

## **Representations of female primary school teachers concerning giving birth to males and females. Exploratory study**

Salma FARES<sup>1,\*</sup> ; Khalid FARES<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>*Faculté de Médecine et de Pharmacie d'Agadir. Université Ibn Zohr. Maroc*

<sup>2</sup>*Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle Bab ROUAH -Rabat- Morocco*

*Corresponding Author: Salma FARES*

*Quartier Tilila Bp 7519 Agence Abb Agadir Al Fidria Cp80060*

---

### **Abstract:**

This study about representations of female primary school teachers is concerning giving birth to males and females aims at finding out the reasons behind the discrimination between males and females. This study starts with three hypotheses: Hypothesis one: This discrimination nurtures the prevailing customs and traditions in the Moroccan society. Hypothesis two: The misunderstanding of religion contributes to strengthening this tendency. Hypothesis three: The spreading of illiteracy, ignorance and the lack of awareness support the continuation of this paradox. The study adopts the analytical descriptive approach. A questionnaire is used to survey the respondents' opinions and comprises two sections and nine items. The study population sample reaches 160 female schoolteachers, representing four different geographical regions, and is conducted in two phases: a phase to administer the questionnaire and collect data and a phase to treat data. The results of the study reveal that two thirds (2/3) of the attitudes expressed substantiate the discrimination between males and females. This discrimination is related to three factors in which the economic part is predominant: (in the first position comes the financial support of parents followed by preserving the family name and in the third position comes the preservation of inheritance). The study also recommends adopting four approaches to overcome this abnormal situation.

**Key words:** culture, representation, Values, Tendency, Habits, Traditions, system of inheritance, family code.

---

Date of Submission: 25-09-2021

Date of Acceptance: 08-10-2021

---

### **I. INTRODUCTION:**

The family is the mainstay to build and sustain society. The stability, success and the progress of any society depend on the family system and the type of communication relationships between its members. They also depend on the feeling the couple has about the importance of marriage life as an institution based on mutual responsibility and emotional and sexual satisfaction, giving birth to children, educating, and preparing them for life and be adapted to society requirements. Besides, this institution is affected by the increase of birth rate. Also, the priority to give birth to males or females is not only determined by the type of prevailing social common culture, but also by urban or rural environment, whose requirements are related to the nature of the labor system. Marriage life in Islam is based on justice, charity, mercy, affection, and the treatment of virtue. Pregnancy and childbearing are considered the fruit of this relationship, which is based on the integration of roles. Since the birth of children is a divine creation [1] that goes beyond human will and a manifestation of granting and preventing, giving, and depriving equality between the two sexes is a fundamental and a mandatory condition and any discrimination or activation of one sex over the other is an objection to God's ability, will, mercy and divine justice. Despite the efforts made by the Moroccan state during the last 20 years to improve the status of the woman either concerning her dignity or her humanity to make her responsible for the family under the care of the couple, to make the right choice of her life partner as a major woman, who can exercise it according to her conviction and interest and to restrict polygamy to urgent necessities with the consent of the first wife [2]. Despite the explicit statement of the new Moroccan Constitution being careful to equate between men and women in civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights and freedoms, and the continuous pursuit of the principle of equality between men and women [3]; the Moroccan family has remained impervious to this development due to the strong presence of the dominant and domineering social culture in the behaviors and actions of the family. The latter is not yet able to get rid of the conservative tendency based on the

discrimination between males and females. This exploratory study aims at monitoring the Moroccan culture concerning giving birth to males and females, the extent to which priority is given to each of these sexes, and the underlying reasons for these perceptions by relying on a sample survey of female teachers working in primary schools.

## **II. METHODS:**

In relation to this paradox between the current and desired situation, three hypotheses can be developed:

- The prevailing customs and traditions of Moroccan society feed the preference and discrimination between males and females.
- The misunderstanding and misrepresentation of religion contributes to the strengthening of this orientation.
- The spreading of illiteracy, ignorance, and the lack of awareness help to preserve this paradox.

### **Study design:**

The study adopts a descriptive and an analytical methodology, which includes the following steps: observation and questioning, then the assumption to develop the problem and choosing hypotheses. The population sample covers 160 female primary school teachers at the national level, representing four different geographical regions, and 40 primary schools. The average age of the teachers is 27 years, with a teaching experience of 15 years, and whose academic qualifications ranges from the Baccalaureate degree to further studies beyond the Bachelor of Arts/Science degree, and 88% of them are married. The sample is based on the quota sampling to have the representation of all specialties and age groups. This sample is limited to survey the females' opinions only, and not the males' views. Questionnaires are used in this study to survey opinions and perceptions because they are easy to administer. The questionnaire consists of two sections and nine items: section 1: concerns the representation of the Moroccan culture of giving birth to males and females and section 2 identifies the reasons behind the discrimination of giving birth to males rather than to females. The questionnaire includes a closed evaluation scale in the first section, and a gradual scale from negative to positive values. The second one considers the specificity of the sample in the research and the nature of the attitudes expressed.

### **Statistical analysis:**

In accordance with the nature of the questionnaire and the sample of 160 female primary school teachers who represent four regional academies (The Educational system in Morocco is subject to regional division comprising twelve Regional Education and Training Academies), the statistical analysis is based on data collection and classification on central tendency measures (frequency, percentage, and mean). Totally data, tables, containing statistical data with descriptive and analytical reading to analyze the results, are used. Informed consent was signed by all participants and anonymity was respected in all steps of data collection and analysis.

### **Key concepts:**

This study is based on two main concepts: culture and representations. Given the overlap of the two concepts with one another, defining these two concepts is of capital importance:

- The concept of culture: E. Taylor (1871) says: "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morale, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" [4]. In his book "La Culture au Cours de la Vie", D. Sir Roustan (1930) thinks that culture is leading to harmony between man and nature, between man and society, and between man and human spiritual values [5].

- The concept of representation: PH. Chombart de Lauwe (1964) defines representation as the result of a process of interaction between the psychological and the social data, whether it is self-representation, the subject, or another representation [6]. S. Moscovici considers that collective representations have a dual function: making the strange familiar and making the invisible visible [7].

The study adopts the concepts of culture and representation defined as follows:

- Culture means all the ideological, moral, knowledge, law and custom manifestations prevailing in a particular society.

- Representation: FJ. Varela (1988) defines representation as "the invocation of a subject that is out of mind, a subject that is unrealistic or cannot be understood directly, but its consciousness or mental perception is possible" [8].

We will use representation and visualization to signify the same meaning because of the close similarity between the two concepts.

The study also adopts six supporting concepts:

- Values: the type of different social criteria that the individual forms because of confronting certain external situations, and because of being involved directly in learning from the environment where he/she grows.
- Tendency: a state of physical and mental readiness, which represents the degree of positive or negative feelings related to some psychological topics.
- Habits: Anything people are used to and do frequently in numerous different occasions.
- Traditions: the new generation following the beliefs, behaviors and appearances done by the previous generations.
- The system of inheritance: the system of inheritance in Islam is based on granting the male two portions whereas the female can have one portion.
- The new family code: a legal framework organizing the relationships between the husband and wife based on an open approach conciliating between the teachings of Islam and the demands of human rights.

### III. RESULTS

**General data:**

Data in Table 1 concerning sample distribution by age groups shows that the highest percentage is observed in the category between 35- and 40-years old teachers (44%), and between 30- and 35-years old teachers (31%). The general average age is 40 years, which shows that most of respondents are married and have a clear conception of the subject under study. According to teaching experience, the highest percentage is observed in the category whose experience ranges between 11 and 20 years (50%), followed by the category between 1 and 10 years (31%). The general average of teaching experience among the respondents is 15 years, which confirms that most of the respondents have a good teaching experience. The highest percentage is observed in the category owning the Baccalaureate degree with 62% while the two other groups who have university and post-graduation qualifications represent the same percentage (19%), which confirms that all the respondents have good academic qualifications that help them deal with the content of the questionnaire in a conscious and rational way.

**Table 1: Distribution of the sample according to age groups, teaching experience and academic qualification**

| Age (years)                       | Number | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| 30- 35                            | 50     | 31             |
| 35- 40                            | 70     | 44             |
| ≥ 40                              | 40     | 25             |
| <b>Teaching seniority (years)</b> |        |                |
| 1-10                              | 50     | 31             |
| 11-20                             | 80     | 50             |
| > 20                              | 30     | 19             |
| <b>Academic qualifications</b>    |        |                |
| Baccalaureate                     | 100    | 62             |
| University                        | 30     | 19             |
| Post-graduate                     | 30     | 19             |

**Section 1: Representation of the Moroccan culture concerning giving birth to males and females.**

Table 2 shows that the section highlighted three different attitudes depending on the respondents' responses. The highest percentage is observed in the attitude that supports accepting the discrimination and preference of giving birth to males rather than to females (65%), followed by non-discrimination and preference of giving birth to males rather than to females (30%). The attitude with discrimination and preference of giving birth to females rather than to males shows the lowest rate (5%). The range between the highest percentage observed in the first attitude and the lowest one in the third attitude reaches sixty (60) points.

**Table 2: Attitudes expressed by the respondents**

| <b>Attitudes</b>   | <b>Frequency (N)</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Accepting the discrimination and preference of giving birth to males rather than to females</b> | 104                  | 65                    |
| <b>Non-discrimination and preference of giving birth to males rather than to females</b>           | 47                   | 30                    |
| <b>Discrimination and preference of giving birth to females rather than to males</b>               | 9                    | 5                     |

**Section 2: Reasons behind the discrimination of giving birth to males rather than to females**

According table 3, the reasons behind the discrimination of giving birth to males rather than to females it is clear that the highest percentage is observed in the attitude of helping the parents to take economic responsibility (82%), followed by the importance of preserving the family name (69%), preserving inheritance (57%), then by customs and traditions (50%), and the lowest percentage is observed in the fifth attitude concerning the misconception of religion (30%), and the sixth one, ignorance and lack of awareness, which does not exceed 16%. The range between the highest percentage observed in the first attitude and the lowest in the sixth one reaches sixty-six (66) points.

**Table 3: Reasons behind the discrimination of giving birth to males rather than to females**

| <b>Attitudes</b>                                    | <b>Satisfaction ratio (%)</b> |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Help parents to take economic responsibility</b> | 82                            |
| <b>Preserving family name</b>                       | 69                            |
| <b>Preserving inheritance</b>                       | 57                            |
| <b>Traditions and customs</b>                       | 50                            |
| <b>Misconception of religion</b>                    | 24                            |
| <b>Ignorance and lack of awareness</b>              | 16                            |

**IV. DISCUSSION:**

**Limit of study:**

This study is subject to several considerations that can be summed up as follows:

- Time limitations: the study is conducted in two phases: Phase 1, between February and March 2019, to fill in the questionnaires and collect data and phase 2 during May and June 2019 devoted to exploiting and analyzing data and preparing the final report.
- Geographical limitations: the study covers only four geographical regions that represent the East, North, Center and South of Morocco. Forty primary schools are targeted, of which 60% in rural areas.
- Objective limitations: this exploratory study focusses on descriptive and analytical dimensions of field data.
- Human limitations: the study is limited to survey opinions of female primary school teachers because the researcher is convinced of the importance of their perception and their representations concerning the treated topic.

**Checking hypotheses:**

Starting from problem advanced in this study, the Moroccan culture is based on the discrimination to give birth to males. This is confirmed by the results obtained; in that, the percentages found reach the highest rates for the males' preference perception (65%). That is, almost the double of the perception of those who defend non-discrimination between sexes, which does not exceed 30%. While the perception of females' preference reaches modest percentages, not exceeding 5%, which is statistically insignificant:

- The first hypothesis concerning customs and traditions confirms\_ according to the results obtained\_ the respondents' attitudes although it does not have the required priority, as it occupies the fourth place with a percentage of (50%).

- The second hypothesis concerning the misconception of religion is not confirmed according to the results obtained and the respondents' attitudes. For it does not constitute a clear interest in priorities and occupies the fifth place with a percentage not exceeding (24%).

- The third hypothesis concerning ignorance and the lack of awareness is not confirmed as well according to the results obtained and the attitudes expressed, which put it in the last place with a low percentage (16%).

Based on the results, the percentages obtained and the respondents' attitudes on the three study hypotheses, neither the second nor the third ones concerning the misconception of religion, ignorance and the lack of awareness obtain the expected priority from the sample population with percentages ranging between 16% and 24%. On the other hand, the findings reveal new factors not focused on in this study such as the main reasons for the preference of giving birth to males rather than to females in the Moroccan culture. These factors are helping parents economically (82%), preserving the family name (69%) and preserving inheritance (57%).

### **Discussion of results:**

In the literature, we have found many difficulties to find studies that deal with discrimination of giving birth to males and females, especially in Arab countries; therefore, we were limited to the following studies:

- Study 1: dealt with mothers' attitudes to give birth to males and females and included 241 mothers chosen to represent different geographical urban and rural areas. The study concludes that mothers prefer to give birth to males rather than to females for their supportive role in helping the family to support the burdens and life demands; and their clear role in supporting the father, especially when he is old to bear the burdens and the requirements of life [9].

- Study 2: dealt with the role of social institutions and social normalization. It included 416 young males and females from urban and rural areas. This study is characterized by the great tendency of women to give birth to males, for two reasons: males contribute to preserving the family name; and the second one that males are the main supporters in the influence expansion, and in resolving conflicts and physical quarrels [10].

These studies show that despite the development of the Arab countries and women involvement in the labor market, the preference to give birth to males is still important as a capital used economically and in imposing influence.

### **Section 1:**

Despite the efforts made by the Moroccan state and the responsible departments to value the roles and actions of women in all the fields alongside men, and to promote the culture of rights based on the principles of equity and equality, it is clear from results found and the attitudes expressed that the idea of resorting to past tendencies and the deep influence of popular social culture on the females are still present in the collective and societal imagination and feelings, although the target sample belongs to the educated class and is representative of females. The results of study show that nearly two-thirds of the attitudes expressed (62%) justify the discrimination in the Moroccan culture of giving birth to males rather than to females. This distinction and gender differentiation derives its strength from a range of conditions and reasons associated with the Moroccan family and its perception of the social and economic life, the extent of clinging to the customs and traditions, the extent of the right understanding of the teachings of Islam and its rules, and the family awareness of the culture of rights.

### **Section 2:**

Following the results observed, especially the first four attitudes, the economic and social factors followed by traditions and customs have an important role in developing different backgrounds in the discrimination and preference of giving birth to males rather than to females with percentages ranging between 82% and 50% as expressed by the respondents. Factors associated with the misconception of religion, ignorance and lack of awareness are lower than the general average. These results reveal that the respondents' attitudes concerning the discrimination and preference to give birth to males and females do not follow a stereotyped model, but they are influenced by several interrelated and complex factors including cultural patterns. The discrimination and preference to give birth to males are mainly related to economic factors, given the important role of the male in helping the family to bear burdens and provide for the requirements of life. Besides, the respondents confirm the preference of parents to live with their male children when they are old. This feeling is more evident in rural families. In the second place, the clinging, and the love of parents to preserve their family name because this brings the father a sense of reassurance and psychological comfort to prove his ability to have self-realization, replicate his image and ensure his continuity in response to his natural inclination and innate readiness to support this preference. What supports this discrimination in the third level is the parents' fear to distribute their inheritance among family members, their desire to preserve this benefit in accordance with Islamic law, which favors the male. The wrong traditions and customs support this preferential attitude, which

anchors past constraints and man dominance in all domains of life. The misconception of religion, ignorance and lack of awareness occupying the fifth and sixth positions reveal statistically insignificant percentages. But these insignificant and low percentages cannot deviate the attention from the implicit and hidden role of (religion and consciousness) in shaping the perceptions and representations of various cultural issues, especially the social ones. Besides, they cannot deviate the attention from the deep impact of these two factors; namely, religion and consciousness to form an auxiliary reference to justify and defend the continuity of the perception based on the discrimination and preference to give birth to males rather than to females.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS:

In the light of results found, the study recommends four approaches to overcome this abnormal situation:

The rights approach based on the principles of equity and equality: The call to prepare a national plan to activate the Moroccan Constitution requirements and the pillars of the new family code, in accordance with a broad participatory approach, in which all the concerned government sectors, the social partners and civil society constituents so that the necessary mobilization and the effective involvement will take effect to achieve the objectives of the plan.

The educational approach: Focusing education on democratic and the values of rights in preparing the educational curriculum and its implementation at level of programs, curricula, textbooks, and educational activities. Also, activating various school life activities, especially the clubs of education on citizenship and sustainable development, considering that: "representations can be subject to developing and reformulating, according to the evolutionary process of cognitive transformations that will continue" [11].

The communication approach: The need for effective involvement of all institutions responsible to shape cultural awareness, to open a broad and continuous public debate among all the constituents of society, to dispel misconceptions about women and the discrimination between males and females by strongly targeting rural, remote, and fragile areas, considering that: "representations can vary in the diversity of social milieu to which they belong" [12].

The scientific approach: Stimulating the domain of scientific research and field studies to identify the factors responsible for feeding and continuing these misrepresentations, which affect the dignity of women and their natural rights and impede progress. Also, providing suggestions and appropriate scientific solutions to overcome this situation, considering the educational research particularly: "a reference for decision makers to find out the priorities, and know what to do to reach what is desired" [13].

## VI. CONCLUSIONS:

According to the results obtained, the classification of attitudes and the percentages found, four conclusions are revealed:

- The economic and social factors and the system of distributing roles between males and females deeply influence the Moroccan culture.
- The natural father's tendency to preserve the family name and his inheritance contribute in the reinforcement of this perception.
- The traditions, misconceptions, and the misunderstanding of the teachings of Islam support this gender-discriminatory situation and does not abide by a logical scientific reasoning.
- Both science and knowledge are not yet able to create the desired separation between looking down upon females as inferior beings and the openness on globalization and the system of rights.

## REFERENCES:

- [1]. The Noble Quran. Al-Shura. Verse: 48.
- [2]. New Family Code. (2004). Moroccan Journal of Business and Construction Law, 34, 11- 12.
- [3]. Constitution of the Kingdom of Morocco. (2011). Royal Press –Rabat.
- [4]. Ferraro, G. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). (1998). The Cultural Dimension of International Business. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- [5]. Egri, CP. (1997). Spiritual Connections with the Natural Environment: Pathways for Global Change. Organizations and Environment. 10(4): 407-31.
- [6]. Migne, J. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). (1994). Pédagogie et représentations. Education Permanente. 8(119): 11-31.
- [7]. MOSCOVICI S. (1961). La psychanalyse, son image et son public. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France. DOI : [10.3917/puf.mosco.2004.01](https://doi.org/10.3917/puf.mosco.2004.01)
- [8]. VARELA, FJ. (Seuil Ed.). (1988/1996). Invitation aux sciences cognitives. Paris
- [9]. Rezsóhazy, R. (2006). Sociologie des Valeurs. Armand Colin.
- [10]. Watfa, A. (1998). Traditional and Modern trends: A study of the contents of Superstitious thinking in a sample of Kuwait Society. AlFellah Library Kuwait.

- [11]. Atif, A. (1993). *Society, Religion and Traditions, Researching the Problematic of the relationship between Culture, Religion and Politics*. Jorous Press, Lebanon.
- [12]. Esawi, A. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). (1981). *Psychological studies*. Egyptian Knowledge House.
- [13]. Radwan, N. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). (1997). *Contemporary Egyptian Youth and the Crisis of Values*. The Egyptian General Book Association.

Salma FARES. “ Representations of female primary school teachers concerning giving birth to males and females. Exploratorystudy.” *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 26(10), 2021, pp. 26-32.