

FACTORS INFLUENCING DECISIONS ON FAMILY SIZE

by

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DECLARATION

“I declare that : *Factors influencing Decisions on Family Size*, is my own work and that the sources that I have used or noted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.”

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SUMMARY

The objective of this study was to explore women's perceptions of family size and to investigate factors that influence women's decisions on family size.

An exploratory research design was used. Fifty women who had completed their families, fifty women who had not started with their families and twenty five males who had not started with their families all residing at Sebokeng, were interviewed.

The results showed that the women's perceptions of family size were changing towards a small family norm. A small family was defined in terms of a family that one can afford to maintain financially and educate. Men support the idea of smaller families. Decisions on family size are influenced by external factors and experience in growing up in big families. Rearing a lot of children also influences women to prefer smaller families either for themselves or for their children.

KEY TERMS

FAMILY SIZE

PERCEPTIONS

BIG FAMILY

SMALL FAMILY

DECISIONS ON FAMILY SIZE

EXPERIENCE

ATTITUDES

WOMEN

SMALL FAMILY NORMS

MODERN FERTILITY PERCEPTIONS

TRADITIONAL FERTILITY PERCEPTIONS

FAMILY SIZE

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the main environmental conservation problems is South Africa's excessively high population growth. According to the Department of Welfare and Population Development the population of South Africa is 41 244 000 with a growth rate of 2,3% per annum. Gauteng is the most populated province in South Africa with the estimated population of 7 048 000 and a growth rate of 2,0%. The average number of children per family is 4,1 (Central Statistical Services (CSS) Household Survey : 1995). According to the national report on population (South African Communication Service (SACS) 1996: 161), which was drawn up for the international conference on population and development held in September 1994 in Cairo, South Africa's population will increase to 80 million in 30 years.

In 1984 the population development programme (PDP) was started in South Africa. The main aim of the programme is to ensure a balance between resources and the population numbers. One of the ways of achieving this objective is to facilitate perceptions towards a smaller family norm. The programme is based on the modernisation theory which states that:

- * Fertility behaviour will not change appreciably if the focus is only on socio-economic development and not on people's values as well.
- * Traditional, social and structural characteristics as well as psychological and social values of traditional African culture is counter productive for the acceptance of the small family norm and fertility decline.
- * Population development should only concentrate on changing people's traditional perceptions regarding fertility to modern perceptions. For this purpose fertility perceptions must be seen within the framework of general perceptions (Van Rensburg: 1990: 1).

This study will focus on the last point, namely, on perceptions of fertility.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

Before one can solve a problem one needs to define the problem and go further to determine the causes of the problem. The purpose of this study is therefore to explore the perceptions of black women of Sebokeng, Vanderbijlpark district on family size. The study will answer the following questions:

- What are the women of Sebokeng's perceptions of family size?
- What factors influence perceptions and decision making process regarding family size?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- (1) to explore the women's perceptions of the family size.
- (2) to investigate factors that influence the women's decision making regarding family size.
- (3) to make recommendations to the Department of Welfare and Population Development as to which areas they must concentrate on in facilitating perceptions toward small family norm and what the role of a social worker can be.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Because of the many variables that influence perceptions towards family size, the exploratory research design as discussed by Grinnell (1983:237) was used.

This design is used when little is known about the field of study and when one wants to gather data to find out "what is out there?" The information gathered

can be used to generate the hypothesis which can be verified using more rigorous research designs. The intervening variables can never be controlled for one cannot generalise the results of the study beyond the particular experimental group or setting. The purpose of the study is to build a foundation of general ideas and tentative theories which can be explored later with more precise and hence more complete research designs and comparative methodologies.

1.5 SAMPLING

Three groups of respondents were used for the purposes of the study.

1.5.1 GROUP A

This group consisted of 50 **women who had completed their families**. All the women were found in the clubs for the aged in Sebokeng, a black residential area in the Western Metropolitan Sub-structure in Vanderbijlpark. The average years of stay in the area was 12,7 years. Half of the respondents grew up in the rural areas in the Free State Province and the other half grew up in the urban areas of the old Vaal Triangle of which Sasolburg is now in the Free State Province and Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark are in Gauteng Province.

The clubs for the aged were established by Vanderbijlpark municipal nurses, for health purposes. Later on the social worker took over for the purposes of handwork, lunch and socialisation. The aged meet on Tuesdays and Wednesdays especially during the last two weeks of the month when pensions are not being paid out. Although the clubs are for the aged, women who do not qualify for an old age pension are also admitted and they also assist with other activities of club members. Although there were three clubs, it was not possible to get 50 respondents from one club only. Therefore the researcher invited members from all three clubs to participate in the research basing it on availability sample. Amongst the respondents 88% (44) received old age pensions and 12% (6) were members of the club who had not reached pensionable age but they had completed their families. The average age of the respondents was 55,24 and the highest percentage of the respondents occurred in the age group of 65 years.

An analysis of the respondents' marital status showed that 28 were married, 18 were widowed and 4 were divorced.

1.5.2 GROUP B

The second group consisted of 50 **women who had not started with their families**. All the respondents reside in Sebokeng, a black residential area in the Western Metropolitan Sub-structure in Vanderbijlpark.

The average years of stay in the area was 7,9 years. Of these respondents 84% (42) grew up in the urban areas in the Vaal Triangle and 16% (8) grew up in the rural areas mainly in the Free State Province.

All the respondents had completed standard 10 and were studying towards a teacher's diploma at Sebokeng College of Education. Since it was towards the examination and some students studied independently either at home or at different venues, researcher interviewed only those students who were available on condition that they had not started with their families.

The respondents' ages were between 20 and 29 years. The average age of the respondents was 20,12 and the highest percentage of the respondents appeared in the age group of 21 years.

An analysis of the respondents' marital status showed that 98% (49) were single and 2%(1) was single but lived with men.

Although this group was used to achieve the same objectives of the study as stated in 1.3 the group was also used for the following objectives:

- * To determine whether there was a change in women's perceptions of family size.

- * To determine whether there was a difference in perceptions of family size of the higher educated women compared to less educated women.

- * To determine whether there is a difference in the perceptions of the older women compared to the younger women.

1.5.3 GROUP C

The group consisted of 25 males who completed Std 10 and who were also training for teachers' diploma at Sebokeng College of Education. All the males resided in Sebokeng at the time of the study and they were all single. The male respondents were not part of the study as such but were used as a reference for female respondents' responses.

Regarding the interview schedule the same procedure was followed as for female respondents.

1.6 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Interview schedules were constructed for all the groups by the researcher.

For the group **that had already completed their families**, a schedule with semi-structured questions was constructed (see annexure A). This schedule included in-depth open ended and closed questions regarding the respondents' perceptions of family size and what determined their perceptions. It was intended that each respondent would not be interviewed for more than an hour so as to maintain her attention span.

A pilot study was conducted with four respondents. Their responses and comments were recorded, ambiguous questions were identified and appropriate grammatical problems were attended to. Prior to and after the pilot study, the draft interview schedule was submitted to the researcher's promoters for discussion and corrections. An interview schedule was printed for each respondent.

Between May and July 1995 the respondents were formally interviewed. The initial contact was made with the social worker for the Association for the Care of the Aged to negotiate that the members of the clubs be interviewed for research purposes.

A personal contact was then made with the respondents where the purpose of research was explained. The researcher then personally conducted one semi-structured interview with each respondent. During the interview she recorded the respondents' answers and comments on the schedule.

The researcher used the combination of both direct i.e. asking the exact question using both open and closed questions and non direct interview styles which allowed unlimited freedom to explore, based on the general problem area. Although she followed the questions on the schedule, she permitted discussion with the interviewee to get more information on specific issues. This allowed them to focus on the prescribed topic, but prevented them from feeling inhibited from expanding in their answers. The main subjects covered in the interview schedule were demographic characteristics of the respondents, perceptions of family size, the actual family size of the respondents and factors influencing the decisions on family size.

With the second group i.e. **the group of women who had not started with their families**, the researcher constructed an interview schedule (see annexure B) based on the responses of women who had completed their families. In other words the questionnaire was constructed after the responses of group A were studied. The main subjects covered in the interview schedule were demographic characteristics of the respondents, perception of family size and factors influencing the decisions regarding family size.

Regarding constructing the interview schedule, pilot study and administration of the interview schedule, the same steps as with women who had completed their families were followed. The respondents were interviewed between September

and November 1995. They were interviewed at the college at the familiar environment. The responses and comments were recorded on the schedule.

For the male respondents who had not started with their families a schedule (see annexure C) based on the responses of the female respondents (group A and B) was constructed. The schedule consisted of closed questions where the respondents had to respond with “yes or no” or “true or false”.

Since studies (which will be discussed later in chapter 2) that were conducted by some researchers showed that men have an influence on decision making regarding family size, the male students were interviewed to confirm or dispute this perception and as a reference for some of the women’s perceptions.

The same procedures that were followed for interviewing female respondents (groups A and B) was followed with the male students. The male students were interviewed in November 1995.

1.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

The commonly used concepts in this report are hereby defined.

Big Family: Rainwater (1965: 161) defines a big family as a family with four or more children.

Culture: According to the Study Guide for Socio-Cultural Anthropology(1988: 427) culture is the ways of thinking and acting and material objects created and recognised by a human group as standards acquired by individuals through learning.

Giddens (1992: 31) defines culture as the whole way of life of members of the society. It includes how they dress, their marriage customs and family, their patterns of work, religious ceremonies and leisure pursuits. It covers also goods they create which become meaningful to them.

Haralambos and Heald (1987: 3) defines a culture of society as the way of life of its members; the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation. Culture has two essential qualities: firstly it is learned, secondly it is shared.

For the purpose of this study Haralambos and Heald's definition will be used.

Child: According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996:10) child means a person under the age of 18 years.

The Child Craft dictionary (1993: 82) defines a child as someone's son or daughter of any age. In this study the Child Craft definition will be used but step-children will be excluded.

Family: According to Giddens (1992: 384 - 386) a family is a group of persons directly linked by kin connections, the adult members of which assume responsibility for caring for children . Kinship between these individuals is established through marriage. Families can be identified as nuclear or extended families. A nuclear family consists of two adults living together in a household with their own or adopted children. An extended family can be defined as a group of three or more generations living within the same dwelling or very close to each other.

Haralambos and Heald (1987: 328-6) defines a family as a social group characterised by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and one or more children, own or adopted. The smallest family unit is the nuclear family.

Haralambos and Heald's definition will be used for the purpose of this study. Adopted children will also be excluded from the definition.

Family Size: Refers to the number of people in a nuclear family i.e. a family that consists of parents and their own children.

Fertility: Refers to the reproductive power of people reflected in patterns of child bearing. Fertility levels of the population are measured by the total fertility rate i.e. the average number of children that would be born alive to a woman during her child bearing years (Guideline document 1991: 2).

Infant Mortality

Rate: Refers to the number of children who die before they reach their first birthday (Guideline document 1991:2).

Perceptions: Robbins (1993: 135) defines perception as a process by which individuals organise and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment.

According to the guideline document from the Department of National Health and Population Development (1991: 1)

perceptions refer to the way people view aspects of family life such as ideas and people . Perceptions are linked to values, attitudes, beliefs and norms which are culturally determined through socialisation and internalisation.

The National Health definition will be used for the purposes of this study.

Small Family: Rainwater (1965: 161) defines a small family as a family with two children.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

1.8.1 Research interviewing was used. Grinnell (1988: 269-73) identified certain shortcomings with research interviewing that can result in inaccurate answers. The shortcomings are misunderstanding the questions, difficulty in remembering some facts or difficulty in discussing some issues openly especially in cases of family planning and family size topic.

This was the case with the group that had completed their families as some of the aged respondents were not comfortable with the pilot study. The researcher tried to control these factors by using social work interviewing techniques such as probing and indirect questions and the theoretical base of the study through literature review.

- 1.8.2 Using availability sampling one could not determine beforehand who the respondents would be. This was complicated by the fact that attendance at the clubs of group A participants is not compulsory. The members of the club could decide to absent themselves without informing the group leader at the club. It was also accepted that some do not come when it is pension pay out day.
- 1.8.3 With the group of students who had not started with their families and the male students the same situation arose i.e. the researcher could not determine before time who the respondents would be. This was complicated by the fact that the students had completed their syllabus and were preparing for the examinations. Some students did not come back to the college at all or left after break to study at the library or different venues. The researcher had to get volunteers from different classes as long as they had not had children. There was no guarantee that those who agreed to be interviewed would be present when they had to be interviewed. Although the researcher managed to get 50 female students to participate only 25 male students were available.
- 1.8.4 With the male respondents closed questions were used. The male students were used as a reference for female student respondents' responses and were not part of the study. It is women's perceptions that researcher was interested in. Closed questions did not provide the male respondents with an opportunity to explain their responses and how they were related to females' responses.

1.8.5 The male respondents who had completed their families were not interviewed. Their perceptions could not be used as a reference in the study.

1.8.6 The results cannot be generalised beyond the defined sample statistics i.e. black women who have completed their families and those who have not started their families, who live in Sebokeng in Vanderbijlpark.

1.9 PRESENTATION OF CONTENTS

Chapter I : The orientation and Introduction

Chapter II: Literature review

Chapter III: Discussion of research results

Chapter IV: Conclusion and recommendations

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher will discuss the models and the theoretical base for the study, perceptions of family size, factors influencing perceptions and decisions about family size and link them with the expectations on the role of women in the Southern Sotho culture and how perceptions are changed.

2.2 MODELS AND THEORETICAL BASE FOR THE STUDY

2.2.1 THE CONVERGENCE HYPOTHESIS:

Goodman (1978: 539) discussed the convergence hypothesis that was developed by the functionalists. This hypothesis states that as industrialisation proceeds all industrial countries would converge or become more and more similar to one another. Another aspect of the hypothesis concerns change in personal values that modernisation is thought to entail. In this hypothesis modernisation was defined as "a transformation of traditional values of pre-modern society into the types of technology and associated organisations that characterise the advanced,

economically prosperous and relatively politically stable nation of Western World". The values characterising the modern person consist of among others e.g.

- * openness to new experiences
- * high occupational and educational ambitions
- * an interest in planning one's affairs, being prompt and readiness to take a role in community affairs.

Goodman (1978: 541) concluded that living in the city, attending school and working in the industry are the most important modernising agents. These agents help bring about changes that are important in the process of gender socialisation and the expected gender role behaviour e.g. fertility behaviour.

The convergence hypothesis forms a basis on which the population development programme concentrates in facilitating perceptions towards a small family norm. The question is why do we need to facilitate perceptions towards a small family norm. The answer is found partly in the demographic transition theory on which the programme is also based. This theory also explains the stage at which the South African population is. Researcher will also discuss models that explain factors influencing decisions regarding family size.

2.2.2 THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION THEORY:

According to this theory, demographic transition takes place in four stages.

- 1st stage: both infant mortality and fertility are high resulting in a stable population growth rate
- 2nd stage: infant mortality drops, fertility remains high and causes a rapid population growth
- 3rd stage: fertility begins to drop
- 4th stage: fertility and infant mortality are at a low and approximately equal level. This results in a zero or negative population growth.

According to this theory the South African population is presently somewhere between the second and the third stages of the demographic transition i.e. the birth rate is still high compared to the lower death rate. This results in rapid population growth rate. There are significant signs of declining population rate especially in urban areas probably because of the modernising influence of modern life-style. Amongst blacks fertility has just started declining, the death rate is fairly low but the infant mortality rate is still high and can yet decline significantly. Due to the fact that most blacks still live in rural areas and are not exposed to modern social and economical influences and may see their children as economic assets, they maintain some traditional norms with regard to big families and may maintain high birth rates (van Rensburg: 1992: 9-11).

Since Sebokeng is a township in the urban areas the population in this area is expected to be showing a significant decline. The situation in Sebokeng will be discussed in detail in chapter 3.

2.2.3 MODELS THAT EXPLAIN FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE DECISIONS ON FAMILY SIZE

a) A DIAGONAL MOBILITY MODEL

This model links the wife's educational attainment to her ability to influence family decisions. It also shows that a higher educational level may lead to increased communication between husband and wife and decision making strategies. It goes on to show that the role of educational attainment in shaping demands for children is a process that may be experienced by both partners. The size of the family of origin may be associated with both educational attainment and reference norms about the appropriate size of one's family. The expectation that children will be afforded the same educational opportunities as their parents also suggests a downward pressure on family size goals that would be experienced by both spouses. The educational attainment may also affect one's inclination to invest in other sources of personal satisfaction rather than increase family size (Sorenson 1989: 125-35).

b) **THE ONE DECISION AND THE SEQUENTIAL DECISION MODEL OF FERTILITY.**

Urdu (1983: 117-28) discussed the one decision and the sequential decision model of fertility as the process that is being followed in making decisions about family size.

The one decision model states that when couples marry they decide how many children they want to have and set forth to achieve their goal - never swayed from it by any circumstances surrounding them. This model is rooted in the proposition that fertility values and preferences are acquired through socialisation in childhood and youth and that husbands and wives enter into marriage with preferences which are either the same initially or are negotiated before or early in marriage with a fertility plan.

The sequential decision model proposes that the number of children a couple wants is constantly under reconsideration in response to problems of child bearing, economic prospects, the developing character of marriage and other factors. According to this model decisions are made one birth at a time. The assumption is that a couple does not develop one optimal control strategy. In each period an independent decision is made with respect to fertility control.

c) **THE MICRO-PROBABILISTIC MODEL OF FAMILY EXTENSIONS**

Several studies (Osman & Yamashita 1987: 377-82; Park 1983: 332-352; Klat 1983: 171-85) discussed the micro-probabilistic model of family extension which explains the effect of preferred sex of children on the family size.

According to this model couples determine the desired number of boys and girls and the maximum desired number of children at the beginning of their productive years and continue to produce until the desired number of children reaches the desired number of preferred sex. This model concludes that : -

- Couples with an unbalanced sex ratio among offsprings tend to have large families.
- All girl families are shown to be particularly motivated to increase further but it is not clear to what extent son preference produces extra birth.
- The last member is more likely to be a boy rather than a girl regardless of the family size.
- Parents try to have at least one boy and one girl regardless of their final number of children, once achieved the probability of stopping having children increases.

The model also suggests that fertility is a sequential decision making process. Depending on the stage of family building the sex of the earlier births seems to be

an important consideration as to whether or not to have additional children. Birth beyond the second child seems to be affected by the sex of the fourth child. A complicated decision making process seems to take place considering the sex sequence of all the previous children.

2.3 PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY SIZE

2.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Family size norms are mainly determined by cultural values, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions. Thus a couple with more traditional fertility perceptions would adhere to a large family norm and produce many children. Traditional fertility perceptions are characterised by high status and value placed on children. Children are viewed as gifts from the upper being, which cannot be refused. The more children a woman bears for her husband and family the higher the status. The woman's role is viewed primarily as a bearer and caretaker of children at home. Children are also viewed as security for old age and remembrance after death.

Likewise a couple with modern fertility perceptions will most likely adhere to small family norm and use contraceptives to plan their family. Modern fertility perceptions are characterised by a lower value placed on children. The small

family is viewed as economically and personally advantageous. People believe in planning families and the use of contraceptives to limit family size. They do not attach economic value to children. They have a broad view on the women's role, which includes women as additional or main bread winners and decision makers in the family.

In this section the researcher will discuss perceptions of family size, their determinants and how perceptions are changed.

2.3.2 FERTILITY PERCEPTIONS

According to the guideline document compiled by the Department of National Health and Population Development (1991:1) perceptions refer to the way in which people view aspects of life, such as objects, ideas, happenings, people etc. Perceptions are linked to values, attitudes, beliefs and norms which are mainly culturally determined through socialisation and internalisation. Perceptions related to cultural life and world views change less readily.

According to this document fertility perception refers to people's views on aspects related to fertility. These aspects include marriage, sexual relations, contraceptive use, abortion, fertility decision making, patterns of communication between sexual partners, family size, women's roles, the value of children, gender and child spacing.

Fertility perceptions may be viewed in the continuum with traditional and modern perceptions as extreme role. People do not have either traditional or modern perceptions but are on differing points on the continuum. Thus, not all people living in more traditional settings necessarily have traditional fertility perceptions and vice versa.

Mostert & Lötter (1990: 63-73) reported that the desired average family size was 3,6 for South African black couples and the desired number of children was 4 which is lower than of the other African states. This study showed that the fertility desires had undergone decline among blacks in South Africa. The lower desires are prevalent in urban areas. They also reported that more than a quarter of black women who had two children indicated that they did not want more children. On the other hand black women between the ages 20-24 had almost the same desired family size as other non-white groups. Taking the low fertility norms of young black women into account, Mostert & Lötter expected that the desire to terminate reproduction after a small number of children have been born will increase in future.

Vlassoff (1990: 216-25) found that the ideal number of boys and girls was declining and the family size norm was shifting downward to a two child norm in India. Both men and women expressed concern over lack of employment opportunities, the growing shortage of land, the need for increased investments in

education and the costs entailed in child bearing. Having a small family was considered a rational response to problems.

Mott and Mott (1985: 88-99) conducted a study in Yoruba village of Bolorundora in South West Nigeria. They found that fertility intentions within the context of this culture are formed on an individual not on a family level. Women had preferences which were clearly individual and not related to their husband's desires.

Harrison (1982: 221) did research in the Third World. He came to the conclusion that, while the ideal number of children in the developed countries was 2 - 3,1, it was 3,8 - 9,4 in the Third World. He stated that people in the Third World believe in large families. He argued the point of lack of access to family planning clinics. He stated that every culture had its family planning methods. The fact that people do not use these methods shows that they want to plan large families. He concluded by saying unless attitudes to large family size and costs and benefits to having them are changed making contraceptives available may provide a social service but may not have significant impact on birth rate in many countries.

If one was to adopt Harrison's views one would first have to establish what determines the perceptions of family size. In the following section the researcher will look at the factors that influence family size perceptions and decision making process regarding family size.

2.3.3 FACTORS INFLUENCING PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY SIZE

Silverman (1982: 376) described the factors influencing perceptions as factors in the target, factors in the perceiver and factors in the situation. For the purpose of this study researcher will discuss factors in the perceiver and factors in the situation. Researcher will also discuss how values influence perceptions.

a) FACTORS IN THE PERCEIVER

When a person looks at a target and tries to interpret what he sees, that interpretation is heavily influenced by personal characteristics of the individual perceiver. Among the more relevant personal characteristics affecting perceptions are attitudes, past experiences and expectations.

*** ATTITUDES**

Tedeschi (1976: 185) states that an attitude is a combination of beliefs and values. Beliefs usually involve expectation of response. The outcome associated with belief has a particular value to a person. A person's beliefs and values serve as an anchor for many social adjustments and agreeing or disagreeing with statements or opinions regarding various issues. The beliefs and values of an individual are of paramount importance in determining behaviour. The ability to predict behaviour from knowledge of an attitude may be improved by consideration of other relevant

attitudes held by an individual and whether his behaviour leads to contradicting or competing responses.

(Baro & Byne 1984: 124; Silverman 1982: 399) defined attitudes as a predisposition to respond in a consistent manner to a particular person, group or object. Attitudes may have been learnt if not through personal experience then through the teachings of others. Attitudes may strongly shape our perceptions of the social world, our relations with others and influence a long range of social behaviour. They reflect how one feels about something.

Since attitudes are learned through personal experience and the teachings of others, a woman whose parents believed that a role of a woman is to bear as many children as possible in order to please her husband may also develop the same attitude and end up having a big family. A woman whose husband feels that using contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancies is wrong may not plan her family and end up with a big family size.

* **EXPERIENCE**

According to the Guideline Document from the Department of National Health (1991:3) it was concluded that experience with modern institutions, such as the school and workplace away from home as well as exposure to mass media, have an influence on people's (fertility) perceptions. Institutional changes provide a new basis for individual experience in the school, the work, the city etc. Exposure to

modernising and developing forces and ideas, changes the way they perceive, value, express and behave with respect to themselves, their interpersonal relations and the world around them. In cases of women, experience with modern institutions helps change the way they view their role as that of a wife and bearing children. The woman's status is then determined by achieved rather than prescribed status. Experience in growing up in a big family or in bringing up a big or small family can also have an influence in deciding on family size.

* **EXPECTATIONS**

Expectations can also have an influence on the fertility perceptions. The expectations include expectations of the husband and the in-laws about the role of the woman and the expectation that parents have about the role that children will play when they are old.

Sorenson (1989: 125 - 35) found that the expectation that children will be afforded the same educational opportunities as their parents suggest a downward pressure on family size goals that would be experienced by both spouses.

The expectations of the parents also have an influence on the use of contraceptives. Higgins (1981: 136-43) states that not only is the timing of contraception an important factor but frequency of the use and the type of method used has a significant bearing on expected family size. Those who use one method

expect to have few children than those who use mixed methods. Regular users also expect fewer children than occasional users.

b) FACTORS IN THE SITUATION

The context in which we see objects or events is important. Elements in the surrounding environment, i.e. the situation, influence perceptions.

Chaundhuri (1983:5-6) states that in urban areas, lack of space, costs of educating children and attempts to improve the standards of living motivate people to limit their families. In rural areas, some traditional norms with regard to big families and fertility may also maintain high birth rates.

Harrison (1982: 227) states that social pressures sometimes push people to have large families even if they do not want them. He also argues that people have large families because their children will be a source of income, yet their poverty is increased because everyone else follows the same strategy.

c) VALUES

Values are important because they lay foundations for understanding of attitudes and motivations and because they influence our perception. Further they imply that certain behaviours or outcomes are preferred to others.

Values are basic convictions that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to the opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. When we rank the individuals values in terms of interest we obtain a persons value system (Robbins 1993: 171).

Milton Rokeach as quoted by Robbins (1993: 173-74) created the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) which consists of two sets of values with each set containing eighteen individual value items. One set, called the terminal values, referred to the desirable end-states of existence i.e. goals that a person would like to achieve during his life time. The other set is the instrumental, values referring to preferable mode of behaviour or means of achieving terminal behaviour. People in the same category or occupation tend to hold similar values.

The terminal values have an influence on family size. A woman who values comfortable life for example, may either have more children if she believes that they will be a source of income that will provide her with the kind of life she wants or she may decide to have few children who will not demand more money for education and maintenance. This woman will then be able to invest for her future.

2.4 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DECISIONS ON FAMILY SIZE

The researcher reviewed literature to establish the factors that influence perceptions that affect the decision making process regarding family size.

Different authors came up with different factors which will be discussed below:

2.4.1 AGE AT MARRIAGE

In his study Bailey (1989: 285-92) concluded that the wife's age at first marriage is inversely and significantly related to fertility. Therefore raising age of marriage by means of some social legislation or extended schooling can lower fertility substantially. This was also stated by Chaundhuri (1983: 5-6). He referred to general marital fertility as "the number of children born per year per 1000 married women having particular indicators e.g. income group, literacy rate or religious group". Chaundhuri argued that the birth rate in India might be reduced by as much as 30% if all the women married by the age of 19 years instead of 18 years.

Nagi (1983: 245-62) concluded that delaying the age at marriage contributed to a decline in fertility in Muslim countries. He stated that since marriage signifies

the initiation of male sexuality an increase in age at marriage will mean the postponement of sexual activities and the first birth.

2.4.2 AGE AT FAMILY FORMATION

In his study Pillai (1984: 290-95) analysed the effect of age at family formation on the family size. Age at family formation is the mother's age at the birth of the first child. According to the study age at family formation has a negative effect on the family size i.e. the greater the age at family formation the more likely is the woman to be interested in extramarital activities such as school and participation in labour market and the more is the decrease in preference for motherhood.

2.4.3 FAMILY PLANNING

Warren (1987: 42- 8) investigated the most important determinants of fertility in Puerto Rico. He came to the conclusion that contraceptive use especially female sterilisation has the strongest effect on fertility. The prevalence of contraceptive use is high in the educated groups. Breast feeding was found to have little influence on fertility.

Harrison (1982 :221) argued that the point of lack of access to family planning clinics cannot be used as an excuse for having large families since every culture has its family planning methods.

2.4.4 SEX OF THE CHILDREN

Studies by Karki (1988: 169-78) and Arnold and Kuo (1984: 229-318) discussed the reasons why parents preferred a specific sex of children. Parents, in Nepal and Korea respectively, prefer sons to daughters because of their culture and the various roles that sons play in their family life e.g. carrying a family name, performing death rituals to ensure that the gates of heaven are open to parents. More parents especially in rural areas wanted boys more for religious reasons. In other words girls were wanted for qualities that apply when they are young e.g. companionship while boys were wanted for qualities that apply when they are old.

2.4.5 EDUCATION

Sorenson (1989: 125-35) stated that the expectation that the children will be afforded the same educational opportunities as their parents also suggests a downward pressure on family size goals that would be experienced by both spouses. The educational attainment may also affect one's inclination to invest in other sources of personal satisfaction rather than increase family size.

Maternal education has been found to influence age at first birth positively, age at first birth further influences the number of children the couples have negatively. High educational attainment impinges on attitude change towards fertility behaviour. It may also improve literacy levels which may determine access to information related to acquisition of family size. Improvement of the status of women through education and participation in labour market is important because it reduces the birth rate. Informal education is also important since most of what people learn at school about sex, reproduction and families comes to them informally through peer communication and informal exposure to information through class and non class situation (Gatara 1982: 181).

Gatara (1982: 201) further found that marital education has a negative effect on fertility. She recommended that education should be made compulsory as it will help increase the age at marriage for females, eliminate young age at marriage and/or change the cultural perception that young girls should get married and bear children. In addition, education will facilitate acquisition of information on family planning, prepare females for search of employment outside their home and compete with the demand for raising large families. Although husbands' education is not statistically significant it does exhibit a negative effect on fertility. Thus parents who obtain good education may earn a higher salary through better employment opportunities. She concluded by saying mass education may be a key to fertility decline.

2.4.6 RELIGION

Gatara (1982: 235) stated that no detailed probe as to how religious institutions enter into a decision making process about family size has been made. She goes on to say that Christian religion is capable of affecting fertility preferences and family size especially in cases of Christian schools because of the means by which the church imparts its values on young people in schools.

Harrison (1982: 119) stated that those religions which are against family planning, like Roman Catholic Church and the Zion Christian Church, cannot quote a verse that is against family planning in the bible. Those people impose their beliefs and play on other peoples feelings until they feel guilty. If you press further you find that they fear that family planning will encourage immorality and premarital sex.

In India it was found that superstitions, beliefs and customs even without religious restrictions, greatly influence family planning. General marital fertility in India is lower among Christians than Hindus and Moslems (Chaundhuri 1983: 5-6).

In the study on the attitudes of black South African men towards fertility and family planning, Lötter (1977: 1-10) found that less than 30% of the sample believed that God or “Badimo” does not approve of family planning.

2.4.7 FAMILY INCOME AND THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF THE CHILDREN

Family income has been found to play a role on deciding on the family size. Large families can be found to be a hindrance in achieving socially desired goals because of the restrictions children place on their parents hence affecting the opportunities to work and be involved in other extra-marital activities. This view was confirmed by Mostert & Lötter (1990:45-62) who stated that the economic value of the children has declined. Children have become an economic liability. They do not only become dependant much longer but parents need large amounts of money to educate, clothe and feed them. This has led to an emergence of a two child family norm in developing countries.

Karki (1988: 169-78) stated that the economic value of the children is changing even in rural areas of Nepal. Also the reasons for wanting sons and daughters support the suggestion that the economic motive of having children may be weakening. Many villagers link poverty to large family size. The land has also become so expensive that its purchase has become practically impossible. Those families that had land have become moderately well off because as generations grow, inheritance customs continually divide large estates between sons.

Pillai (198: 290-95) conducted a study among women in India. He came to the conclusion that the family income also plays a role in deciding on family size.

2.4.8 SOCIALISATION

Socialisation is the process by which individuals learn the culture of their society through the family, educational system, occupational groups and peer groups. Without socialisation an individual would bear little resemblance to any human being defined as normal by the standards of his society (Haralambos and Heald 1987: 4-5).

The family type has also been found to influence perceptions towards family size. Extended and joint families tend to favour large families while nuclear families because of inadequate household labour and economic support favour smaller families. On the other hand Oosthuizen in Mostert & Lötter (1990: 211-222) stated that although the nuclear family is still in tact in some areas it is now supplemented by one parent families which have a strong influence on family size perceptions.

Higgins (1981: 160-64) stated that a woman's own pregnancy history seems to influence the number of children she would like her daughter to have. The higher the pregnancy rate of a woman is the more are the children wanted for

her daughter. Users of family planning want fewer children for their daughters than non users.

2.4.9 THE ATTITUDE OF MEN

Frankel (1985: 155-62) carried out a study among the Huli of the Southern Highland in Papua New Guinea . He found that women have accepted and need contraceptives. He also suggests that some men would accept family planning if it is effectively provided. He concluded by saying “For the programme to be accepted men’s attitudes will have to alter”.

Lötter (1977: 1-10) carried out a study with 2000 men in South Africa excluding the then self governing states. The purpose of the study was to assess the attitudes of black men towards fertility and family planning. The study found that the younger and better educated urban segments of the population showed a greater preference for smaller families. Generally men thought that children are a gift from God. About half of the urban areas respondents were in favour of the idea of using contraceptives to prevent many pregnancies.

Mbizvo & Adamchalk (1991: 31-8) conducted a study in Zimbabwe in 1988 to assess the attitude of men towards family planning. They concluded that the major problem facing African based family planning promotion and population

development is the exclusion of men when probing circumstances that govern the couples' contraceptive behaviour. In this study it was found that:

- * family planning was not used for reducing the family size but for spacing - thus fertility is still high because male partners still desire large families.

- * There is evidence that the influence of education and urban residence is changing men's attitudes therefore reducing family size desires.

2.4.10 CULTURE

Mostert & Lötter (1990:50) stated that fertility decline does not and cannot occur in widely differing socio-economic contexts. Its onset appears to be determined more by ill understood cultural factors e.g. the role and status of women; than by any objectively ascertainable development factors such as labour force participation of women, reduction of infant mortality rate levels and education. He concluded by saying the Indian population is still very high in their country of origin because their culture still plays an important role.

Haralambos & Heald (1987: 3) defined culture of a society as a way of life of its members, the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation. It also defines accepted ways of behaving for

members of a particular society. Culture is learned and transmitted through socialisation.

Every culture contains norms and values. A norm is a specific guide to action which defines acceptable and appropriate behaviour in particular situations.

Norms are enforced by positive and negative sanctions i.e. reward and punishment. Sanctions can be informal like an approving or disapproving glance or formal such as a fine or reward offered by an official body. Usually a threat of such negative sanctions is sufficient to enforce normative behaviour.

A value is a belief that something is good and desirable and provides specific directions for conduct. It also defines what is important, worthwhile and worth striving for.

Also related to the culture of the society is the social position known as stature. Some are relatively fixed, there is little an individual can do to change his assignment to a particular position e.g. gender. Each status in a society is accompanied by a number of norms known as roles which define how an individual occupying a particular status is expected to behave. Thus, norms, values and roles are culturally determined as a result gender roles are a product of culture (Haralambos & Heald 1987: 373).

2.4.11 THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Haralambos & Heald (1987: 337-9) stated that culture is the means by which men control and regulate nature. Women are seen to be closer to nature and therefore as inferior to men. Their bodies and physiological functions are more concerned with natural processes like menstruation, pregnancy, child birth and lactation. Their social roles as mothers and the family itself is seen to be closer to nature compared to the activities and institutions outside the family. On the other hand men are seen to be closer to culture since their thought processes are defined as more abstract and objective than those of women. Since culture is seen to be superior to nature women's psyche is devaluated and men come out on top making decisions. In marriage the wife rather than the husband makes adjustments, conforms to wishes and increasingly comes to resemble him.

a. CASE STUDY ON CULTURE OF TWO SOUTHERN SOTHO WOMEN

Two women belonging to the Southern Sotho culture, one who grew up in the traditional community in Qwa Qwa and one who grew up in the rural areas in Lesotho, were interviewed by researcher. The reason why women from the Southern Sotho culture were interviewed was the fact that the culture of the community (about 90%) is Southern Sotho. The purpose of the interviews was to determine the thinking of Southern Sotho women regarding the effect of their culture and the role of the woman on family size. The findings from these

interviews cannot be generalised to all Southern Sotho women. The following information was obtained.

The sex of the children plays an important role from the time children are born. Boys are regarded as important in the family because they will keep a family name and remain with the parental family. They are also given an opportunity to be educated because it is believed that they will uplift the family in future.

Girls are not given an opportunity to be educated because as soon as they are old enough to marry they will leave the parental family. If they are educated they will get jobs and spend their earnings on the husbands' families and thus improve their husbands' quality of life. When a decision about education is made the future of the daughter i.e. whether or not she will have a good quality of life, is not considered. Her husband is expected to provide and look after her. The community also plays a role. If parents continue to educate their daughters they are seen to have deserted their traditions. Parents are expected to prepare their daughter for marriage as marriage is seen to be more important than education.

Girls are then expected to get married between the age of 17-20. If a woman has reached age 21 without getting married she is considered to have failed and her chances of getting married are slim. A woman is not expected to have children before marriage. In her marriage a woman is expected to play different roles

e.g. looking after her husband and his family, providing sexual satisfaction to her husband, reproducing and increasing family members. On the eve of her wedding the elderly women inform a woman about her roles. In addition she is told never to refuse to have sex with her husband. If a woman refuses to have sex with her husband the husband tells the elder members of the family. A family meeting is convened where the problem is solved.

The most important role is that of bearing children. A woman is expected to fall pregnant within a year of marriage in which case she must inform her mother-in-law. If she does not fall pregnant within that period the mother-in-law and even her mother becomes worried and they take her to traditional healers who then give her medicine to cure her infertility. Her husband is never thought to be infertile. If she does not conceive her husband will then be free to marry another wife. If a woman refuses to have sexual intercourse with her husband or to have children she is taken back to her family and the in-laws demand their money back.

Contraceptives are never used. A woman is expected to wait for a period of 2 - 3 years before she can have another child. This is easily achieved where a woman would sleep with her mother-in-law for as long as she was breast feeding. Polygamy is encouraged because the husband would sleep with another wife when the other one was breastfeeding. It must be noted that this

arrangement does not always work as some women fall pregnant before the end of a two year period especially where the husband works nearer home.

Having a lot of children is not regarded a problem. A man with many children was envied and the in-laws were happy that the money spent on lobola is paid back by the number of children. Whether the family could afford to maintain the children was not an issue because they used to plough the fields and rear cattle and sheep.

2.5 HOW PERCEPTIONS ARE CHANGED

In this section the researcher will discuss how perceptions are changed referring to the attribution theory, the role of culture in communicating messages aimed at influencing women to accept a small family norm and the role of persuasion in modifying, discarding or replacing attitudes.

2.5.1 THE ATTRIBUTION THEORY

In order to change people's perceptions it would be important to look at what their behaviour is attributed to. According to the attribution theory Silverman (1982: 376) states that behaviour can be internally or externally determined . Externally considered behaviours are those that are believed to be resulting from

outside forces i.e. a person is seen to be forced into a behaviour by situations e.g. lack of family planning methods. Internally caused behaviours are those that are believed to be under personal control of the individual e.g. sterilisation after the birth of two children.

Attribution is based on the study of how we make assumptions about why people act in certain ways and how they are feeling when they do so. The first important question to be resolved is whether to attribute a person's behaviour to internal or external factors. All behaviour stems at least from internal states but the degree of external pressure we perceive can influence our final assessment of what caused a particular behaviour (Silverman 1982:376). A woman may prefer to have a family of two children for example but because of the financial circumstances she may end up having one child.

Kelly (1973) as quoted by Silverman (1982: 378) stated that in any given situation a process of attribution follows a definite sequence:

1. We make an automatic check of several different categories that seem to be relevant to the situation.
2. We make inferences about the person perceived, the stimulus that provoked the person's reaction and the setting under which the reaction took place.

We use the following guidelines:

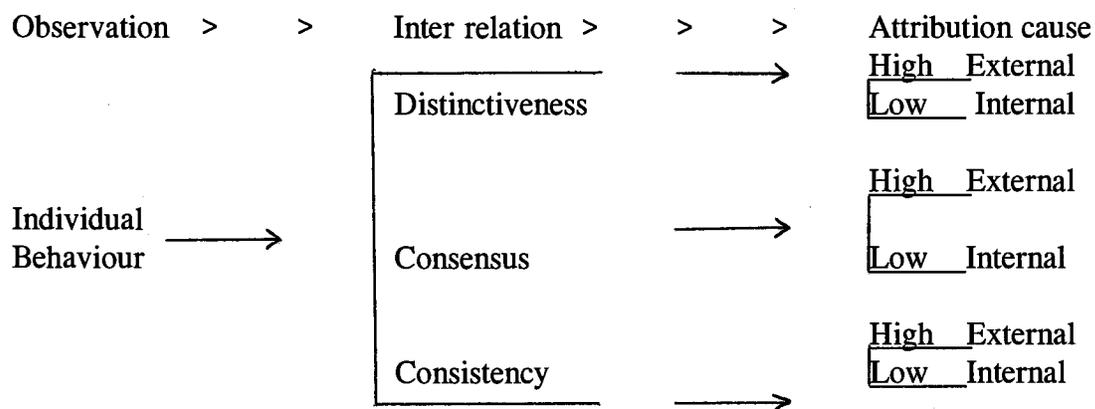
- a. **Consistency:** Whether the response occurs in the same way over extended period of time. The more consistent the behaviour is the more the observer is inclined to attribute it to internal causes. In this study, for example, if women in both groups prefer big families their preferences can be attributed to internal factors. The implication is that the duration in terms of years and age does not affect their preferences but their desires which are internal play a role.

- b. **Consensus:** Whether other people in the same situation respond the same way. If consensus is high you would be expected to give external attribution to a person's behaviour .If there is no consensus you may be expected to give internal attribution. If all women who live in urban areas for example have smaller families you would attribute it to the external factor like the high cost of living.

- c. **Distinctiveness:** The degree to which a reaction is characteristic of a person and occurs in various situations and in response to

various stimuli. What needs to be evaluated is whether the behaviour is usual or not. If it is usual it will possibly be attributed to internal causes. In this study if both the women who live in urban areas and in rural areas or both the less educated and higher educated prefer big families their desires can be attributed to internal factors. If there is a difference in the desires of the different groups their desires can be attributed to external factors.

The attribution Theory can be illustrated as follows:



(Robbins 1993: 140)

Before one could even think of changing behaviour or perception it would be important to know what the causes of the behaviour can be attributed to. If the same behaviour is attributed to different causes then different programmes will be developed to change the behaviour. In cases of perceptions of family size it would be important to establish whether all women in the same residential area for example have the same perceptions or different age groups have different

perceptions although they live in the same environment. If there is no consensus then different programmes would have to be developed based on the individual group needs, but if consensus is high one approach would be used. In addition it would be important to establish what determined the perceptions. If there is consensus among all respondents then external factors would be considered in drawing the programme.

It must be noted that there are errors or biases that disrupt attribution. For instance there are tendencies to under estimate the influence of external factors and over estimate the influence of internal factors when making judgement about behaviour, This is known as fundamental attribution error.

There is also a tendency for individuals to attribute their own successes to internal factors like ability or effort while putting the blame for failure to external factors like bad luck. This is known as self servicing bias.

Silverman (1982: 381) refers to the attribution biases which result from the fact that the way in which we view others differ from the way we view ourselves.

Firstly we can never have direct knowledge of other people's experience and in many cases we are unfamiliar with events that formed their responses. Secondly we form our own concepts of what is normal or universal in human experience from our own experience and these concepts may be experiences different from

our own. Thirdly our ability to empathise with the feelings of others may be limited by the fact that we are all, in varying degrees, motivated by self interest.

Another kind of bias is selective perception. People also selectively interpret what they see based on their own personal experiences, attitudes, backgrounds and interests. Since we cannot assimilate all we observe we take in bits and pieces according to our background.

People also use stereotyping in judging others. Stereotyping refers judging someone on the basis of our perception of the groups to which he belongs. Generalisations make assimilation easy and it helps us maintain consistency. The errors or biases can have an effect on developing programmes aimed at changing perceptions of family size. Family size preferences can also be attributed to different factors both internal and external. These factors are affected by different situations like the environment and cultural beliefs. People who share the same cultural beliefs may not necessarily have the same preferences of family size.

Programmes aimed at changing perceptions of family size should take the above into consideration. The attribution process as discussed by Kelly in Silverman (1982:376) must be followed i.e.

- several different factors that seem to affect decisions on family size e.g. sex of children, income, must be checked

- it must also be determined under which circumstances do these desires occur e.g. rural areas or urban areas and
- it must also be established whether the desires are consistent, distinct or there is consensus amongst all the people in the same situation.

Once it is clear to which factors family size preferences are attributed messages and programmes that aim to facilitate perceptions towards a small family norm can be developed. Programme developers must avoid falling in a trap of stereotyping, generalising and attribution bias as discussed above. It is therefore important that programme developers familiarise themselves with factors in the situation and factors in the perceiver.

Two factors that can be considered are the role of culture and the role of persuasion in communicating messages that aim to facilitate perceptions toward a small family norm.

2.5.2 THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN COMMUNICATING MESSAGES REGARDING FAMILY SIZE

Mani (1984: 9-20) emphasises the role of culture in communication of messages and calls for the involvement of field workers and audiences in materials production for family planning information and educational activities. The audience is those who should be informed and motivated to accept a small

family norm and persuaded to accept contraceptives. He argues that it is common practice in family planning communications that materials through which messages are communicated are created by the “elite” culture and are directed to the mass culture. This on many occasions has led to surprises due to unexpected reactions and interpretations by the mass audience. Despite the recognition that messages are always mediated through culture, communicators see culture as an obstacle to their programmes and instead of incorporating it in their messages they often blame it for ineffective communication. It is important to remember that the message is much more likely to succeed if it fits the patterns of understanding attitudes, values and goals that the receiver has or at least if it starts with the pattern and tries to reshape it slightly. This calls for the involvement of field workers and audiences in material production.

When we involve the audience in material productions the source is brought closer to the destination. This amongst others increases the area of common experience between the two as a result the audience is able to recover the original message with minimal distortion and the cultural factors that enter into the encoding process are similar to those that enter during the decoding of signals into messages. It will also help to remove ideas that go against cultural patterns especially if adopting messages from other countries. On the other hand the involvement of field workers is important because they have higher credibility among their audiences hence material will also include cultural

symbolism, costume and language that are meaningful to the audience, also feedback is immediate.

2.5.3 THE ROLE OF PERSUASION IN MODIFYING, DISCARDING OR REPLACING ATTITUDES

Silverman (1982: 330-401) discussed the role of persuasion in modifying, discarding or replacing an attitude. He stated that attitudes are discarded in response to new information that is of pressing importance.

Persuasion involves a communicator, a message and an audience. The degree to which the audience will be persuaded to change its attitude on a given issue depends to a large extent on a degree to which it regards the communicator as credible. The success of the communicator depends to some extent on the degree to which their attitudes are perceived to be similar to those of their audience. Communicators who are liked by the audience are more successful in changing attitudes than those who are disliked. If the recommendations of a liked communicator are seen to be stemming from external factors (important factors which should not be ignored) then the reverse is true. In the case of family size, a woman who belongs to the same cultural group who has had difficulties in bringing up a lot of children may be regarded as a credible communicator. Such a woman may be more effective in sending messages that aim to change

perceptions towards a small family norm than a woman who has not had the same experience or who belongs to a different cultural group.

Silverman (1982:330 -401) also stated that

- * the messages that seem to present more than one side of an issue are more effective than one dimensional messages as the communicator appears to be more informed and therefore credible.

- * the information people generate on their own about an issue is an important determinant of how much and which direction their attitude will change.

According to McGuire (1960) as quoted by Silverman (1982:330-401) most people defend their beliefs by avoiding contact with conflicting ideas. As a result of lack of experience with conflicting ideas, such people are vulnerable to persuasion. He states that there are two methods of increasing resistance to persuasion:

- * Exposure to ideas that confirm one's beliefs and

- * Exposure to opposing arguments that are not so strong to be overpowering but make it necessary to develop arguments of one's own

to counter them, especially where there is resistance to attack on deeply cultural beliefs.

Brehm in Tedeschi (1976:7) suggested that when an individual's freedom to choose his own opinions and attitudes are threatened, he reacts by attempting to re-establish the freedom that has been threatened. An attempt to force people to take specific position or to influence them beyond their desire to be influenced will threaten their sense of freedom and arouse what is called psychological reactance. This depends on how important a particular attitude is to them as well as a degree to which they perceive their freedom threatened. People may attempt to re-establish their freedom by avoiding agreement with opposing arguments, avoiding even the slightest influence or moving far away from the opposing position than they have been.

Mostert & Lötter (1990: 50) concluded by saying that if urbanisation reflects relocation of kin groupings and does not disengage effectively kin control and power, if industrialisation does not result in rising aspirations for mobility, if labour force participation of women does not provide alternative forces for status and prestige to women and does not release women from male domination, if educational advances are focused on specialised socio-economic groups and not dispersed more widely to all sectors of the population, if mortality reduction is brought about through diffusion without changes in living

standards, there is a likelihood that these changes will not result in the necessary pressure engendering fertility reduction.

CHAPTER 3.

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

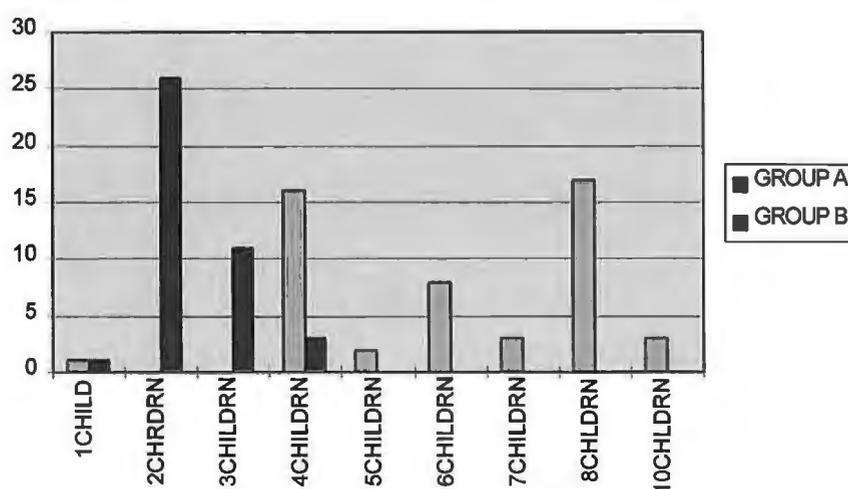
In this chapter the researcher will discuss the research results. The researcher begins by comparing the perceptions of family size of the group that had not started with their families with those who had completed their families. The researcher goes further and explains the actual family size of the respondents who had completed their families and compares it with their preferred family size. In discussing the results the researcher refers to literature. Reference will also be made to the responses by male respondents. Finally the researcher will analyse factors that influence decisions on family size. The results will be presented in the form of tables and graphs followed by short discussions.

Fifty women who had completed their families (group A), fifty women who had not started on their families (group B) and twenty five males who had not started on their families (group C) were interviewed.

3.2 PREFERRED FAMILY SIZE

The preferred family size was established from the female respondents, i.e. **those who had completed their families and those who had not started with their families.** The information obtained is indicated in Bar chart 3.1.

Bar chart 3.1. **PREFERRED FAMILY SIZE OF THE RESPONDENTS WHO HAD COMPLETED THEIR FAMILIES (GROUP A) AND THE RESPONDENTS WHO HAD NOT STARTED WITH THEIR FAMILIES (GROUP B).**



According to Bar chart 3.1, 17 respondent (34%) who had completed their families preferred to have 8 children, 16 (32%) preferred to have 4 children, 8 (16%) preferred to have 6 children, 3 (6%) preferred 10 children, 3 (6%)

preferred 7 children, 2 (4%) preferred 5 children and only 1 i.e. (2%) preferred 1 child.

The average number of preferred children was 6,38 and the mode was 8 children. The ages of these respondents were between 50 - 71 years of age.

The Bar chart further shows that 26 (52%) of the respondents **who had not started with their families** preferred to have 2 children, 11 (22%) preferred to have 3 children, 9 (18%) preferred to have 4 children, 3 (6%) preferred to have 5 children and 1 (2%) preferred to have one child. The average number of children preferred by this group was 2,74 and the mode was two. These respondents were in the age group 20 - 29 years.

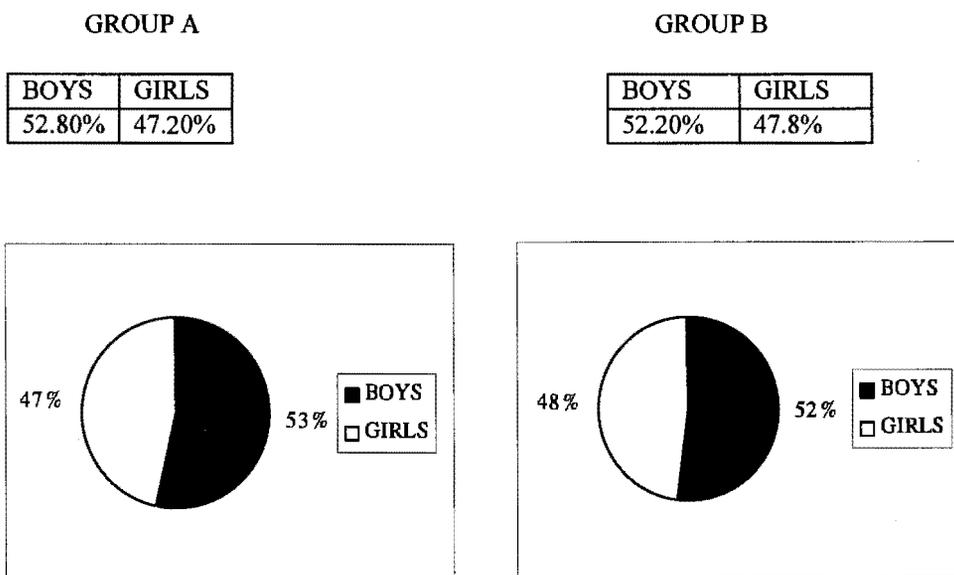
These findings confirmed the findings by Mostert & Lötter (1990 : 63-73) that the fertility desires have undergone some decline among blacks in South Africa. Mostert & Lötter (1990: 73) concluded by saying that, taking low fertility norm of young black women into account, one can expect that desires to terminate reproduction after a small number of children have been born will increase in future.

The findings of this study also confirmed Vlassof's (1990 : 216-25) findings namely, that the family size norm was shifting downward to a two child norm.

3.3 PREFERRED SEX OF CHILDREN

The information related to the preferred sex of children was also obtained from **women who had completed their families (Group A) and those who had not started with their families.(Group B)** The information obtained will be indicated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 PREFERRED SEX OF CHILDREN

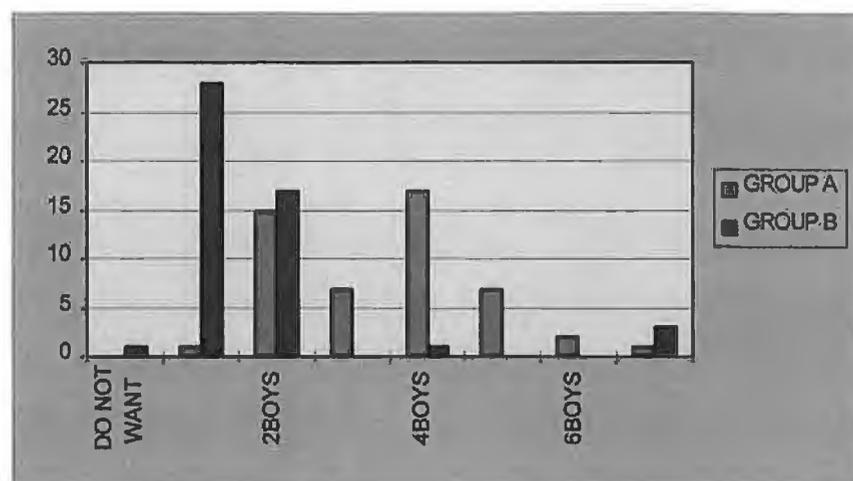


According to Figure 3.1 there was no significant difference between the preference of sex of the children in the two women's groups. Fifty three percent of the women who had completed their families against fifty two percent of women who had not started with their families, preferred boys. It further shows that both women who had completed their families and those who had not started with their families preferred to have more boys than girls, although there

was no significant difference. The respondents who had completed their families stated that they preferred boys to girls because girls will get married and look after other people's families while boys will stay with parental families and look after their parents. This confirms the findings about the culture of Southern Sotho as stated by the two women interviewed namely Mahao and Motsamai (see page 53), i.e. girls were not educated because it was believed that they would get married and uplift other people's families. The women who had not started with their families who preferred boys stated that they liked boys. The preferred number of children according to sex will be discussed in more detail in the next sections.

3.3.1 PREFERRED NUMBER OF BOYS

The researcher established the preferred number of boys from both the respondents **who had completed their families** (Group A) and the women **who had not started with their families.**(Group B) The information obtained is indicated in Bar chart 3.2

Bar chart 3.2 **PREFERRED NUMBER OF BOYS**

Bar chart 3.2 shows that most of the respondents i.e. 17 (34%) **who had completed their families** preferred to have 4 boys. They were followed by 15(30%) who preferred to have 2 boys, 7 (14%)who preferred to have 5 boys, 7 (14%) who preferred to have 3 boys, 2 (4%)who preferred to have 6 boys, 1 (2%) who preferred to have at least 1 boy and 1 (2%) who said it does not matter. The average number of preferred boys was 3,36.

It was also found that most of the respondents **who had not started with their families** i.e. 28 (56%) preferred to have one boy, followed by 17 (34%) who preferred to have 2 boys, 3 (6%) who said it does not matter, 1 (2%)who

preferred 4 boys and 1 (2%) who did not want boys at all. The average number of preferred boys was 1.38.

It can be concluded from this Bar chart that women who had completed their families i.e. 34% preferred a higher number of boys, i.e. up to four, compared to women who had not started with their families of whom 56% (28) preferred to have two boys.

It can also be concluded that the ideal number of boys is declining.

The respondents **who had completed their families** stated that they preferred boys because they will be able to look after their parents when they are old. They also stated that they preferred more boys because children are not the same. This means that if one child does not want to look after the parents, the other one would be able to look after their parents.

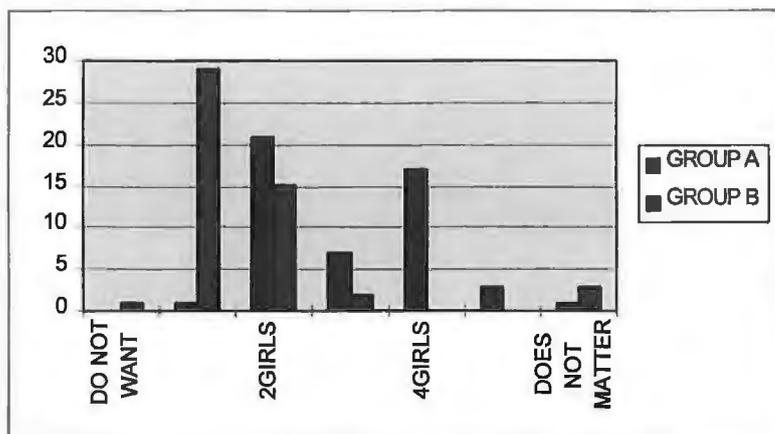
The findings of this study agree with the findings of Arnold and Kuo (1984: 229-318) who stated the reason for son preference among the Asians as the importance of carrying a family name, achievement, work related qualities and qualities that apply when they are old.

Karki (1988: 169-78) stated that parents in Korea preferred sons to daughters because of the various roles that sons play in their family life e.g. carrying a family name, performing death rituals and for economic reasons.

On the other hand Vlassof (1990: 216-25) found that the ideal number of both boys and girls seemed to be declining. These findings were confirmed by the **women who had not started with their families** of whom 56% preferred to have one son and who also preferred to have fewer children

3.3.2 PREFERRED NUMBER OF GIRLS

The preferred number of girls was established from both the group of the **women who had completed their families (Group A)** and the **women who had not started with their families.(Group B)** The information obtained is displayed in Bar Chart 3.3.

Bar chart 3.3 **PREFERRED NUMBER OF GIRLS**

According to Bar chart 3.3 21 (42%) of the women who had completed their families preferred to have 2 girls, 17 (34%) preferred to have 4 girls, 7 (14%) preferred to have 3 girls, 3(6%) preferred to have 5 girls 1 (2%) preferred to have 1 girl and 1 (2%) said it does not matter. The average number of preferred girls was 3.

Comparing the findings in Bar chart 3.2 with the findings in Bar chart 3.3 it can be concluded that these respondents preferred slightly less girls than boys.

With those who had not started with their families 29 (58%) preferred to have 1 girl, 15 (30%) preferred to have 2 girls, 2 (4%) preferred to have 3 girls, 3 (6%) said it does not matter and 1 (2%) said she does not want a girl at all. The average numbers of preferred girls was 1,38.

Comparing the information in Bar chart 3.3 with information in Bar chart 3.2, it can be concluded that the women who had not started with their families preferred almost the same number of boys and girls.

From these two Bar charts it can be concluded that both respondents who had completed their families and those who had not started with their families preferred almost the same ratio of boys to girls. Those who had completed their families preferred slightly less girls to boys but the difference is not big, i.e. 0,36 more boys than girls.

It can further be concluded that those who had completed their families preferred to have more children compared to those who had not started with their families. i.e. 3,36 : 1,38 boys and 3 : 1,38 girls.

3.3.3 THE INFLUENCE OF THE SEX OF THE CHILDREN ON DECISION MAKING REGARDING FAMILY SIZE

The respondents who had completed their families and those who had not started with their families were interviewed regarding the influence of the sex of children on the decision making process regarding family size.

Sixty six percent (33) of the respondents who had completed their families stated that the number of girls and boys they had did not

influence their decision regarding the number of children they wanted to have. These respondents believed that children are a gift from God as a result one cannot decide as to how many children of which sex one will have. Thirty eight percent (17) stated that the number of boys and girls they had had an influence on the decision making process regarding the number of children they wanted to have. They wanted to have the equal number of boys and girls. Only forty seven percent (9) of the seventeen respondents had the same number of boys and girls.

From the above it can be concluded that the sex of children did not have a strong influence on the decision making process regarding the number of children women who had completed their families wanted to have.

With the women who had not started with their families 98% (49) stated that if they do not get the number of boys or girls they wanted they will accept what they get.

Only one respondent in the group of **women who had not started with their families** stated that she preferred to have two children but she will try up to a third child if she does not get the number of boys and girls that she wanted. She stated that she was the only child , and she does not

have friends in her family. She therefore feels that there should be a balance between boys and girls.

In view of the above findings it can be concluded that for both the women who had not started with their families and those who had completed their families, the sex of the children did not have a significant influence on the decision making process regarding the number of children that they wanted to have. Most of the respondents i.e. 98% of the women who had not started with their families and 62% of the women who had completed their families believe that children are a gift from God hence, He decides what to give. **In other words women prefer to have both boys and girls but their preference does not influence the decision regarding how many children to have.**

The responses of both women's groups were compared with the responses of the **male respondents who had not started with their families.** Ninety two percent (23) of the 25 respondents stated that it does not matter what the sex of the children is.

The findings also confirm the findings by (Osman & Yamashita 1987: 377 - 82; Park 1983: 332-352; Klat 1983:171 - 85) who stated that parents try to have at least one boy and one girl regardless of their final

number of children; once achieved the probability of stopping having children increases.

The study also confirmed the findings by Park (1983: 351) who stated that it is not clear to what extent son preference produces excess births although all girl families are shown to be particularly motivated to increase further. He concluded by saying that if couples could determine the sex of their unborn children before conception the total fertility rate may be reduced nearly to the level of the ideal family size.

3.4 FAMILY SIZE OF THE WOMEN WHO HAD COMPLETED THEIR FAMILIES

The information about the actual family size that the respondents had was obtained from the women **who had completed their families**. by means of an interview schedule (Annexure A) The findings are reflected in table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1 FAMILY SIZE OF THE RESPONDENTS WHO HAD COMPLETED THEIR FAMILIES.

| NO OF CHILDREN | NO OF RESPONDENTS | % |
|----------------|-------------------|------------|
| 2 | 2 | 4 |
| 3 | 12 | 24 |
| 4 | 3 | 6 |
| 5 | 5 | 10 |
| 6 | 6 | 12 |
| 7 | 7 | 14 |
| 8 | 5 | 10 |
| 9 | 4 | 8 |
| 10 | 2 | 4 |
| 11 | 4 | 8 |
| | TOTAL 50 | 100 |

Table 3.1. shows that 12(24%) of the respondents who had completed their families had 3 children. 7 (14%) had seven children. 6 (12%) had six children. 5 (10%) had five children. 5 (10%) had eight children, 4(8%) had nine children. 4 (8%) had eleven children. 3 (6%) had four children. 2 (4%) had two children and 2 (4%) had ten children.

The average number of children the respondents had was 6,04 which was not that different from their preferred number of children i.e. 6,38. When asked whether this was the number that they had initially wanted the respondents stated that it was not a question of what they wanted. They did not use any contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancies to stop pregnancies but they could not get anymore children.

All the women in this group stated that they would not have the same number of children again if they had to start all over again. The reason was that they cannot afford to maintain a lot of children and that bringing up children was a lot of work.

From the above it can be concluded that **women who had completed their families' perceptions of family size were changing towards a small family norm. This can be attributed to experiences that the women had in maintaining large families and bringing up a lot of children.** This confirms what was stated by Robbins (1993: 185) when he stated that one of the factors that influences perceptions is experience.

Robbins (1993:140) also stated that if other people in the same situation respond in the same way, i.e. if consensus is high one is expected to give external attribution to a person's behaviour. This was the case with the women who had completed their families as all of them stated that they would not have the same number of children again because of the difficulties experienced in bringing up a lot of children.

According to Goodman (1978: 539) one aspect of the convergence theory concerns change in personal values that modernisation is thought to entail.

Values characterising the modern person concern among others "an openness to new experiences". The women who had completed their families showed this openness to new experiences of smaller families that they could afford to maintain.

3.5 A COMPARISON OF WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY SIZE

A comparison of the women who had completed their families and women who had not started with their families' perceptions of family size was made. The researcher began by comparing the women who had completed their families' preferred number of children with the number of children in their actual family size, what they saw as the ideal number of children, the number of children their parents had and what they perceived to be a number of children in a large family. The researcher then compared the findings about the perceptions of the women who had completed their families with the perception of women who had not started with their families. The findings are reflected in Table 3.2 in averages.

Table 3.2 WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY SIZE

| | PREFERRED NO OF CHILDREN | ACTUAL NO OF CHILDREN | IDEAL NO OF CHILDREN | NUMBER OF CHILDREN THE RESPONDENTS PARENTS HAD | NO OF CHILDREN IN A BIG FAMILY |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Those who have completed their families | 6,38 | 6,04 | 3,2 | 7,26 | 6,14 |
| Those who had not started their families | 2,74 | -- | 3 | 4,9 | 5,14 |

Table 3.2. shows that the women who had completed their families came from large families i.e. families with an average of 7,26 children. These women also preferred to have large families with an average of 6.38 children although this was slightly lower than what their parents had. The average number of children

these respondents had was 6.04 which was almost the same as their preferred family size. (See Bar chart 3.1)

The average number of children that a woman should have as perceived by women who had completed their families was calculated at 3,2 which was half the average number of children they had. The average number of children in a big family was calculated at 6.14. It must be noted that these women preferred an average of 6,38 children and had an average of 6.04 children which is almost the same as what they regarded as an average number of children in a big family.

From the above it can be concluded that the women's perceptions of family size are definitely changing towards a small family norm.

The respondents further stated that the average of 6,04 children which was their actual average family size was not easy to maintain. It can therefore be **concluded that family size can be defined in terms of whether one can afford to maintain it or not.**

The women who had not started with their families came from families with an average of 4,9 children. These women preferred to have an average of 2,74 children which is almost half of what their parents had. These respondents also

stated that they preferred this number because it was easy to maintain and educate.

The calculated average number of children that the respondents felt that couples should have was 3 which was almost the same as their preferred average family size. The average number of children in a big family as seen by the respondents was calculated at 5,14 which is almost the same as the number that their parents had. The respondents felt that the average number of 5,14 children was not easy to educate and maintain financially.

From the above table it can also be concluded that women who had not started with their families preferred to have smaller families, and that family size is defined in terms of whether one can afford to maintain it or not.

When comparing the perceptions of the women who had not started with their families and the perceptions of women who had completed their families **it can be concluded that perceptions are definitely changing towards a smaller family norm.** Both the women who had completed their families and the women who had not started their families stated that the ideal family size is 3.2 and 3 respectively.

These findings confirm the demographic transition theory as discussed by van Rensburg (1992:9 -11). Comparing this theory with the findings it can be

concluded that **fertility is beginning to drop especially in urban areas probably because of the modernising influence of modern life style. Fertility of the women of Sebokeng is therefore at a third stage of the demographic transition theory.**

3.6 THE ROLE OF WOMEN AS THAT OF BEARING CHILDREN

The study found that the women in both groups felt that bearing children was an important role for women. All the respondents **who had completed their families** stated that not having children would affect their marriage. They would have been insulted by the in-laws and the husband would have had to marry another woman who would be able to bear children. These respondents stated that they would have regretted it if they did not get children. Only five of these respondents stated that they would have adopted a child if they did not get a child at all.

Women who had not started with their families stated that it is a stigma for a woman not to have children. A woman must have children to show that she is fertile, to be remembered when she is dead and to have someone to inherit from her.

All the respondents who had not started with their families stated that they would adopt children if they did not get children at all. Only five stated that they would take children from relatives rather than adopt through a welfare agency.

All the respondents who had completed their families stated that a woman should have children even if she is not married. On the other hand 46 (92%) of the women who had not started with their families stated that they would have at least one child even if they are not married.

It can be concluded from the above that although women see having children as one of their roles, it does not lead them to having big families.

They all stated that they would be satisfied with the number of children that they have even if it is less than what they wanted.

These findings agree with the findings by Staples (1985: 10005 - 13) who found that among other things blacks believe in the institution of a family and amongst the most traditional values is that of motherhood and childbearing. He further stated that the role of a mother is regarded as more important than any role including that of a wife.

3.7 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE WOMEN'S DECISIONS ON FAMILY SIZE

In this section the researcher is going to discuss the factors influencing the women's decision regarding family size i.e. the number of children they want to have. The findings will also be linked to the findings from the literature.

3.7.1 INFLUENCE OF THE RESPONDENT'S FAMILY OF ORIGIN ON HER FAMILY SIZE

It was found from the research that women who have completed their families came from big families i.e. families with an average of 7,26 children. These women also had big families i.e. families with an average of 6,04 children.

These respondents also stated that families with an average of 6.14 children are big, and not easy to maintain (see table 3.2). These respondents also stated that the number of children their parents had did not affect their decision regarding family size because children are a gift from God as a result they did not plan their family size.

Women who had **not started with their families** came from smaller families i.e. families with an average of 4,9 children. These women preferred families with an average of 2,74 children and they regarded families with an average of

5,14 children as big (see table 3.2). These respondents stated that the number of the children that their parents had influenced them negatively toward a family size because their parents could not afford to maintain them. They further stated that big families are only beneficial in times of financial and emotional needs because they serve as support systems.

From the above it can be concluded that women who came from big families preferred to have big families and ended up with big families. Women who came from smaller families preferred to have smaller families.

3.7.2 PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON DECISION MAKING REGARDING THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN THEIR CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE.

Researcher found that all the respondents who had completed their families never communicated with their parents regarding family size or children. All these respondents stated that it was common knowledge that a married woman should have children, but the number of children was never discussed. These women also never discussed with their in-laws the number of children they should have. The mother in-law only spoke when a woman could not bear children. In this case the woman would be insulted because she was thought to be barren.

Forty six percent (23) of the respondents who had completed their families stated that they did not discuss family size with their daughters because traditionally it was never done.

Fifty four percent (27) of the respondents who had completed their families stated that they did discuss family size with their daughters and they encouraged them to have smaller families because it is expensive to maintain a lot of children.

Comparing the findings with theory e.g. Higgins (1981:160-64) stated that a woman's own pregnancy history seems to influence the number of children she would like her daughter to have. According to Higgins, the higher the pregnancy rate of a woman the more children are wanted for her daughter.

This study found the opposite to the findings by Higgins and **suggests that experience in bringing up a lot of children can lead parents to advising their children to have fewer children.**

The findings about women who had completed their families regarding the influence of parents on decision making regarding family size were confirmed by the respondents who had not started with their families. Eighty percent (40) of those respondents stated that their parents did discuss with them the number of children they should have. They encouraged them to be educated, setting

goals, using contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancies and to have the number of children that they can afford to maintain and educate.

From the above findings it can be concluded that

- **parents are beginning to have influence on their children regarding family size and they are encouraging them to have smaller families.**
- **parents' attitudes and norms are also changing from the belief that parents should not talk about the number of children with their children to the modern attitude that people should discuss and plan for the future.**
- **The perceptions of family size are changing from a big family to a small family norm that parents can afford to maintain and educate.**

3.7.3 THE ROLE OF CHILDREN

The researcher found that respondents who had completed their families expected their children to look after them (their parents) when they are old. In addition they were expected to educate and look after their siblings. This role was expected to be played by boys compared to girls because girls would get married. These respondents stated that this expectation influenced them to have at least more than one boy in case the other one does not help but it did not influence their decision as to how many children to have.

With the respondents who had not started with their families 54% (27) stated that they did not expect their children to provide for them financially when they are old. Instead these respondents stated that they wanted to educate their children so that they could look after themselves. The parents would then further their studies and invest for their future. They also expected their children to support them emotionally. This expectation led them to decide on smaller families.

From the above it can be concluded that

- **the expectations that the parents had on the role that their children would play in future does not have an influence on the decision making process regarding the number of children that the women who had completed their families wanted to have. The expectation however did have an influence on the decision making process regarding whether to have children or not.**
- **Women who have not started with their families saw children as an economic liability who have to be educated so that they may be able to look after themselves.**

These findings confirm the findings by (Karki 1988: 77; Oosthuizen in Mostert & Lötter 1990: 211-222; Vlassof 1990: 216 - 25) who found that children do not only become dependant much longer on parents, but parents need large amounts

of money to educate and feed them. This leads to a two child family norm. The expectation that children will be afforded the same educational opportunities as their parents also suggests a downward pressure on the appropriate size for one's family.

These authors found that both men and women expressed concern over lack of employment opportunities, the growing shortage of land, the need for increased investment in education and the cost of child bearing.

Karki (1988: 169-78) found that the economic value of the children is changing even in rural areas. Reasons for wanting sons and daughters support the suggestion that the economic motive of having children may be weakening. Many villagers link poverty to large family size.

It can therefore be concluded that

- * **Children are no longer expected to look after and provide for their parents instead parents see themselves as having a responsibility to provide for educating their children.**

- * **Due to their responsibility parents prefer a small family.**

3.7.4 THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY INCOME ON THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS REGARDING FAMILY SIZE

The information on family income was obtained from the women who had completed their families. This information was compared with the perceptions of the women who had not started with their families as they were not working.

The findings are as follows:

Seventy percent (35) of the respondents who had completed their families stated that they had worked as domestic workers before they got married and thirty percent (15) stated that they had not worked before they got married.

Ninety six percent (48) of the women in this group stated that they did not have a job at the time of the interview. Seventy two percent of them (34) were pensioners and 28% (14) were awaiting pension.

Sixteen percent (8) of the women who had completed their families were working as domestic workers and 4% were self employed, sewing clothes for other people.

Thirty two percent (16) of the respondents earned between R600 and R1000 per month and it was both husband and wife who were working. Sixty eight percent

(34) earned below five hundred Rand per month and only the husband was working.

All the respondents who had completed their families stated that their family income did not have an influence on the decision making process regarding the number of children they wanted to have. Fifty percent (25) of these women grew up on the farm. They said it did not matter how much money the family had because they could get milk and mealie meal from the farmer. Women were also expected to have children irrespective of the family income.

From the above it can be concluded that family income did not have an influence on the decision making process regarding the number of children women who had completed their families wanted to have or whether or not to have children at all.

The above findings are in contrast to the findings of Pillai's (1984: 290-95) study that was carried out in India. In this study Pillai found that family income plays a role in deciding about family size.

In contrast to women who have completed their families women who had not started with their families stated that if they had to start working they would have few children irrespective of the amount of money they earn. Eighty four percent (21) of the male respondents did not agree with this perception. They

stated people should have the number of children they can afford to maintain, give the best and plan for the future.

These findings are in line with the findings about the expectation about the future role of the children, where the respondents stated that children are an economic liability who need a lot of money to be maintained and educated.

3.7.5 INFANT MORTALITY RATE

Forty four percent (22) of the respondents **who had completed their families** stated that they had children who died immediately after birth. Thirty four percent of these respondents (8) stated that the death of their babies influenced their decision to have more children because they wanted to replace the children that they had lost.

Fifty six percent (28) of the respondents **who had completed their families** stated that they did not have any children who died immediately after birth but all these respondents stated that parents who have children who died after birth should replace their children to maintain a balance in numbers and to avoid further loss through death.

Thirty percent (15) of the respondents **who had completed their families** stated that they had pregnancies that did not result in a live birth. They also stated that

these deaths influenced them to try and have more children. Seventy percent (35) stated that they did not have pregnancies that did not result in live births but they also stated that parents who had lost children should try and have more children in order to avoid further loss.

Eighty four percent (42) of the respondents **who had not started with their families** stated that parents whose children have died should replace them if they are still young to have children and to provide a friend for the remaining child.

It must be noted that most of the respondents who had not started with their families preferred to have two children. Sixteen percent (8) stated that couples should not replace children because it does not help with feelings resulting from the loss of a child.

From the above it can be concluded that infant mortality rate has a positive effect on family size, as most of the respondents i.e. 56% of the women who had completed their families and 84% of the women who had not started with their families stated that people should replace the children who have died.

Comparing this finding with theory on the demographic transition it can be concluded that the mortality rate is fairly low in the urban areas. Comparing this with the fertility rate as indicated in table 3.2 where it was found that fertility is in the third stage of the demographic transition, **it can be concluded that the**

population is between the second and the third stage i.e. the birth rates are still higher compared to the lower death rates.

3.7.6 FAMILY PLANNING

a) THE USE OF CONTRACEPTIVES

The study found that all the women **who had completed their families** had never used contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancies or to space the children. They stated that traditionally it was expected of a woman to have children and there were no family planning methods.

When breast feeding, a woman was expected to sleep with her mother-in-law because sleeping with a man when breast feeding was believed to cause the child to loose weight. Eight percent (4) of these respondents stated that they would be happy if their husbands had relationships with other women when they were breastfeeding because they would not bother them with sexual intercourse.

All the respondents **who had completed their families** stated that couples should discuss and agree on the use of contraceptives. They stated that they had advised their children that it is not advisable for couples to have children that they could not afford to maintain.

It can be concluded from these findings that **women's perceptions are definitely changing towards the use of contraceptives. A more positive attitude (acceptance) is developing towards the use of contraceptives.**

These findings also confirm: what was discussed by Mahao and Motsamai when discussing the culture of Southern Sotho i.e. married women are expected to bear children (see case study on the culture of two Southern Sotho women:54) .

The findings by Harrison (1982:221) when he argued that the point of lack of access to family planning clinics cannot be used as an excuse for having large families since every culture has its own family planning methods were also confirmed in this study. He concluded by saying that the fact that these methods e.g. breast feeding are not used shows that people are planning large families. It can be concluded that perceptions are influenced by factors in the perceiver in this case the past experiences that the women who had completed their families had.

Seventy two percent (36) of the respondents **who had not started with their families** stated that they use contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Even those who did not discuss with their boyfriends before they started using contraceptives stated that their boyfriends are happy

because they are not ready for children. Only 12% (4) of the 36 respondents stated that their boyfriends did not know that they use contraceptives and if they knew they would stop them because they want children.

Eighty two percent (41) of the women **who had not started with their families** could not explain the fertility cycle well. Eighteen percent (9) could explain it and 55% of the nine (5) had used it as a method of family planning.

All the respondents **who had not started with their families** stated that they learnt about contraceptives at school from the family planning advisors. They also believe that husbands and wives should discuss and agree on the use of contraceptives to ensure that they are used, to avoid unwanted pregnancies and to avoid sexually transmitted diseases.

Ninety eight percent (49) of the **respondents who had not started with their families** stated that it is both husband and wife's responsibility to use contraceptives because they will both be affected by the presence of the unwanted child and failure to maintain it.

The findings about women who have not started with their families confirms what was found about women who had completed their families

i.e. perceptions are changing towards a small family norm that people can afford to maintain.

These findings also confirm the findings by Goodman (1978: 539) i.e. couples who place a lower value on children will more likely adhere to a small family norm and use contraceptives to plan their families.

Warren (1987: 42-8) also stated that the prevalence of contraceptive usage is high in educated groups. This was the case with women who had not started with their families, who had done standard 10 and were also studying towards a teachers diploma compared to women who had completed their families whose highest standard of education was standard eight.

The findings about the perceptions of women in both groups were compared with the perceptions of **males who had not started with their families** and the following information was obtained:

Fifty six percent (14) of the **male respondents who had not started with their families** stated that they used contraceptives. Forty four percent (11) stated that they do not use contraceptives.

Ninety six percent (24) of the **male respondents** stated that husbands and wives should discuss and agree on the use of contraceptives. Ninety two percent (23) of the male respondents stated that it is both husband and wife's responsibility to use contraceptives. Thirty nine percent of these respondents do not use contraceptives. It must be noted that the male respondents were not given an opportunity to give the reasons why they do not use contraceptives.

The findings about the **male respondents** confirmed the findings about the women who had not started with their families. These male respondents were studying at the same college of education as the female respondents and also stated that they learnt about family planning at school. The aforementioned can be used as proof of the findings by Mbizvo and Adamchack (1991: 31-8) who stated that the major problem facing African based family planning promotion and population development policy is the exclusion of men probing circumstances that govern the couples contraception behaviour. He also stated that education and urban residence is changing men's attitudes therefore reducing family size desires. The findings about the influence of education and urban residency were confirmed by Lötter (1977: 9-10).

Frankel (1985: 55-62) suggested three programme initiatives that could lead to change:

- * increasing the availability of male family planning methods
- * educational programmes that stress the need for males to have a positive attitude towards family planning
- * concentration on younger men since their attitudes are less rigid.

From the above it can be concluded that:

- **there is a positive attitude towards the use of contraceptives in both the women's groups**
- **education and urban residence played an important role in influencing the use of contraceptives and changing perceptions towards smaller families**
- **the male respondents' attitudes are also positive towards the use of contraceptives for family planning.**
- **men who have been exposed to family planning information tend to support the use of contraceptives**
- **school plays an important role in promoting the use of contraceptives hence a small family norm.**

- **Although 72% (36) of the women who had not started with their families use contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancies, 80% (29) of these women could not clearly explain the fertility cycle. This puts them at the risk of unwanted pregnancy, especially if they stop using the method for one reason or another. In addition to giving information about contraceptives more information must be given about the fertility cycle and it can be used as a family planning method.**

b) WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS VERSUS ATTITUDES OF MEN

All (100%) of the respondents who had completed their families stated that making a woman pregnant proves a man's manhood. A married man who does not have children is regarded as a woman. They further stated that men pride themselves in having made a woman pregnant. Although the respondents knew that a man could be infertile, they stated that the society never thinks that a man is infertile if a couple cannot bear children. Instead it is believed that a woman is infertile or that he has bad luck.

All the respondents who had completed their families stated that sex is not only for procreation but also for pleasure. Seventy two percent (36) of these respondents stated that they had at one time or another refused

to have sex with their husbands i.e. when they did not want to or when they were angry but not to prevent unwanted pregnancy. Twenty eight percent (14) stated that they had never refused to have sex with their husbands because a woman is supposed to have sex with her husband.

Eighty percent (40) of the women who had not started with their families shared the same perception with the woman who had completed their families i.e. men pride themselves in having made a woman pregnant because they (men) believe that it proves that they are men, productive and matured. However respondents stated that they do not believe that making a woman pregnant proved a man's manhood. They stated that making a woman pregnant proves that the man and the woman are fertile. They felt that there are many other ways through which a man can prove his manhood like being responsible and planning his family. Twenty percent (10) of the women who had not started with their families stated that not all men pride themselves in making a woman pregnant. They only experience pride when they are first informed that a woman is pregnant if it is a planned pregnancy, but thereafter have regrets.

All the respondents who had not started with their families stated that sex is not only for procreation but also for pleasure. Ninety percent (45) of these respondents stated that they had at one time or another refused to

have sex with their boyfriends either because of fear of pregnancy, did not desire to have sexual intercourse or were not ready to be involved in a sexual relationship. It must be noted that 72% (36) of the respondents who had not started with their families had stated that they were sexually active and used contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancy, and 28% (14) had stated that they did not use contraceptives because they were not sexually active.

Eighty percent (20) of the male respondents confirmed the women's perceptions i.e. sex is not only for procreation. Only 20% (5) stated that sex is for procreation.

Sixty eight percent (17) of the male respondents stated that men do not experience pride if they had made a woman pregnant. These respondents also stated that making a woman pregnant does not prove a man's manhood. This perception is in contrast with that of the women who had completed their families and is in agreement with the perception of eighty percent of the women who had not started with their families. Thirty two percent (8) of the male respondents stated that men pride themselves in making women pregnant and that making a woman pregnant proves a man's manhood.

It can be concluded from these findings that:

* **the perception that sex is only for procreation is changing as both the women who had completed their families and the women who had not started with their families stated that sex is also for pleasure. It must be noted that 72% of the women who had completed their families and 90% of the women who had not started with their families had at some time refused to have sex with their husbands or boyfriends. This shows that women are no longer afraid of being sent back home as stated by Mahao and Motsamai if they refused to have sex with their husbands as this had no adverse consequences on their relationship (see case study on the culture of two Southern Sotho women:54) .**

* **both groups of women namely, those who had completed their families and those who had not started with their families hold a strong perception that men experience pride irrespective of whether they are married or not if they have made a woman pregnant. This may have a negative effect on small family size norm if the woman has a relationship with a man who holds traditional values and believe that women should have children. This effect is not strong especially in the younger generation as 80% (40) of the women who**

had not started with their families stated that men do not always become proud after making a woman pregnant.

- Although there was no difference in the attitude of men and women in the purpose of sex, it is not clear what influence the perceptions about men have on decision making regarding family size.

3.7.7 MARITAL STATUS AND FAMILY SIZE

a) MARITAL STATUS

In this study it was found that 56% (28) of the respondents who had completed their families were married, 36% (18) were widowed and 8% (4) were divorced.

Ninety eight percent (49) of the respondents who had not started with their families were single and 2% (1) was single but lived with a man.

One hundred percent (25) of the male respondents were single

b) AGE AT MARRIAGE

The study found that the women who had completed their families got married between the ages of 16 and 27 years. The average age at marriage was 21.08.

The women who had not started with their families were between the ages of 20 and 29, they were not married and were still studying.

All the respondents who had completed their families stated that the age at which they got married had an influence on the number of children that they wanted to have. They stated that if they got married later they would have had fewer children. It must be noted that this effect was not based on a decision as to when to start a family but the decision was left to nature. All the respondents who had completed their families stated that they started with their families immediately after getting married. Sixty eight percent (34) of these respondents had their first children within the first year of marriage. Forty five percent of the thirty four respondents had children before they got married but they did not wait longer than a year before they had a second child.

These findings confirm what was found by Bailey (1989: 285-92) that the wife's age at marriage is significant and inversely related to fertility.

Therefore raising age at marriage by means of some extended schooling can lower fertility substantially.

Chandhuri (1983: 5-6) also confirmed the findings of the study when he stated that the higher the age at marriage the less is the general fertility.

It can be concluded from these findings that the younger the woman is at marriage the bigger the family size and visa versa. This conclusion was also confirmed by all the respondents, including male respondents, who stated that getting married at a later age has a positive effect on the promotion of the small family norm.

c) **AGE AT FAMILY FORMATION**

In this study it was found that the average age of the respondents who had completed their families' age at marriage was 21,08. Forty six percent (23) of these respondents already had one child when they got married. Sixty eight percent (24) including those who already had a child when they got married started immediately after marriage with their families. These respondents stated that they did not use any contraceptives. It is therefore not clear whether the respondents started immediately purposefully or it was because they did not use any contraceptives. Twenty four percent (12) of these respondents stated that

women should start immediately with their families to prove that they are fertile. Forty six percent of the women who have completed their families stated that a woman should start a year later and 32% (16) stated that they should start after 2 years with having children.

The women who prefer not to start immediately with their families regard this waiting period as a time to be used for adjusting in the marriage and planning for the children.

It must be noted that the respondents who had completed their families had an average of 6,04 children and preferred to have an average of 6,38 children.

The younger respondents i.e. all women who had not started with their families and 56% of the male respondents stated that people should stay up to 3 years before starting with their families. The waiting period should be used for planning for the children financially, adjusting and enjoying marriage. These respondents believed that if they get married later in life they can start later with their families and have fewer children.

From the above findings it can be concluded that delaying age at family formation contributes to couples having smaller families.

These findings confirm the findings by Pillai (1984: 290-95) who stated that the greater the age at family formation the more likely is a woman to be exposed to extramarital interests, school and participation in labour market and the more is the decrease in preference for motherhood.

d) **DECISIONS ABOUT FAMILY SIZE**

Urdu (1983: 117-28) discussed the **one decision model** which states that when couples marry they decide how many children they want and set forth to achieve their goal - never swayed from it by circumstances surrounding them, This model proposes that the fertility values and perceptions are acquired through socialisation in childhood and youth and husbands and wives enter into marriage with preferences which are either the same initially or are negotiated before or early in marriage into a fertility plan.

The women who had completed their families partly disputed the **one decision model**. They all stated that they did not discuss before hand or plan the number of children they wanted to have. They also partly agreed with the model where it concerns socialisation. They all stated that traditionally the number of children was never discussed, children were a gift from God and it was expected that a married woman should have children.

All the respondents including the male respondents stated that couples should discuss and agree on the number of children they wanted to have so that they can plan for the number of children they can afford.

This study agrees with Urdy's (1983: 117-28) sequential decision model which proposes that the number of children couples want is constantly under consideration in response to problems of child bearing, economic prospects, the developing character of marriage and other factors. He concluded that decisions are made one birth at a time.

3.7.8 RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION

The information about the respondents' religious denominations was obtained from all three groups. The information obtained is listed in the following table:

TABLE: 3.3 RESPONDENTS RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION

| RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|-----|------------------|-----|
| | Those who have completed families | | Those who have not started families | | Male Respondents | |
| | NO | % | NO | % | NO | % |
| Anglican Church | 17 | 34 | 5 | 12 | 1 | 4 |
| Apostolic Church | 8 | 16 | 13 | 26 | 4 | 16 |
| Methodist | 8 | 16 | 9 | 18 | 4 | 16 |
| Roman Catholic | 6 | 12 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 4 |
| NG Kerk/Dutch Reformed Church | 1 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 12 |
| Lutheran Church | 4 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| Christian Church | 0 | 0 | 8 | 16 | 6 | 24 |
| Zion Christian Church | 6 | 12 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 8 |
| Jehova's Witness | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| Unity Reform Church | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Moslem | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| None | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| TOTAL | 50 | 100 | 50 | 100 | 25 | 100 |

According to Table 3.3 the respondents belong to different religious groups.

The first group is Christian churches (Baptist etc.) i.e. religious system of the Church of Christ comprising spiritual healing. For the purpose of the study all the Christian churches i.e. Baptist, Assemblies of God, Rhema were grouped together. The second group is the African independent churches e.g. Zion Christian Church and Apostolic Church and then third group are Protestants e.g. Anglican, Roman Catholic, NG Kerk, the religion of any Christian churches of Western Christendom that adhere substantially to principles established during the reformation.

Although all the respondents who had completed their families had never used

contraceptives it must be noted that their attitude had changed towards acceptance of family planning. Seventy two percent of the women who had not started with their families and fifty six percent of the male respondents used contraceptives. These respondents were spread among all the religious denominations.

Twenty eight percent (14) of the women who had not started with their families stated that they did not use contraceptives. Five of these respondents belonged to the Independent church, four belonged to the Christian church and four belonged to the Protestant churches i.e.2 from the Roman Catholic Church, 1 from the Anglican Church and 2 from the Methodist Church. Reason for not using contraceptives was that the respondents were not sexually active.

Seventy two percent (36) of the women who had completed their families belonged to the Protestant churches. Although the respondents in this group belonged to different religious denominations all of them stated that nothing is ever said in their churches about family size or the number of children the couples should have. All these respondents also stated that religion did not have an influence on the number of children that they wanted to have but they believed that children are a gift from God.

All the respondents who had completed their families stated that according to the bible people who limit the family size are sinning against God because God said

“be fruitful and multiply in numbers...” Genesis 1: 28. The respondents further stated that reality does not allow people to have a lot of children, therefore they believe that people who limit the family size are not sinning against God but are clever because they are planning their families. People who have a lot of children suffer because they cannot afford to maintain them (the children). The respondents concluded by saying that God does not punish people who do not want to have children but the in-laws punish a woman who does not want to have children by insulting her.

All the women who had not started with their families concurred with the women who had completed their families and stated that the church never says anything about family size or the number of children that couples should have. The church discourages unmarried women from having sex before marriage, unwanted pregnancies and even the use of contraceptives. The youth is encouraged to abstain from sex. These discussions are not held during the service but during youth sessions where experts are involved. It must be noted that 72% (36) of these respondents stated that they used contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Only 28% (14) stated that they did not use contraceptives. The respondents who did not use contraceptives also belonged to different religious groups.

All the women who had not started with their families stated that people who limit the family size are not sinning against God. They believed that such people

are wise because they are planning families that they can afford to maintain.

Seventy eight percent (39) of these respondents stated that God does not punish people who do not want to have children. They stated that God expects people especially married couples to have children that they can afford to maintain.

Twenty two percent (11) of the respondents who had not started with their families stated that God expects people to have a lot of children because He said to Abraham "I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth" Genesis 13: 16. These respondents also stated that God punishes people who do not want to have children either by giving them a lot of unwanted children, or they live a longer life and does not give them anyone to look after them when they are old or sick. It must be noted that all the respondents believed that children are a gift from God but they also stated that everyone should decide for himself as to how many children he/she wants to have.

Sixty percent (15) of the male respondents stated that religion does not have an influence on family size. Eighty percent (20) male respondents stated that people who limit the family size are not sinning against God. These respondents stated that God does not expect people to have a lot of children. God also does not punish people who do not want to have children.

From the findings in all three groups **it can be concluded that religion has a limited influence on the family size.** Those respondents who believe that

people who do not want children are sinners cannot quote any verse in the bible or any teachings from the church. These findings confirm the findings by Harrison (1982: 119), who stated that people who discourage the use of contraceptives impose their beliefs and play on other people's feelings until they feel guilty. If you press further you find that they fear that family planning will encourage immorality and premarital sex.

The findings based on the responses of the women who had not started with their families regarding the use of contraceptives also agree with the findings of Gatara (1982: 181) who stated that western religion is capable of affecting fertility preferences and family size because of the means by which the church imparts its values on young people.

3.7.9. EDUCATION

The information regarding educational qualifications of the respondents was obtained from both women's groups. All the respondents **who had not started with their families** had completed standard 10 and were studying towards a teacher's diploma. The educational qualifications of the women **who had completed their families** are listed in Table 3.4 below:

TABLE 3.4 Educational qualifications of the women who had completed their families.

| SCHOOL STANDARD | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----|
| | NO | % |
| Have never been to school | 11 | 22 |
| Standard 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Standard 2 | 8 | 16 |
| Standard 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Standard 4 | 6 | 12 |
| Standard 5 | 5 | 10 |
| Standard 6 | 4 | 8 |
| Standard 7 | 2 | 4 |
| Standard 8 | 9 | 18 |
| Standard 9 | 2 | 4 |

Twenty two percent (11) of the respondents who had completed their families had never been to school and 18% did up to standard 8. The highest standard completed was standard 9 which was completed by only 4% of the respondents in this group. The average completed standard was 4,22. According to this table 54% of the respondents had not done more than the level of education required for a person to be defined as literate i.e. standard 5. It must be noted that the average number of children that the respondents in this group had was 6,04 and the average number of children that they stated that they preferred was 6,38. The respondents had defined this family size as big as they felt that they could not afford to maintain. The respondents in this group also stated that they expected their children to look after them (their parents) and to look after and educate their siblings when they are old. The perceptions of these women were

however changing towards a small family norm. This change is attributed to experience in bringing up a lot of children and maintaining big families.

All the respondents who had not started with their families including the male respondents had done up to standard 10 and were studying towards a teachers diploma. They had actually done more than the level of schooling required for a person to be defined as literate. The women who had not started with their families' average preferred number of children was 1,38. They felt that this number was manageable and easy to maintain. Fifty four percent (27) of these women stated that they did not expect children to look after parents when they are old. Parents would educate their children so that they can look after themselves. The parents would then further their studies and invest in the future.

The findings based on the responses of the women who had not started with their families confirm the findings of Chaundhuri (1983: 5-6) i.e. the fertility rates of educated women are definitely lower than those of illiterate women. The responses of the women in this group also confirm what was stated by Sorenson (1989: 125-35) i.e. the expectations that children will be afforded the same educational attainment as their parents suggest a downward pressure on family size goals that would be experienced by both spouses. The educational attainment may also affect ones' inclination to invest in other sources of personal satisfaction rather than increase family size.

Mbizvo and Adamschalk (1991: 31-8) also found that the influence of education and urban residence is changing men's attitude therefore reducing family size desires. This has been confirmed by the responses of the male respondents who also stated that they did not expect their children to look after their parents when they are old.

From the findings in all the groups it can be concluded that:

- * **education has an influence on the decision making regarding family size. The more educated the woman is, the less is the desire to have more children and the more is the interest in other areas like labour market.**
- * **schools play a role in providing information on family planning . This contributes to educated women and men accepting the use of contraceptives.**
- * **education contributes to women delaying age at marriage for females and age at family formation.**

The recommendation by Gatara (1982: 110) regarding maternal education, i.e. **education be made compulsory for women, may be useful in changing perceptions regarding family size.** She stated that this would in turn increase age at marriage for females, eliminate young age at marriage and/or change the cultural perception that young girls should marry and bear children and facilitate

the acquisition of information on family planning. In addition it will prepare females for employment outside the home and compete with the demand of raising large families.

3.7.10 URBAN RESIDENCE

The information regarding urban residence was obtained from both the women who had completed their families and the women who had not started with their families.

Fifty per cent (25) of the women who had completed their families grew up in rural areas and the other fifty percent (25) grew up in urban areas. All the respondents who had completed their families were residing in urban areas at the time of the study and they stated that they expected their children to look after them when they are old. All those respondents preferred to have big families i.e. families with more than four children. Their perceptions were changing towards a small family norm, i.e. families that one could afford to maintain.

It can be concluded from the findings that the place where the respondents grew up did not have an influence on their decision making process regarding family size but modernisation, urban residency and experience

had taught the respondents that they should have the number of children that they can afford.

Eighty four percent (42) of the respondents who had not started with their families, grew up in urban areas and still lived in urban areas. Sixteen percent (8) of the respondents grew up in rural areas but live in urban areas. All the respondents in this group preferred a family with an average of 1,38 children i.e. a family that they could afford to maintain.

The findings with this group concur with the findings of the women who had completed their families. The findings also confirm the convergence theory as discussed by Goodman (1978: 439) i.e. living in the city and working in the industry were experiences that help an individual to be modern and change personal values. The values characterising a modern person are:

- openness to new experiences.
- high occupational and educational ambitions, and
- an interest in planning one's affairs.

Based on the discussions on urban residence, it can be concluded that urban residence has a negative effect on family size.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The study was carried out on the black women of Sebokeng, a black residential area in the Western Metropolitan sub-structure in Vanderbijlpark. Fifty women who had completed their families and fifty women who had not started with their families were interviewed. Reference was also made to responses of 25 males who had not started on their families.

4.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- to explore women's perceptions of family size
- to investigate factors that influence women's decisions regarding family size.
- to make recommendations to the Department of Welfare and Population Development as to which areas they must concentrate in facilitating perceptions towards a small family norm and what the role of a social worker can be.

4.3 CONCLUSIONS

4.3.1 PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY SIZE

The perceptions of family size of both women who had completed their families and women who had not started with their families are changing towards a small family norm. A small family was defined as the family that one can afford to maintain. The change in the perceptions of the women who had completed their families can be attributed to experiences that women had in bringing up a lot of children and maintaining big families.

Women who had not started with their families who were also more educated preferred smaller families i.e. an average family size of 2.74 children compared to women who had completed their families who were less educated who preferred an average family size of 6.38 children.

There was no significant difference between the preferred number of boys and girls in the two women's groups. Women who had completed their families preferred 3.36 boys:3 girls while women who had not started with their families preferred 1.38 boys:1.38 girls. The ideal number of boys was also found to be declining. It was also not clear to what extent boy preference produces excess births, but it did not influence decision making regarding family size.

Although all the women in both groups saw having children as one of their roles, it does not lead them to having big families.

The fertility of the women of Sebokeng is at the third stage of the demographic transition, i.e. the fertility is beginning to drop.

4.3.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING DECISIONS ON FAMILY SIZE

The second objective was to investigate factors that influence women's decisions regarding family size.

DECISIONS ON FAMILY SIZE

The study proposes that the number of children couples want is consistently under consideration in response to problems of child bearing, economic prospects, the developing character of marriage and other factors. Decisions are made one birth at a time. There was consistency among the respondents regarding factors that influence their decision on family size. It can be concluded that decisions on family size are influenced by external factors.

The following factors were found to have an influence on family size:

THE WOMAN'S FAMILY OF ORIGIN

Women who came from big families i.e. families with an average of 7.26 children, preferred to have big families i.e. a family with an average of 6.38 children. These women ended up with big families i.e. families with an average of 6.04 children. While women who came from smaller families i.e. families with an average of 4.9 children preferred to have smaller families i.e. families with an average of 2.74 children.

PARENTAL INFLUENCE

Experience in bringing up and maintaining a lot of children contributed to parents advising their children to have smaller families. Parents' attitudes and norms are also changing from a belief that parents should not talk about family size to their children to an attitude that parents should discuss and plan for the future. Fifty four percent (27) of the women who had completed their families stated that they did discuss family size with their children and they encouraged them to have smaller families because it is expensive to bring up a lot of children.

INFANT MORTALITY RATE

The study also found that infant mortality rates have a positive effect on family size as most of the respondents i.e. 70% who had completed their families and 82% of those who had not started with their families stated that parents should replace children who died.

SEX PREFERENCE

Although the study found that sex preference does not have an influence on decision making regarding family size, it was not clear to what extent sex preference produces excess births. Sixty eight percent (31) of the women who had completed their families stated that the sex of the children did not have an influence on their decision regarding family size because God decides which sex of a child to give. Ninety eight percent (49) of the women who had not started with their families stated that if they did not get the number of boys and girls that they wanted they would accept what they get.

USE OF CONTRACEPTIVES

The findings from literature suggested that women who use contraceptives tend to have smaller families This study also found that:

- both the women's groups and the males have accepted the use of contraceptives for planning families.
- education and urban residence contributed to women using contraceptives and changing perceptions towards a small family norm

- men who have been exposed to family planning information tend to support the use of contraceptives

AGE AT MARRIAGE

Delaying the age at marriage also contributes to women being interested in extra marital activities like working in open labour market or education hence having smaller families. Hundred percent of the women who had completed their families stated that the age at which they got married had an influence on the number of children they had. These women did not use contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

AGE AT FAMILY FORMATION

Delaying the age at which couples start having children also contributes to women having smaller families. The average age at marriage of the women who had completed their families was 21.08. Sixty four percent of these women started immediately after marriage with their families. The average age of the women who had not started with their families was 20.12 and they were still attending college.

RELIGION

Although Gatarra (1982:181) found that religion was capable of influencing fertility perceptions, presently it has a limited influence on family size.

EDUCATION

Findings from both literature and research revealed that education has an influence on decision making regarding family size. The more educated the

woman is the less is the desire to have a lot of children and the more is the interest in other areas like open labour market and investing for their future. Hundred percent of the women who had not started with their families had completed standard ten and were studying towards a teacher's diploma. These women preferred a family with an average of 2.74 children. Women who had completed their families' highest standard of education was standard 8. These women preferred a family with an average of 6.38 children.

Education also contributes to women delaying age at marriage and age at family formation which contributes to women having smaller families.

Educational institutions also play a role in educating both males and females about contraceptives which help prevent unwanted pregnancies. Hundred percent of the women who had not started with their families had learnt about the use of contraceptives at school.

URBAN RESIDENCE

Literature and research also revealed that urban residence has an influence on family size. The cost of living in urban areas encourages women to have fewer children that they can afford to educate and maintain.

FAMILY INCOME

This study also found that family income does not have an influence on the women's decisions regarding family size. Fifty percent of the women who had completed their families who also grew up on farms stated that it did not matter how much money they had because they could get mealie meal and milk from the farmer.

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT MEN

Although all the women felt that sex is not only for procreation but also for pleasure, one hundred percent of the women who had completed their families and 80% of the women who had not started with their families believed that men generally feel proud after having made a woman pregnant. It was not clear how this perception influences decisions on family size but it may have a negative effect on small family size norms if a woman has a relationship with a man who holds traditional values and believes that the main role of a woman is to have children.

EXPERIENCE

This study found that experience in growing up in a big family or in bringing up a family with a lot of children makes women to want fewer children than their parents had.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above findings the researcher recommends that:

- when designing programmes and developing messages that aim to change perceptions towards a small family size norm, factors affecting different target groups, i.e. factors in the situation, should be taken into consideration. Different programmes and messages for different target groups, e.g. urban women and rural women, should then be developed. The programmes and messages should concentrate on the external factors. In cases of women in rural areas, culture, which defines the role and status of women, may play a role in determining perceptions regarding family size. Programmes aimed at

changing perceptions of family size of this group must then include messages that are aimed at improving the status of women.

- women who have experience in bringing up of children in a big family and maintaining a lot of children should be involved in sending messages aimed at changing perceptions towards smaller family norms. These messages can include information about the disadvantages and difficulties experienced in bringing-up of a lot of children, hence promoting a smaller family norm.
- Family planning promotion programmes should not only concentrate on the use of contraceptives but also on changing perceptions towards a small family norm. In addition both males and females should be educated about the fertility cycle and how it works as a family planning method.
- both males and females should be helped to realise that there is no difference in their perceptions regarding family size. Mixed male and female groups during educational programmes can be used to achieve this objective.
- since there is already change of perceptions of women in the urban areas more efforts should be placed on educating women in rural areas and farms regarding the advantages of smaller families. Farmers can also be involved in motivating their employees to have small families.
- education about the advantages of smaller families should include information about the advantages of delaying age at marriage and age at family formation. This must be combined with educational policies which make education compulsory up to grade 12 (std. 10).
- the possibility of using educational institutions for promotion of a small family norm should be explored.
- in-depth research must be done on the effect of women's perceptions of men on family size. Relevant programmes can then be developed.
- in-depth research should also be done on the effect of sex preference on family size as well as the possibility of using churches to encourage couples to have smaller families they can afford to maintain should be explored.

- social workers are equipped with interviewing and often offer premarital counselling . These sessions can be used effectively to help couples plan their families and the number of children they want to have and can afford to maintain. These sessions can also include making decisions on what they will do if they do not get the number of children they want or they do not get children at all.

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ANNEXURE A

**FACTORS INFLUENCING PERCEPTIONS AND DECISIONS OF THE
WOMEN WHO HAVE COMPLETED THEIR FAMILIES REGARDING
FAMILY SIZE.**

CONFIDENTIAL

1. Residential Address : _____

1.1 For how long have you lived at this address _____ yrs.
since birth _____

1.2 Where and in which part of the country did you grow up before you
came to this address?

PLACE

PART OF THE COUNTRY

URBAN _____

RURAL _____

SEMI-RURAL _____

2. School standard passed _____

3. Occupation _____

3.1 Did you ever work before you got married?

YES () NO ()

3.2 Do you have a job at present?

YES () NO ()

3.3 Did you work all the years during marriage?

YES () NO ()

Elaborate:

3.4 What was your household income?

| | FATHER | MOTHER |
|-------------|--------|--------|
| 100 - 500 | _____ | _____ |
| 600 - 1000 | _____ | _____ |
| 1000 - 2000 | _____ | _____ |
| above 2000 | _____ | _____ |

3.5 How was your income generated?

3.6 Do you think your family income had an effect on decision making concerning the number of children you wanted to have?

YES () NO ()

Elaborate _____

4. Religious denomination _____

4.1 Did your religion have any influence on the decision making process concerning the number of children you wanted to have?

YES () NO ()

Elaborate _____

4.2 Do you think that people who limit the family size are sinning against God?

YES () NO ()

Elaborate _____

4.3 How does God punish those who do not want to have children?

4.4 Does God expect people to have a lot of children?

YES () NO ()

Elaborate

5. Date of birth _____

5.1 Marital Status

Married

Single and live with a man

Divorced and live with a man

Divorced

Widowed

Widowed and live with a man

5.2 If married, how old were you when you got married? _____

5.3 When did you have your first child?

i) before marriage

ii) after marriage

5.4 If widowed/divorced and living with another man, did you have any children in your second relationship?

YES () NO ()

If yes, why did you have more children? _____

5.5 If remarried do you have children in your second marriage?

YES () NO ()

5.6 How long after marriage did you have your first child? _____

5.7 What do you think is the ideal length of time between marriage and the first child?

1 year _____ 2 years _____ 3 years and above _____

Elaborate _____

5.8 Do you think the age at which you got married had an effect on your decision as to when to start a family?

YES () NO ()

Elaborate _____

5.9 Did you decide when you first got married on the number of children you wanted to have?

YES () NO ()

5.10 Was your husband/boyfriend involved in a decision making process concerning the number of children you wanted to have?

YES () NO ()

5.11 Do you think husbands and wives should discuss and decide together on the number of children they want to have?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

5.12 Was your mother/mother-in-law involved in a decision making process concerning the number of children you wanted to have?

YES () NO ()

5.13 Who in your extended family supported large families?

6.2 How many boys and how many girls would you like to have?

Boys _____ Girls _____

6.3 Did the number of boys and girls you had affect the number of children that you have?

YES () NO ()

Elaborate _____

6.4 Would you encourage your daughter to have a child even if she is not married?

Elaborate _____

6.5 Did you have any children who died immediately after birth?

YES () NO ()

6.6 If yes, do you think this death influenced your decision to have other children?

Elaborate _____

6.7 Did you have any pregnancy that did not result in live birth?

YES () NO ()

If yes, do you think this death influenced your decision to have other children?

Elaborate _____

7. Do you think the number of children you have is what you wanted when you got married?

YES () NO ()

7.1 If no, why did you not have the number that you first wanted?

7.2 If you had to start all over again, would you have the same number of children that you have now?

YES () NO ()

Elaborate

7.3 Do you discuss with your daughter the number of children she must have when she is married?

YES () NO ()

Explain

8. As you know people have ideas about the number of children couples should have, how many children do you think a couple should have?

Why

8.1 How many children would have been there in a family before you call it large?

Explain

8.2 Are large families happier than small families?

YES () NO ()

Explain

8.3 What would you do if you only had one child?

8.4. What would you do if you had no children?

8.5 What role do you expect your children to play when you are old?

8.6 What role do you expect your children to play where it concerns their siblings?

8.7 Did you have this expectation before you started a family?

YES () NO ()

Explain

8.8 Did this expectation influence your decision concerning the number of children you wanted to have?

YES () NO ()

Explain

9. Do men pride themselves in having made a woman pregnant?

YES () NO ()

Explain

9.1 Do you believe that making a woman pregnant proves a man's manhood?

YES () NO ()

Explain

9.2 Is sex purely for procreation?

YES () NO ()

Explain

10. Did you ever refuse to have sex with your husband?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

11. Can you explain the fertility cycle?

12. Some people use contraceptives to limit the number of children or space children, did you also use them?

YES () NO ()

12.1 If yes, did you discuss with your husband/boyfriend before you started using contraceptives? _____

12.2 How does your husband/boyfriend feel about you using contraceptives?

12.3 When did you start using contraceptives?

before marriage
after marriage
after completing a family

12.4 Do you think husbands and wives should discuss and agree on the use of contraceptives?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

ANNEXURE B

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PERCEPTIONS AND DECISIONS OF WOMEN WHO HAVE NOT STARTED WITH THEIR FAMILIES REGARDING FAMILY SIZE.

1. Residential address _____

1.1 For how long have you lived at this address _____ yrs
since birth _____

1.2 Where and in which part of the country did you grow up before you came to this address?

PLACE

PART OF THE COUNTRY

URBAN _____

RURAL _____

SEMI-RURAL _____

2. School standard passed _____

3. Occupation _____

3.1 Did you ever work in your life?

YES () NO ()

3.2 Do you have a job at present?

YES () NO ()

3.3 What was your household income?

HUSBAND/BOYFRIEND

SELF

100 - 500

600 - 1000

1000 - 2000

above 2000

3.4 How was your income generated?

3.5 If you were to start a family now do you think your household income would have an effect on decision making concerning the number of children you want to have?

YES () NO ()

Elaborate

4. Religious denomination _____

4.1 Does your religion have any influence on the number of children you want to have?

YES () NO ()

Elaborate

4.2 Do you think that people who limit the family size are sinning against God?

YES () NO ()

Elaborate

4.3 How does God punish those who do not want to have children?

4.4 Does God expect people to have a lot of children?

YES () NO ()

Elaborate

5. Date of birth _____

5.1 Marital Status

Married _____
 Single and live with a man _____
 Divorced and live with a man _____
 Divorced _____
 Widowed _____
 Widowed and live with a man _____

5.2 If married, how old were you when you got married? _____

5.3 Do you think the age at which you got married had an influence as to when to start a family?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

5.4 What do you think is the ideal length of time between marriage and the first child?

1 year _____ 2 years _____ 3 years and above _____

Elaborate _____

5.5 If married did you decide when you first got married on the number of children you want to have?

YES () NO ()

5.6 Do you think couples should decide on the number of children they want to have when they first get married?

YES () NO ()

Elaborate _____

5.7 Was your husband/boyfriend involved in a decision making process concerning the number of children you wanted to have?

YES () NO ()

- 5.8 Do you think husbands and wives should discuss and decide together on the number of children they want to have?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

- 5.9 Was your mother/mother-in-law involved in a decision making process concerning the number of children you want to have?

YES () NO ()

- 5.10 Who in your extended family supports large families?

- 5.11 Who in your extended family supports smaller families?

- 5.12 Did these people have an influence on your decision concerning the family size?

Explain _____

- 5.13 How many children did your mother have? _____

- 5.14 Do you think this number influenced your decision concerning the number of children you want to have?

YES () NO ()

Elaborate _____

- 5.15 Were you ever told by your parents that your main role in marriage is to bear children?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

5.16 Did you have pressure from your parents/siblings to have children?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

6. How many children would you like to have?

6.1 How many boys and how many girls?

Boys _____ Girls _____

6.2 What will you do if you do not get the number of boys and girls that you want?

6.3 What will you do if you do not get the number of children that you want?

6.4 What will you do if you do not get any child at all?

6.5 Will you have children if you do not get married?

Elaborate _____

6.6 Do you think couples who have had children who died should try and have more children?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

6.7 Do you have any expectations about the role your children should play when you are old?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

7. How many children do you think couples should have?

7.1 How many children would have been there in a family before you call it large?

Explain _____

7.2 Are large families happier than small families?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

7.3 Do you discuss with your mother the number of children you must have when you are married?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

8. Do men pride themselves in having made a woman pregnant?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

8.1 Do you believe that making a woman pregnant proves a man's manhood?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

8.2 Is sex purely for procreation?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

8.3 Did you ever refuse to have sex with your husband/boyfriend?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

8.4 Can you explain the fertility cycle?

9. Some people use contraceptives to limit the number of children or space children, do you also use them?

YES () NO ()

9.1 If yes, did you discuss with your husband/boyfriend before you started using contraceptives?

9.2 How does your husband/boyfriend feel about you using contraceptives?

9.3 When did you start using contraceptives?

Before marriage

After marriage

9.4 Do you think husbands and wives should discuss and agree on the use of contraceptives?

YES () NO ()

Explain _____

9.5 Whose responsibility is it to use contraceptives?

i) a man

ii) a woman

iii) both

Elaborate _____

ANNEXURE C

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PERCEPTIONS AND DECISIONS OF MALES
WHO HAVE STARTED WITH THEIR FAMILIES REGARDING FAMILY SIZE.

CONFIDENTIAL

1. Residential Address : _____

1.1 For how long have you lived at this address _____

1.2 Where and in which part of the country did you grow up before you came to this address?

PLACE

PART OF THE COUNTRY

URBAN _____

RURAL _____

SEMI-RURAL _____

2. School standard passed _____

3. Occupation _____

3.1 Did you ever work in your life? YES NO

3.2 Do you have a job at present? YES NO

3.3 The family income has an influence in the decision concerning the number of children the couple would like to have. TRUE FALSE

3.4 The more money you earn the more children you want. TRUE FALSE

3.5 Couples should have few children irrespective of the amount of money they earn. TRUE FALSE

4. Religious denomination _____

4.1 My religion has an influence on the decision making process regarding the number of children a couple would like to have. TRUE FALSE

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|-------|
| 4.2 | People who limit family size are not sinners | TRUE | FALSE |
| 4.3 | God does punish those who do not want to have children at all. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 4.4 | God does not expect people to have a lot of children. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 4.5 | It is God who gives us children not the ancestors. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5. | Marital status _____ | | |
| 5.1 | The younger you get married the sooner you start a family. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5.2 | Couples should stay for at least a year after marriage before they start a family. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5.3 | Couples should decide immediately after getting married on the number of children they want to have. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5.4 | Husbands and wives should discuss and agree on the number of children they want to have. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5.5 | Parents should be involved in the decision making process of their children regarding the number of children they want to have. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5.6 | The woman's main role in marriage is to bear children. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5.7 | It does not matter what the sex of the children is a couple has. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5.8 | It is important to have children even if one is not married. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5.9 | Couples whose children have died should replace them. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5.10 | Large families are not happier than smaller families. | TRUE | FALSE |

- 5.11 Men become proud if they have made a woman pregnant. TRUE FALSE
- 5.12 Making a woman pregnant proves a man's manhood. TRUE FALSE
- 5.13 Sex is only for procreation. TRUE FALSE
- 5.14 It is both a man and a woman's responsibility to use contraceptives. TRUE FALSE
- 5.15 Couples should discuss and agree on the use of contraceptives. TRUE FALSE
- 5.16 Do you use contraceptives? YES NO