The results of the Fifth Rwanda Population and Housing Census (5-RPHC) show that nearly half of the population aged 12 and above (49.1%) is married either officially, or not officially.

However, since 1978 to 2022 the percentage of married people has been continuously decreasing. Women get married earlier than men where for example, between the ages of 20 and 24 one woman in three (35.0%) is already married compared to one man in six men (15.5%).

The mean age at first marriage has been continuously increasing for both women and men, from 25 years old and 21 years old in 1978 respectively for men and women, to 28.2 years old and 25.3 years old in 2022,
respectively for men and women.

The prevalence of polygamy has declined from 12% of men aged 15 and above in 1978 to 1.4% in 2022. Rural residents are relatively more polygamous (2.5%) than urban residents (1.4%), while elderly people are more frequently in polygamous unions than younger ones. Polygamy also decreases with the level of education: 2.4% and 5.1% of men and women without any education are in respectively polygamous unions while only 0.2% and 0.3% of men and women who attended university live in polygamous unions, respectively. With regard to religion, Muslims and traditional/animist are more frequent in polygamous unions compared to other religions.

Education also affects marital status in various ways, including the effect of the time spent in school, potential changes to attitudes regarding reproduction and the traditional customs attached to children, and the opening up of new perspectives. For both sexes, the percentage of people who have never been married increases with the level of education. Religion, however, has less impact on attitudes toward marriage, and the differences observed are also linked to differences in the age structure.

Reference documents (PDF & Excel)

- RPHC5 Thematic Report_Marital status and nuptiality.pdf (pdf, 11.63 MB)
  LAST UPDATED: 7 Feb 2025

- Tables_Marital status and nuptiality.xlsx (xlsx, 193.6 KB)
  LAST UPDATED: 7 Feb 2025

Data source

Fifth Population and Housing Census - 2022

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