

The Influence of Education Level and Career on Women's Decisions to Postpone Marriage in Central Kalimantan

Usup Riassy Christa¹, Trecy E. Anden¹ & Dandy Nugraha²

¹ Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Palangka Raya

² Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Palangka Raya

Email: trecyanden01@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of education level, career development, social pressure, as well as personal views and priorities on women's decisions to postpone marriage, with a specific focus on Central Kalimantan Province. The background of this research stems from the declining marriage rates in Indonesia, which align with the increasing participation of women in higher education and the workforce. The study employs a mixed-method approach involving 367 female respondents from six districts/cities. Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression to test four main hypotheses. The results show that women's perceptions of the role of education and career significantly influence their tendency to delay marriage. In addition, family support was found to have a greater influence than social pressure. Age and views on personal achievement were also proven to affect women's decision-making regarding marriage timing. These findings indicate that the decision to delay marriage results from the interaction between structural factors and personal values. This study is expected to serve as a foundation for policies supporting women's empowerment and a balance between career advancement and family life.

Keywords: marriage postponement, higher education, women's career, family support, social pressure, life priorities.

1. Introduction

In recent years, Indonesia has experienced a significant decline in marriage rates, particularly between 2021 and 2023, with a national reduction of around two million marriages. This phenomenon reflects complex social changes, driven in part by rising education levels and increased female workforce participation. Central Kalimantan reflects a similar trend, with a decrease of 846 marriages in 2023 compared to the previous year. Interestingly, the province has a relatively high Gender Development Index (GDI) of 89.20, reflecting substantial efforts to promote gender equality, particularly in education and career opportunities for women.

As women gain greater access to higher education and career advancement, more of them are choosing to delay marriage. However, these advances also bring new dynamics that affect social structure and demographics, including shifts in family composition, declining birth rates, and evolving gender roles. This study seeks to examine how education and career influence women's

decisions to postpone marriage in Central Kalimantan. The topic is relevant as it offers deeper insight into the changing life choices of women within their socio-economic context and provides a basis for formulating policies that promote balance between personal achievement and family life.

2. Literature Review

Marriage postponement among women has become an increasingly visible phenomenon in modern societies. Modernization theory posits that as education and the economy advance, traditional values are replaced with more rational and individualistic thinking, including attitudes toward marriage (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Higher education equips women with knowledge, skills, and wider career opportunities, making them more likely to delay marriage in pursuit of personal and professional goals (Cunningham, 2005). Rational choice theory (Becker, 1981) explains that individuals make decisions based on cost-benefit analysis. Women with promising career prospects may see delayed marriage as yielding greater long-term benefits—both economically and psychologically—than early marriage. This is further reinforced by growing gender awareness and female autonomy, especially in regions with high GDI scores, such as Central Kalimantan.

However, delaying marriage also raises social implications such as shifts in family structure, lower birth rates, and challenges to traditional gender roles. Thus, it is essential to explore the impact of education and career on women's marriage decisions. Based on the above theories, the following hypotheses are proposed: (1) The influence of education on marriage postponement; (2) The influence of career on marriage postponement; (3) The influence of social pressure and environment on marriage postponement; and (4) The influence of personal views and priorities on marriage postponement.

3. Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach, employing observation, surveys, and in-depth interviews for data collection. The main objective is to thoroughly explore the perceptions, experiences, and challenges faced by women—particularly regarding their decision to delay marriage and their access to equal career opportunities. Survey data were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics and multiple regression, while data from interviews and observations were analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns related to the influence of education and career on marriage decisions, as well as gender equality issues in the workplace. This methodological approach is expected to offer a comprehensive picture of the relationship between education, career, and women's decisions to delay marriage, while revealing the challenges and opportunities faced by women in accessing equitable and inclusive work environments.

4. Finding and Discussion

The Effect of Education on the Decision to Postpone Marriage. The analysis reveals that education contributes to the decision to delay marriage, though not strictly in terms of formal education level. The variable "last level of education" was statistically insignificant; however, perceptions that education provides career opportunities ($p < 0.00001$) and shapes views on marriage ($p < 0.00001$) had significant effects. The R^2 value of 0.4352 indicates that approximately 44% of variation in marriage postponement is explained by education-related perceptions. This supports modernization and rational choice theories, which assert that education fosters autonomy and long-term planning.

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0,65966866
R Square	0,43516275
Adjusted R Square	0,42892145
Standard Error	0,68553582
Observations	367

ANOVA					
	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	4	131,068173	32,7670434	69,7231429	9,9984E-44
Residual	362	170,125287	0,46995936		
Total	366	301,19346			

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95,0%	Upper 95,0%
Intercept	0,75850956	0,17309798	4,38196648	1,5427E-05	0,41810566	1,09891346	0,41810566	1,09891346
Tingkat Pendidikan Terakhir	0,0277455	0,0401807	0,69051814	0,4903109	-0,0512714	0,1067624	-0,0512714	0,1067624
Pendidikan Tinggi dan Kesempatan Berkarir	0,35103556	0,04980737	7,04786431	9,2383E-12	0,25308744	0,44898368	0,25308744	0,44898368
Latar Belakang Pendidikan Individu	0,35701197	0,04804228	7,43120355	7,8262E-13	0,26253496	0,45148898	0,26253496	0,45148898
Kebebasan dalam Karir	0,0318778	0,05250484	0,60714013	0,54413854	-0,071375	0,13513061	-0,071375	0,13513061

The Effect of Career on the Decision to Postpone Marriage. Career-related factors are also significantly associated with the decision to delay marriage. While type of profession showed no statistical significance, monthly income ($p = 0.012$) significantly affected decisions, indicating that higher-earning women feel more control over their life choices. Key perceptions such as marriage hindering career progression ($p = 0.0259$) and belief that postponement supports career success ($p < 0.00001$) were crucial. These reflect concerns about balancing domestic and professional roles and emphasize women's aspirations to achieve career stability before marriage.

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Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0,60147591
R Square	0,36177327
Adjusted R Square	0,35293356
Standard Error	0,73883333
Observations	367

ANOVA					
	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	5	111,702179	22,3404358	40,9259418	2,5558E-33
Residual	361	197,060764	0,54587469		
Total	366	308,762943			

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95,0%	Upper 95,0%
Intercept	1,07677374	0,18613487	5,7849115	1,574E-08	0,71072889	1,44281858	0,71072889	1,44281858
Profesi	-0,0541409	0,03375857	-1,603768	0,1096397	-0,1205291	0,01224724	-0,1205291	0,01224724
Pendapatan Bulanan	0,17214986	0,06820224	2,52410847	0,01202739	0,03802626	0,30627347	0,03802626	0,30627347
Kesulitan Meniti Karir	0,13464058	0,06020813	2,2362525	0,02594564	0,01623786	0,25304331	0,01623786	0,25304331
Karir Sukses dan Menunda Pernikahan	0,24704507	0,06600124	3,743037	0,00021147	0,11724987	0,37684027	0,11724987	0,37684027
Pilihan Menunda Pernikahan	0,26651553	0,05663004	4,70625698	3,6009E-06	0,15514932	0,37788174	0,15514932	0,37788174

The Role of Social Pressure and Family Support. Social pressure from peers or colleagues was found to be statistically insignificant ($p = 0.245$), while family support showed strong and significant influence ($p < 0.00001$). Women who feel supported by their families are more likely to postpone marriage. This suggests a shift in modern families toward recognizing women's autonomy and aspirations for career development prior to entering marriage.

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0,24002898
R Square	0,05761391
Adjusted R Square	0,05243596
Standard Error	0,86922769
Observations	367

ANOVA					
	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	2	16,8138424	8,40692121	11,1267894	2,0401E-05
Residual	364	275,02267	0,75555679		
Total	366	291,836512			

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95,0%	Upper 95,0%
Intercept	2,93198759	0,14893726	19,6860579	2,8899E-59	2,63910208	3,2248731	2,63910208	3,2248731
Tekanan Lingkungan	0,05632617	0,0483855	1,16411262	0,24514081	-0,038824	0,15147639	-0,038824	0,15147639
Dukungan Keluarga	-0,2438256	0,05168687	-4,7173614	3,411E-06	-0,345468	-0,1421833	-0,345468	-0,1421833

Personal Views and Priorities. Age had a significant negative correlation ($p = 0.0012$), with younger women more inclined to view postponement as a strategy for self-development. The belief that “successful women should postpone marriage” had the strongest effect ($p < 0.00001$), indicating that achievement is increasingly measured by individual success rather than marital status. While prioritization between career and marriage was not statistically significant ($p = 0.1103$), many respondents believed both could be pursued in parallel depending on individual circumstances.

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0,55086315
R Square	0,30345021
Adjusted R Square	0,2976936
Standard Error	0,93125458
Observations	367

ANOVA					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	3	137,144612	45,7148708	52,713354	2,6446E-28
Residual	363	314,806341	0,8672351		
Total	366	451,950954			

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95,0%</i>	<i>Upper 95,0%</i>
Intercept	1,17136898	0,27174167	4,31059757	2,0999E-05	0,63698338	1,70575458	0,63698338	1,70575458
Usia	-0,1120546	0,03435738	-3,2614426	0,00121346	-0,1796191	-0,0444901	-0,1796191	-0,0444901
Persepsi Responden	0,70040929	0,07247968	9,66352664	8,2477E-20	0,55787651	0,84294207	0,55787651	0,84294207
Prioritisasi Karir dan Pernikahan	0,13920162	0,08695186	1,60090453	0,11026794	-0,031791	0,31019425	-0,031791	0,31019425

5. Conclusion

Education significantly influences decisions to postpone marriage, primarily through perceptions of education as a pathway to autonomy and personal growth—not through formal credentials alone. Career has a notable impact, especially among higher-income women who view marriage as potentially limiting career mobility. Family support outweighs external social pressure in encouraging women to prioritize self-development before marriage. Personal priorities and values are central motivators; the decision to delay marriage is often a strategic choice to achieve emotional readiness, financial independence, and personal fulfillment. These findings suggest that women’s decisions to postpone marriage reflect not a rejection of the institution itself, but a deliberate, empowered choice aligned with their life goals. This highlights the need for inclusive

policies, flexible work environments, and supportive families to enable women to thrive in both professional and personal roles.

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