Investigating the Attitudes of Female students of the Islamic Azad University of Abhar towards Family Formation and its Influencing Factors in the Academic Year of 2009-2010

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ABSTRACT
Background: This research seeks to measure the attitudes of female students of the Islamic Azad University of Abhar toward family formation and family planning and its influencing factors. Also, efforts have been focused on answering to two major questions: A) Which are the influencing factors on the attitudes of girl students towards marriage and family planning? B) What are the hopes and plans of female students for their future in the context of marriage, employment and education? Objective: In this context, mainly three major hypotheses have been discussed which separately studied the effects of cultural health and demographic and social factors on the attitudes of people towards family organization and planning. The population of the study was included of all students of the Islamic Azad University of Abhar that was studying in this university in academic year of 2009-2010. Results: Since the study population make up the future women of our community and they are at the stage of leaving behind the university and actually have announced their willingness to actively participate in science and society, considering their views, especially with regard to the research topic (their attitudes toward family formation and planning) will help people who are interested in research, study, investigation and planning in such cases. Conclusion: Therefore by using questionnaires the needed data have been gathered and by using SPSS and Path analysis method, the obtained results have been analyzed. The major tips and results that have be obtained we can mentioned the acceptance of family planning programs (Use of contraception, age spacing between births, controlling and limiting the number of children), Planning to form a family and get married with the coherent and organized knowledge and plan (With a gradual tendency of individuals to freedom of thought and yet respect the customs and traditions) and finally, awareness of the consequences of population growth noted in the study population.

INTRODUCTION
Population and population based understandings of the social sciences arises from the fact that there are severe relations and inextricable links in national or international level between population issues and social issues in general and between economical, political, sociological and anthropological issues in particular. Population data and organizations that exist among social issues from one hand and social coordination on the other hand, have important roles as the first steps in social and economic planning studies and without them it is impossible to implement successful programs.
It has been proved that the minimum population is necessary for the prosperity and development of civilization, and at present is not more than a maximum. This average level or what is called appropriate and desirable level of population by demographers is associated with many conditions in the society and it clearly shows the effects of economic, social and cultural conditions on the population and the effects of population characteristics and composition on social conditions and programs, population and community interaction or in other words, interaction between demographic phenomenon with social and economical issues; And the need for population studies clearly can be seen from here.

The importance of research:
In today's world population growth is one of the main human concerns about the future. Those who are involved in such developments are faced with a quandary because of the enormous increase in population on the one hand and the resources that should be available to meet their needs, on the other hand. In fact, the rapid growth in population and increased use of Earth's limited resource provides further imbalance between these
two major categories. The only option to maintain balance and avoid the growing imbalance is to find variables or parameters reducing the population growth rate in a tolerant and proportional way based on the available resources.

Today, determining factors of family formation and planning, including all the biological, demographic and socio-cultural factors are considered as the primarily important issues in terms of population control and changes in the world. In developed countries, there is less need to adjust or reduce the amount of population. But even in these areas, just short-term changes in birth control and family planning can lead to unexpected trends in population growth rates and subsequently, social and economic programs will fail. So in non-advanced countries with high fertility and birth rate, studying and investigating family formation and planning and its determinants will be so important. Today, in many countries, the research results show that rather than biological and physiological characteristics, fertility behavior have social, cultural and religious character and also have roots in the political, economic, social structure of the community.

The purpose of research:

The overall objective of this study was to identify the knowledge, attitudes and social-cultural and religious behavior of Islamic Azad University girl students in the areas of culture (norms and social-cultural religious values and social life). In this context, different parts of culture which have been considered included the life and family relationships, marriage and spouse selection criteria, educational aspirations, occupational aspirations, pre-judgments on social issues, public awareness of cultural and demographic situation of women and men in the society, some religious beliefs, general beliefs, social values.

Theoretical framework:

In this section the theories related to attitude and the definition of attitude and its features are discussed and then the opinions of attitude experts are offered.

Definition of Attitude:

Since attitude is an abstract concept, it is not expected that experts would agree on the nature of attitude. This difference can be seen in the definition of attitude, too. Attitude is defined as the tendency to practice that is composed of the integration of multiple responses which were similar in terms of type and exists as a general neural "Set"; and once be activated by specific stimuli, results in a behavior that is clearly a function of that attitude rather than a function of the stimulus activator. One important point that should be noted about this definition is that here attitude is considered as comprehensive and expanded determinants of behavior (not simple and specific determinants). Attitude is a sustainable system of positive or negative evaluations, emotional feelings and a tendency toward agreeing or disagreeing action against a social issue. Attitudes are in fact likes and dislikes; that means Favorable or unfavorable evaluation of objects, people, situations or any other aspect of the world including abstract ideas and social policies and the reaction of people to them. People mostly express their attitudes in the form of opinion expressions: "I love orange" or "I can't tolerate liberals" (Hilgard's Psychology, 612). Thomas believes that a multidimensional concept of attitude that includes cognitive, emotional and behavioral elements is the most accepted definition of attitude. So, attitude shows the cognitive and emotional effects of personal experience from a social object or issue and a tendency to respond against that object. In this sense attitude is a "hidden mechanisms" that leads behavior [16].

Different components of attitude:

As noted above, based on the most accepted definition, attitudes consist of three elements: cognitive, affective (emotional) and readiness for action. Also, we saw in some definitions attitude is considered as a durable system for evaluations or a sustainable organization of beliefs. The term system or organization implies that the three mentioned attitude’s components are associated with each other. This means that people’s understandings about different objects, is affected by his/her emotion and intensity and of his/her desire to do an action against it. On the other hand, a change in personal understanding about an object will affect his/her in feelings towards the readiness for action and behavior against that object.

The Cognitive Component of Attitude:

The cognitive component of attitude means the information a person has about attitude, for example, our understanding of our country's education system is that this system consists of the associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels. However, the most important kind of recognition are those which are combined with a method of assessment, for example, the belief in the goodness or badness of a political ideology; whether in this ideology, the legitimate rights and freedom of people are guaranteed or it is does not accept legitimate freedom of people.
The Cognitive Component of Attitude:
This component includes feelings that the subject of attitude arises in people. That means, this issue can be pleasant or unpleasant, that creates joy and happiness or drives disgust and hate. This emotional aspect of attitude is the one that has motivational role on people’s behavior and highlights the importance of the emotional aspect in attitude. A young person who has positive feelings towards university education is enthusiastic of entering the university and particularly respects its environment. Conversely, if he/ she feels that he could not solve any problem by university education and will not reduce any burdens from the society, may consider entering the university useless and is and just a waste of time.

The Readiness for Action Component of Attitude:
In the definition of attitude mostly it has been mentioned as readiness for action that means attitude makes people ready to show behavioral attitudes toward different issues. If a person has positive attitude towards a subject, he/ she is ready to help, praise, support or reward. And conversely, if a person has negative attitude toward that subject, he/ she is ready to get hurt, ignored, or even try to destroy it [16].

Reasoned Action Theory:
Ayzen and his two colleagues are researchers that their research lead to more accurate prediction of behavior from attitudes. They have been shown that to when and how attitudes and behaviors are effective. They offered the result of a part of their study in the form of "reasonable action theory". "Reasonable action theory” means that the majority of people’s behaviors have been done because they think the consequences of their actions and to achieve some results and to avoid others they make logical choices. Their theory is composed of two main elements: of the personal the social elements which their composition is a predictor of a behavioral intention; an intention which ultimately determines the behavior.

Individual elements of this model, that means the "action" actually contains the personal views regarding a certain behavior and this attitude is the result of two factors: the person's belief regarding the result of that specific behavior and his evaluation of the possible outcomes of that behavior that each of these two factors vary between individuals. For example, let's imagine that a student (Hasan) decides to get a better score on a test, he spends more 10 hours per week and reduces the time he has spending to meet his friends.

Gender socialization theory:
Socialization is a process that individuals make attitudes, values and behaviors as an element of the culture internal within themselves. In this regard we can define gender roles as the expected behaviors of attitude, duties and preferences in a society. This finding is close to interactions perspective. Essentially, sociologists have divided socialization agents into several sections: family, schools and media. Socialization is a factor that affects people’s attitudes toward sexual behavior. In this regard, socialization and role attitude perspectives believe that the proper role for women and men refers to the teachings that they have in socialization process, in some extent. Some parts of decision making power in the family refer to the traditional role of male and female. According to Ritzer, in this society, men have more decision making power. A group of demographic variables such as age, age gap between couples, urban experience, length of marriage and life-cycle stage, family aspects and the age of children, will influence the quality, distribution and construction of power in the family.

Social learning:
Another process through which attitudes are learned is the social learning model, following or observational learning. For example, in some families, children shape many of their attitudes by observing attitudes and especially by observing behavioral attitudes of their parents. This process, will act even when parents have no responsibility to teach specific attitudes to their children. Thus, the process of modeling plays an important role in shaping attitudes. In many cases, children hear their parents to express certain things about a certain person, a specific object or a particular issue and knowing these attitudes of the parents will shape similar attitudes in them. Sometimes parents talk about issue they do not want their children hear those stories or children see their parents while they are doing something they avoid their children from doing it. For example, smoking parents avoid their children from smoking while they are doing the same action in front of them. What is modeled here is parents’ behavior not their words. However, parents are not the one who is followed by children; perhaps all those who are in the child's surroundings, such as their playmate, other adults, teachers or any other important person are observed and modeled by them.

Social Comparison:
Although many of the attitudes are learned through social learning, but abundance of attitudes will naturally require multiple formation practices and mechanisms. Another mechanism involved in the formation of attitudes is the social comparison, i.e., we tend to compare ourselves with others to determine whether our views about social facts are true or not.
To the extent that our ideas are consistent with the views of others, we conclude that our imaginations and attitudes are true. So, if others have the same views as us, they must be true views. For the function of this process, we often change our attitudes to make our vision close to the views of others [16].

Research Literature:

In a survey that had been conducted in 1990 on 100 students in the U.S, to investigate the factors influencing marriage and the effect of others on the choice of partner, John A. Prader realized that in the group of girls, their parents and peers have the greatest influence on the choice of future wife than in the group of boys. One of the results of this research includes this issue that despite the change in roles, the findings emphasize that American parents maintains the traditional view and they are their looking for a husband from the upper levels of society for their daughter.

Shahabi [11] conducted a research with the title “Goals of parity and partner selection” that a summary of the results is as follows: 1) the concept of the same age partnership does not apply in Iran. In this case there is no rule of equality and uniformity, but the age gap is in favor of men. 2) The tendency toward selection of same level (dignity) partner is more sever in Tehrani mothers than in her daughters. The desire to select a same educational level partner is stronger in girls than in her mothers. 3) There is a tendency to select same dignity level partner in mothers and daughters in high and very high level families and a tendency to select same educational level partner in families that belong to intermediate and low level. 4) Mothers and daughter have more agreements about the selection of same dignity level partners than their agreements about the selection of same educational level partner and the factors influencing husband selection among them.

Jahangirzadeh in a research entitled "Investigating effective economic on the way on spouse selection practices among university students in Shiraz" concludes that the men “shared religious values” have the highest and “having housing by future wife” have the lowest priority. Among female respondents, the highest priority is "good behavior" and the lowest one is “future wife childbearing”. Also in relation to the same partner age and education as the two variables which have been considered has indicated that the age, marriage stage, age difference between respondents and their spouses have a significant relationship with the dependent variable of equal partner.

Shahabi has achieved several important issues in the research on mate selection and dating in Tehran in 1991. Some of these findings are: an increase in the average age of marriage for girls, an increase in the marriage age of the girls along with increased economical - social opportunities of the family, acceptance of age difference between men and women in favor of men, believe in more age gap along with increased economical - social level of the family and differences in attitudes toward the appropriate age of marriage and ideal age gap between husband and wife between mothers and daughters of Tehran. He has noted that unlike in Western countries, the marriage age and a gap age between the couple has not a universal social norm; this is an indicator of the transitory structure of Iran from an agricultural society to an industrial one.

The results of the study conducted by Azizi (1998) indicate that the higher level of economical- social level of the respondents, the higher their scores in the attitude range of them towards equal spouse selection; This means that their expectations of their future spouse will increase with increasing socio-economic status. Based on these results, the level of the respondents’ equal spouses has positive relationship with the economical status or their education, so that the score of equal spouses from economic- dignity perspective for those who have Diploma is 22/93, while for those who have an M.A. or higher degrees this average score has reached to 24/68; This result is significant at 95% confidence. And also, with an increase in the income of the respondents, their equal spouse scores from economic- dignity perspective will increase; this result is meaningful in the 6/95% confidence.

Methodology:

From the methodology perspective, two methods have been used in this study.

The first one is a documentary and library study for the organization of theoretical parts and the second one is surveying or considering method is used to measure the attitude of university students.

The population in this study included all students of Islamic Azad University of Abhar in the academic year of 2010-2009. The population in this study was separated based on the school and the field of study and the statistical unit, is the individual or the selected student in the sample.

336 subjects were considered as the sample population and this number is appropriate based on the sampling method. When the maximum variance of a variable is assumed, the results can be generalizable to 99% of all the students with a 1% difference.

To do sampling in the first stage, according to available statistics, the size of sample is determined based on the number of students per faculty (Faculty of Humanities, engineering and agricultural and natural resources) and their fields of study. At the second stage, to estimate the variance, the desired feature has been determined based on the related sampling formula and finally, the samples were selected from different faculties.
Since the subject of this study was an investigation of the attitudes and aspirations of girl university students, using written questionnaire for measuring variables and collecting data has been preferred. Multiple choice questions in the questionnaire are designed in one level of measurement (nominal - rank - distance - relative).

Data analysis is performed in two levels:
1) The description level; at this stage one-dimensional analysis or description of the variables was performed.
2) Level of analysis and explanation; at this stage for investigating the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable, subject of study among students is analyzed by using SPSS.

Findings:
In this section attempts have been made to analyze the findings of this research based on two general categories under the headings of personal wishes and aspirations and analytical investigation of the results. In the desire and aspiration part, 95/4% of respondents are going to choose a work for themselves in future and just 4/7% is not going to choose a work. 76/5% of people agreed with the association before marriage for girls and boys, 15/6% were neutral and 7/7 percent was opposed to this practice. The ideal degree for more than half of respondents with 55/2% was an M.A. degree. From the respondents’ view, their parents wanted them to work with a tendency of 92/6%.

About the sources of information about family planning and the ones most commonly used, the results indicate that the friend with the 2/34% is in the first place and then are classmates with 31%. The textbook by 10/3% and mothers with 8/3% and eventually TV with 2/6% are placed; this results points to the effect of reference groups in the development of attitudes.

Respondents have approved their tendency in the context of equal spouse selection by 16%.

People mostly prefer that their future partner has a better social status than their own family with 57/2%. On the other hand, the 3/56% of people questioned, believe in the equality of men and women in decision making. This belief, in turn, confirms the previous comment about selecting equal and homogeneous partner. In societies like Iran, ethical, religious and legal status had an important place and we can consider some consequences for the people who violate the desired limitations. The results of this study also show that 84% of respondents absolutely confirmed social consequences for mothers who have children without marriage. In turn, 6/5% of people have expressed complete opposition with this issue. Thinking about this issue indicates the fact that the need to prevent failure or punishment by another person or group will be very helpful in the development of attitudes. In the case of ideal number of children for families, 70/5% of people believe in having 2 children, 13/6% tends to have one children and 6/2% wants to have 4 children. In addition, 3/6% of respondents expressed their desire to have no children. Interval of 2 to 5 years of for birth spacing between two consecutive births is desired for the respondents.

Following comments are presented as the main views of the respondents:
- An emphasis on continuing their education to achieve high degrees;
- Parents’ emphasis on continuing education to achieve high degrees;
- An emphasis on the importance of women's employment, especially employment outside the home;
- Believe on the age distance to be between 25-21 years as the most appropriate marriage age for girls;
- The older age of men in the time marriage and in other words, observing age differences between couples;
- An emphasis on using contraception and teaching women about the proper spacing between children.
- Having a plan for fertility control or an agreement for determining the number of children
- Reduction of good takes caring by increasing the number of children;
- Confirmation of the pregnancy risks for mother and child in the case of pregnancies below 20 years and above 30 years;
- Belief in the primacy of continuing education over forming families along with an appropriate career choice before the birth of first child;
- Acceptance of the positive role of religion in the family;
- An emphasis on the problems arises from increasing population of the country;
- Comply with certain practices, such as marriage ceremonies and celebrations, engagement and wedding;
- An emphasis on mate choice after consultation with the parents, but based on their own preferences;
- An emphasis on the positive role of religion in family planning and to prevent abortion in particular;
- An emphasis on the positive role of reference groups in awareness rising of family planning;
- An emphasis on public education to prevent pregnancy and family planning;
- An emphasis on not having so many children;
- Acceptance and highlighting the role of couples in the control of the number of children;
- Acceptance of motherhood as the most important task of a woman
- An emphasis on the high cost of pregnancy in comparison of the benefits of childbearing
- An emphasis on the need to observe morals and sexual satisfaction in the context of family
- An emphasis on the equality of power between men and women within the family
The following comments are important in the analytical results of data:
- The positive impact of religious culture on encouraging people to form a family (at 1%, by a factor of 0.803);
- Negative impact of the cost of childbearing on the decision of people to form a family (at the 1% level by a factor of 0.125);
- Positive impact of culture of opposition to single individuals in their attempt to form a family (at the 1% level by a factor of 0.245);
- The positive effect of the age of marriage by the society on individual's action to form a family (at 1% level by a factor of 0.570);
- Positive impact of the marriage possibility on individual's action to form a family (at 1% level by a factor of 0.115);
- Emphasizing the positive role of social consequences fear from pregnancy without marriage on individual's action to form a family (in 1% or a factor of 0.615);
- The positive role of birth control on individual's action to form a family (in 0/01 by a factor of 0.327);
- Emphasizing the positive role of social consequenc es fear from pregnancy without marriage on individual's decision to form a family (in 0/01 or a factor of 0/047);
- Emphasizing on the positive role of the social consequences of pregnancy outside of marriage in family planning acceptance (in 0/01 by a factor of 0/570);
- The significant relationship between population growth and social consequences of the acceptance of family planning (at the 1% level by a factor of 0/670);
- The significant relationship between considering age distance between children and family planning acceptance (at 1% level by a factor of 0/048).

In multivariate data analysis (multiple regression), a multiple regression analysis of the data will be done. The purpose of this analysis was to determine the contribution of the major variables of the study on the development of people's attitudes toward family formation and planning. The multiple regressions help to explain and predict the variance of the dependent variables and this is performed by estimating the role and contribution of the variables in making this variance.

In order to describe in multivariate regression analysis of the data, the variables that are supposed to be measured should be identified. Therefore, by considering the theoretical framework and history of the research and also based on an analytical model to explain the issue, all measured independent variables have been selected in a stepwise fashion and are used in a regression order to achieve final equation. So here the focus is mainly on the variables that:
Firstly, have been measured at a distance level and Secondly, have been important parameters and variables of the analytical model and has control and interactive effects.

Table 1: Path analysis to explore attitudes towards family planning "variables that has been used in the equation".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sigh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing Culture – Religion</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>-3.14</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology and Counseling Centers – making knowledge</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>0.159</td>
<td>1/653</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media communication</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>1/404</td>
<td>0.687</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Available statistics indicate the fact that the order of religion which forbids abortion is the most effective independent variables on family planning. After that, going to the counseling center and the media are influential.

Table 2: Analysis of the attitude towards family formation "variables that have been used in the equation".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Error of measurement</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sigh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion encouragement to family formation</td>
<td>0.473</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td>0.334</td>
<td>3/670</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The high cost of pregnancy and childbearing</td>
<td>0.131</td>
<td>0.116</td>
<td>0.105</td>
<td>1.132</td>
<td>0.260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Communication</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.530</td>
<td>0.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriages in the desired age</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>0.681</td>
<td>0.498</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Available statistics indicate the fact that the order of religion encouragement to family formation is the most effective independent variables on family planning.

After that, high cost of pregnancy and childbearing, marriages in the desired age and the role of media and communication are influential on family formation.

Summary and conclusions:

In this research, after an explanation of the importance and urgency of the issue, a brief description of the relevant research literature and research purposes are provided. Next, the research methodology, techniques of data collection, data analysis, and important research notes has been investigated. The focus was to answer two main and pivotal questions through this study:

1. What are academic, career and marriage wishes and desires of young people, as well as their attitudes toward family formation and planning?
2. What should we do regarding the results of this research or how attitudes, desires and wishes of university students can be formed appropriately?

After presenting an overview of the subject, expressing main questions and move to answer the key questions, the main results can be summarized as follows:

Theoretical results of this study, regarding educational planning of youth, clearly confirms the essential role of parental expectations on children's academic programs and attitudes, thus, there is a significant association between educational expectations of the fathers and the desired educational level of youth. This issue shows the effect of group belonging and the role of first groups, especially the family on the attitude formation of people. According to the results of this study, the majority of young people are interested in achieving high educational degrees.

Furthermore, the results on career planning of young people show that parents and their job expectations play a central role in young people's aspirations and career planning. The results obtained show that both parents agreed to work of the respondents and along with 95% female students want to have a job in the future. Theoretical finding of this study regarding marriage and family formation show that girls want to have husbands that are older than them. One of the most important factors influencing mate selection is that despite the changes have been witnessed, especially in recent decades, our society is still largely adhere to the customs and traditions inherited from previous generations. Still, our young people tend to move in a particular area in terms of cultural and social issues and do not exceeds its limitations.

Based on sociological the perspectives of family sociologists, a lot of people want to have a wife that in many ways are similar and equal to them. According to the present study, about 16% of those questioned want their husbands to be in the same family and social level to them.

It appears that the first criterion in the mate-selection in Iran is parent's involvement. The investigation results indicate that only 12% of respondents chosen their future husband personally. This type of mate selection and a strong involvement of parents in this procedure is called the traditional isolation. Based on the results of the present study, 65% of people tend to select their partner with their own desire and wish but ultimately with the advice and approval of their parents. This study shows that there is traditional isolation in our community but at the same time represents a decline in the amount of this type of mate selection among the youth of our community and gradually we will see less parental involvement in spouse selection.

Based on the results obtained, 5/76% of people agreed with the association of girls and boys before marriage. This confirms that young people of our community want choice and freedom more than last years and decades. The demand that perhaps is due to individual awareness about their social and personal rights. One of the theoretical results of this study about people's attitudes toward family planning is their belief in the relationship between economic cost and the desired number of children. That means, in the view of the individuals in question, the higher the economic cost of living, the lower the tendency of people to childbearing, and consequently the number of children will be reduced.

The obtained results indicate that most of the respondents would like to have two children within 3 years after marriage and considering a minimum age gap of 2 to 5 years between their children. These notes confirms the awareness of people about the issues and actions regarding family planning programs and the acceptance such programs. At last, we can mention the view of people regarding the consequences of incomplete and incorrect implementation of family planning such as the high population growth in such communities. When such applications are not accepted by people for various reasons, or in other words they are not institutionalized among the community or appropriate policies have not been developed and implemented by relevant and responsible units, we will face with different consequences such as population growth. In this situation, one of the problems is a shortage of housing for people and if there is any house, it can not exist in proportion to the number of people who live in the society. And there will be such consequences like inappropriate living conditions and health problems. Such shortages are exacerbated following the widespread migration to urban areas. Most of the respondents have believed in the existence of such problems and have confirmed it.
References