



Attitudes Towards Fertility, Childbearing, and Their Relationship with Family Functioning in Married Women

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The unprecedented decrease in fertility and childbearing in many parts of the world is among the most critical demographic developments in recent years. Considering the consequences and adverse effects of reduced fertility and childbearing, as well as their importance for families and society, this study aimed to investigate attitudes toward fertility and childbearing and their relationship with family performance among married women of Esfrain City in 2024.

Methods and Materials: In this descriptive-analytical and cross-sectional, 225 married women without children and single children were randomly selected. The data collection tool included three sections: demographic information and questionnaires regarding attitudes towards fertility and childbearing (ATFC) and family functioning assessment (FAD). Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical analysis tests and Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficients in SPSS version 26 software.

Results: The average age of women surveyed was 28.34 ± 6.76 years. The results indicated that 50.2% of women held a positive attitude toward having children, while 42.7% exhibited an average attitude, and 7.1% demonstrated a poor attitude. The mean score for attitudes towards childbearing was 64.59 ± 18.46 . The analysis revealed no statistically significant relationship between the mean score of attitudes fertility and various demographic variables, including age ($p = 0.397$), age at marriage ($p = 0.492$), duration of marriage ($p = 0.894$), number of children ($p = 0.669$), housing ownership status ($p = 0.057$), education level ($p = 0.602$), spouse's education ($p = 0.939$), occupation ($p = 0.220$), and spouse's occupation ($p = 0.219$). However, among the demographic factors, only economic status ($p = 0.026$) showed a statistically significant relationship with the average score of attitudes towards having children. Furthermore, this study found a positive and significant relationship between attitudes toward fertility and childbearing and family functioning ($p = 0.001$; $r = 0.606$). Also, there was a positive and significant relationship between attitudes towards having children and various dimensions of family functioning, including problem-solving ($p = 0.001$; $r = 0.801$), communication ($p = 0.001$; $r = 0.779$), roles ($p = 0.001$; $r = 0.830$), emotional companionship ($p = 0.001$; $r = 0.777$), emotional intimacy ($p = 0.001$; $r = 0.809$), behavioral control ($p = 0.001$; $r = 0.733$), and overall performance ($p = 0.001$; $r = 0.940$).

Conclusion and Discussion: In the present study, fertility and childbearing tendencies are substantially related to family functioning. Therefore, to increase the likelihood of women having children, it is essential to improve family dynamics and its various dimensions through appropriate measures and the design of targeted interventions.

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