

Early Marriage: Understanding Motivations and Impact

Khodijah¹, Bagong Suyanto², IB Wirawan³

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya

²Universitas Airlangga

³Universitas Airlangga

Correspondence: uchykhadijah7@gmail.com

Article History

Submitted:

March 15, 2024

Reviewed:

May 21, 2024

Approved:

June 22, 2024

Abstract

This research aims to explore the dominant factors of early marriage from the other perspective of married teenage girls. This Research was conducted from May 2022 until January 2023 in Singosari, Malang. Purpose sampling was used to select 20 electable informants. Data was collected directly through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using conventional content analysis methods. This research uses a qualitative method with a content analysis design for exploring topics related to cultural context. The qualitative method with content analysis design in this study uses a traditional approach. The research results showed that multiple factors encourage the decision to marry at an early age from the perspective of adolescent girls including two categories namely "socio-economic conditions" and "individual conditions." Therefore, the problem of early marriage is caused by many factors, and a multidimensional and interdisciplinary approach is needed to develop and implement systematic, effective, massive, and comprehensive steps, including programs to increase knowledge, understanding, and awareness of teenagers, parents and society about the negative impacts of early marriage. The implications of this research highlight the need for more targeted policies and interventions to prevent early marriage, as well as the important role of education and community support in changing perceptions and social norms that support this practice. This research also provides a basis for the development of youth empowerment programs that focus on improving their quality of life and well-being.

Keywords: *Adolescent Female, Dominant Factors, Analyzing Context, Early Age Marriage*

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a precious age for girls over the world. Everything that happens during adolescence in a girl will determine her future life (Barbara S. Mensch, Erica Soler-Hampejsek, Christine A. Kelly, Paul C. Hewett, & Monica J. Grant, 2014). Many women in

developing countries such as Indonesia, puberty in adolescence marks a period of increased vulnerability to early marriage (Ibitoye, Choi, Tai, Lee, & Sommer, 2017).

Early marriage is a marriage that occurs before woman and man have not reached the age of majority or under the age of 18 years (Badan Kependudukan dan Keluarga Berencana Nasional, 2012). Early marriage is defined as a marriage bond that occurs between both parties before reaching the age specified by the applicable legal regulations. In accordance to the Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974, it is explained that marriage between a man and a woman is only permitted if both parties are at least 19 years old (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 16 Tahun 2019 Tentang Perubahan Atas Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 1974 Tentang Perkawinan, 2019).

In the current era, it is estimated that there are 46 million teenagers of productive age the total population of almost 270 million in Indonesia. 46% of them are teenage girls. Out of the total female teenagers, 51% are in the 10-14 year age range, while the rest are in the 15-19 year age range (United Nation Children's Fund, 2020). Concomitant with the high number of teenage girls, marriage at an early age has become a topic of discussion in various aspects for instance health, law, psychology, religion, social and economics. United Nation Children's Fund is abbreviated as UNICEF statistics in 2022 state that Indonesia is in 8th rank through all countries in the world and in ASEAN it is in 2nd rank through all cases of early marriage of 1.5 million cases (Kamil & Satosa, 2022). Subsequently, 27.07% of teenagers married for the first time at the age of 22-24 years. The leftovers married for the first time when they were 16-18 years old (Finaka, 2023).

Based on gender, male and female adolescents indicate differences in age at first marriage. Mostly men pass the first year of marriage at a more mature age than women. As shown at statistics, 35.31% of male teenagers first married when they were in the age range of 22-24 years. Another 31.02% had their first marriage at the age of 25-30 years. Meanwhile, 38.17% of female teenagers had their first marriage at the age of 19 to 21 years. The remaining amount 27.18% had their first marriage at 16 to 18 years (Finaka, 2023).

According to Sulistyorini *et al.*, (2023) the data shows an enhancement in the marriage rate between teenagers under 19 years of age in Malang Regency. In 2016, the incidence rate was 1.38% of the total number of marriages and increased to 5.85% in 2020.

The number of requests for marriage dispensation at the Kantor Urusan Agama (KUA) increased from 1.77% (2016) to 8.74% (2020). The highest marriage rate for teenage girls was recorded in 31 sub-districts. The three sub-districts with the highest rates of teenage female marriage are in Singosari, Poncokusumo, Dau and Wajak sub-districts (Sulistiyorini, Wibowo, & Indriani, 2023).

Various factors contribute to the high rate of early marriage, including male dominance, parental ignorance, and social forces (Ahmed, Khan, Khan, & Noushad, 2014). The research data from (Montazeri *et al.* 2016) shows that "family structure", "low autonomy in decision making", and "response to fulfilling basic needs" contribute to the occurrence of early marriage. Early marriage is possible to teenage girls who are destitute people, low education, and live in rural areas (Oyorley & Pobi, 2010). It deprives adolescent girls of educational opportunities and to develop life skills, dissociate from family and friends, compromise their abilities in increasing vulnerability to health problems and significant social problems (Mouli, Greifinger, Nwosu, Hainsworth, & Sundaram, 2013).

The latest data indicate that early marriage has many consequences, for teenage girls and babies born (Santhya, 2011). The high frequency of unwed pregnancy, abortion, preterm birth, maternal and fetal death, malnutrition in infants and toddlers is perilous due the highest number of cases in early marriage (Santhya, 2011).

Besides, it can inflict psychological problems for instance depression, anxiety and other psychological disorders (Ahmed et al., 2014). In addition to the risk of psychological disorders, the possibility of physical abuse and sexual violence in married life is vulnerable to adolescent girls who marry at a young age (Mouli et al., 2013). Kemenppa reported that 43.2% of adolescent girls who married early had experienced domestic violence (Kemenppa, 2018). The statement above is in coincide with research results (Farahat, Shaheen, Khalil, & Nashat, 2019) it reveals that various conflicts tend appear more frequently in early marriages. Based on the explanation above, underage girls are the ones most vulnerable to feeling the impact of marriage at an early age.

In the midst of determinants that encourage the high number of early marriages in Indonesia, cultural factors are considered to have a big role. In the province of East Java, child marriage primarily occur in the Horseshoe region (Tapal Kuda), including Pasuruan, Probolinggo, Bondowoso, Situbondo, and Madura Island, most of whose communities are

of the Madurese ethnic group. In this region, the percentage of early marriages reaches around 20.15% of all marriages that occur in East Java province (Arimurti & Nurmala, 2018). Early marriage is an art of the culture in the Horseshoe region, where marrying at an early age, especially for girls, is considered legal by religion (Islam) and socioculturally acceptable to prevent spinsterhood (Pohan, 2017).

Malang Regency, as one of the Regency Cities in East Java, has a fairly high rate of early marriage. Data released by the Central Statistics Agency (2020) shows that in 2020 there were 21.33% of women aged 10 years and over in East Java with the age at first marriage under 17 years. This figure has increased significantly compared to 2019 of 18% and 17.12% in 2018.

Early marriage in East Java, especially in Malang Regency, is encouraged by community culture. In Malang Regency, arranging marriages were common in the last era and the choice of life partner was largely determined by parents and was carried out based on the kinship system. In Malang, puberty and menstruation are considered transitions to adulthood. Adolescent girls who have menstruated are eligible for marriage, no matter what. For some parents, the desire to marry off their daughter becomes a competition to avoid social judgment/discrimination for being late in marriage.

Another study confirms many significant factors that encourage early marriage in regions, these include tradition, poverty, low awareness of adolescent girls and their parents about the risks of early marriage, negative attitudes towards the importance of education, rigid parental rules and weak power of adolescent girls to making decisions and lack of decision-making power (Santhya, 2011). Research conducted by (Setiadi, 2021) on 18 informants consisting of young women who married at the age of less than 18 years in the 1990-2020 period showed that socio-culturally, women who married at a young age still considered early marriage to be normal and acceptable. The severity of the challenges of life towards adulthood causes young marriage to become an idealized socio-psychological coping mechanism for some young women because of the gap in knowledge about the impact of giving birth at a young age. This perspective is also influenced by existing local socio-cultural values which place marriage as a solution to socio-economic problems.

Modernization in Indonesia has surprisingly increased the age of marriage in adolescent girls. The results of the analysis show that there is a significant difference between

male and female teenagers in the percentage of child marriage cases. Gender inequality is indicated based on findings that young women were found to be four times more vulnerable to being trapped in child marriage than men. Apart from that, the results of the analysis also show that young women are more easily trapped in the practice of child marriage in both age groups. Furthermore, the results of the analysis also show that young women are more vulnerable to being involved in child marriage when they are in the 16–18-year age group (Rohayana, A. D & Mahmudah. U, 2020). The transition to modernity has had an impact on increasing the age of marriage, though marriage between teenage girls is still a problem in most societies and has not received sufficient attention from various parties (Himawan, Bambling, & Edirippulige, 2019). Early marriage in Indonesia has become a serious concern for the government, with various initiatives and policies launched to overcome this problem. The government has increased the minimum age of marriage for women from 16 years to 19 years through Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage. Apart from that, the government has also launched educational programs and awareness campaigns to reduce the rate of early marriage, in collaboration with various non-governmental organizations and international institutions. These efforts include community outreach, women's empowerment, and reproductive health programs targeting adolescents.

However, even though many steps have been taken, there are still several aspects of early marriage that have escaped the government's attention. One is a more in-depth and comprehensive approach to sexual education in schools, which is often limited or not provided at all. In addition, there is still a lack of focus on strict law enforcement against violations of the marriage age limit, especially in rural and remote areas, where local customs and traditions are still very strong. The government also needs to increase psychosocial support for children who have been married early, including access to mental health services and further education programs. This challenge shows that there is still a lot of work to be done to completely eradicate the practice of early marriage in Indonesia.

Based on the explanation above, the research related to the problem of early marriage needs to gain a deeper understanding of the determinants in early marriage from the perspective of teenage girls. This research expected to contribute the development of interventions that appropriate to the culture of society in Malang Regency in increasing

understanding of the impact of early marriage on the physical and psychological health of adolescents as well as the role of culture in reducing the high rate of early marriage.

This research uses a qualitative method with a content analysis design. This design was deemed appropriate for exploring topics related to cultural context. (Forman & Damschroder, 2015). The qualitative method with content analysis design is a subjective interpretation of text content through a systematic process of coding and identifying topics or categories (Mayring, 2014) to obtain a broad and brief description about research phenomenon (Forman & Damschroder, 2015). This qualitative research was conducted to identify the factors that determine the occurrence in early marriage from the perspective of teenage girls.

This research was conducted from May 2022 to January 2023 in Malang Regency, East Java. 15 informants were selected using the purposive sampling method. Each informant who met the criteria was given an explanation of the research and encouraged to informant in the research. The informant who took part in this research met the criteria including married girls aged between 13 and 19 years, living in Malang Regency and willing to participate in this study. In accordance with the established criteria, there were 20 informants in this study. The demographic characteristics of the informant are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Categories and Subcategories

No.	Characteristics	Count	Percentage
1.	Woman's age	16.3	-
2.	Difference in age of informan and husband (average years/months)	6.8	-
3.	Educational level of research informans		
	a. Did'nt have a School Education	0	
	b. Primary School	3	15%
	c. Secondary School	9	45%
	d. Senior High School	8	40%
4.	Employment status of research informans		
	a. Employee	3	15%
	b. Housewife	17	85%
5.	Residence		
	a. City	8	40%
	b. Rustic	12	60%
6.	Religion		
	a. Islam	18	90%

b. Others	2	10%
7. Age of marriage (average/year)	5.7	-

The informant profile in this study was female with an average age of 16 years and the age difference with male partners was 6.8 years. The educational level of 45% of informants have secondary education (Secondary School), 40% has upper-level education (High School) and the remaining 15% has a primary education background (Primary School). Daily, 85% of informants work as housewives and the rest work as workers. Some informants live in rural areas of Malang, namely 60%, others are spread across several district cities. 60% of the informants adhere to Islam and 40% of the informants are from religions other than Islam. Based on the data obtained, at the time data collection took place, the average age at which informants were married was 5 years.

The content analysis method was used for data analysis with the Graneheim and Lundman model (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). All interview transcripts were read several times to understand the content of the interview as a whole. Transcripts were broken down into meaningful units, summarized, abstracted and coded. The codes were then compared for similarities and differences and sorted into categories and subcategories that formed statements. Members of the research team checked the initial categories. Finally, the categories were formulated as research results.

This research follows the guidelines of Lincoln and Guba (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to ensure reliability. The reliability of the research results was ensured by selecting valid research methods and appropriate research groups, using purposive sampling to select appropriate informants, member checking and peer review to ensure universality of findings, and triangulation through various data collection such as extended fieldwork. An external audit process was conducted to ensure reliability and verification processes. In addition, a final report of the research process was provided to enhance transferability.

Table 2. Research Categories and Subcategories

No	Categories	Subcategories
1	Socio-economic conditions	Education Level
		Economic Strata
		Cultural Values
		Media Influences
		Peer influences
2	Individual Condition	Unwed Pregnancy

Social, emotional, and sexual needs

Religious Beliefs

Right to Make Decision

DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic Factors and Early Marriage

This section presents research findings in the form of factors driving early marriage in women which are divided into two categories, namely socio-economic conditions and individual conditions. Based on data analysis, the two categories above are further divided into nine subcategories.

In this research, although the majority of informans intended to postpone marriage to complete basic education, several factors such as level of education, economic status, cultural values held by the family, unwed pregnancy, individual needs, religious beliefs and the right to make decisions were not "strengths" it appears that this encourages informans to early age marriage

The first category is socio-economic conditions at the education level, economic difficulties and family cultural values that encourage research informans to early age marriage.

"My life is difficult. My father's job was uncertain, my mother had to raise me and my siblings up. My parents had to go into debt for daily needs. My indigant family made me think about getting married soon. If I'm married, lighten burden's parents and got something that I have never gotten before."

Another informan stated that,

"If marriage was the best strategy to dealing with difficult family situation, I would do for it."

In this research, most of the informans had low family educational background. Hence, the most informans were unable to continue their senior secondary education. Low education level is the basic reason that encouraged them to early age marriage.

"I graduated from junior high school. I had to earn money and help my parents. My siblings need to eat. Thus, school is no longer necessary for me"

The statement above was strengthened by another response,

"I never thought about studying and completing assignments, my days were filled with thoughts about how my parents' debts could be paid and my sibling's gorged"

Demographic factors dominate early marriages in Malang District. One of these demographic factors is educational level. Education can be understood as a human effort to grow and develop their physical and spiritual potential, in accordance with the values existing

in society and culture (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, 2003).

In general, a higher level of informan education may be associated with the probability of early marriage (Bawono, Suminar, and Hendriani 2019). The successful completion of primary and secondary education is considered an important and has an impact in girls' age marriage. This is because girls who complete primary and secondary education will spend a longer time exposed to education at school.

A high educational level increases the age of marriage through the biological, physical, and spiritual psychological maturity (Wani & Masih, 2015). In general, education helps individuals in a better situation regarding the opportunity to get a job (Noreen & Khalid, 2012). This happens in Malang regency; job opportunities are more profitable for adolescent girls who are highly educated. Thus, tend to postpone marriage because of the availability of more opportunities and career choices. This is supported by (Utami & Ariusni, 2023) who stated that job opportunities are more open for educated women. The higher the educational level, the more opportunities for women to participate in the labor market.

Education level is positively correlated with the risk of marriage. The results of previous research show that there is a correlation between an individual's level of education and age at marriage. Informans who have an educational background equivalent to elementary school are 4 to 8 times more likely to marry at a young age compared to informans who have an educational background at the upper secondary level (Anggraini et al., 2021). In research presented by (Soekarno, 2011) the largest percentage of women with a first marriage age of no more than 18 years was found among women with elementary school education.

Different levels of education will influence the decision-making behavior of whether to marry soon or not. This is because uneducated teenage girls do not have enough knowledge regarding the negative consequences that arise of early marriage.

Low levels of education are influenced by weak economic capacity. In this research, early marriage is commonplace for many people in Malang Regency who are in the low economic strata. Economic difficulties encourage families to immediately marry off their daughters. In destitute families, adolescent girls tend to want to marry at an early age to escape economic and social difficulties.

The relation between parents' low education level and early marriage is also stated by (Raj et al., 2019) who say that parents' education level greatly influences the tendency for children to get married early because low parents education is very vulnerable for children to do early-age marriage. This is because parents lack knowledge and insight into the effects of early marriage so parents also support children to have early marriages

The low level of education of parents which has an impact on the occurrence of early childhood marriages eventually also has an impact on the low level of education of their children because their children's education is stopped after marriage. This is as stated by (Bezie & Addisu, 2019) who said that most of the teenagers who did not go on to higher education because the average level of education of their parents was also low, so that they did not support children in continuing higher education

In addition to the factors above, most of the informans established by dysfunctional families with economic difficulties. Informans had difficult childhoods experienced, abused children and deprivation. The desire to escape their life of deprivation encourages them to early age marriage.

"I thought that marriage is the best way to live a better life".

The above statement was reinforced by another informant who stated,

*"I'm tired of seeing my parents fight every day, I'm tired of being forced to fulfill my daily needs."
"All this time, this man has been the one paying for my and my family's living expenses. Like it or not, I will accept him as my husband. My family is poor".*

Another informan approved the similar things,

"If a man asks me to marry, I could escape from deprived my family environment".

This fact is in accordance with the results of previous research which shows that marriage for teenage girls in several villages in Malang Regency is considered the best way to get out and escape from the economic difficulties experienced by their families (Ayako Kohno et al., 2020). Other research is explaining that teenage girls who marry at an early age come from families with lower economic strata. Families from lower economic strata have a greater possibility of marrying earlier than those from higher economic groups (Kamal, 2011). According to UNICEF, poverty has been proven to have a negative impact as an

important factor behind the high rate of early marriage (Istiqomah, Rahmawati, & Asmaningrum, 2023).

Family conditions make daughters considered an economic burden. Therefore, marriage of daughters is considered the only solution to reduce this burden (Mahato, 2016). Families with a low economic level will consider their daughter's marriage to be something profitable because parents no longer need to provide for their daughter.

Poverty is considered the most dominant factor in the number of cases of early marriage among women (Ahonsi et al., 2019). Its influence on child marriage is multi-dimensional that stems from parents' socioeconomic status and children's demand for material goods that their parents cannot afford (in some cases attributable to parental neglect and supervision). Some parents and girls are motivated by financial gains and security to the family and they tend to agree to child marriage. In some cases, it provides financial stability to girls coming from economically disadvantaged homes as some child brides married to escape poverty. Child brides do not only get financial support from their husbands, but also from their in-laws to ensure they lack little or nothing. Some child brides are also able to amass some wealth from their husbands to take care of their own family (Schildkrout, 2023). Hence, parents who marry their children off early "are not necessarily heartless parents but, rather, parents who are surviving under heartless conditions", as some parents use child marriage as a strategy to break out of poverty (Bokaie, Bostani Khalesi, & Ashoobi, 2021).

Research (ÖZTÜRK, Albayrak, KARATAŞ, & Aslan, 2021), which conducted in-depth interviews with girls among Syrian refugees who have temporary protection status in Turkey, and refugee communities who immigrated from Afghanistan concluded that marriage as a means of protection from family problems, security the state and the protection of "honour", the issue of attending education, covering up sexual abuse and finally the goal of increasing population to compensate for war losses.

The next factor that influences the practice of early marriage in Malang is the values held by the family and community culture. One of the informans stated this,

*"Several people considered that a girl who had menstruated, she is as well ready for marriage."
"My family believes that it is better for girls to early age marriage rather than to be a spinster. In fact, most of my siblings married under 16 years old."*

According to the statement above, moreover another informan stated that,

“In my family’s habit is to find partners for the daughters who had menstruated. They would rather discern their daughters get married soon”.

The role of parents in contributing greatly to deciding a daughter's marriage is influenced by cultural factors that are rooted in the family. Beliefs and customs that apply in the family. Family culture includes norms, roles, communication, agreements, expectations in the family system (Kohno et al., 2020). On the other hand, early marriage is widely seen as an instrument in gaining social status in one's local community (Schaffnit, Urassa, & Lawson, 2019).

According to the journal (Abdurahman, Assefa, & Berhane, 2022), social norms and gender are also factors that influence early marriage. In social norms that occur due to the community in urban slums in Bangladesh boys who are said to be mature must be married immediately. Meanwhile, what is meant by gender influencing early marriage is an adult male, namely a man who already has a job and has sufficient income. On average, many men in urban slum areas of Bangladesh are still teenagers who earn their living (Abdurahman et al., 2022)

This phenomenon is complicated by the traditions and culture of most societies. Social stigma against marriage after girls enter puberty, considered shameful in some places, also increases the marriage rate of teenage girls. In connection with this social stigma (Rosanti et al., 2020) in his research stated that parents married off their daughters as soon as the daughters had their first menstruation (menarche) at the age of 10-11 years because of the fear that the daughters would become spinsters and involved in adultery. In a family that has a daughter and doesn't have a partner, they tend to feel worried, so they try to immediately find a husband for their daughter.

In Indonesia, marriage is understood as a social obligation rather than an expression of everyone’s freedom This statement also emphasizes that the concept of marriage will be understood by groups of people whose relationship patterns are still conservative as a "social need", part of traditional heritage, and considered sacred (Suhadi, 2012). The conservative viewpoint of marriage is a social obligation that appears a significant role in the phenomenon of early marriage in Malang Regency.

The development of several media, as tough social media for teenage girls, has contributed in increasing of early marriage.

“At first, married at a young age was interested. At least that's what I have seen on television and Netflix.”

Another informan stated that,

“When I was young, I wanted to have a loving husband, lots of money. An interesting life as well as on Instagram.”

“Every day, I see some young women who are happy with their husbands. Build a business and child raising together. Beautiful wife, handsome husband, rich, I want to follow them”.

Media exposure is also a determining factor in the occurrence of early marriage. There is a significant relationship between the accessibility of information and media in the context of early marriage (Shaud & Asad, 2020). Some media such as television, Instagram, TikTok, Netflix can influence early marriage. Because the media can increase awareness about the impact of early marriage, thereby reducing the rate of early marriage (Rumble et al., 2018).

Media exposure is a factor that influences early marriage. According to the journal (Wulan Angraini et al., 2019), media exposure affects early marriage because the media makes adolescents easily access pornographic videos so that adolescents will be at risk of early marriage. This opinion is also supported by journals (Nabila, Roswiyani, & Satyadi, 2022) and (Rasul, Nasir, Akhtar, & Hinde, 2022), where media exposure is a source of information about various things about negative things and tends to risk leading to early marriage (Saleheen et al., 2021)

This study also showed that there was an association between informational access on early marriage. Women who have good access to information about early marriage were less likely to have early marriage. A study entitled “Determinants of Early Marriage in Rajshahi, Bangladesh” showed that access to information media has an effect on early marriage. Women who have access to media such as listening to the radio, watching television, and other media that provide information about the dangers of early marriage were less likely to have early marriage than those who never get the information (Rashid, Al-Amin, Rahman, & Rahman, 2023).

A study showed that the majority of people who have done early marriage did not know the legal minimum age for marriage. Another study conducted among teenagers in

Bangladesh revealed similar results that the majority of those who get married at an early age did not have good information about the legal age for marriage (Pandya YP & Bhanderi DJ, 2015).

Adolescence is marked by several biological, emotional and social changes regarding on adolescent decision making. Friends play a big role in social changes and development of adolescents, including the decision of early marriage.

"Incidentally, my friend's house was already married. We used to be playmates. Now they truly enjoy their life."

"I don't want my friends think that I'm a woman who got married late in life. When they all decide to get married soon, I can do that too."

"My close friends got married before they finished school yet. I still saw them every day. Heard the story of their wedding, I thought I get married too."

Nowadays, young people often spend most of their time with friends of the same age. They form a group of friends and even expand their circles. Therefore, it is important to strengthen their self-identity, self-esteem, and the feeling of social acceptance as young people tend to act according to the group behavior. Ding et al. (2018) found teenagers drinking liquor at a university in China were mostly influenced by their peers. Young people strive to be accepted by one or more peer group. In this case, peer grup refers to small group consisting of people who interact regularly and build self-reputation and create self (Kiesner et al., 2002). Having a good peer group is important for teenagers since they rely on this peer group to share their feelings. A study reveals that 60% share their feelings with friends of the same age, and 20% with their parents. Support and response from friends of the same age is very important for them. However, the support can bring either positive or negative influence (Clasen, et al.,2018). Previous study by Nurhandini (2018) involving 107 respondents showed 58.9% of students had a negative peer role and 57.9% had low motivation for early marriage. The results of the statistical test were 0.17 (independent and dependent variables had very weak relationship), which shows that teenagers who received bad influence from their peers tend to have high motivation for early marriage.

The influence of peers affects early marriage, according to the journal (Arikhman, 2019) in Baru Village, West Warm Air Subdistrict, Kerinci Regency, many adolescents marry at an early age due to the influence of peers during adolescence, where they interact more closely with friends of the same age than with parents. Friends become their confidants, and

adolescents make friends with their confidants, recognize what is happening, and tell stories related to sex so that friends will be influenced by early marriage. The influence of peers is also supported by the journal (Nurhikmah et al, 2021) where according to this journal the influence of peers because friends can influence negative things and invite to do early marriage and influence negative things related to sex adolescents tend to have free sex resulting in pregnancy and inevitably will be married off immediately.

Teens are very vulnerable to the social influence around them, especially from their peer group. A study by Robalino & Macy (2018) revealed that peers had the biggest influence on smoking habits among young people. However, another study shows there is a positive effect of peers that lower the levels of alcohol drinking among teenagers. Teenagers tend to be friends with other teens who have similar behaviour (Wang et al., 2017). Therefore, choice of friends greatly impacted teenagers' behavior, where the impact can be either positive or negative (Fitriani, 2016).

The results of the research provided that the role of peer support has a direct effect on early marriage and is statistically significant, both from bivariate and multivariate tests as well as path analysis. It can be said that the influence of friends in making decisions or actions is very large (Wijayati, Soemanto, & Pamungkasari, 2017). An environment with lots of peers supports early marriage, then women will also marry early. However, there are differences in the influence of peers between adolescents who marry early and single adolescents (Ela & Damayanti, 2004). The positive influence of peers makes many teenagers reluctant to marry because they always want to make money and please their parents. Peer influence is closely related to early marriage. Teenagers with a negative friendship environment.

As teenagers get older, their parents' influence shifts to their peers. Adolescents who marry early are motivated by the influence of peer groups or friends, with the aim of becoming part of a group or peers by following what is adhered to. Premarital sex ends in early marriage which many young women do, it is an encouragement to provide necessities. Early marriage is a response to social, emotional, and sexual needs. Adolescent girls sight marriage to achieve independence and social identity as an important part of their transition to adulthood (Ihza, I. M., & Fadhilah, N., 2022)). Other research shows that teenage girls, especially those who have experienced menarche, often seek attention from the opposite sex, post self-portraits on social media, and pay more attention to their appearance as an effort

to fulfill their basic need for affection. (Nurkhamidi, A., Khumaedy, A., & Khuzaiyah, S. 2023). For teenage girls, marriage will give them more feelings of respect, peace, love and freedom in making decisions in their future lives.

Individual's Condition and Early Marriage

On the other hand, teenage girls who already have partners are often trapped in unhealthy relationships by engaging in premarital sex. As a result, many teenage girls become unwed pregnant. Research in Indonesia indicated that early marriage is the solution to the problem of unwanted pregnancy sometimes.

Individual conditions include sex before marriage, unwed pregnancy, individual needs, religious beliefs and right to make choices. Mostly, some people in Malang Regency, unwed pregnancy is a thing purposeful and appropriate for being ostracized from the environment. Some informants who had unwed pregnancy would avoid these sanctions by immediately getting married. Three subjects explained that they married at a young age because they were pregnant before officially married.

"Unwed pregnancy is a disgrace that can merely hidden by marriage soon."

"After having sex with my boyfriend and I was pregnant, the best solution is asked him to marry me immediately."

Another informant stated that,

"Getting married before graduating from school is a shameful thing, but I would be more embarrassed if people found out that I was unwed pregnant."

Early age marriage frequently occurs during puberty. This is because teenagers are prone to sexual behavior that encourages them to engage in premarital sex (Sekarayu & Nurwati, 2021). Another research shows that having sex before the age of 16 years has a 73.5 times higher risk of early marriage (Mpilambo, Susuman, Kanayo, & Stiegler, 2017). The age at first sexual intercourse is the strongest positive factor associated with early marriage. In other words, the age at first sexual intercourse greatly influences the age at first marriage (Mpilambo et al., 2017). This statement is strengthened by other data and indicated that the rate of first pregnancy is one of the highest causes of pushing teenage girls to marry early (K.G. Santhya & Jejeebhoy, 2015).

According to the informans, marriage is an opportunity to social satisfy, emotional and sexual needs. Several informans described the needs they had been encouraged by the decision to marry soon. One informan confirmed that:

“All I need is love and happiness. I'm tired of the difficulties.”

The description that marriage can provide feelings of being loved and accepted, this convinced informan to be married. Another informan stated that:

“I got what I dreamed of in my husband's family. I was accepted as a beloved child. Even though there wasn't much money, I was well received.”

“All my life, I have felt loved. I lost the male figure in my life when my father went to work abroad. I'm enjoying this feeling.”

Apart from the need to be loved, the need to live in peace is also one of the reasons informans to married soon.

“When I was single and messy. My parents have a lot of demands and always want to fulfill all their wishes. They didn't even want to hear my opinion; That's why I married soon to have a peaceful life.”

“For the first time in my life, I felt like I was walking to be loved. I have feelings towards the opposite sex. This is a new experience, a good and enjoyable thing for me. I really need it to be loved by someone.”

Based on the results of interviews with other informans, marriage is a way to satisfy sexual needs. Regarding this issue, two informans emphasized this,

“At that time, I agreed to married soon after graduated from middle school because I was afraid of going too far. I have a strong desire to have sexual intercourse.”

“I am a girl who is liked by a lot of boys. They all chased me and seduced me into having sex outside of marriage. I thought that getting married would make it safe for me to do that.”

The encouragement to fulfill the needs of girls above is often not balanced with sufficient skills to achieve goals. In addition to meeting social and emotional needs, girls believe that marriage is a satisfying tool for satisfying sexual desires. Respond to this phenomenon. Researchers emphasize the importance of sex education, especially in adolescence (Caitlin E. Welles, 2005).

Indonesian culture, sexual relations before marriages are prohibited legally, religiously, and morally. Families intend to encourage their children to marry soon to satisfy their sexual needs and protect the purity of their daughters.

For the majority of informans, the problem of early marriage is related to belief in religious teachings. One informan explained:

"My mother and mother-in-law advised me to get married immediately because according to them, hastening to get married is the recommendation of our prophet."

In line with other informants stated that,

"My family is a religious family. My parents also had an arranged marriage. They really try to obey religious rules, one of which is the prohibition on approaching adultery. Then they asked me to immediately marry the prospective partner they chose so that I would be safe from zina."

On the other hand, the informant said,

"Several times at recitation events, I heard the ustad say. When a servant is married, it means he has completed half his religion. My parents don't mind if I married soon".

Research shows that early marriage occurs more often in areas with Muslim populations (Mobolaji, Fatusi, & Adedini, 2020). In Islam, marriage is a way for anyone who cannot control their desires. Religious rules are believed to strongly influence parents' decisions to marry off their daughters immediately.

Religion as a justification for early marriage among teenagers is supported by many studies which show that early marriage among teenagers occurs based on adherence to religious beliefs (Montazeri, Gharacheh, Mohammadi, Rad, & Ardabili, 2016). In Islam, if someone marries, they perfected half of their religion. It means that anyone who is married and whatever their age, will be better protected from all kinds of immorality that arises from lust. A married person's lust will be directed towards a halal partner and will receive a reward.

At the same time, according to Islam, marriage should not be forced if the young girl is not ready. However, marriage readiness is a subjective assessment that cannot be easily assessed by other people and therefore, early marriage among adolescent girls is largely accepted. There are cases of teenage girls not being able to make their own decisions because they are too young and lack knowledge and skills (Fadhilah, N., 2020).

The informant's decision to early age marriage was not based on sufficient knowledge about the consequences that would arise. Lack of knowledge regarding the impact of early marriage makes them accept the decisions made by their parents.

"I thought getting married was something all women did. It seemed easy for me, especially since my parents already had a potential partner that they chose for me."

"I didn't even have the chance to refuse when my father introduced a man as my husband."

“Since I was little, everything related to my life was controlled by my father and mother. Likewise in terms of couples and marriage. When, where and with whom I get married, as prepared by them. I've gotten used to things.”

Other informans felt they had no one to ask for opinions other than their parents.

“I don't know whether to accept this decision or not. I am an only child. Acceptance is the only option I have.”

Previous research suggests that among adolescent girls there is often limited access to knowledge which ultimately hinders freedom in making decisions (Montazeri et al., 2016). In this research, informans believed that they were not mature enough and were not independent enough to make decisions regarding marriage. On the other hand, the informans felt they had limited critical thinking, lacked information about marriage and this was strengthened by the absence of a trusted party to provide reliable advice. Thus, it makes teenage girls powerless to go beyond the authority and decision of their parents to marry them off. Early marriage appears to be a subtle or covert form of forced marriage. Research (Abera, Nega, Tefera, & Gelagay, 2020) shows that early marriage makes women more likely to experience various forms of violence in married life due to a lack of skills and freedom of decision making.

Although some informans wanted to postpone marriage for educational and career reasons, a lack of persuasive and negotiation skills prevented informans from discussing their desires with their parents and were ultimately forced to marry at an early age.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to explore the dominant factors of early marriage from the perspective of married young women. This research presents an overview and in-depth understanding of the determinants of early marriage from the perspective of young women. The research results showed that although informans had the desire to postpone marriage, several dominant factors, such as socio-economic conditions and individual conditions, forced them to accept the decision to marry at an early age.

The data obtained in this study highlights the fundamental factors involved in the decision to marry early among adolescent girls. The results of this research have implications for policymaking in various fields, such as health, education, economics, and religion, to

develop interventions that suit existing needs and culture. Especially for women, youth empowerment programs need to be emphasized in order to they have enough knowledge and skills to make the right decisions and prepare them to enter married life at the right time. Since early marriage is a multifactorial problem, a multidimensional and interdisciplinary approach is needed to develop and implement effective and comprehensive steps, including programs to increase knowledge, understanding, and awareness of teenagers, parents, and society about the negative impacts of early marriage. Furthermore, to understand other problems that underlie early marriage, further research is needed regarding the perception of early marriage among adolescent girls from various cultural and religious backgrounds.

Recommended further steps include: (1) Development of Education and Outreach Programs: Implementation of education and outreach programs aimed at increasing awareness of the negative impacts of early marriage. This program should include material on reproductive health, women's rights, as well as the importance of education and economic empowerment for young women; (2) Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls: Development of initiatives for the economic empowerment of adolescent girls through skills training, access to vocational education, and employment opportunities. This aims to provide an alternative to early marriage as an economic solution; (3) Community Based Intervention: Empowering local communities to support and advocate for postponing early marriage. This includes engaging community leaders, religious leaders, and local organizations in efforts to change social norms that support early marriage; (4) Supportive Policies and Regulations: Encourage the government and policy makers to tighten regulations regarding the minimum age of marriage and implement policies that protect the rights of young women. This also includes providing support services for young people who are vulnerable to early marriage; (5) Further Research: Conduct further, more in-depth and broader research on the factors underlying early marriage, as well as exploring differences in perceptions and experiences in various cultural and religious contexts. This research should also include an evaluation of the effectiveness of programs and policies that have been implemented.

Thus, the results of this research can be the basis for developing a more comprehensive and effective strategy in overcoming the problem of early marriage, as well as contributing to improving the welfare of adolescent girls in Indonesia.

REFERENCE

- Abdurahman, D., Assefa, N., & Berhane, Y. (2022). Parents' intention toward early marriage of their adolescent girls in eastern Ethiopia: A community-based cross-sectional study from a social norms perspective. *Frontiers in Global Women's Health*, 3. doi:10.3389/fgwh.2022.911648
- Abera, M., Nega, A., Tefera, Y., & Gelagay, A. A. (2020). Early marriage and women's empowerment: the case of child-brides in Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia. *BMC International Health and Human Rights*, 20(1), 30. doi:10.1186/s12914-020-00249-5
- Ahmed, S., Khan, A., Khan, S., & Noushad, S. (2014). Early Marriage; A Root Of Current Physiological and Psychosocial Health Burdens. *International Journal of Endorsing Health Science Research*, 2(1).
- Ahonsi, B., Fuseini, K., Nai, D., Goldson, E., Owusu, S., Ndifuna, I., ... Tapsoba, P. L. (2019). Child marriage in Ghana: evidence from a multi-method study. *BMC Women's Health*, 19(1), 126. doi:10.1186/s12905-019-0823-1
- Arimurti, I., & Nurmala, I. (2018). Analisis Pengetahuan Perempuan Terhadap Perilaku Melakukan Pernikahan Usia Dini di Kecamatan Wonosari Kabupaten Bondowoso. *The Indonesian Journal of Public Health*, 12(2), 249. doi:10.20473/ijph.v12i2.2017.249-262
- Ayako Kohno, Teeranee Techasrivichien, S. Pilar Suguimoto², Maznah Dahlui, Nik Daliana Nik Farid, & Takeo Nakayama. (2020). Investigation of The Key Factors That Influence The Girls to Enter Into Child Marriage: A Metasynthesis of Qualitative Evidence. *PLoS ONE*, 15(7).
- Badan Kependudukan dan Keluarga Berencana Nasional. (2012). *Pernikahan dini pada beberapa provinsi di Indonesia: Akar masalah dan peran kelembagaan di daerah*. Jakarta: BKKBN.
- Barbara S. Mensch, Erica Soler-Hampejsek, Christine A. Kelly, Paul C. Hewett, & Monica J. Grant. (2014). Challenges in Measuring the Sequencing of Life Event Among Adolescent in Malawi: A Cautionary Note. *Demography*, 51(1), 277–285.
- Bezie, M., & Addisu, D. (2019). Determinants of early marriage among married women in Injibara town, north West Ethiopia: community-based cross-sectional study. *BMC Women's Health*, 19(1), 134. doi:10.1186/s12905-019-0832-0
- Bokaie, M., Bostani Khalesi, Z., & Ashoobi, M. T. (2021). Challenges and strategies to end child marriage. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 33(3), 75–81. doi:10.1515/ijamh-2021-0017

- Caitlin E. Welles. (2005). Breaking the Silence Surrounding Female Adolescent Sexual Desire. *Women & Therapy*, 28(2), 31–45.
- Ela, N., & Damayanti, R. (2004). Dinamika Perkawinan Dini Pada Remaja Putus Sekolah di Desa Pringkasap Kecamatan Pabuaran Kabupaten Subang Tahun 2014. *Universitas Indonesia*.
- Fadhilah, N. (2020). Kecenderungan perilaku seksual beresiko dikalangan mahasiswa: Kajian atas sexual attitude dan gender attitude. *Marwab: Jurnal Perempuan, Agama Dan Jender*, 19(2), 171-189.
- Farahat, T., Shaheen, H. M., Khalil, N., & Nashat, N. (2019). Early Marriage Consequences in the Most Deproved Areas in Menoufia Governorate-Egypt: A Community-Based Survey. *Egyptian Family Medicine Journal*, 3(2), 83–96.
- Finaka, A. W. (2023, January). Mayoritas Pemuda di Indonesia Menikah Muda. *Indonesiabaik*.
- Forman, J., & Damschroder, L. (2015). Qualitative Content Analysis. In *Empirical Methods for Bioethics: A Primer*, 39–62.
- Himawan, K. K., Bambling, M., & Edirippulige, S. (2019). Modernization and singlehood in Indonesia: Psychological and social impacts. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 40(2), 499–506.
- Ibitoye, M., Choi, C., Tai, H., Lee, G., & Sommer, M. (2017). Early menarche: A systematic review of its effect on sexual and reproductive health in low- and middle-income countries. *PLOS ONE*, 12(6), e0178884. doi:10.1371/JOURNAL.PONE.0178884
- Ihza, I. M., & Fadhilah, N. (2022). Psychoeducation Implementation of the Society in Early Marriage Prevention in the Songgodadi Village. In *Proceeding International Conference on Islam and Education (ICONIE)* (Vol. 2, No. 1).
- Istiqomah, S. H., Rahmawati, I., & Asmaningrum, N. (2023). *Poverty As A Cause of Early Marriage: A Literature Review*. In *UNEJ e-Proceeding*. Semarang.
- Kamal, S. M. M. (2011). Socio-Economic Determinants of Age At First Marriage of The Ethnic Tribal Women In Bangladesh. *Asian Population Studies*, 7(1), 69–84. doi:10.1080/17441730.2011.544906
- Kamil, I., & Satosa, B. (2022, December 16). Kemenko PMK Sebut Perkawinan Anak di Indonesia Urutan Ke-8 di Dunia Artikel ini telah tayang di Kompas.com dengan judul 'Kemenko PMK Sebut Perkawinan Anak di Indonesia Urutan Ke-8 di Dunia'. *Kompas*.
- Kemenpppa. (2018). *Perempuan Rentan Jadi Korban Kdrts, Kenali Faktor Penyebabnya*. Jakarta.

- K.G. Santhya, & Jejeebhoy, S. J. (2015). Sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescent girls: Evidence from low- and middle-income countries. *Global Public Health*, 10(2), 189–221.
- Kohno, A., Techasrivichien, T., Suguimoto, P., Dahlui, M., Farid, N. D. N., & Nakayama, T. (2020). Investigation of the key factors that influence the girls to enter into child marriage: A meta-synthesis of qualitative evidence. *PLoS ONE*, 15(7).
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. USA: SAGE Publications.
- Mahato, S. K. (2016). Causes and consequences of child marriage: a perspective. *International Journal of Scientific and Engineering Research*, 7(7), 697–702.
- Mayring, P. (2014). Qualitative Content Analysis: Theoretical Background and Procedures. *Approaches to Qualitative Research in Mathematics Education*, 365–380.
- Mobolaji, J. W., Fatusi, A. O., & Adedini, S. A. (2020). Ethnicity, religious affiliation and girl-child marriage: a cross-sectional study of nationally representative sample of female adolescents in Nigeria. *BMC Public Health*.
- Montazeri, S., Gharacheh, M., Mohammadi, N., Rad, J. A., & Ardabili, H. E. (2016). Determinants of Early Marriage from Married Girls' Perspectives in Iranian Setting: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Environmental and Public Health*.
- Mouli, V. C., Greifinger, R., Nwosu, A., Hainsworth, G., & Sundaram, L. (2013). Invest in adolescents and young people: it pays. *Reproductive Health*, 10(1).
- Mpilambo, J. E., Susuman, S., Kanayo, O., & Stiegler, N. (2017). Determinants of Early Marriage among Young Women in Democratic Republic of Congo. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 52(1–3), 82–91.
- Nabila, R., Roswiyani, R., & Satyadi, H. (2022). *A Literature Review of Factors Influencing Early Marriage Decisions in Indonesia*. doi:10.2991/assehr.k.220404.223
- Nurkhamidi, A., Khumaedy, A., & Khuzaiyah, S. (2023). Behaviour Changes of Elementary School Students Who Had Menarche and Educational Program Needed Relating to Menarche. *Muwazah: Jurnal Kajian Gender*, 21-36.
- Oyortey, N. O., & Pobi, S. (2010). Early marriage and poverty: exploring links and key policy issues. *Gender & Development*, 11(2), 42–51.
- ÖZTÜRK, A. B., Albayrak, H. A. N. D. E., KARATAŞ, K., & Aslan, H. (2021). Dynamics of child marriages among Syrian and Afghan refugees in Turkey. *Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 25(1), 251–269.

- Pandya YP, & Bhanderi DJ. (2015). An epide-miological study of child marriages in a rural community of Gujarat. *Indian. Journal Community Medic*, 40(4), 246–251.
- Pohan, N. H. (2017). Faktor-Faktor yang Berhubungan Dengan Pernikahan Usia Dini terhadap Remaja Putri. *Kajian Ilmiah Problema Kesehatan*, 2(3), 424–435.
- Raj, A., Salazar, M., Jackson, E. C., Wyss, N., McClendon, K. A., Khanna, A., ... McDougal, L. (2019). Students and brides: a qualitative analysis of the relationship between girls' education and early marriage in Ethiopia and India. *BMC Public Health*, 19(1), 19. doi:10.1186/s12889-018-6340-6
- Rashid, M. M., Al-Amin, M., Rahman, M., & Rahman, M. (2023). Exploring Determinants of Early Marriage among Women in Bangladesh: A Multilevel Analysis.
- Rasul, A., Nasir, J. A., Akhtar, S., & Hinde, A. (2022). Factors associated with female age at first marriage: An analysis using all waves of the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey. *PLOS ONE*, 17(3), e0264505. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0264505
- Rohayana, A. D., & Mahmudah, U. (2020). Gender discrimination on child marriage in Indonesia: A Quantitative research using bootstrap approach. *Muwazab: jurnal kajian gender*, 12(2), 275-294.
- Rumble, L., Peterman, A., Irdiana, N., Triyana, M. , & Minnick, E. (2018). An empirical exploration of female child marriage determinants in Indonesia. *BMC Public Health*, 18, 1–13.
- Saleheen, A. A. S., Afrin, S., Kabir, S., Habib, Md. J., Zinnia, M. A., Hossain, Md. I., ... Talukder, A. (2021). Sociodemographic factors and early marriage among women in Bangladesh, Ghana and Iraq: An illustration from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey. *Heliyon*, 7(5), e07111. doi:10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07111
- Santhya, K. G. (2011). Early marriage and sexual and reproductive health vulnerabilities of young women a synthesis of recent evidence from developing countries. *Current Opinion in Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 23(5), 334–339.
- Schaffnit, S. B., Urassa, M., & Lawson, D. W. (2019). “Child marriage” in context: exploring local attitudes towards early marriage in rural Tanzania. *Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters*, 27(1), 93–105. doi:10.1080/09688080.2019.1571304
- Schildkrout, E. (2023). *Dependence and autonomy: the economic activities of secluded Hausa women in Kano*. Routledge.
- Sekarayu, S. Y., & Nurwati, N. (2021). Dampak Pernikahan Usia Dini Terhadap Kesehatan Reproduksi. *Jurnal Pengabdian Dan Penelitian Kepada Masyarakat*, 2(1).

- Setiadi, S. (2021). Getting Married is a Simple Matter: Early Marriage among Indonesian Muslim Girls in Rural Areas of Java. *JSW (Jurnal Sosiologi Walisongo)*, 5(2), 143–154. doi:10.21580/jsw.2021.5.2.7970
- Shaud, S., & Asad, S. (2020). Marital adjustment, convergent communication patterns, and psychological distress in women with early and late marriage. *Current Psychology*, 39, 2326–2333.
- Sulistiyorini, Y., Wibowo, A., & Indriani, D. (2023). The increasing rate of marriages and premarital pregnancies in adolescents during the transitional period of changes to the marriage law. *Journal of Public Health in Africa*, 14(52).
- Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 16 Tahun 2019 Tentang Perubahan Atas Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 1974 Tentang Perkawinan. Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 16 Tahun 2019 (2019).
- United Nation Children’s Fund. (2020). The State of Children in Indonesia – Trends, Opportunities and Challenges for Realizing Children’s Rights. Jakarta: UNICEF Indonesia.
- Vaismoradi, M., Turunen, H., & Bondas, T. (2013). Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nursing and Health Sciences*, 15(3), 398–405.
- Wijayati, N. A., Soemanto, R. B., & Pamungkasari, E. P. (2017). Socioeconomic and Cultural Determinants of Early Marriage in Ngawi, East Java: Application of PRECEDE-PROCEED Model. *Journal of Health Promotion and Behaviour*, 2(4), 302–312.
- Wulan Angraini, Bintang Agustina Pratiwi, Henni Febriawati, Riska Yanuarti, Betri Anita, & Oktarianita Oktarianita. (2019). Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Terjadinya Pernikahan Usia Dini. *Jurnal Biometrika Dan Kependudukan*, 8(2), 183–191.