



**FACTORS AFFECTING FERTILITY IN THE SOUTH OF
THAILAND**

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**With compliments
of**

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It is generally believed that the higher levels of fertility prevailing in some populations have been sustained by certain religious norms favoring large family size. So this study aimed at examining the determinants causing for the fertility difference between two religious groups, Buddhists and Muslim in the South of Thailand. Fertility in this study was measured in two ways, as actual family size and desired family size.

This study used data from the Evaluation Project of Family Planning Program in the South of Thailand. The sample size used in this study was 4,070 currently married women aged 15-44 who were either Buddhist or Muslim. Both bivariate and multivariate analysis were employed. The study results indicated that Muslim women actually had and also desired larger family size than Buddhist women. The findings also indicated that the majority of Muslim women desired a family size of three to five children, while Buddhist women preferred two to three children. Almost all of the women seemed to desire a completed family of both sexes, while women who did not reach their desired family size, especially in terms of composition, were more likely to want more children. For both religious groups, women with high socio-economic status actually had and desired a smaller family size.

The results from multivariate analysis showed that actual family size was significantly affected by age of women, age at first marriage, religion, education of both husbands and wives, economic status, place of residence, and whether or not wives worked in blue collar occupations or used contraceptive. In addition desire for additional children was significantly affected by religion, contraceptive use and place of residence.