



**MUSLIMS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS DELAYED  
MARRIAGE: A CROSS GENERATIONAL STUDY OF  
STAFF AND STUDENTS OF INTERNATIONAL  
ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY, MALAYSIA (IIUM)**

**BY**

**KARAMAT KELANI**

**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology and  
Anthropology**

**Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and  
Human Science  
International Islamic University Malaysia**

**JUNE 2014**

## **ABSTRACT**

Muslim society had remained conservative on the issue of marriage, but in recent times this has given way to modernity with its emerging challenges. In the Muslim societies today, it is not uncommon albeit to a lesser degrees than in the Western societies to see homosexuality (gay marriage and lesbianism), single parenthood, cohabitation, late marriage and resentment for marriage or non-marriage to be practised. In light of these developments, this thesis aims to cross examine perceptions of Muslims towards delayed marriage in order to find value shift between two generations of Muslims. It is an undeniable fact that with demographic imbalance and economic crisis among other things, the age of marriage has risen tremendously throughout the world. To study this phenomenon, the staff and students of International Islamic University Malaysia are used as a case study. As the population is stratified into samples of old and young generations with a total sample of 310 respondents, it is found that the younger generation is favourably disposed towards delayed marriage while the older generation is more conservative towards delayed marriage. The younger generation perceive that marrying early is not encouraging for various reasons such as pursuit of higher education, preoccupation with career, financial stability/ independence, and availability of right partner among other things. However, the older generation's perception is in stark contrast to the younger generation's. Their position is informed by the fact that Islam has made provision for everything and to be successful in this world and the here-after, one needs to adhere to the Islamic teachings. They contend that it is possible to achieve all those factors against early marriage within marriage itself though willing to concede that it is quite difficult with myriad of challenges facing contemporary society. Lastly, some recommendations are given on ways the two positions can be harmonised for the betterment of the Muslim society.

## خلاصة البحث

بقيت مجتمعات المسلمين محافظة على مسألة الزواج، ولكن في الآونة الأخيرة تغير الوضع بسبب الحداثة مع التحديات المنبثقة منها. في مجتمعات المسلمين اليوم، فإنه ليس من غير المألوف -- ولو بدرجة أقل مما كانت عليه في المجتمعات الغربية -- الشذوذ الجنسي (زواج مثلي الجنس والسحاق)، ووحدة الأبوة أو الأمومة، والمعايشة غير الشرعية والزواج المتأخر والاستياء للزواج أو عدمه. في ضوء هذه التطورات، تهدف هذه الأطروحة إلى دراسة تصورات المسلمين نحو تأخير الزواج من أجل إيجاد تحول قيمي بين جيلين من المسلمين. هذه حقيقة لا يمكن إنكارها أنه مع عدم التوازن الديمغرافي والأزمة الاقتصادية من بين أمور أخرى، ارتفع توقيت الزواج بشكل كبير في جميع أنحاء العالم. لدراسة هذه الظاهرة، تم استخدام الموظفين والطلاب من الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية بماليزيا كعينة الدراسة. إن المستجيبين الذين بلغ عددهم 310 قُسموا إلى مجموعتين: مجموعة من الجيل القديم وأخرى من جيل الشباب. وتبين أن جيل الشباب يؤيد الزواج المتأخر، في حين أن الجيل الأكبر سناً أكثر تحفظاً تجاه الزواج المتأخر. جيل الشباب يرى أن الزواج المبكر ليس مشجعاً لأسباب مختلفة مثل مواصلة التعليم العالي، والانشغال الوظيفي، والاستقرار/ الاستقلال المالي، وتوافر الشريك المناسب من بين أمور أخرى. فتصور الجيل الأكبر سناً في تناقض صارخ مع تصور جيل الشباب. موقف الجيل الأكبر سناً من (هذه القضية) مؤيد بحقيقة أن الإسلام قد أعطى الحكم الشرعي لكل شيء، وللنجاح في هذه الدنيا والآخرة يحتاج المرء إلى التمسك بالتعاليم الإسلامية. هم (الجيل الأكبر سناً) يؤكدون بأنه من الممكن تحقيق كل هذه العوامل ضد الزواج المبكر في إطار الزواج نفسه، على الرغم من اعترافهم بأن حصولها صعب جداً مع وجود عدد كبير من التحديات التي تواجه المجتمع المعاصر. وأخيراً، تم إعطاء بعض التوصيات بشأن سبل يمكن عن طريقها مواءمة الموقفين من أجل تحسين أحوال مجتمعات المسلمين.

## APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation of Karamat Kelani has been approved by the following:

---

A.H.M. Zehadul Karim  
Supervisor

---

Hazizan B. Md. Noon  
Internal Examiner

---

Farid Uddin Ahamed  
External Examiner

---

Elwathig Saeed Mirghani  
Chairman

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degree at IIUM or other institutions.

Karamat Kelani

Signature.....

Date .....

**INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA**

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION  
OF FAIR USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

Copyright © 2014 by Karamat Kelani All rights reserved.

**MUSLIMS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS DELAYED MARRIAGE:  
A CROSS GENERATIONAL STUDY OF STAFF AND STUDENTS  
OF INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY, MALAYSIA  
(IIUM)**

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below.

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may only be used by others writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or the library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purposes.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieval system and supply copies of the unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

Affirmed by Karamat Kelani.

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date

*All praise is for Allah who makes all things possible; who teaches man the use of pen,  
teaches him what he knows not.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful. He that doesn't give thanks and show gratitude to people cannot be thankful to Allah. Therefore, first and foremost, I would like to express my deep appreciation and thanks to my academic supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. A.H.M. Zehadul Karim for his valuable guidance, support, patience, and kindness. It is not gainsaying that this work might not have seen the light of the day if he had not taken me under his wings at the time the work was floundering like a ship in the ocean of uncertainty. Thank you Prof. for your amazing supervision during the course of this work and for always being available whenever I needed your help even during inopportune time.

I would also like to thank Dr. Nurazzura Bt. Mohd. Diah for her support and help especially in making sure that the thesis was finished on time. For both of you thank you for your wonderful relationship and it was a great pleasure to work with you.

I would also like to thank the entire staff of the department of Sociology; specifically, my thanks to Prof. Dr. Jamil Farooqui from whom the lesson of conceptualizing society within the ambit of Islam was learnt; Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hazizan B. Md. Noon whom I so much respect and admire for his humility and more importantly for his ability to lay bare the essence of Islamization of knowledge; and last but not least, Dr. Azlan B. Mohd. Noor, Dr. Pute Raimah Makol Abdul and Dr. Rohaizah Rokis for their contributions towards my studies; to you all, I am highly indebted.

Many thanks to the staff of the Management Services Division (MSD) and Academic Management and Admission Division (AMAD) for their assistance in accessing the names of staff and students used as data in this research.

I will eternally be grateful to my mother and my siblings for their financial and moral support towards the success of this study. My special thanks goes to Mrs Sanni Mistura (my sister from another mother) for the great role she played towards the success of this thesis. Thanks are also due to Alhaji Liasu and Mrs Alabi who ensured that I didn't miss home much, as well as numerous others who contributed one way or the other to the success of this work.

Last but not least, I would like to express deep appreciation to my jewels: Sofiyah, Moryam, the little one Habeebah who had to bear the brunt of loneliness while I attended to the completion of this thesis and of course my dear husband for his understanding and perseverance throughout.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	ii
Abstract in Arabic .....	iii
Approval Page .....	iv
Declaration Page .....	v
Copyright .....	vi
Dedication .....	vii
Acknowledgements .....	viii
List of Tables .....	x
List of Figures .....	xii
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background to the Study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	10
1.3 Research Objectives .....	13
1.4 Research Questions.....	13
1.5 Research Hypotheses .....	14
1.6 Significance of the Study.....	14
1.7 Organization of the study .....	16
1.8 Definitions of Terms and Clarification.....	17
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>21</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	21
2.2 Marriage, Modernity, Modernization and Changing Marital Behaviour .....	21
2.3 Cross Cultural Perspective of Delayed Marriage .....	27
2.4 Value shift among Muslims: Evidences .....	31
2.5 Theories on Delayed Marriage	
2.5.1 Structural-Functional Theory .....	34
2.5.2 Social Exchange Theory.....	36
2.5.3 Conflict Theory .....	36
2.6 Theoretical Framework .....	38
2.6.1 Causes of Delayed Marriage .....	38
2.6.1.1 Education/Career .....	39
2.6.1.2 Relative Economic Decline of Men .....	42
2.6.1.3 Urbanization .....	43
2.6.1.4 Mass Media .....	45
2.6.1.5 Lack of Suitable Partners.....	47
2.6.1.6 Lack of Parental Social Control/Dearth of Arranged Marriage .....	48
2.6.1.7 Social Acceptance of Delayed Marriage .....	50
2.6.1.8 Parental Factors .....	52
2.6.1.9 Gender Norms and Stereotypes .....	53
2.6.1.10 Changes in the Values of Child Bearing and Rearing .....	55

2.6.2 Implications of Delayed Marriage.....	59
2.6.2.1 Implications on the Society .....	59
2.6.2.2 Implications of Delayed Marriage on Personal Social Lives of Muslims .....	62
2.6.2.2.1 Cohabitation.....	64
2.6.2.2.2 Pre-marital Sex .....	68
2.6.2.2.3 Risk for HIV/AIDS Infection among Never Married People .....	69
2.6.2.2.4 Unintended Pregnancies/Out of Wedlock Births .....	69
2.6.2.2.5 Health.....	74
2.6.2.2.6 Psycho-Social .....	78
2.7 Summary of the Chapter .....	81
<b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>83</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	83
3.2 Research Design .....	83
3.3 Population and Sampling.....	85
3.4 Instrumentation.....	88
3.5 Data Collection Procedure.....	100
3.6 Data Analysis Technique.....	103
3.7 Summary of the Chapter.....	104
<b>CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA .....</b>	<b>105</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	105
4.2 Results and Analysis of Data.....	105
4.3 Descriptive Statistics .....	109
4.4 Hypotheses Testing.....	131
4.5 Summary of the Chapter .....	138
<b>CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>140</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	140
5.2 Discussion on Findings.....	141
5.3 Contributions of the Study.....	148
5.4 Limitations of the Study.....	150
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>152</b>
APPENDIX I.....	172
APPENDIX II .....	177

## LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
1.1	Trends in Never-Married Malay Muslim Women aged 30-49 Years from 1960- 2000 (in % over Total Population)	7
2.1	Summary of Value Shift among Muslims: Evidences	34
2.2	Trends of Out- of- Wedlock Births in Malaysia, 2006-2011	75
3.1	Distribution of the Respondents	88
3.2	Advantages and Disadvantages of Quantitative Research Method	90
3.3	Item-Total Statistics for Perceptions on Delayed Marriage	96
3.4	Item-Total Statistics for Perceptions on Causes of Delayed Marriage	96
3.5	Item-Total Statistics for Perceptions on Positive Implications of Delayed Marriage	97
3.6	Item-Total Statistics for Perceptions on Negative Implications of Delayed Marriage	98
4.1	Generation of Respondents	109
4.2	Gender of Respondents	109
4.3	Marital Status of Respondents	110
4.4	Career Status of Respondents	110
4.5	Kulliyah of Respondents	111
4.6	Perceptions of Muslims on delayed marriage	113
4.7	Perceptions of Muslims on education/career as a cause of delayed marriage	115
4.8	Perceptions of Muslims on ideology that cause delayed marriage	117
4.9	Perceptions of Muslims on arranged marriage	118
4.10	Perceptions of Muslims on gender norms and stereotypes	120

4.11	Perceptions of Muslims on gender norms and stereotypes	122
4.12	Perceptions of Muslims on value of children	123
4.13	Perceptions of Muslims on social acceptance of delayed marriage	124
4.14	Perceptions of Muslims on cost of marriage	125
4.15	Perceptions of Muslims on positive implications of delayed marriage	127
4.16	Perceptions of Muslims on delayed marriage and cohabitation	128
4.17	Perceptions of Muslims on delayed marriage and its effect on fertility	129
4.18	Perceptions of Muslims on delayed marriage and its effect on children	130
4.19	Perceptions of Muslims on delayed marriage and its psycho-social effect	131
4.20	Perceptions of Muslims on delayed marriage and its effect on children	133
4.21	Difference in the perceptions of Muslims towards delayed marriage	134
4.22	Difference in the perceptions of Muslims toward positive implications of delayed marriage	136
4.23	Difference in the perceptions of Muslims toward negative implications of delayed marriage	138

## LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure No</u>		<u>Page No</u>
1.1	The Median Age at First Marriage in United States between 1960-2011	5
2.1	Illustration of Causes of Delayed Marriage	58
2.2	The Total Fertility Rate, 2010	62
2.3	Percentage of Married Adults and Unmarried Cohabiting Adults in the Reproductive Age (18-49 years) in all Regions of the World	66
2.4	The Great Crossover	73
2.5	Illustration of Implications of Delayed Marriage	81

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Family is a fundamental social institution and it is the basic reproductive unit of the society which performs many socio-cultural roles as well. The roles that a family plays in the society cannot be over-emphasized and most importantly, it is committed to the socialization of children who are the products of the institution, thereby promoting stability in the society. Lippman and Bradford describe the family as a core social institution that occupies a central place in the lives of men, women, and children around the world: It is

1. A source of support and sometimes an obstacle, to individual and collective achievements;
2. A unit of economic production and consumption;
3. An emotional haven that can sometimes be a source of emotional strain;
4. A vehicle for extending care giving and culture across the generation for better and for worse (Lippman and Bradford in World Family Map Project, 2013).

The family is the oldest of all human institutions, and entire civilizations have flourished or disappeared depending on the situation as to whether family life was strong or weak (Maqsood, 2001). Pan Pacific & South East Asia Women's Association (1993) states that family is an important decision-making unit responsible for the types and forms of support necessary in shaping the future generations of the nation. Murdock (1949) defined the family as a social group characterized by common

residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults. Malinowski (1927) gave the definition of family mapped onto i) a bounded set of people who recognize each other and are distinguishable from other groups, ii) a definite physical space, a hearth and home; and iii) a particular set of emotions, family love. Anthony Giddens (2009) regarded family as a group of individuals related to one another by blood ties, marriage or adoption, who form an economic unit, the adult members of which are responsible for the upbringing of children.

From religious point of view, Confucianism looks at family with a focus of their own ethics, which holds that a basic moral principle, xiushen (self-improvement), can be pursued only within the confines of the family (Asia Demography, 2011). Hammudah (1993: 19) in his book titled *The Family Structure in Islam* defines the term from Islamic perspective and regarded it as “a special kind of structure whose principles are related to one another through blood ties and/or marital relationship, and whose relatedness is of such a nature as to entail ‘mutual expectations’ that are prescribed by law, and internalized by the individual”.

Family is basically an outcome of marriage<sup>1</sup> and in the traditional society, marriage was regarded to be the union of two opposite sexes of two different families divinely enjoined for the support of procreation and stability of the society. According to Giddens (2009), marriage normally forms the basis for family of procreation—that is, it is expected that the married couples will produce and bring up children. According to World Family Map Project (2013: 14), “in many societies,

---

<sup>1</sup> Marriage in the context of this writing refers to the conventional meaning of marriage and does not include same-sex marriage.

marriage has played an important role in providing a stable context for bearing and rearing children, and for integrating fathers into the lives of their children”. Furthermore, Morgan (2005) states that there is no record of societies without marriage and families; all societies that have survived have been built on marriage. In addition, Dhimi and Sheik (2000) assert that the Muslim family is a divinely inspired institution, with marriage at its core point.

However, the purpose of marriage varies from one individual to another and from one society to another and recently it has gone through some tremendous changes. Some young people enter into marriage because of religious reasons; others marry in response to social or societal pressure or for numerous other reasons. Tepperman (cited in Quah, 2009), suggests that marriage is considered an important life event for two reasons: first—the personal motive—which is to secure a keel for the emotional life of individuals and second, the social motive—to ensuring the socio-economic stability and progress of family, kin and community (Quah, 2009).

In Muslim societies, marriage is an obligation on every Muslim who has the economic capability because it is considered a religious duty prescribed by the Holy Qur’an. Hammudah (2008: 52) puts it that “the normal, natural course of behaviour for a Muslim is to establish a conjugal family of procreation”. Many Qur’anic verses and Prophetic *hadith* (sayings of the Prophet) point to the fact that marriage is an act of piety. One of these verses is as follows:

“And marry the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. If they should be poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty and Allah is all-encompassing and knowing”.  
(Qur’an, An-Nur: 32)

And one *hadith* of the Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H) says that:

“When a Muslim marries, he has perfected half of his religion; so let him be God-minded with respect to the other half”. (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol.7, Book 71, No.662)

Throughout the world, marriage behavioural pattern has changed tremendously compared to the traditional period. It is no longer a phenomena peculiar to European continents; it has now become a major source of concern in Asian countries, although not yet an alarming problem in Africa. Notable among these new behaviours are: homosexuality, lesbianism, single parenthood, cohabitation, late marriage and resentment for marriage or non-marriage (Almond, 2006; Morgan, 2005). Emphasising the importance of marriage among Muslims, the former Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir in the book titled *The Voice of Asia*, contrasted Asians’ respect for marriage with that of other non-Western and Asian societies with “the breakdown of established institutions and diminished respect for marriage, family values, elders, and important customs” in the West. Dr Mahathir claims that Western societies are riddled with single-parent families with homosexuality, with cohabitation (Mahathir Mohamad & Shintaro Ishihara, 1995).

Traditionally, adulthood is defined by three states; financial independence, marriage, and starting a family (Chao & Gardner, 2007). However, today’s young adults are delaying marriage and parenthood, even when they have the means to do so. According to the Current Population Survey (2011) nowadays, both men and women are marrying later than they did in the past. Figure 1.1 below presents the median age at first marriage in the United States between 1960-2011. There are two lines indicated by red and blue colours. The blue trend line shows the median age for men and the red trend line presents the median age for women. According to the lines, the median age at first marriage rose from 22.8 in 1960 to almost 29 years for men and from 20.3 to almost 27 years for women in 2011.

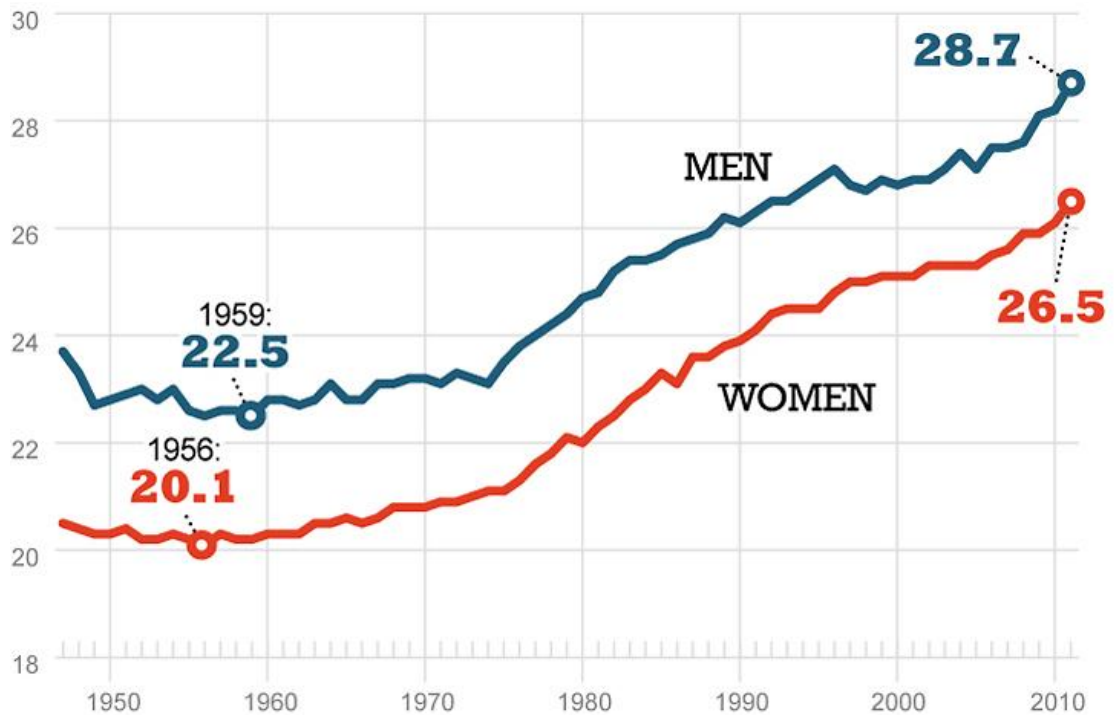


Figure 1: The Median Age at First Marriage in United States between: 1960-2011  
 Source: U.S Census Bureau Current Population survey (2011). Adapted from familyfacts.org.

Generally, the trend at the age of first marriage in contemporary societies among the educated is on the rise, for the reasons of long stay in school, career pursuit, urbanization, exposure to mass media and so on. Zarinah Mahari (2011) concludes that socio-economic growth especially in education has a great connection to development and modernisation process that leads to the rising number of women delaying marriage.

Modernization has its root in three stages as enunciated by August Comte in mentioning about positivism, and according to him, positivism represents the third stage where scientific explanation of any phenomenon is given the basis for rationality. It is associated with the rise of the scientific world view. According to Badri (1997), modernization is the dazzling ‘external’ and dramatic progress brought about by the scientific revolution and its spectacular technology. “Historically,

modernization is the process of change towards those types of social, economic, and political systems that have developed in Western Europe and North America from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth and have then spread to other countries and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the South American, Asian and African continents” (Eisenstadt, 1966: 1). It is generally believed that the West is superior to the third world in all social, political and economic aspects therefore the underdeveloped nations that require to be accorded the status of being modern need to adopt their scientific revolution (Hulme & Turner, 1990). Modernization involves a process of secularization that systematically challenges religious institutions, beliefs and practices, substituting them with those of reason and science. It therefore places higher value on material than spiritual culture which has its base in traditional values but incongruent with modern living.

Many Muslim societies, for example Turkey, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Malaysia are striving towards becoming modernized societies but they have not been successful as modernization requires adopting Western values. Mumtaz Ali (1999) observed that a few developing and modernizing Muslim countries have neither totally accepted a Western model of development nor have they intended to totally bring up an Islamic model of development and modernization. This has brought about an amalgamation of two cultures that have different ethos thus producing cultural mix-up and dislocation. It therefore poses major problems to the Islamic faith, practices, and way of life.

As non-Western societies industrialize, they resemble Western societies so closely (Aparna, 2005); a phenomenon which is referred to as the modernization paradigm (Rostow, 1963). Malaysia, a Muslim country has taken a giant stride in socio-economic development aiming to become a developed nation by the year 2020.

While striving for rapid economic growth, emphasis is also given to retaining and enhancing social and moral values of the society (PPSEAWA, 1993). However, structural changes as a consequence of rapid socio-economic development have affected all the institutions of the Malaysian society as it happened in the Western societies. These changes have not spared the marriage institution as people now delay marriage or do not want to marry at all. They are only concerned with higher education and career pursuit which they believe will make them financially independent. Leete (1996) mentioned that, increasing in educational and economic opportunities particularly in urban areas has led to a significant shift of the Malay population to urban areas, and this shift has affected the trend of marriage and family formation among Malay women. This contradicts the report that says marriage is a universal phenomenon in Malaysia where only about 5% will remain single by age 40 (PPSEAWA (1993)).

Table 1.1  
Trends in Never-Married Malay-Muslim Women Aged  
30-49 from 1960 to 2000 (in % over total population)<sup>2</sup>

Age	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
30-34	1.1	3.3	7.9	10.2	9.7
35-39	0.8	1.9	3.8	5.8	6.0
40-44	0.6	1.1	2.2	4.1	4.4
45-49	0.6	0.7	1.7	2.3	3.2

Source: Rosita Ibrahim & Zaharah Hassan (2009: 397)

Table 1.1 above reveals that, the number of never married Malay-Muslim women in Peninsular Malaysia, in the age range 30-34 shows rapid increase from 1.1% in 1960 to 9.7% in 2000. During the same period, the proportion of never

---

<sup>2</sup> This table is adapted from Rosita Ibrahim and Zahara Hassan (2009) in their study of “Understanding Singlehood from the Experiences of Never-Married Malay Muslim Women in Malaysia. Never married women refer to women of marriageable age but who are not into any marital relationships whether in the past or at present. Usually, age 30 years is the cut off marriageable age for women.

married among those aged 35-39 rose from 0.8% to 6.0%. Those in the age range 40-44 also witnessed a similar increase from 0.6% to 4.4% and the proportion of women never married among those aged 45-49 rose from 0.6% to 3.2%. Compared to the 1960s, women in the age range 30-49 who married late in the 2000s are affected by modernization, which practically has the most impact on educated Muslim women. Social control on marriage has been relaxed; children are expected to choose their marriage partners by themselves and the criterion for the partner selection is based primarily on romantic love. Jones, (2005) mentioned that, children no longer expect their parents to play a role in the mate selection process and in hastening them to get married when they reach what parents consider to be an appropriate age. Jones (1994) explained that among the Malays in Peninsula Malaysia, the parents were quick to abandon the system of arranged marriages at young ages due to the fact that they benefit from the economic contributions of their daughters who are working. In this regard, the later they postpone marriage the longer their parents would benefit from their earnings.

Since the trend among many Muslim women is not to marry early because of the above reasons, this aroused my interest to study perceptions of Muslims<sup>3</sup> about delayed marriage by comparing the perceptions of two generations of Muslims. To narrow the scope, this study has been conducted on the students and staff of International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM) main campus. It has centred on two sets of people belonging to different generations namely; (i) the older generation and (ii) the younger generation. The older generation (comprises the baby boomers and generation X), people who were born between 1946—1979 while, the younger

---

<sup>3</sup> Muslims here refers to Muslims from different countries of the world who are either staff or students of IIUM and who belong to the older or younger generation.

generation (generation Y—also known as millennial) are the people who were born between (mid 1980's—present).

The study made use of professionals (academic and non-academic staff) in IIUM as the baby boomers and generation X while the undergraduate students were categorized in the generation Y. The rationale for choosing IIUM for this study is that it was easier to get Muslim professionals and students belonging to the said age groups or generations. Besides this, it is located in the metropolitan city of Kuala Lumpur, which is among the most modernized areas in Malaysia. Muslims belonging to two generations were chosen because the era in which people are born affects the development of their views of the world (Codrington, 2008). Thus, the older and younger generations were chosen in order to focus on intergenerational change in perception, as generational change leads to value change.

International Islamic University Malaysia is one of the public universities in Malaysia which was established in 1983. At present, it is located in Gombak, a district in the state of Selangor. The university has staff strength of about 3,000 and approximately 16,000 undergraduate students who are international students from 125 countries in the world and are spread throughout thirteen faculties also known as Kulliyahs. IIUM has several campuses each with its own specialization, spread across several states of Malaysia. Its main campus is located in Gombak in the city of Kuala Lumpur, which is the capital of Malaysia. Gombak Campus has eight Kulliyahs namely; Kulliyah of Architecture & Environmental Design (KAED), Kulliyah of Engineering (KOE), Kulliyah of Information & Communication Technology (KICT), Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws (AIKOL), Kulliyah of Economics & Management Sciences (KENMS), Kulliyah of Language and

Management (KLM), Institute of Education (INSTED) and Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Science (KIRKHS).

IIUM professionals comprise both academic and non-academic staff at management level, from different parts of the world. The academic staff in this category includes all the deans of Kulliyyahs and centres and head of divisions as well as the lecturers, while the non-academics in the category include the directors, the executive directors, the heads and professionals working under them.

Apart from perceptions on delayed marriage, the scope of this study also covered the perceptions on the causes of delayed marriage among Muslims as well as perceptions on the implications of delayed marriage on Muslim society and also on personal and social lives of the Muslims. The essence is to provide us with a clear picture of the extent of value shift among the two generations of Muslims in this study.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In recent times, researchers have given serious attention to the study of delayed marriage both in the West and Muslim countries as the trend of marriage portrays an increase in age at first marriage and non-marriage.

In Malaysia and especially in a city like Kuala Lumpur, incidence of delayed marriage is high although it is less pronounced among the Muslims compared to the non-Muslims. Tey (2007) believes that the effects of socio-economic development on marriage postponement and non-marriage have been stronger for non-Malays compared to Malays (Muslims). The Malays seriously uphold the tenets of Islam; this religious expression manifests in all ramifications of their lives. Shari'ah is applied to issues like marriage, divorce and custody among others. Under the Shari'ah law (for

Muslims), the minimum age of marriage for a woman is 16 years and for a man is 18 years (World Health Organization, 2005). As a result of increased educational and employment opportunities, men and women marry later than these ages. Astonishingly, some Muslim women in their 30s and 40s have yet to marry. This generated a lot of debates in the past and suggestions were made by the religious leaders on how to deal with this problem. Unfortunately, efforts mounted by the government to deal with this problem seem not to have solved the problem as there continues to be an increase in age at marriage.

The most important implication of delayed marriage is delayed childbearing which consequently affects the population growth. According to a report from the Social Issues Research Centre, United Kingdom (2009), more have been practicing delayed marriage until their late twenties or early thirties and consequently it has shown direct impact on having children and later have fewer children. This violates the value that is placed on children in Islam. Children are the most valuable assets a family can have as they are regarded as mercy and ‘gift’ from God.

Apart from this, delayed marriage may lead to a change in the sequence of sexual initiation and marriage (Blanc & Way, 1998), the likelihood of young people having multiple sexual partners’ increases thereby increasing the likelihood of the spread of HIV/AIDS (Caldwell & Caldwell 1993; Meekers & Klein, 2002). In addition, Jones (2005) asserts that delayed marriage is associated with a longer period of singlehood among both men and women and regarded the period as extended adolescent period. According to him, the extended adolescence through delayed marriage has now become a major pre-occupation of parents, community leaders, policy makers and government. The period is problematic as Xenos, (1990) reported