

Unraveling the Fundamental Causes of Child Marriage in Lumajang Regency

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Abstract

This study examines the underlying causes of the high rates of child marriage in Lumajang Regency, East Java. This study applies Giddens' structuration theory to explore the dynamic interplay between economic, sociocultural, and educational factors. Using a qualitative approach, the research identifies three key factors driving early marriage practices: economic instability in families, sociocultural norms that legitimize early marriage, and limited access to and understanding of education and reproductive health. Economic factors include families' inability to meet their needs, leading parents to marry their children as a temporary solution. Sociocultural norms, which still regard early marriage as part of tradition, exacerbate this situation. Finally, limited education and understanding of reproductive health make children more vulnerable to early marriage. In response, the Lumajang Regency Government issued Regulation No. 23 in 2020 to address this issue. However, the effectiveness of this policy is limited. This study recommends strengthening reproductive health education programs in schools, empowering economically vulnerable families, and enhancing the role of community leaders in disseminating the negative effects of child marriage to reduce early marriage rates.

Keywords: Policy Intervention, Lumajang District, Early Marriage

Introduction

Child marriage is still a serious problem in various regions of Indonesia, where it is often the first chapter of many life stories that ends unhappily. Behind moral or cultural reasons, there is a bitter reality for children who marry underage people. They often face a difficult life path, lose educational opportunities, and become trapped in financial instability (Cameron et al. 2021). Moreover, psychological and social pressures often surround people's lives. This triggers conflict and isolation, which worsens mental health (Fadhilah 2021). These impacts not only risk destroying their childhood dreams but also create a cycle of poverty that is difficult to break (UNICEF, 2021). In various regions of Indonesia, child marriage remains a reality that hinders the development and potential of children. This marriage brings them responsibilities that should not have been burdensome at a young age. East Java is the province with the highest number of child marriages. According to data from the East Java Religious Court, the number of marriage dispensations has reached 12,334 applications (Pratama, 2024). One of the regencies in East Java, with a high number of child marriages, is Lumajang Regency.

Underage marriage is a phenomenon that affects many girls in Lumajang Regency. Postmarriage has a major impact on their lives and the future. In 2017, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) collaborated with the Lumajang Regency Government to

obtain data on the prevalence of underage marriage by distributing questionnaires. From the distribution of the questionnaire, data was obtained that 17.2% of children under 15 years old, 46.6% of children aged 15-16 years and 36.3% of children aged 17 years had been married (Satu Data Lumajang, 2024). With these data, the prevalence or trend of underage marriage is obtained; namely, one in three girls under 18 years of age must be married.

Percentage of Underage Marriage Age of Women
in Lumajang Regency

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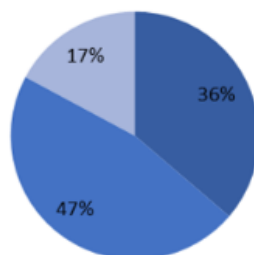


Figure 1. Percentage of Underage Marriage Age of Women in Lumajang Regency
Source: Satu Data Lumajang, 2019

Underage marriages in Lumajang deserve attention. This is because the high number of underage marriages has an impact on domestic violence. According to the latest data, the number of cases of domestic violence (KDRT) in this area tends not to decrease, even showing an increasing trend (Yudiantoro 2024). Cases of child marriage in Lumajang also seem to influence the high rate of stunting. This is shown by Rosyidah (2024), who found that areas with a high prevalence of underage marriage tend to show high stunting rates.

Various prevention efforts listed in the policy have been implemented, especially in areas with a high incidence of children marrying underage, including Lumajang. As a concrete step, the Lumajang Regency Government has implemented Regent Regulation (Perbup) No. 23 of 2020, which is designed to prevent underage marriage through a more intensive educational and supervision approach. However, this policy has not been effective enough, so the rate of underage marriage is still high. Social perceptions, economic conditions, and lack of education are some of the factors that hinder efforts to significantly reduce the number of underage marriages (Suyanto et al., 2023). Many factors cause underage marriages, including cultural, customary, economic, social, and environmental factors (Azizah, 2021). Cultural and customary factors, this factor is very inherent in people's lives and has even become a tradition passed down from their ancestors who consider that children who have reached puberty should get married immediately. This is because many parents do not understand the meaning of a child's maturity, which ends up marrying off their children at a young age, whereas girls who are

not married at the age of 18 are considered spinsters (Azizah, 2021). The minimum age limit for marriage was regulated in Law Number 1 of 1974. Referring to data from the High Religious Court of Lumajang Regency, in 2024, it was recorded that 4 people under the age of 15 and 162 people aged 15-19 were married.

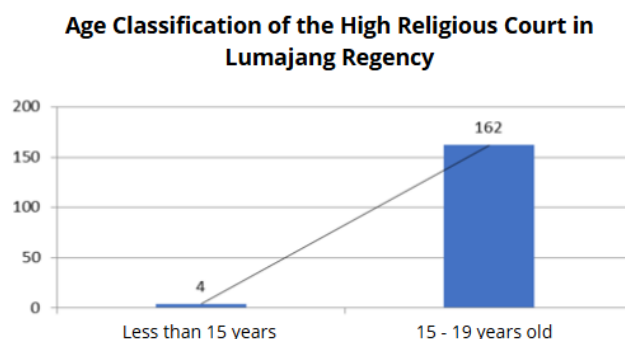


Figure 2. Age Classification of the High Religious Court in Lumajang Regency Per-Data Period 2024

Source: Child Marriage Prevention Dashboard - SIAPA PEKA

The economic factor considers underage marriage as a solution to help the family economy or create a better life for children (Khaerani, 2019). This assumption allows parents to reduce the burden of the economic costs borne simply by marrying off their children at a young age.

The third factor is social and environmental factors. This factor is influenced by free association among teenagers, low faith in a person, and lack of affection and parental education, which leads to adultery and pregnancy outside marriage (Cantika, 2018). Khoiroh (2022) stated that cases of adultery often force both families to immediately marry off their children to avoid being ridiculed by society even though their children are still young. In addition, adultery encourages the implementation of unregistered marriages due to the fear of their parents' reactions. As reported by the Kompas.com news page, a 16-year-old girl in Candipuro District, Lumajang Regency, East Java Province is known to have married unregistered caretakers at an Islamic boarding school in Lumajang Regency, while her parents only found out after her neighbors talked a lot about their daughter's pregnancy. Of the three factors that have been described, there are two factors that are the most dominant causes of underage marriage in Lumajang Regency per the data period of 2024, namely cultural factors as many as 120 people (72%) and social and environmental factors (pregnancy as many as 34 people (21%) and avoiding adultery as many as 12 people (7%).

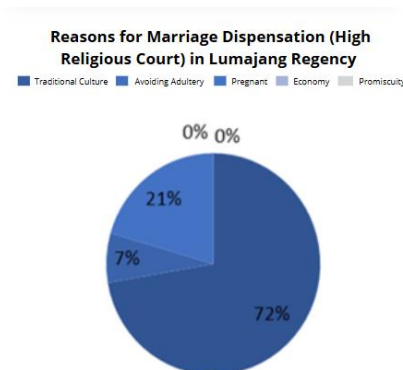


Figure 3. Reasons for Marriage Dispensation (High Religious Court) in Lumajang Regency per Data Period 2024
Source: East Java Province (2024)

As a result of underage marriage in Lumajang Regency, instead of creating a better life according to parents' expectations, it actually has various negative impacts on children's household life, both physically, mentally, and materially (Indawati et al., 2024). As evidenced by Satu Data Lumajang (2024), as many as 50% of children cannot complete their education or get decent job opportunities. This happens because they are expelled from school and forced to become isolated housewives, so that they still depend on their families. Ultimately, parents experience a double burden because they have to support new family members. As many as 43% of pregnant children are at risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections, affecting the health of the mother and newborn. This is influenced by the body of a girl under the age of 17 who is still not ready to conceive and give birth, and can even be at risk of miscarriage and death during childbirth, both for the mother and the baby. Finally, as many as 33% of children found it more difficult to carry out their positions as parents and relationships with their partners. This is caused by emotional instability in children under the age of 17, which triggers quarrels between young couples and makes wives vulnerable to Domestic Violence (KDRT) from their husbands.

School-aged children who marry underage are vulnerable to the risk of losing access to education, as shown in data from Lumajang Regency, which shows that as many as 50% of children who marry underage are forced to drop out of school and find it difficult to continue formal education (Satu Data Lumajang, 2024). This can have implications for their ability to obtain decent work in the future as well as increase the economic burden on families because they are unable to be financially independent (Indawati et al., 2024).

This shows that Perbup No. 23 of 2020 was not able to significantly reduce the rate of child marriage. The effectiveness of this policy is constrained by various fundamental factors in society. Therefore, prevention efforts that have been carried out through formal policies have not fully touched on the root of the problem in society.

Based on the explanation above, this study attempts to identify the fundamental causes and impacts of underage marriage in Lumajang Regency. Identification is carried out to provide recommendations for more effective and comprehensive preventive policies in line with existing policy instruments. This study uses the Giddens' 1984 Structuration Theory of Anthony Giddens as an analytical tool to dissect the relationship between economic, socio-cultural, and educational factors in a broader inequality structure. Structure and agency are positioned as two sides of social reality that mutually influence and reproduce social practices, allowing for continuity and the possibility of structural change slowly and sustainably, not suddenly.

Method

To explore the causes of rampant cases of underage marriage in Lumajang Regency, this study uses a qualitative research method. Qualitative research methods are useful for deepening and understanding the meaning of the experiences of individuals or groups that experience challenges in the context of social and humanitarian problems (Cresswell, 2017). This study utilized three sources (data triangulation): literature review, in-depth investigation, and in-depth interviews. The literature review included searching for literature relevant to underage marriage in Lumajang Regency with validity, namely, academic literature obtained from accredited academic platforms, then selected based on relevance and published in the last 10 years. An in-depth investigation was conducted through the collection of 10 media investigative articles about underage marriage with the following provisions: minimum length of 1,000 words, published since 2020, subjects in East Java, and sourced from reputable independent media with direct and critical observation. In-depth interviews were conducted with East Java BKKBN and several families in the Lumajang Regency. The selection of informants considered social background and direct involvement in the issue of underage marriage. To maintain research ethics, each informant's identity is kept confidential through the use of an anonymous code so that no personal information can reveal their identity. With this approach, data triangulation not only strengthens the validity of the findings but also provides a more complete picture of the complexity of underage marriage, especially for cases in the Lumajang Regency. Data collection was continued with data analysis through in-depth reading and coding based on the causes and impacts of underage marriage. Data are categorized into sub-factors to facilitate the interpretation and formulation of policy recommendations.

Results and Discussion

Researchers have successfully carried out research designs and data collection methods. The researchers presented the focus of the findings in the three discussions. The first includes the fundamental factors that cause underage marriage, the second includes

the impacts caused by the widespread practice of early marriage, and the third includes supporting instruments for policies to reduce the number of underage marriages.

Fundamental Factors Causing Underage Marriage

Based on the results of the data processing conducted by researchers, there are three fundamental influences that encourage minors to decide to marry before the minimum age limit. The cases presented in this study are not only personal narratives but are a representation of general patterns found in the Lumajang Regency community, as confirmed through data triangulation and consistency of findings from various sources. The fundamental factors that cause underage marriage are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Analysis of Causes of Underage Marriage, 2021-2023

No	Subject	Penyebab	Source
1	N (P/13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Pregnancy out of wedlock (Social) b) Lack of understanding about reproduction (Education) c) Social pressure and environmental stigma (Social) d) Parental pressure due to economic pressure (Economic) e) Limited access to education and career opportunities (Education) 	Syakriah (2023) in Multatuli Project
2	P (P/17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Pregnancy out of wedlock (Social) b) Poverty and limited access to education (Economic, Education) c) Coercion due to Family Economic Conditions (Economic) d) Social Stigma and Environmental Pressure (Social) e) Difficult family economic conditions (Economic) 	Syakriah (2023) in Multatuli Project
3	S (L/18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Low education level (Education) b) Emotions are not yet stable (Social) c) Brief introduction to partner (Social) 	Azizah et al (2021)
4.	N2 (P/17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Mystical aspects that are still attached (Social) b) Avoiding community assumptions (Social) 	Saliki & Naila (2023)
5.	K (P/16)	Mystical aspects that are still attached (Social) Avoiding community assumptions (Social)	
6.	S2 (P/15)	Demands to accept someone's proposal (Social)	
7.	V (P/17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Influenced by local norms and culture (Social) b) Lack of educational motivation (Education) 	

		c) Experiencing social pressure or family pressure (Social) d) Influence of the culture of siri marriage practices (Social)	
8.	M (L/17)	Parents' beliefs and mindsets that children do not need to pursue higher education because they will end up in the fields (Education)	
9.	U (P/17)	Low family financial conditions so they cannot send their children to school (Economic)	
10.	N3 (P/16)	Low family economic conditions so they marry off their children to help the economy (Economic)	
11.	M2 (P/15)	Parents' pressure for their children to get married soon, because they are afraid of getting pregnant out of wedlock and there is pressure from the surrounding environment (Social)	<i>In Depth-Investigation</i> Kompas TV Jawa Timur (2023)
12.	SD (P/15)	Parents' pressure for their children to get married soon, because they are afraid of getting pregnant out of wedlock and there is pressure from the surrounding environment (Social)	

Description: (P/13) is (Gender/Age)

Source: Data Processed by Researchers

Based on data processed by researchers, underage marriage is mainly caused by socio-cultural factors such as customs, coercion, and the stigma of society, which suggests that early marriage can prevent pregnancy outside of marriage. This tradition forms a causal chain or common pattern that is passed down from generation to generation and creates long-term impacts. The habit of underage marriage often leads to economic instability and poverty, which limits children's access to a decent education. Lack of knowledge and life skills makes it difficult for them to get out of this circle, so this practice continues to be perpetuated to support the family's economic condition. Associated with Giddens' structuration theory, underage marriage in the Lumajang Regency can be understood as part of a cycle of structuration that influences each other between structure and agency. Socio-cultural factors as the most influential structure on the ongoing underage marriage, such as community norms that stigmatize pregnancy outside of marriage, the perspective that women should marry young, and pressure from the extended family or environment increasingly create a strong social structure. The influence of this socio-cultural structure forms agencies (individuals and families) that make decisions to marry children in response to social pressure. The decision is a reflection of the internalization of embedded norms and values. Furthermore, the action simultaneously reproduces the existing structure, so that the cycle of early marriage continues.

Based on the data obtained, researchers identified three main factors that cause underage marriage. After analysis, it was found that social factors occupied the dominant

position as the main cause. This is reflected in the field findings, which show that social norms, environmental pressure, and community views on gender roles have a large influence on the decision to marry at an early age. The following is a more comprehensive explanation of these factors.

Social and Cultural Factors

The social and cultural stigma regarding efforts to avoid pregnancy outside marriage by conducting underage marriage is still strong in Lumajang Regency. This statement is consistent with the M2 and SD cases. Their parents were afraid that their children would become pregnant outside marriage if they were not married immediately. It is further known that norms and culture also glorify (accept and normalize) the occurrence of underage marriage, one of which was experienced in Case V. The culture of early marriage and unregistered marriage is common in V's residential environment, which makes V conduct an unregistered marriage at an age when she is still underage. In other cases, it was also caused by some families who said that they believed in mystical things and made efforts to avoid negative judgment from the environment, including the case of N2.

In the case of M, the mindset of parents tends to think that higher education is not that important for women, because in the end they will go to the rice fields. This kind of thinking worsens the decision to marry young children. In addition, social pressure from the surrounding environment also influences teenagers' decisions to marry. S described the demands to accept proposals, which made teenagers feel that marriage was a way to fulfill the social expectations of the family and society. S added that low levels of education, immature emotions, and too short introductions to partners are often factors that are not realized but ultimately lead to early marriage.

These findings are in line with research by McDougal, where the phenomenon of underage marriage is closely related to the influence of sociocultural factors in an area. The decision to marry at a young age is often driven by social pressure that influences parents as decision-makers (McDougal et al., 2018). Social norms that underlie the practice of underage marriage have a major influence on the marriage of young women in rural areas, especially through the influence of peers who adhere to these norms. Marrying the first prospective husband is considered an opportunity that should not be missed, and a symbol of good luck, where relatives, neighbors, and marriage intermediaries facilitate the process. Young women usually accept their first marriage offer regardless of age (Tewahido et al., 2022).

In Lumajang Regency, there is an assumption that a woman should be behind her husband; there is no point in women going to college because, after marriage, women will only take care of kitchen affairs. The culture that develops in society emphasizes that women should support their husbands and not need to pursue higher education. Parents consider that higher education does not provide significant benefits after marriage and

choose to marry off their children. There is also a deep-rooted societal view of women that if they do not marry young, women will be labeled as "old maids" which causes parents to feel pressured to marry off their children early so that they do not have difficulty finding a partner in the future (Azizah, 2021).

Economic Factors

Based on the findings of researchers, economic factors are also one of the main factors supporting underage marriage. Based on the experience of 12 cases, low income, poor financial management, and economic constraints encouraged underage children to marry. In the cases of P, U, and N, the family was forced to marry them off to reduce their financial burden. P and U initially intended to continue their education to a higher level. However, their families' financial situations forced them to abandon their intentions. Meanwhile, N had no choice from the beginning because her parents forced her to marry.

Something interesting happened in the SD and M2 families who had conservative beliefs where they felt the need to immediately marry their children off to avoid the possibility of getting pregnant out of wedlock and adding to the family's economic burden. Furthermore, the cases of N and K experienced limited access to education, exacerbated by the family's unstable financial condition, which also influenced their decision to marry underage. In addition, there was a lot of social stigma that influenced the family's decision to give permission to their children to marry underage.

These findings are supported by a study by Wulandari and Laksono, which showed that poverty is one of the main factors causing underage marriage in developing countries (Wulandari & Laksono, 2020). Azizah (2021) stated that early marriage is a practical solution to reduce the economic burden borne by the family. The practice of early marriage often occurs in women in villages who come from low-income families and do not receive proper education. Girls are married to people who are considered capable, so the family's economic burden is reduced with the hope that the child will also be able to help the family's economy (Yanti et al., 2018). Parents think that if their daughters are married, they can live independently, and their economy will improve. However, in practice, it is not uncommon for them to marry people with economic statuses that are not much different (Khaerani, 2019). This leads to a sad ending in repeated early marriages.

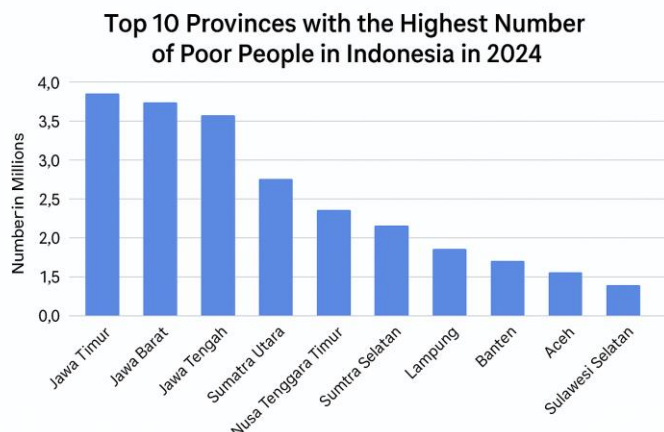


Figure 5. Provinces with the Largest Number of Poor People in Indonesia 2024

Source: Central Statistics Agency (BPS)

The high number of early marriages in East Java is also in line with the high poverty in East Java. Based on data from the BPS, East Java Province is the province with the largest total poor population in Indonesia, which is 3.98 million poor people or 9.79 percent of the total population. In line with this, East Java is also among the top three provinces with the most early marriages in Indonesia. One of the areas with early marriage practices in East Java is Lumajang Regency. Based on literature studies, the practice of early marriage due to economic factors is still common in Lumajang

Education Factor

Based on the experiences of six subjects, it was revealed that a lack of understanding of reproduction, limited access to education, low levels of education, and lack of motivation to learn also influenced the reasons why a minor got married.

In the case of N, it was stated that a lack of understanding about reproduction could be influenced by low levels of education, which also played a role in the decision to marry early. In addition, P revealed that poverty and limited access to education were the main factors that made teenagers feel that getting married was an easier way out.

One of the participants, S, stated that low levels of education and unstable emotions played an important role in the decision to marry early. With a low level of education, teenagers cannot prepare themselves emotionally and mentally to face the challenges of a married life. In addition, V also stated that a lack of educational motivation influenced teenagers' decisions to marry early. Many teenagers feel that education is not that important, especially if it is influenced by local norms and cultures that consider marriage at a young age as something normal. This is exacerbated by other factors such as cultural influences that consider higher education for women to be unimportant, as conveyed by M, who stated that their parents thought that women did not need higher education because they would eventually return to the field. U stated that low economic

conditions made families unable to send their children to school, leading to the decision to marry off their children early to help the family economy. Research conducted by Azizah (2021) explains that, in many communities, especially in rural areas, low levels of education are often one of the main factors driving early marriage. When adolescents do not complete formal education, they tend to be less aware of their rights, including the right to determine their future and live independently. In addition, the lack of knowledge about reproductive health makes adolescents less aware of the risks that can be caused by early marriage, both in terms of physical and psychological health. The Center for Reproductive Health of Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), in collaboration with Rutgers International, revealed that only 45 percent of students were aware that adolescent girls could become pregnant after having sex for the first time. In addition, only one-third of students believed that condoms were effective in preventing pregnancy, and less than 20 percent of female students knew where they could obtain contraceptives. Nearly one-third also feel reluctant to access contraceptive services due to shame (Perestroika et al., 2022).

Impact of Underage Marriage

Based on the results of the data processing, there are several analyses of the impact of underage marriage in 2021-2023. From the various factors that cause it, it turns out that not only are children married underage, but the lives of families and communities in the area are also affected. The analysis of the impact of underage marriage is as follows:

Table 2. Analysis of the Impact of Underage Marriage, 2021-2023

No	Subject	Impact	Sources
1	N (P/13)	a) Dropping school (Social) b) Limited access to decent work (Social) c) Inability to achieve financial independence (Economic) d) Ostracized (Social)	Syakriah (2023) in Project Multatuli
2	P (P/17)	a) Financial difficulties b) Expelled from the village c) Taking care of children alone, because the man does not want to take responsibility	
3	S (L/18)	a) Not having a job b) Divorce occurs c) Ostracized d) Trauma	Azizah, et.al (2021)
4.	N2 (P/17)	a) Ignoring the official dispensation process b) Mystical influence on marriage decisions	Saliki & Naila (2023)
5.	K (P/16)	a) Limited access to education b) Loss of adolescence c) Mental and emotional unpreparedness d) Economic dependence on partner e) Reproductive health risks	

		f) Stress	
6.	S2 (P/15)	a) Lack of self-development b) Affects mindset and child rearing	
7.	V (P/17)	Mystical influence on marriage decisions	
8.	M (L/17)	a) Lack of self-development b) Affects mindset and child rearing	
9.	U (P/17)	a) Material or financial issues are guaranteed b) Unable to continue school	
10.	N3 (P/16)	a) Husband who is irresponsible b) Divorce occurs	
11.	M2 (P/15)	a) Mentally and emotionally unprepared b) Instability in the household c) Education that disconnected d) Social isolation	<i>In Depth- Investigation Kompas TV Jawa Timur (2023)</i>
12.	SD (P/15)	a) Mental and emotional unpreparedness b) Loss of personal freedom	

Description: (P/13) is (Gender/Age)

Source: Data Processed by Researchers

Childhood marriage has a major impact on educational, economic, social, and psychological factors. In this study, various significant impacts of underage marriage were found that not only affect married individuals but also the lives of their families and the surrounding community. The most noticeable impact is the limited access to decent work. Those who marry underaged people, especially girls, are often required to leave school early. Therefore, they do not have the educational qualifications or competencies required to compete in the job market. This is in accordance with research that has found that underage marriage causes a lack of good job opportunities, which results in precarious work, low wages, and no guarantee of long-term welfare (Rahayu & Wahyuni, 2020; Wahhaj, 2022).

As experienced by N, K, and U, who faced limited access to continuing their education after early marriage, their self-development was hampered. They lost the opportunity to acquire skills that could open decent job opportunities in the future. Based on the research presented by Naila (2023), early marriage is closely related to an increase in school dropout rates, which has an impact on the quality of life and empowerment of women in the future, as well as increasing social and economic inequality. This leads to the inability to achieve financial independence and the risk of intergenerational poverty (UNICEF, 2021). This financial inability ultimately results in economic dependence on partners and worsens their condition later in life.

Economic dependence on a partner eventually spreads to social impacts related to emotional instability. This can increase divorce because they do not yet have emotional maturity (Fadhilah, 2021). The stigma and discrimination of society that often occurs when teenagers marry underage people, their social interaction with the surrounding

community, and peers also tends to decrease. As experienced by N, who is still in school, pregnancy out of wedlock forced her to marry in secret to maintain the family's reputation. However, this complicates their social status. Because N and her husband's marriage are not legally valid, they feel that they do not need to go through official procedures to separate. This is in line with Fadhillah's (2021) research, which states that marriage at a young age often leads to emotional instability, divorce, and social exclusion. Stigma and discrimination from society also worsen the psychological and social conditions of children who marry young.

Worsening psychological conditions can occur if marriage becomes traumatic due to unpreparedness to face life after marriage (Naila, 2023). These psychological conditions include emotional trauma, mental instability, and severe social pressures. Mental unpreparedness to face the responsibilities of marriage often causes stress, especially in difficult economic conditions such as those experienced by P and K. In addition, dropping out of school and lack of self-development experienced by N and U add to mental stress, preventing them from achieving independence and limiting opportunities to improve their quality of life. The psychological impact of underage marriage, as found in the data above, is in line with the research by Naila (2023), which shows that underage marriage often causes emotional trauma and mental instability. Research by Fadhillah (2021) also supports these findings, stating that underage marriage is associated with an increased risk of mental and psychological disorders as well as negative impacts on long-term well-being. However, there is also research showing that in some cases, especially in areas with cultures that support early marriage, individuals who marry young can manage these challenges with strong support from the family and community (Arikarani & Mahaersal, 2024).

Policy Support Instruments for Reducing the Number of Underage Marriages

Despite the high number of underage marriages, researchers have found a number of policy instruments implemented by the Lumajang Regency Government as preventive measures. These instruments include regional regulations, consultation units, business group assistance, and health applications. In this sub-chapter, researchers compiled supporting instruments for policies to reduce underage marriages by referring to the three causal factors described in the discussion section. Some of the instruments that have been implemented to support the policy of reducing early marriages in Lumajang Regency include:

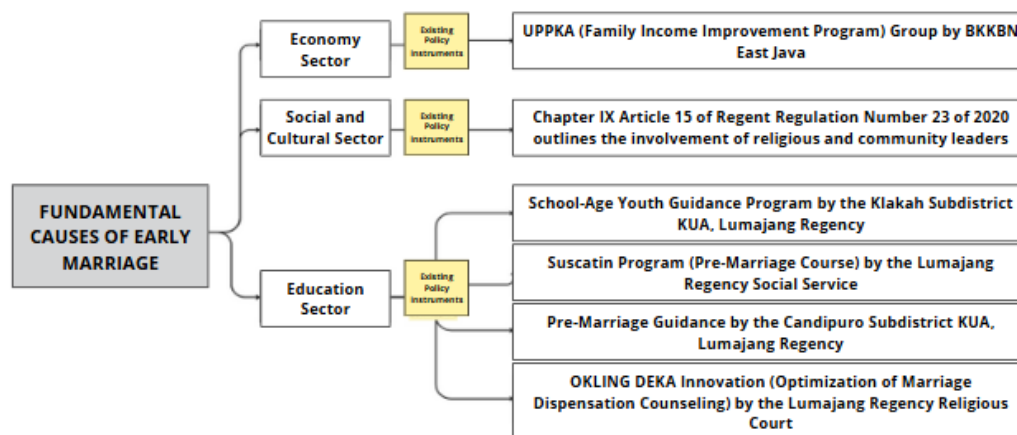


Figure 6. Instruments Supporting Policies to Reduce the Number of Underage Marriages

Source: Data processed by researchers

A. Economic Sector (Economic Empowerment Program)

Referring to Regent Regulation Number 23 of 2020 concerning the Prevention of Child Marriage, namely, in Chapter VI Article 12 point 3, it is stated that every government OPD is responsible for providing an economic empowerment scheme for poor parents not to marry off their children at an early age. In the realization of the economic empowerment program policy for the community, the East Java BKKBN stated that in every region in East Java, including Lumajang, there has been a Family Income Improvement Effort Acceptor (UPPKA) group, where every family who wants to improve their family's economy by trading can register to have an NIB so that every family in East Java and especially for Lumajang Regency can increase the resilience and economic independence of their respective families so that they will not plan to marry off their children at an early age for economic reasons.

B. Socio-Cultural Sector (Involvement of Religious and Community Leaders)

Religious and community leaders are part of the cultural authority that has a strong influence on shaping community norms and behavior. In many areas, including the Lumajang Regency, they are often seen as role models, so their words and directions tend to be followed by the community. Their involvement can be an important strategy in reducing the number of early marriages, for example, through counseling and socialization regarding the negative impacts of child marriages. However, it should be noted that in some cases, these cultural authority figures tend to support early marriage, either for cultural, religious, or social reasons. This raises the potential for conflict between state regulations that strictly prohibit child marriages and cultural authorities at the local level. Therefore, efforts to reduce

early marriage are not enough just to involve community leaders, but must also be accompanied by an approach that encourages the transformation of their understanding and values so that they are in line with child protection policies.

A religious and community leader can represent the role of the community in reducing the number of early marriages in Lumajang Regency, as stated in Regent Regulation Number 23 of 2020 concerning the Prevention of Child Marriage, especially in Chapter IX Article 15. However, in its implementation, regulation is considered only a formal norm without a strong implementation. Based on the results of an interview with one of the family members domiciled in Lumajang Regency, community leaders are no longer the main means of socializing the negative impacts of early marriage. This is due to the tendency of some religious and local community leaders to actually support early marriage, as long as they do not conflict with applicable religious and customary norms.

Based on the reality of community leaders and religious leaders who still support the tendency towards early marriage, it is necessary to take a participatory cultural approach to involve local leaders in the preparation of programs, training on the perspective of child protection and early marriage, and strengthening religious and customary narratives that are in line so that they feel they own and are willing to actively participate in efforts for social change and face previously existing local norms.

C. Education Sector

1. Curriculum of Education Impact of Early Marriage

Referring to Lumajang Regent Regulation Number 23 of 2020 concerning Prevention of Child Marriage, it is known that there has been an order for the government to formulate and implement policies to prevent child marriage. Furthermore, Wulandari's research (2023) conducted at the Klakah District Religious Affairs Office includes a school-age youth guidance program specifically designed for SMA, MA, and SMK institutions. In this program, it is known that there are several materials presented, such as self-knowledge material, material on the challenges of today's youth (marriage, children, pregnancy, etc.), and the self-concept of Quranic youth. In addition, research by Mualifah (2023) also states that the Lumajang Regency Social Service is involved in providing education related to the prevention of child marriage through the Suscatin (Prospective Bride and Groom Course) program, as stated in Regent Regulation No. 23 of 2020. The Suscatin programme focuses on providing education in the health sector, which also collaborated with the Lumajang Regency Health Office. The KUA Candipuro District, Lumajang Regency, also implements Premarital Guidance, which provides education, especially for couples married early, to learn about life after marriage, including facing risks that may arise (Fizana, 2021).

2. Early Marriage Counseling

Efforts to reduce the number of early marriages in Lumajang Regency are also carried out through the provision of early marriage counseling. The Junior Registrar of Applications at the Lumajang Religious Court, Sofan Afandi, said that the religious court had held and provided counseling services for couples who applied for marriage dispensation. Before continuing the marriage process, applicants for marriage dispensation are given an explanation of the advantages and disadvantages of continuing to carry out early marriage. However, only about 2 percent of all couples who apply for dispensation cancel their intention to marry early after counseling (Lumajangsatu, 2022).

The Religious Court of Lumajang Regency also made efforts to optimize marriage dispensing counseling (DEKA) innovation (Bawazier, 2023). In this innovation, prospective marriage dispensations and their families will be given counseling related to existing regulations. These regulations include the consequences or impacts of child marriage (early), the unpreparedness of prospective brides and grooms, and the impact on reproductive health later. This is in line with Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning amendments to Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning marriage.

Conclusion

Underage marriage in Lumajang Regency is not only caused by social and cultural factors, economic and psychological factors, and limited access to education, but also reflects a structural failure to ensure the protection of children's rights. Low levels of education have an impact on the lack of understanding of reproductive health, and emotional and mental unpreparedness during marriage. Economic pressure also worsens the situation, and underage marriage is often considered a pragmatic solution by poor families. However, educational policies alone have proven insufficient, if not accompanied by changes in social norms and structural interventions that support child protection and equal access to education and family welfare.

This study recommends four policy strategies in the fields of economics, socioculture, and education. First, it strengthens economic programs based on gender streaming. This strategy is important for addressing the root of economic problems while encouraging independence.

Second, religious leaders and community organizations are involved in campaigning against the negative impact of underage marriage. Given the moral and/or cultural authority of religious leaders, this collaboration is considered appropriate for shaping public opinion and gradually shifting social norms.

Third, interventions using educational policy instruments can be implemented directly and massively. This can be realized through the sexual education curriculum and internalization of local content learning and the formation of clusters in schools with comprehensive module provision. The Lumajang Regency Government must also be committed to fulfilling children's rights to obtain educational services for married minors and still students.

Finally, the Lumajang Regency Government must formulate data-based policies based on the results of schoolchildren's perceptions regarding reproductive health, basic rights, the role of women in the family, and child marriage. This study is important to ensure more accurate, measurable, and sustainable interventions.

These recommendations are based on the main finding that underage marriage is not only an individual problem but also a structural problem that requires a systematic and transformative cross-sector policy response.

As a direction for further research, it is recommended to conduct a deeper study regarding family dynamics, power relations, children's perceptions after early marriage, and the influence of social media on shaping decisions about early marriage. This is important for further study in order to completely understand and formulate more contextual and responsive interventions.

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