

## **Prevalence of Marriage Abstinence and Its Associated Factors among Saudi Youth: A Cross-Sectional Study**

**Aljwhara Albrahim**

School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia,  
11800 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia and Department of  
Sociology and Social Service, Faculty of Social Sciences,  
Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University,  
Riyadh 11564, Saudi Arabia

**Azlinda Azman**

School of Social Sciences,  
Universiti Sains Malaysia,  
11800 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

### **ABSTRACT**

The prevalence of marriage abstinence, which is related to social and economic factors, has recently raised social concerns in Saudi Arabia. This study aimed to identify the social and economic factors leading to marriage abstinence among young people in Saudi Arabia. A cross-sectional study was conducted with 575 participants selected using a simple convenience sampling technique. Data were collected using a self-administered online questionnaire. The results of the study revealed that the prevalence of marriage abstinence among young Saudis was 46.8%. The social factors (personal factors, attitude factors, family factors and women empowerment) constituted 57.6%, while economic factors (living costs, marriage costs and job and salary) constituted 62.2% of marriage abstinence reasons. There was a significant association between age, gender, education level, job, employment and monthly income ( $p < 0.05$ ) with the marriage abstinence. Furthermore, social and economic factors were statistically positively correlated with agreeableness, openness, and neuroticism and negatively correlated with conscientiousness. The high prevalence of marriage abstinence in Saudi Arabia is of great concern. Education and community awareness programs are needed to mitigate the problem of marriage abstinence. Furthermore, setting dowries, providing jobs, solving the housing problem, and providing soft loans can contribute to reducing the problem of marriage abstinence.

**Keywords:** Celibacy, late marriage, marriage, marriage abstinence, Saudi Arabia.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Marriage is an important and rewarding social system that is the social foundation of humanity. Family formation is considered the most important event in a person's life because it serves as a transition into a new phase that has many roles and patterns. Marriage is one of the oldest and most widespread and accepted social systems through which people fully satisfy their innate needs. It is the formation of a large and new intimate relationship between a man and a

woman to create a family that ensures the continuity of a lineage and adherence to social and religious norms [1,2].

The problem of late marriage or abstinence from marriage has emerged in modern times, despite the clear importance of marriage recognised by human societies. It has become a problem for society in general and for Muslim and Arab societies in particular because marriage in Islam is the only means of establishing a family and building relationships. Since marriage is important for the individual and the community, late marriages have a negative impact on Saudi society. When young people do not marry or delay marriage, it has a negative impact on themselves, their families and society. The severity of this problem has increased in recent years due to economic, social, psychological, cultural and political factors [1,3].

A demographic analysis of Saudi society revealed that the age of marriage has increased in recent years. In decades past, men typically married between the ages of 15 to 20 while women married at the age of 14 and 18. However, a 2004 demographic survey by the General Assembly discovered that the age of marriage of both genders had increased. This age is anticipated to gradually increase to 30 to 35 for men and 25 to 30 for women. More specifically, in 2004, 40.61% (1,034,531) of the 2,547,254 male respondents and 26.65% (682,635) of the 2,561,132 female respondents aged 20 to 39 were unmarried. Meanwhile, in 2010, 44.28% (1,554,347) of the 3,510,237 male respondents and 30.45% (1,089,119) of the 3,576,342 female respondents aged 20 to 39 were unmarried. As expected, at the last demographic survey in 2016, these figures had increased to 56.11% (2,034,857) of the 3,626,764 male respondents and 38.70% (1,347,072) of the 3,480,761 female respondents aged 20 to 39 [4].

Previous studies highlighted the seriousness of the situation in Saudi society as more youths are abstaining from marriage due to social factors; such as a desire to complete their studies, fear of responsibility as well as customs and familial marriage customs; such as social status, high dowries, consanguineous marriages, and parental interference that results in refusing marriage proposals and forced marriages [5,6]. The economic factors, primarily, included unemployment followed by a lack of employment or work opportunities, adequate housing, low standards of living by today's modern standards, and the high cost of living [7]. In addition, previous studies reported that there was a significant negative correlation between neuroticism and marriage abstinence and there is a significant positive correlation between extroversion and conscientiousness and marriage abstinence [8,9].

Several studies have investigated the prevalence of abstinence from marriage among young Saudi men and women and identified the key factors influencing this phenomenon [10-12]. Most of these studies agreed that psychological, social, economic and cultural factors are closely related to marriage abstinence. However, there is a lack of studies examining the effects of modern economic and social changes in Saudi society, such as female emancipation, gender mixing in the workplace, female driving, and the cost of living, on marital abstinence and the correlation between marital abstinence and personality traits. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to investigate the prevalence of abstinence from marriage and its associated social and economic factors and personality traits among Saudis aged 25 to 35 years in Saudi Arabia.

## METHODS

### Study Design, Sampling, and Participants

A cross-sectional design was applied in conducting the current study to investigate the social and economic reasons for marriage abstinence in Saudi Arabia's four biggest cities, namely Riyadh, Jeddah, Mecca and Dammam, among single Saudi youth aged 25 to 35 years old of both genders. Non-Saudis, married, divorced, widowed participants, and participants aged less than 25 or more than 35 years old were excluded from the study. A simple convenience sampling technique was used to select the participants. All young single Saudis aged between 25 to 35 years were involved in this study, and the eligible participants were selected based on the inclusion criteria. The sample size for the study was estimated using a two-proportion sampling formula at the power of 80%, 95% confidence level, and an estimated 15% of incomplete data. Therefore, the total sample size is 575 participants.

### Data Collection

Data was collected from May 2023 to August 2023 through a self-administered questionnaire through Google Forms from the four biggest cities in Saudi Arabia: Riyadh, Jeddah, Mecca and Dammam. The researcher collected the data in the people gathering places with attractive servers, such as cafes, restaurants, shops and universities. Indeed, all these facilities are full of people during the day and everywhere. Furthermore, the researcher has visited the female gathering places because the probability of meeting and surveying females is low.

The study instrument includes an Arabic version questionnaire based on studies done by Al-Rabid [3] in Saudi Arabia and Rehim et al. [1] in United Arab Emirates, including the sociodemographic characteristics (age, gender, monthly income, educational status, employment status, domain of work, marital status), reasons for marriage abstinence including the social and economic dimensions and personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, neuroticism). Marriage abstinence was measured with a single question — “Do you identify yourself as marriage abstained (rejecting marriage) according to the definition of marriage abstinence (that it is the internal refusal of people to the idea of marriage, and establishing a family? “. Eighteen questions related to social reasons for marriage abstinence, and 11 questions related to economic reasons for marriage abstinence with five on the Likert scale: 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3=neutral, 4 = disagree, and 5= strongly disagree. The Big Five Personality Test (BFPT) questionnaire included 50 items about extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. This questionnaire identified leisure activities that align with personality, identified personality types that might influence behaviour and monitored personality type changes. The BFPT was assessed using a five-level Likert scale for each item (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree). Each personality type had a score between 0-40. Higher scores equal a stronger personality type. BFPT questionnaire was valid and reliable with the English version; in different studies, Cronbach's alpha was 0.70–0.86 [13-15]. The questionnaire was originally developed in Arabic and then double-translated from Arabic into English and then to Arabic by two certified translators. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, a panel of experts checked the wording of all the items. As for the liability, a pilot study to ensure that the target respondents fully understood all the wording was conducted among 50 participants selected in different cities in Saudi Arabia besides the list of cities included to avoid data contamination. Also, reliability analysis was conducted, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.806, 0.863,

0.816 and 0.986, which shows the reliability of the items as the coefficient of 0.7 and above is considered acceptable.

## Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using the software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 for Microsoft Windows (Chicago, IL, USA). The data was presented by descriptive statistics, i.e. means, median, and standard deviations (SD) for continuous variables. Frequencies and percentages were used to present the categorical variables. The Chi-square test was used to determine the association between the variables. The correlation between social and economic factors of marriage abstinence and personality traits was calculated using the Pearson correlation coefficient.

## RESULTS

Data Of the 575 surveys, 408 questionnaires were returned, which represented approximately 71% response rate. Table 1 shows the distribution of socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. Most participants (63.0%) were 25-30, with mean  $\pm$  SD age being  $29.47 \pm 3.44$  years, and most were male (59.3%). The majority of them (65.7%) held undergraduate degrees and above. In terms of the respondents' jobs, most of them work for their own accounts (38.0%), and the majority were in other sectors (27.7%). Most respondents (67.4%) had low monthly income (less than 5,000) with a mean  $\pm$  SD of  $5671.33 \pm 6498.19$ . Riyadh City had the most respondents (54.7%), followed by Makkah City (17.2%), Jeddah city (16.9%) and Dammam city (11.3%).

**Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=408)**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Age (Years) Mean <math>\pm</math> SD</b>	$29.47 \pm 3.44$	
25-30	257	63.0
31-35	151	37.0
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	242	59.3
Female	166	40.7
<b>Education level</b>		
Intermediate school and below	56	13.7
High school	84	20.6
Undergraduate degree and above	268	65.7
<b>Job (Position)</b>		
Employee in the government sector	76	18.6
Employee in the private sector	126	30.9
I work for my own account	155	38.0
I do not work	51	12.5
<b>Employment</b>		
Education Sector	53	13.0
Military Sector	10	2.5
Health Sector	36	8.8
Business Administration, Marketing and Sales Sector	51	12.5
Engineering, Petroleum and Minerals	23	5.6
Communications and Information Technology	39	9.6
Restaurants and Cafes Sector	32	7.8
Others	113	27.7
<b>Monthly Income (SR) Mean <math>\pm</math> SD</b>	$5671.33 \pm 6498.19$	
<5000 Low income	275	67.4
5000-14,999 Middle income	98	24.0
$\geq 15,000$ High income	35	8.6

City		
Riyadh	223	54.7
Makkah	70	17.2
Jeddah	69	16.9
Dammam	46	11.3

SD = standard deviation; SR= Saudi Riyal (1 \$= 3.75 SR)

Regarding the prevalence of marriage abstinence among Saudis, most 191 (46.8%) of the participants have identified themselves as marriage abstaining, followed by 163 (40%) have responded that they were not marriage abstaining, while 54 (13.2%) have answered that they may be marriage abstaining.

Table 2 shows the distribution of social factors that affect marriage abstinence. The mean and standard deviation (SD) of the social factors were calculated. Social factors were assessed using a five-level Likert scale ranging from "1" strongly disagree to "5" strongly agree. Among the social factors that affect marriage abstinence, the highest mean score was personal factors (mean= 2.95; SD= 1.20), followed by attitude factors (mean= 2.89; SD= 1.17), family factors (mean =2.93; SD=1.22) and empowering of women (mean= 2.55; SD= 1.09). Overall, social factors made up the mean (SD) 2.84 (1.37). The total and all social factors were met to moderate level, except the women driving cars which was have low level.

**Table 2: Distribution of Social Factors Affect Marriage Abstinence**

Items	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Not Sure 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5	Mean	SD
<b>A. Empowering of Women</b>						<b>2.55</b>	<b>1.09</b>
a) Women working in a mixed environment.	70 (17.2)	164 (40.2)	97 (23.8)	60 (14.7)	17 (4.2)	2.49	1.068
b) Women driving cars.	106 (26.0)	141 (34.6)	113 (27.7)	40 (9.8)	8 (2.0)	2.27	1.017
c) Women's financial and social independence.	59 (14.5)	108 (26.5)	92 (22.5)	117 (28.7)	32 (7.8)	2.89	1.198
<b>B. Family Factors</b>						<b>2.93</b>	<b>1.22</b>
a) Differences in the social, cultural and religious levels of young people.	46 (11.3)	106 (26.0)	116 (28.4)	97 (23.8)	43 (10.5)	2.96	1.171
b) Intolerance to family and tribe.	73 (17.9)	99 (24.3)	107 (26.2)	100 (24.5)	29 (7.1)	2.79	1.202
c) Some families impose marriage among relatives.	84 (20.6)	97 (23.8)	93 (22.8)	99 (24.3)	35 (8.6)	2.76	1.263
d) Parents' intervention in determining the age and specifications when marrying their children.	65 (15.9)	117 (28.7)	88 (21.6)	92 (22.5)	46 (11.3)	2.85	1.257
<b>C. Personal Factors</b>						<b>2.95</b>	<b>1.20</b>
a) Fear of divorce and the resulting disintegration of the family.	96 (23.5)	128 (31.4)	77 (18.9)	79 (19.4)	28 (6.9)	2.55	1.233
b) Young people's preoccupation with educational attainment and neglect of the idea of marriage.	47 (11.5)	102 (25.0)	92 (22.5)	128 (31.4)	39 (9.6)	3.02	1.187
c) Interest in continuing education and being busy with it.	56 (13.7)	99 (24.3)	77 (18.9)	140 (34.3)	36 (8.8)	3.00	1.221
d) Young people's love and desire for freedom and freedom.	43 (10.5)	92 (22.5)	84 (20.6)	138 (33.8)	51 (12.5)	3.15	1.211
e) Fear of bearing responsibility.	51 (12.5)	90 (22.1)	78 (19.1)	135 (33.1)	54 (13.2)	3.12	1.253

f) The death of the head of the family and the young man assuming responsibility for the family.	51 (12.5)	105 (25.7)	126 (30.9)	102 (25.0)	24 (5.9)	2.86	1.107
<b>D. Attitude Factors</b>						<b>2.89</b>	<b>1.17</b>
a) The delay of a family member in getting married reflects on the rest of the family members.	62 (15.2)	134 (32.8)	96 (23.5)	92 (22.5)	24 (5.9)	2.71	1.147
b) Availability of various means of entertainment and preoccupation with them.	49 (12.0)	121 (29.7)	100 (24.5)	112 (27.5)	26(6.4)	2.87	1.136
c) The influence of social media.	47 (11.5)	109 (26.7)	97 (23.8)	119 (29.2)	36 (8.8)	2.97	1.173
d) Women's adornment and failure to adhere to the legal dress code.	66 (16.2)	95 (23.3)	113 (27.7)	104 (25.5)	30 (7.4)	2.85	1.187
e) Difficulty in meeting the required specifications in a life partner.	45 (11.0)	111 (27.2)	86 (21.1)	117 (28.7)	49 (12.0)	3.03	1.218
<b>Social Factors Overall</b>						<b>2.84</b>	<b>1.37</b>

The distribution of economic factors affecting marriage abstinence is shown in Table 3. A mean and standard deviation (SD) were calculated for each economic factor. Economic factors were assessed using a five-level Likert scale ranging from "1" strongly disagree to "5" strongly agree. Among the economic factors that affect marriage abstinence, the highest mean score was marriage costs with mean (SD) =3.14 (1.24) followed by job and salary with mean (SD)= 3.11 (1.14) and living costs with mean (SD)= 3.08 (1.20). Overall, economic factors made up the mean (SD) 3.11 (1.19) with middle level.

**Table 3: Distribution of Economic Factors Affect Marriage Abstinence**

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
<b>A. Marriage Costs</b>						<b>3.14</b>	<b>1.24</b>
a) High dowries.	67 (16.4)	108 (26.5)	71 (17.4)	113 (27.7)	49 (12.0)	2.92	1.30
b) High costs and expenses of marriage.	32 (7.8)	81 (19.9)	71 (17.4)	140 (34.3)	84 (20.6)	3.40	1.23
c) Fear of loans and debts.	38 (9.3)	106 (26.0)	97 (23.8)	112 (27.5)	55 (13.5)	3.10	1.20
<b>B. Living Costs</b>						<b>3.08</b>	<b>1.20</b>
a) Inability to secure suitable housing.	30 (7.4)	133 (32.6)	67 (16.4)	125 (30.6)	53 (13.0)	3.09	1.20
b) Girls abstaining from living with their husband's family in the same residence	61 (15.0)	87 (21.3)	101 (24.8)	112 (27.5)	47 (11.5)	2.99	1.25
c) The girl's eagerness to marry a financially well-off young man as a basic criterion.	34 (8.3)	98 (24.0)	100 (24.5)	112 (27.5)	64 (15.7)	3.18	1.20
d) Girls' increasing financial demands.	34 (8.3)	108 (26.5)	112 (27.5)	108 (26.5)	46 (11.3)	3.06	1.15
<b>C. Job and Salary</b>						<b>3.11</b>	<b>1.14</b>
a) Low monthly salary for the young man.	30 (7.4)	80 (19.6)	93 (22.8)	137 (33.6)	68 (16.7)	3.33	1.18
b) Lack of job opportunities.	36 (8.8)	91 (22.3)	79 (19.4)	144 (35.3)	58 (14.2)	3.24	1.20
c) Girls' fear of losing their job after marriage.	42 (10.3)	95 (23.3)	118 (28.9)	124 (30.4)	29(7.1)	3.01	1.11
d) The young man's eagerness to search for a working girl.	36 (8.8)	128 (31.4)	116 (28.4)	107 (26.2)	21 (5.1)	2.88	1.06
<b>Economic Factors Overall</b>						<b>3.11</b>	<b>1.19</b>

Table 4 shows the distribution of the personality traits among the participants. Measures of the personality traits in this study were based on the Big Five Inventory developed by John and Srivastava (1999). There were 50 items of measurement about extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. The rate of extraversion among the participants was 60.57% with a mean (SD) of 3.03 (1.09), while the agreeableness rate was 63.96% with a mean (SD) of 3.20 (1.12). The average conscientiousness rate among participants was 61.86%, with a standard deviation of 3.09 (1.09), compared to 57.81% for neuroticism, with a mean (SD) of 2.89 (1.10). In addition, the rate of openness among the participants was 63.94%, with a mean (SD) of 3.20 (1.11).

**Table 4: Distribution of Personality Traits**

Personality traits	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD	%
	1	2	3	4	5			
<b>A. Extraversion</b>						<b>3.03</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>60.57</b>
I am the life of the party.	51 (12.5)	119 (29.2)	86 (21.1)	120 (29.4)	32 (7.8)	2.91	1.181	58.2
I don't talk a lot.	60 (14.7)	114 (27.9)	115 (28.2)	101 (24.8)	18 (4.4)	2.76	1.113	55.2
I feel comfortable around people.	32 (7.8)	115 (28.2)	120 (29.4)	128 (31.4)	13 (3.2)	2.94	1.018	58.8
I keep in the background.	65 (15.9)	124 (30.4)	105 (25.7)	96 (23.5)	18 (4.4)	2.70	1.125	54.0
I start conversations.	35 (8.6)	113 (27.7)	111 (27.2)	132 (32.4)	17 (4.2)	2.96	1.054	59.2
I have little to say.	46 (11.3)	129 (31.6)	117 (28.7)	103 (25.2)	13 (3.2)	2.77	1.048	55.4
I talk to a lot of different people at parties.	42 (10.3)	132 (32.4)	111 (27.2)	105 (25.7)	18 (4.4)	2.82	1.067	56.4
I don't like to draw attention to myself.	40 (9.8)	114 (27.9)	110 (27.0)	119 (29.2)	25 (6.1)	2.94	1.099	58.8
I don't mind being the center of attention.	59 (14.5)	159 (39.0)	115 (28.2)	61 (15.0)	14 (3.4)	2.54	1.022	50.8
I am quiet around strangers.	29 (7.1)	88 (21.6)	94 (23.0)	151 (37.0)	46 (11.3)	3.24	1.126	64.8
<b>B. Agreeableness</b>						<b>3.20</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>63.96</b>
I feel little concern for others.	50 (12.3)	152 (37.3)	109 (26.7)	83 (20.3)	14 (3.4)	2.65	1.042	53.0
I am interested in people.	42 (10.3)	104 (25.5)	99 (24.3)	133 (32.6)	30 (7.4)	3.01	1.136	60.2
I insult people.	131 (32.1)	124 (30.4)	80 (19.6)	63 (15.4)	10 (2.5)	2.26	1.137	45.2
I sympathize with others' feelings.	33 (8.1)	93 (22.8)	74 (18.1)	154 (37.7)	54 (13.2)	3.25	1.182	65.0
I am not interested in other people's problems.	62 (15.2)	168 (41.2)	100 (24.5)	69 (16.9)	9 (2.2)	2.50	1.013	50.0
I have a soft heart.	33 (8.1)	97 (23.8)	75 (18.4)	143 (35.0)	60 (14.7)	3.25	1.201	65.0
I am not really interested in others.	79 (19.4)	143 (35.0)	105 (25.7)	69 (16.9)	12 (2.9)	2.49	1.075	49.8
I take time out for others.	32 (7.8)	94 (23.0)	76 (18.6)	168 (41.2)	38 (9.3)	3.21	1.135	64.2
I feel others' emotions.	35 (8.6)	95 (23.3)	78 (19.1)	157 (38.5)	43 (10.5)	3.19	1.162	63.8
I make people feel at ease.	29 (7.1)	87 (21.3)	80 (19.6)	166 (40.7)	46 (11.3)	3.28	1.132	65.6
<b>C. Conscientiousness</b>						<b>3.09</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>61.86</b>

I am always prepared.	25 (6.1)	98 (24.0)	114 (27.9)	137 (33.6)	34 (8.3)	3.14	1.067	62.8
I leave my belongings around.	91 (22.3)	143 (35.0)	100 (24.5)	66 (16.2)	8 (2.0)	2.40	1.063	48.0
I pay attention to details.	33 (8.1)	92 (22.5)	94 (23.0)	140 (34.3)	49 (12.0)	3.20	1.156	64.0
I make a mess of things.	133 (32.6)	122 (29.9)	96 (23.5)	52 (12.7)	5 (1.2)	2.20	1.069	44.0
I get chores done right away.	44 (10.8)	113 (27.7)	122 (29.9)	106 (26.0)	23 (5.6)	2.88	1.087	57.6
I often forget to put things back in their proper place.	77 (18.9)	133 (32.6)	92 (22.5)	95 (23.3)	11 (2.7)	2.58	1.118	51.6
I like order.	35 (8.6)	97 (23.8)	78 (19.1)	140 (34.3)	58 (14.2)	3.22	1.204	64.4
I shirk my duties.	72 (17.6)	159 (39.0)	105 (25.7)	63 (15.4)	9 (2.2)	2.46	1.022	49.2
I follow a schedule.	43 (10.5)	109 (26.7)	132 (32.4)	104 (25.5)	20 (4.9)	2.87	1.062	57.4
I am exacting in my work.	32 (7.8)	105 (25.7)	123 (30.1)	114 (27.9)	34 (8.3)	3.03	1.089	60.6
<b>D. Neuroticism</b>						<b>2.89</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>57.81</b>
I get stressed out easily.	54 (13.2)	124 (30.4)	114 (27.9)	94 (23.0)	22 (5.4)	2.77	1.109	55.4
I am relaxed most of the time.	42 (10.3)	112 (27.5)	124 (30.4)	114 (27.9)	16 (3.9)	2.88	1.054	57.6
I worry about things.	38 (9.3)	104 (25.5)	91 (22.3)	131 (32.1)	44 (10.8)	3.10	1.172	62.0
I seldom feel blue.	59 (14.5)	117 (28.7)	122 (29.9)	99 (24.3)	11 (2.7)	2.72	1.068	54.4
I am easily disturbed.	42 (10.3)	124 (30.4)	113 (27.7)	103 (25.2)	26 (6.4)	2.87	1.100	57.4
I get upset easily.	51 (12.5)	115 (28.2)	115 (28.2)	103 (25.2)	24 (5.9)	2.84	1.116	56.8
I change my mood a lot.	37 (9.1)	125 (30.6)	96 (23.5)	115 (28.2)	35 (8.6)	2.97	1.138	59.4
I have frequent mood swings.	44 (10.8)	119 (29.2)	128 (31.4)	87 (21.3)	30 (7.4)	2.85	1.101	57.0
I get irritated easily.	60 (14.7)	117 (28.7)	114 (27.9)	100 (24.5)	17 (4.2)	2.75	1.107	55.0
I often feel blue.	30 (7.4)	135 (33.1)	127 (31.1)	92 (22.5)	24 (5.9)	2.87	1.035	57.4
<b>E. Openness</b>						<b>3.20</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>63.94</b>
I have a rich vocabulary.	37 (9.1)	96 (23.5)	104 (25.5)	141 (34.6)	30 (7.4)	3.08	1.111	61.6
I have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.	59 (14.5)	124 (30.4)	106 (26.0)	109 (26.7)	10 (2.5)	2.72	1.083	54.4
I have a vivid imagination.	31 (7.6)	99 (24.3)	102 (25.0)	117 (28.7)	59 (14.5)	3.18	1.176	63.6
I am not interested in abstract ideas.	38 (9.3)	104 (25.5)	129 (31.6)	117 (28.7)	20 (4.9)	2.94	1.053	58.8
I have excellent ideas.	28 (6.9)	84 (20.6)	97 (23.8)	153 (37.5)	46 (11.3)	3.26	1.115	65.2
I do not have a good imagination.	96 (23.5)	126 (30.9)	102 (25.0)	73 (17.9)	11 (2.7)	2.45	1.114	49.0
I am quick to understand things.	31 (7.6)	105 (25.7)	79 (19.4)	142 (34.8)	51 (12.5)	3.19	1.173	63.8
I use difficult words.	52 (12.7)	171 (41.9)	105 (25.7)	67 (16.4)	13 (3.2)	2.55	1.012	51.0
I spend time reflecting on things.	37 (9.1)	86 (21.1)	82 (20.1)	162 (39.7)	41 (10.0)	3.21	1.155	64.2



I am full of ideas.	24 (5.9)	97 (23.8)	90 (22.1)	137 (33.6)	60 (14.7)	3.27	1.151	65.4
---------------------	----------	-----------	-----------	------------	-----------	------	-------	------

Table 5 presents the association of sociodemographic characteristics and the marriage abstinence of participants. This association was tested using the Chi-square test. The results showed that there was a significant association between the age ( $\chi^2 = 10.045$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ), gender ( $\chi^2 = 44.011$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), education level ( $\chi^2 = 127.347$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), job ( $\chi^2 = 89.119$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), employment ( $\chi^2 = 65.708$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and the monthly income ( $\chi^2 = 81.104$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) with the marriage abstinence, where most of the participants in the age group 31-35 years old (57.0%), male (60.3%), in intermediate school and below education level (92.9%), working for their account (75.7%), work in restaurants and cafes sector (78.1%), participants with low monthly income have identified themselves as marriage abstaining. However, there was no significant association between city and marriage abstinence ( $\chi^2 = 6.553$ ,  $p = 0.364$ ).

**Table 5: Association between Sociodemographic Characteristics and Marriage Abstinence**

Variables	Marriage abstinence			$\chi^2$	P-value
	Yes	No	Maybe		
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)		
<b>Age</b>				10.045	0.007*
25-30	105 (40.9)	113 (44.0)	39 (15.1)		
31-35	86 (57.0)	50 (33.1)	15 (9.9)		
<b>Gender</b>				44.011	<0.001*
Male	146 (60.3)	74 (30.6)	22 (9.1)		
Female	45 (27.1)	89 (53.6)	32 (19.3)		
<b>Education level</b>				127.347	<0.001*
Intermediate school and below	52 (92.9)	2 (3.6)	2 (3.6)		
High school	67 (79.8)	13 (15.5)	4 (4.8)		
Undergraduate degree and above	72 (26.9)	148 (55.2)	48 (17.9)		
<b>Job (Position)</b>				89.119	<0.001*
Employee in the government sector	28 (36.8)	33 (43.4)	15 (19.7)		
Employee in the private sector	26 (20.6)	76 (60.3)	24 (19.0)		
I work for my own account	112 (75.7)	29 (19.6)	7 (4.7)		
I do not work	25 (43.1)	25 (43.1)	8 (13.8)		
<b>Employment</b>				65.708	<0.001*
Education Sector	14 (26.4)	29 (54.7)	10 (18.9)		
Military Sector	3 (30.0)	5 (50.0)	2 (20.0)		
Health Sector	13 (36.1)	18 (50.0)	5 (13.9)		
Business Administration, Marketing and Sales Sector	16 (31.4)	32 (62.7)	3 (5.9)		
Engineering, Petroleum and Minerals	13 (56.5)	9 (39.1)	1 (4.3)		
Communications and Information Technology	15 (38.5)	22 (56.4)	2 (5.1)		
Restaurants and Cafes Sector	25 (78.1)	2 (6.3)	5 (15.6)		
Others	72 (63.7)	23 (20.4)	18 (15.9)		
<b>Monthly Income</b>				81.104	<0.001*
<5000 Low income	170 (61.8)	79 (28.7)	26 (9.5)		
5000-14,999 Middle income	16 (16.3)	65 (66.3)	17 (17.3)		
≥15,000 High income	5 (14.3)	19 (54.3)	11 (31.4)		
<b>City</b>				6.553	0.364
Riyadh	96 (43.0)	94 (42.2)	33 (14.8)		
Makkah	31 (44.3)	28 (40.0)	11 (15.7)		
Jeddah	39 (56.5)	23 (33.3)	7 (10.1)		
Dammam	25 (54.3)	18 (39.1)	3 (6.5)		

Significance \* $P < 0.05$ ,  $\chi^2$  = chi-square statistic

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine the correlation between social and

economic factors of marriage abstinence and personality traits (table 6). The results show that there was a statistically significant positive correlation at the level of 0.01 and 0.05 between the social factors (empowering of women, family factors, personal factors and attitude factors) and economic factors (marriage costs, living costs, job salary) with agreeableness, openness and neuroticism. In addition, there was a statistically significant negative correlation at the level of 0.01 between the social factors (empowering of women, family factors, personal factors and attitude factors) and economic factors (marriage costs, living costs, job salary) with conscientiousness. However, there was no significant correlation between the social and economic factors with extraversion.

**Table 6: The Correlation between Social and Economic Factors of Marriage Abstinence and Personality Traits**

Marriage Abstinence Factors	Correlation Coefficient	Personality Traits				
		Extraversion	Agreeableness	Openness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism
Empowering of Women	Pearson Correlation	-0.025	0.100*	0.114*	-0.193**	0.155**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.612	0.043	0.022	<0.001	0.002
Family Factors	Pearson Correlation	0.073	0.259**	0.318**	-0.229**	0.332**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.139	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Personal Factors	Pearson Correlation	0.023	0.342**	0.362**	-0.308**	0.452**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.650	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Attitude Factors	Pearson Correlation	0.054	0.207**	0.267**	-0.222**	0.295**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.272	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Total Social Factors	Pearson Correlation	0.034	0.311**	0.337**	-0.312**	0.418**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.498	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Marriage Costs	Pearson Correlation	0.013	0.491**	0.466**	-0.379**	0.527**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.788	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Living Costs	Pearson Correlation	-0.009	0.490**	0.467**	-0.391**	0.532**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.850	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Job Salary	Pearson Correlation	0.037	0.467**	0.437**	-0.392**	0.480**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.452	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Total Economic Factors	Pearson Correlation	0.014	0.524**	0.496**	-0.421**	0.557**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.778	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## DISCUSSION

This study showed that about half of the participants (46.8%) identified as abstaining from marriage. It found that Saudi youth had higher rates of marriage abstinence than previously reported in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries (1,3,16,17). Among the social factors that affected marriage abstinence, personal factors, such as young people's love and desire for freedom, had the highest mean score. Personal factors were followed by attitudinal factors, such as the influence of social media; family factors, including social, cultural, and religious differences among young people; and the empowerment of women through financial and social

independence. These results are consistent with Al-Rabid's [3] study, which concluded that young people's love of and desire for freedom, social, cultural, and religious differences, and women's empowerment were contributing factors to marriage abstinence. This result is also consistent with the study's findings done by Al-Shamayleh [18] that the preoccupation with educational attainment over marriage, an interest in time-consuming continuing education, and the fear of accepting responsibility were the main factors contributing to young people abstaining from marriage. According to a study by Al-Mutairi [11], preoccupation with education is a social factor affecting delayed marriage. Furthermore, the death of the head of a family and a young man assuming responsibility for the family were factors leading to marriage abstinence. The death of a father and the subsequent responsibilities present a difficult situation for young men. Being a father is challenging, especially for young men who lack experience and knowledge in managing a family's social, educational, and other affairs. According to a study by El Behnasawy [19], the loss of one or both parents and the responsibility to raise siblings are among the reasons for marriage abstinence. Economic factors of marriage abstinence, specifically living costs, followed by marriage costs and type of job and salary level, were largely achieved (62.2%). Thus, it became clear that economic factors significantly contributed to delays in marriage among young people. The costs of marriage are high, and the financial obligations that result from it make it difficult for a young man who has recently graduated from university and is new to the workforce to have the necessary financial capabilities (if any) in the short term. Due to the current exorbitant cost of living, including marriage costs, young people find it challenging to obtain all or even some of the necessary finances. The current study's results are consistent with previous studies in Saudi Arabia and other Arabic countries [3, 11, 12, 16, 17], which have indicated that economic factors are influential in delaying the age of marriage or causing marriage abstinence.

In the present study, age was significantly associated with marriage abstinence among participants between 31 and 35 years of age (57.0%). Other studies have also identified a significant association between marriage abstinence and age group [3, 16]. However, these studies found no statistically significant differences in the age group predicting marriage abstinence among males [3, 20]. This result may be due to the participants' similar ages and education levels. There was also a significant association between marriage abstinence and gender, even though no other studies have established this association [1,3,16, 20]. Moreover, 92.9% of participants with an intermediate school or lower education identified as marriage abstainers, which was a significant association ( $p < 0.001$ ). These findings are consistent with other studies reporting a significant association between education level and marriage abstinence [17, 21]. Conversely, a study of Saudi youth in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, found no significant association between education and marriage abstinence [22].

Like other studies [23], the current study found a significant statistical association between employment and marriage abstinence, specifically that the percentage of marriage abstinence was higher among participants who were either unemployed or self-employed. Our study found that monthly income was significantly associated with marriage abstinence, with marriage abstinence (61.8%) higher among participants with low monthly incomes than among those with high and middle monthly incomes. Similarly, a study by Al-Balhan et al. [20] noted statistically significant differences among Kuwaiti participants due to monthly income. In contrast, Shahimat [24] and Al-Rabid [3] found no statistically significant differences in monthly income that predicted marriage abstinence among males.

Our study evaluated the correlation between the social and economic factors of marriage abstinence and personality traits. We observed a statistically significant positive correlation between the social and economic factors and agreeableness, openness, and neuroticism and a statistically significant negative correlation between socioeconomic factors and conscientiousness. However, we identified no significant correlation between socioeconomic factors and extraversion. In contrast, another study reported a significant positive correlation between extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness and marriage abstinence and a statistically significant negative correlation between neuroticism and marriage abstinence [8]. Researchers have also found that those with high extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were likelier to desire marriage since an extrovert is likelier to express warmth, friendliness, coexistence, and cooperation with their partner [9, 25]. Studies have also identified high neuroticism in one or both spouses as a significant cause of marriage abstinence and marital problems [25, 26].

The main limitation of this study is that the cross-sectional design only indicates associations between factors rather than causality; thus, the results cannot be generalised. In addition, the collection of data using self-reporting questionnaires is prone to bias, and psychological factors such as depression and neglecting responsibilities were not assessed. Future studies should consider these variables in similar populations.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the high prevalence of marriage abstinence among Saudi youth is of great concern. To mitigate this problem, media programs and seminars must be provided to raise awareness of the magnitude of this problem and provide appropriate solutions, as well as working to prepare the living conditions and economic conditions for the best possible outcome. Our study found that living and economic conditions were among the main factors contributing to delaying marriage and the reluctance of young people to marry.

### References

- [1]. Rehim, M. H., AL-Tkayneh, K. M., & Jabarah, T. A., 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*, 2023. 12(2): p. 212-227.
- [2]. Hu, J.X., & Nash, S.T., *Marriage and the Family: Mirror of a Diverse Global Society*. 1st ed. 2019, Routledge.
- [3]. Al-rabid, S., The reasons for the delay in the age of marriage among young people from the point of view of Qassim University students. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Sciences*, 2019. 3(12): p. 1211-1245.
- [4]. General Authority for Statistics, *Statistics of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. 2017, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- [5]. Rasheed, A. A., & Akkurt, M. N., *Marriage and family counseling in Saudi Arabia*. In: *Intercultural Perspectives on Family Counseling*, 2020. p. 145-155.
- [6]. Rasheed, A., Amr, A., & Fahad, N., Investigating the relationship between emotional divorce, marital expectations, and self-efficacy among wives in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 2021. 62(1): p. 19-40.
- [7]. Gonalons-Pons, P., & Gangl, M., Marriage and masculinity: Male-breadwinner culture, unemployment, and separation risk in 29 countries. *American Sociological Review*, 2021. 86(3): p. 465-502.
- [8]. Mahmoud, A. G., Marital compatibility in its relationship to some personality factors and emotional intelligence. *Journal of the Faculty of Education in Mansoura*, 2006. 60(1): p. 52-110.

- 
- [9]. Al-Mashikhi, G. M., Marital compatibility and its relationship to some personality traits among graduate students in the Executive Business Administration Program at the College of Administrative and Financial Sciences at Taif University. *Education Journal*, 2015. 165(2): p. 55-598.
- [10]. Maashi, M. A., The reality of psychological, social and economic factors associated with the phenomenon of spinsterhood (late marriage age) as perceived by academics at Jazan University and their suggestions to reduce it. *Specialized International Educational Journal*, 2007. 6(7): p. 151-167.
- [11]. Al-Mutairi, H., Economic and social factors that delay youth age of marriage in Saudi Youth in Saudi Society. 2009, King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia. Master's thesis.
- [12]. Al-Khudairi, S., The phenomenon of late marriage age from the point of view of university youth: A field study. *Journal of Literature*, 2015. 27(2): p. 77-137.
- [13]. Kohút, M., Kohútová, V., Žitný, P., & Halama, P., Further validation of Slovak Big Five Inventory 2: 6-months test-retest stability and predictive power. *Studia Psychologica*, 2020. 62(3): p. 246-258.
- [14]. Kupper, K., Krampen, D., Rammstedt, B., & Rohrmann, S., The German-language short form of the big five inventory for children and adolescents–other-rating version (BFI-K KJ-F). *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 2020.
- [15]. Mereu, A., Big five personality traits prediction with AI. *European Psychiatry*, 2021. 64(S1): p. S445-S446.
- [16]. Al-Barashi, H. A. M., Khalil, M. B., & Murad, M. M., Lifestyle and its relationship to the trend towards reluctance to marry among university students. *Arab Journal of Humanities and Literature*, 2021. 5(16): p. 1-38.
- [17]. Shanib, J. A. H. A., The phenomenon of delayed marriage for both sexes in Libyan society, its effects, and how to reduce it: A field study on a sample in the city of Al-Khoms. *Journal of Physical Education and Other Sciences*, 2021. 7(1): p. 26-99.
- [18]. Al-Shamayleh, S. N., The factors leading to the delay marriage age in the Jordanian society in Al-Karak. 2021, Mu'tah University, Jordan. Master's thesis.
- [19]. El Behnasawy, L., Delayed marriage of girls between cultural heritage and reality: study of a sample of postgraduate students. *Journal of the Faculty of Arts*, 2018. 78(7): p. 11-78.
- [20]. Al-Balhan, E., Al-Nasser, F., & Al-Khulaifi, I., Reasons for delaying the age of marriage according to the perceptions of a Kuwaiti and an American sample. *Educational Journal*, 2014. 28(112): p. 7-15.
- [21]. Al-Gohary, S. A., Personales variables of University girls associated with the problem of spinsterhood and late marriage: a field study applied to female students in the Department of Sociology and Social Service, King Abdulaziz University. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 2020. 28(10): p. 1-22.
- [22]. Al-Maliki, B. S. A., The Phenomenon of Late Marriage Age in Saudi Society from the Point of View of Saudi Youth in Jeddah Governorate. *International Journal of Research and Studies Publishing*, 2022. 3(27): p. 614-652.
- [23]. Al-Guarana, A. R. M., Deviation in marriage either by refraining from or delaying with explanations from Jordan's amended personal status law 2010. *Islamic University Journal of Legal Sciences*, 2020. 28(3): p. 265-290.
- [24]. Shahimat, F. T., The predictive ability of irrational thoughts and some demographic variables in delaying the age of marriage. 2014, Yarmouk University, Jordan. Master's thesis.
- [25]. Watson, D., Hubbard, B., & Wiese, D., General traits of personality and affectivity as predictors of satisfaction in intimate relationships: Evidence from self-and partner-ratings. *Journal of Personality*, 2000. 68(3): p. 413-449.
- [26]. Gattis, K. S., Berns, S., Simpson, L. E., & Christensen, A., Birds of a feather or strange birds? Ties among personality dimensions, similarity, and marital quality. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 2004. 18(4): p. 564-574.
-