

The Phenomena of the Delaying Age of First Marriage and its Implications for Population Growth in North Sumatra

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Abstract

This study investigates the postponement of the age of first marriage and its implications for population growth and demographic structure in North Sumatra Province. The research utilizes qualitative methods to obtain clear and in-depth information. It employs secondary data collected and published by other sources to analyze trends in delaying the age of first marriage and its impact on population growth. Findings indicate a significant trend of delaying first marriage, especially among youth, with an observed increase in 2023. Factors such as access to education, changes in social values, and economic conditions influence the decision to postpone marriage. This postponement affects fertility and population growth, potentially reducing the birth rate. However, despite the decline in birth rates, population growth continues due to factors such as migration. The study emphasizes the importance of considering various factors, including migration, in demographic analysis and development planning to accommodate the complex dynamics of the population and meet the needs of the community comprehensively.

Keywords: the delay in marriage age, level of education, population growth

INTRODUCTION

Population growth in North Sumatra, as in other parts of Indonesia, has become an important concern in national development strategies. One factor that has a significant effect on population growth is the age at first marriage. A younger age of first marriage can increase the rate of population growth because more children will be born. Therefore, delaying the age of first marriage is an important strategy in controlling population growth. In recent years, the phenomenon of delaying the age of first marriage has increased in North Sumatra. This can be caused by several factors, such as increased public awareness about the importance of education and career before marriage, as well as increased awareness about the importance of a better quality of life before marriage. In addition, the delay in the age of first marriage can also be caused by changes in the social and cultural values of the community, such as increased awareness of the importance of independence and awareness of the importance of a better quality of life before marriage.

However, delaying the age of first marriage also has significant implications for population growth. If the age of first marriage is younger, the population growth rate will also increase. Therefore, it is important to understand the factors that influence the postponement of the age of first marriage and its implications for population growth in North Sumatra. We will also study the factors that influence the postponement of the age of first marriage, such as education, and public awareness about the importance of education and career before marriage. Education plays an important role in changing people's paradigm regarding the age of first marriage. Improved access to and quality of education can provide opportunities for individuals, especially women, to develop the independence,

skills, and knowledge needed to make better decisions about marriage and family. By having adequate education, individuals are more likely to be able to pursue their aspirations before entering into marital commitments. Comprehensive sexual education is also important to help individuals understand the importance of reproductive health, responsible decision-making regarding sexual relations, and prevention of unwanted pregnancies.

In this research, we will study the phenomenon of delaying the age of first marriage in North Sumatra and its implications for population growth. By doing so, we can find out how delaying the age of first marriage can help control population growth in North Sumatra and how effective strategies can be implemented to raise public awareness about the importance of education and careers before marriage.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research falls into the category of qualitative research, which aims to understand phenomena about the experiences of research subjects such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, and others thoroughly and by using descriptions in the form of words and language in a natural context. Qualitative research relies on various scientific methods to find and analyze data, data sources, and facts obtained from primary sources such as literature (books, journals, internet), as well as references relevant to the research theme (Moleong, 2017). In this study, researchers used secondary data, which is data that has been previously collected and published by other parties. Secondary data refers to information collected by other individuals or entities, not by researchers who are conducting research. This secondary data is used to analyze the phenomenon of the trend of delaying the age of first marriage and its implications for population growth in the North Sumatra region.

After the data and data sources were collected, the researcher analyzed the data, made comparisons, and drew conclusions about the implications of delaying the age of first marriage on population demography in North Sumatra. This study aims to uncover and explore the phenomenon of delaying the age of first marriage and its impact on the demographic characteristics of the population in North Sumatra.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Law No. 16/2019 on the Amendment to Law No. 1/1974 on Marriage states that the minimum age for marriage, for both men and women, is 19 years old. This change is an increase from the previous provision which stipulated that the minimum age of marriage for women was 16 years old. The age of 19 is considered a more physically and mentally mature age for a woman to enter into marriage. In terms of gender, the age of first marriage for young men is two years older than for women.

In general, the development of the age of first marriage among youth in North Sumatra shows a movement that tends to increase in 2021 and increase dramatically in 2023 (Figure 1). This means that there is a delay in the age of first marriage among young people in North Sumatra both in total, namely men, and women, both in villages and cities.

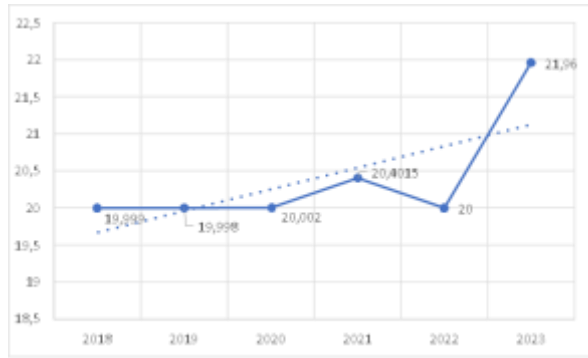


Figure 1. Development of Age at First Marriage of Youth Total in North Sumatra

Source: Indonesian Youth Statistics data processed by the author, 2024

Based on the last six years, the delay in the age of first marriage among young people in North Sumatra increased dramatically in 2023 with an average percentage of 21.96%. The delay in the age of first marriage began to slowly increase in 2021 with a total average percentage of 20.40%. The delay in the age of first marriage in North Sumatra had decreased in 2022, but experienced a drastic increase in 2023. So that this can be a major study that must be considered. The distribution of age at first marriage in North Sumatra by age group, village classification, and gender is presented in table 1 and table 2.

Table 1. Percentage of Youth by Province and Age at First Marriage, 2023

Provinsi	Kelompok Umur (Tahun)		Jumlah
	19-21	22-24	
	Sumatera Utara	12,97	

Source: Indonesian Youth Statistics data processed by the author, 2023

Table 2. Average Age at First Marriage of Youth by Province and characteristics, 2023

Provinsi	Klasifikasi Desa		Jenis Kelamin		Jumlah
	Perkotaan	Perdesaan	Laki-Laki	Perempuan	
Sumatera Utara	22,23	21,67	23,06	21,38	21,96

Source: Indonesian Youth Statistics data processed by the author, 2023

Table 1 shows the percentage of data by province in North Sumatra which shows that the largest percentage of the age of first marriage in North Sumatra falls in the age category 19-21 years with a percentage of 33.03%. Meanwhile, Table 2 shows the difference in age at first marriage based on village classification and gender. In the village classification, the average age of first marriage for youth living in urban areas is slightly older than in rural areas, it can be seen that the delay in first marriage for youth occurs more in urban areas than in rural areas. An average age of first marriage in the village of 21.67 while in urban areas it is older with an average age of first marriage of 22.23.

Average age at first marriage of youth by gender. It shows that males are older for first marriage than females, which means that males delay their first marriage more than females. The average age at first marriage for male youth is 23.06 while the average age for female youth is 21.38. This can be seen as a big difference in the age of first marriage between male and female youth.

Contribution of Education to Age of Marriage

Education is one of the factors that can influence the age of first marriage in youth because education has a strong influence on the maturation of the age of first marriage. The higher the level of education, the more opportunities to participate in the labor market, especially for women (Inderayani & Sjafii, 2012).

A person's level of education will have an impact on the opportunity to work and earn a better living. The better socio-economic condition of the community is shown through the success of the community's education level. The longer a person is in education, the more they can delay the need to marry because they are more oriented towards education and decent work. In urban or developed communities, the level of education is included in the high socio-economic costs. This is because education is considered a form of investment for the next generation of society. The following is the distribution of school enrollment by age group.

Table 3. Table 3. Percentage of Population Age 7-24 Years by School Age Group, and School Participation (Male + Female) (Percent) in North Sumatra

School Age Group	Percentage of Population Aged 7–24 Years by School Age Group, and School Participation (Male + Female) (Percent)					
	No/Never					
	Attended School		Still in school		No More School	
	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
7-12	0.36	0.40	99.50	99.51	0.14	0.08
13-15	0.27	0.21	96.78	96.76	2.95	3.03
16-18	0.31	0.20	78.66	79.25	21.03	20.55
19-24	0.76	0.22	26.60	28.61	72.64	71.17
7-24	0.46	0.28	73.19	73.90	26.35	25.82

Source: Indonesian Youth Statistics data processed by the author, 2023

Based on Table 3. In 2023, the low level of out-of-school enrollment among youth was experienced at the age of 19-24 years, at which age youth had completed their high school but did not continue to college with a percentage of 71.17%. This percentage decreased compared to 2022 with a total percentage of youth who did not continue to college more than in 2023 at 72.64%.

While the age group of 19-24 years, youth who are still in school in 2023 as much as 28.61% is slightly more than in 2022 as much as 26.60%. From the total percentage of school participation (male + female) based on the age group 19-24 years, which is the age at which youth can potentially have their first marriage, it can be seen that more North Sumatra youth aged 19-24 years do not continue their education to college. The total percentage of youth no longer in school in 2023 with the total percentage of youth in school in 2023, experienced a large percentage difference of 42.56%.

In general, the highest level of education completed has an inverse relationship with youth first marriages, especially for female youth first childbirth at age less than 21 years, and has a linear relationship with female youth first childbirth at age 21-30 years. This means that the higher the highest level of education completed or the longer youth (male+female) have been in school, the lower the percentage of youth who marry at first age and the lower the percentage of female youth who give birth at less than 21 years of age. On the other hand, the higher the level of higher education or the more years of schooling completed, the higher

the percentage of young women who gave birth at the age of 21-30 years. Therefore, it can be seen that when young people continue their education up to college, it can delay the age of first marriage for both male and female youth.

This is in accordance with previous research which found that the level of education in youth can be a factor in determining the age of first marriage, namely the lower the level of education, the more it encourages young marriage and vice versa (Ariyani, 2011) and (Naibaho, 2012).

Implications on Population Growth

The trend of delaying first marriage is a social phenomenon where individuals delay the age of their first marriage to an older age than previous generations. In the context of fertility, this trend has significant implications. Delaying the age of first marriage could potentially lead to a decline in fertility rates, as age is an important factor in women's reproductive quality. The older a person is, the lower the likelihood of having children, and the higher the risk of pregnancy and birth complications. In addition, delaying first marriage can also change reproductive patterns, with smaller families or even no children at all. This can impact the demographic structure of a population, with the potential to lower population growth rates.

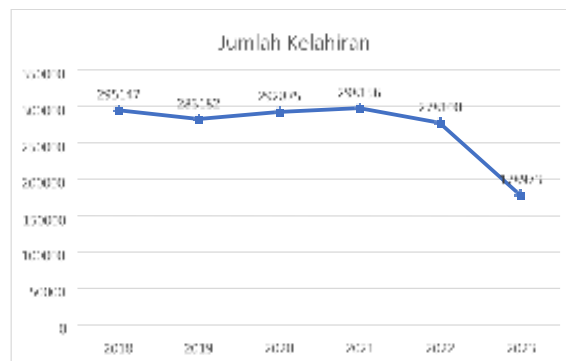


Figure 2. Number of baby births in North Sumatra
Source: Central Statistics Agency of North Sumatra

Based on Figure 2 above, it can be seen that the number of baby births in North Sumatra Province in 2022 reached 278,100 people, then experienced a drastic decline to 178,973 thousand people in the following year. The decline was influenced by the phenomenon of the trend of delaying the age of the first marriage that occurred in 2023. The increasing number of individuals who postpone the age of first marriage in that year contributes to the decline in the birth rate. Many individuals have reached the age of maturity for marriage but choose to delay it for various reasons, such as focusing on education, career, or financial stability. This phenomenon reflects changing social values and preferences in society, where individuals are more likely to pursue personal achievements before entering married life and having children. The longer individuals delay marriage and having children, the less time they have available to have offspring.

According to Ramli Utina et al (2014), the relationship between age at first marriage and fertility is negative. This means that the younger a person marries, the longer the reproductive period and the more children are born. This factor has a significant impact on fertility rates, both at the individual level and the population as a whole. When a woman marries at a younger age, she has more time to go through the reproductive period and have children. This results in a greater likelihood of having many children. On the other hand, if the

age of first marriage is delayed, a woman's reproductive period is shorter, which reduces the likelihood of having many children. In this context, delaying the age of first marriage can have a direct impact on female fertility rates and broadly affect the demographic structure of the population.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), fertility is defined as the event of a woman giving birth to a live child. Fertility refers to the reproductive ability or birth rate in a population, particularly in terms of the number of children born to a woman during her lifetime. Fertility is one of the indicators of population growth because fertility is one of the factors that increase the population besides in-migration (Imelda Hutasoit, 2017). Thus, a high fertility rate will result in a greater number of births, which in turn will lead to rapid population growth. High fertility can also create a younger population, with a higher percentage of children in the age structure of the population.

Conversely, low fertility will result in fewer births, which can lead to a slowdown in population growth or even a decline in population in the long run. The following is the development of population in North Sumatra Province, namely:



Figure 3. Population Growth in the Province North Sumatra
Source: Central Statistics Agency of North Sumatra

Based on the data shown in Figure 3, it can be seen that the population has increased every year. However, Figure 2 shows that there is a drastic decrease in the number of births in 2023. Although the decrease in birth rate should potentially reduce population growth, in reality, the population continues to increase. This suggests that other factors, such as migration, play a role in determining population growth in the region. The continued increase in population despite the drastic decline in births can be explained by migration into the region. Significant in-migration can lead to an increase in population, even if the birth rate declines. This migration can be caused by various factors, such as job opportunities, health facilities, or other social and economic factors.

Population growth is influenced by the number of babies born (adding to the population), but will simultaneously be reduced by the number of deaths that occur in all age groups. Meanwhile, migration also plays a role in population growth. In-migration to an area will increase population growth, and conversely, out-migration from an area will decrease population growth in the area concerned (Azizah, 2018). Thus, a decrease in the birth rate does not necessarily mean a decrease in population growth if there are other factors at play, such as migration. This emphasizes the importance of considering various factors in demographic analysis and development planning so that policies can accommodate the complex dynamics of the population and the needs of society as a whole.

CONCLUSIONS

The results show that youth in North Sumatra tend to delay marriage when they have the opportunity to pursue higher education, prepare for a career, or achieve financial stability. These factors contribute to an increase in the age of first marriage, which significantly affects reproductive patterns and birth rates in society. Furthermore, delaying the age of first marriage has a significant impact on fertility and population growth. This delay can lead to a decrease in fertility, as age at first marriage and a woman's reproductive age have a direct effect on the number and quality of reproductions. Women who delay marriage tend to have fewer or no children. This affects the demographic structure of the population, potentially lowering population growth rates and creating an older population. However, a decrease in the birth rate does not necessarily mean a decrease in overall population growth. Despite the drastic decrease in the number of births, population growth still occurs due to migration factors. Significant in-migration can lead to an increase in population, even if the birth rate decreases. This shows the complexity of factors affecting population dynamics and highlights the importance of considering various aspects in demographic analysis. Thus, the main conclusion is that delaying the age of first marriage affects demographic structure and population growth, but its impact can be modified by other factors such as migration. This emphasizes the importance of holistic development planning, which takes into account social, economic, and demographic factors as a whole to achieve sustainable and inclusive development.

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