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Abolghasem Pour Reza Anvar
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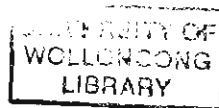
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**ATTITUDES OF IRANIAN MOTHERS TOWARDS FAMILY PLANNING,
FAMILY SIZE AND FERTILITY**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY



FROM:

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

BY

ABOLGHASEM POUR REZA ANVAR

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SCIENCES

DECEMBER 1995

DEDICATION

To the immortal memory of my mother:

A Goddess of humanity and kindness who died during this study.

DECLARATION

I declare that the work described in Attitudes of Iranian Mothers Towards Fertility Family Planning And Family Size is entirely my own work. References to the work of others are indicated in the text. This work has not been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any other University.

A. Pour reza

10/December/1995

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The Ministry of Health of Iran, Statistics Centre of Iran, and University of Tehran because of their very generous and particular assistance that has been given to the researcher in terms of access to clinics and administrative process of data collection, access to censuses and relevant data, computer facilities utilization and consulting services.

Finally, I would thank Iranian mothers, who agreed to participate in the study and gave their invaluable time to respond. I wish them all the best.

ABSTRACT

Fertility and fertility control behaviour in the context of developing countries is substantially important because of its health, environmental, socio-economic, and policy implications.

This study investigates the fertility behaviour of 406 Iranian women, randomly selected from three regions of the capital city of Tehran. These women were once married, aged 15-45 years and fertile. Demographic, socio-economic, attitudinal and policy-oriented variables relevant to fertility and fertility control behaviour together with psychological factors such as 'subjective norms' were taken into account in order to analyse the issues comprehensively.

Data was collected through a questionnaire, including three scales for 'abortion', 'contraceptive', and 'son preference' with 20 items, and 33 questions which have been recognized as valid, important, and influential on fertility and fertility control behaviour. Alpha Cronbach was calculated for each scale separately and for all items collectively. It revealed a very high 'intercorrelation' and 'internal consistency' among items of each scale and all other items and demonstrated a very distinctive reliability.

Chi-Square test, Analysis of Variance, Multiple and Stepwise Regression analysis were conducted in order to find association, differences, effects and importance of each variable on the sample's attitudes and behaviour towards abortion, contraceptive usage, sex preference and family size.

Demographic and socio-economic factors have significantly differentiated fertility behaviour of the respondent. A significant relationship was found between 'duration of marriage' and 'existing family size' on the one hand, and between 'women's status', as a combined variable, and 'ideal family size' on the other. A similar significant relationship was also found between 'women's status' and 'ideal family size' as well as 'attitudes towards

son preference' ($p < .01$). It has been concluded that 'attitudes towards abortion' and 'contraceptive usage' have mainly been affected by post-war socio-economic circumstances as well as policy-oriented variables.

Multiple and stepwise regression analysis demonstrated 'duration of marriage' - 'age at marriage' - as the strongest determinant of family size which accounts for about 62 per cent variation of 'family size' among the respondent. 'Education' as one of 'women's status' variables demonstrated stronger effect on 'family size', 'ideal family size' and 'son preference' than did the other variable, 'occupation'. 'Perceived ideal family size among other families' as a psychological factor, together with 'existing family size' of the respondents was recognized as major determinant of their 'ideal family size' and account for 29 out of 31 percent variation about the 'ideal family size' of the respondent. Data was processed by using SPSS and STATVIEW GRAPHICS statistical packages.

All important and determinant variables and their multidimensional implications on fertility, fertility control and social life are investigated. The findings are discussed with reference to gender differences as well as other structural characteristics of the study site.

The study revealed that 'husbands', 'health workers', 'friends and neighbours' are the most influential groups on fertility related behaviour of the respondents. There are also indicators of a successful family planning program effort on national level population growth control. It has also been asserted that the effectiveness of the programs is due mainly to post-war socio-economic circumstances. Despite this achievement, fertility control behaviour has a long way to be institutionalised and mean time there are some structural components which may favour higher fertility particularly in the absence of an effective family planing program.

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