



## Research Article

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Received: 25 September 2022 / Accepted: 5 February 2023 / Published: 5 March 2023

# The Causes of Delayed Marriage among Young Men: An Analytical Descriptive Study of a Sample of Al Ain University Students

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2023-0043>

## Abstract

*The phenomenon of delayed marriage in society in general and in the UAE society, in particular, has become obvious. Attitudes and opinions regarding marriage have changed due to the intense evolvement of society, and the rise in education and economic levels. This study seeks to identify the factors leading to the delay of marriage among young men, from the perspective of a sample of 272 male students at Al Ain University. The descriptive analytical approach was adopted to analyze the data and identify the factors perceived as contributing to the delay of marriage. The study concludes that high dowry, in general, is one of the main factors for delaying the age of marriage among young males in Al Ain city.*

**Keywords:** *Marriage, Late marriage age, Emirati society, Al Ain University*

## 1. Introduction

The term “bachelorette” is used for an unmarried woman, while “bachelor” is used to refer to unmarried men. The terms “bachelorette” or “unmarried” are typically used to describe a woman who is over 35 years old and still unmarried. When examining the trend of women marrying at a later age in Arab societies, it was discovered that 59% of women between the ages of 25-35 were unmarried, while 90% of males of the same age group are delaying marriage (Al-Sannaad, 2007). In the United Arab Emirates (henceforth UAE) the percentage of young men and women that are delaying marriage is rising, despite the vast amount of religious and cultural support to reverse the trend. However, there are backward traditions, imported lifestyles, and many formal conditions that allow this trend to settle into the fabric of Middle Eastern societies. The delay in marriage creates ripple effects such as crimes committed against oneself, society, and religion. Additionally, there are times when an unmarried woman is seen as guilty, when in fact, she is a victim.

International conventions and declarations have taken care of the family and affirmed the right of all individuals to freely marry without any restrictions due to religion, nationality, or race. They

also prohibit child marriage. However, they do not regulate the issue of delayed marriage, nor recommend procedures to be followed to encourage individuals to marry.

Delayed marriage is a matter of concern in Emirati society. Statistics reveal that there are more than 175,000 women in the country who are still unmarried. This has motivated sociologists to explore the reasons behind this phenomenon, how to confront it, and how to reduce its negative effects on society, especially on women. In this paper, some of the causes of this phenomenon will be investigated and opinions from notable figures concerning the impact of this phenomenon on the health of the country will be summarized (Saad, 2011).

Delayed marriage among women has become a topic discussed widely on Internet forums and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, especially after Arab news sites published statistics about the rates of delayed marriage in Arab countries. The UAE is in second place, as the percentage of unmarried women over the age of 35 is 75%. Family counselors from the Marriage Fund Foundation questioned the accuracy of this percentage; however, they recognized that delayed marriage worries Emirati society, and they suggested some policies to encourage young people to marry. These include financial benefits for married couples, additional benefits for children, and providing support for a man to marry a second wife under certain conditions (Bayoumi, 2015).

The phenomenon of delayed marriage in the UAE is remarkable for its growth and high rates. This situation has negative effects and repercussions on individuals, families, and society. There are social, economic, cultural, and psychological causes behind this shift, and these causes are changing the system of individual and community values. Attitudes, trends, and opinions about marriage have changed due to an increase in emancipation and openness in society. The educational, cultural, and economic achievements of women, in addition to their introduction to the workforce, made them economically independent, albeit relatively. A speculative partner's demands that are related to beauty, financial and social status, the dowry and its value, the luxury of the bride's dress, and the high expectations that a wedding will be held in a luxurious lounge or hotel, have all prompted the spread of delayed marriage in Emirati society. Much of the available research on delayed marriage focused on young women. This calls for studies to investigate the size, causes, and effects of delayed marriage among young men in order to search for ways to reverse the trend. The research question is: what are the factors leading young men to delay marriage until a later age?

This research question is divided into the following sub-questions:

1. Do the reasons for the delay of marriage among young men include high dowries and marriage costs, such as the dress, parties, and venues?
2. Is preoccupation with continuing education a reason for young men to delay marriage?
3. Are marriage customs in the dating process and family interference among the reasons for delaying marriage among young men?
4. Is the fear of having family obligations a reason for delaying marriage among young men?
5. Are there any other reasons for the delay of marriage among young men?

Research findings will help reverse the trend of this problem in Emirati society, i.e., the delay of marriage among young people. This research is an attempt to identify the causes of this cultural shift and provide policy suggestions to reverse the trend. The current research also deals with an important topic of family and marital counseling, which can help those interested in understanding this phenomenon and identifying its causes, expand knowledge in the social sciences, and create a baseline for researchers to further study this topic. This research will also fill the gap in the literature, as there is a scarcity of scientific studies that have addressed the issue of delayed marriage among young men in Emirati society.

## 2. Literature Review

This research will first describe the concept of delayed marriage in terms of language and convention, the reasons for delaying marriage, and the average age of marriage in Arab countries. A literary review will be followed with a commentary.

There is a specific word to describe marriage at an older age among men; they are described as being bachelors. A woman is referred to as a 'bachelorette', which means that her family kept her away from marriage proposals until she passed the usual age of marriage, but she is able to have children (Yahia,1997). Al-Asma'i stated that it should not be said that she missed the age of marriage or is unable to marry anymore, but she has become a bachelorette because the responsible party is unknown, and she is a bachelorette against her will (Manzor,2007).

Some use the term 'bachelor' to refer to men and women. Muhammad Mansour defined it as the case when a man or woman is unmarried after a certain age, even though they need to marry and have the desire to do so. Nobody specifies a certain age for a woman to be considered a bachelorette, except for the Maliki jurists who differed among themselves in determining the age when a woman became a bachelorette. Some jurists said it is the age of thirty, others said it is thirty-five, forty, forty-five, and some said it is sixty. The appropriate timeline for marriage varies according to time and location (Mansour, 2000).

### 3. Reasons for Delaying Marriage

*Optional delay.* The multiple reasons for "optional delay in marriage" are expanding day by day. An example would be a person's financial and emotional independence.

*Inevitable delay.* It occurs if the marriage does not occur as a result of extenuating circumstances. An example is the case of a woman who becomes and would like to marry, but no one has proposed to her yet. Another example is the different cases of either men or women which are related to financial, social, or personal conditions.

#### 3.1 Age of Marriage in Arabic Families

One of the Arabic traditions is that young boys and girls often marry at the age of puberty. Their eligibility to wed is not measured by their age, and in the past, girls were married around the age of ten. There are no legal procedures that prevent such marriages, but there is confusion when the actual wedding takes place after an extended period has passed since the marriage contract was signed.

Islamic law does not specify an appropriate age for marriage, nor does it rule that marriage between children is invalid. Conversely, the Ottoman law specified the age of marriage at twelve years old for boys and nine years for girls.

Puberty is the operative word here, and some arrangements have been made for the marriages of young boys and girls when they reach puberty (Hasan 1981). Many Arab societies have legalized a minimum age of marriage for young men and women in order to outlaw underage marriages, which is a phenomenon that has spread in Arab societies and continues to this day. Many civil societies have passed laws that punish a girl's guardian if she is married at an early age.

In the UAE, the Personal Status Law recognizes that a marriage contract is the legitimate legal framework for the formation of a new family, and it specified the age of marriage in Article 30, Clause 1: "Capacity to marry is defined by reason and maturity. The age of maturity is 18 years, unless the person concerned matures earlier in conformity with the law" (Federal Law No. (28) of 2005 On Personal Status, Article (30)).

### 4. The Negative Effects of Late Marriage

If marriage leads to reproduction, community building, and stability, delaying it will contribute to the emergence of social consequences, which lead to problems and negative effects, and these include, but are not limited to, the following:

*Physiological implications.* The fertility curve in a woman's life is between the ages of 15 to 49 years, and it reaches its peak at the age of 30 years before declining. If a woman marries at a later age,

her chances of pregnancy decrease because her advanced age plays an important role in determining the number of children she can have. The late age of marriage for women is considered an indicator of progress, as it leads to a significant reduction in early pregnancy (before the mother is 20 years of age), which poses a great threat to the health of the mother and the child.

*Mental implications.* The psychological effects of delaying marriage that can affect both men and women include loneliness, depression, tension, loss of self-confidence, and psychological pain. This may be especially true for women because they have not obtained a socially and legally accepted partner. An unmarried woman may face criticism from her social circle and alienate herself for fear of ridicule and hurtful gossip. This can result in physical pain, and she may deviate from the morally accepted path in search of accommodation and emotional fulfillment. Delaying marriage may also cause psychological harm to the family, as its members may feel concerned, shame, and dishonored. The family may fear how people talk about them. Gossip can negatively affect the relationships between family members and their social circle.

#### 4.1 Social Implications

Choosing to delay marriage and evading marital responsibility leads to negative effects on society.

- *The spread of immorality and illegal relationships.* Such habits make young people psychologically and emotionally unstable. The abundance of these relationships facilitates the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, which have economic, health, and social consequences. In the same vein, the spread of such relationships destroys, or at least harms, families (Mahdaoui, 2011: 56).
- *Weak social ties.* The family is considered the nucleus of society in terms of social structure, and marriage is the most important way to unite the family. With the formation of the family, its goodness, and interconnectedness, society strengthens, repairs, and intertwines, and with its fading and disintegration, society disintegrates, decays, and collapses. The percentage of bachelorettes in a society, whether increases or decreases, may be considered an indicator of the weakness or strength of the society. Accordingly, one of the social effects of celibacy and delayed marriage is the fluctuation of social ties within the family.
- *Low birth rate.* One of the social effects of spinsterhood and celibacy is the low birth rate. The preservation of the human race can only be achieved by marriage, and creating the next generation is a great goal of marriage (Hakim, 2005, p. 124). Marriage was originally legalized according to the tenements of religion.
- The emergence of marriages that are not officially recognized such as common-law marriage, secret marriage, and other types of unofficial marriages.

#### 4.2 Economic Implications

There is no doubt that an increase in unmarried women in any society has economic effects such as:

- *Decreasing the population.* The high rate of delayed marriage leads to a decrease in reproduction rates, and consequently, a decrease in the population over time. Since the family is the unit of construction in healthy societies, the decrease in the number of families will eventually lead to the decay of society, its decline, and perhaps its extinction.
- *Reduced production.* The psychological suffering experienced by unmarried people and their preoccupation with the situation reduce their ability to work and produce high-quality outputs. Their lack of competence and devotion at work may be considered a waste of human resources (Mahdaoui, 2011).
- Marriage after the age of 30 may have an impact on childbearing, so the probability of giving birth to children with disabilities increases. In addition, fertility decreases after this age, which requires couples to seek out alternative means of pregnancy such as surrogacy. This can lead to significantly increased expenses and stress to obtain expensive treatments.

- The reluctance to marry negatively affects the productivity of society; an unmarried man is preoccupied with an unstable and unbalanced mind, and he cannot reach his full potential. Both he and the unmarried woman waste their time searching for self-satisfaction, which results in setbacks in their careers. Both are unable to advance in life and their careers.

#### 4.3 Religious Implications

Choosing the path of permanent celibacy, or being content with unlawful relationships, may lead to the killing of religious conviction and weakening of faith. This may lead to the further devaluing of marriage and indifference to the dire consequences of this behavior.

### 5. Previous Studies

The study of Alhajjaj, Ghraibeh, and Al-halalat (2021) revealed the importance of the economic and social factors behind delaying marriage among a sample of young people in Oman. The study showed that the economic factors resulted in a high degree, followed by the social factors which were of a medium degree. The study concluded that there were no significant differences in the social factors behind the delay in the age of marriage due to age, with significant differences in the social factors attributed to the place of residence, which was in favor of the rural population and gender which was in favor of males.

Al-Jawhari (2020) found that one of the most important economic factors behind the delay in the age of marriage is unemployment, and one of the social factors is the requirements associated with societal customs and traditions. The girl has always fulfilled the conditions of religion, morals, and values, and the family's attitudes towards marriage are modified through moderation in expenses and dowry. Similarly, Al-Jalbana (2017) also found that the economic conditions experienced by young people in Jordanian society are an important factor in delaying the age of marriage for males.

The General Authority for Statistics in KSA in 2019 showed that the causes of young adults getting married at later ages are as follows: costs of living (33.9%), increasing costs of marriages (28.8%), finishing higher education (13.7%), unwillingness to take responsibility (7.04%), the difficulty of finding a suitable partner (6.7%), reluctance to marry at the moment (5.7%), and 4.12% declined to share their reasons (General Authority for Statistics in KSA 2019: 24).

Al-Elwi and Ali (2018) aimed in their study to identify the factors that lead women to delaying marriage in a changing society. The study discovered a set of variables that lead to delay in marriage for Iraqi women, including high dowries and the woman's family forcing her to marry a man they consider suitable thus removing her right to choose, class and sectarian factors, and customs and traditions that prevent mingling and dating before marriage. There is also the practice of fathers hoarding a daughter's salary and preventing daughters from marrying in order to keep their salaries. Many men reject educated women because they want an ignorant young wife who they can tyrannize. The majority of young men are advised to marry foreigners because of the cheap costs of marriage (Al-Elwi and Zamel, 2018).

Maleki and Zaitouni (2017) aimed to uncover the factors that influenced young people to delay marriage in the urban community of Mostaganem, Algeria. The sample size was 100 young people. The study aimed to verify two hypotheses: first, the economic conditions such as high dowries and the lack of housing separate from their families contributed to high rates of postponed marriages, and second, young people's interest in completing their education and achieving financial independence contributed to high rates of postponed marriage. This study verified the two hypotheses, as the respondents confirmed, at a rate of 74%, that the reason for delaying marriage is the inability to obtain a separate home and provide the cost of dowry. A percentage of 68.8% of respondents asserted that the reason for delaying marriage is that women want to finish their education and achieve financial independence.

Khalil's study (2016) examined the factors influencing people to delay marriage at a high rate in

Arab societies. The researcher used a two-response logistic regression method to identify the most important causes, using citizens from the community of Umluj city in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the study sample. The study found that the most important factors that prompt people to delay marriage include the loss of one or both parents, the responsibility of raising siblings, excessive demands of the potential partner, an individual's appreciation of the family he intends to form, friendship and mixing between the two genders through social media sites, and the fuss and expense required for a wedding.

Al-Khudairi's study (2015) examined why young people delay marriage using university youth in Saudi society as the sample population. It sought to identify the main factors that led to the situation, quantify the negative effects of this shift, and identify solutions that can reverse the trend. The results revealed that religion is one of the most prominent motives for marriage among Saudi youth. The most prominent determinants of marital choice were that personal choices are conditional according to family acceptance, introductions made by relatives, and rejections of Internet dating sites and matchmakers. It revealed that the most prominent reasons for delaying marriage are the lack of income, inability to secure adequate housing, overblown and expensive weddings, expectations of extravagance regarding banquets and celebrations, and the desire to continue education. In light of these results, the study provided recommendations and proposals that could reduce this trend (Al-Khudairi, 2015).

In 2011, the Community Development Authority of the Dubai Government reported the results of an opinion poll regarding the factors that inspired Emiratis to delay marriage. A total of 2,462 UAE citizens in the Emirate of Dubai were surveyed from April 7 to May 3 of 2011. The study found that the factors that cause respondents to delay marriage are the high cost of living (67.2%), the lack of independent housing (66.1%), high dowries (63.3%), financial burdens of marriage (53.3%), customs and traditions that impose obligations on husbands (49.4%), media and the negative image it conveys about marriage (40.3%), unwillingness to bear responsibility for children (40.3%), fear of failure (35.8%), parental interference in marital life (35.7%), and the desire to finish education (32.3%) (Community Development Authority of Dubai, 2011).

Qashttoui's research (2009) examined the causes and factors of the late marriage age among Algerian youth and why they delay marriage. Higher educational attainment caused both men and women to delay marriage since higher education requires a long period to complete and is frequently followed by a job search. Men are expected to spend a long period saving money to meet wedding expenses, even if the wedding is a frugal affair. Additionally, the weak economy caused young people to delay marriage. This primarily affected men more than women since men are responsible for housing costs, in addition to wedding costs and other expenses. All these expectations manifested alongside growing unemployment, especially among university graduates, the housing crisis, since newlyweds prefer to live in a separate house from their parents after marriage, in addition to the high cost of living. (Qashttoui, 2009).

The study conducted by Mahamid (2015) aimed to identify the causes of the rising number of bachelorettes using students of Al-Najah National University as study participants. The study sample consisted of 164 students from the College of Graduate Studies enrolled in the first semester of the academic year 2015-2016. The results showed several factors perceived as influencing the decision to delay marriage. The factors mentioned most frequently were high dowries, excessive demands regarding a potential spouse's demographics and status, the social stigma associated with some families, young people's fear of losing their freedom after marriage, family problems, fear of emotional failure, and previous separation experiences. The results showed no differences in the views in relation to the demographics of study participants, namely gender, marital status, and age (Mahamid, 2015).

Al-Sabaawi's study (2007) aimed to identify the causes of the phenomenon of delayed marriage from the middle school teachers' viewpoint. The results of the study showed that the causes of delayed marriage in Iraqi society centered around a set of issues, including the difficult living conditions experienced by the Iraqi community, the high cost of dowries, the desire of women to

complete their education, customs and traditions such as forcing young people to marry a cousin, the growing cost of living, and the difficulty in obtaining housing due to high prices. The results did not show statistically significant differences in the opinions of participants when gender and marital status were taken into account (Al-Sabaawi, 2007).

A study researching later ages of marriage among university youth is the one conducted by Al-Sannad (2007). The study aimed to identify the causes of this trend. The study used a sample of 400 students from the Schools of Engineering and Education at the University of Damascus. It confirmed that the main reasons for young people delaying marriage were the housing crisis and high rent (86.8%), high cost of living (75%), with 74% of the sample members admitting that the matter is "already destined", a woman's reluctance to live with her husband's family (70.2%), parental death, and the ensuing responsibility to provide for the family (68%), and continuing education (65%). There was no statistical significance regarding the gender and academic specialization of the study participants (Al-Sannaad, 2007).

Dhaif's study (2000) aimed to define the concept of delayed marriage and its rates in Arab countries, know its causes, understand the damages caused by the rising number of bachelorettes, and recommend policies to reverse the trend. The researcher surveyed women. He reached several results, the most important of which is that the main cause of delayed marriage in relation to women is their education, which allows them to enter the workforce. The most important reason for delaying marriage among young men is the high dowries expected in Arab countries (Dhaif, 2000).

The study done by Abdul Hamid (2000) aimed to explore the most important problems of marital and academic futures in a sample of 2,515 male and female students from the United Arab Emirates University. The research concluded that the most four important problems for marital future are high costs of marriage, fear of not earning money to secure the future, lack of knowledge of how to form a family, and the difficulty of procuring housing (Hamid, 2000).

## 6. Research Methodology

This research adopted the descriptive analytical method to analyze the data, derived the relationships and results from the responses, and examine evidence to answer the research questions. The research participants consisted of male students at Al Ain University from all colleges who are studying for a bachelor's degree.

1. This field study was conducted from January 2019 to June 2019. It took place at the main campus of Al Ain University, in the city of Al Ain. The sample population was made up of male students attending Al Ain University for their bachelor's degree.
2. A random sample of male university students was selected by sending the link of the questionnaire to university faculty members who were asked to send it to their male students studying who seek a bachelor's degree. A total of 272 students from all the university's colleges answered the questionnaire (See Table No. (1) below).
3. A random sample of male students at Al Ain University in general (married or single) was taken, so that married male students would have the opportunity to participate in the questionnaire and answer in light of their experiences before marriage, in addition to the challenges and obstacles from the point of view of singles in the current situation.

### 6.1 Data Collection

Previous research in periodicals and academic journals that studied the trend of delayed marriage among young people in general, and delayed marriage among young men, in particular, were reviewed.

The data was collected and stored on Google Drive. The researcher surveyed the opinion of the study participants through a questionnaire consisting of 14 questions. Care was taken to ensure the questions were clearly stated and explicitly referred to the perceived factors leading to delayed marriage among young men, where most of these phrases were inspired by previous studies. In

addition to the survey, there was an open-ended question which is “What do you think are the reasons leading to the delay of marriage?”

Survey responses were extracted and measured on a Likert scale, which ranks responses between 5 and 1.

### 6.2 Designing the Questionnaire

The survey went through several drafts.

Phrases in the questionnaire have been formulated, deleted, amended, and redrafted to ensure that the survey terms are best suited to measure and collect the data required. To measure the perceptions of the sample population, the study relied on the Likert Scale, as it is one of the best-known tools for measuring responses to surveys. When responding to a question or statement asked using the Likert format, respondents indicate the degree to which they agree with the statement.

The data compiled from the respondents' answers were entered into a computer. The format for collecting data was:

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Taking into account that the score 3 is the mean value, the arithmetic means that if the answer to the statement is rated more highly than 3 on average, it is considered greater than the average and falls in the area of approval. If the average response to a statement is less than 3, it is considered less than the average and falls in the rejection zone. This means the ratio to the right of 3 symbolizes the positive trends, while the ratio to the left of 3 symbolizes negative trends.

*Arbitration.* An early draft of the survey was submitted to the Institutional Review Board in the College of Education and Human Sciences at Al Ain University to provide feedback. Based on that feedback, the survey was modified and resubmitted. The application to conduct the research was approved.

*Statistical methods used for data analysis.* Survey data were subjected to statistical analysis to achieve the research objectives and answer the study questions. These data were analyzed based on numbers and percentages to measure responses to each statement in the survey, determine the percentage of respondents who agree with each statement and examine to what extent they agree with the statements. In addition, the arithmetic averages were considered to measure the weights of the responses as given by the research participants.

### 6.3 Description and Analysis of the Respondents

The demographics of the 272 survey respondents were analyzed. The following tables show the breakdown of the demographics.

**Table 1:** Participants' College Majors

College	Number of male students in the college	Research Participants	Percentage of the male student body %
Education, Humanities and Social Sciences	192	130	47.8
Law	151	60	22.1
Media	116	34	12.5
Business	119	7	2.6
Engineering	136	21	7.7
Pharmaceuticals	75	20	7.3
Total	786	272	100

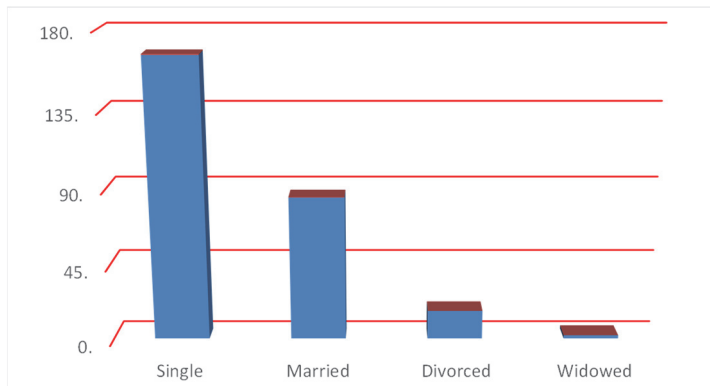


The College of Education makes up about half of the students belonging to Al Ain University; there are 960 students in the bachelor's and master's levels. The number of College of Education male students studying for a bachelor's registered in the second semester of the year 2019-2020 is 192. Since the survey was distributed on Google Drive, 272 male students from the research community responded.

**Table 2:** Demographic data of the study participants

The Variables	The Classification	The Iteration	The Percentage
Age	20-25 years old	146	53.7%
	26 - 30 years old	78	28.7%
	More than 30 years old	48	17.6%
Marital status	Single	166	61.0%
	Married	85	32%
	Divorced	17	6.3%
	Widowed	2	0.7%
Family income	High	19	7.0%
	Average	220	80.9%
	Low	33	12.1%

Students ages (i.e., 20-25 years) made up the highest percentage (53.7%) of respondents, while the lowest percentage of respondents (17.6%) came from students who were over 30. Students who were between 26 and 30 years old make up 28.7% of the respondents, which is consistent with the age breakdown of male students at Al Ain University. The percentage of unmarried students is 61%, which is the highest, while the percentage of married students was 32%. The respondents' data recorded the percentage of divorced students as 6.3%, while the percentage of widowed students was recorded as 0.7%, which is the lowest percentage. This corresponds to the social and family status of the overall student community at Al Ain University.



**Diagram 1:** Marital Status of Study Participants

The table shows that the highest percentage of respondents (54.55%), come from families with a high income. A percentage of 36.36% of students come from middle-income families, and the smallest percentage of respondents (9.09%) come from low-income families. This distribution may be attributed to the participants' social class; they are citizens of the UAE whose incomes are proportional to the collection of local taxes since their families are government employees. Figure (2) details the income status of the study participants. The data was obtained by asking the participants

about their families' income status and letting them decide if that status was high, average, or low. The categories were undefined, so students could answer based on how they see themselves, not how the researchers see them. Al Ain University has a large percentage of foreign students who are non-citizens, and they likely consider themselves to have low-income status.

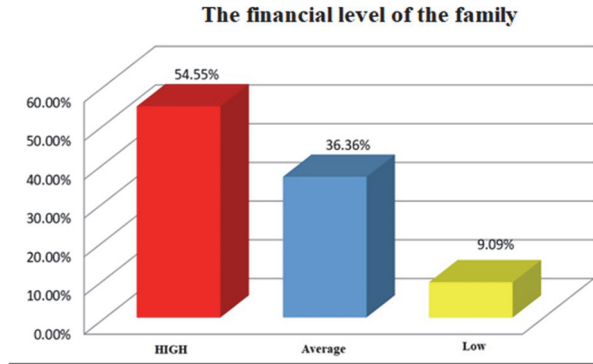


Diagram 2: Income Level of the Families of Participants

### 7. Analysis of Results

Here we will review the participants' statements and calculate the answers to the survey questionnaire to measure the impact of certain factors on the trend of delayed marriage among young men as perceived by Al Ain University male students.

The questionnaire data was organized in interpretive tables showing the responses provided by the respondents to each of the survey questions. A descriptive analysis of the survey answers was performed and shown in Table No. (3) below which shows the numeric and percentage breakdown of responses.

Table 3: Breakdown of answers to survey: Sample size (N) = 272

S	Statements	Strongly agree	%	Agree	%	Neutral	%	Disagree	%	Strongly disagree	%
1	High cost of living is not commensurate with income.	79	29	54	19.9	102	37.5	21	7.7	16	5.9
2	High cost of dowries.	113	41.5	60	22.1	55	20.2	22	8.1	22	8.1
3	Reluctance to assume the financial burdens of marriage.	61	22.4	65	23.9	87	32	25	9.2	34	12.5
4	Customs and traditions, and the obligations they impose on marriage.	68	25	64	23.5	89	32.7	28	10.3	23	8.5
5	The negative image of marriage as portrayed by the media.	62	22.8	41	15.1	82	30.1	37	13.6	50	18.4
6	Inability or lack of desire to have children.	45	16.5	57	21	74	27.2	40	14.7	56	20.6
7	Fear of failure in family life and failing to achieve marital happiness based on the experiences of relatives.	40	14.7	52	19.1	88	32.4	38	14	54	19.9
8	Reluctance to have a traditional marriage (defined parents choosing a spouse for their children).	48	17.6	40	14.7	90	33.1	36	13.3	58	21.3
9	A preoccupation with education in order to start a better career.	54	19.9	73	26.8	80	29.4	34	12.5	31	11.4

S	Statements	Strongly agree	%	Agree	%	Neutral	%	Disagree	%	Strongly disagree	%
10	Difficulty finding a future partner, which requires a lot of time.	46	16.9	53	19.5	101	37.1	37	13.6	35	12.9
11	Desire for a single life; to enjoy traveling and going out with friends.	78	28.7	52	19.1	82	30.1	30	11	30	11
12	Social responsibility and preoccupation with family.	29	10.7	65	23.9	98	36	33	12.1	47	17.3
13	Looking for a job.	108	39.7	58	21.3	67	24.6	20	7.4	19	7
14	Disability or chronic disease.	26	9.6	36	13.2	104	38.2	38	14	68	25

We will merge the first measurement on the Likert scale (strongly agree) with the second (agree) as the two clauses indicate one phrase, which is the approval of the statements. At the same time, our analysis will merge the fourth (disagree) and fifth (strongly disagree) measurements on the Likert scale to indicate the lack of approval of the statements.

1. The high cost of living is not commensurate with income. A total of 133 of the study participants agreed with this statement, representing 63.6% of the sample, compared to 13.6% of those who believe that income has no effect on the delay of marriage.
2. The high cost of dowries. The number of study participants who strongly agreed, or agreed, with this statement was 173, which constitutes 63.6%. They admitted that dowries are high, and this is a sufficient reason for the delay of marriage for males in the community of Al Ain. In contrast, 16.2% do not believe high dowries are a reason for delaying marriage among young men.
3. Reluctance to assume the financial burdens of marriage. The number of respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with this statement was 46.3%, compared to 21.7% who strongly disagreed, or disagreed.
4. Customs and traditions and the great obligations they impose on marriage. **A total of 48.5%** of the survey respondents believe that customs have an important role in delaying marriage, and this is particularly the case in the community of Al-Ain. Many members of the community acknowledge customs that are considered important, such as bragging and imitating wealthy individuals. Many customs and values have changed along with the material state of society after the discovery and export of petroleum. The influx of sudden wealth led to marriage customs such as exaggerated feasts and a focus on gifts, gold, and other luxuries. Some young people have rejected these customs and tried to delay marriage. Only 18.8% either strongly disagree or disagree with this statement.
5. The negative image of marriage as portrayed by media. A total of 37.9% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that this statement is a reason for delaying marriage. This is not a high percentage, but it is more than those who strongly disagree or disagree with the same statement, which only constitutes 30%. The remaining 30.1% was neutral. It might be worth researching the use of streaming websites among young men, and the media they consume about the conflicts between husbands and wives, which sometimes reach the point of murder.
6. The inability or lack of desire to have children. A total of 36.5% of survey participants either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, compared to 60.6% of those who strongly disagreed or disagreed. Ergo is an unlikely reason for the delay of marriage among young men in the community of Al Ain. Because the research sample is from the community of Al Ain and they are citizens, the laws of the United Arab Emirates obligate them to provide housing, pay child support, and contribute a non-refundable gift to consummate the marriage amounting to 70 thousand dirhams.
7. Fear of failure in family life and failing to achieve marital happiness based on the experiences of relatives. A total of 33.8% strongly agreed or agreed that this factor plays a

- role in young people delaying marriage, 33.9% strongly disagree or disagree with that, and 32.4% were neutral.
8. Reluctance to have a traditional marriage (defined as parents choosing a spouse for their child). A total of 32.3% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that this factor is a reason for delaying marriage, and 34.6% strongly disagreed or disagreed. This matter is important and further research regarding the perceptions of both genders is necessary. The responses are almost evenly split. Here is either an implicit acknowledgment that parents should choose a spouse for their child, or automatic compliance with the social values followed in this regard. More research is needed on this subject.
  9. A preoccupation with education in order to start a better career. A total of 46.7% either strongly agree or agree that this is an important factor that causes young men to delay marriage. In contrast, only 23.9% strongly disagree or disagree that this factor contributes to the trend. This is especially relevant for students at the university level, many of whom attend university at a non-traditional age, which made them older than students who entered college immediately after finishing high school. This is evident from the age groups of the sample members, of which, roughly, 35% fall into two categories: between the ages of 25 and 30, and over 30 years old.
  1. Difficulty finding a future partner, which requires a lot of time. A total of 36.4% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that this matter is important in delaying marriage. It is possible that this subject is more relevant to university students than to the population at large. Notably, the responses to this question are almost evenly divided. A total of 30.5% strongly disagree or disagree with this statement, and 37.1% were neutral.
  2. Desire for a single life; to enjoy traveling and going out with friends. A total of 47.8% of the respondents strongly agree or agree that this is an important factor that leads to delaying marriage among young men, compared to 22% who strongly disagree or disagree. Being single in a rich society as luxurious as the city of Al Ain is considered a natural thing for several reasons. The most important of these is that Emirati citizen can travel to most countries of the world without a visa, enjoy traveling, and wander with friends. Material wealth contributes to freedom. Additionally, many young people from Al Ain city go to Dubai and Abu Dhabi to enjoy time away from family and relatives.
  3. Social responsibility and preoccupation with family. A total of 34.6% of respondents strongly agree or agree that this factor leads to a delay of marriage among young men. Perhaps they do not consider it a significant challenge since the UAE law provides pensions for dependents without a breadwinner. While we find that (29.4%) disagree that this should be a reason for the delaying marriage among young people, (36%) were neutral.
  4. Looking for a job. Most respondents said this is an important factor in delaying marriage. A total of 61% strongly agree and agree it was a factor, and only 14.4% strongly disagree or disagree that this is a reason for delaying marriage. It is possible that many young men do not marry until they find work so that their suffering won't increase with the addition of dependents.
  5. Disability or chronic disease. A total of 22.8% of respondents strongly agree or agree that this could be the cause of delaying marriage for young men, while 39% of the respondents strongly disagree or disagree that this is a reason for delaying marriage. It is possible that the survey respondents, a group of young and presumably healthy men, may not know the suffering disability of chronic diseases can cause.

Table No. (4) Shows the means and standard deviation of statements 1 through 14 of the survey.

**Table 4:** Mean and Standard Deviation of Factor Statements n = 272

S	The Statement	Percentage for approval	level of response	The ranking
1	The high cost of dowries.	63.6	High	1
2	Looking for a job.	61.0	High	2
3	Customs and traditions, and the obligations they impose on marriage.	49.2	Average	3
4	Desire for a single life; to enjoy traveling and going out with friends.	47.8	Average	4
5	A preoccupation with education in order to start a better career.	46.7	Average	5
6	Reluctance to assume the financial burdens of marriage.	46.3	Average	6
7	The high cost of living is not commensurate with income.	41.5	Average	7
8	The negative image or marriage as portrayed by the media	37.9	Low	8
9	The inability or lack of desire to have children.	37.5	Low	9
10	Difficulty finding a future partner, which requires a lot of time.	36.4	Low	10
11	Social responsibility and preoccupation with family.	34.5	Low	11
12	Fear of failure in family life and failing to achieve marital happiness based on the experiences of relatives.	33.8	Low	12
13	Reluctance to have a traditional marriage (defined as being when parents choose a spouse for their child)	32.3	Low	13
14	Disability or chronic disease.	22.8	Low	14

The responses indicate that one of the main reasons for delaying marriage as perceived by survey respondents is the high cost of dowries. The results are consistent with the study conducted by Al-Sabaawi (2007) regarding the high cost of dowries and the one conducted by Abd Al-Wadud (2000) which indicated that the most significant harm to the institution of marriage is the high cost of dowries in Arab society. Al-Elwi and Ali's study (2018) also indicated that dowries are among the reasons Iraqi women are delaying marriage.

The responses to the question about the job hunt also reflect the global economic crisis, its consequences, and the low oil prices that keep wages depressed. It is worth studying whether the UAE government should guarantee employment for members of society. When many young people get a job and become financially independent, they no longer need their families. They can access credits and financial institutions with the guarantee of their employment.

In third place are customs and traditions and the obligations they impose on marriage. Responses indicate that customs and traditions are no longer useful, and some participants saw them as a major cause of prolonged bachelorhood. This was also indicated in Al-Sabaawi's study (2007), which mentioned that the reasons for the delay in marriage in Iraqi society centered on a set of issues, including the prevailing customs and traditions that may cause some women to remain unmarried. Such traditions included, but were not limited to, forcing young people to marry their cousins. Al-Elwi and Ali (2018) and Al-Shaya (2007) indicated that the customs and traditions that prevent dating before marriage are among the reasons for delaying marriage.

The fourth most common reason to delay marriage was the desire to enjoy traveling and going out with friends without restrictions. There is no doubt that young people in the UAE have access to many material luxuries and comforts, and they can travel to all countries of the world without a visa. Given that the community of Al Ain is conservative, it is possible that young people see overseas travel as a means of accessing greater freedom. This requires a lot of money. Traveling is more fun than marriage and commitment due to its financial consequences and social responsibilities, among others.

Preoccupation with education and not thinking about marriage until after graduation is the fifth most reported reason to delay marriage. The respondents emphasized that education has a great impact on marriage, and an individual's desire to earn a degree distracts them from dating. Participants indicated that a preference for education over marriage is an important matter for both

sexes. Several studies have referred to this variable, including Abd al-Wadud (2000) which indicated that the most important reason for women to delay marriage is their focus on education, due to women's desire to enter the workforce. Al-Sabaawi (2007) stated that women's desire to complete their education is one of the causes of delayed marriage. Al-Shaya (2007), referred to women's refusal to marry in order to complete their education. This study indicates that the same is true for men.

Reluctance to bear the financial burdens of marriage and its consequences come as the sixth most likely reason for men to delay marriage. This study indicates this element is an influential factor, but not as much so as the factors listed above. It is possible that respondents expect that the wife may contribute to the household finances, especially if she is in the workforce. This corresponds with the findings of Abdel-Hamid (2000), who indicated that one of the reasons for delaying marriage is the high costs of married life.

In seventh place comes the high cost of living which is incompatible with income. This is possible because of the rising costs of goods, homes, and the economic crisis sweeping the world. After that, the high cost of living that is incompatible with the income was also noted by participants as a reason to delay marriage. This is likely because of the rising costs of goods, and the worldwide economic crisis. Al-Khudairi (2015) said one of the reasons leading to the trend of delaying marriage is low income, as did Qashtouli (2009), which indicated that prohibitively high prices of goods trap young people in a cycle of poverty and cause them to postpone marriage. Other reasons did not receive significant attention from the respondents and are not perceived as having an impact on the trend of young men delaying marriage.

## 8. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that the high dowry, in general, is one of the main factors for delaying the age of marriage among young males in Al Ain city. The second factor is attributed to the lack of obtaining a job, and this factor also reflects the global economic crisis and its consequences and the drop in oil prices. Although the UAE government guarantees access to work for the people of society, and this requires more time than before.

In the third place comes customs and traditions and the obligations and exorbitant costs they impose on marriage, as it was found that customs and traditions have expired from the point of view of some, while others see them as a major cause of spinsterhood, so it can be said that this factor affects moderately the age of delay in marriage among young people. The study recommends the following:

1. Increasing the awareness of the importance of rising prices, especially regarding dowries. This may fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Media. The Ministry may want to devote resources to encourage awareness of the importance of marriage and the family among the youth.
2. The Ministry of Education should focus on the importance of marriage and the family and develop curricula to achieve that goal.
3. Establishing a semi-government body, or government-sponsored non-profit, for the benefit of both men and women, to further research causes of their reluctance to wed, and help them reach a point, either financially, or emotionally, where they are willing and able to marry.
4. Providing social support for families who are in real need of financial assistance to obtain a decent standard of living. These families would then be financially able to arrange their sons' and daughters' marriages.
5. Providing funding for social research to identify other reasons that would cause people to delay marriage. If researchers collect more data, it will help government officials determine the best use of resources and public money.
6. Educating young people about the benefits of marriage, holding awareness campaigns in schools and universities, and intensifying efforts to help and encourage young people to get married and provide marriage loans to help them overcome financial difficulties.

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