

The Concept of Family Planning among the Educated Classes

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مفهوم تنظيم الأسرة لدى الفئة المتعلمة

المدرس الدكتور

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Abstract:-

The current research study aims to identify and analyze the views of the educated classes in relation to family planning and birth control policies. Due to their education, this class of people is characterized by high awareness, decent education, willingness, culture, and scrutiny of things in terms of their positive and negative dimensions.

Hence, for many highly educated classes, education is considered the borderline between ignorance and intellectual awareness. The present research study is thus based on an online selected sample. The sample consists of (300) families. The results of the questionnaire indicate that the majority of respondents, consisting (73%), encourage family planning and birth control plans.

Key words: Family Planning, Birth Control, Educated Group, Intellectual Awareness, Population Growth.

المخلص:-

تهدف الدراسة البحثية الحالية إلى تحديد وتحليل آراء الفئات المتعلمة فيما يتعلق بسياسات تنظيم الأسرة وتحديد النسل. فبفضل تعليمهم، تتميز هذه الفئة بوعي عالٍ، وتعليم جيد، واستعداد، وثقافة، ودقة في الأمور من حيث إيجابياتها وسلبياتها.

لذا، يُعدُّ التعليم، بالنسبة للعديد من الفئات المتعلمة، الحد الفاصل بين الجهل والوعي الفكري. لذا، اعتمدت الدراسة البحثية الحالية على عينة مختارة عبر الإنترنت، بلغ عددها (٣٠٠) أسرة. وتشير نتائج الاستبيان إلى أن غالبية المستجيبين، بنسبة (٧٣٪)، يشجعون على تنظيم الأسرة وتحديد النسل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تنظيم الاسرة، تحديد النسل، الفئات المتعلمة، الوعي الفكري، النمو السكاني.

1. Introduction:

1.1 Purpose of the Research Study

The current research study aims to identify the position of the people of educated classes on the issue of family planning and birth control. The people of these classes are supposed to be cultivated and highly cultured in all life affairs including the issue of birth control. Therefore, the current research study has targeted those highly educated classes to find out how much awareness they have regarding the strategies of family planning and birth control, and how they demonstrate such awareness in real life situations.

1.2 Problem of the Research Study

A rapid growth in the population of Iraq has been observed. In fact, Iraq's population has risen from (5) million people according to the results of the census in 1957, to (43 million and 324 thousand people) according to the latest statistics. This increase is faster than the Malthusian sequence that determined the doubling of the population in 25 years. In reality, the Iraqi population seems to grow more rapidly than whatever estimations a census or population theory can predict. It even exceeds the estimates of some of the most reliable population theories like the Malthusian theory.

According to this theory, the world populations grow so rapidly that the world's food supply and other resources become insufficient. Thus, there seems to be a kind of an imbalance between the size of the world populations and its supply of food. This is so because the world populations grow disproportionately to the size and amount of food and other necessities of life. However, the Iraqi population has grown beyond the estimates of the Malthusian theory itself.

For (66) years from 1957-2023, the Iraqi population has grown from (5) million people to around (44) million people; it is a rapid growth that even surpasses the Malthusian theory estimates. That is to say, the Malthusian theory would have predicted the Iraqi population to reach this size in a time span of (75) years, not in a time span of (66) years. The Iraqi population was supposed to reach this size in 2032; after approximately nine years, and not in 2023. Hence, the growth rate of the Iraqi population has not just surpassed such theories' estimates, but has also outdone the time limit cutting

down a time gap of nine years. Therefore, the present research study is therefore set to survey and examine such a phenomenon.

1.3 Hypothesis of the Research Study

The hypothesis of the research study lies in the statement that the majority of the Iraqi people believe, due to the prevailing traditional culture, that birth control is forbidden. They even consider it a violation of Islamic law, without taking into consideration the recommendations of many other religious texts, including the noble hadith, which states that “Fewness of children is one of the two eases”.

2. Methodology

The research study is mainly based on a questionnaire that has been distributed electronically by the researcher to (300) families. It therefore depends on the questionnaire and its results on the concerning issues. The target families represent a selected and educated sample, the majority of whom have an education level beyond the initial university degree of (BA/BSc).

3. Theoretical Background

Societies with high annual fertility rates—mostly due to a lack of family planning principles and an absence of birth control policies—suffer from several difficulties and problems. The most prominent of which are poverty, unemployment, and low standards of living. On the other hand, families and communities practicing family planning and birth control policies enjoy a better quality of life and higher standards of living. Such quality of living would also enable those families and communities to have a better access to health, educational, and recreational services (Al-Khafaf, 1999).

The literature on the subject of family planning mechanisms emphasizes the security and legitimacy of contraception and birth delay with the agreement of both parties (husband and wife), in a way that suits their economic and social conditions, considering happiness to the family as well (Li, 2005).

Family planning has many advantages as follows:

3.1. Health Benefits:

1- Preventing unplanned pregnancy and its risks.

- 2- Safeguarding negative effects of pregnancy in case of genetic diseases.
- 3- Improving the nutritional status of mothers and children.
- 4- Improving the health of parents by expanding rest time.
- 5- Decreasing the annual rate of infant mortality and maternal prenatal mortality.

3.2. Economic and Social Benefits:

- 1- Improving the financial situation of the family, raising the standards of living, and promoting their state of well-being.
- 2- Reducing poverty.
- 3- Increasing chances of providing better educational and health services.
- 4- Increasing chances of providing diverse job opportunities, improving the economic and social situation toward justice, and reducing the numbers of marginalized people.
- 5- Increasing the chances of preserving resources, especially natural resources that are accessible through sustainable development plans.
- 6- Increasing the national income and the family and individual shares.
- 7- Reducing the demand for water resources, electrical energy, and housing (Imran, 1988; Meslé, 2004).

4. Description of the Population under Study

In order to determine the society's acceptance of the policy of family planning and birth control, this research has relied on the answers of a purposive sample of educated people. Their answers are shown in the following tables:

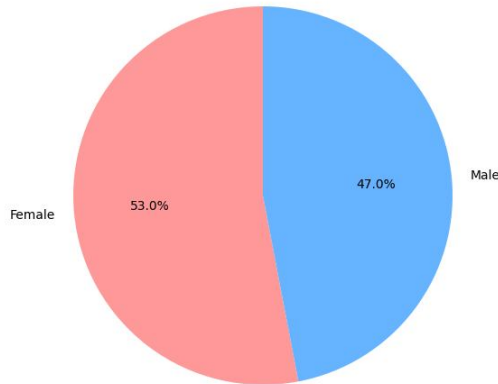
4.1 Demographic Description

The population of the sample under study is distributed in terms of gender into 53% women and 47% men, as shown in Table (1). The percentage of females was the highest, which is typical since women are the ones going through the hardships of pregnancy and childbirth.

Table 1

Distribution of the sample population by gender

	Gender	Number	%
	Female	١٥٩	%٥٣
	Male	١٤١	%٤٧
	Total	٣٠٠	%١٠٠

**Figure 1**

Distribution of the sample population by gender

In terms of broad age groups, the participants of the population under study are distributed between the categories of (20) years and more than (40) years. The highest among them range from (20-25) years, with a percentage of (35.7%). The lowest percentage is (9.3%) for the ages of (35-40) years, as shown in Tab. 2.

Table 2

The population according to age groups

Age (Years)	Number	%
٢٥-٢٠	١٠٧	%٣٥,٧
٣٠-٢٥	٤١	%١٣,٧
٣٥-٣٠	٤٥	%١٥
٤٠-٣٥	٢٨	%٩,٣
٤٠ +	٧٩	٢٦,٣
Total	٣٠٠	%١٠٠

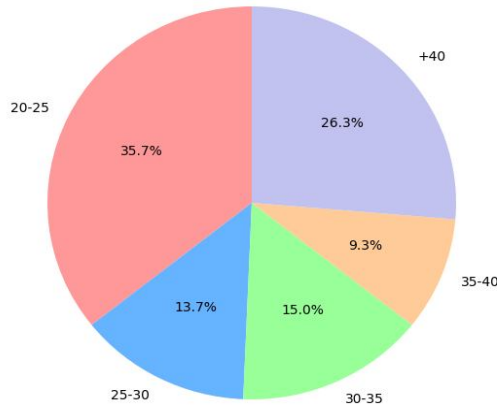


Figure 2 The population according to age groups

Tab. 2 shows that the majority of the sample participants are young people, with an overall percentage of (73.7%), which constitutes almost 3/4 of the population under study.

This percentage means, among other things, that they are educated and represent the rising generation who attempt to abandon the traditional culture.

4.2 Economic State

Profession or craft that an individual practices unquestionably has an impact on their behavior. The current research study thus focuses on the issue of the family's income size. Therefore, the researcher has decided to consider the family's average monthly income as an indicator of its orientation toward accepting or rejecting the idea of family planning.

Hence, the questionnaire includes a question about the amount of monthly income, and the answers are shown in Tab. and fig. 3.

Table 3 The average monthly income of families in the sample under study

Monthly income (ID)	Number of families	%
More than a million	١٠٣	٣٤.٣
750 thousand	٩٢	٣٠.٦
500-750 thousand	٥٥	١٨.٥
Below 500 thousand	٥٠	١٦.٦
Total	٣٠٠	%١٠٠

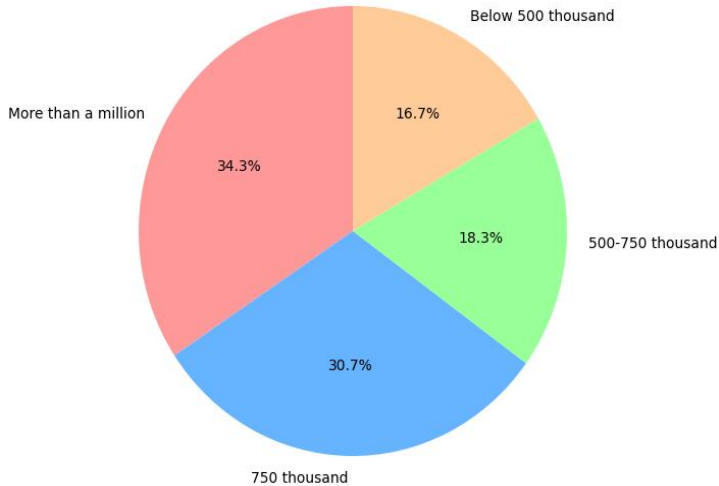


Figure 3

The average monthly income of families in the sample under study

The table shows that around 2/3 of the population investigated in this study enjoy a good income and an appropriate standard of living. Perhaps it is self-evident that they consider family planning as an attempt to maintain their good standards of living.

4.3 Social State

4.3.1 Marital Status and Position on the Age of Marriage

Marital Status	Number	%
Married	١٥٣	٥١
Single	١٤٧	٤٩
Total	٣٠٠	%١٠٠

Table 4

Marital status of participants of the population under study

Table (4) indicates that the majority of participants of the studied population are married, with a percentage of (51%), hence exceeding half of the community as shown in the following table:

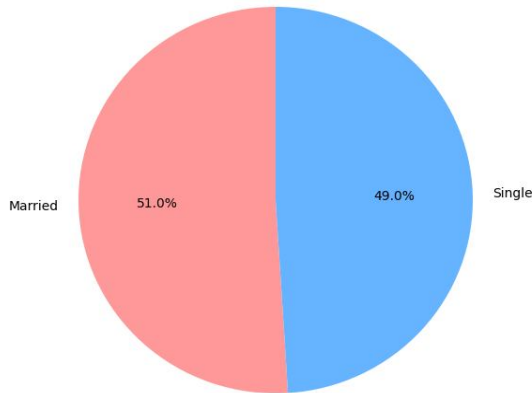


Figure (4)

Marital status of participants of the population under study

As for the position toward age of marriage, most participants of the current research study prefer a young woman to marry, then a mature-age woman. Some of them have specified this age to be between (20-25) years, with a percentage of (57.5%). However, those who wish to marry a woman at the age of older than (30) constitute a very low percentage of (2.3%) of the sample size.

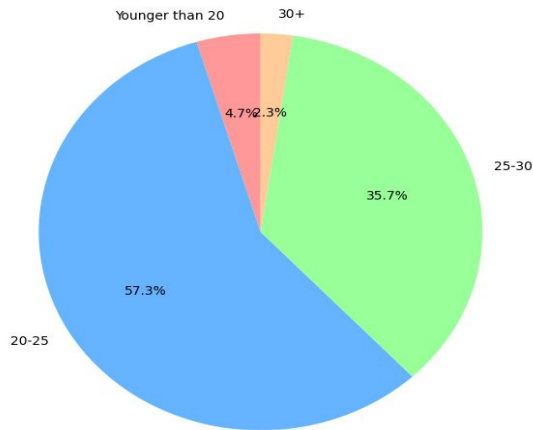
The percentage of those preferring to marry young girls under the age of 20 has slightly increased, with a percentage of (4.6%).

In fact, these results indicate a case of departure from the old traditional culture that encourages early marriage, as shown in Tab. 5.

Age	Number	%
Younger than 20	١٤	٤,٦
20-25	١٧٢	٥٧,٥
25-30	١٠٧	٣٥,٦
+ 30	٧	٢,٣
Total	٣٠٠	%١٠٠

Table 5

The appropriate age for woman marriage among participants of the study



For the question about the appropriate age for a man to marry, the answers encourage marriage at the age of mature youth, which is the age ranging between (25-30) years. This age represents the state at which an individual completes the requirements for a university undergraduate (bachelor's) degree, as shown in Tab. 6.

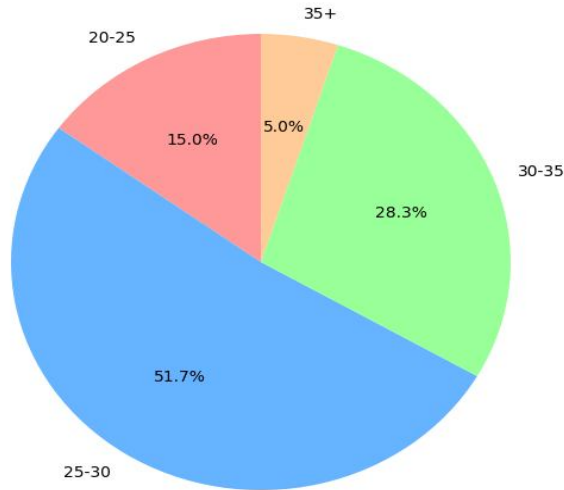
Table 6

Appropriate age for man's marriage among participants of the study

Age	Number	%
20-25	٤٥	١٥
25-30	١٥٥	٥١,٧
30-35	٨٥	٢٨,٣
35+	١٥	٥
Total	٣٠٠	%١٠٠

Figure 6

Appropriate age for man's marriage among participants of the study



The results of this table indicate that members of the studied society are moving away from the old traditional culture that encourages early and even very early marriage.

As for the next question about the number of desired children, the answers indicate that the majority of the respondents favor (3) children, and those who desire to have one child still constitute only a weak percentage of 0.7% of the population studied, which appears in Tab. 7.

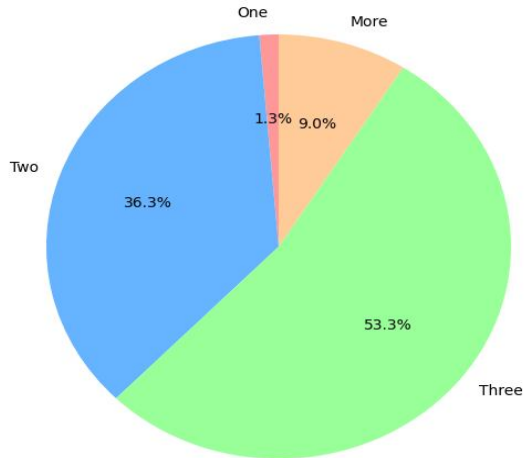
Table 7

Participants' preference for the appropriate number of children in a family

Number of children	Number	%
One	٤	١,٤
Two	١٠٩	٣٦,٢
Three	١٦٠	٥٣,٣
More	٢٧	٩,١
Total	٣٠٠	%١٠٠

Figure 7

Participants' preference for the appropriate number of children in a family



The data in the table indicate that respondents of the population of the study have departed from the old traditional culture that favors a large number of children; a culture that is still prevalent among the majority of the people in rural areas.

To confirm the position of the participants on birth control, the answers to the question (Do you support following a policy of birth control and family planning) are: (73%) have answered with 'yes' to the birth control policy, and (27%) have responded with 'no', as shown in Tab. 8. This result indicates a state of refusal of the inherited social values.

Table 8

Participants' position towards the policy of birth control and family planning

Position	Number	%
Yes	٢١٩	٧٣
No	٨١	٢٧
Total	٣٠٠	%١٠٠

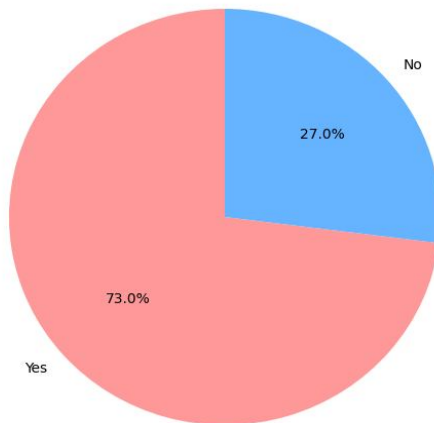


Figure 8

Participants' position towards the policy of birth control and family planning

Today, it is living in a state of over-population, which places severe pressure on its natural resources, especially water.

Fertility rates in Iraq are still the highest among the countries of the region, Southwest of Asia in general, and the whole world. Iraq recorded a fertility rate of (3.3%) per woman, according to data from the Ministry of Planning for population projections for 2022 (International Labor Organization, 2022; Ruder, 1985).

This population rate drops to (2.44), worldwide, while it drops to (1.69) in the Western world (Peterson, 2017; Yao W., 2013).

The researcher of the current research study does not agree with this theory, which considers the rapid increase of population to be a “gift”; it is rather a “demographic disease.” Hence, the researcher tends to follow a birth control policy to reach a state of balance between population growth and the resources of the country.

In order to identify the explicit position of the family or the head of the family on the issue of reproductive planning, the research study has asked (3) questions, as shown in Tab. (9-10-11). The results of these questions are as follows:

In general, the table indicates that educated people accept the idea of abandoning the traditional culture and of entering the

framework of the new culture that favors and even encourages women to be partners within the family and society; perhaps the approval to practice work is clear evidence, as in Tab. 9.

Moreover, more than a third of the sample supports family planning and birth control policies, believing in time change and the difficulties of raising children today (Tab. 10).

Religious factors and social customs have only a limited role, as only a quarter of the society for only (14% and 11%) have responded to them.

Table 9

Population's Opinion on women's work

Opinion	Number	%
Yes	٢٤٦	٨٢
No	١٨	٦
Total	٣٠٠	%١٠٠

Figure 9

Population's Opinion on women's work

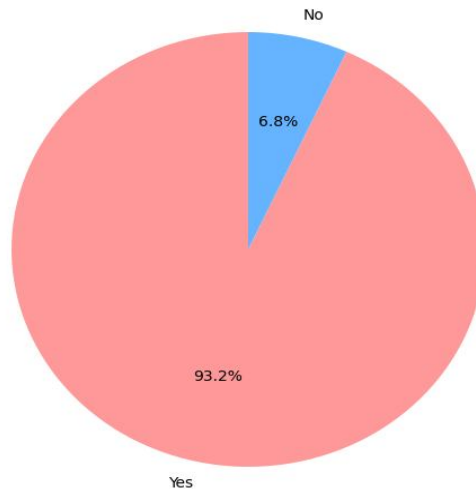


Table 10

Reason behind population's approval of family planning

Reason	Number	%
Because the conditions and time have changed and raising children is not easy	111	37
All options mentioned	90	30
Another option not mentioned in the questionnaire	60	20
The unstable political situation of the country	10	5
Family economic conditions	12	4
Women will be busy with their work and do not devote themselves to raising children	9	3
Health reasons related to the parents	3	1
Total	300	%100

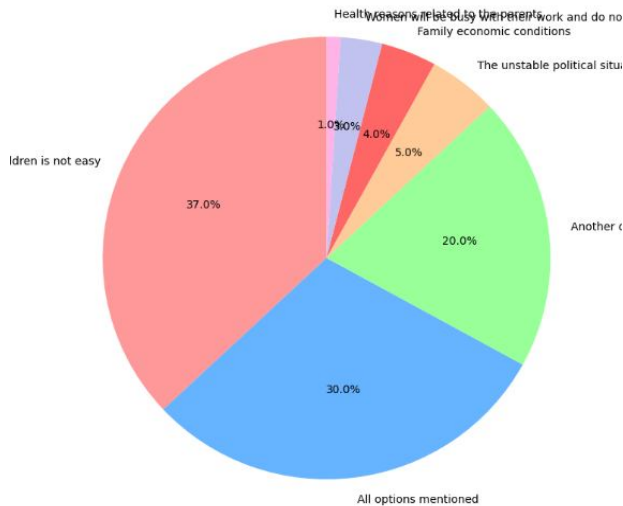


Figure 10

Reason behind population's approval of family planning

Reason	Number	%
All options mentioned	111	37
Another unmentioned	90	30
Religious	60	20
Social	10	5
Excellent economic status	12	4
Total	300	%100

Table 11 Reason behind population's disapproval of family planning

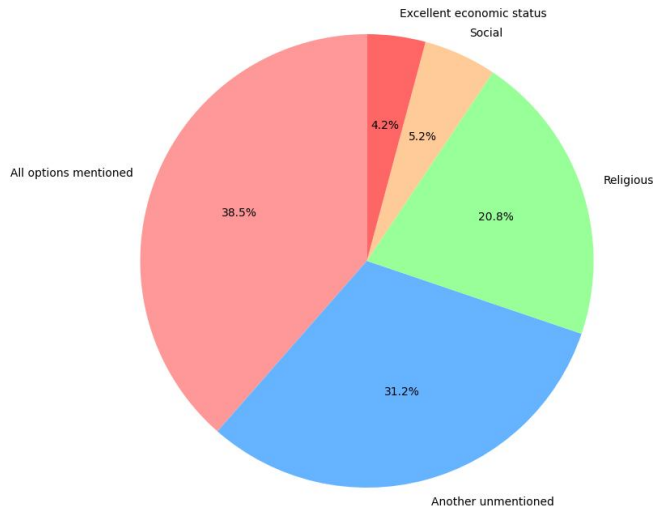


Figure 11

Reason behind population's disapproval of family planning

The results of the questionnaire have generally indicated that school—in its primary, secondary, and preparatory stages—has played an important role in creating a conscious person and a loyal citizen. The changes sought by this research study are those that have led to the transition of Iraqi society from what demographic studies call the Brazilian style (Lutz, 2006). The Brazilian style is characterized by a rapid population increase as in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. On the contrary, the European style is a highly cultured style that believes in birth planning and procreation. This demographic transition uses a cultural transition whose background is education; both elementary and higher education (Selin, 2009; Tumwebaze H. K., 2015).

5- Conclusion

The study concludes that the educated classes, mostly with degrees of higher education, have been able to abandon the circle of traditional culture. This culture breeds embarrassment in practicing

methods of birth control, childbearing, and family planning. Perhaps this embarrassment has been experienced by some families who have chosen it for a reason other than what has been mentioned in the questionnaire.

In Table (11), customs and traditions still govern some families, even highly educated ones, so we see them encouraging the uncontrolled reproduction. As for the group that has chosen family planning, they have been able to enter the scope of the open culture that does not accept the restrictions of the past, which has until recently been prevalent in our society. Family planning has become one of the basics of every family that follows a balanced system in its expenses and achieves the basic goals of its formation, ultimately attaining peace of mind, life comfort and well-being.

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