



Influential Factors on Delay Marriage in Tehran

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Abstract: Today, youth's marriage due to the socio-economic conditions has become one of the most important subjects in social science. The purpose of this article was to investigate the factors affecting delay marriage of married men and women in Tehran. In this study, the information of 612 married women aged 15-49 years and 588 married men aged 20-59 years were collected through structured questionnaire using two-stage stratified sampling method from different regions of Tehran in 2017, and data were analyzed by Logistic regression model. About 15.3% of people believed that they had delay marriage. The results of logistic regression model showed that, by increasing age, the odds of delay marriage is decreased; employed and migrant people, and those who had less than 2 million Tomans of household expenditure in a month, compared to unemployed (OR = 0.542) and non-migrant (OR = 0.509) people and those who live in households with more than 3.5 million Tomans expenditure in a month (OR = 0.512) are less likely to delay marriage. However, Fars people and those with kinship marriages were more likely to delay marriage than other ethnicities (OR = 1.830) and non-kinship marriages (OR = 1.693), respectively. According to the results, job status and expenditure are two influential factors on the delay in marriage age; policymakers in this field can reduce this delay by providing a right platform for working which causes youths earn enough income and can start their marriage life.

Keywords: Marriage age; Delay marriage; Socio-economic situation; Logistic Regression; Tehran.

Introduction

Marriage is a formal union, social and legal contract between two individuals that unites their lives legally, economically, and emotionally. Marriage age is the general age, as a legal age or as the minimum age subject to parental, religious or other forms of social approval, at which a person is legitimately allowed for marriage. The most appropriate marriage age for young men and women is the age when both of them physically mature and are psychologically ready to accept the responsibility of marriage (Buokzadeh, 2011). The results of recent studies in Iran indicate an increase in the mean age at marriage of men and women in urban and rural areas (Jarib et al., 2009). Nowadays, the generality and rate of marriage especially in urban areas have decreased, and the marriage age due to factors such as the rate of urbanization and increasing the educational level and employment of women has increased; thus, changes in the pattern of marriage are happening in the way that moving from early to late marriages. Delay marriage is occurred when there is a gap

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between desired and actual marriage age. Based on the information of statistical center of Iran, mean age at marriage in 2016, 2006, 1996, 1986, 1976 were 27.4, 26.2, 25.6, 23.8, 24.1 for men, and 23.0, 23.2, 22.4, 19.9, and 19.7 for women, respectively (A. Al-Tajai & Zadeh, 2012). Many studies have shown that, marriage age increment for men and women are much more in metropolitan than other areas. Tehran is capital and the most developed city have had the most mean of age marriage for both men (28.5) and women (24.2) (Fathi et al., 2017). The negative effects of increasing the marriage age can be the destruction and threat of mental health, the creation of barriers to mental growth and excellence, the emergence of mental and social disorders and diseases such as depression, anxiety, addiction and social delinquency and waste of huge energy of individuals that hinders their growth and social advancement (Jarib et al., 2009).

Increasing marriage age has also occurred in the most country, and in some cases it is not treated as a problem or a social crisis (Moradi & Saffarian, 2012). However, based on Iranian socio-cultural background youth marriage is becoming one of the challenging issues now a days in Iran. Recent years in Iran, so many studies have examined the cause of delay marriage from different point of view (Abbasi et al., 2002; Cherati, 2008; Fakhraei et al., 2015; Nezhad et al., 2014; Rezadost & Mambeni, 2009) unemployment, part-time, temporary, and low-income jobs, inflation, inability to hold a wedding, dowry, and family expenditure are the most important economic factors, those effect on delay marriage (I. Al-Tajai & Zadeh, 2016). In developing country, such as Iran, men are the main responsible for family expenditure, so unemployment and temporary job, especially for men, is one of the most important reasons for postponing their marriage. As a result, young men who are dependent on financial family assistance should delay their plans and goals of get married until an unknown future. Based on Oppenheimer theory (1988), men's and women's marriage age is dependent on the time when the young men start permanent jobs (Oppenheimer, 1998). Therefore, High unemployment rate can be caused increasing marriage age for both men and women (A. Al-Tajai, 2012). Therefore, in theory, high and persistent inflation should also have a negative effect on marriage. On the other hand, some young people have the tendency of staying single, which has made the celibacy phenomenon a common problem faced by Iranian families. Young people who often live with their parents until old age have high expectations for starting their own marriage life (Cherati, 2008).

Various studies indicate that the socio-economic status of the family for girls and boys is the biggest obstacle to their marriages. On the other hand, whenever the social and economic situation of them improves, in other words, they are at a desirable level in terms of educational level and employment status, their marriage takes place at a younger age and they got married faster than others. As a result, the existence of different cultural (such as a desire to increase educational level), economic (such as earning a living), and social (such as the relationship between family members and children's relationship with parents) capitals among youth and their families creates changes in values and attitudes to start their marriage life (Entezari et al., 2018).

Although the available statistics reflect the changing trends of the actual age of marriage in Iran over the past few decades, little has been investigated about the ideals and social expectations regarding the desired marriage age in Iran. The desired range for marriage age is a reflection of the general mentality of the society towards a certain age range in which young people are expected to find the relative and necessary preparations for starting a family. Acquiring this relative readiness can implicitly include achieving a relatively wide range of conditions necessary for family formation, such as access to basic material facilities, religious and sexual maturity, physical and mental development, social and personality development, intellectual independence. Therefore, studying social attitudes, ideals and evaluations towards the appropriate age of marriage for youth and determination of the social differences associated with it, especially in understanding the coordination between changes in the actual age of marriage and the ideal marriage age is vital and can help the occurred changes in the family and the marriage age as well as predict the future changes of marriage and family (Nodoushan et al., 2016).

I. Al-Tajai & Zadeh (2016) applied panel model to study the marriage age in 28 provinces during 2010-2015; their results showed that increasing inflation and unemployment increment the marriage age of men and women. Mehrabani (2014), Showed that education was an effective factor on the marriage men's marriage age. Based on economic approach, Zarabi & Mostafavi (2011), examined many factors affecting women's marriage age in Iran; according to their study, educational level and living in urban area had positive effect on women's marriage age (Zarabi & Mostafavi, 2011). Bahrani & Someah (2011), studied social factors affecting on marriage age increasing in student women; they concluded that increasing economic problems such as production reduction, unemployment, and consumerism, had negative effect on student women marriage. Kazemipour (2004) showed that individuals' educational level, ethnicity, place of residence and socio-economic status affect their age at marriage. Based on Derahaki & Mahmoudian (2012) survey on students living in dormitories of the University of Tehran, the student's attitude to the ideal marriage age was affected by opportunity cost positively and family-centered negatively on the ideal age of marriage for men and metamaterialism, opportunity cost and attitude to friendship between girls and boys, it has a positive effect on the ideal age of marriage for women. In a study conducted by Nodoushan et al. (2016) to investigate the ideal marriage age in Yazd, the effect of demographic, cultural and attitudinal factors were evaluated using bivariate and multivariate analysis. The results showed that by controlling marital status, respondent and their parent's educational level, was the most important variable that effect on attitudes towards appropriate marriage age for girls and boys. Since most of the studies conducted in recent years have examined the changes in the age of marriage and the factors affecting on it, in this study the factors affecting delay marriage with respect to the ideal age of marriage between married men and women in Tehran was determined.

Method

In the present study, data of a cross-sectional survey under the title of "Study of the effect of socio-economic dimensions of rationality on childbearing behaviors in Tehran" was used (Abdollahi, 2018). Based on multi-stage proportional probability sampling method, and structured questionnaire 1200 samples including 590 (49.2 percent), 20- 59 year old men and 610 (50.8 percent) 15- 49 year old women who lived Tehran province in Iran were selected in 2017. In this study, the 22 metropolitan regions of Tehran province were clustered in terms of developmental degree in four levels of development as developed (regions 1, 2, 3, 6), relatively developed (regions 5, 7), Middle-developed (regions 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 20, 21, 22), and Non-developed (regions 15, 17, 18, 19) regions (Rafieian & Shali, 2013). Therefore, each of the levels of development in different regions of Tehran was considered as a class, and the regions in each of these classes were proportionally selected on the basis of their size; therefore, 10 (1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 14, 15, 18, 20) regions were selected in Tehran according to the population size of regions in four developmental levels. In this study, the structured questionnaire collected demographic, fertility history and childbearing attitudinal factors. Based on the aim of this article, only demographic questions were considered. The validity of questionnaire was confirmed by 10 demographers and sociologists and Cronbach's Alpha reliability of questionnaire's factors was at least 0.873.

In this article, according to the definition of delay marriage as the rate of lagging behind the desired age of marriage for young people in society (Cherati, 2008), delay marriage (late marriage) was measured by the question "If you go back to a time when you were not married, how many years earlier or later would you get married?". Based on this question, people whose desired and actual marriage age were the same, older or younger, were classified as people with on-time, early and delay marriage, respectively. According to the objectives of the present article, only people who was married late were compared to on-time married ones, and the effects of gender, age, educational level, job status, ethnicity, immigration status during the last ten years, spouse selection type, marriage type (kinship and non-kinship), region, household expenditure, internet use and the ideal number of children on delay marriage odds were analyzed by logistic regression.

Result and Discussion

In this study, about 51% of the samples were women, 42% were in the age group of 30-39 years, 88% were non-migrants and 59% were employed. 70% of marriages were non- kinship, 47% of the sample had university education, 55% of them had household expenditure less than 2 million Tomans and 54% of them were Fars (the largest Iranian ethnicity). About 48% of sample chose their spouse personally, 72% of them used the internet and most of them had ideal of two children (48%). About 15.3%, 20.3% and 64.4% of the sample believed that they had late, early and on- time marriages, respectively. The most important reasons for delaying marriage were personal reasons (21.9%), financing problems (16.9%), not having a suitable candidate (10.9%) and not having a job (9.8%).

From men's point of view, the mean ideal age at marriage for women and men were 22.50 ± 3.34 and 26.77 ± 3.45 years, respectively, and from women's point of view were 23.93 ± 3.20 and 28.31 ± 3.20 years, respectively. Table (1) shows the distribution and significance of the relationship between delay marriage and the selected covariates. According to *p*-values of Chi-square tests, there are significant relationships between delay marriage and gender, age group, job status, ethnicity and ideal number of children (*p*-value <0.05); men (23.4%) more than women (14.2%), age group 40-49 years (24.7%) more than other age groups, employed (23.7%) more than unemployed (17.2%), other ethnicities (27.1%) more than Fars and Turk ethnicities and individuals with ideally 3 children (26.7%) and 5 children and more (26.8%) were believed to be delayed in their marriage.

In order to study the covariate effects of gender, age, educational level, job status, ethnicity, immigration status, spouse selection type, marriage type, region, household expenditure, internet use and the ideal number of children on the odds of delay marriage in this study, logistic regression was applied. The goodness of the fitted model was confirmed based on Hosmer-Lemeshow test (*p*-value = 0.25) and Neglerkerke statistic R^2 (0.62). Table (2) shows the results of fitted model.

Table 1. Sample Distribution according to the marriage age delay and the studied covariates

Variable	Marriage delay			P-value chi-square test
	Yes	No	Total number	
Sex	Female	14.2	85.8	0.001*
	Male	23.4	76.6	
Age group	Less than 29	8.2	91.8	0.001*
	30-39	21.1	78.9	
	40-49	24.7	75.3	
	More than 50	17.2	82.8	
Educational level	Illiterate	20.8	79.2	0.093
	Secondary and high school	25.3	74.7	
	Diploma	14.78	85.2	
	Collage and bachelor	21.8	78.2	
Job status	Master and PhD	19.0	81.0	0.018**
	Employed	23.7	76.3	
Ethnicity	Unemployed	17.2	82.8	0.014**
	Fars	17.1	82.9	
Immigration status	Tork	18.1	81.9	0.111
	Others	27.1	72.9	
Spouse selection type	Migrant	23.7	76.3	0.871
	Non-migrant	18.5	81.5	
Marriage type	Her/his-self	18.8	81.2	0.382
	Others	19.2	80.8	
Region	Kinship	17.3	82.7	0.479
	Non-kinship	19.9	80.1	
Region	Developed	23.7	76.3	0.479
	Relatively developed	18.4	81.6	

Variable	Marriage delay			P-value chi-square test	
	Yes	No	Total number		
	Middle-developed	18.6	81.4	409	
	Non-developed	17.7	82.3	248	
Household expenditure (Million Tomans)	Less than 2	19.6	80.4	541	0.847
	2-3.5	18.0	82.0	267	
	More than 3.5	19.7	80.3	132	
Internet use	No	16.4	83.6	269	0.194
	Yes	20.0	80.0	679	
Ideal number of children	Childless	17.5	82.5	40	0.035**
	1	11.4	88.6	123	
	2	19.4	80.6	468	
	3	26.7	73.3	116	
	4	15.9	84.1	164	
	5 and more	26.8	73.2	41	

** significant at 0.01 *significant at 0.05

According to the results of this table, age, job status, ethnicity, immigration status, marriage type and household expenditure had a significant effect on the odds of delay marriage (p-value <0.05).

Table 2. logistic regression of marriage age delay and the studied variables

Variable	β coefficient	β standard error	P-value	Exp(β)	
Sex	Male	-0.191	0.228	0.403	0.826
	Female (ref)	-0.034	0.012	0.003**	0.966
Age	Illiterate	-0.194	0.518	0.708	0.823
	Secondary and high school	-0.531	0.407	0.192	0.588
	Diploma	0.002	0.330	0.995	1.002
Educational level	Collage and bachelor	-0.468	0.297	0.115	0.626
	Master and PhD (ref)				
	Employed	-0.613	0.246	0.013*	0.542
Job status	Unemployed (ref)				
	Fars	0.604	0.236	0.010*	1.830
Ethnicity	Tork	0.304	0.260	0.241	1.356
	Others (ref)				
Immigration status	Migrant	-0.676	0.278	0.015*	0.509
	Non-migrant (ref)				
Partner selection type	Her/his-self	0.156	0.189	0.407	1.169
	Others (ref)				
Marriage type	Kinship	0.526	0.211	0.013*	1.693
	Non-kinship (ref)				
	Developed	-0.304	0.327	0.353	0.738
	Relatively developed	0.092	0.331	0.781	1.097
Region	Middle-developed	-0.053	0.240	0.825	0.948
	Non-developed (ref)				

Variable		β coefficient	β standard error	P-value	Exp(β)
Family expenditure (million Tomans)	Less than 2	-0.669	0.319	0.036*	0.512
	2-3.5	-0.236	0.311	0.576	0.790
	More than 3.5 (ref)				
Internet use	No	0.305	0.247	0.218	1.356
	Yes (ref)				
Ideal number of children		-0.111	0.079	0.162	0.895

**Significant at 0.01 *Significant at 0.05

As the age increases, the odds of delay in marriage decreases. Employees, immigrants and those living in households with a cost of less than 2 million Tomans, compared to the unemployed (OR = 0.542), non-immigrants (OR = 0.509) and households with a cost of more than 3.5 million Tomans (OR = 0.512), had less chance of delaying marriage respectively. Meanwhile, Fars ethnicity comparing to the other ethnicities (OR = 1.830) and those with kinship marriage type comparing to the others (OR = 1.693) were more likely to delay their marriage.

Due to the importance of the issue of delay marriage, in the current study effects of selected covariates, gender, age, educational level, job status, ethnicity, immigration status, spouse selection type, marriage type, region, household expenditure, internet usage and ideal number of children on delay marriage were examined by applying logistic regression. Based on the results, job status was an important and influential variable on the delay marriage, so that employees believed that they were less late in marriage than unemployed. The present result is consistent with many studies in this field (Abbasi et al., 2002; Ahmadi & Qaisarian, 2014; A. Al-Tajai & Zadeh, 2012; Gottabi & Ghafari, 2011; Seif & Aref, 2016). The results showed that the Fars ethnicity was later in their marriage than other ethnic groups; According to the study of Kazemipour (2004), the mean age at marriage for men and women for Turks were 25.3 and 22.1 and 25.7 and 23.4 for Fars people, respectively (Kazemipour, 2004). Shavazi & Sadeghi (2005) also showed that the mean age at marriage of Fars women is higher than other ethnic groups except Mazani and Gilaki (Shavazi & Sadeghi, 2005). Immigrants to Tehran over the last 10 years had less delay in their marriage. The results of Sadeghi et al. (2017) also showed that the rate of male celibacy among natives (non-immigrants) is higher than immigrants. In this study, people who had not a kinship relationship with their spouse had less delay in their marriage age comparing to the others. In a study conducted by Mahmoudian (2004) based on survey of socio-economic characteristics of households in 2002, it was also shown that the ratio of distant kinship of couples had a direct effect on their age of marriage. According to the results, households with low expenditures got married later than households with higher expenditure. This shows the role of materialism in delaying the age of marriage, which has been shown in many studies, including (Bahrani & Someah, 2011; Moradi & Saffarian, 2012; Seif & Aref, 2016).

Conclusion

According to the results of this study, job status and household expenditure are two influential factors on the delay marriage; thus, policymakers can reduce this delay by providing a right platform for working which causes youths earn enough income and can start their marriage life.

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