# Economic Determinants of Son Preference in Islamabad-Pakistan

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**Abstract**. Since the emergence of mankind on mother earth, preference for sons has been evident in every aspect of life and the same situation persists to date. Son preference has persisted in the face of sweeping economic and social changes in a country like Pakistan as herein families are now tended to have more sons than daughters to stabilize their future economic condition. This research aimed to assess the reason that set into motion this very phenomenon of sex selection and its consequent impacts in the economic realms. The prime concern was to comprehend how certain cultures manufacture and perpetuate gender roles in general and patriarchal tendencies in particular that are created by individuals within a society who choose to imbue a particular structure with meaning. The supremacy of the male child is engineered and hence knitted well into our patriarchal socio-cultural and economic structure from which one cannot be aloof to escape from this labeling, and to support the practice of non-medical gender selection, 'family balancing' has taken the position. As the approach of the study was quantitative research, sampling of the study was a probability sampling technique, data was collected through a Face-to-Face structured interview schedule and lastly, analysis was done through SPSS. The study denotes that the son preference is the product of multifaceted psychological, social, and economic causes. It can be concluded that there are psychological, social, and economic causes as well as impacts that comprise some factors which have more importance for the nuanced interpretation of the son preference than the overall factors themselves.

## 1. Introduction

Son preference emerges from patriarchal family tendencies that denote an attitude of preferring a male child to a female child. It is a cultural and social construction of unequal power relationships where a society classifies men in the upper (superordinate) position and women in the lower (subordinate) position in a social structure. Sen (2015) stated that son preference reflects the valuation of women wherein numbers tell us all how many "Women are missing" in any country. These measures in gender bias mortality are due to sex-selective births, abortions or insufficient health care for the girl children.

Son preference is also a key to balancing family and slowing the unsustainable population growth of developing countries. Under developing and underdeveloped regions focus on consumption and working hands, therefore male preference in such regions can be seen as prominent among different cultures, families or communities. People desire more sons than girls not only in rural but in urban or semi-urban areas also to get financial support in the future from their male offspring. They assume that having more sons leads to an effective or bright future and may influence on positive economic development of one's family or society.

In Asian countries, such as Pakistan, India, China, Nepal and Bangladesh people have now come to know that sustainable family development depends upon more working hands of family members, they do not shock after hearing modern and traditional ways of getting less and qualitative childbearing methods. There are some instrumental and medication treatments to cure women's health and to attain the desire of having more sons, which usually couples apply while having pregnancy or after delivery.

Now people in Asian regions accept family planning, family balancing and child spacing concepts for having healthy male offspring. It has been now accepted in south Asian countries that modern practices to avail son offspring is something beneficial from which family can get an idea and peaceful life.

In the Pakistani social fabric, patriarchal families foresee their future monetary and cognitive benefits through the accumulative increase in resources. Human behavior is rational and is hence based upon utility maximization for their economic cost-benefit analysis. Following causes for sex selection such as cost of a child, quality importance, generation enhancement, economic stability, investment for future, and capital expenditure leads to the below-mentioned effects: son is preferable for future, fewer daughters' quantity, the girl is the consumer and costly, son career matters, higher education for sons, daughters are costly (education, career, dowry, etc.).

## 2. Literature Review

In most developing countries, especially in South Asia, the preference for sons in families is persistent (Williamson, 1976; Arnold and Kuo, 1984; Bairagi and Langsten, 1986; Kent and Larson, 1982; Ali, 1989; Vlassoff, 1990). According to Sheps (1963), every couple wishes for at least two sons. In India, people want at least one living son (Das, 1989). In Pakistan, the desire for a son cannot be overlooked. Different research on son preference shows that the number of living sons is an indicator of complete family size in Pakistan (Khan and Sirageledin, 1977). Research shows that the number of additional children is influenced by the presence of sons (Ali, 1989; Clark, 2000; Croll, 2002; Bhat and Zavier, 2003).

Cultural history such as dowries and restrictions on economic activities for women give parents an incentive for sons (Lundberg, 2005). Dowry and wealth flowing from the bride's family to the groom's family have become a common practice in all casts and communities. This has put a heavy burden on the girl's family in arranging for a dowry demanded by the boy's family, in addition to meeting increasing marriage expenses (Sekher, Hatti, 2006; Hussain, Fikree, and Berends, 2000; Ali 1989, Safder, Sharif, Hussain, and Rasheed, 2007).

If a family is unable to provide the required dowry to the groom's family, then the bride's parents may face undesirable consequences. The costs of daughters' weddings are a major drain on household resources in India, and there is growing evidence of dowry inflation (Rao, 1993). Nag (1991) and Ali (1989) report that a daughter's birth in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan is regarded as bringing neither benefit nor prestige to the family. Rather it is considered an economic liability because of the dowry system and the high cost of a female's wedding. In the nutshell, female children are considered an economic burden in different societies for many decades. The developing countries have a significant role of male offspring in families or different areas of stages of life one of the most is the economic stability of male offspring for their parents and family. To have a female child refers to finance consumption and raw expansion like education and dowry.

Male members within families have a definite preference for sons and South Asian women face the same fate. This is primarily associated with the economic dependence of women on men (Bairagi and Langsten, 1986; Kabir et al., 1994). Financial autonomy and the working status of women significantly influence the way women think.

Women with careers and better education are more likely to require their husbands to wear condoms to avoid unwanted pregnancies and to de-emphasize the importance of having several pregnancies to produce a son (Morrison, 1995).

Tavakoli (1993) also reports those women who have good jobs and do not depend on men, influence the decision-making regarding family planning and gender preference (Sathar, 1986). Education, wealth and region have a significant impact on son preference in Pakistani society. It is also noted that the desire for male children increased proportionally and remain higher after the birth of female childbirth, Sathar (2015).

## 3. Objectives of the Study

- To explore the economic variables that result in strengthening patriarchal family tendencies in general and son preference in particular,
- To analyze the economic impacts of patriarchal family tendencies in general and son preference in particular,
- To explain the cost and benefit analysis on the grounds of which, families prefer sons over daughters.

## 4. Methods

The approach of the study was Quantitative. The probability Sampling Technique was used to select the suitable population

for the study. For Data Collection, Face to Face interview schedule was used and for Data Analysis, Statistical Data analysis Techniques were used. Inclusion criteria for the study were, that respondents must be married without the compulsion of the date of marriage so that the trends of sex selection can also be described.

The respondents must be consulting hospitals specifically in Islamabad for sex selection procedures. As the study focused only on women, therefore, the respondent must be female. While Exclusion Criteria were All males even married or otherwise were not part of this study.

All respondents consulting sex-selection procedures outside Islamabad were not part of this study. All respondents who do not desire family balancing were not part of this study. The researcher visited all the hospitals in Islamabad where the sex selection process was available. In each hospital, the researchers collected information about whether the hospital was providing the facility of sex selection or not.

Those hospitals which did not offer a sex-selection process were excluded from the sampling criteria. After visits to all the hospitals, public and private, in Islamabad city, the researcher prepared a list of the hospitals which provided the sex selection information and procedures which were 38 in number in twin cities Islamabad/Rawalpindi. The next important step was to select true representatives of the population from each hospital. To do so, the researcher had to visit the medical staff that was responsible for sex selection services.

The researcher arranged a meeting with the concerned staff/authorities/doctors and briefed them about the research purpose. It was explained that the collected data would not be used other than for research purposes and the name of any of the staff members would not be disclosed except his/her permission where necessary.

The staff was also described that the research would not cause any harm to the dignity of the hospitals and the professionalism of the staff. Next, to obtain the true representative of the

population, the researcher selected the Taro Yamane sample size

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

equation which is as follows:

where:

N = Population size

1 = Constant number

e = Margin of Error

As the target population of the study was married women tending to sex selection, the population size of the married women was required, which the author acquired from Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18. The number of married women by the survey was 6277 in Punjab.

The researcher used the number of married women numbers in Punjab because the number of married women in Islamabad capital (103) produced a very small sample size i.e., 82 respondents. Even reducing the margin of error to 0.01, the resulted sample size was 101 which the researcher believed is small sample size for her study.

However, using a larger population size provides higher chances of a big sample size and a higher number of representatives from Islamabad. Thus, the researcher determined the sample size of the study using the number of married women in Punjab which is as follows:

$$n = \frac{6277}{1 + 6277\,(0.0025)} = 376$$

As the confidence interval is 95%, therefore, the margin of error in the equation is 0.05. The resulted sample size for the study was 376. However, considering the resources and to improve the validity of the generalization, the researcher increased the sample size to 390 respondents.

## 5. Data Analysis

### 5.1. Demographic Profile

The low standard deviation values of occupation (.970) explain that there is not much diversity among occupations as women are unlikely to be contributing to household income and even if they do, their contribution is rarely recognized.

Secondly, due to cultural constraints, females are not allowed to work and usually end up adopting the role of housewives.

**Table 1a. Percentage distribution of demographic profile of respondents**

| Variable | Categories | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | less than or equal to 20 | 9 | 2.3 | 3.65 | 1.330 |
| | 21-25 | 70 | 17.9 | | |
| | 26-30 | 121 | 31.0 | | |
| | 31-35 | 89 | 22.8 | | |
| | 36-40 | 50 | 12.8 | | |
| | more than or equal to 41 | 51 | 13.1 | | |
| Education | Illiterate | 33 | 8.5 | 4.13 | 1.647 |
| | Middle | 40 | 10.3 | | |
| | Matric | 74 | 19.0 | | |
| | FA/FSc | 51 | 13.1 | | |
| | BA/BSc | 79 | 20.3 | | |
| | MA/MSc and Above | 113 | 29.0 | | |
| Occupation | Housewife | 159 | 40.8 | 2.01 | .970 |
| | Government Job | 93 | 23.8 | | |
| | Private Job | 115 | 29.5 | | |
| | Business | 23 | 5.9 | | |
| Income per month | Nil | 177 | 45.4 | 2.52 | 1.729 |
| | Less than or equal to 20,000 | 38 | 9.7 | | |
| | 20,001-40,000 | 67 | 17.2 | | |
| | 40,001-60,000 | 51 | 13.1 | | |
| | 60,001-80,000 | 27 | 6.9 | | |
| | 80,001-100,000 | 19 | 4.9 | | |
| | More than 100,000 | 11 | 2.8 | | |

The high SD value (1.729) explains variations in the monthly income level of the respondents as they were mostly in the higher and middle-income groups. The reasons behind these variations are relatively proportional to the income level of the husbands of the respondents. As occupations of husbands vary, so does their income level and lastly, as women were usually economically dependent on their husbands, hence their attitude towards information regarding sex selection also varies as some bear the cost of such information and methods from their own pocket money and some rely on the financial support rendered by their husbands.

On the other hand, desired fertility does vary with education, income level and region, as now in urbanized settings and with time, women's attitude towards large families is changing due to more inclinations toward education, career and profession. Hence to limit their family size, the quest for sons is persistently increasing due to patriarchal family demands that remain constant.

Similarly, the SD values (1.330), and (1.647) explain variations in age and education respectively. As women with lower fertility, better education or socioeconomic status, and more exposure to media are more likely to pursue the deliberate desire to control the sex of their next child.

Moreover, the table comprised some of the prime demographic variables of the respondents which showed that a very minor percentage of the respondents (2.3%) had an age less than or equal to 20, whereas almost 18 % of the respondents had the age cohort of 21-25. The table also revealed that the percentage of the respondents in the age cohort of 26-36 is high compared with all other age cohorts' percentage distribution. The age cohort of 31-35 comes second in order as 22.8% of respondents from this age cohort participated in the study. However, a similar percentage of the respondents from the age cohort of 36-40 (12.8%) and more than 41 (13.1%) participated in the study.

The table also revealed the frequency along with the percentage distribution of qualification level of the respondents wherein the percentage of the respondents with sixteen years of education or above is highest (29%) whereas 8.5% of the participants were illiterate. The table also showed that 10.3% of the respondents had middle, 19% of the respondents had matric and 13% of the respondents had secondary level education. The percentage of the respondents who had B.A/B.Sc. is second in order as 20.3% of the respondents secured this level of qualification. In the nutshell, age, as well as education variables, were almost similar.

The table further showed that most of the respondents reported themselves as housewives (40.8%) whereas, only 5.9% of the respondents said that they had their own business. However, 23.8% of the respondents were government employees and 29.5% of the respondents were working in the private sector. As the employment distribution of the respondents showed that most of the respondents were housewives, the percentage and frequency distribution of their income affirmed it as slightly lower than the half of the respondents wherein 45.4% reported that they have no monthly income. Interestingly, the percentage distribution of income categories manifested that only 2.8% of the respondents were earning more than 100000 PKR per month. However, 17.2% and 13.1% of the respondents reported that they were earning 20,001-40,000 PKR and 40,001-60,000 PKR per month respectively.

**Table 1b. Percentage distribution of demographic profile of respondents**

| Variables | Categories | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spouse Income | Nil | 51 | 13.1 | 3.29 | 1.593 |
| | Less than or equal to 20,000 | 75 | 19.2 | | |
| | 20,001-40,000 | 116 | 29.7 | | |
| | 40,001-60,000 | 66 | 16.9 | | |
| | 60,0001-80,000 | 39 | 10.0 | | |
| | 80,001-100,000 | 24 | 6.2 | | |
| | More than or equal to 100,001 | 19 | 4.9 | | |
| Marriage type | Exogamous | 205 | 52.6 | 1.47 | .500 |
| | Endogamous | 185 | 47.4 | | |
| Family type | Nuclear | 133 | 34.1 | 1.78 | .649 |
| | Joint | 208 | 53.3 | | |
| | Extended | 49 | 12.6 | | |
| Family members | Less than or equal to 2 | 42 | 10.8 | 2.87 | 1.224 |
| | 3-4 | 136 | 34.9 | | |
| | 5-6 | 98 | 25.1 | | |
| | 7-8 | 62 | 15.9 | | |
| | 9-10 | 49 | 12.6 | | |
| | More than 10 | 3 | .8 | | |
| Earning Hands | One | 160 | 41.0 | 2.02 | 1.120 |
| | Two | 121 | 31.0 | | |
| | Three | 66 | 16.9 | | |
| | Four | 32 | 8.2 | | |
| | Five | 6 | 1.5 | | |
| | Six | 5 | 1.3 | | |
| Religion | Muslim | 356 | 91.3 | 1.15 | .514 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Hindu | 8 | 2.1 | | |
| | Christian | 26 | 6.7 | | |
| Years of marriage | 1-4 | 137 | 35.1 | 2.40 | 1.425 |
| | 5-8 | 104 | 26.7 | | |
| | 9-11 | 61 | 15.6 | | |
| | 13-16 | 46 | 11.8 | | |
| | 17-20 | 29 | 7.4 | | |
| | More than 20 | 13 | 3.3 | | |

Table 1b consisted of the frequency along with the percentage distribution of the demographic variables. The low standard deviation values of marriage type (.500) explain that there is not much diversity among marriage types as well as in family type (.649), and religion (.514). The reason behind less variation in marriage type is that most of the marriages were endogamous and hence arranged. In case there were urbanized nuclear families, the decisions to apt fertility choices are proportionally influenced by the family elders living in the native towns. Moreover, saturated responses in family type were because respondents were mostly living in the joint family system.

Lastly, the high SD value (1.593) explains high variations among spousal income as well as years of marriage (1.425) that still lie in the fertility age cohort of marriage. Similarly, the SD values (1.224), and (1.120) explain variations among Family members and earning hands respectively. The variation is linked with the birth of the sons as the proportion of women preferring three or more sons remains two to three times higher than that of women who desire as many daughters as possible in all categories.

It reflected that most of the spouse's monthly income was lower than 40000 PKR per month as 19.2% of the spouses' income was less than 20000 PKR per month and 29.7% of the spouses' income per month was 20001-40000 PKR. Interestingly, 13.1% of the spouses did not have income at all. However, 21.1% of the spouses had greater than 60000 PKR income per month (60, 0001-80,000 = 10%, 80,001-100,000 = 6.2% and more than or equal to 100,001 = 4.9%).

Interestingly, it was also found that exogamous marriages are increasing as slightly higher than half of the respondents (52.6%) reported that they had an exogamous marriage.

However, endogamy was competing with the former marriage type by 47.4% of prevalence.

Although exogamy was increasing yet the joint family type prevailed as 53.3% of the respondents were living in this family type. Astonishingly, almost 13% of the respondents reported that they are living in the extended family system. However, the nuclear family system surpassed the former family type because 34.1% of the respondents were living in this family system.

Furthermore, the family size cannot be neglected when it comes to the family and marriage type. Therefore, the table also showed that a very little percentage of respondents that their family size was less than or equal to 2 (10.8%) and more than 10 (0.8%). However, almost 35% of the respondents reported a family size of 3-4 which ideal family size for a nuclear family. Nevertheless, the percentage of 5-8 family sizes was greater because 40% of the respondents had such a big family size (5-6 = 25.1% and 7-8 = 15.1%). Interestingly, almost 13% of the respondents reported the size of their family as 9-10.

The table also showed that the dependents in each family were higher as the number of earning hands is lower which can be viewed through the percentage of the families who has only one earning hand (41%). However, a very minimal percentage of the respondents reported four (8.2%), five (1.5%), and six (1.3%) earning hands in their families. The table also showed that 31% and 16.9% of the families have two and three earning hands, respectively.

The table also showed the frequency and percentage distribution of religious affiliation of the respondents which affirmed the national distribution of religions. The table showed Muslims are the majority in the country as 91.3% of the respondents were

Muslims. However, the Hindus (2.1%) and Christians (6.7%) were minorities in the country.

The table also revealed the total years of marriage of the respondents which showed that 3.3% of the respondents were married for more than 20 years. However, 35.1% of the

respondents' years of marriage were 1-4 and 26.7% of the respondents' years of marriage were 26.7%. The table further revealed that those respondents whose years of marriage are between 9 and 11 years are 15.6%, whereas the respondents who married for 13-16 years are 11.8%.

### 5.2. Economic Causes of sex selection

**Table 2a. Percentage distribution of economic causes**

| Variables | Categories | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Types of methods you know regarding sex selection | Timing method | 118 | 30.3 | 3.05 | 1.693 |
| | Sperm's sorting | 61 | 15.6 | | |
| | Ericsson | 27 | 6.9 | | |
| | IVF/PGD Technique | 51 | 13.1 | | |
| | None | 133 | 34.1 | | |
| Sort of method for attaining sex selection | Timing method | 113 | 29.0 | 3.19 | 1.737 |
| | Sperm's sorting | 61 | 5.6 | | |
| | Ericsson | 13 | 3.3 | | |
| | IVF/PGD Technique | 46 | 11.8 | | |
| | None | 157 | 40.3 | | |
| Variation of affordability for a particular method for you | To a great extent | 75 | 19.2 | 2.66 | 1.137 |
| | Somewhat | 114 | 29.2 | | |
| | Very little | 68 | 17.4 | | |
| | Not at all | 133 | 34.1 | | |

The low standard deviation values in affordability for a particular method for respondents portray (1.137) that almost the majority of respondents sought knowledge regarding available sex-selective methods and their cost while relatively high SD values (1.693) and (1.737) depicted high variation for the types of methods regarding sex selection available at peculiar fertility center as well as sorting of method that might be suitable for the respondents, both in regard of success and affordability. Information regarding such methods was directly proportional to those fertility centers and geographical regions which were technologically advanced. Greater access to knowledge and services enabling prenatal sex selection was also relative to such centers.

Table 2a comprised the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents concerning the economic causes of sex selection. The respondents were asked about the sex selection

methods which related to the economic capacity of individuals. It found that 30.3% of the respondents said that they knew about the trimming method, 15.6% of the respondents were aware of sperm sorting methods, 6.9% of the respondents understand the Ericson method, 13.1% of the respondents recognized the IVF/PDF technique and 34.1% of the respondent did not know about any of these sex selection methods.

The respondents were also asked which sort of method they like to practice selection. Interestingly, 40.3% of the respondents said that they would not select any of the methods. On the contrary, 29% selected the trimming method, 15.6% chose the sperm sorting method, 3.3% preferred the Ericson method and 11.8% of the respondents were in favor of the IVF/PDF technique.

The respondents were further asked to report on the variation in the affordability of a method for them. It was found that 19.2%

and 29.2% of the respondents said that the variation in affordability for them occurred to a great extent and somewhat extent, respectively. It was found that 17.4% of the respondent said such variation affected their very little to their affordability. However, 34.1% of the respondents said that it did not affect their affordability at all.

**Table 2b. Percentage distribution of economic causes**

| Variables | Categories | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variation of effectiveness which you feel about the method you chose | To a great extent | 69 | 17.7 | 2.66 | 1.137 |
| | Somewhat | 130 | 33.3 | | |
| | Very little | 53 | 13.6 | | |
| | Not at all | 138 | 35.4 | | |
| Information regarding the particular method | Family | 51 | 13.1 | 3.11 | 1.406 |
| | Doctors | 107 | 27.4 | | |
| | Relatives | 87 | 22.3 | | |
| | Spouse | 39 | 10.0 | | |
| | None | 106 | 27.2 | | |
| Sons are more important for wealth b/w the generations | Strongly agree | 109 | 27.9 | 2.19 | 1.084 |
| | Agree | 177 | 45.4 | | |
| | Undecided | 38 | 9.7 | | |
| | Disagree | 54 | 13.8 | | |
| | Strongly disagree | 12 | 3.1 | | |
| Having sons makes you economically secure | Strongly agree | 103 | 26.4 | 2.19 | 1.056 |
| | Agree | 184 | 47.2 | | |
| | Undecided | 39 | 10.0 | | |
| | Disagree | 54 | 13.8 | | |
| | Strongly disagree | 10 | 2.6 | | |

Table 2b consisted of the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents concerning the economic causes of the sex selection. The table showed that 17.7% and 33.3% of the respondents reported great extent and somewhat extent variation in the effectiveness of the method they selected for sex selection, respectively.

A little percentage of the respondents doubted the effectiveness of the selected method as they marked the option "very little".

However, 35.4% of the respondents said that they do not have any double on the effectiveness of the selected method.

The respondents were asked who gave them information about the method they selected. The table showed that 13.3% came to know about the selected method from their families, 27.4% heard from doctors, 22.3% had the information from their relatives and only 10% were told about the selected method by their spouse. Interestingly, 27.2% of the respondents said that

they did not come to know about the selected method from any of these categories.

The researcher also asked about the economic inheritance of the family concerning the male baby selection. It was found that 27.9% and 45.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that son is more important than a daughter for the wealth inheritance across generations, respectively.

However, 13.8% and 3.1% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with such importance of a son, respectively.

The table also showed that 9.7% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with such importance of a son.

The respondents were asked to report about the economic security of having a son in the family. The responses of the respondents showed that 26.4% and 47.2% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with such economic security, respectively.

On the contrary, 13.8% and 2.6% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with such security. Interestingly, 10% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

**Table 2c. Percentage distribution of economic causes**

| Variables | Categories | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Daughters are economically more dependent on you than sons | Strongly agree | 81 | 20.8 | 2.46 | 1.141 |
| | Agree | 163 | 41.8 | | |
| | Undecided | 44 | 11.3 | | |
| | Disagree | 91 | 23.3 | | |
| | Strongly disagree | 11 | 2.8 | | |
| Economic dependency of daughters more at the time of their marriage | Strongly agree | 66 | 16.9 | 2.49 | 1.084 |
| | Agree | 172 | 44.1 | | |
| | Undecided | 56 | 14.4 | | |
| | Disagree | 87 | 22.3 | | |
| | Strongly disagree | 9 | 2.3 | | |
| Because of the daughter's marital status, she can't support her parents in old age | Strongly agree | 108 | 27.7 | 2.26 | 1.146 |
| | Agree | 167 | 42.8 | | |
| | Undecided | 37 | 9.5 | | |
| | Disagree | 62 | 15.9 | | |
| | Strongly disagree | 16 | 4.1 | | |

Table 2c comprised the frequency as well as a percentage distribution of the respondents concerning the economic causes of sex selection.

The table showed that 20.8% and 41.8% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that daughters are more dependent on them than sons, respectively.

The table also showed contrary responses which revealed that 23.3% and 2.8% of the respondents disagreed and strongly

disagreed with dependence, respectively. However, 11.3% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

It was further probed whether daughters become more dependent on their parents at the time of their marriage? The responses showed that 44.1% and 16.9% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with such dependency.

Meanwhile, 22.3% of the respondents disagreed with such dependency. It was found that 14.4% of the respondents

preferred to not give any opinion about it. The researcher asked the respondents that is it the marriage of their daughters restricted them not supporting their parents in their old age. The responses revealed that 27.7% and 42.8% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that it is the marital status of daughters which restricted them to not supporting their parents in their old age, respectively. On the other hand, 15.9% and 4.1% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with this, respectively. However, 9.5% of the respondents were undecided about it.

*5.3. Economic Impact of sex selection*

**Table 3. Percentage distribution of economic impacts**

| Variables | Categories | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Who is more able to support parents economically in old age | Son | 270 | 69.2 | 1.47 | .754 |
| | Daughter | 58 | 14.9 | | |
| | None | 62 | 15.9 | | |
| Any sort of financial rewards gap in your household service being the mother of specific sex | To a great extent | 82 | 21.0 | 2.35 | 1.037 |
| | Somewhat | 174 | 44.6 | | |
| | Very little | 51 | 13.1 | | |
| | Not at all | 83 | 21.3 | | |
| Having more girls increases the trend of bride buying | Strongly agree | 57 | 14.6 | 2.73 | 1.151 |
| | Agree | 130 | 33.3 | | |
| | Undecided | 89 | 22.8 | | |
| | Disagree | 90 | 23.1 | | |
| | Strongly disagree | 24 | 6.2 | | |
| Having more girls in society increases the trend for dowry | Strongly agree | 62 | 15.9 | 2.64 | 1.142 |
| | Agree | 144 | 36.9 | | |
| | Undecided | 73 | 18.7 | | |
| | Disagree | 93 | 23.8 | | |
| | Strongly disagree | 18 | 4.6 | | |
| In patriarchy, people expect dowry at the time of their son's marriage | To a great extent | 36 | 9.2 | 2.95 | 1.005 |
| | Somewhat | 99 | 25.4 | | |
| | Very little | 104 | 26.7 | | |
| | Not at all | 151 | 38.7 | | |
| Dowry as a burden for daughter's parents | To a great extent | 143 | 36.7 | 2.18 | 1.116 |
| | Somewhat | 103 | 26.4 | | |
| | Very little | 74 | 19.0 | | |
| | Not at all | 70 | 17.9 | | |

*Ahmad et al.*

The low standard deviation values of marriage type (.754) explain that there is not much diversity among who is more able to support parents economically in old age while the high SD value (1.116) explains high variations among dowry as a burden for daughter's parents, having more girls in society increases the trend for dowry (1.142) and lastly having more girls increases the trend for bride buying (1.151) respectively. Similarly, the SD values (1.005) and (1.037) explain variations among the variables as such; in patriarchy, people expect dowry at the time of their son's marriage and any sort of financial rewards gap in your household service being the mother of a specific sex. Daughters are seen as an expense and an economic burden coupled with the increasing price of dowry. Table 3 comprised the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents concerning the economic impacts of sex selection. The table showed that 69.2% of the respondents said the sons are more able to support their parents in their old age economically. However, 14.9% were of the view that daughters are more able to support their parents in their old age than sons. Interestingly, 15.9% of the respondents said that neither sons nor daughters can support their parents in their old age. The table also showed that 21% of the respondents were of the view that there is a reward gap in their family being the mother of particular sex such as being the mother of a daughter has less reward than being the mother of a son. It was further found that 44.6% of the respondents reported such a gap as somewhat. The table also showed that 13.1% of the respondents reported very little such gap in their family. However, 21.3% of the respondents report no such gap at all. The researcher asked the opinion of the respondents about the relationship between the increase in births

of daughters and bride buying. The table showed that 14.6% and 33.3% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that an increase in births of daughters set the trend of bride buying. On the contrary, 23.1% and 60.2% of the respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed with such a relationship, respectively. However, 22.8% of the respondents remained undecided. The researcher also measured the relationship of such an increase with dowry and found that 15.9% and 36.9% strongly agreed and agreed with the relationship between the increases in the birth of daughters related to the trend of dowry, respectively. However, 23.8% and 4.6% of the respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed with this relationship, respectively. It was also found that 18.7% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this relationship. The table also exhibited the expectation of dowry at the time of the marriage of their sons in patriarchy. The distribution of responses showed that 9.2% and 25.4% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with the expectation of dowry at the time of marriage of their sons, respectively. On the contrary, 26.7% and 38.7% of the respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed with such expectations at the time of the marriage of their sons within a patriarchal structure, respectively. However, 38.7% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with such expectations. The researcher asked whether to some extent they agreed with the burden of dowry on parents. The table showed that 36.7% and 26.4% of the respondents agreed to a great extent and a somewhat extent, respectively, that the dowry is a burden for parents. However, 19% and 17.9% of the respondents said that they agreed with it to a very little extent and not at all, respectively.

**Table 4. Predictor of economic impacts of sex selection**

| Variables | Sub Variables | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| | Constant | 4.812 | .972 | | 4.949 | .000 |
| Psychological Causes | Personal Cause | .032 | .056 | .029 | .579 | .563 |
| | Interpersonal Cause | .000 | .097 | .000 | -.003 | .998 |
| Social Causes | Son Preference | .102 | .053 | .104 | 1.919 | .056 |
| | Religious Imposition | .346 | .076 | .202 | 4.544 | .000 |
| | Spouse Educational Gap | -.100 | .096 | -.045 | -1.042 | .298 |
| | Daughter / Boy sex preference | -.045 | .105 | -.018 | -.432 | .666 |
| Economical causes | | .318 | .038 | .424 | 8.415 | .000 |
| Goodness of fit $R^2 = 0.34$ | | | | | | |

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Table 4 consisted of the results of a simple linear regression analysis on the economic impacts of sex selection. The R2 value of the model showed that the predictors explained 34% of the variance in the outcome variable. The One Ways Analysis of Variance also showed that the predictors are significantly different by outcome variable, $F(7, 382) = 27.9$, $p<.001$.

The results of this model produced very interesting results as it showed that most of the variables did not significantly predict the economic impacts of sex selection except one religious imposition and economic causes. More interestingly, both predictors have almost similar importance in predicting the economic impacts of sex selection as the coefficient value of religious imposition is 0.35 and economic causes are 0.32. It also showed that religious impositions have higher importance than economic causes in the economic effects of sex selection.

## 6. Conclusions

Several cultural, social, and economic factors influence the relative Cost and Benefits of sons and daughters in society ultimately leading parents to gender preferences. There is huge pressure on women to produce sons…which not only directly affects women's reproductive choices and decisions, with implications for their health and survival, but also puts women in a position where they must perpetuate the lower status of girls through son preference. It is also women who have to bear the consequences of giving birth to an unwanted girl child.

These consequences can include violence, abandonment, divorce or even death. Against the backdrop of such intense pressure, women seek to discover the sex of a fetus through ultrasound. The discovery of a female fetus can then lead to its abortion.

Sex selection can also take place before a pregnancy is established, or after the birth of a girl, through child neglect or infanticide. Over decades, the practice has caused a sex-ratio imbalance in many countries, particularly in South Asia, East Asia and Central Asia including Pakistan.

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