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## The Relationship between Cohabitation and the Reluctance to Have Children

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### ABSTRACT

The trend of unmarried couples choosing to share a home has become more main stream in recent years. In this study, researchers compare the attitudes of cohabiting and newlywed couples toward the decision to have a family. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between cohabitation and reluctance to have children by comparing the attitudes of cohabiting couples and newlyweds. The purpose of this study is to examine the variables that impact family planning choices in contemporary partnerships. There were 40 participants in this quantitative study, including 20 cohabiting couples and 20 newlywed couples from Israel. Participants filled out a separate questionnaire designed to probe their feelings about having children and family planning. T-tests and other statistical analyses were used to evaluate differences in responses between the two groups. The average score for newlyweds was 4.3, while the average score for cohabiting couples was 2.8 on a Likert scale measuring agreement with the value of having children within families. Statistical tests verified the significant gaps in perspectives on family planning between the two groups. The research shows that cohabiting couples and newlyweds have quite different perspectives on motherhood. Despite certain caveats, the results seem to indicate that cohabiting couples are less likely to want to have a family than married ones. This study adds important context to the conversation about how relationships and social norms are changing over time, and it highlights the need to do future research with more significant and varied populations.

**Keywords:** Cohabitation, Marriage, Children, Family planning, Newlyweds, Quantitative study, and Motherhood.

### INTRODUCTION:

In recent years, the phenomenon of cohabitation, in which unmarried couples choose to reside together, has become more prevalent. Couples are increasingly choosing to live together as opposed to getting married, reflecting a worldwide change in cultural conventions and relationship dynamics (Le Bourdais and Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004). This study dives into the nuances of the problem, narrowing down on Israel, a small nation where cohabitation has witnessed a significant increase, affecting around 5% of all couples UniversePG | [www.universepg.com](http://www.universepg.com)

(Lavee & Katz, 2003). The rising trend of cohabitation raises the issue of what causes couples to choose this alternate living arrangement. The correlation between couples' decision to have fewer children than the norm or unwillingness to have a family at all is a central focus of this research (Daatland, 2007). By illuminating the various reasons behind such choices, this study hopes to fill a knowledge gap about the intricate link between family planning decisions and the decision to live in a cohabitation relationship. An exhaustive literature search, including studies from

Israel and beyond, has been performed to provide a strong groundwork for this investigation. The variables that contribute to the rise of the cohabitation phenomena have been studied from a wide variety of cultural and socioeconomic perspectives. Many causes, including cultural norms, financial constraints, and individual inclinations, have been elucidated by this research as contributors to the trend away from traditional marriage (Pesando, 2019). This study article presents a nuanced view of the elements determining cohabiting relationships by synthesizing this substantial body of evidence.

This study follows a two-stage technique and uses a quantitative approach to its research. Using major research papers, surveys, and academic publications from Israel and throughout the world, we conduct a comprehensive literature review in the first part. This article examines the phenomena of cohabitation and the many elements that contribute to it in depth. A quantitative questionnaire was given to Israeli couples who were living together as part of the study's second section. This study investigates the link between apprehension about having a family and choosing to live together. Using statistical methods, this study seeks to illuminate the causes of this cultural shift by revealing recurring themes and connections hidden within the data. There is significant social value in learning more about the factors that influence people to choose cohabitation, especially as they relate to choices about starting a family. This study has implications beyond the realm of academia, providing helpful information for professionals in the disciplines of family planning and relationship counseling as well as legislators and social scientists. Society may better adjust to shifting relationship dynamics by learning the motivations behind people's decisions to cohabit, creating a more welcoming and accepting atmosphere for families of varying compositions.

This study aims to add to our understanding of modern couple hood and family life by examining the factors that contribute to couples' reluctance to create a family and ways in which cohabitation affects that decision.

### **Review of Literature**

The trend of unmarried couples living together, known as cohabitation, has received a lot of attention both UniversePG | [www.universepg.com](http://www.universepg.com)

abroad and in Israel. Studies performed throughout the globe, including even here in Israel, show that the number of couples who choose to live together instead of getting married is on the rise. Cohabitation among Jewish couples in Israel has increased from 2.4% in 1995 to 5.8% in (Gassen, 2023), with a startling 10% among secular Jews in 2018. Significant cultural shifts may be seen in this developing trend, which is posing new challenges to traditional ideas of family and marriage (Popenoe, 2020). However, a universal definition of cohabitation is lacking. Because of the lack of indigenous vocabulary in Hebrew, many foreign words have been adopted into the language. Cohabitation is multidimensional, including both shared living and partnerships that are similar to marriage (Treas & Giesen, 2000). Cohabitation rates in industrialized nations are higher than in Israel, highlighting the many social and legal elements that influence this decision (Lavee & Katz, 2003). There is a gender gap in Israel, with more men than women opting to live together outside of marriage (Batalova & Cohen, 2002).

The rise of cohabitation may be attributed to a number of causes, including the desire for independence, the pursuit of job progress, and the testing of a relationship before committing entirely (Kalmijn *et al.*, 2007). People are more invested in their relationships when one or both partners have access to more flexible living arrangements, such as cohabitation (Song & Lai, 2020). This trend, however, is also linked to putting off marriage, which has repercussions for family planning and adds to an increase in the number of unwed births (Delnord *et al.*, 2015). Increased participation in relationships and the potential for relationship instability are both pros and cons of cohabitation (Seltzer, 2000). Cohabitation has a wide range of implications for social interactions and family dynamics. Heuveline and Timberlake, (2004) found that married couples were more likely than cohabiting couples to achieve a happy medium between independence and closeness in their relationships (Heuveline & Timberlake, 2004). Separated persons, those with religious limitations, same-sex couples, and their impact on social skill development are only some of the topics that have been the focus of research on the value of investigating cohabitation patterns (Stanton, 2008). Additionally, the dynamics of married couples

are altered by cohabitation. Cohabiting couples report lower levels of relationship satisfaction than married couples who recently made the transition from cohabitation (Delnord *et al.*, 2015). However, the law does not provide the same rights to unmarried partners as it does to married ones. According to government surveys, researchers in Israel are increasingly interested in quantifying the phenomenon of cohabitation (Delnord *et al.*, 2015; Hasibuzzaman *et al.*, 2022). Individuals' wants and preferences are investigated, and the results provide insight into the factors that lead some to choose cohabitation over marriage. Recognizing the far-reaching influence cohabitation has on modern relationship dynamics, international studies have emphasized the need to explore further the motives, rewards, and issues involved with cohabitation.

## METHODOLOGY:

### Research question

This study's primary objective is to answer the following research question: Does cohabitation increase the likelihood that a couple will delay having a family?

### Participants

A total of 40 individuals took part in the research. A total of 20 Israeli couples who are currently living together and want to do so indefinitely were included in this sample. In addition, twenty Israeli couples who had just been married within the last year were included in the study for comparison.

### Research method

The study used a quantitative method based on statistical analysis to investigate the link between cohabitation and a hesitation to have a family. The information from the participants was gathered using a

separate questionnaire. Participants' responses to questions on their child-rearing goals and attitudes towards children within the family were compiled into a questionnaire. On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), participants were asked to rate their agreement with the following propositions. A score of 1 signified strong disagreement while a score of 5 showed strong agreement.

### Data collection

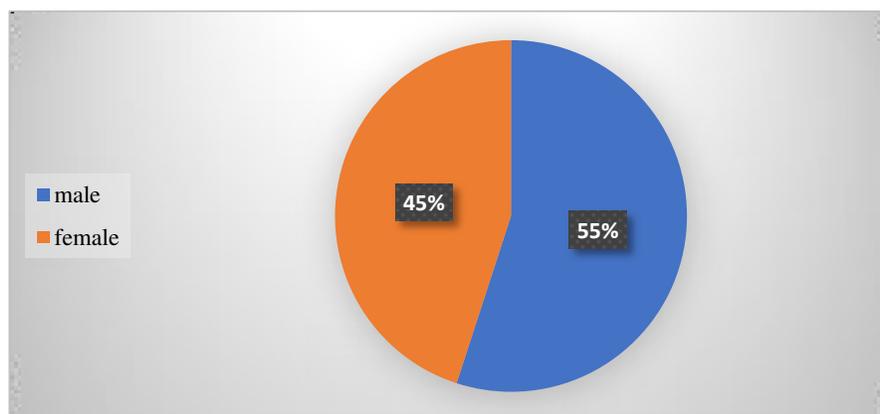
The study team found potential participants by scouring relevant Facebook groups. Each respondent was given a unique Google Docs URL through which to access and complete the survey. After gathering all of the replies, an Excel spreadsheet was created for further examination of the data.

### Research ethics

Research was conducted in accordance with all applicable ethical standards. The research's goals and the intended use of the data were explained to the participants. Participants were ensured their anonymity and made aware of their freedom to discontinue participation at any time without penalty. This transparency and adherence to participants' rights were maintained throughout the study by emphasizing these ethical issues in both the first contact and the questionnaire.

### Findings

Results show that there was a very even split between male and female participants in the study, with 55% of the total coming from men and 45% from women. This gender parity in the study group ensures that a wide range of perspectives and experiences are represented in the results (**Fig. 1**).



**Fig. 1:** Gender Distribution of Research Participants.

The geographical locations of study participants are clearly shown in the provided graph. Significantly, more than half of the participants call the energetic metropolis of Tel Aviv home. Additionally, about a third of the participants are locals of the ancient metropolis of Jerusalem. The remaining 8% of contributors live in different cities. Thus, they must be

combined into a single group for statistical reasons. This detailed analysis sheds light on the research's geographical composition, drawing attention to the outsized influence of major metropolitan hubs like Tel Aviv and Jerusalem but also recognizing the wide range of experiences represented by survey participants from other locations (Fig. 2).

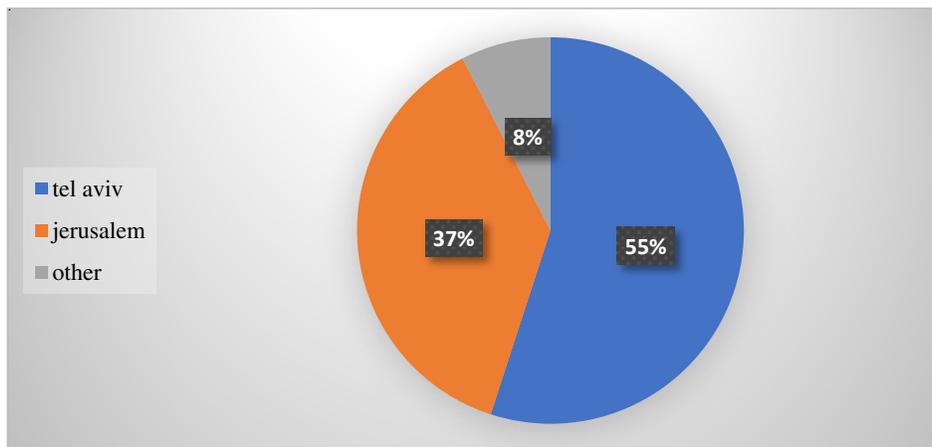


Fig. 2: Geographic Distribution of Research Participants.

The provided graph offers a comprehensive look at how newly married people and those living in cohabitation compare on a variety of measures. There is a clear and significant gap between their mean replies. The average answer score among those who cohabit is 3.1, whereas among those who are recently married, it is a much higher 4.6. These statistical differences highlight the fact that the two groups have different perspectives and norms with regard to family planning and having children. A comprehensive statistical study was performed to determine the significance of these discrepancies. A p-value of 0.003 was calculated using the t-test for unpaired samples at a significance level

of  $\alpha=0.05$  and a two-tailed test. This finding shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the groups' mean replies. These results are even more solidified by the computed standard deviations, which come in at 0.73 for the cohabitation group and 0.82 for the married group. The statistical method not only verifies the relevance of the variations in opinion between the study's participants but also proves the considerable nature of those discrepancies. The results of the t-test provide strong support for the research hypothesis, showing that there is a statistically significant difference between the responses of cohabiting individuals and those of newlywed couples (Fig. 3).

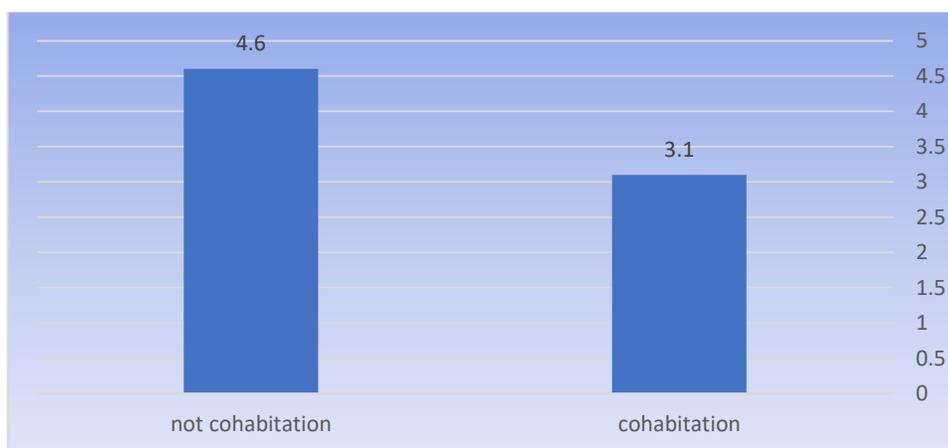
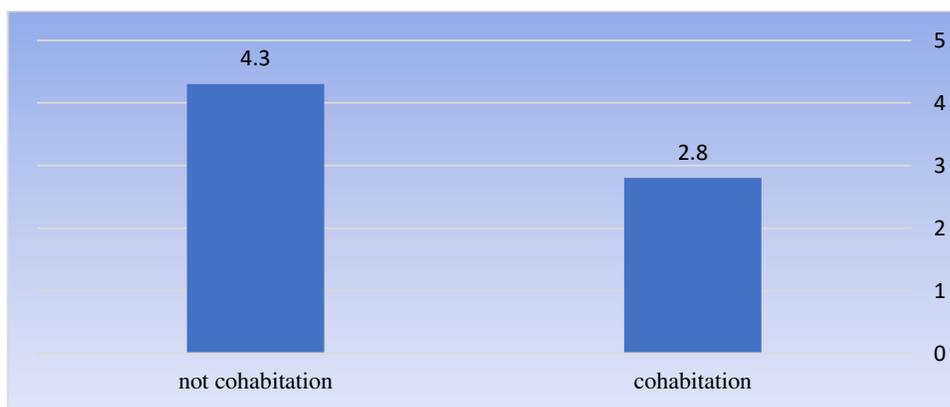


Fig. 3: Comparative Analysis of Average Responses.

The statement "I think every family eventually has to have children" was the focus of the study since it was directly related to the research topic. Participants' strong agreement with this statement is a strong indication that they want children. The average replies provide intriguing information when compared to this scenario. Participants in the cohabitation group responded much lower on average to this statement, with a score of 2.8. The average answer among the newlyweds was 4.3, which was much more significant than any other group. The vast gap between the two groups' estimates highlights fundamental disparities in their views on the importance of motherhood. As before, a t-test was used to assess the significance of these differences statistically. Robustness was contributed

to the statistical analysis by the computed standard deviations for the cohabitation group (0.51) and the newly married group (0.64). The t-test findings were stunning, with a p-value less than 0.001, demonstrating a very significant difference in how families feel about the need to have children. This statistical method provides support for the observed differences, demonstrating that differences in replies to the question of whether or not it is necessary to have children between cohabiting persons and recently married couples are not simple coincidences but are statistically significant. The findings shed light on the complex dynamics of modern relationships by highlighting the importance of cohabitation in altering people's views and wishes about family planning.



**Fig. 4:** Attitudes toward Parenthood in Different Relationship Groups.

**DISCUSSION:**

This study compared the viewpoints and attitudes of cohabiting couples with those of newlyweds to shed light on the complex link between cohabitation and a lack of desire to have children. New insight into the complexities of modern romance and the shifting dynamics of cohabitation and family make-up is provided by the results. The findings of this research support the hypothesis that cohabiting couples see the advantages of starting a family in a different way than those in nuclear households. The desire to have a family was lower among individuals who had been living together for some time before getting married. Different perspectives on one's own parenting duties may account for the observed variance in approaches to family planning. A significant limitation of this study is the limited size of the sample employed in the analysis. There were a total of 20 participants: 10 cohabiting individuals and 10 married individuals. Although the UniversePG | [www.universepg.com](http://www.universepg.com)

study's findings are intriguing, they don't apply to all cohabiting couples in Israel. Additionally, it was challenging to recruit cohabiting couples for the study, highlighting the need for additional investigation to address these challenges and expand the sample size.

**CONCLUSION:**

Despite these caveats, this research has important implications for deciphering the shifting dynamics of contemporary relationships. Once seen as a radical alternative, cohabitation has become more common in recent years. The study's findings highlight how traditional views of marriage and childrearing have been challenged in recent years. This study shows that cohabiting couples are more likely to be open about their desire to pursue nontraditional lifestyles than married couples are. The repercussions of these findings extend beyond individual decisions to societal perceptions of marriage and family life. Social conventions

have expanded the range of relationship options as more people come to see cohabitation as a valid and significant option. This phenomenon indicates a change in society's views and values by posing a threat to the widely held belief that marriage is the sole valid structure for committed relationships. For the entire complexity of this phenomenon, further research is needed with more extensive and more varied samples. Still, this study gives vital insights into the relationship between cohabitation and the unwillingness to have children. Even when cultural norms shift, it is crucial to have a detailed knowledge of the elements that go into family planning choices since they provide light on the complex nature of modern partnerships.

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#### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

The author does not have any conflict of interest.

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