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Factors Influencing Early Marriage in Ponorogo, Indonesia: An Islamic Law Perspective

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Abstract

Objective: This study analyzes the factors influencing early marriage in Ponorogo Regency, Indonesia, from an Islamic law perspective. **Theoretical framework:** This research is grounded in Islamic legal theory, particularly maqasid al-shariah, which emphasizes protection of religion, life, lineage, intellect, and property in regulating marriage practices. **Literature review:** Previous studies indicate that early marriage is influenced by cultural traditions, economic hardship, low educational attainment, religious interpretation, and unintended pregnancy, with a significant rise in dispensation cases reported by religious courts in Indonesia. **Methods:** This study employs a qualitative literature study approach using secondary data from academic journals, books, and official reports, following Mestika Zed's framework, without field data collection. **Results:** The findings show that early marriage in Ponorogo is mainly driven by out-of-wedlock pregnancy, followed by economic conditions, cultural norms, low education levels, personal willingness, and limited religious understanding, with consistently high dispensation cases recorded by the Religious Court. **Implications:** The study suggests the need for strengthened Islamic education, improved reproductive health awareness, stricter marriage dispensation evaluation, and enhanced community engagement to reduce early marriage rates. **Novelty:** This study integrates Islamic legal analysis with empirical trends from Religious Court data in Ponorogo, providing a contextual understanding of early marriage drivers rarely combined in previous literature. Furthermore, the persistence of early marriage in Ponorogo reflects a complex interaction between socio-cultural traditions, economic vulnerability, and limited access to comprehensive reproductive health education, while Islamic legal principles emphasize prevention of harm (darar) and protection of lineage (hifz al-nasl), suggesting that policy interventions should combine legal enforcement, community-based education, and strengthened coordination between religious institutions and government agencies to effectively reduce the rate of marriage dispensation cases among adolescents in the region through integrated Islamic socio-legal approaches. We recommend collaborative preventive strategies and policy reform urgently for sustainable social impact.

Keywords: early marriage, islamic law, ponorogo, marriage dispensation, religious court.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a contract that legalizes biological relations between men and women and gives rise to various rights and obligations between them. In a broad sense, marriage is a binding contract between a man and a woman to live together and obtain offspring in accordance with Islamic teachings [1], [2]. Wedding ceremonies in Indonesia itself have a variety of characteristics, according to their respective religions, customs, and cultural tribes. The meaning of marriage in Islam is an inner birth bond between a man and a woman to live together in a household that is sakinah, mawadah, and warohmah, to be able to maintain life

by producing offspring, carried out in accordance with Islamic sharia. As in QS. Al-Hujurat verse 13: It means: "Behold, we created you from a man and a woman, and made you into nations and tribes, that you might know one another. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious among you. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Knowing" [3], [4].

By looking at the letter, it is illustrated that Allah SWT has set rules that are in accordance with his self-esteem and honor can be maintained. The purpose of marriage is the establishment of a happy and lasting home. The marriage law states that the ideal age of marriage for men is 19 years, while for women it is 16 years; if they do not meet that age, apply for marriage dispensation to the Religious Court. While in Islam, there is no age limit for marriage, but the general requirements are puberty, being sensible, and being able to distinguish between good and bad so that they can give consent to marry [5], [6].

Article 1 of Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage (Marriage Law) states that marriage is an inner birth bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the aim of forming a happy and eternal family (household) based on the One and Only Godhead. Furthermore, Article 2 of the Marriage Law regulates the legal requirements for marriage, which states that:

Marriage is wrong if it is performed according to the laws of each religion and belief.

Every marriage shall be recorded in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

In addition to regulating marriage registration, the Marriage Law also regulates the age limit for marriage, namely in Article 7 of the Marriage Law, which states:

Marriage is only permitted if the male party has reached the age of 19 (nineteen) years and the female party has reached the age of 16 (sixteen) years.

In the event of any deviation from subsection (1) of this article, dispensation may be requested from the court or other official appointed by both the male and female parents [7], [8].

On October 14, 2019, the government promulgated Law 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage. What has changed from this Marriage Law is the age limit provision in Article 7. The provisions regarding the age limit for marriage state:

Marriage is permitted only when the man and woman have reached the age of 19 years (nineteen years).

In the event of a deviation from the age provisions as referred to in paragraph first, the male parent and/or the female parent may request dispensation to the court on urgent grounds accompanied by sufficient supporting evidence.

The granting of dispensation by the court as referred to in paragraph second must take into account the opinions of both prospective brides who will hold the marriage.

Furthermore, in the explanation of Article 7, it is explained that what is meant by "compelling reasons" is the situation where there is no other choice, and it is very compulsory for marriage to take place. Meanwhile, what is meant by "sufficient supporting evidence" is a certificate proving that the age of the bride and groom is still below the provisions of the law and a certificate from a health worker supporting the parents' statement that the marriage is very urgent to take place [9], [10], [11].

Although the Marriage Law has stipulated the age limit for marriage either before or after the amendment of the Marriage Law, and those who want to marry underage must apply for marriage dispensation, it turns out that there are still couples who marry underage, and even without applying for marriage dispensation to the religious court. This means that in this case

there are 3 provisions of the Marriage Law that are not used, namely regarding the age limit for marriage, marriage dispensation, and marriage registration [12], [13].

However, in reality, there are many early marriages, that is, marriages that occur between men and women who are immature and mature based on the law and from a psychological perspective. This can occur due to several causative factors. Early marriage is a classic problem that is still often found in Indonesian regions, both in rural communities and urban communities. The factors that cause people to preserve early marriage are usually traditional factors (customs), economic factors, factors of low public interest in education, personal desire factors, factors of pregnancy out of wedlock, factors of religious understanding, and so on. Physical and mental readiness in running a household is still very low and prone to floods in the household, considering that a person's emotional level at a young age still cannot be stable and, if not balanced with careful preparation, divorce is prone to arise [14], [15], [16].

The case of underage marriage in Indonesia is not an unusual event, so it is not strange to see a man or woman who has been married even though he is not old enough. According to the United Nations Development Economic and Social Affairs, Indonesia was the 37th country with the highest number of early marriages in the world in 2007. At the ASEAN level, the rate of early marriage in Indonesia is second. Couples who marry underage socioeconomically can be said to be less or immature physically, physiologically, and psychologically and make domestic life encounter problems that may occur in the course of marriage, often becoming no longer harmonious [17].

Based on data provided by PA Ponorogo, the number of discs from 2020 to 2021 did increase, but not all marriage dispensations were submitted due to pregnancy. In 2019, of the 97 marriage dispensations received by the PA, 42 (43.2%) were due to pregnancy and 55 (56.7%) were due to other causes. These numbers experienced a very sharp increase in 2020. In 2020, of the 241 marriage dispensations received by PAs, 91 (37.7%) were due to pregnancy and 150 (62.2%) were due to other causes. Along with the peak of the Covid 19 pandemic in 2021, the number of marriage dispensations also rose again to 266. Of these, 131 (49.2%) were due to pregnancy and 135 (50.8%) due to other reasons. From the figures given by the PA, the actual rate of marriage dispensation for non-pregnant reasons is higher than the rate due to pregnancy. But pregnancy rates still need serious attention. In addition, two things need to be underlined from these figures: first, the increase in the rate of marriage dispensation, and second, the increase in the rate of child pregnancy. Two different but related things need to be explained in more detail: why and how the facts are [18]. Based on the above background, the researcher decided to conduct a study entitled "Factors Influencing Early Marriage in Ponorogo, Indonesia: An Islamic Law Perspective".

Theoretical Framework

Wedding

Marriage or marriage is a contract that legalizes association and limits the rights and obligations of a man and a woman who are not mahram. According to the term Islamic law, there are several definitions of marriage, including marriage according to sharia, which is a contract stipulated by sharia to allow fun between men and women and allow the pleasure of women with men. In general, marriage between a man and a woman is intended as an effort to maintain self-honor (hifz al "ird) so that they do not fall into forbidden acts, maintain the continuity of healthy human life/offspring (hifz an nasl) establish a loving home life between husband and wife and help each other for mutual benefit [19], [20], [21].

Early Marriage

Early marriage is a marriage that takes place at an age below the productive age, which is less than 20 (twenty) years in women and less than 25 (twenty-five) years in men. Early marriage is a child marriage; in this case, the preparation of a child or adolescent has not

been fully maximized, both in mental, psychic, and even material preparation. When marriage is done at an early age, adolescents do not have enough knowledge about marriage and family, and do not know how to manage conflict well. This will cause quarrels in the family and make the marriage less harmonious [\[22\]](#), [\[23\]](#), [\[24\]](#).

Factors for Early Marriage

The factors that affect early marriage are as follows:

a. Economic Factors

Economic difficulties are one of the factors causing early marriage, families that experience economic difficulties will tend to marry off their children at a young age to do early marriage. This marriage is expected to be a solution so that the economic burden in the family can be reduced. In addition, low economic problems cause parents to be unable to meet all their needs, including school fees, so that by marrying, the responsibility to support their children's lives is released in the hope that their children can have a better life [\[25\]](#), [\[26\]](#), [\[27\]](#).

b. Education Factor

If an area has a low education rate, it will definitely be very possible for them not to have enough knowledge about how to have a good marriage.

c. Social Media/Technology Factors

Many teenagers have sex outside of marriage because they are influenced by social media and the electronic technology they have. It is known that many online sites present content in a vulgar and open manner so that it has a bad impact on the teenagers themselves [\[28\]](#), [\[29\]](#), [\[30\]](#).

d. Promiscuity

Promiscuity is the most common factor in early marriage. A small example of promiscuity is choosing the wrong friends, dating, frequent night outs, and so on. This situation usually makes parents anxious and then forced to marry them even though they are still in school.

e. Self-willedness

This self-will factor is caused by mutual love and affection for each other from both men and women. If this couple is already blinded by love, they can do whatever they want, including marriage regardless of age and what problems they will face after married life.

f. Parents

The occurrence of early marriage can also be caused by coercion from parents. The main reason is, of course, economic factors, but besides that, parents' worry will fall into promiscuity and have negative consequences for their children, matching their children to perpetuate relationships with others [\[31\]](#), [\[32\]](#), [\[33\]](#).

g. Customs or Customs

Traditional customs in the implementation of marriage procedures are types of habits that are embedded and attached to traditional norms, social values, and people's personality values in social life that have certain sacred values that are permanent and difficult to change.

Customs believed by certain communities increasingly increase the percentage of early marriage in Indonesia. For example, the belief that it is not permissible to refuse someone's proposal to their daughter even though she is under the age of 18 is sometimes considered trivial and insulting, causing parents to marry off their daughter. The interesting thing about the percentage of early marriage in Indonesia is the significant comparison between rural and urban areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Early marriage has been widely discussed in academic literature as a multidimensional social phenomenon influenced by legal, cultural, economic, and religious factors. Scholars generally define early marriage as a marital union involving individuals below the legally or socially accepted age of maturity, often associated with limited psychological readiness, educational attainment, and economic independence. In many developing countries, including Indonesia, early marriage remains a persistent issue despite the existence of formal legal restrictions and regulatory frameworks [34].

Previous studies highlight that economic hardship is one of the strongest drivers of early marriage. Families experiencing financial instability often perceive marriage as a strategy to reduce household burden. In such contexts, daughters are sometimes married off early to transfer economic responsibility to husbands. This economic explanation is frequently reinforced by rural poverty conditions and limited access to education, which reduce long-term opportunities for adolescents, making early marriage appear as a practical alternative. Educational factors also play a significant role in shaping early marriage trends. Low levels of schooling are closely associated with limited awareness of reproductive health, legal marriage age, and long-term consequences of early family formation. Adolescents with restricted educational exposure are more likely to engage in risky behavior or lack the knowledge necessary to delay marriage decisions. In contrast, higher educational attainment is consistently found to delay marriage age and improve decision-making capacity among youth [35].

Cultural and social norms further contribute to the persistence of early marriage. In some communities, traditional values encourage early marriage as a means of preserving family honor, avoiding social stigma, or maintaining customary expectations. These norms may override formal legal provisions, particularly in rural settings where customary law holds strong influence over community behavior. Social pressure and parental authority also play crucial roles, as families may arrange marriages to protect children from perceived moral risks. Religious interpretation is another factor frequently discussed in the literature. While Islamic teachings emphasize maturity, responsibility, and readiness in marriage, interpretations at the community level may vary, leading to differing justifications for early marriage practices. Some studies argue that misinterpretation of religious values can contribute to the normalization of early marriage, particularly when it is framed as a preventive measure against immoral behavior [36].

In addition, unintended pregnancy is consistently identified as a dominant immediate cause of early marriage. This factor often becomes the primary reason for marriage dispensation requests in Islamic courts. The intersection of limited reproductive health education, peer influence, and lack of parental supervision contributes significantly to this phenomenon. Overall, the literature indicates that early marriage is a complex issue shaped by interconnected socio-economic, cultural, educational, and religious dimensions. These findings provide a foundational understanding for analyzing early marriage in Ponorogo within an Islamic law perspective [37].

METHODOLOGY

In writing this research, the method used is a literature study. According to Mestika Zed 2004 stated that literature study is a series of activities related to the use of literature reviews and reference sources, which means that in conducting literature research, researchers do not have to go to the field, just look for literature and data related to the discussion, then conclude it. In this section, a review of the concepts and theories used is carried out based on the available literature, especially from articles published in various scientific journals. So that by using this research method, the author can easily solve the problem to be researched [38], [39]. Research data sources use primary data sources, the primary data source in this

study is direct data from the object being studied, so the data received by researchers is based on data from journals and bibliography.

This study employs a qualitative literature review approach to examine the factors influencing early marriage in Ponorogo, Indonesia, from an Islamic law perspective. The literature study method is used to systematically collect, analyze, and interpret relevant written sources without conducting field research. This approach focuses on reviewing concepts, theories, and empirical findings from various academic publications, legal documents, and institutional reports related to early marriage and Islamic legal thought. The data sources in this study are secondary data obtained from scientific journals, books, official reports, and other scholarly publications that discuss early marriage and marriage regulations. These sources are used to build a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of early marriage, particularly in relation to social, economic, cultural, and religious factors. The data are selected based on relevance to the research focus and analyzed critically to identify patterns and key themes [40].

In addition, this study applies an Islamic law (sharia) approach as an analytical framework. This approach is used to interpret early marriage issues based on Islamic legal principles and *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, particularly the protection of lineage, intellect, and moral conduct. Through this perspective, early marriage is not only understood as a social and legal issue but also as a moral and religious concern that requires normative evaluation within Islamic teachings. The analysis process involves organizing the collected literature, categorizing key findings, and interpreting them in relation to Islamic legal values. This method allows the researcher to synthesize different viewpoints and develop a structured understanding of early marriage in Ponorogo. By integrating literature review techniques with an Islamic law perspective, this study provides a comprehensive analytical foundation for explaining the causes and implications of early marriage in the research context [41].

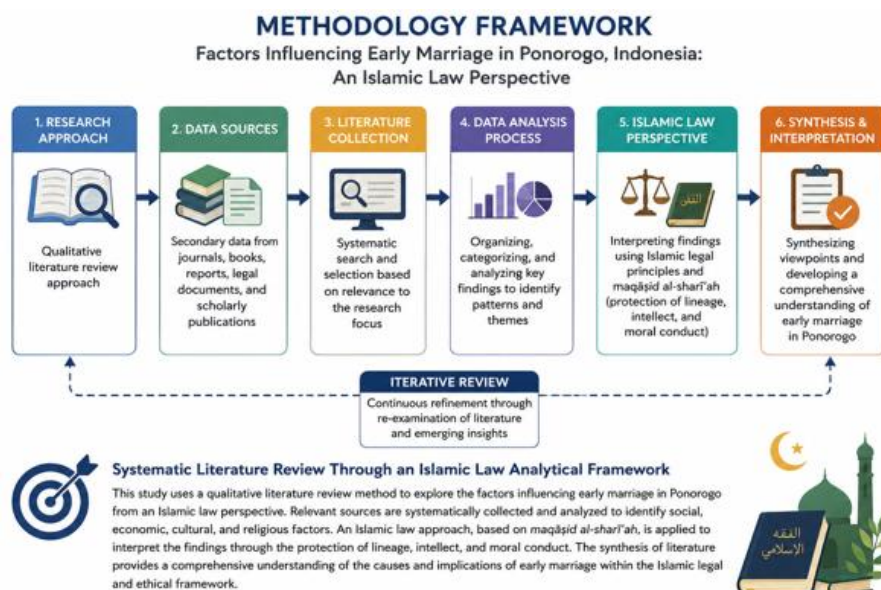


Figure 1. Systematic Literature Review and Islamic Law Analytical Framework for Examining Early Marriage in Ponorogo, Indonesia

This methodology applies a qualitative literature review to examine early marriage through relevant academic sources, legal documents, and institutional reports. The collected data are systematically analyzed using an Islamic law framework based on *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*. This approach identifies social, economic, cultural, and religious factors while providing comprehensive interpretations of the causes and implications of early marriage in Ponorogo.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ponorogo Regency is a regency in the province of East Java, Indonesia. This regency is located at an altitude between 92 and 2,563 meters above sea level and also has an area of 1,731.78 km². This regency is located in the west of East Java province and is directly adjacent to Central Java province, or more precisely, 220 km southwest of the capital city of East Java province, Surabaya. In 2015, based on the population census, the population of Ponorogo Regency was 1,020,648 people.

The average Ponorogo community has a low level of education. This is because many children cannot continue their studies due to limited costs. Low education levels result in many children misassociating, resulting in various problems, namely early marriage [42].

Based on Detiknews on January 24, 2020, the Ponorogo Religious Court recorded that throughout 2019, there were 97 ABG couples who applied for marriage dispensation. But 93 couples were decided. The reason for the dispensation is that 95% because it is caused by pregnancy out of wedlock. Applications for marriage dispensation experienced a very sharp increase in November and December 2019, namely there were 12 applications and also 20 applications. The causes of early marriage are various factors, including educational factors, family or parental factors, environmental factors, society and customs, economic factors, and pregnancy out of wedlock. Here is the data on the increase in the number of marriage dispensations from 2016-2019:



Figure 2. Graph of the Increase in Marriage Dispensation

Source: Created by Author, 2023

Based on the table above, the reality that occurs in Ponorogo Regency is that there are still many problems caused by early marriage, which has increased from year to year. Starting from 2016, there were 83 couples, in 2017 there were 67 couples, in 2018 there were 83 couples, and in 2019 there were 97 couples. This marriage dispensation is caused by the large number of young people who carry out early marriages, among others, triggered by extramarital pregnancies.

The Ponorogo Regency Religious Court recorded that in 2021 there were 266 applications for marriage dispensation, while in 2022 there were 184 applications for marriage dispensation. The application for marriage dispensation is dominated by pregnancies or outside the bonds of marriage. A report by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2020 states that 1 in 9 women aged 20-24 years has their first marriage before the age of 18, which is 1.2 million people [43], [44].



Figure 3. Application for Marriage Dispensation

Source: Created by Author, 2023

Based on detiknews, the Ponorogo Religious Court (PA) received reports of 191 applications for children to marry early during 2022. A large part of the reason is that the child is pregnant and gives birth. Of the 191 applications for marriage dispensation that were entered, the highest age range for submitting applications was 15 to 19 years, with as many as 184 cases. The remaining applicants for marriage dispensation were under 15 years of age, which is 7 cases.

The Religious Court (PA) of Ponorogo Regency stated that during the last 3 years from 2019 to 2021, the number of applications for marriage dispensation at Ponorogo PA increased. Despite the decrease compared to 2021 (266), the number of marriage dispensation cases remained high in 2022 at 184 cases.

Various studies say that promiscuity is indeed a factor that influences the occurrence of early marriage significantly. Some factors of early marriage vary greatly, including, according to the author are due to economic factors, because of arranged marriages, wanting to perpetuate relationships, and because of factors that are actually undesirable, namely MBA (married by accident), married because of an accident.

Divorce is never expected in a marriage. After all, when divorce occurs, there will always be consequences for the divorce. This is inseparable from social factors that affect a person's attitude and behavior, which then the parents not caring much about children, lacking attention to children, and have disseminated pronographic information that is now out of control. If not supported by a harmonious family, children will easily vent by doing actions that are violated by norms and religion, such as sex outside marriage.

Early marriage hurts the perpetrators, including:

1. Adolescents who experience pregnancy at a young age will cause a disease called anemia, and this disease will cause death for the baby and the mother.
2. Loss of the opportunity to continue school to a higher level.
3. The opportunity to get a job will automatically be difficult because it is caused by the lack of education, which can increase poverty.

The positive impacts are as follows:

1. Financial support: Getting married at an early age can ease the economic burden to be more savings.
2. Emotional support: With emotional support, it can train emotional and spiritual intelligence in a partner.

3. Learn to have responsibility at an early age, many couples are still unmarried because of their parents, but by marrying early, they must have greater responsibilities than before.

Be free from immoral acts such as adultery. In terms of religion, young marriage is actually not prohibited because by doing the marriage has the aim of avoiding adultery, which is often committed by teenagers, which is implied or explicitly prohibited both by religion and law. Allah says in Surah Al-Isra' verse 32: "And do not approach adultery, verily adultery is a heinous deed and a bad way" [\[45\]](#), [\[46\]](#), [\[47\]](#). From the explanation of the verse above, it can be understood that approaching adultery alone is forbidden, let alone committing adultery itself. Surely he has committed a great sin. Therefore, Islam regulates it by holding or performing marriages so that rampant adultery does not occur.

The phenomenon of early marriage in Ponorogo Regency, Indonesia, reflects a multidimensional social problem that cannot be understood solely through legal or moral lenses, but must be analyzed through the interaction of socio-economic, cultural, educational, and religious factors. From an Islamic law perspective, marriage is ideally designed to protect human dignity, lineage, and moral conduct. However, in practice, early marriage in Ponorogo often emerges as a reactive solution to social problems rather than a planned and responsible life transition. One of the most dominant drivers is unintended pregnancy outside marriage, which accounts for the majority of marriage dispensation cases. This indicates a breakdown in social and moral control systems among adolescents, influenced by increased exposure to digital media, weakening family supervision, and limited reproductive health education. Instead of being guided toward prevention and responsibility, marriage is often used as a corrective institution to "legitimize" an already occurring situation, which shifts its function from a sacred contract to a problem-solving mechanism [\[48\]](#).

Economic pressure is another structural factor. Many families in lower socio-economic conditions view early marriage as a strategy to reduce financial burden. This reflects a survival-oriented mindset where marriage is framed as an economic solution rather than a developmental process. Such conditions are reinforced by low educational attainment, which limits adolescents' awareness of long-term consequences such as unemployment risk, domestic instability, and psychological immaturity. Cultural norms also play a significant role. In certain communities, early marriage is still perceived as socially acceptable or even desirable, particularly to preserve family honor or avoid social stigma related to dating or pregnancy. These cultural expectations often override individual readiness and contribute to the normalization of underage marriage [\[49\]](#).

From an Islamic legal perspective, although marriage is encouraged to prevent immoral behavior, its implementation must still prioritize maturity, responsibility, and harm prevention. The principle of preventing harm suggests that marriage should not become a justification for unresolved social problems but should instead be a well-prepared institution that ensures welfare for both partners. The increasing number of marriage dispensations in Ponorogo indicates a gap between legal regulations and social reality. While laws set age limits and procedural requirements, enforcement alone is insufficient without addressing root causes. Therefore, early marriage in this context is not merely a legal issue but a systemic challenge involving education, family resilience, religious interpretation, and social policy coordination [\[50\]](#).

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that early marriage in Ponorogo, Indonesia, is influenced by interconnected educational, economic, cultural, familial, and religious factors. The increasing number of marriage dispensation applications indicates that early marriage remains a persistent social challenge despite legal regulations establishing minimum marriage age requirements. Data from the Ponorogo Religious Court reveal a rising trend in marriage

dispensations, with the majority of cases resulting from pregnancies outside marriage, indicating that early marriage frequently functions as a reactive solution rather than a carefully planned family institution.

Educational attainment represents one of the most influential determinants. The study indicates that many adolescents discontinue formal education because of financial limitations, reducing their opportunities to develop critical thinking, reproductive health awareness, and future career aspirations. Limited educational access also weakens understanding of the legal, psychological, and economic consequences of early marriage. Consequently, adolescents become more vulnerable to risky social behaviors and are less prepared to make informed decisions regarding marriage and family life.

Economic hardship further reinforces the prevalence of early marriage. Families experiencing financial difficulties may perceive marriage as a practical strategy to reduce household expenses or transfer economic responsibility to another family. Although some respondents acknowledge financial and emotional benefits associated with early marriage, these perceived advantages are generally outweighed by long-term consequences, including limited employment opportunities, persistent poverty, interrupted education, and increased health risks for young mothers and infants. These findings suggest that poverty functions both as a cause and a consequence of early marriage, creating an intergenerational cycle of socioeconomic disadvantage.

Social and cultural influences also contribute substantially to early marriage practices. Community expectations regarding family honor, parental authority, and social acceptance often encourage marriage at a young age, particularly when adolescents engage in premarital relationships. Weak parental supervision, increased exposure to digital media, and inadequate moral guidance have further intensified adolescent vulnerability to premarital pregnancy. Consequently, marriage is frequently chosen to avoid social stigma rather than to establish a mature and stable family. This phenomenon demonstrates that cultural norms and changing social environments significantly shape adolescent decision-making regarding marriage.

From the perspective of Islamic law, marriage is fundamentally intended to preserve religion, lineage, intellect, dignity, and family welfare in accordance with the objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*. Islam strongly discourages adultery and encourages lawful marriage; however, Islamic jurisprudence equally emphasizes maturity, responsibility, justice, and the prevention of harm. Therefore, marriage should not merely legitimize unintended pregnancy or resolve temporary social problems but should establish a stable institution capable of protecting the rights and welfare of both spouses. The continued increase in marriage dispensations suggests that legal enforcement alone cannot address this issue without strengthening education, family resilience, religious counseling, and coordinated community policies. An integrated approach involving educational institutions, religious leaders, families, and government agencies is therefore essential to reduce early marriage while promoting sustainable social welfare and the broader objectives of Islamic law.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study highlights that marriage, in both Islamic teachings and Indonesian positive law, is a sacred institution that establishes a legal and moral bond between a man and a woman to form a harmonious family. In principle, marriage is not only a social contract but also a religious commitment that carries responsibilities, rights, and obligations aimed at achieving family well-being. Indonesian Marriage Law regulates the minimum age of marriage, namely 19 years for men and 16 years for women, and requires individuals who are below this age to obtain a marriage dispensation from the Religious Court. This legal framework is intended to ensure physical, psychological, and social readiness before entering married life. However, empirical findings from the Ponorogo Religious Court indicate a persistent and increasing trend of early marriage cases over the years. The data show fluctuations but an overall upward tendency, beginning with 83 cases in

2016, decreasing slightly to 67 cases in 2017, rising again to 83 cases in 2018, and increasing to 97 cases in 2019. These figures demonstrate that early marriage remains a recurring issue in the region. Furthermore, most of these cases were resolved through court decisions, indicating the formal involvement of legal institutions in addressing underage marriage practices. A significant contributing factor identified in the data is pregnancy outside of marriage, which accounts for approximately 95% of marriage dispensation requests. This dominant factor reflects complex social dynamics, including limited sexual education, weakening family supervision, and increasing exposure to risky behaviors among adolescents. It also suggests that marriage is often used as a corrective measure to address unintended social consequences rather than as a planned and mature decision. Additionally, data from 2019 to 2021 show a continuous increase in marriage dispensation applications in Ponorogo, with a peak of 266 cases in 2021. Although there was a decrease in 2022 to 184 cases, the number remains relatively high, indicating that early marriage continues to be a significant social and legal concern. This trend emphasizes the need for more effective preventive strategies, including education, community awareness, and stronger enforcement of marriage regulations. Overall, the persistence of early marriage in Ponorogo reflects a combination of legal, cultural, economic, and moral factors that require integrated and sustainable solutions beyond formal legal mechanisms.

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Author Contribution

Dimas Adi Saputra conceptualized the study, collected and analyzed the data, interpreted the findings, and prepared the original manuscript. Muthoifin supervised the research process, provided methodological and theoretical guidance, critically reviewed and edited the manuscript, and approved the final version for publication. Both authors agreed to the published manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. The research was conducted independently without financial, commercial, or personal relationships that could have influenced the study's design, data collection, analysis, interpretation of findings, or preparation of the manuscript.

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