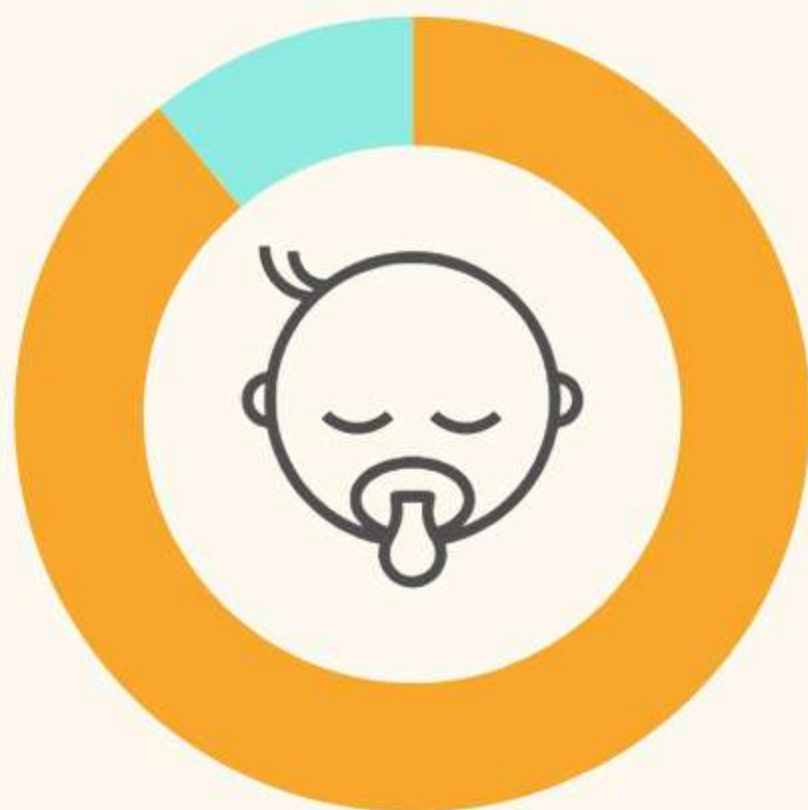


Do Families Stop Having Children Once They Have a Son? Punjab Data Suggests They Often Do

Among births that were followed by another pregnancy, 50.4% were boys.
Among births that turned out to be a woman's last birth, 54.0% were boys.
The difference suggests that families are more likely to stop childbearing after the birth of a son than after the birth of a daughter.



89%

Couples with two living daughters express a desire to have more children, largely driven by the hope of having a son.

Source: Gallup & Gilani Pakistan
(www.gallup-international.com;
www.gallup.com.pk www.gilanifoundation.com)



(Also emailed*/faxed separately)



PRESS RELEASE

Big Data Analysis Gender & Family Planning

Do Families Stop Having Children Once They Have a Son? Punjab Data Suggests They Often Do

(Islamabad), 7th August 2026

One of the oldest questions in demography is whether families continue having children until they have a son.

New analysis by Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, using birth-history data from the Punjab Health & Population Survey (PHPS Baseline), tested this question in two independent ways. Both point to the same conclusion.

The first test examined actual fertility behavior.

Among births that were followed by another pregnancy, 50.4% were boys. Among births that turned out to be a woman's last birth, 54.0% were boys.

The difference suggests that families are more likely to stop childbearing after the birth of a son than after the birth of a daughter.

The second test examined stated fertility intentions.

Looking only at women with exactly three living children, family size was held constant while only the sex composition changed.

Among mothers with three daughters, 72% still wanted another child.

Among mothers with two sons and one daughter, only 18% wanted another child.

The four-fold difference indicates that whether a family already has a son strongly influences the decision to continue childbearing.

The findings also suggest that families value having both sons and daughters. Families with only sons were somewhat more likely to want another child than families with a balanced mix of sons and daughters. However, the desire for a son appears to influence fertility decisions much more strongly than the desire for a daughter.

Taken together, revealed behavior (what families actually did) and stated preferences (what families say they want) both support the same conclusion: son preference continues to shape fertility decisions in Punjab.

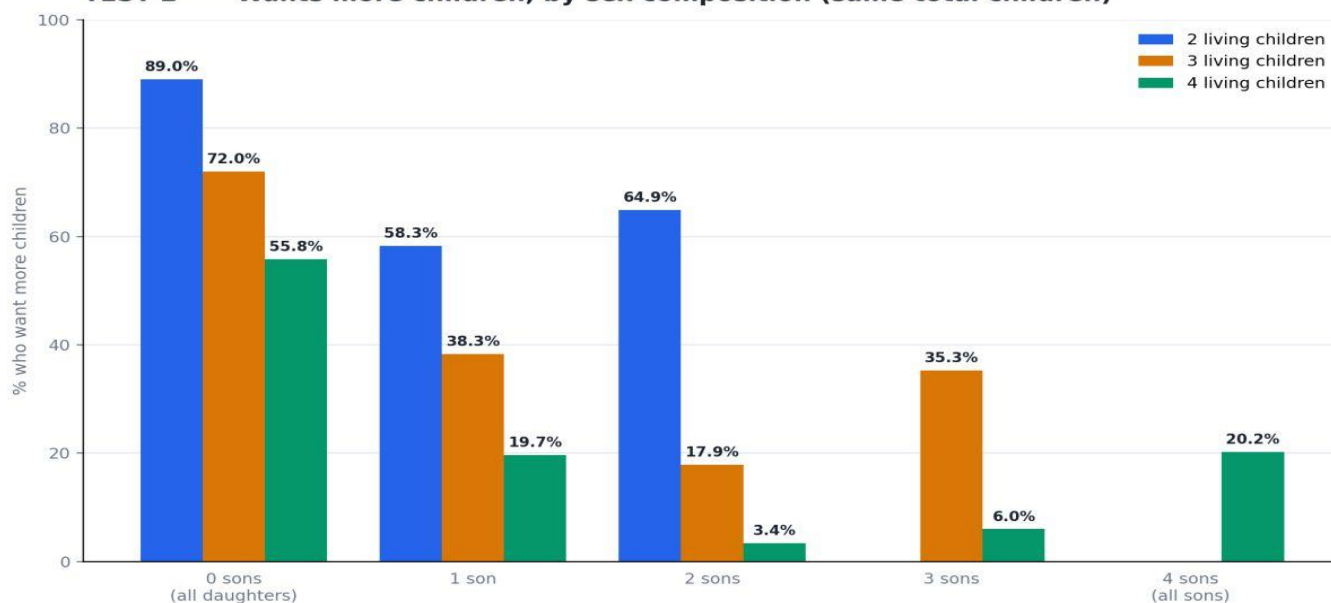
Do Families Stop Having Children Once They Have a Son?

Testing the son-preference stopping-rule hypothesis in Punjab's birth-history data

TEST 1 — SEX RATIO AT LAST BIRTH

Among the same women, births NOT followed by another pregnancy vs. births that WERE the last one:
 50.4% male (non-last births) → 54.0% male (last birth)

TEST 2 — Wants more children, by sex composition (same total children)



READING THE PATTERN

At 3 living children, mothers of 3 daughters want more at 4x the rate of mothers with 2 sons + 1 daughter (72% vs 18%) — the same total family size, but the presence of a son changes everything. Families with only sons also want slightly more than perfectly balanced families, suggesting some desire for a daughter too — but the son effect dominates throughout.

THE FINDING

Two independent tests — what actually happened, and what women say they want — point the same direction: families with sons stop; families without keep trying.

Source: PHPS Baseline (Bureau of Statistics Punjab) · Weighted estimates from birth-history & fertility-desire data, ever-married women 15–49

Analysis & visualization: Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics

Source: Gallup & Gilani Pakistan

(www.gallup-international.com; www.gallup.com.pk; www.gilanifoundation.com)

This analysis was conducted by Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics using data from the Punjab Health & Population Survey (PHPS Baseline) conducted by the Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab. The analysis combines birth-history records and fertility preference data to examine whether the sex composition of children influences decisions about continuing childbearing.



Opinion Poll from Gallup Pakistan
The Pakistani Affiliate of Gallup
International



Friday, 7th August 2026

(3 Pages, English version Only)

Gilani Research Foundation is a not-for-profit public service project to provide social science research to students, academia, policymakers, and concerned citizens in Pakistan and across the globe.

Gilani Research Foundation is headed by Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani who pioneered the field of opinion polling in Pakistan and established Gallup Pakistan in 1980. Currently, Dr. Gilani, who holds a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and has taught at leading universities in Pakistan and abroad, is Chairman of Gallup Pakistan.

If you have any further questions regarding this poll, please feel free to contact us.

*Best Regards,
Gallup Pakistan*

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Daily Gilani Poll
2026



of Gallup Pakistan
(1980-2026)