




# Can Women Delay Marriage by Becoming More Educated? Case in Indonesia

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**Abstract** Indonesian women postpone marriage for education, career, and financial independence. Society increasingly values self-discovery over long-term commitments. Weddings in Indonesia fall annually. Many economic and non-economic variables may cause women to delay marriage, according to this study. This study used a logit model to assess Indonesian women's postponement of marriage. This investigation uses a logit model to determine if education and income postpones marriage. This study uses economic status, age at marriage, occupation, and geography. This research uses 2017 Demographic Health Survey data. High-educated women are 9% more likely to postpone marriage after 25 in the logit model. Higher-class women were 2% less likely to marry after 25. The findings show that women's education significantly reduces their risk of marriage before 25. Environmental pressures are 7% more likely to drive women to marry before 25 than personal choice. Education allows Indonesian women to delay marriage until they are above 25. Education has reduced Indonesian women's marriage desire. Instead of marriage, educated women will choose careers.

**Keywords:** Marriage, Education, Economic Status.

## 1 Introduction

Over the previous decade, the worldwide occurrence of child marriage has decreased from 23 percent to 19 percent (UNICEF, 2022). At higher SES levels, couples put off marriage and having children to focus on their careers and education, but they do marry in the end and have a low risk of divorce. At lower SES levels, couples are more likely to live together and have children before getting married and less likely to get married at all (Karney, 2021).

The central bureau of statistics reports a decline in the proportion of married women aged 20 to 24. In 2018, the percentage of women married between the ages of 20 and 24 stood at 11.21 percent, but projections indicate a decrease to 6.92 percent by 2023 (Statistics, 2023).

Women's higher levels of education have a tendency to delay marriage, which can contribute to the fall in the rate of early marriage. Highly

educated individuals tend to postpone marriage until later in life, but finally they are more likely to get married compared to those with lower levels of education (Park & Lee, 2017).

In 2015, the proportion of young women pursuing secondary and higher education was 36.61 percent, which rose to 39.37 percent in March 2020 (Bappenas, 2022). Indonesia is among the top ten nations in the world with the largest absolute number of child weddings, with an estimated 1,220,900 women aged 20 to 24 who got married before the age of 18 that year (Bappenas, 2022).

Decisions to marry are now predominantly influenced by a rational and intellectual evaluation of the benefits and drawbacks of cohabitation vs marriage (Billari & Liefbroer, 2016). Research on marital decision-making is limited, especially in underdeveloped countries like Indonesia. Indonesia exhibits a patriarchal culture wherein women encounter diminished autonomy relative to men. The aim of this study is to analyze the influence of socio-economic factors on the decision to postpone marriage.

## 2 Literature Review

The table below shows some of the research that has been done related to women delay marriage by becoming more educated.

Table 1. Previous Research

Author	Objective	Method	Result	Limitation
Marphatia et al., (2020)	This study examines how much education is needed to delay women’s age at marriage and first pregnancy	Kaplan-Meier survival analysis, multivariable logistic and Cox proportional hazards regression model	Women who marry late generally have higher education	no data on education quality and on other potential confounding factors

Author	Objective	Method	Result	Limitation
Li & Cheng (2019)	This study explains about how women education can influence marriage decisions in China	Probit regressions on marital status	Every additional education level will increase the delay of marriage but if additional just one-years can't significant influence	Limited lack of detailed educational history data and sample limitations
Atiqah et al., (2020)	This study focus on perceptions of women in late marriage	Research design qualitative research (interviews) Unit of analysis Individuals	The decision to marry is influenced to a large extent by personal decisions, weather they are influenced by other thongs or not	Small sample size, limited demographic representation , lack of Quantitative data, limited discussion on solution, subjectivity of responses, limited scope of factors.
Arshad et al., (2014)	This study examines about Marital Adjustment and Life Satisfaction Among Early and Late Marriages	Participants, Sampling Technique, Research Design, Operational definition of Variables, research instruments, Procedure of the study, statistical analysis	late marriages have higher levels of life satisfaction	Small sample size, non-representative sample selection, Generalization, lack of variable control

Based on the literature above, there are still many limited data regarding educational history, one of which is also regarding the quality of education.

### 3 Method and Data

The data utilized in this study was derived from the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) 2017 women dataset. Expected age at marriage, socioeconomic status, area of residence, nature of work, and decision to marry were the variables assessed. In this investigation, a logit model is implemented. An event's probability is predicted using the logit model. The equation to be utilized for the logit model is as follows:

$$P = (y = 1|x) = P(y|x_1, \dots, x_n)$$

Let  $Y_i$  represent the binary dependent variable for the  $i_{th}$  observation

*marriage age*

$= f(\text{economic status, education level, region, decision for marriage, job})$

This research employs a binary variable as the result measure. The age at which one marries is a binary variable. A category with a value of 1 indicates marriage at 25 years or older, whereas a category with a value of 0 signifies marriage under 25 years. We reiterate data processing after doing logit regression to derive the marginal effect value. We subsequently examine the probability value of an occurrence derived from the marginal effect.

Table 2. Summary of Statistic

	Indicator	Question	Percentage (%)
<b>Age Marriage (Outcome)</b>			
0	<25 years	Age to be married	83.62
1	≥25 years		16.38
<b>Economic Status</b>			
1	Poor	Wealth index	41.31
2	Middle		38.58
3	Richest		20.11
<b>Women Education Level</b>			
0	≤ Primary	Highest	81.60
1	≥ Secondary	educational level	18.40

	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
	<b>Region</b>		
0	Rural	Type of place of residence	46.74
1	Urban		53.26
	<b>Decision for Marriage</b>		
1	Self	Decision maker for the person to marry	69.20
2	Parents		9.85
3	Relatives		0.47
4	Jointly		20.48
	<b>Job Category</b>		
1	Industrial	Respondent's occupation	6.82
2	Non-industrial		52.96
3	Not working		40.20
4	Don't know		0.02
	<b>Total Observation</b>		<b>9,274</b>

Source: DHS 2017 (data processed)

This research utilized 9,274 observations. 83.62 percent of women wish to marry before the age of 25, and 16.38 percent prefer to marry after this age. Primary and lower education levels constitute 81.60 percent of the total, while secondary education and higher represent the remaining 18.40 percent. The predominant basis for marriage decisions was individual choices (69.20%), followed by joint decisions made by children and parents (20.48%). Regarding employment type, 52.96 percent are engaged in the non-industrial sector, whilst 40.20 percent are unemployed.

#### 4 Result and Discussion

Table 3 presents the marginal impact values associated with socio-economic status, residential location, and decision-maker influence on the probability of women delaying marriage. The marginal effect results indicate that most variables exert a significant influence.

Table 3. Marginal Effect

<b>Outcome Variable (Age to be married &lt; 25 years)</b>	<b>Marginal Effect</b>	<b>Probability</b>
<b>Independent Variable</b>		
<b>Economic Level (Based group: Poor)</b>		
Middle**	-0.03	0.02
Rich	-0.02	0.38
<b>Education Level (Based group: ≤ Primary)</b>		
Secondary ≥ ***	0.09	0.00
<b>Residence (Based group: Rural)</b>		
Urban ***	0.03	0.00
<b>Decision Maker (Based group: Self)</b>		
Parents	0.02	0.33
Relatives**	-0.07	0.04
Jointly ***	0.03	0.01
<b>Working Status (Based group: Industrial)</b>		
Non-Industrial	0.02	0.23
Not Working ***	0.05	0.00
Don't Know	0.19	0.52
<b>Observation</b>	<b>9,274</b>	

Robust standard errors in parentheses: \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01

The economic status reveals those women with elevated socioeconomic standing exhibit a diminished probability of marrying post-25 years of age. Individuals with a moderate economic status exhibit a statistically significant 3% reduced likelihood of marrying beyond the age of 25, but those with a higher economic status have a 2% lower probability in comparison to women of lower economic status. This suggests that women with robust economic capabilities demonstrate a higher propensity to marry than those with constrained economic talents. Women with constrained financial means are more inclined to prioritize the augmentation of their economic potential.

One of the most significant factors that can influence a woman's decision to marry before or beyond the age of 25 is the residential location of the woman. When compared to their counterparts in rural areas, urban women have a higher possibility of getting married if they are over the age of 25. This likelihood increases by 3%. A correlation was found by the researchers, which indicated that women who live in rural areas have a higher tendency to get married at a younger age compared to women who live in urban areas (Adebowale et al., 2012; Ahmed, 1986; Faroque et al., 2016; Rasul et al., 2022).

Women in the occupation group who are not employed have a higher possibility of marrying beyond the age of 25 compared to those who are employed in the industrial sector. This probability value is 5%, and it has a significant impact. With probability values of 2% and 19%, respectively, women working in non-industrial sectors and those who are uncertain about the nature of their career have a much higher likelihood than women working in the industrial sector. This is in comparison to women working in the industrial sector. Many individuals prioritize career advancement and personal growth due to delayed marriage (Gündoğdu & Bulut, 2022). Compared to women with lower levels of education, those with higher levels of education had a higher probability of delaying marriage by nine percent. Education can influence women's decision to marry, whether they are over 25 or under 25 years old, by transforming their thinking and conduct. It is essential for women to receive an education since it enables them to grow more and helps them have a more successful profession. Delayed marriage enables individuals to pursue their professional and academic aspirations (Gündoğdu & Bulut, 2022). Certain individuals defer their marriage in light of their professional ambitions, while others choose to wait due to their educational objectives (Gündoğdu & Bulut, 2022; Haotanto, 2016).

External environments and familial factors can impact women's decisions about the age of marriage. The likelihood of women marrying after the age of 25 increases when parental influence and discussions between women and their parents are involved, with respective probability values of 2% and 7%. The external environment around the nuclear family can impact women's choices regarding marriage after age 25. Factors external to the nuclear family reduce the likelihood of women marrying after the age of 25 to 7%. Discussions about personal matters

with parents positively correlated with collaborative decision-making between parents and daughters over husband selection (Paul et al., 2023). Engaging in discussions with parents can assist women in determining whether to marry. Participating in dialogues with parents can lead to better informed and deliberate decisions.

## 5 Conclusion

The amount of education that women have attained is a crucial factor in determining whether or not they will delay marriage until after the age of 25. On the other hand, it is essential to keep in mind that the environment in which women live continues to play a significant part in the decisions they make regarding marriage. There is the potential for the external environment to have an effect on the decision-making process of an individual.

Through the implementation of programs that encourage women to pursue higher education, the government has the ability to indirectly reduce the prevalence of early marriage by postponing the age at which individuals choose to get married. To ensure that daughters do not feel driven to marry at a young age, it is essential to provide them with a home environment that is encouraging and supportive.

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