a good education	-	-		9	7.7	

In contrast to the previous argument, respondents who refused to use both processes of family planning and birth control attributed this abstention to four reasons, as seen in Table 6, the chief among these reasons being the religious prohibition against using such methods (50.1% and 64.9% respectively). This reflects the strong connection of the people to Islamic values and beliefs. The desire to have a large number of children comes as the second cause in refusing the use of these methods. As indicated earlier, the need for children for support in old age, due to the absence of good social security and welfare programs, was considered among the main reasons for parents to have a large number of children in many developing countries. The data show that a tenth of the respondents attributed the refusal of using birth control methods to this reason. About 17.2% and 5.6% of the respondents respectively attributed the refusal to use these methods to their ignorance of them.

Table 6: Reasons for Not Using Family Planning and Birth Control Processes

Reasons	Family Planning			Birth Control		
	F	%	Total	F	%	Total
Against religion	265	50.1	529	523	64.9	806
Want large number of children	169	32.0		157	19.5	
Do not know about it	91	17.2		45	5.6	
Harmful to the woman's health	4	0.7		-	-	
Need support in old age	-	-		81	10.0	

IV. Respondents' Attitudes toward Fertility:

Among the factors that differentiate between sociology and other disciplines is the study of the attitude of the people from a social point of view for a particular phenomenon. The researcher believes this study will not take final shape without the understanding of the sample's attitudes toward the notion of fertility. Therefore, the respondents' attitudes toward the fertility issue have been discussed through asking the respondents their views toward twelve statements concerning this subject. The respondents' attitudes toward these statements are listed in Table 7.

Table 7: Respondents' Attitudes toward Fertility

Statements	Agree		Don't know		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. The frequency of child mortality in the family is a main motive behind high family fertility.	470	50.9	234	25.4	219	23.7
2. A large number of children are considered a burden in their rearing.	548	59.4	127	13.8	248	26.9
3. A large number of children are considered security for the parents in their old age.	760	82.3	103	11.2	60	6.5
4. A large number of children make it difficult to provide them with good education and good health care.	292	31.6	221	23.9	410	44.4
5. A large number of children benefit the family financially.	627	67.9	178	19.3	118	12.8
6. A large number of children are considered an economic burden on the family.	493	53.4	186	20.2	244	26.4
7. A large number of children provide the man with high social status among his colleagues.	627	67.9	138	15.0	158	17.1
8. The cost of living these days makes it difficult to have a large number of children.	392	42.5	202	21.9	329	35.6
9. A large number of children provide the man with satisfaction that the failure of one of these children could be overridden by the success of another.	648	70.2	148	16.0	127	13.8
10. It is better for a person to have a small number of children in order to provide them with a good upbringing.	444	48.1	179	19.4	300	32.5
11. A large number of children make the strong ones among them help the weak ones.	663	71.8	176	19.1	84	9.1
12. Having a large number of children requires complete dedication to their rearing.	276	29.9	249	27.0	398	43.1

The table shows that child mortality is responsible for the high fertility of the sample, since half of the respondents (50.9%) indicate that due to death among the children in the family resulting from the diffusion of poor health services in the area, as mentioned by Al-Humaidi (2002), parents should produce more children to avoid this problem. When respondents were

asked about child rearing through two statements (2 and 12), the findings were inconsistent to some degree. More than half of the sample (59.4%) agreed that a large number of children were considered a burden in their rearing, while 26.9% disagreed. On the other hand, when respondents were asked if a large number of children meant complete dedication to their rearing, more than a quarter of the sample (29.9%) agreed, while 43.1% of the respondents disagreed. The reason behind these results is that in the first statement the man himself is the one who is responsible for complete support of the family, and therefore some of these men agreed to this fact, while in the other statement, a large number of the men did not agree because they believe the children's rearing (particularly when they are young) is the job of the mother, who should devote herself to doing it. Statements 5, 7, 9 and 11 deal with the issue of children as social and economic assets, as indicated earlier. Therefore, it is not surprising that a large majority of the respondents (82.3%, 67.9%, 67.9%, 70.2%, and 71.8% respectively) agreed on that. Statements 4, 6, 8 and 10 discuss how the costs of the living affect a large number of children, particularly in their rearing. Since education and health services in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are provided free to all people, accordingly, more than a quarter of the respondents (44.4%, 26.4%, 35.6% and 32.5% respectively) disagreed that producing a large number of children is seen as an economic burden.

V. The Relationship between Respondents' Characteristics and Fertility Scale:

Respondents' attitudes toward fertility and family planning were grouped together in order to form a single scale to measure fertility. Thus, respondents' attitudes toward fertility are divided into three categories: negative attitudes toward fertility ranging from 1 point to 12 points, neutral attitudes toward fertility ranging from 13 to 24 points, and positive attitudes toward fertility ranging from 25 to 36 points. The majority of the sample (80.6%) had positive attitudes toward fertility, as is seen in Table 8. The simple correlation coefficient (r) for the respondents' attitudes toward fertility with their age, education, work, income, first wife's education, second wife's education, third wife's education, fourth wife's education, family of orientation, family of procreation, use of mass media and number of dead children is used, as seen in Table 9.

Table 8: Attitudinal Scale toward Fertility

Scale	Frequency	Percentage
Neutral attitude (13-24 points)	179	19.4
Positive attitude (25-36 points)	744	80.6

The table shows that there were positive relationships between the respondents' age and family of procreation and their attitudes toward fertility. On the other hand, there were inverse relationships between the respondents' level of education, monthly income, first wife's level of education, and exposure to the mass media with their attitudes toward fertility. Nevertheless, there were no relationships found between the respondents' work, second, third and fourth wife's level of education, family of orientation, and number of dead children.

Table 9: Simple Correlation Coefficient between Some of Respondents' Characteristics and Attitudes toward Fertility

Attitude toward Fertility	Low Att. (13-24) pts	Positive Att (25-36) pts	r	Level of Significance
Respondents' Characteristics				
Age				
Less than 40	85	257	0.082	0.05
40-59	44	249		
More than 60	50	238		
Respondent's Education				
Illiterate	28	196	-0.101	0.01
Read & Write	13	57		
Primary Education	34	173		
Intermediate Education	29	147		
Secondary Education	24	117		
Technical Education	17	79		
University Education	34	92		
Work				
Student	3	27	-0.49	Not significant
Retired	13	70		
In own business	54	223		
Private Sector	3	22		
Government Sector	106	402		
Income				
Less than SR 3000	46	254	-0.102	0.01
SR 3000-4999	58	246		
SR 5000-6999	38	150		
SR 7000-9999	22	61		
More than SR 10,000	15	33		
First Wife's Education				
Illiterate	86	406	-0.079	0.05
Read & Write	5	29		
Primary Education	21	93		
Intermediate Education	23	81		
Secondary Education	18	64		
Technical Education	7	30		
University Education	9	41		
Second Wife's Education				
Illiterate	32	133	-0.109	Not significant
Read & Write	1	20		
Primary Education	6	18		
Intermediate Education	7	16		
Secondary Education	4	8		
Technical Education	2	3		
University Education	3	8		
Third Wife's Education				
Illiterate	3	27	-0.262	Not significant
Read & Write	-	-		
Primary Education	5	2		
Intermediate Education	-	4		
Secondary Education	1	2		
Technical Education	-	-		
University Education	-	-		
Fourth Wife's Education				
Illiterate	1	2	0.175	Not significant
Read & Write	-	-		
Primary Education	1	1		
Intermediate Education	1	-		
Secondary Education	-	1		
Technical Education	-	-		
University Education	-	1		
Family of Procreation				
Fewer than 5	70	215	0.065	0.01
5-11	66	334		
More than 11	43	195		
Family of Orientation				
Fewer than 5	53	251	-0.047	Not Significant
5-11	95	392		
More than 11	31	101		
Use of Mass Media				
No use	5	46	-0.101	0.01
Seldom	55	273		
Sometimes	72	293		
Always	47	132		
Number of Dead Children				
1 child	20	140	-0.037	Not significant
2 children	10	65		
3-5 children	7	36		

CONCLUSIONS

The study points out very clearly that the rural family in Saudi Arabia is interested in having a large number of children since the average number of desired children is about ten children per family. Compared to the average of the size of the family of procreation, which almost reaches nine persons, the average of the size of the family of orientation reaches about eight persons in the family, and is considered the main reason behind polygamy. The majority of the sample refused the use of birth control methods since they considered such methods against their religion, which imposes rigid conditions on the use of such methods. In contrast, the use of family planning processes met with acceptance within more than a third of the sample (42.5%) since it provides the family with opportunity for a good upbringing of the children, makes the life of the couple more comfortable through arranging the timing of their children's birth and minimizes the expenditures of the family. The study reveals that the large majority of the respondents had positive attitudes toward fertility and family planning processes and it found significant relationships to the respondents' ages, level of education, monthly average income, first wife's education, family of procreation and exposure to the mass media.

Saudi Arabia presently has a large number of expatriates, approaching 5,258,079 persons, working in the country in different fields, particularly in the instructional and technical sectors (Al-Khraif, 2003). Therefore, the attitude toward high fertility should not prove frightening, since those coming children can replace these foreigners deal with the situation. Hence, the study recommends that planners and developers in Saudi Arabia should be aware of the people's attitudes toward fertility and the inclination to have a large number of children. Such a desire should be met by providing the facilities for those future children, including good education, good health services, good housing and other necessary services, in order to achieve the planned development that will transform the country and enable it to join the developed countries.

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الخصوبة وتنظيم الأسرة في المناطق الريفية بالمملكة العربية السعودية
إبراهيم بن عبد الله الحميدي
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يهدف هذا البحث إلى: (أ) معرفة إدراك المبحوثين نحو الخصوبة في المناطق الريفية بالمملكة العربية السعودية من وجهة نظر الرجال؛ (ب) معرفة إدراك المبحوثين نحو تنظيم الأسرة وتحديد النسل؛ (ج) معرفة اتجاه المبحوثين نحو الخصوبة؛ (د) معرفة العلاقة بين خصائص المبحوثين والخصوبة. أجري البحث على عينة قوامها ٩٢٣ رب أسرة موزعين على ست مناطق إدارية بالمملكة ويعيشون في ٧٥ قرية تم اختيارهم بواسطة العينات العنقودية والعشوائية. ولقد تم جمع البيانات بواسطة المقابلة الشخصية باستخدام إستبانة أعدت لهذا الغرض واستخدمت أساليب النزعة المركزية ومعامل الارتباط البسيط في تحليل البيانات البحثية.

أسفرت نتائج الدراسة عن وجود رغبة كبيرة لدى الرجال الريفيين في تكوين عائلة كبيرة الحجم، كما تبين الرفض التام من قبل المبحوثين لاستخدام موانع الحمل لتعارضها مع الشريعة الإسلامية والقبول المحدود لاستخدام برامج تنظيم الأسرة. تنادي هذه الدراسة المخططون بأن تؤخذ وجهات نظر هؤلاء الأفراد نحو تكوين الأسر الكبيرة بعين الاعتبار وذلك بغرض توفير الخدمات الضرورية واللائمة لسكان تلك القرى حتى يمكن سد الفجوة التي سوف يحدثها رحيل العمالة الوافدة الكبيرة الموجودة في الدولة.