

## EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF DELAYED MARRIAGE AMONG YOUTH IN TARAUNI L.G.A.

Isah Khamisu Madachi <sup>1</sup>

Received 07.01.2024.

Revised 14.02.2024.

Accepted 12.03.2024.

Keywords:

*Delayed marriage, youth, Tarauni L.G.A., qualitative research, abortion, stigma.*

Original research



### ABSTRACT

*The study “Exploring the Challenges of Delayed Marriage Among Youth in Tarauni L.G.A.” investigates the challenges of delayed marriage among youth, and its detrimental effects within the Tarauni Local Government Area, Kano, Nigeria. Marriage, an important social institution, traditionally symbolizes adult responsibilities and societal integration. However, in recent times, delayed marriage has become prevalent, leading to societal stigmatization and psychological distress among the youth. This research adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing in-depth interviews with eight respondents, including community leaders, religious figures, and unmarried individuals, to understand the implications of delayed marriage. The findings reveal several challenges faced by individuals, such as increased vulnerability to masturbation and premarital sex, inferiority complex, risk of remaining childless, interpersonal relationship difficulties, and reduced fertility. Particularly, women bear the brunt of societal stigma and mental health instability. Respondents also revealed severe consequences like illegal abortions and the birth of children out of wedlock, which contravene cultural norms and exacerbate emotional and health issues. This research contributes to the broader discourse on the socio-economic and impacts of delayed marriage, offering insights for policymakers and community stakeholders to develop strategies that support youth in achieving marital and societal stability.*

© 2024 SPECTRUM Journal of Social Science

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The evolution of human society is marked by the development and diffusion of institutions that facilitate societal survival, with marriage being a paramount institution that regulates conjugal and filial ties, thereby contributing to the preservation and continuation of societal structures (Wimalasena, 2016; Okunlola et al., 2023 Wrenn & Zhang, 2019). Marriage is a socially and legally sanctioned institution, defined by the voluntary union of two individuals of opposite sexes, with the intention of forming a lifelong partnership, building a

family, and maintaining exclusivity (Asien et al., 2020). In traditional Nigerian society, adult males are socialized to prioritize marriage as a demonstration of masculine identity and responsibility, which is actualized through the roles of husband, father, and household head (Adebowale, 2018). Similarly, young individuals in Tarauni Local Government Area are also expected to adhere to these cultural norms and expectations. Nevertheless, the evolving attitudes of youth towards marriage are a reflection of the multidimensional development of human society. However, delayed marriage has become a significant concern, as individuals who postpone marriage are often stigmatized, bullied, and labeled as socially shameful,

<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author: Isah Khamisu Madachi  
Email: [isahkamisumadachi@gmail.com](mailto:isahkamisumadachi@gmail.com)

leading to emotional and psychological distress. This issue has far-reaching consequences, affecting not only the individuals but also the society at large, with millions of people impacted. In northern Nigeria, for instance, unmarried individuals face intense societal pressure, leading to emotional abuse and increased vulnerability to mental health issues like depression and anxiety. This study aims to investigate the specific challenges faced by youth experiencing delayed marriage and its adverse effects on their well-being. The family institution is a critical component of human society, and any dysfunction within it has a ripple effect, impacting all other institutions. Globally, the average age of marriage has been increasing steadily in recent years, making this issue a pressing concern.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a body of existing literature on the delayed marriage. Despite the presence of these literatures, significant knowledge gaps exist. Most of the studies conducted in this area primarily used quantitative approaches. Nevertheless, this study was conducted specifically to explore the negative implications of delayed marriage. It was also conducted in northern Nigeria, unlike others that were either conducted in the south or foreign countries. In addition to its unique objectives, this study will adopt a qualitative approach, which sets it apart from previous research. Rehim et al. (2023) argue that the increasing trend of delayed marriage is an important and noteworthy phenomenon for it has significant implications and consequences on individuals, families, and society as a whole.

### 2.1 Challenges of Delayed Marriage Among Youth

Researchers have investigated the impacts of delayed marriage on youth and society. Findings from these studies reveal that individuals who experience delayed marriage encounter a range of challenges, including:

**Self-sex:** A study conducted by Manjur et al. (2023) found that youth experiencing delayed marriage are more vulnerable to masturbation than married individuals. With the advent of sex toys and high-quality pornographic contents, it has become easier for youth to satisfy their sexual desires through self-pleasure.

**Premarital Sex:** when marriage is delayed, individuals may be more likely to engage in premarital sexual activities, which increases the risk of unintended pregnancies (Asien et al., 2020). In addition, premarital sex is often associated with a higher risk of infidelity, promiscuity, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), posing significant health and social consequences.

**Inferiority Complex:** individuals who experience delayed marriage may struggle with persistent feelings of inferiority, which can negatively impact their self-esteem and interpersonal relationships (Chen & Tong, 2021). This is particularly true in societies where

marriage is highly emphasized, as delayed marriage can lead to stigma and negative perceptions, leading to a feelings of inadequacy.

**Risk of Remaining Childless:** Couples who delay marriage may experience increased difficulty in achieving parenthood, leading to emotional distress (McIlhane & Sprigg, 2021). The longer they wait to start a family, the greater the potential decline in their fertility and ability to have children, making it more challenging to build a family.

**Interpersonal Relationship Challenges:** Delayed marriage can lead to difficulties in establishing and sustaining intimate relationships, as prolonged singlehood can make it harder for individuals to form and maintain emotional connections (Akhter & Bhat, 2018). This may also affect their capacity to navigate the intricacies of romantic relationships and manage the emotional demands that come with them.

**Reduced Fertility:** Research by Mathews and Hamilton (2016) suggests that delayed marriage, especially among women, is associated with reduced fertility. As women delay marriage, they are also managing their biological clock, as their reproductive window is limited, making it more challenging to conceive.

In Tarauni L.G.A. also, delayed marriage has far-reaching consequences for youth and society. Studies have shown that delayed marriage can lead to inferiority complex, premarital sex, interpersonal relationship challenges, reduced fertility, self-sex and the risk of remaining childless. These effects can have lasting impacts on individuals, families, and communities. In Tarauni L.G.A., where marriage is highly valued, delayed marriage can lead to negative perceptions, stigma, and emotional distress. Therefore, it is essential to address the root causes of delayed marriage and provide support for young people in Tarauni L.G.A. to navigate the challenges of marriage and family formation.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted qualitative research design. The population of this study typically included youth in Tarauni Local Government Area (L.G.A.) in Kano State, who are eligible for marriage or within the age range that is commonly associated with marriage but were not married, community leaders and religious leaders. Moreover, this study used purposive sampling which, according to Creswell (2003) is vital in social research due to its focus on selecting specific participants who possess unique insights or experiences relevant to the study's objectives. Using this sampling technique, eight respondents were selected for interview from whom the qualitative data was collected. The primary data for this study was collected using In-depth interview. The data was analyzed using thematic summary by describing, summarizing and interpreting the data based on the research objectives.

#### 4. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSES

Interview data were collected in Hausa language which is the native language of the interviewed respondents. It was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim to English language. As earlier mentioned, the respondents comprised eight community members and leaders in Tarauni L.G.A., Kano state.

**Table 1.** Background Characteristics of the Respondents

S/N	Age	Sex	Marital status	Level of Education	Occupation
1	48	Male	Married	NCE	Religious Leader
2	55	Male	Married	Degree	Community Leader
3	32	Female	Single	ND	Baker
4	29	Female	Single	SSCE	Entrepreneur
5	34	Female	Single	Degree	Class teacher
6	36	Male	Single	SSCE	Plumber
7	30	Male	Single	NCE	Civil Servant
8	35	Male	Single	Degree	Shop owner

*Source: Madachi, (2024).*

Out of the 8 respondents interviewed, as shown in Table 1, the majority 5, (62.5%) are males, while females account for 3 (37.5%) of the respondents. This is because Tarauni L.G.A is largely a patriarchal society, but where women are respected and given due consideration. Therefore, the data are gender-sensitive, as they include the voices of women, which is essential since the topic deals with youth, comprising both males and females.

The age range of 29-38 years constitutes the largest proportion (75%) of the respondents, followed by the 39-48 years age range (12.5%), and then the 49-58 age range (12.5%). This reveals a significant aspect of our respondents' profile, who are considered mature enough to provide valuable insights into the phenomenon being studied. All respondents were mature adults above 25 years old.

In terms of marital status, a larger proportion, 6 (75%) of the respondents are single, while only 2 (25%) are married. This is because the study's target population consists of single adults who have reached the customary ages for marriage but remain unmarried, making them ideal participants for providing firsthand information crucial to the research's success. The few married individuals among the respondents are community and religious leaders, as it is rare to find individuals of their stature in Tarauni L.G.A who are not married.

Regarding education, the majority, 3 (37.5%) of the respondents hold a degree, followed by NCE and SSCE, which account for 2 (25%) each. The remaining 1 (12.5%) holds a National Diploma. Their educational background indicates a high level of aemic achievement, with the majority having completed their degree and the rest holding other higher institution

certificates. Only two respondents have an SSCE certificates, which is a basic qualification, but at least they have some formal education.

The respondents' occupations are diverse, with no single occupation predominating. Notwithstanding, various professions are represented equally, each accounting for 1 (12.5%) of the respondents, including Religious Leaders, Community Leaders, Bakers, Entrepreneurs, Class Teachers, Plumbers, Civil Servants, and Shop Owners. This indicates that all respondents have a source of income, ranging from those who are well-off to those who struggle to make ends meet. As a result, the perspectives of both the affluent and the struggling individuals are equally represented.

All interviewed respondents demonstrated awareness of delayed marriage as a burgeoning phenomenon. Some respondents expressed the belief that this issue extends beyond Kano state or Hausaland, with a global proliferation of the problem. For example, an Imam, a religious leader, noted the prevalence of delayed marriage in Tarauni and highlighted the universality of the issue. He said:

*Of course, there is a prevalence of this problem in this area, and I think it's everywhere today. Not only in Hausa land, but I hear people talking about this issue on the radio, television, etc. (IDI with religious leader from Tarauni L.G.A., 2024).*

Corroborating the above, another male respondent, who is also experiencing delayed marriage, added that:

*Well, there is a presence of this issue in this area, and I believe it is now frequent almost everywhere. There are people that I know who have reached the ages of marriage but are still yet to get married. I'm even younger compared to some people that I know, both the men and women (IDI with an unmarried male from Tarauni L.G.A., 2024).*

The initial respondent, a religious leader, exhibited awareness of the delayed marriage phenomenon. The subsequent respondent, who is personally experiencing delayed marriage, also acknowledged its prevalence in Tarauni L.G.A. nevertheless, he noted that despite having attained the customary marriageable age in Tarauni, he is still relatively younger compared to some unmarried individuals within his social circle.

Moreover, the phenomenon of delayed marriage has been found to have numerous effects on the society of Tarauni L.G.A., as well as on the individuals concerned. According to the respondents, some of the effects include illegal abortions, infidelity in the form of illicit sexual behavior, and the production of children out of wedlock, which contravenes the societal standards of Tarauni L.G.A., Kano. A religious leader further emphasized this point, saying:

*Whoever is acquainted with media or would hardly pass a week without hearing news of people picking up a baby thrown away by his parents. Such babies are thrown away because they were born out of the wedlock. After that,*

*there is a frequency of abortion among the youth. These are some of the serious effects of this issue in this area (IDI with a religious leader, 2024).*

Agreeing with the above, an unmarried female respondent buttressed that:

*This problem leads to a high level of infidelity in society, where both men and women engage in various forms of illegal sexual activities. I believe this also leads to the production of children out of wedlock, which inflicts pain and shame on the family of the girl and especially on the children themselves. There is also a frequency of abortion, which affects women's health (An unmarried female respondent, 2024).*

The first speaker and the second speaker both acknowledged the new phenomenon of giving birth to children outside of wedlock, which contravenes the norms and standards of Tarauni L.G.A. They also decried the prevalence of infidelity and illegal sexual activities among youth, noting that illegal abortion is another issue exacerbated by these activities, which in turn affects women's health.

The research respondents identified a multitude of specific challenges faced by individuals experiencing delayed marriage. Notably, the researcher observed that these challenges disproportionately affect women. Furthermore, stigma and mental health instability emerged as the most prominent challenges, surpassing others in significance. As one unmarried female respondent poignantly remarked:

*There is an issue of stigma for the women, especially from their sisters. When you don't get married earlier, all eyes will be on you. I am talking from experience. In fact, it leads to frustration and even depression. It also leads to drug abuse for both males and females. Most importantly is the issue of stigma from the people because not even long ago someone made a comment on me that landed both of us in trouble (IDI with an unmarried female respondent, 2024).*

Another female respondent, who shared a personal example, emphasized the challenges faced by mature adults in Tarauni L.G.A. She explained that all her peers were married with children, causing her significant anxiety about her future prospects. Furthermore, she noted that she was subjected to ridicule and nicknames due to her marital status, as she was frequently called different names simply because she was single. She recounted:

*To give an example with myself, most, if not all, of my age mates have already got married. This makes me worried about the future. There is also a challenge of stigma, sincerely from both my family and the society. Their concern is just I should get married. Sometimes people call me with many unprintable names just*

*because I'm single (An unmarried female respondent from Tarauni L.G.A., 2024).*

In line with the above, the religious leader interviewed also said:

*Males are affected emotionally and psychologically because as a man, you can't have absolute peace of mind when you reach the ideal age to get married without getting married. For women, they can experience problems like stigma, health challenges, and bullying even from their family members (IDI with a community leader, 2024).*

Regarding the challenges faced by individuals experiencing delayed marriage, as mentioned above by the respondents, it is clear that they all emphasized the issue of stigma. Individuals who delay marriage in Tarauni L.G.A are vulnerable to individual stigma. The first speaker even shared that a neighbor made a comment about her marital status, which led to a dispute between them. The second and third speakers expressed their concerns about the health challenges affecting both men and women.

In order to fulfill the research objectives, the respondents' perspectives were also sought on potential solutions to alleviate the issue of delayed marriage among youth in Tarauni L.G.A. A wide range of solutions were suggested, but the most notable ones that stood out were: promoting early vocational training and employment, reexamining attitudes and expectations regarding partner selection, government intervention in job creation, and addressing cultural spending expectations associated with marriage ceremonies. The religious leader interviewed offered the following insight:

*In my opinion, to address this issue, we have to go back to the drawing board. It's a systemic problem. It is something that has to do with the family institution in general. Parents should make sure they find something for their children to do even before they become fully adults. Moreover, modern marriage has to be on the low key. Everyone should go for a partner that belongs to his or her economic class. Moreover, from the government's side, it should prioritize reviving technical and vocational schools where young people could learn different occupations, so that by the time they finish, they have something to do, making marriage easier for them (A religious leader from Tarauni L.G.A.).*

The community leader interviewed also has an opinion that aligns with the above. He said:

*In order to address this issue, Kano state government has started a very good work in curbing bride price, but I don't know why it has not been implemented. I don't hear anything about it anymore. Secondly, parents should also change their attitude of saying that their children must marry rich men. I think one should give his daughter's hand to a man once*

*he is satisfied with his adherence to religion, respect for elders, and has something to do. We should stop so many unnecessary rituals that are attached to marriage in Hausa land. The bride price, for example, is the most significant (IDI with a community leader, 2024).*

An unmarried male respondent also buttressed that:

*In a straightforward language, the government should provide jobs for the youth first. Second, too much expectations and spending attached to the culture of Hausa people in marriage should be addressed. I think that's all (IDI with another unmarried male respondent, 2024).*

Finally, according to the respondents' opinions on how to address the issue of delayed marriage in Tarauni L.G.A, they unanimously agreed that the best solution is to provide job opportunities and sources of income for the youth. Additionally, they pointed out the need to reduce the bride price associated with marriage in Tarauni L.G.A and address the high expectations surrounding marriage arrangements.

Based on the findings presented, the research has successfully addressed its objectives pertaining to the challenges of delayed marriage among youth, and perceptions on how to reduce it in Tarauni L.G.A. A substantial awareness of the issue of delayed marriage among youth in Tarauni L.G.A, Kano state, has been observed. However, this problem has not received the attention it warrants. Furthermore, delayed marriage among youth has several detrimental effects on the society of Tarauni L.G.A., including the prevalence of infidelity, illegal abortion, and the production of children outside of wedlock, all of which are contrary to the norms of the area. The affected youth also experience various challenges, including stigma, mental health instability, and health challenges. To address the issue of delayed marriage, several solutions have been identified, but the most important ones are: promoting early vocational training and employment, changing attitudes and expectations regarding partner selection, government intervention in job creation, and addressing cultural spending expectations associated with marriage ceremonies.

## 5. MAJOR FINDINGS AND OUTCOMES

### 5.1 Major Findings:

- Delayed marriage among youth in Tarauni L.G.A is a serious concern, with 75% of respondents being single and facing various challenges.
- The majority of respondents (62.5%) are males, while females account for 37.5%, indicating a gender-sensitive issue.
- Respondents identified stigma, mental health instability, and health challenges as the most prominent challenges faced by individuals experiencing delayed marriage.
- The phenomenon of delayed marriage has numerous effects on society, including illegal

abortions, infidelity, and the production of children out of wedlock.

- Respondents emphasized the need for job opportunities, reduction of bride price, and addressing cultural spending expectations to alleviate the issue of delayed marriage.

### 5.2 Outcomes:

- Youth in Tarauni L.G.A are experiencing significant emotional and psychological distress due to delayed marriage, leading to decreased well-being and life satisfaction.
- Delayed marriage is perpetuating harmful societal norms, including infidelity, illegal abortion, and the production of children out of wedlock.
- The issue of delayed marriage is hindering economic development, as youth are unable to establish stable families and contribute to the economy.
- Addressing the challenges of delayed marriage requires a multi-faceted approach, including promoting early vocational training, changing attitudes towards partner selection, and government intervention in job creation.
- By alleviating the issue of delayed marriage, youth in Tarauni L.G.A can experience improved mental health, social stability, and economic prosperity, ultimately contributing to the development of the community.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

This research on the challenges of delayed marriage among youth was conducted in Tarauni Local Government Area, Kano State. The main aim of the study was to explore the major factors challenges faced by youth experiencing delayed marriage, and also the effects of delayed marriage on the society of Tarauni L.G.A. To address the objectives of the research, the researcher adopted qualitative method, precisely indepth interview (IDIs) and conducted interviews with religious leader, community leader, and some selected youth within the various parts of the study area. The study reveals that there is prevalence of this phenomenon, and people are highly aware of it. Through an exploration of challenges of delayed marriage, effects thereof, and perceptions on potential mitigation strategies, a clear understanding of this issue has been achieved. Moreover, there are far-reaching consequences of delayed marriage on both the society of Tarauni L.G.A., and the affected individuals, including social, emotional, and psychological impacts on individuals, and the broader societal fabric of Tarauni L.G.A.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORKS

### 7.1 General Recommendations:

- Future research should include a broader range of geographic locations to see if the patterns observed in Tarauni LGA are consistent across different regions and communities.
- Investigate the different impacts and challenges of delayed marriage for young men and women separately to identify gender-specific issues and solutions.
- Examine the effectiveness of existing policies and interventions aimed at addressing delayed marriage and propose evidence-based policy recommendations.
- Study the role of cultural, religious, and traditional beliefs in influencing perceptions and consequences of delayed marriage among youth.

### 7.2 Methodological Recommendations:

- Utilize both qualitative and quantitative research methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges. Conduct surveys for quantitative data and in-depth interviews or focus groups for qualitative insights.
- Ensure a diverse sample representing different socioeconomic backgrounds, educational levels,

and employment statuses to capture a wide range of experiences and challenges.

- Employ triangulation by using multiple data sources and methods to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings.
- Conduct a thorough contextual analysis to understand the specific socio-economic, cultural, and political factors influencing delayed marriage in Tarauni LGA.

### 7.3 Theoretical Recommendations:

- Use social exchange theory to explore how costs and benefits influence youths' decisions regarding marriage timing.
- Apply the life course perspective to understand how delayed marriage fits into the broader life trajectories of youth, considering factors like education, employment, and family responsibilities.
- Utilize an intersectionality framework to examine how intersecting identities (e.g., gender, class, ethnicity) shape experiences and challenges related to delayed marriage.
- Apply Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory to analyze how different environmental systems (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem) impact youths' marriage timing decisions.

## References:

- Adebowale, S. A. (2018). Dynamics of child marriage and marital timing in Nigeria: A retrogression or progression? *Health Care for Women International*, 39(9), 975–993.
- Akhter, R., & Bhat, M. R. (2018). Late Marriage Consequences and Concerns among women of Kashmir Valley. *International Journal on Arts, Management and Humanities*, 7, 1-9
- Asien, A. A., Shiyabola, A. A. & Igaroola, A. F. (2020). Societal Implications of Delayed Marriages in Contemporary Times: Evidence from Nigeria. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. 25(11), Series 1 50-60
- Chen, D., & Tong, Y. (2021). Marriage for the sake of parents? Adult children's marriage formation and parental psychological distress in China. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 83(4), 1194-1211.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Madachi, I. K. (2024). Table One: Background Characteristics of the Respondents.
- Manjur, M., Sharma, P. & Hossain, A. (2023). Late Marriage among the Adults of Bangladesh: Are We Ready for it Right Now? *South Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*. 4(6), 9210.
- Mathews, T. J., & Hamilton, B. E. (2016). Mean Age of Mothers is on the Rise: *United States, 2000–2014. NCHS Data Brief*, 232, 1-8
- McIlhane, J. S., & Sprigg, P. (2021). Fertility Rates, Delayed Marriage, and Infertility. *Institute for Family Studies*
- Okunlola, D. A., Makinde, O. A. & Bamidele, S. (2023). Socio-economic Correlates of Marital Status and Marriage Timing Among Adult Men in Nigeria. *Journal of Family Issues*. 44(6), 1508-1524.
- Rehim, M. H., AL-Tkhayneh, K. M., and Jabarah, T. A. (2023). The Causes of Delayed Marriage among Young Men: An Analytical Descriptive Study of a Sample of Al Ain University Students. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 12(2), 212-222.
- Wimalasena, N. A. (2016). An analytical study of definitions of the term “marriage”. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 6(1), 166-174.
- Wrenn, D. H., Yi, J., & Zhang, B. (2019). House prices and marriage entry in China. *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 74, 118–130.

**Isah Khamisu Madachi**

Department of Sociology

Bayero University, Kano

Nigeria.

[isahkamisumadachi@gmail.com](mailto:isahkamisumadachi@gmail.com)

**ORCID:** 0009-0006-4016-7640

---

