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## AN ANALYSIS ON PERCEPTION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TOWARD CHILDFREE MARRIAGE

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### Abstract

Childfree has become an increasingly preferred choice among married couples, and this growing trend may significantly affect national demographics by shrinking the working-age population, raising dependency ratios, and placing greater financial strain on social support systems, ultimately challenging sustainable economic growth. This study explores the perceptions and key factors influencing the childfree choice among Malaysian youth, with university students from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Negeri Sembilan serving as the respondents. Employing a quantitative approach, data were gathered from 217 participants across three campuses to examine the impact of economic, career, health, and lifestyle factors on their reproductive decisions. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 29.0. The findings indicate that health and lifestyle significantly shape the decision to be childfree, whereas economic and career factors do not show a significant effect. The results suggest that students value personal freedom, independence, and quality of life, viewing parenthood as a potential limitation due to its time, financial, and lifestyle constraints. These insights reflect a generational shift from traditional beliefs linking childbearing to financial or career stability. This study contributes valuable empirical evidence on the changing reproductive attitudes of Malaysian youth, offering important implications for policymakers, educators, and social planners in responding to emerging demographic and societal trends.

**Keywords:** Childfree, Voluntary Childlessness, Family Planning, Parenting

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of marriage is multifaceted, evolving, and varying greatly across cultures, religions, and individual beliefs. Marriage is often a foundation for a deep emotional bond and lifelong companionship. It provides a secure base where individuals share life's challenges, joys, and everyday experiences. A strong marital relationship can contribute to personal fulfilment and psychological health, providing stability and belonging. Historically, marriage has been seen as the ideal environment for raising children. It establishes a structured framework for the next generation's upbringing, education, and socialization. Beyond child-rearing, marriage is often associated with passing on family values, traditions, and sometimes property, ensuring continuity across generations. The purpose of marriage, according to these studies, encompasses multiple dimensions. The Islamic perspective highlights building a lasting, happy household and continuing offspring (Sumiati & Jamaluddin, 2023). Marriage is viewed as sacred, aiming to achieve peace, tranquillity, and mutual nurturing between spouses based on love and affection (Sumiati & Jamaluddin, 2023).

Many couples view marriage as a partnership that enables shared financial responsibilities and pooling resources to achieve common goals, whether buying a home, saving for retirement, or

investing in the future. Research suggests that marriage is often viewed as a partnership of equals, with shared financial responsibilities and resource pooling. However, the reality can be more complex. While community property laws support equal ownership of marital wealth (Kelly, 2009), couples who cohabit before marriage are likelier to choose separate property regimes (Vitali & Fraboni, 2022). Marriage establishes a legal framework that defines rights and responsibilities such as inheritance, tax benefits, and medical decision-making, thereby protecting both partners in a variety of circumstances. Marriage is not one-size-fits-all. While traditional reasons like family creation and economic cooperation are still important in many cultures, current perspectives emphasise personal happiness, emotional well-being, and the evolution of individual identity within a committed relationship. Marriage's purpose is ultimately determined by everyone's values, expectations, and life goals.

According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, there was an 11.5% decline in live births in the first quarter of 2025 compared to 2024. The decline in birth rates reflects shifting societal priorities driven by urbanization and modernization. Many couples, particularly in urban areas, now prioritize careers, financial stability, and personal growth over parenthood. Growing social acceptance of childfree marriages, especially among younger generations, supports this trend. Some couples choose adoption for personal, medical, or ethical reasons, while others remain childfree to focus on their relationship, support extended family, or contribute to society through mentorship, education, or community service. This lifestyle shift highlights evolving norms where marriage is increasingly seen as a partnership focus on companionship rather than reproduction.

As fewer children are born, the proportion of elderly individuals grows, leading to an aging society with fewer young, working-age individuals to sustain economic productivity. This demographic shift results in labour shortages, particularly in key industries such as healthcare, manufacturing, and technology, where skilled workers are needed to drive economic growth (Bloom, Canning, & Fink, 2010). With a smaller workforce, businesses may struggle to maintain output, and governments may face challenges sustaining economic momentum. Moreover, a declining working-age population leads to an increased dependency ratio, where fewer taxpayers must support a growing number of retirees. This places significant pressure on social welfare systems, including pensions, healthcare, and elderly care services, which require substantial funding (Lee & Mason, 2011). Without proactive measures, Malaysia could face long-term economic stagnation and increased financial strain on public resources due to its aging population.

Although study on the childfree culture has gained interest in recent years, there is still a significant gap in understanding the factors that motivate individuals, especially Malaysian youth, to choose a childfree life. While some couples choose not to have children for medical reasons, many do so voluntarily, citing economic restraints, career goals, or lifestyle preferences. Key economic concerns include rising living costs, employment uncertainty, and the financial burden of having children, as well as changing society attitudes, gender roles, and personal interests. These individual choices have broader socioeconomic consequences, contributing to decreased birth rates, an ageing population, labour shortages, and growing strain on Malaysia's welfare systems. Understanding public perceptions and cultural narratives about the childfree life is critical in fostering informed discussion and developing appropriate legislation. This study seeks to investigate the motivations behind childfree marriage decisions from the perspective of university students, focusing on four major factors: economic conditions, career development, health considerations, and lifestyle preferences, with the goal of providing empirical insights to inform future policy and planning.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Childlessness can result from both voluntary and involuntary decisions. Voluntary childlessness, often known as being childfree, happens when people or couples decide to postpone or avoid having children. This choice may be driven by financial considerations, a focus on personal development, preferred lifestyle, or concerns about their well-being. Childfree people consciously reject traditional pronatalist values and societal norms that regard reproduction as an important life aim. Instead, they derive meaning from personal development, professional achievements, travel, recreation, and other non-parenting activities (Moore, 2018). Ciesielski (2024) agrees with this viewpoint, claiming that the decision to stay childfree is frequently motivated by a strong desire for autonomy and flexibility. Aracı and Ergun (2025) highlights the influence of evolving cultural and gender norms, noting that contemporary, individualistic societies increasingly enable individuals to challenge conventional life paths, including marriage and parenthood. Choosing to be childfree signifies a broader transformation in societal values, where concepts of adulthood, success, and fulfilment are being redefined beyond the framework of traditional family structures.

Economic background can be one of the factors contributing to a childfree decision. Childbearing can be costly for certain people since raising a child requires significant investment in financial and time commitments (Albertini & Kohli, 2017). A young couple who just started their career might find childbearing very costly. A study by Berrington, Kuang, and Perelli-Harris (2024) proved low intentions to have a child among young couples, especially for financially inactive and low-income households. The priorities for having a child have shifted to making proper living conditions rather than raising children due to economic issues and financial burdens (Sharif-Nia et al., 2024). In France, the government has provided financial allowances and tax deductions that offset the costs of employing a registered day-care professional (assistante maternelle agree) to reduce the financial burden of the parents (Köppen et al., 2017). The same incentives have been applied in Malaysia, where parents can claim tax relief for childcare, tuition fees, and breastfeeding equipment. Tanturri and Mencarini (2008) found that even though the government had provided child-related benefits, it was still insufficient to cover the parenthood costs. The increasing patterns from Southern, Central, and Eastern European countries showed that childcare expenses are expensive, and many couples cannot afford the cost and choose to delay or even give up parenthood (Sobotka, 2017). However, contrary to some previous findings, economic conditions do not seem to have an important role in predicting childfree (Tanturri, & Mencarini, 2008).

Job instability, caused by economic fluctuations and a competitive job market, adds another layer of uncertainty, making long-term financial commitments like raising children more daunting. As a result, more couples are shifting their focus toward financial stability, career advancement, or alternative lifestyle choices, leading to a gradual shift in social norms regarding marriage and parenthood (Wilkinson & Rouse, 2023). A non-parent worker has become a trend in Western countries (Eurostat, 2022). Data from the Pew Research Center (2024) indicates a steady rise in the number of individuals in the United States who have not had children and do not intend to from 2018 to 2023. Likewise, the UK Office for National Statistics (2022) reports that more than 50% of women are childfree by the age of 30. Moreover, in France, Lucifora et al. (2021) discovered that childbirth imposes a sustained earnings penalty on mothers. The study compared the career trajectories and income levels of first-time working parents with those of individuals without children, where mothers faced persistent reductions in earnings that extended well beyond the initial period of maternity leave. Many individuals, especially women, are career-

oriented, and some prefer to focus on their professional growth rather than motherhood (Addzaky & Asy'ari, 2025). Dual-income households with demanding jobs may struggle to balance work and family life; hence, they view having children as an obstacle to achieving their goals.

Childfree is increasingly viewed as a wise and health-conscious choice, particularly for personal well-being (Shapiro, 2014). Some people, particularly women, avoid the physical challenges of pregnancy and the psychological demands of parenting. Pregnancy and childbirth can involve significant bodily changes and potential health risks, prompting some women to choose a childfree life to preserve their physical fitness, bodily autonomy, and long-term health. With the emotional demands of raising children being so high, especially for mothers, some feel that staying childfree is the best way to maintain their emotional balance and protect their mental health. According to Aracı and Ergun (2025), some women reject motherhood to safeguard their physical identity and avoid what they view as bodily sacrifice and medical risk. Fears, perceived complications, and a sense of unsuitability for parenthood often influence this choice. These individuals highly value their health and emphasize responsible family planning. Similar perspectives are supported by Höglund and Hildingsson (2022), who found that personal perceptions related to reproductive health and parenting significantly shape the decision to remain childfree.

Another motivation for choosing a childfree life is maintaining a preferred lifestyle. This lifestyle offers greater flexibility in daily routines, long-term planning, and the pursuit of personal goals (Aracı & Ergun, 2025)). Some individuals emphasize personal freedom, career advancement, financial stability, travel opportunities, and leisure. According to Park (2002), those who choose to remain childfree often value autonomy and self-determination, viewing parenthood as a potential obstacle to achieving their personal aspirations. Their lifestyle may become more difficult to sustain while raising children. For some, having children is also associated with a loss of spontaneity and personal time, which are deeply valued aspects of their lives and require greater commitment. Tanturri and Mencarini (2008) found that women who forgo motherhood often perceive it as a time-consuming responsibility. These women are typically well-educated and employed, with limited leisure time, and tend to find fulfilment outside of motherhood, sometimes viewing children as an obstacle to personal achievement.

Widespread childfree choices can considerably impact a country's demographic structure, resulting in a shrinking labour force and increased demand for social support services for the elderly. Lower birth rates contribute to a diminishing working-age population, lowering economic productivity and GDP per capita and creating challenges for long-term economic growth (Kearney & Levine, 2022). Furthermore, a shrinking workforce increases dependency ratios, putting more significant financial pressure on social security, healthcare, and pension systems. For example, Lee and Mason (2017) discovered that countries face increased budgetary strain as fertility rates decrease due to rising expenditures associated with age care. Similarly, Bloom et al. (2020) argue that countries with persistently low birth rates face long-term economic stagnation and increased pressure to reform retirement and healthcare systems.

Government population policies, such as those in Singapore and Japan, have a substantial impact on perceptions of a childfree lifestyle by supporting pronatalist norms that view childbirth as a social or national duty. These programs, which attempt to increase reproduction rates through incentives and family assistance measures, may stigmatize childless people as stray from cultural norms (Teo, 2013; Yamashita, 2023). At the same time, personal issues such as mental health and chronic problems influence childless decisions. Individuals suffering from depression, anxiety, or chronic illnesses may perceive parenthood as emotionally or physically taxing,

leading them to regard a childless existence as a rational and health-preserving option (Teo, 2013). As a result, structural pressures and individual well-being have a substantial impact on how people see the childfree lifestyle.

In summary, existing literature reveals that multiple factors contribute to the decision to remain childfree. Economic considerations, including financial insecurity and job instability, have been shown to influence childbearing intentions. Career aspirations and the demands of modern work environments further contribute to the appeal of a childfree lifestyle. Health-related concerns, both physical and mental, also play a critical role in discouraging parenthood, particularly among women. Finally, lifestyle preferences centered around autonomy, leisure, and personal fulfillment increasingly shape decisions against having children. Drawing from these insights, this study posits the following hypotheses:

**H1:** Students perceive that economic factors significantly influence the intention to remain childfree.

**H2:** Students perceive that career-related factors significantly influence the intention to remain childfree.

**H3:** Students perceive that health-related factors significantly influence the intention to remain childfree.

**H4:** Students perceive that lifestyle-related factors significantly influence the intention to remain childfree.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative research design, utilizing a questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection from students at UiTM Negeri Sembilan. A simple random sampling method was applied to ensure that each student had an equal probability of being selected, thereby reducing researcher bias (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). 217 students from various academic programs completed the questionnaire within the given period. Data was collected through an online survey distributed via Google Forms over two weeks. The measurement items were adapted from previously validated instruments. Constructs related to the factors and perceptions were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “1” (strongly disagree) to “5” (strongly agree). Economic factors and perceptions were measured using five measurement items. Meanwhile, health, career, and lifestyle were measured using four items. This study uses a questionnaire adapted from Tanturri and Mencarini (2008), with necessary modifications to ensure cultural appropriateness and relevance for Malaysian youth respondents. Adjustments were made to the wording, content, and thematic focus to reflect local values, language use, and contemporary youth perspectives, ensuring greater relevance and validity for the target population. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 29.0, involving procedures such as descriptive analysis, reliability testing, correlation, and regression analyses to examine the relationships among the variables and test the research hypotheses.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### *Demographic Profile*

A total of 217 questionnaires were usable for data analysis in this study. Table 1 highlights the demographic profile of students involved in the survey. Out of 217 students, a significant majority are female respondents (153), compared to 64 males. Most of them are diploma students,

with 133 pursuing this level of education, while the remaining are degree-level students. The fields of study are varied, with Administrative Science and Policy Studies being the most common (107), followed by Business Management (76), Computer Science and Mathematics (23), Mass Communication and Media (10), and Information Management (1). Most of these respondents are living in urban (152), followed by suburban (41) and rural (24).

Table 1 Demographic profile of respondents

Profiles	Types	Frequencies n= 217	Percentage %
Gender	Male	64	29.5%
	Female	153	70.5%
Age	18-20	127	58.5%
	21-23	78	35.9%
	24-26	12	5.6%
Program Level	Diploma	133	61.3%
	Degree	84	38.7%
Field of Study	Business Management	76	35%
	Information Management	1	5%
	Computer Science & Mathematics	23	10.6%
	Administrative Science and Policy Studies	107	49.3%
	Mass Communication and Media	10	4.6%
Residential	Urban	152	70%
	Suburban	41	18.9%
	Rural	24	11.1%

### Descriptive analysis

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the five study variables. The analysis revealed that the economic dimension had the highest mean score ( $M = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ), indicating that students rated economic considerations most favourably. This was followed by perception ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ), health ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ), and lifestyle ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ). The career variable recorded the lowest mean score ( $M = 2.82$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ), suggesting relatively lower levels of agreement or satisfaction in this area. Overall, the standard deviation values indicate a moderate spread of responses, reflecting some diversity in participants' views across all dimensions.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of variables

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Economy	217	1	5	3.9327	0.82062
Career	217	1	5	2.8166	0.66228
Health	217	1	5	3.5207	0.82785
Lifestyle	217	1	5	3.5161	0.95092
Perception	217	2	5	3.8369	0.58636

### Correlation Coefficient

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between economy, career, health, lifestyle, and perception. Table 3 presents all correlations as positive and statistically significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). The strongest relationship was found between career and lifestyle ( $r = .686$ ), followed closely by health and lifestyle ( $r = .656$ ), and career and health ( $r = .626$ ). These results indicate a high level of

association among these variables.

Additionally, the economy showed moderate correlations with career ( $r = .607$ ), lifestyle ( $r = .531$ ), and health ( $r = .517$ ). Perception exhibited a weaker but still significant correlations with health ( $r = .329$ ), career ( $r = .309$ ), lifestyle ( $r = .322$ ), and economy ( $r = .274$ ). Based on Pallant (2020), correlation values above 0.5 suggest a strong relationship, indicating that most of the hypothesized associations in this study are moderately to strongly correlated.

Table 3. Correlation coefficient analysis

	<b>Economy</b>	<b>Career</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Lifestyle</b>	<b>Perception</b>
Economy	-	.607**	.517**	.531**	.274**
Career	.607**	-	.626**	.686**	.309**
Health	.517**	.626	-	.656**	.329**
Lifestyle	.531**	.686**	.656**	-	.322**
Perception	.274**	.309**	.329**	.322**	-

### Reliability

The results in Table 4 indicate that all variables demonstrated acceptable to excellent reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70. Specifically, careers showed the highest reliability ( $\alpha = 0.948$ ), followed by lifestyle ( $\alpha = 0.924$ ), economy ( $\alpha = 0.916$ ), health ( $\alpha = 0.869$ ), and perception ( $\alpha = 0.758$ ). These findings confirm that the measurement items for each construct are reliable and consistent, supporting their use in further statistical analyses.

Table 4. Reliability

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Economy	0.916
Career	0.948
Health	0.869
Lifestyle	0.924
Perception	0.758

### Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis examined the influence of economy, career, health, and lifestyle on perception. The analysis summary in Table 5 revealed that only H3, health ( $p = 0.016$ ) and H4, lifestyle ( $p = 0.028$ ), were statistically significant at the 0.05 level. These findings indicate that both health and lifestyle significantly positively influence perception, suggesting that students who report better health and more balanced lifestyles tend to have more favourable perceptions.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictors	Std. Coefficient	Sig.
Economy	0.102	0.191
Career	0.109	0.239
Health	0.206	0.016**
Lifestyle	0.187	0.028**

The significant role of health suggests that students who enjoy better physical and psychological well-being are more likely to develop positive perceptions. In the context of higher education, health may influence motivation, engagement, and overall satisfaction, which in turn shape perception. Students who prioritize their physical and mental health tend to view parenthood as a potential threat to their overall well-being; thus, these students may perceive a childfree lifestyle to preserve their health, freedom, and personal care routines. Moreover, students who perceive themselves as not physically fit or healthy may lack confidence in their ability to meet the physical demands of raising children. The significant influence of health on students' perception of remaining childfree is consistent with prior studies emphasizing the role of physical and mental well-being in reproductive decision-making.

For instance, Höglund and Hildingsson (2022) found that individuals' perceptions of their reproductive health and readiness significantly influence their decision to remain childfree to protect their overall well-being. Similarly, Boiarintseva, Ezzedeen, and Wilkin (2021) highlight that concerns about maintaining mental stability and managing chronic health conditions are pivotal factors influencing young adults' decisions to opt for a childfree lifestyle. This further supports the view that the choice to remain childfree for many students is not merely a personal preference but a deliberate strategy to safeguard their long-term health and psychological resilience.

The significant effect of lifestyle on students' perception of being childfree reflects a growing focus on personal freedom, independence, and overall quality of life among younger generations. The results show that students who love traveling and exploring hobbies often view parenting as a significant constraint on their desired way of living. Additionally, the responsibilities associated with raising children, such as time commitments, financial obligations, and reduced flexibility, are seen as incompatible with the lifestyle they wish to maintain. This aligns with findings by Gillespie (2003), who noted that many voluntarily childfree individuals prioritize self-fulfilment and freedom from traditional roles, especially when those roles are perceived to limit personal development. Similarly, Settle and Brumley (2014) observed that individuals who remain childfree often do so to preserve their independence and avoid lifestyle sacrifices typically associated with parenthood.

In contrast, economy (H1) and career (H2) were not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating that these variables do not independently contribute to students' perception. Unlike previous generations who linked childbearing to economic security or career stability, today's youth might not see financial or career status as central to their reproductive choices. One possible explanation is that many students have not yet entered a life stage where they directly experience the financial responsibilities of parenthood. As a result, economic considerations may seem less urgent. Furthermore, today's younger generation may view economic instability as a general part of life, rather than a specific obstacle to having children. With everyday challenges like rising living costs, student debt, and uncertain job prospects, students may not see the financial demands of parenthood as a separate or decisive concern. The findings parallel Tanturri and Mencarini's (2008), which suggest that economic conditions do not play a significant role in predicting voluntary childlessness, contrary to what some earlier studies have proposed. While previous studies highlight the financial burden of childbearing, particularly for young or low-income couples, the lack of significant influence in this study suggests that students may view these economic challenges as part of broader life concerns rather than a direct factor in their decision to remain childfree (Albertini & Kohli, 2017; Berrington et al., 2024).

Although career-related demands are often associated with delayed parenthood, the significant effect in this study may be due to students not yet fully experiencing these pressures, as many are still in the early stages of their career paths and have not encountered the conflicts often faced by working professionals (Boiarintseva et al., 2021). With growing career ambitions and demanding work schedules, many individuals, particularly women, view childbearing as a challenge that could interfere with their personal and professional goals (Addzaky & Asy'ari, 2025). The study reveals that health and lifestyle strongly influence students' choice to remain childfree, as they want to protect their well-being and enjoy personal freedom. However, economic and career factors were not significant, likely because students have not yet faced those pressures directly.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The study reveals that health and lifestyle are the two most significant factors influencing students' perceptions of remaining childfree. Students with better physical and psychological well-being are more likely to associate parenthood with risks to their health, freedom, and self-care routines. Those who perceive themselves as less physically fit may also doubt their ability to handle the physical demands of parenting. This aligns with past research indicating that concerns over mental health, chronic conditions, and reproductive readiness often drive young adults to opt for a childfree lifestyle as a strategy to safeguard long-term well-being.

Similarly, lifestyle preferences, particularly the desire for personal freedom, travel, and uninterrupted pursuit of hobbies, shape students' negative perceptions of parenting. Many view child-rearing as a constraint on the autonomy and flexibility they value. These findings support earlier studies that suggest voluntary childlessness is often rooted in a desire to maintain independence and avoid the sacrifices traditionally associated with parenthood.

In contrast, economic and career factors did not significantly influence students' decisions to remain childfree. This may be due to their current life stage—many students have yet to face the financial or career-related challenges of adulthood fully. As such, they may perceive economic instability as a general life condition rather than a distinct deterrent to having children. Overall, the study highlights that students' decisions to remain childfree are primarily shaped by health and lifestyle preservation concerns rather than financial or career-related considerations.

A multifaceted approach is needed to address students' growing preference for child-free lifestyles, primarily influenced by concerns over health, lifestyle limitations, and uncertain career and financial readiness. Many young adults perceive parenthood as a threat to their physical and mental well-being, as well as to their freedom. To counter this, health and wellness support should be strengthened in educational institutions, including access to mental health services and reproductive health education. Promoting flexible parenting models and showcasing diverse, modern family lifestyles can help reduce the belief that raising children is incompatible with travel, hobbies, or independence. Furthermore, integrating real-life examples through mentorship and inclusive discussions can demonstrate that career success and parenthood are not mutually exclusive. Encouraging work-life balance through policy incentives like parental leave, childcare access, and flexible work environments can further support this narrative. At a broader societal level, reshaping cultural norms and reducing stigma around child-free and parenting choices is essential. This includes fostering open dialogue through education, media, and community engagement, where child-free lifestyles and parenthood are valid personal decisions. Engaging religious, cultural, and institutional leaders can help modernize traditional marriage and reproduction expectations. While today's students may not yet feel the economic pressures of parenthood, proactive policies such as housing support, tax incentives, and affordable childcare

can remove potential future barriers and make parenthood a more accessible option. Ultimately, efforts should focus not on promoting one lifestyle over another but on empowering individuals to make informed, supported, and respectful choices regarding their reproductive futures.

Despite offering valuable insights into students' perceptions of child-free marriage, this study has limitations. Firstly, the study sample may lack diversity, as it is likely limited to students from a specific geographic location, academic institution, or socio-cultural background. This homogeneity can limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations, including working adults, married individuals, or those from different ethnic, religious, or socioeconomic contexts. Cultural norms surrounding marriage and childbearing vary significantly, and findings drawn from a student population may not reflect the attitudes of society at large. Secondly, the study may be influenced by the respondents' life stage. As university students, many participants have not yet entered full-time careers, long-term relationships, or parenthood, which means their perceptions may be shaped more by ideals, assumptions, or future-oriented thinking rather than direct experience. This may explain why economic and career factors were not statistically significant. In addition, the study's cross-sectional nature limits the ability to assess how perceptions may change over time with life experience. These limitations suggest the need for more longitudinal, diverse, and experience-based studies to gain a fuller understanding of the perceptions and realities of child-free marriage.

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