

# **Agents of Influence: Exploring the Role of Cultural and Economic Factors in Underage Marriage and Poverty in Indonesia**

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**Abstract**

Underage marriage remains a persistent social issue in rural Java, Indonesia, continuing across generations since 1997. This research purpose to explore how traditional beliefs, conservative gender roles, and economic hardship shape young women's decisions to marry early and influence their lives afterward. Using qualitative methodologies, including in-depth interviews, this study gathers the personal experiences of young women in underage marriages across rural Java. It examines the role of cultural norms, traditional beliefs, and economic constraints in shaping their choices. In these communities, strong patriarchal values often lead families to prioritize marriage over education for daughters. Limited resources and the hope that marriage will provide financial stability further drive this expectation. However, this approach often traps young women in cycles of poverty, as limited education restricts access to stable, well-paying jobs and increases economic dependency within marriage. Girls who marry as young as 16 or 17 face these challenges without adequate financial or emotional preparation, which heightens their risk of domestic violence, early divorce, and single parenthood. This study reveals the long-term impacts of underage marriage on young women's well-being, independence, and economic potential. It highlights how underage marriage restricts socioeconomic mobility and perpetuates poverty across generations.

Keywords : Underage marriage in Indonesia, poverty, cultural factors, economic factors

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# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

Underage marriage is a social phenomenon that happened in Indonesia<sup>1</sup>. It often occurs in villages in Indonesia. Underage marriage happened in Indonesia before twentieth century<sup>2</sup>. Underage marriages are popular in Indonesian society especially in Java Island. According to Blackburn and Bussel in 1997 not only lower class people do underage marriage but bureaucrat and aristocrat also do it the same things<sup>3</sup>. Indonesia was colonized by Dutch for 350 years, underage marriage not only happened in Indonesia society at that time, a lot of Dutch people also do the same. For example, the twelfth Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies Carel Reynierz 44 years old marry with Franscoise de Wit 14 years old<sup>4</sup>.

Underage marriage in Indonesia become more popular and still happened until now. This social problem not only happened in Indonesia but it also happened in Malaysia. There are a lot of children in Malaysia especially girl marry underage because of gender equality, lack of education, and also inadequate infrastructure<sup>5</sup>. It also gives a lot of negative impacts for individuals and society in Malaysia. Therefore, Malaysia government also pay attention and take action to protect their citizen from underage marriage by making law Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (UDHR), Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 1979 (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

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<sup>1</sup> YOESEF BUDIANTO, "Tingginya Angka Perkawinan Usia Anak di Indonesia," (2024), <https://www.kompas.id/baca/riset/2024/03/08/tingginya-angka-perkawinan-usia-anak-di-indonesia>.

<sup>2</sup> Eva Nisa, "Marriage Practices: Indonesia," (2016), <https://religionresearch.org/musmar2014/files/2019/09/Nisa-2016-EWIC-Marriage-Practices-Indonesia-pre-final.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Nisa, "Marriage Practices: Indonesia."

<sup>4</sup> Nisa, "Marriage Practices: Indonesia."

<sup>5</sup> Ajwad Mohd Shafie Muzaffar Syah Mallow, "FINDING HOLISTIC SOLUTIONS TO THE ISSUE OF UNDERAGE MARRIAGE IN MALAYSIA," (2019), [https://www.ocerints.org/intcess19\\_e-publication/papers/20.pdf](https://www.ocerints.org/intcess19_e-publication/papers/20.pdf).

(CRC), and Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage, and Registration of Marriage 1962<sup>6</sup>.

Underage marriage is someone who marry in the young age for women under 19 years old and men under 21 years old. Same with Malaysia, to protect children and women welfare Indonesia government also make law no. 16 of 2019 regarding age limits<sup>7</sup>. Government also try to educate people by provide education about the danger of underage marriage in villages and also provide some skills such as making handicraft for women with hope that women do not have always depend on men. In Indonesia there are also several non-profit organization such as Kalyanamitra, it's a community for women which provides counseling, training and supports gender justice.

According to Central Bureau of Statistics, Indonesia has 10.5% underage marriage in every year<sup>8</sup>. No wonder if underage marriage in Indonesia become an ongoing social problem. UNICEF determined that Indonesia has the largest number of underage marriage cases in ASEAN<sup>9</sup>. Underage marriage happened because of several factor such as economic, policy, and also culture. Usually, people who lived in the villages do underage marriage, is like a cycle that happened hereditary<sup>10</sup>. In the village is a common things if a girl marry underage. Parents in the village are supporting they children to do underage marriage with hope their children will have a better life. People in the villages are lack of education, 65 % children in Indonesia

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<sup>6</sup> Muzaffar Syah Mallow, "FINDING HOLISTIC SOLUTIONS TO THE ISSUE OF UNDERAGE MARRIAGE IN MALAYSIA."

<sup>7</sup> Endang Prastini, "Pernikahan Usia Dini dalam Tinjauan Hukum dan Psikologi Anak," (2022), <https://doi.org/http://pijarpemikiran.com/index.php/Aufklarung>, <https://pijarpemikiran.com/index.php/Aufklarung/article/view/184/166>.

<sup>8</sup> BUDIANTO, "Tingginya Angka Perkawinan Usia Anak di Indonesia."

<sup>9</sup> BUDIANTO, "Tingginya Angka Perkawinan Usia Anak di Indonesia."

<sup>10</sup> Noni Arni, "Kuatnya Tradisi, Salah Satu Penyebab Pernikahan Dini," (2009 ), <https://www.dw.com/id/kuatnya-tradisi-salah-satu-penyebab-pernikahan-dini/a-4897834>.



can not complete K12 education<sup>11</sup>. This thing happened because most of people in the village have economic problem so they cannot give their children education.

Education is one of the most important things to get a better job. In fact, people in the village cannot get an education because of financial problem, inadequate facilities and infrastructure<sup>12</sup>. Education also influences a person's mindset.<sup>13</sup> People who lack of education have their own mindset, usually they will think more traditionally and prefer to follow local culture especially the old generation. Indonesia has a strong social theoretical. They think is better for a girl to marry early than late, so if a man proposes the girl. She must accept it otherwise no one will propose her anymore<sup>14</sup>. Society will also talk about her and it will make the girl feel ostracized in society. Society pressures also affected children mindset.<sup>15</sup> Usually, children will be carried away by situation that is happening at that time and just follow what other people say because they don't have any choices. Indonesian society also have a strong patriarchal theory<sup>16</sup>. In patriarchal theory, man and women have different portion, man has more power and more dominating than women<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Silvia Agustin, "Pendidikan di Indonesia yang Tidak Merata," (2022 ), <https://www.kompasiana.com/silviaagustin3390/638315154addee7bf1385fa2/pendidikan-di-indonesia-yang-tidak-merata>.

<sup>12</sup> Agustin, "Pendidikan di Indonesia yang Tidak Merata."

<sup>13</sup> Holilulloh Rima Permata Sari, Hermi Yanzi, "THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SOCIETYS' MIND SET ON THE IMPORTANT OF EDUCATION IN CUGUNG VILLAGE," (2015), <https://jurnal.fkip.unila.ac.id/index.php/JKD/article/viewFile/9694/6296>.

<sup>14</sup> Arni, "Kuatnya Tradisi, Salah Satu Penyebab Pernikahan Dini."

<sup>15</sup> Rima Permata Sari, "THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SOCIETYS' MIND SET ON THE IMPORTANT OF EDUCATION IN CUGUNG VILLAGE."

<sup>16</sup> Muzaffak, "PENGARUH TINGKAT PENDIDIKAN DAN EKONOMI TERHADAP POLA KEPUTUSAN ORANG TUA UNTUK MENKAWINKAN ANAKNYA DI DESA KARANG DUWAK KECAMATAN AROSBAYA KABUPATEN BANGKALAN," (2013), <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/247464-pengaruh-tingkat-pendidikan-dan-ekonomi-08f76823.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> UNESA, "Budaya Patriarki di Indonesia," (2023 ), <https://bem.fish.unesa.ac.id/post/budaya-patriarki-di-indonesia>.

If a family have a girl and a boy, they usually prioritize the boy to get an education than the girl. Even though the girl is older than the boy they will still prioritize the boy to get a higher education.

Old generation thought, in the future girl will be marry and being a wife who just take care of a household work<sup>18</sup>. It because of culture and tradition parents will supporting their children to do underage marriage especially a girl. Because when a girl is married, her husband who will be the one taking care of her. It would not be her parent responsibility anymore. So indirectly the economic burden on the family will decrease when their daughter is married<sup>19</sup>. Many parents in the village are supporting their children to marry underage especially a girl, even there are a lot of parents who matched their children since they were kids. In the village underage marriage it's like a cycle that will happened continuously.<sup>20</sup> However a lot of Indonesian society didn't realize that underage marriage will give negative impact not only for individuals who do underage marriage but also in society. A lot of people think that marry in the young age will help them out from poverty, in fact it will make their condition even worst. Marry underage without financial stable and mental stable can give a long-term effect such as domestic violence, trauma, and also divorce. A lot of women who divorce, and they don't have enough education because they didn't complete K12 education. It probably hard to find decent job. It will be hard for women to raise their kids and give a proper life. Indirectly it will increase property level in Indonesia. It also gives a long-term

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<sup>18</sup> Muzaffak, "PENGARUH TINGKAT PENDIDIKAN DAN EKONOMI TERHADAP POLA KEPUTUSAN ORANG TUA UNTUK MENKAWINKAN ANAKNYA DI DESA KARANG DUWAK KECAMATAN AROSBAYA KABUPATEN BANGKALAN."

<sup>19</sup> Muzaffak, "PENGARUH TINGKAT PENDIDIKAN DAN EKONOMI TERHADAP POLA KEPUTUSAN ORANG TUA UNTUK MENKAWINKAN ANAKNYA DI DESA KARANG DUWAK KECAMATAN AROSBAYA KABUPATEN BANGKALAN."

<sup>20</sup> Arni, "Kuatnya Tradisi, Salah Satu Penyebab Pernikahan Dini."

negative effect for their children growth and development because they are lack of attention from parents.

## 1.2 Motivation

Weakness of Indonesian society awareness about the bad impact of Underage marriage. A lot of Indonesian society didn't realize that underage marriage has a lot of negative impact not only for the person who do underage marriage but it also give negative impact to the society. According to UNICEF underage marriage give a negative impact on the Indonesian economy<sup>21</sup>. The resulting losses were estimated at 1.7 percent of Bruno's domestic income<sup>22</sup>. It not only gives negative impact to the person who do underage marriage but it also gives negative impact to their children<sup>23</sup>.

Children who do underage marriage, they are not ready physically and mentally. Underage marriage gives negative impact to health especially for a girl. A girl who marry underage can get a lot of health problem such as anemia, hypertension, and also reproductive problems<sup>24</sup>. Physically underage women's reproductive organs are not yet ready for pregnancy and childbirth<sup>25</sup>. According to UNICEF girls under 15 are five times more susceptible to death during pregnancy and childbirth than women aged 20 years<sup>26</sup>. So, it will be endangered mother and child. Mothers may experience continuous bleeding because they

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<sup>21</sup> Aysah, "bahaya pernikahan dini " (2023 ),  
<https://repository.unja.ac.id/56332/2/BAB%20I.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Aysah, "bahaya pernikahan dini ".

<sup>23</sup> Aysah, "bahaya pernikahan dini ".

<sup>24</sup> Desi Aulia Umami Lezi Yovita Sari, Darmawansyah, "Dampak Pernikahan Dini Pada Kesehatan Reproduksi Dan Mental Perempuan (Studi Kasus Di Kecamatan Ilir Talo Kabupaten Seluma Provinsi Bengkulu)," (2020),  
<https://ejournal.urindo.ac.id/index.php/kesehatan/article/view/735>.

<sup>25</sup> Lezi Yovita Sari, "Dampak Pernikahan Dini Pada Kesehatan Reproduksi Dan Mental Perempuan (Studi Kasus Di Kecamatan Ilir Talo Kabupaten Seluma Provinsi Bengkulu)."

<sup>26</sup> Rizky Irfano Aditya, "The Legal Protection Against Child Marriage in Indonesia," (2021 ),  
[https://socialprotection.org/sites/default/files/publications\\_files/55144-152600-3-PB.pdf](https://socialprotection.org/sites/default/files/publications_files/55144-152600-3-PB.pdf).

are not yet ready for pregnancy. The child born may also be premature or have organ defects<sup>27</sup>.

Apart from give negative impact on health, underage marriage also gives negative impact to mental health. Children who do early marriage also can get mental problems. Psychologically they are not ready to start a family<sup>28</sup>. Children still can't control their emotion, and it will give impact to their household welfare. They are not mature enough to solve problem and sometimes it also can cause domestic violence in their household. It causes a lot of girls have trauma, stress, and also depression because they got domestic violence in their household . They are too young for being a husband and wife or even being parents for their kids, they can not even give their kids lesson. According to research, most of domestic violence happened in underage couple than adults couple . A lot of domestic violence that happened in the household cause high rates of divorces in Indonesia. Early marriage also causes a lot of broken home children. A lot of children also trauma because of their parents, which will also give impact to children's growth and development.

### **1.3 Research Purpose**

The purpose of this study is exploring and identify role of culture and economic roots causes underage marriage and poverty in Indonesia. Girls have right to get freedom, and enjoying their life. Every girl can have a chance to get a better future. According to declaration of human rights every people have the same rights and have the same dignity<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Lezi Yovita Sari, "Dampak Pernikahan Dini Pada Kesehatan Reproduksi Dan Mental Perempuan (Studi Kasus Di Kecamatan Ilir Talo Kabupaten Seluma Provinsi Bengkulu)."

<sup>28</sup> Fadhilah Rizky Afriani Putri, "When Girl Become Wives: The Portrait of Underage Marriage in Indonesia," (2020), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15294/ijicle.v2i4.43155>, <https://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/ijicle/article/view/43155>.

<sup>29</sup> Louisa Yesami Krisnalita, "PEREMPUAN, HAM DAN PERMASALAHANNYA DI INDONESIA," (2018), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37893/jbh.v7i1.315>, <file:///C:/Users/USER/Downloads/Louisa+Yesami+Krisnalita.pdf>.

Women have the same right, they have right to choosing their path and have right to get education for their better future. A lot of old generation in the village who do discrimination and underestimate girl. Old generation stick with their mindset because they are lack of education. Even though there is marriage law no. 16 of 2019 regarding age limits, marriage is only permitted if the woman 19 years old and the man have reached the age of 21 years old<sup>30</sup>. A lot of people still break the law and choosing to marry underage.

A lot of girls are forced by their parents to marry underage or they experiencing pressure from society to marry as soon as possible because of tradition. Indonesia still have patriarchy theoretical so no wonder if a lot of people still think about gender equality<sup>31</sup>. However, many early marriages also occur without pressure from the family, it from the young couple who want to do early marriage. Indonesian government try to reducing the number of underage marriages by making marriage law no. 16 of 2019 regarding age limits, but people still can apply for dispensation to do underage marriage<sup>32</sup>. Applying dispensation still often happened, this can prove the low level of awareness Indonesian about the dangers of underage marriage. Marriage is something need to be prepared thoroughly, but a lot of people take it for granted without thinking the risk.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

- 1) What are the socio-cultural and economic factors that contribute to child marriage with a long- terms impacts on individuals?
- 2) How people who do underage marriage views, experiences, and struggle of those involved in underage marriages regarding their decision about do underage marriage ?
- 3) How do people who marry underage view marriage?

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<sup>30</sup> Prastini, "Pernikahan Usia Dini dalam Tinjauan Hukum dan Psikologi Anak."

<sup>31</sup> Prastini, "Pernikahan Usia Dini dalam Tinjauan Hukum dan Psikologi Anak."

<sup>32</sup> Prastini, "Pernikahan Usia Dini dalam Tinjauan Hukum dan Psikologi Anak."

## 1.5 Contributions

Underage marriage happened because of several factors such as economy, policy, and also culture<sup>33</sup>. Therefore, Indonesian government make an action to reducing the number of underage marriages in Indonesia by making law about the minimum age of marriage in Indonesia<sup>34</sup>. Indonesian government make the law with expectation they can protect children from underage marriage. Indonesian government may evaluate the law about the minimum age of underage marriage really work effectively reducing the number of underage marriages in Indonesia. However, government need to take another actions to decreasing the number of underage marriage by making the society understand and realize the danger of underage marriage.

This research may explore about experiences people who marry underage. To know how much culture and economy factors are influence they decision to do underage marriage. Apart from that, parents' education patterns are also one of the things that influence children's mindset and how children take decision. Underage couple may facing a lot of struggle on their household.

## 1.6 Limits

To do this research is more possible to use qualitative method than quantitative method to observe and interview people who choose to marry underage and poverty that happened in Indonesia. It may be challenging to find the study population and collect the data because not every people who do underage marriage are willing to share their experiences about underage marriage. Besides that, It will only involves a small number of diverse groups of Indonesian society so the data collection must be more detailed to prove validation. Time

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<sup>33</sup> Rima Permata Sari, "THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SOCIETYS' MIND SET ON THE IMPORTANT OF EDUCATION IN CUGUNG VILLAGE."

<sup>34</sup> Aditya, "The Legal Protection Against Child Marriage in Indonesia."

and place limitation, usually people who do underage marriage are live in the village far from urban areas. It need time to go to the village and the road is difficult to be access by using public transportation.

### **1.7 Delimits**

Indonesia is an archipelago country, there are many regions in Indonesia. My case study will focus on Java island to know more about people who lived in Java island thought about this social issue. Historically arranged underage marriage are popular especially in Java island there are more than 40% Indonesian society do underage marriage rather it arranged by their relatives or their parents<sup>35</sup>. In the history, population of society in Java island is higher than another region in Indonesia. I will observe people who marry underage in Java island by identifying based on their age and their problems that occurred until they choose to marry underage. I will using interview to know more about their perception about underage marriage, their experience and how they solve their problem when they are facing a lot of struggle on it. I will also focus on culture and tradition adopted by the local community in Java island, because every region in Indonesia has different culture and tradition. There will be a clear delineation between economic and cultural variables, such as education levels, access to decent work, customs around marriage among ethnic groups, and other markers of poverty.

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<sup>35</sup> Nisa, "Marriage Practices: Indonesia."

## Literature Review

Underage marriage in Indonesia has significant long-term negative impacts on both individuals and society. According to Indonesian Law No. 16 of 2019, children are considered to be married underage if girls marry under the age of 19 and boys under the age of 21<sup>36</sup>. Several factors contribute to the prevalence of underage marriage in Indonesia, including cultural and traditional norms, economic conditions, and policy frameworks. This literature review aims to explore the extent to which these factors influence individuals' decisions to engage in underage marriages. By examining these contributing elements, the review seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the drivers behind underage marriage and its broader societal implications.

### 2.1 Underage Marriage Practice in Indonesia

Indonesia is an archipelago country it has a lot of different ethnicities, cultures, traditions, and languages vary in each region. According to 2016 National Socioeconomic Survey, the presence of child marriage was 10.68% however the percentage of underage marriages in rural areas is higher, at 15.90%, compared to 6.58% in urban areas<sup>37</sup>. Underage marriage frequently occurs in various villages and regions in Indonesia due to a combination of socioeconomic factors, religious beliefs, educational shortcomings, and a lack of information. This practice is not confined to Indonesia alone; it is also prevalent in several other countries, including Malaysia. The legality of underage marriage in Malaysia has been a subject of significant debate, yet the governance and administrative frameworks that

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<sup>36</sup> Endang Prastini, "Pernikahan Usia Dini dalam Tinjauan Hukum dan Psikologi Anak," (2022), <https://doi.org/http://pijarpemikiran.com/index.php/Aufklarung>, <https://pijarpemikiran.com/index.php/Aufklarung/article/view/184/166>.

<sup>37</sup> Milda Irhamni, "Child Marriage in Indonesia: A Literature Review," (2023 ), [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=4520455](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4520455).



permitted this practice have not been critically examined<sup>38</sup>. In addition to the government's focus on administrative aspects, there are arguments related to Islamic law. As the majority religion in Malaysia is Islam, some perspectives argue that the Quran does not explicitly specify a minimum age for marriage<sup>39</sup>. However, In Indonesia Muslim leader Haji Nur contends that "children are a gift from God, and thus their physical and mental integrity should be respected to the utmost extent"<sup>40</sup>.

Indonesia is among the countries with the highest incidence of child marriage globally<sup>41</sup>. Haji Nur Rohmat as a religious leader in rural area try to do effort to stop child marriage by doing collaboration with International Plan Foundation to stop this harmful practice, despite his effort numerous religious leaders have been advocating against it<sup>42</sup>. Haji Nur asserts that underage marriage constitutes harm and a violation of children's rights<sup>43</sup>. He

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<sup>38</sup> Mohamed Azam Mohamed Adil Rafeah Saidon, Noorul Huda Sahari, and Baterah Alias Mardhiyyah Sahri, Norzaidi Mohd Daud and Khairudin Murad, "Developing a New Model of Underage Marriage Governance for Muslims in Malaysia," (2015), <https://doi.org/10.5829/idosi.mejsr.2015.23.04.21762>, [https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/86957127/12-libre.pdf?1654300275=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DReappraisal\\_of\\_Governance\\_for\\_Underage\\_M.pdf&Expires=1718254660&Signature=RHpBdY8ZfSgTFZBdan5c0A8VsJoGU9Mvrt6JNYL3wU7XLG0tX6Q5zz0lhAnO6ZP2y5ep26VcWtRl6~eqPZ4SzM8~ReQNm5wdC6rSC-ajfHNvJ63GNGSxsfD~j0bsWzigS9ls4wtrhTRz4XWwTR2tZcFKW53VAh1yybwsbPrXgRxjD24PwGz6~iP96IuD70uIpc9thNJoZiA27IPBD6SGhkXQ60TTLhzTA5E5xMzER79pHlb-TnxJtfuV5sz6m471nSgccaiv0XY0zooqq-0pgDXrU2yIWhQclM4hkdoNmG86dJTwE4yn8BwQrAMzAUkjoG5nJDgADTMWcAf614ITnA\\_\\_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA](https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/86957127/12-libre.pdf?1654300275=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DReappraisal_of_Governance_for_Underage_M.pdf&Expires=1718254660&Signature=RHpBdY8ZfSgTFZBdan5c0A8VsJoGU9Mvrt6JNYL3wU7XLG0tX6Q5zz0lhAnO6ZP2y5ep26VcWtRl6~eqPZ4SzM8~ReQNm5wdC6rSC-ajfHNvJ63GNGSxsfD~j0bsWzigS9ls4wtrhTRz4XWwTR2tZcFKW53VAh1yybwsbPrXgRxjD24PwGz6~iP96IuD70uIpc9thNJoZiA27IPBD6SGhkXQ60TTLhzTA5E5xMzER79pHlb-TnxJtfuV5sz6m471nSgccaiv0XY0zooqq-0pgDXrU2yIWhQclM4hkdoNmG86dJTwE4yn8BwQrAMzAUkjoG5nJDgADTMWcAf614ITnA__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA).

<sup>39</sup> Rafeah Saidon and Mardhiyyah Sahri, "Developing a New Model of Underage Marriage Governance for Muslims in Malaysia."

<sup>40</sup> PLAN INTERNATIONAL, "The Messenger Matters: Indonesia's Religious Leaders and Girls Preventing Child Marriage," <https://plan-international.org/asia-pacific/case-studies/the-messenger-matters/>.

<sup>41</sup> INTERNATIONAL, "The Messenger Matters: Indonesia's Religious Leaders and Girls Preventing Child Marriage."

<sup>42</sup> INTERNATIONAL, "The Messenger Matters: Indonesia's Religious Leaders and Girls Preventing Child Marriage."

<sup>43</sup> INTERNATIONAL, "The Messenger Matters: Indonesia's Religious Leaders and Girls Preventing Child Marriage."

emphasizes the parental obligation to protect children, stating, "The abuse and coerced marriage of minors are clear violations"<sup>44</sup>. Moreover, there are also several factors that contribute on underage marriage more often occurs in rural areas.

Dianto highlights significant disparities between rural and urban areas, noting that in many remote villages, there is a marked variation in access to basic infrastructure<sup>45</sup>. Some villages have limited electricity and inadequate road networks, while others lack both electricity and telecommunication services altogether<sup>46</sup>. This disparity contributes to differences in information access, digitalization, and education, which in turn shape the mindsets and attitudes of rural and urban communities.<sup>47</sup>The substantial disparities between rural and urban areas result in individuals in rural regions often being constrained by their circumstances. This issue extends beyond mere access to information, encompassing educational challenges as well<sup>48</sup>.

The difficulties in accessing quality education, characterized by insufficient curricula, a shortage of qualified teachers, and inadequate facilities, impede the ability of rural communities to enhance their socioeconomic status<sup>49</sup>. Education is important to get better employment opportunities<sup>50</sup>. Consequently, it is not uncommon for rural populations to

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<sup>44</sup> INTERNATIONAL, "The Messenger Matters: Indonesia's Religious Leaders and Girls Preventing Child Marriage."

<sup>45</sup> PRABAWATI, "Atasi Kesenjangan Digital Dengan Internet Masuk Desa," (2021 ), <https://www.diskominfo.kaltimprov.go.id/berita/atasi-kesenjangan-digital-dengan-internet-masuk-desa>.

<sup>46</sup> PRABAWATI, "Atasi Kesenjangan Digital Dengan Internet Masuk Desa."

<sup>47</sup> PRABAWATI, "Atasi Kesenjangan Digital Dengan Internet Masuk Desa."

<sup>48</sup> Zulkarnaen

Ari Dwi Handoyo, "FAKTOR-FAKTOR PENYEBAB PENDIDIKAN TIDAK MERATA DI INDONESIA," (2019), <https://bimawa.uad.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/Paper-Seminar-Nasional-2.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> Handoyo, "FAKTOR-FAKTOR PENYEBAB PENDIDIKAN TIDAK MERATA DI INDONESIA."

<sup>50</sup> Handoyo, "FAKTOR-FAKTOR PENYEBAB PENDIDIKAN TIDAK MERATA DI INDONESIA."

remain within their apathetic thinking, adhering to local traditions and norms, which further perpetuates the cycle of limited opportunities and social mobility<sup>51</sup>.

In a rural area, most of people are doing underage marriage. There are 65% children in Indonesia can not finish K12 education<sup>52</sup>. Residents of rural areas often contend that education does not necessarily ensure success, leading many parents in these communities to regard higher education is not important<sup>53</sup>. This perspective stands in stark contrast to that of urban residents, who frequently prioritize gaining admission to prestigious universities as a means to secure a prosperous future<sup>54</sup>. The competitive pursuit of higher education in urban areas underscores the significant disparity in educational values and aspirations between rural and urban populations<sup>55</sup>.

After graduating from high school, Parents in rural areas are encourage their children to work in the agricultural sector, whereas their urban counterparts are more frequently encouraged to pursue higher education at universities<sup>56</sup>. The differing mindsets between urban and rural areas contribute to the higher prevalence of underage marriage in rural regions. Additionally, individuals in rural areas often find themselves constrained by their

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<sup>51</sup> Universitas Muhammadiyah Palangkaraya, "Perception and Mindset of Schooling for Village Children in East Barito Regency Sardono," (2021 ), file:///C:/Users/USER/Downloads/2467-Article%20Text-9790-1-10-20210723.pdf.

<sup>52</sup> Silvia Agustin, "Pendidikan di Indonesia yang Tidak Merata," (2022 ), <https://www.kompasiana.com/silviaagustin3390/638315154addee7bf1385fa2/pendidikan-di-indonesia-yang-tidak-merata>.

<sup>53</sup> Palangkaraya, "Perception and Mindset of Schooling for Village Children in East Barito Regency Sardono."

<sup>54</sup> UNIVERSITAS MEDAN AREA, "Perbedaan Pandangan Masyarakat Desa dan Kota terhadap Pendidikan Tinggi," (2023 ), [akai.uma.ac.id/2023/11/30/perbedaan-pandangan-masyarakat-desa-dan-kota-terhadap-pendidikan-tinggi/](http://akai.uma.ac.id/2023/11/30/perbedaan-pandangan-masyarakat-desa-dan-kota-terhadap-pendidikan-tinggi/).

<sup>55</sup> AREA, "Perbedaan Pandangan Masyarakat Desa dan Kota terhadap Pendidikan Tinggi."

<sup>56</sup> Palangkaraya, "Perception and Mindset of Schooling for Village Children in East Barito Regency Sardono."

inability to accept change, resulting in a perpetuation of their current socioeconomic positions<sup>57</sup>.

## 2.2 Legislative Framework Governing Underage Marriage

Children are considered to marry underage when they marry below the minimum age limit set by the government, which is 19 years for females and 21 years for males<sup>58</sup>. In the beginning, the Indonesian government established regulations on the age limit for marriage, which were legalized in Law Number 1 of 1974<sup>59</sup>. This regulation was created to prevent the welfare of children, especially girls. Law Number 1 of 1974 stated that marriage is allowed if the man is 19 years old and the woman is 16 years old<sup>60</sup>. In fact, this regulation contradicts the Child Protection Law, Article 1, Paragraph 1, Law Number 23 of 2002 regarding child protection, which defines a child as someone who is under 18 years old<sup>61</sup>. Therefore, the government amended the law regarding the minimum age limit for marriage in Law Number 16 of 2019, setting the marriage age limit for women at 19 years old and men at 21 years

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<sup>57</sup> Palangkaraya, "Perception and Mindset of Schooling for Village Children in East Barito Regency Sardonno."

<sup>58</sup> Issha Harumma, "Menikah di Bawah Umur Menurut Hukum di Indonesia" (2022 ), <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2022/10/01/05050061/menikah-di-bawah-umur-menurut-hukum-di-indonesia>.

<sup>59</sup> Aliesa Amanita Neng Poppy Nur Fauziah, "PELAKSANAAN UNDANG-UNDANG NOMOR 16 TAHUN 2019 TENTANG PERUBAHAN UNDANG-UNDANG NOMOR 1 TAHUN 1974 TENTANG PERKAWINAN TERKAIT PERKAWINAN DI BAWAH UMUR DI KANTOR URUSAN AGAMA KECAMATAN CIPATAT, KABUPATEN BANDUNG BARAT," : *Jurnal Dialektika Hukum* Vol 2 No 2 (2020), no. Vol 2 No 2 (2020): Jurnal Dialektika Hukum

Section (2020 ), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36859/jdh.v2i2.513>, <https://ejournal.fisip.unjani.ac.id/index.php/jurnal-dialektika-hukum/article/view/513>.

<sup>60</sup> Neng Poppy Nur Fauziah, "PELAKSANAAN UNDANG-UNDANG NOMOR 16 TAHUN 2019 TENTANG PERUBAHAN UNDANG-UNDANG NOMOR 1 TAHUN 1974 TENTANG PERKAWINAN TERKAIT PERKAWINAN DI BAWAH UMUR DI KANTOR URUSAN AGAMA KECAMATAN CIPATAT, KABUPATEN BANDUNG BARAT."

<sup>61</sup> Neng Poppy Nur Fauziah, "PELAKSANAAN UNDANG-UNDANG NOMOR 16 TAHUN 2019 TENTANG PERUBAHAN UNDANG-UNDANG NOMOR 1 TAHUN 1974 TENTANG PERKAWINAN TERKAIT PERKAWINAN DI BAWAH UMUR DI KANTOR URUSAN AGAMA KECAMATAN CIPATAT, KABUPATEN BANDUNG BARAT."

old<sup>62</sup>. This law was implemented with many considerations such as mental, physical, and financial readiness.

The Indonesian government hopes that by implementing regulations regarding the age limit for marriage, it can address and reduce the prevalence of child marriages in the country<sup>63</sup>. Children, both mentally and physically, are not prepared for the responsibilities and challenges of marriage<sup>64</sup>. In his book "The Psychology of Young Adult Development" Dariyo argue that marriage can lead to anxiety, stress, and depression<sup>65</sup>. Child marriage, in particular, can have deleterious effects on the mental and physical health of young individuals, often resulting in trauma, stress, and depression<sup>66</sup>. Qibtiyah argue the dangerous of child marriage poses significant health risks, particularly for girls, as they are biologically unprepared for pregnancy and childbirth before the age of 16<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>62</sup> Neng Poppy Nur Fauziah, "PELAKSANAAN UNDANG-UNDANG NOMOR 16 TAHUN 2019 TENTANG PERUBAHAN UNDANG-UNDANG NOMOR 1 TAHUN 1974 TENTANG PERKAWINAN TERKAIT PERKAWINAN DI BAWAH UMUR DI KANTOR URUSAN AGAMA KECAMATAN CIPATAT, KABUPATEN BANDUNG BARAT."

<sup>63</sup> Fachria Octaviani, "DAMPAK PERNIKAHAN USIA DINI TERHADAP PERCERAIAN DI INDONESIA," (2020), file:///C:/Users/USER/Downloads/2820-Article%20Text-12600-1-10-20200923.pdf.

<sup>64</sup> Neng Poppy Nur Fauziah, "PELAKSANAAN UNDANG-UNDANG NOMOR 16 TAHUN 2019 TENTANG PERUBAHAN UNDANG-UNDANG NOMOR 1 TAHUN 1974 TENTANG PERKAWINAN TERKAIT PERKAWINAN DI BAWAH UMUR DI KANTOR URUSAN AGAMA KECAMATAN CIPATAT, KABUPATEN BANDUNG BARAT."

<sup>65</sup> Prastini, "Pernikahan Usia Dini dalam Tinjauan Hukum dan Psikologi Anak."

<sup>66</sup> Prastini, "Pernikahan Usia Dini dalam Tinjauan Hukum dan Psikologi Anak."

<sup>67</sup> Indah Pawitaningtyas Herti Windya Puspasari, "Maternal and Child Health Problems in Early Age Marriage at Several Ethnic Indonesia: The Impact and Prevention," (26 November 2020 2020), [https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/102425510/1981-libre.pdf?1684580116=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DMasalah\\_Kesehatan\\_Ibu\\_Dan\\_Anak\\_Pada\\_Pern.pdf&Expires=1718523944&Signature=I0MucZFK7-e28uCCG4zW5EV7tlz44O2wtJZeRaBWLlHY2yb6L4NI0iScXhL~CmSA9LZG1droVyG4EAXIT4JkhlyWhS2~GoxIj8Xp0hLpl5vL3VE3mJ4Xz~qYGR2pRpIMbX2QqGFso4HEyxum1SVIhTBzeWN7RVjeUG~ztZ6JMGqsrABeltCu2FeIsvnEn1N7UjMBpis8Q-KBL9SX7D8ZqmO72aynwIOgjqQIfsI~Ek~Eoe2EMFOnaJ--22Rs8hANFyt3-ZgNXRD5ey1DF0M8PftyUxUJe14XDTbc8dCRV~On118Q4FpP3CZmXK1kHE23bbtTgOp4qdqeu-rzEUR1A\\_\\_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA](https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/102425510/1981-libre.pdf?1684580116=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DMasalah_Kesehatan_Ibu_Dan_Anak_Pada_Pern.pdf&Expires=1718523944&Signature=I0MucZFK7-e28uCCG4zW5EV7tlz44O2wtJZeRaBWLlHY2yb6L4NI0iScXhL~CmSA9LZG1droVyG4EAXIT4JkhlyWhS2~GoxIj8Xp0hLpl5vL3VE3mJ4Xz~qYGR2pRpIMbX2QqGFso4HEyxum1SVIhTBzeWN7RVjeUG~ztZ6JMGqsrABeltCu2FeIsvnEn1N7UjMBpis8Q-KBL9SX7D8ZqmO72aynwIOgjqQIfsI~Ek~Eoe2EMFOnaJ--22Rs8hANFyt3-ZgNXRD5ey1DF0M8PftyUxUJe14XDTbc8dCRV~On118Q4FpP3CZmXK1kHE23bbtTgOp4qdqeu-rzEUR1A__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA).

This is further corroborated by a report from the Indonesian Ministry of Health, which indicates that the maternal mortality rate in 2015 was 305 per 100,000 live births, far exceeding the MDG target of 102 per 100,000 live births for that year (Kemenkes, 2018)<sup>68</sup>. In addition to revising legislation, the Indonesian government is also conducting a national campaign to prioritize the issue of child marriage within the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN)<sup>69</sup>. Furthermore, the government has directed various agencies to develop intervention programs, such as the Community-Based Integrated Child Protection initiative<sup>70</sup>. Despite these concerns, many individuals still apply for dispensation to allow underage marriages for various reasons, such as fear of social stigma, pregnancies outside of wedlock, and other societal pressures.

Indonesia is a country with five religions such as Buddhism, Catholicism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam. However, the majority of the Indonesian population adheres to Islam. In Islam, believers are advised not to engage in prolonged courtship for fear of committing adultery or facing slander<sup>71</sup>. Therefore, many people apply for dispensation for marriage due to the fear of slander<sup>72</sup>. Children who apply for marriage dispensation must obtain permission from both families and provide compelling reasons along with clear

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<sup>68</sup> Herti Windya Puspasari, "Maternal and Child Health Problems in Early Age Marriage at Several

Ethnic Indonesia: The Impact and Prevention."

<sup>69</sup> Octaviani, "DAMPAK PERNIKAHAN USIA DINI TERHADAP PERCERAIAN DI INDONESIA."

<sup>70</sup> Octaviani, "DAMPAK PERNIKAHAN USIA DINI TERHADAP PERCERAIAN DI INDONESIA."

<sup>71</sup> Ahmad Khoiri, "PERNIKAHAN DINI DALAM TINJAUAN UNDANG-UNDANG DAN PSIKOLOGI," (2018 ), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30736/adk.v12i01.146>.

<sup>72</sup> Ribhan Abd M. Aso, "ALASAN DISPENSASI NIKAH USIA DINI (STUDI KASUS DI PENGADILAN AGAMA PALU)," (2020 ), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24239/familia.v1i2.14>, <https://jurnalfamilia.org/index.php/familia/article/view/14>.

evidence<sup>73</sup>. The court will then consider whether the dispensation application will be accepted or not. Article 7 of Law No. 1 of 1974 states that if someone (who is Muslim) has not reached the minimum age, they can apply for marriage dispensation to the Religious Court.<sup>74</sup> There is another regulation that governs marriage dispensation, which is Article 15 of the Compilation of Islamic Law, which has the same meaning as Article 7 of Law No. 1 of 1974<sup>75</sup>. However, both regulations do not provide detailed reasons, so the court needs to consider and decide on granting marriage dispensation based on the evidence and reasons presented.

### **2.3 The Socioeconomic Determinants of Underage Marriage**

Poverty is a major driving factor behind early marriages, as highlighted by UNICEF and UNFPA research conducted in 2018<sup>76</sup>. According to UNICEF, underage marriage gives negative impact to Indonesia financial stability, this can be evidenced by early marriage estimated to cost the economy 1.7 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)<sup>77</sup>. Economic factors are a significant driver of underage marriage, with many families persisting in the desire to have numerous children despite insufficient economic means<sup>78</sup>. The high incidence of early marriage contributes significantly to the elevated birth rate in Indonesia<sup>79</sup>. Cultural

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<sup>73</sup> Aso, "ALASAN DISPENSASI NIKAH USIA DINI (STUDI KASUS DI PENGADILAN AGAMA PALU )."

<sup>74</sup> Aso, "ALASAN DISPENSASI NIKAH USIA DINI (STUDI KASUS DI PENGADILAN AGAMA PALU )."

<sup>75</sup> Aso, "ALASAN DISPENSASI NIKAH USIA DINI (STUDI KASUS DI PENGADILAN AGAMA PALU )."

<sup>76</sup> Octaviani, "DAMPAK PERNIKAHAN USIA DINI TERHADAP PERCERAIAN DI INDONESIA."

<sup>77</sup> Aysah, "bahaya pernikahan dini " (2023 ),  
<https://repository.unja.ac.id/56332/2/BAB%20I.pdf>.

<sup>78</sup> IMROATUL MUFASIRIN, "BANYAK ANAK BANYAK REZEKI PERSPEKTIF PERLINDUNGAN ANAK PADA MASYARAKAT PINGGIRAN," (2021),  
<https://theses.iainponorogo.ac.id/15439/1/Imroatl%20Mufassirin.pdf>.

<sup>79</sup> MUFASIRIN, "BANYAK ANAK BANYAK REZEKI PERSPEKTIF PERLINDUNGAN ANAK PADA MASYARAKAT PINGGIRAN."

beliefs prevalent in Java, such as the proverb "many children, much fortune," reinforce this trend<sup>80</sup>. This proverb encapsulates the belief that each child brings their own fortune, thus encouraging larger family sizes<sup>81</sup>. These economic and educational factors, play a crucial role in shaping reproductive behaviours and demographic trends in the region. However, having many children often results in parents being unable to adequately support them, struggling to meet even their daily needs, let alone afford educational expenses<sup>82</sup>. This situation leads to widespread economic hardship for many families.

In regions with high poverty rates, marrying off daughters is often perceived as a means to alleviate economic burdens<sup>83</sup>. Early marriages are also frequently driven by cultural factors, particularly in rural areas where traditional customs are strongly upheld<sup>84</sup>. In these communities, there is a prevailing belief that girls who have reached puberty must be married promptly; otherwise, they risk social ridicule and being deemed undesirable for marriage<sup>85</sup>.

Economic constraints and societal perceptions of education significantly influence the decision-making process of villagers regarding the continuation of their children's education, particularly for girls<sup>86</sup>. Many villagers perceive that the costs associated with schooling are

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<sup>80</sup> MUFASIRIN, "BANYAK ANAK BANYAK REZEKI PERSPEKTIF PERLINDUNGAN ANAK PADA MASYARAKAT PINGGIRAN."

<sup>81</sup> MUFASIRIN, "BANYAK ANAK BANYAK REZEKI PERSPEKTIF PERLINDUNGAN ANAK PADA MASYARAKAT PINGGIRAN."

<sup>82</sup> MUFASIRIN, "BANYAK ANAK BANYAK REZEKI PERSPEKTIF PERLINDUNGAN ANAK PADA MASYARAKAT PINGGIRAN."

<sup>83</sup> Octaviani, "DAMPAK PERNIKAHAN USIA DINI TERHADAP PERCERAIAN DI INDONESIA."

<sup>84</sup> Octaviani, "DAMPAK PERNIKAHAN USIA DINI TERHADAP PERCERAIAN DI INDONESIA."

<sup>85</sup> Octaviani, "DAMPAK PERNIKAHAN USIA DINI TERHADAP PERCERAIAN DI INDONESIA."

<sup>86</sup> Syarifah Nuraini Sri Handayani, Rozana Ika Agustiya, "Factors influencing early marriage in several ethnic groups



prohibitive, especially when juxtaposed against their unmet daily necessities<sup>87</sup>. This perception is further compounded by traditional gender roles and expectations, which often devalue the importance of formal education for girls<sup>88</sup>. Consequently, these intertwined economic and social factors result in a lower prioritization of educational investment, leading to reduced enrolment and continuation rates among rural children.

Additionally, data on unstable incomes support this trend. According to Central Statistics Agency in 2020, there are three main occupations in rural communities are: 24% family workers or unpaid which means individuals working in their own household or family without receiving a fixed wage, 19% labourers who work as wage workers in sectors such as agriculture, small-scale industry, or services, and 19% self-employed individuals who run their own small businesses or trade independently without being labourers or receiving wages from others<sup>89</sup>. From these statistics data, it can be concluded that people in the village have less income, many of them do not even receive salary from their hard work. Most of people in the village have less income but they must to meeting their household needs.

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in Indonesia," (2021), [https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/94801480/2656-libre.pdf?1669342082=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DFaktor\\_Faktor\\_Penyebab\\_Pernikahan\\_Dini\\_d.pdf&Expires=1718897347&Signature=ZHdPXWhA2qaalhPpEalqhWlgD6i1cKjoS0GcWmkaNeS5RFgn7acmE4rQ~kqf9RpEATHirwXv9~Z48sXJ5ipd8LZ4I5gCUlpXlWCcx-6C0sZsO1-UjVig2Hr1Dfqlbm6QETVxA2xisLLjJsGeh0tGBP2Kw1FLSebBDTe8Vp7ktkV8Z9SKFr3uaRGSRymnEup2DaftJFItFQLu~K315Jz0wE7aLLmZVXz3x3ijjPPcJXFxSjBz1sbYkcZLMC6hPIVXRPSZAO85isp5DYthXQqwaVwvIXD2HnJM2iPfdHQFCF2JnwlprGKnOKprTxjzgVTk8bf4py2guVc51CkNF8lWg\\_\\_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA](https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/94801480/2656-libre.pdf?1669342082=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DFaktor_Faktor_Penyebab_Pernikahan_Dini_d.pdf&Expires=1718897347&Signature=ZHdPXWhA2qaalhPpEalqhWlgD6i1cKjoS0GcWmkaNeS5RFgn7acmE4rQ~kqf9RpEATHirwXv9~Z48sXJ5ipd8LZ4I5gCUlpXlWCcx-6C0sZsO1-UjVig2Hr1Dfqlbm6QETVxA2xisLLjJsGeh0tGBP2Kw1FLSebBDTe8Vp7ktkV8Z9SKFr3uaRGSRymnEup2DaftJFItFQLu~K315Jz0wE7aLLmZVXz3x3ijjPPcJXFxSjBz1sbYkcZLMC6hPIVXRPSZAO85isp5DYthXQqwaVwvIXD2HnJM2iPfdHQFCF2JnwlprGKnOKprTxjzgVTk8bf4py2guVc51CkNF8lWg__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA).

<sup>87</sup> Sri Handayani, "Factors influencing early marriage in several ethnic groups in Indonesia."

<sup>88</sup> Sri Handayani, "Factors influencing early marriage in several ethnic groups in Indonesia."

<sup>89</sup> BPS, "Persentase Penduduk Bekerja Menurut Status Pekerjaan Utama (Persen), 2020-2022," (2022 ). <https://pagaralamkota.bps.go.id/indicator/6/293/1/persentase-penduduk-bekerja-menurut-status-pekerjaan-utama.html>.

Economic instability within families in rural areas often precipitates the practice of underage marriage<sup>90</sup>. Parents and older generations frequently argue compel their children, particularly daughters, to marry at a young age<sup>91</sup>. This compulsion is driven by the belief that marriage will alleviate financial burdens, as a married daughter transitions from being a financial responsibility of her parents to that of her husband<sup>92</sup>. Consequently, children in these communities are left with little choice but to comply with their parents' wishes regarding underage marriage.

Girls are especially vulnerable, with many being forced into marriage before reaching the age of 19. This practice is justified by parents who, unable to afford educational opportunities for their daughters, perceive marriage as a pathway to a better life<sup>93</sup>. The prevailing attitude among parents in these villages is that formal education holds little value if a girl is ultimately destined to become a housewife<sup>94</sup>. However, this perception overlooks the fact that underage marriage is not an effective solution to poverty<sup>95</sup>. On the contrary, it often exacerbates financial hardship and perpetuates the cycle of poverty<sup>96</sup>. Many children in rural areas themselves choose marriage because they do not want to burden their parents and prefer not to continue their education<sup>97</sup>. This choice is often seen as an easy way to secure their

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<sup>90</sup> Sri Handayani, "Factors influencing early marriage in several ethnic groups in Indonesia."

<sup>91</sup> Sri Handayani, "Factors influencing early marriage in several ethnic groups in Indonesia."

<sup>92</sup> Sri Handayani, "Factors influencing early marriage in several ethnic groups in Indonesia."

<sup>93</sup> Noni Arni, "Kuatnya Tradisi, Salah Satu Penyebab Pernikahan Dini," (2009 ), <https://www.dw.com/id/kuatnya-tradisi-salah-satu-penyebab-pernikahan-dini/a-4897834>.

<sup>94</sup> Sri Handayani, "Factors influencing early marriage in several ethnic groups in Indonesia."

<sup>95</sup> Nelud Darajaatul Aliyah, "Revealing the Impact of Underage Marriage: How is Household Welfare Adversely Affected?," (2023 ), <https://inti.ejournalmeta.com/index.php/inti/article/view/15>.

<sup>96</sup> Aliyah, "Revealing the Impact of Underage Marriage: How is Household Welfare Adversely Affected?."

<sup>97</sup> Irahmani, "Child Marriage in Indonesia: A Literature Review."

future, mirroring the actions of their parents and older community members, thereby perpetuating a cycle of early marriage within the village<sup>98</sup>. However, some children in rural areas exhibit high enthusiasm for learning, but are forced to drop out of school due to financial constraints, as their families struggle to meet daily needs. Education plays a vital role in shaping an individual's thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors<sup>99</sup>. A lack of education often leads to closed-mindedness and perpetuates the challenges faced by these communities.

## 2.4 Cultural Norms and Practices Influencing Early Marriage

Indonesia is still known for its culture and traditions, one of which is the patriarchal culture. Many regions in Indonesia still adhere to patriarchal culture, where there is a gap between women and men. In traditional families, women are seen as inferior and men as superior<sup>100</sup>. Gender inequality like this is still prevalent in Indonesia, men always have more power while women are often looked down upon and underestimated. In his book "Foucault, Subjectivity and Identity: Historical Constructions of Subject and Self" (2002), Robert argues that male domination over women has already occurred before 3100 BCE in the eastern region<sup>101</sup>. The patriarchal culture has become a generational tradition and a stereotype in society, where men are perceived to have special rights and authority, while women are expected to follow the orders of men<sup>102</sup>. In several regions of Indonesia, such as Bali and Java, patriarchal culture remains deeply entrenched. In Bali, where Hinduism is predominantly practiced, there are often misconceptions surrounding the concepts of purusa

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<sup>98</sup> Irhamni, "Child Marriage in Indonesia: A Literature Review."

<sup>99</sup> Irhamni, "Child Marriage in Indonesia: A Literature Review."

<sup>100</sup> Louisa Yesami Krisnalita, "PEREMPUAN, HAM DAN PERMASALAHANNYA DI INDONESIA," (2018), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37893/jbh.v7i1.315>, file:///C:/Users/USER/Downloads/Louisa+Yesami+Krisnalita.pdf.

<sup>101</sup> Gramedia, "patriarki di indonesia " *Patriarki adalah Konstruksi Sistem Sosial dengan Sejarah yang Panjang*, Gramedia <https://www.gramedia.com/literasi/patriarki-adalah/>.

<sup>102</sup> Gramedia patriarki di indonesia

and pradana, leading to the belief that women (pradana) are inferior to men (purusa)<sup>103</sup>.

Rahmawati contends that gender equality is perceived as unfair by many, as Balinese women are burdened with more arduous tasks compared to their male counterparts<sup>104</sup>. Housework is typically viewed as a woman's responsibility and is frequently undervalued. In Bali, children particularly girls, are accustomed to and trained in household chores from a young age<sup>105</sup>. This practice is not confined to Bali but is also prevalent in other regions, such as Java.

Ralf Dahrendorf's research on authority dynamics, specifically the relationship between superordinates and subordinates, is relevant here<sup>106</sup>. According to Dahrendorf, individuals in positions of authority are expected to exert control over those in subordinate positions, shaping the expectations of their surroundings not due to inherent psychological traits but because of their roles<sup>107</sup>. Crucially, Dahrendorf asserts that such authority is not permanent<sup>108</sup>. This perspective can be applied to the familial structure where men traditionally hold authority over their families. However, Dahrendorf's observations suggest that women, despite often being seen as subordinates, actually possess significant authority<sup>109</sup>. This dynamic frequently leads to conflicts of interest, a phenomenon Dahrendorf

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<sup>103</sup> I Komang Agus Darmayoga, "Perempuan Dan Budaya Patriarki Dalam Tradisi, Keagamaan Di Bali (Studi Kasus Posisi Superordinat dan Subordinat Laki-Laki dan Perempuan)," 2 April 2021 (2021), <https://jurnal.ekadanta.org/index.php/danapati/article/view/136/114>.

<sup>104</sup> Darmayoga, "Perempuan Dan Budaya Patriarki Dalam Tradisi, Keagamaan Di Bali (Studi Kasus Posisi Superordinat dan Subordinat Laki-Laki dan Perempuan)."

<sup>105</sup> Darmayoga, "Perempuan Dan Budaya Patriarki Dalam Tradisi, Keagamaan Di Bali (Studi Kasus Posisi Superordinat dan Subordinat Laki-Laki dan Perempuan)."

<sup>106</sup> Darmayoga, "Perempuan Dan Budaya Patriarki Dalam Tradisi, Keagamaan Di Bali (Studi Kasus Posisi Superordinat dan Subordinat Laki-Laki dan Perempuan)."

<sup>107</sup> Darmayoga, "Perempuan Dan Budaya Patriarki Dalam Tradisi, Keagamaan Di Bali (Studi Kasus Posisi Superordinat dan Subordinat Laki-Laki dan Perempuan)."

<sup>108</sup> Darmayoga, "Perempuan Dan Budaya Patriarki Dalam Tradisi, Keagamaan Di Bali (Studi Kasus Posisi Superordinat dan Subordinat Laki-Laki dan Perempuan)."

<sup>109</sup> Darmayoga, "Perempuan Dan Budaya Patriarki Dalam Tradisi, Keagamaan Di Bali (Studi Kasus Posisi Superordinat dan Subordinat Laki-Laki dan Perempuan)."

terms "conflicts of interest"<sup>110</sup>." Both men and women play essential roles in social life, yet regional customs related to caste and religious teachings often perpetuate the notion that men occupy more significant roles than women. This perspective overlooks the equally important and vital contributions of both genders.

In Javanese language there is society stereotypes that women jobs only macak, manak, and masak<sup>111</sup>. It refers to traditional gender roles assigned to women, emphasizing domestic tasks such as cleaning, nurturing, and cooking. Old generation often argues "What's the point of girls pursuing higher education if they end up just becoming housewives in the end?"<sup>112</sup>. This mindset causes a lot of girls don't continue their education and it happened continuously. Parents will prioritize their sons to receive better and higher education than their daughters, even if the daughters are older. Therefore, a lot of rural girls are lack of education and choose married in their young age.

According to Javanese customs and myths, there is a prevailing belief that if a daughter receives a marriage proposal, it must be accepted; otherwise, she may remain unmarried for an extended period<sup>113</sup>. Parents often arrange marriages for their daughters as early as eleven years old, at an age where the children themselves do not comprehend the implications of marriage<sup>114</sup>. Child marriage has become embedded in the culture of certain Indonesian communities, perpetuating the perception of girls as second-class citizens<sup>115</sup>. Parents frequently expedite their daughters' marriages for various reasons, including

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<sup>110</sup> Darmayoga, "Perempuan Dan Budaya Patriarki Dalam Tradisi, Keagamaan Di Bali (Studi Kasus Posisi Superordinat dan Subordinat Laki-Laki dan Perempuan)." *Journal of Gender Studies*, 2018, p. 1-10.

<sup>111</sup> Gramedia patriarki di indonesia

<sup>112</sup> Irhamni, "Child Marriage in Indonesia: A Literature Review."

<sup>113</sup> Arni, "Kuatnya Tradisi, Salah Satu Penyebab Pernikahan Dini."

<sup>114</sup> Gramedia patriarki di indonesia

<sup>115</sup> Arni, "Kuatnya Tradisi, Salah Satu Penyebab Pernikahan Dini."

economic and social pressures, the belief that education is not essential for girls, and the negative stigma associated with remaining unmarried<sup>116</sup>.

However, patriarchy culture not only exist in Indonesia it also exists in several country such as Malaysia and China. In China 1979, there was a period when the government in China implemented a one-child policy to control the population, leading to many people opting for abortion of girl foetuses as they preferred boy <sup>117</sup>. This resulted in a greater value being placed on males over females. Same with Indonesia, parents in China are also often arrange marriages for their daughters on matchmaking markets or what is known as “sheng nu”.

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<sup>116</sup> Arni, "Kuatnya Tradisi, Salah Satu Penyebab Pernikahan Dini."

<sup>117</sup> Apphia Angel, "patriarchy in China " *Nasib Perempuan di Pedesaan Republik Rakyat China*, 11 December 2022 2022 <https://kumparan.com/apphiaangels/nasib-perempuan-di-pedesaan-republik-rakyat-china-1zPgQ6Z4EoD/4>.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In the literature review, it has been identified that Indonesians still lack awareness about the dangers of underage marriage. Additionally, early marriage is often perceived as a common practice and has become a tradition in several regions. This study aims to explore the economic and cultural factors associated with underage marriage in Indonesia. To investigate these issues, a qualitative research design will be employed. Specifically, in-depth interviews will be utilized to examine how significant economic and cultural factors influence individuals' decisions to enter into underage marriages and how these decisions are associated with poverty in Indonesia. The qualitative method, particularly through interviews, allows for an in-depth exploration of personal perspectives and experiences. By capturing the nuanced reasons behind individuals' choices to marry at an early age, the study seeks to uncover the complex interplay of cultural norms, economic pressures, and individual considerations that contribute to this phenomenon.

Marriage, especially at a young age, is a multifaceted decision influenced by various factors. Through interviews, the research will gather insights from participants about their personal lives, motivations, and the broader social and economic contexts that shape their decisions. This approach recognizes that the decision to marry early is not straightforward and is influenced by a myriad of considerations and circumstances unique to each individual. This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how cultural and economic factors drive underage marriage and its implications for poverty, thereby contributing valuable knowledge to inform policy and interventions aimed at addressing these issues in Indonesia.

### **3.2 Research Design**

For the research issue titled "Agents of Influence: Exploring the Role of Cultural and Economic Factors in Underage Marriage and Poverty in Indonesia," the researcher has chosen to employ qualitative methods, particularly through interviews. The study will involve interviewing individuals who entered into marriage at a young age to understand their experiences and perspectives. The research aims to explore how traditions significantly influence their thoughts about underage marriage and how societal norms shape their views on this practice. Additionally, the study will examine the economic factors contributing to underage marriage, particularly in rural areas where educational attainment is often limited due to financial constraints. Many families in these regions lack the resources to provide adequate education for their children, leading to higher rates of early marriage. The research will also delve into the behaviours and attitudes of individuals regarding underage marriage, seeking to understand the extent to which cultural and economic factors influence these attitudes and behaviours. By exploring these dimensions, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how cultural and economic factors drive underage marriage and its broader implications for poverty in Indonesia. This research will offer valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners working to address these critical issues.

### **3.3 Sources of Data**

For this study, the researchers have chosen Java Island as the primary source of data. Historically, approximately 40% of Indonesian society engages in underage marriage, whether arranged by relatives or parents. Java Island exhibits high birth rates and a substantial population, partly due to the prevalence of underage marriages. Historically, early marriage practices originate from Java Island. Additionally, Java maintains strong stereotypes related to traditions and norms, including a deeply entrenched patriarchal system. However, contemporary trends indicate a rise in self-arranged underage marriages, with many young



individuals independently deciding to marry at a young age and receiving parental support for their decision. In Javanese culture, there is a prevailing belief encapsulated in the expression "macak, manak, masak," which refers to the notion that a woman's role is primarily confined to domestic duties—dressing up, bearing children, and cooking. This cultural perspective significantly influences societal attitudes and behaviours, perpetuating gender-specific expectations and disparities in the treatment of girls and boys.

To explore these phenomena, the researchers will employ purposive sampling to select participants. Specifically, researchers will conduct interviews with individuals from Java Island who have experienced early marriage. Participants will include those who married under the age of 19, aligning with Indonesian laws that define early marriage as occurring before this age, particularly for women. Additionally, the researchers will leverage the assistance of participants to identify other individuals who have also experienced underage marriage, thus ensuring a diverse and representative sample. By capturing this variety of perspectives, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the cultural and economic factors driving underage marriage in Java, thereby contributing valuable insights for policy and intervention strategies.

### **3.4 Instrumentation and Data Collection**

To facilitate data collection, the researchers enlisted the assistance of household workers who possessed firsthand experience with underage marriage. Each of participants, with their unique insights and experiences, played a crucial role in identifying additional participants who had also undergone underage marriage. The researchers obtained contact information from these household workers and subsequently reached out to potential participants, seeking their willingness to participate in the interviews. Clear explanations regarding the research's purpose were provided to ensure informed consent from each participant. The overarching objective of the interviews was to delve into individual

experiences of underage marriage and elucidate the influence of cultural and economic factors on decision-making processes, particularly in relation to poverty dynamics in Indonesia. Throughout the research process, strict measures were implemented to uphold the privacy and confidentiality of all participants involved. To ensure participant privacy, researchers will conduct individual interviews with each participant. This approach will allow participants to discuss their experiences with underage marriage more freely and provide insights into the significant influence of their surrounding environment on the decision to marry early

Before each interview, the researchers obtained explicit permission from participants to record the conversation, ensuring accurate documentation and analysis of responses. Each interview was structured around three sub-questions focusing on personal experiences, economic considerations, and cultural influences pertaining to underage marriage. The first question will be about personal experience questions delved into participants' experiences with underage marriage, their perspectives on marriage, the influence of family and local communities on their decision, and their feelings about marrying at a young age.

The second sub questions are about economic factors were explored through inquiries about the family's primary source of income, the significance of economic circumstances in the decision to marry underage, and any associated economic challenges. And the third sub question about cultural factors were examined by asking participants to describe cultural norms surrounding marriage in their community, assess the influence of tradition on decision-making regarding underage marriage, discuss the role of traditional community norms in perpetuating this practice, and elaborate on how cultural norms shaped the lives and expectations of individuals who married underage, particularly girls. Interviews were conducted either online or in-person within village settings, depending on feasibility.

Throughout the interviews, researchers meticulously documented key points of participants' responses, capturing nuances and insights essential for research analysis.

### **3.5 Tools for Data Analysis**

The purpose of this research was to understand the perceptions of individuals who married underage, focusing on their experiences, feelings, and struggles. Through interviews, the researchers aimed to explore how economic and cultural factors influenced their decision to marry at an early age. Interview transcripts were used as the primary data collection tool. These transcripts were meticulously translated word-by-word to accurately capture the perceptions of those who married underage. The rich qualitative data obtained from the transcripts enabled the researchers to perform detailed thematic analysis, providing in-depth insights into the complex nature of underage marriage. From the interview transcripts, researchers employed thematic analysis to examine and interpret the data. By utilizing thematic analysis, researchers can systematically identify and analyze recurring patterns within qualitative data, providing a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between economic hardships, cultural norms, and the practice of underage marriage. This approach facilitates the exploration of how economic pressures and cultural expectations not only coalesce to prompt early marriage. Through the identification and interpretation of key themes, researchers can uncover the underlying reasons and motivations behind underage marriage decisions, offering valuable insights into the socio-economic and cultural dynamics at play. This comprehensive analysis is crucial for developing targeted interventions and policies aimed at addressing both the practice of underage marriage and its broader socio-economic implications.

This method allowed them to identify and analysing patterns and themes within the transcripts. Additionally, researchers analysing the audio recordings to ensure accuracy and depth in their interpretation. The findings from both the transcripts and audio recordings were

then synthesized into a comprehensive report using thematic analysis. This approach enabled the researchers to generate detailed and insightful conclusions about the perceptions and experiences of individuals who married underage. The objective of this study was to understand how individuals who married at a young age perceived their experiences, emotions, and challenges. Through interviews, researcher explored how economic and cultural factors influenced their decision to marry early. Collected data primarily through interview transcripts, meticulously translating them to capture participants' views accurately. Thematic analysis helped us identify and analysing key patterns and themes in the transcripts. Researcher also analysing audio recordings to ensure our interpretations were thorough. Finally, we synthesized the findings from both transcripts and audio recordings to create a detailed report using thematic analysis. This approach allowed us to draw insightful conclusions about the perceptions and experiences of those involved in underage marriages.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

Prior to conducting the interviews, researchers sought participants' agreement for audio recording and provided them with a comprehensive explanation of the interview's purpose. Participants were informed that the interviews would be utilized for research purposes and were assured that their privacy and anonymity would be safeguarded. Recognizing the sensitive nature of the topic, researchers also carefully considered the phrasing of interview questions to avoid causing offense or discomfort. By prioritizing the participants' comfort and security, researchers aimed to create an atmosphere conducive to open and honest communication, encouraging participants to share their experiences willingly and without reservation. n the context of this study on underage marriage, utilizing interviews as the primary method for data analysis raised significant ethical considerations. Participants were expected to share personal life experiences and concerns about their privacy

during these interviews. Ensuring the confidentiality and well-being of participants was deemed essential.

To address this, researchers took measures to protect the identities of participants. This involved anonymizing participant information, such as names and identifying details, to mitigate feelings of exposure or vulnerability. By prioritizing privacy and confidentiality, researchers aimed to create a secure and trusting environment where participants could openly discuss their experiences without fear of repercussions or judgment.

### **3.7 Limitation**

Researchers will embark on conducting interviews with a carefully selected sample size of 7-8 individuals. However, it is pertinent to acknowledge that this modest sample size may not entirely capture the vast diversity present within the Java region of Indonesia, known for its extensive population and cultural heterogeneity. Given the inherently subjective nature of individual experiences, it is anticipated that each interviewee will offer a unique perspective on the myriad factors influencing their decision to partake in early marriage. Each participant may have different experiences and struggles, contributing to the variability observed within the sample. Consequently, while the insights gained from these interviews will be valuable, they may not fully represent the diverse population. To address this limitation and provide a broader context, researchers will supplement the interview data with information obtained from the history of underage marriage in Indonesia. Additionally, government policy statistics will be utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of policies aimed at reducing the prevalence of underage marriage. This multifaceted approach will facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding underage marriage in Indonesia.

### 3.8 Summary

The study titled "Agents of Influence: Exploring the Role of Cultural and Economic Factors in Underage Marriage and Poverty in Indonesia" aims to investigate the significant influence of economic and cultural factors on individuals' decisions to marry underage, and its correlation with poverty in Indonesia. The research will employ a qualitative methodology, predominantly through interviews, to delve into the experiences and perceptions of individuals who have married underage, particularly focusing on those residing in the Java region. This region has been selected due to its notable prevalence of underage marriage. Through these interviews, researchers seek to gather data pertaining to the participants' perceptions, experiences, feelings, and struggles related to underage marriage. Additionally, the study aims to uncover the underlying reasons driving individuals towards underage marriage and assess their level of awareness regarding the potential risks associated with early marriage.

Given the inherent limitations of a small sample size, consisting of 7-8 individuals, which may not fully represent the diverse population of the Java region, researchers will supplement the interview data with statistical information obtained from government sources. Specifically, researchers will analyse government statistics related to policies governing the minimum age for marriage, as well as the effectiveness of these policies in reducing the incidence of underage marriage in Indonesia. By adopting this multifaceted approach, the study to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between economic, cultural, and societal factors influencing underage marriage decisions, and its implications for poverty in Indonesia.

## **Data Analysis**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This study, titled *Agents of Influence: Exploring the Role of Cultural and Economic Factors in Underage Marriage and Poverty in Indonesia*, aims to examine the economic and cultural factors associated with underage marriage in Indonesia. The researchers employed a qualitative approach, using in-depth interviews to gather data from individuals who entered into marriage before the age of 19 and reside on the island of Java. Seven participants, all of whom experienced underage marriage, were interviewed to explore their lived experiences, particularly focusing on the challenges faced by women in these marriages. The qualitative analysis seeks to understand the extent to which economic and cultural factors contribute to the prevalence of underage marriage and how these factors shape the experiences of women in navigating the complexities of marital life at a young age.

Based on the interviews, researchers conducted one-on-one sessions with each participant, all of whom were women who married before the age of 19. Each participant reviewed and consented to the interview by signing informed consent forms prior to participation. During the interviews, the women shared their personal experiences regarding married life, describing the challenges they encountered and how they have coped with these difficulties. A significant part of the discussion focused on their reasons for entering into underage marriage. Several participants indicated that parental pressure and societal expectations within their village communities were key reasons for their early marriages. However, a few also reported that they made the decision independently, or due to unplanned pregnancies, where the fear of gossip and social stigma compelled them to marry.

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In addition to personal reasons, the researchers explored the broader socio-economic and cultural factors that support the prevalence of underage marriage in Indonesia. Economic hardship and deeply ingrained cultural norms emerged as significant drivers behind the practice. These two factors play a critical role in shaping the circumstances that lead to underage marriages, as they heavily influence both individual decisions and societal expectations regarding marriage at a young age.

## **4.2 Data Preparations**

### **4.2.1 Transcription of Interview**

In this study, titled *Agents of Influence: Exploring the Role of Economic and Cultural Factors in Underage Marriage and Poverty in Indonesia*, researchers conducted one-on-one interviews with participants. The interviews were audio-recorded via phone. Given the personal and potentially sensitive nature of the participants' experiences, informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the interviews. The consent forms explained the purpose of the study and assured participants that their data would be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.



Since none of the participants spoke or understood English, the interviews were conducted entirely in Bahasa Indonesia. The researchers translated all interview questions from English into Bahasa Indonesia to ensure that participants could easily comprehend the questions and respond based on their personal experiences. After completing the interviews, the researchers transcribed the data verbatim in Bahasa Indonesia and subsequently translated each transcript word-for-word into English for further analysis.

#### **4.2.2 Coding the Data**

To begin analysing the data, researchers first listen to the audio recordings and transcribe each word verbatim. After completing the transcription for all seven recordings, they review the transcripts to gain an in-depth understanding and initiate the coding process. This involves developing a codebook by identifying and organizing the various factors mentioned by each participant, recognizing that each interviewee offers unique reasons and personal experiences. The researchers then categorize these factors into distinct themes that emerge from the data. These categories are refined into codes, which are subsequently organized into subthemes. Through this structured approach, the researchers explore each subtheme in depth, allowing them to identify and interpret the underlying patterns and insights within the participants' experiences. This process ultimately results in a comprehensive and systematic codebook that informs the analysis.

### **3 Thematic Analysis**

#### **3.1 Identification of Key Themes**

##### **3.1.1 Reason to Do Underage Marriage**

The participants shared various reasons for entering underage marriages, which can be categorized into three main factors. First, some participants chose to marry young based on their own desires. Second, others were pressured into marriage by their parents. Third, unplanned pregnancies played a significant role.

For those who chose marriage independently, many young women in rural areas held the belief that marriage would ensure that their husbands would take responsibility for their needs, thereby relieving their families of financial burdens. One participant, who recently married, had no children as her marriage was only a few months old. She shared that she felt unmotivated to continue her education, influenced by societal messages that women eventually end up as housewives. However, her expectations were unmet; she found both herself and her husband unprepared mentally and physically for marriage. Unfortunately, she also experienced domestic violence, leading to a divorce and becoming a young widow at 21.

The second major reason for underage marriage is parental pressure, which participants identified as the most common factor. In rural areas, many parents believe that higher education is unnecessary for girls, as they are expected to eventually become housewives. Additionally, economic instability within these households often leads parents to seek a suitable match for their daughters in hopes of securing a better life for them. Many parents insist on arranging marriages without their daughters' consent, often placing emotional pressure on them by suggesting that rejecting the marriage proposal is a sign of disobedience or lack of love for their parents. As a result, daughters frequently find themselves in marriages with individuals they barely know. One participant described her experience by saying, "It felt like marrying a stranger because we didn't know each other's personal backgrounds, characters, or anything about each other." This lack of connection and forced arrangement often results in separation or divorce for many of these young women.

The third reason for underage marriage is unplanned pregnancy. Some participants experienced unintended pregnancies, which led to early marriage. In rural areas, sex education remains a taboo topic in schools, leaving many young people without essential knowledge. Consequently, they often face unintended pregnancies at a young age, without the

mental and physical readiness required for parenthood. One participant shared, “The marriage happened because of my own carelessness during the dating process, which went too far.” Faced with limited options, she felt compelled to marry at a young age to avoid societal judgment and gossip.

### 3.1.2 Positive Expectations About Early Marriage

Many participants initially held optimistic expectations about early marriage, viewing it as a way to escape poverty and alleviate both family and societal pressures. While some experienced brief relief, most soon realized that the realities of marrying young were far more challenging than anticipated. Many expressed regret, recognizing that entering marriage without adequate preparation had worsened their situations. Participants noted that married life limited their personal freedom compared to being single. As one participant shared, “I thought that getting married young would be enjoyable. But after going through it, I realized that getting married young is not easy.” These positive expectations were largely shaped by societal narratives that portrayed marriage as a means of achieving financial security, with husbands expected to assume responsibility and ease the family’s burdens. However, many participants reported that their husbands lacked financial stability and responsibility, leaving them in difficult situations. Ultimately, the idealized vision of early marriage did not align with the harsh realities they encountered.

### 3.1.3 Economic Challenges During Married Life

Economic challenges during married life were a significant struggle for many participants in early marriage, as few considered their financial stability beforehand. Most had married shortly after high school without pursuing further education, and their husbands often lacked the means to provide adequate financial support for household needs. This situation became especially difficult when children were involved, as the added expenses increased the financial burden. In response, many participants took on jobs to help with

household income, realizing that financial strain contributed to mental stress due to unmet needs. As one participant explained, “I decided to work to help him, especially to prepare for the birth of our child, rather than continuing to argue over money.”

With limited education, participants often found themselves restricted to low-paying jobs, such as domestic work or babysitting, which made it challenging to improve their financial situation. One shared, “There were economic challenges; I wasn’t working and hadn’t graduated from high school, so finding a well-paying job was impossible without a diploma.” For some couples, these financial pressures ultimately led to separation. As one participant recounted, her husband decided to leave, saying, “I can’t afford to support you and the children anymore, so let’s just separate.” She was left as a single mother, responsible for meeting her children’s needs alone.

#### 3.1.4 Emotional Challenges During Married Life

Participants who entered marriage before the age of 19 frequently faced emotional challenges, as they often lacked the maturity needed for the responsibilities of being a spouse and parent. Many were unprepared for the demands of adult life and had to adapt quickly. This lack of emotional readiness often led to conflicts within the household, with both partners struggling to manage their emotions. One participant shared, “I have to be capable of handling everything. You’re forced to be mentally and emotionally prepared.” In more severe instances, emotional strain led to domestic violence. One participant revealed, “I experienced domestic violence” after attempting to stop her husband from engaging in harmful behaviours, such as online gambling. She recounted how her efforts only escalated tensions, highlighting the difficulties of managing such situations without adequate emotional support. Overall, participants emphasized that individuals under 19 are often not equipped to handle

the complex challenges and responsibilities of marriage and parenthood, leading to significant emotional strain.

### 3.1.5 Economic Factors Supporting Underage Marriage

Economic factors supporting underage marriage particularly among participants whose marriages were arranged by their parents. In rural areas, many parents view marrying off their daughters at a young age as a quick solution to escape poverty. These parents often hope that early marriage will secure a more stable future for their daughters and reduce the financial burden on the family. As one participant explained, “My parents arranged the marriage; I thought I would have someone to provide for me.” Another shared, “I came from a less fortunate background; our financial situation was tight.”

However, early marriage rarely resolves poverty. Many young women who resisted arranged marriages but were ultimately forced into them reported that these marriages ended in divorce, leaving them as single mothers and worsening their economic challenges. Even participants who married by choice or due to unplanned pregnancies acknowledged that economic hardship played a role in their decisions, as their parents also viewed marriage as a potential solution to financial struggles. Ultimately, this highlights the limited effectiveness of early marriage as a remedy for poverty and the further challenges it can create.

### 3.1.6 Cultural Factors Supporting Underage Marriage

In rural villages, traditional and cultural beliefs significantly support the practice of underage marriage. Many communities expect girls to marry by age 16 or 17, as one participant explained: “In our culture, once you’re 16 or 17, you’re expected to marry if you date for too long, it’s considered a disgrace, so you’re pressured to marry.” These cultural expectations are intensified in areas with limited access to education, where patriarchal

values remain deeply rooted. Local beliefs prioritize a girl's role as a wife and mother over her personal development or education, reinforcing the notion that her ultimate destiny is to become a housewife. Social pressure within these communities, often spread through gossip, indirectly coerces young girls into early marriage. The prevailing sentiment dismisses the value of education for girls, as they are expected to eventually assume domestic roles. Additionally, prolonged romantic relationships are culturally and religiously discouraged, as they are believed to lead to shame or sin. As one participant shared, "In my village, people don't like relationships lasting too long because they're worried about gossip and shame." Consequently, young women are often encouraged to marry quickly rather than engage in long-term courtships. These cultural factors perpetuate the cycle of underage marriage, limiting young women's opportunities and reinforcing traditional roles.

### 3.1.7 Emotional Support from Family

Most participants received essential emotional support from their families, who genuinely wanted the best for their daughters. This support was crucial in helping them navigate the challenges of married life. Families offered encouragement and guidance on resilience, often providing advice on maintaining harmony within their households, managing relationships with their husbands, and reducing conflicts. One participant shared, "My family has encouraged me to stay strong and manage our small family." Family members also emphasized the importance of understanding their husbands' expectations and reassured participants that every problem has a solution, strengthening their emotional resilience during difficult times. As another participant recalled, "My parents would encourage me, saying just be patient; every problem has a solution." This familial support served as a stabilizing force, helping participants face the complexities of early marriage.

## 4 Exploring subthemes

### 4.1 Exploring Different Types of Underage Marriage Experience

Each participant had their own reasons for entering into underage marriage, which can be categorized into three primary causes. The first and most common reason was parental pressure. In many regions of Java, financial instability is prevalent, as most families rely on farming as their main source of income. Due to the challenges of meeting basic household needs, parents often arrange marriages for their daughters as early as 16 or 17 years old, believing that marriage is both a cultural expectation and a way to improve their family's financial situation.

In cases where marriages were arranged by parents, most participants had little to no familiarity with their future spouses. One participant, for example, only met her future husband three times: once when he was introduced by her family, a second time at their engagement, and finally on their wedding day. These marriages were seen by families as a means to relieve financial pressure, but they often created significant challenges for the young brides. Many struggled to adapt to living with a partner they barely knew, facing emotional and social difficulties as they navigated life with a stranger.

The second reason some participants entered into underage marriage was due to their own desire. These participants chose marriage as they did not wish to continue their education and believed that marrying young was the best option for their future. They often saw marriage as a way to secure stability, assuming their partner would take care of them. In this context, local communities, including neighbors, reinforced the decision, with cultural norms suggesting that marrying early is better than delaying, in order to avoid societal judgment or perceived sin. Families, too, supported these early marriages, unaware of the emotional and psychological immaturity of their children.

However, participants who married by their own choice often found themselves unprepared for the realities of marriage. Many struggled with emotional regulation and managing their egos, leading to conflicts. One participant shared that although her marriage seemed stable in the first month or two, it quickly deteriorated due to financial instability. Her husband became involved in online gambling, and when she tried to intervene, their disagreements escalated into domestic violence. The lack of financial and emotional preparation in these marriages often led to serious issues, including violence, and in her case, eventually resulted in divorce. This highlights the risks of entering marriage without proper financial stability or emotional maturity.

The third reason some participants entered into underage marriage was due to unplanned pregnancy, leaving them with no choice but to marry quickly. Faced with societal pressure and the stigma surrounding pregnancy outside of marriage, participants felt compelled to marry as soon as possible. One participant, for example she had to drop out of school due to her pregnancy, as continuing her education was no longer seen as an option. In rural areas, where sex education remains a taboo topic, many young girls lack knowledge about sexual health and relationships. This lack of education leaves them vulnerable to engaging in sexual activity without fully understanding the consequences.

As a result, these participants found themselves entering marriage without the financial or emotional stability needed to manage both a marriage and motherhood. Forced into the role of young mothers, they struggled with the pressures of caring for a child while also coping with the challenges of an unprepared marriage. This highlights the importance of sex education and the impact that a lack of knowledge can have on young girls' lives, often leading to early marriage and significant personal challenges.



## 4.2 Contextual Factors

Underage marriage in Java is driven by several key factors, with economic and cultural influences playing a significant role. In rural areas, where the majority of families rely on farming for their livelihood, financial instability is common. Many families struggle to meet their basic household needs, making it difficult to provide their children with access to higher education. As a result, parents, particularly those with daughters, often seek out marriage as a way to secure a better future for their children. They believe that marrying off their daughters will relieve financial burdens, as the husband will take on the responsibility of providing for her.

Cultural factors also strongly contribute to the prevalence of underage marriage. In many communities, girls as young as 16 or 17 are expected to marry, and there is social pressure to marry early rather than later. The belief persists that if a girl rejects a proposal, she may not receive another, leading families to pressure their daughters into early marriage. In this environment, many young girls feel they have little choice, as the weight of both economic necessity and cultural expectations leaves them unable to challenge these decisions. These factors combined create a powerful force driving the continuation of underage marriage in Java.

In the Java region, cultural norms strongly discourage long-term dating, with the belief that prolonged courtship is unnecessary and may lead to disappointment. A common saying, "ojo suwi-suwi pacaran engko endinge uduk jodohe," meaning "why date for a long time if you're just guarding someone else's match?" reflects the local sentiment that it's better to marry quickly rather than wait. Communities also emphasize maintaining moral purity by discouraging long-term dating to avoid the risk of sin. Additionally, there is a widespread belief in Java that having many children brings fortune, as each child is thought to bring their own luck. Despite financial

instability, many families believe that fortune will come with marriage and children, even if they lack financial stability at the time.

In this patriarchal society, girls are expected to fulfill traditional roles, such as cooking, cleaning, caring for their husbands, and raising children. However, most underage brides are not mentally or emotionally prepared to handle these significant responsibilities. Many lack the emotional control and maturity needed to navigate the demands of marriage and motherhood. In response, families provide emotional and mental support, encouraging their daughters to remain strong and patient, with the belief that every problem has a solution. To alleviate household financial stress, many underage brides also contribute to the family's income, taking on work to reduce conflict arising from financial instability and to help prepare for their children's needs. This blend of cultural expectations and economic challenges places heavy burdens on young brides, who often lack the readiness to meet these demands.

## **5 Interpretation of Qualitative Findings**

### **5.1 Summary of Key Themes**

In the Java region, cultural norms and expectations remain deeply rooted, particularly in rural areas where patriarchal values are still prevalent. In these communities, there is a strong emphasis on girls fulfilling traditional roles as wives and mothers. Girls are expected to marry early and take on significant responsibilities, such as cooking, managing the household, bearing children, and caring for their husbands and families. There is also a prevailing belief that early marriage helps preserve the community's moral integrity, as prolonged dating is viewed as a potential source of moral transgression. Many parents fear that long-term relationships before marriage could lead to sinful behavior, which contributes to the pressure for girls to marry soon

after completing high school, often around the ages of 16 or 17. These cultural expectations create an environment where early marriage is not only accepted but encouraged as the norm.

In rural areas, most families rely on farming as their primary source of income, which can be unpredictable—some seasons are successful, while others are not. Many participants in this study come from families facing significant financial constraints. Meeting basic household needs is often a struggle, and education is frequently seen as a luxury beyond their reach. For many parents, finding a suitable match for their daughters becomes a way to improve their daughters' prospects and alleviate their own financial burden. Since they cannot afford to invest in their daughters' education, marriage is seen as a solution—once married, the husband is expected to take responsibility for the daughter's well-being, both financially and socially, thus reducing the economic strain on the family.

Individuals who enter into underage marriage often have their own reasons for doing so. Based on the participants' experiences, three main reasons for underage marriage emerged: unplanned pregnancies, arranged marriages by parents, and voluntary decisions by the young girls themselves. Many of these participants come from families with unstable financial backgrounds, making it difficult for them to continue their education. They also held positive expectations about marriage, believing it would be enjoyable and that their husbands would take responsibility for them. However, in reality, many participants ended up divorced, becoming single mothers responsible for raising their children.

As they shared their experiences, many participants reflected that marriage was far more challenging than they had anticipated. It requires a great deal of

responsibility, as well as both emotional and financial stability to properly care for children and maintain a household. Without financial stability, frequent conflicts arise within the household, often leading to debates and arguments. Many participants found themselves needing to help their husbands earn additional income, but their lack of education limited their job opportunities.

Emotional resilience was also necessary, as they often had to compromise on personal desires and manage household conflicts. When emotional stability was lacking, it led to increased tensions, arguments, or even domestic violence. Participants now realize that marriage requires much more preparation than they initially thought. They emphasize the importance of truly knowing a future partner before marriage, as it is a lifelong commitment. Arranged marriages by parents, where individuals may have little familiarity with their future spouse, often led to difficulties in adjusting to life with someone they barely knew.

Now, many participants hope for a different future for their children. They want their children to focus on education, enjoy their youth, and pursue their dreams before considering marriage. They believe that this path would provide their children with better opportunities and more stability in the future.

## **5.2 Contradictions or Divergent Experiences**

Two participants shared their experiences of being forced into marriages arranged by their parents. Initially, both tried to resist, but they found it impossible due to the emotional pressure from their families. Their parents insisted they knew what was best for their daughters, even though it was the daughters who would have to live with the consequences of the marriage. One participant recounted how her parents said, "Just marry this man, he's good for you," but the marriage ultimately ended in divorce. Her parents

later expressed regret when her ex-husband refused to take responsibility for her or their children, leaving her to raise them as a single mother.

Another participant faced a similar situation but experienced even more intense emotional manipulation. When she tried to refuse the arranged marriage, her mother threatened her by saying, "If you don't marry the man your parents chose, it means you don't love your parents." Feeling obligated to prove her devotion to her family, she reluctantly went through with the marriage, despite not having any affection for her husband. This participant struggled throughout the marriage, as she felt trapped by familial expectations and cultural norms.

## **6 Conclusion**

### **6.1 Recap of Qualitative Analysis**

Underage marriage remains prevalent on Java Island, with each participant offering unique reasons for their circumstances. Two primary factors contribute to this issue: cultural and economic influences. Java Island has one of the highest rates of underage marriage in Indonesia, deeply rooted in traditional norms and cultural practices. The patriarchal belief system imposes expectations on girls to focus on domestic roles, such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for children and husbands. Additionally, there is a cultural stigma against long-term dating, as it is perceived as morally questionable. Consequently, many communities and parents encourage young girls, often around the ages of 16 to 17, to marry early.

Economic factors also play a significant role in the prevalence of underage marriage. Many girls come from farming families where financial constraints make it difficult to meet household needs, often preventing them from pursuing education. In this context, families seek to arrange marriages for their daughters, believing that marriage will relieve financial burdens and provide their daughters with a better life. However, this belief does

not always materialize, as marrying without adequate preparation can lead to significant challenges.

Young brides often struggle to manage their emotions and lack financial stability, which can result in conflicts and disputes within their marriages. Many end up divorced, facing worse circumstances as single mothers, or find themselves navigating relationships with partners they barely know. Even for those who remain married, the challenges of financial instability often compel them to seek additional income, yet their limited education hampers their job opportunities. Ultimately, while many participants initially held a positive view of early marriage, they reported that the reality diverged sharply from their expectations. They expressed that they don't have freedom compared to their single lives, coupled with the heavy responsibilities that marriage entails. Moreover, their partners often changed in ways they had not anticipated, complicating their married lives even further.

## **6.2 Transition to Conclusion**

In conclusion, the qualitative analysis has revealed a complex relationship between underage marriage, cultural factors, and economic conditions. Cultural norms significantly influence the circumstances that compel young girls to adhere to traditions and expectations regarding marriage. Simultaneously, economic factors also play a crucial role, as many participants come from financially unstable backgrounds, which often forces them into early marriages. These findings highlight the interconnectedness of economic and cultural factors with underage marriage and poverty in Indonesia. If these issues persist without intervention, families will likely continue to follow the same patterns, perpetuating a cycle of poverty that is difficult to escape.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Underage marriage remains a prevalent social issue in Indonesia, with the Java region historically showing some of the highest rates. Research has identified three primary reasons for underage marriage in rural areas: family pressure, with parents often arranging matches for their children; unplanned pregnancies; and personal desire. Additionally, two main factors economic and cultural further drive this practice. Rural communities have unique norms and stereotypes, with social pressures often reinforcing the need for young women to marry early. Gossip and judgment within these communities can make families believe that a girl should marry sooner rather than later to avoid social stigma. This pressure can lead young women to feel they must marry early and avoid prolonged relationships to prevent being perceived as sinful. Beyond social expectations, economic hardships also play a significant role, as families in rural areas may view early marriage as a solution to financial challenges.

In rural areas, economic stability is limited and many people rely on farming, which often barely meets their families' needs. Consequently, many parents with daughters seek to arrange marriages for them, hoping this will offer their daughters a better life. Similarly, young women may view marriage as a way to relieve their families' financial burden and gain social approval by conforming to local norms and expectations. In these communities, it is often believed that once a woman marries, her husband will assume responsibility for her well-being. Therefore, marriage is seen as a viable escape from poverty. However, this approach often perpetuates the cycle of poverty, leaving young women and their families trapped in difficult circumstances, or even worsening their financial struggles.

According to the findings, marriage requires extensive preparation, both mentally and financially. Couples should be ready to live together, understand each other's backgrounds, and have a level of maturity to navigate the challenges of married life. However, most participants who were pressured into early marriages—whether by family, societal

expectations, or personal desire—ultimately faced divorce. Marriages under the age of 19 are considered underage in Indonesia, as young people often lack the emotional stability needed to be spouses or parents, tending to act from their own unformed egos.

One participant described experiencing domestic violence, while another, in an arranged marriage, felt as if she were living with a stranger. Early marriage introduces multiple challenges, including financial and emotional instability, as young couples often struggle to support a household. These unresolved issues can lead to conflict and, eventually, social violence, with many participants choosing to divorce and become single mothers. This cycle of unprepared marriage often results from social pressures, the prohibition against long-term dating, societal expectations to marry young, and financial burdens that lead families to view marriage as a solution to poverty.

The data reveals that most participants regret their decision to marry early, feeling unprepared and lacking the knowledge needed for marriage and parenthood. They describe the reality of marriage as starkly different from what they had expected or been told. As young mothers and wives, they are expected to manage numerous responsibilities despite lacking emotional stability. If their husbands cannot support the household financially, they often feel pressured to help make ends meet to avoid conflict. Their experience of underage marriage has shifted their perspective, making them realize that marriage requires substantial preparation and maturity. Many participants now hope that their children can pursue their education, achieve their dreams, and ultimately have a better life than they did.

Today, it is crucial for girls to receive an education so they can enter marriage with preparation and still pursue their career paths. With education, they can support their husbands more effectively and find stable employment if needed. Underage marriage is not a



solution to escape poverty rather, marrying without adequate preparation perpetuates poverty in Indonesia, trapping families in a cycle of hardship. In rural areas where patriarchal values and closed-minded attitudes prevail, limiting girls' access to education only reinforces this cycle, leaving daughters vulnerable to the same struggles their parents faced. Education empowers girls to build a better future for themselves and their families, breaking the cycle of poverty.

Researchers suggest that those exploring the topic of underage marriage should consider examining different regions, as each area has unique cultural influences, which can shape diverse experiences of underage marriage. This study has certain limitations, primarily due to ethical considerations and the difficulty of gathering data; interviewing participants was challenging, as most of them work as domestic helpers, making it difficult to coordinate timing for interviews. Exploring other regions could provide a broader perspective and reveal the cultural variances in underage marriage practices across different communities.

## Appendix 1 Interview Protocols

### Interview protocols

Before commencing the interview, the researcher will provide each participant with an Interview Consent Form. Participants will be given ample time to read and understand the contents of the form. Once the participant has reviewed and signed the consent form, the interview will proceed. The recording of the interview will begin only after obtaining the participant's signed consent.

#### 1 Opening remarks

- First of all, thank you for giving me the opportunity to interview you as part of my graduation thesis. Please allow me to introduce myself: my name is Nadia, and I am a third-year student at Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages, majoring in International Affairs. My graduation project focuses on the issue of underage marriage in Indonesia, a topic I chose due to its ongoing prevalence and significant impact on society.
- Underage marriage continues to occur in Indonesia, and I am interested in understanding the reasons behind people's decisions to marry at a young age. Through my literature review and conversations with individuals who have experienced underage marriage, I have identified several influencing factors, primarily economic conditions, cultural norms, and regional traditions.
- During this interview, I would like to learn about your personal experiences and perspectives on underage marriage. I will ask a series of questions related to personal experiences, economic factors, and cultural influences. The insights you provide will contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and motivations surrounding underage marriage. This interview will take approximately 30 to 40 minutes of your time. Is that okay with you?

- Your participation and personal stories are invaluable to this research, and I hope this paper will help others to better understand the complexities and struggles associated with underage marriage in Indonesia.

(With your permission, I would like to begin the interview now.)

## 2 Interview participant

### Demography information

1. Age
2. Marital status
3. Occupations

### Personal experience

1. Describe about their experience on underage marriage ?
2. What is their perspective about marriage ?
3. How did your family and local communities influence this decision?
4. How did you feel about getting married in the young age? Were you aware of the implications and responsibilities?

### Economic factors

1. What is your family's main income ?
2. How significant is the influence of economic situations in the decision-making process to marry underage?
3. Are there any challenges regarding economic issues during underage marriage?

### Cultural factors

1. Describe about the cultural norms about marriage in your community
2. How significant is the tradition influence in the decision making to marry underage ?
3. What role do the traditional community play in these practice?
4. How do norms shapes children who do underage marriage lives?
5. What are the cultural expectations for your girls and marriage?

### 3 Conclusion

- Thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this interview. Please be assured that all of your data will be kept secure and confidential. The video recording will be transcribed and used solely for the purposes of this research.
- After the interview, I will carefully review the transcript to ensure that all questions have been answered and that I fully understand your responses. If there are any unclear points or additional questions, I may need to contact you for further clarification. With your permission, may I have your contact number for any necessary follow-up?
- Thank you once again for your valuable contribution to this study. Your insights are greatly appreciated.

## **Appendix 2 Interview Consent Form**

### Interview Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to explore the economic and cultural factors influencing underage marriage and its association with poverty in Indonesia. This study aims to raise awareness about the consequences of underage marriage and to help people understand the significant impact of economic and cultural factors on the decision to marry at a young age. Additionally, it seeks to provide insights into the cultural norms and traditions of the Java region.

Before the interview, I have reviewed relevant literature on underage marriage and listened to the experiences of individuals who have undergone underage marriage. The interview questions will be divided into three main topics: personal experience, economic factors, and cultural factors. This structure aims to provide a deeper understanding of the issue. Each interview will take approximately 30-40 minutes.

Your responses will be kept confidential. Your true identity will not be revealed in the study. The audio recording of the interview will be transcribed for data analysis and then deleted. All data collected will be used solely for the purposes of this research. Participation in this study is voluntary, and you have the right to skip any questions you do not wish to answer. The information provided in this interview will be used for this study. By agreeing to participate, you confirm that you fully understand the purpose of the research, the use of your data, and your rights as a participant.

I agree to participate in this study and to have the interview audio recorded. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time. I also understand that my data will be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of this research.

Contact researchers:

If I have any concerns or question about this study. I may contact the researchers at :

Nadia Selena Sutanto

Email: [nadia.selena81@gmail.com](mailto:nadia.selena81@gmail.com)

Phone: +6285881118181

Interviewee's name :

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Respondent Signature :

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Interview date :

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## APPENDIX 3 Interview Schedule

### Interview schedule

Respondent Affiliation: Individuals who married underage on Java Island

Interviewee: Individuals who married under the age of 19 living on Java Island

Interviewer: Nadia Selena Sutanto 陳佳美

Timeline (from initial contact to formal interview):

**2024/06/28:** Obtain contact information from the interviewer's house helper regarding individuals who married underage. Seek their permission and willingness to participate in the study.

**2024/06/30:** Receive responses from potential interviewees via WhatsApp confirming their willingness to participate in the interview.

**2024/07/01:** Confirm the participation of the interviewees.

**2024/07/03:** Inquire about the specific date and time the interviewees are available for the interview in July (weekend or weekdays).

**2024/07/05:** Draft and send a formal letter to the interviewees, including the interview consent form for their review and signature. Additionally, provide the interview questions so they can prepare their responses.

**2024/07/09:** Send a reminder notification to the interviewees.

**2024/07/10:** Conduct the formal interview.

## **Procedure on the interview day**

### **1 Consent and Participation**

Participants will be required to sign an interview consent form, indicating their willingness to participate in the study and their agreement to be interviewed with audio recording. (1) All personal information, including names, will be kept confidential to protect participants' privacy. (2) Participation in this study is entirely voluntary; participants may withdraw from the interview at any time if they feel uncomfortable, or they may choose to skip any questions they do not wish to answer. (3) We appreciate your willingness to participate voluntarily. Your insights will be invaluable to this study.

### **2 Interview Opening Remarks**

The researcher will provide a comprehensive introduction to each interviewee, explaining the purpose of the interview, the motivations behind the study, and the estimated duration of the interview.

### **3 Interview Subjects**

The interview will cover several key areas:

1. **Personal Information:** This section will gather demographic data and explore personal experiences and perspectives on underage marriage.
2. **Economic Factors:** This section will examine the role of income and occupation in influencing the decision to marry underage, assessing the significance of economic considerations.
3. **Cultural Factors:** This section will investigate the cultural norms and social pressures within the participants' communities that may impact their views on underage marriage.



#### 4 Conclusion

The interview will conclude with a summary of the key points discussed, ensuring that all topics have been adequately covered and that the interviewee has an opportunity to add any additional comments or clarifications.

#### APPENDIX 4 Code Book

Audio 1	My parents arranged the marriage.	Reasons that directly led to the marriage decision.
Audio 1	Yes, everything changed. What I thought before was I will be happy	Positive expectation about early marriage
Audio 1	My parents arranged the marriage, I thought I would have someone to provide for me	Economic factors supporting underage marriage
Audio 1	My husband said, I can't afford you and our children anymore let's separate	Economic Challenges during marriage life
Audio 1	People in java island say that better to marry young than old cause it will give your parents shame because you marry in the old age.	cultural factors supporting underage marriage
Audio 2	The marriage happened because of my own carelessness during the dating process, which went too far.	Reasons that directly led to the marriage decision.
Audio 2	Before it happened, I thought that getting married young would be enjoyable. But after going through it, I realized that getting married young is not easy.	Positive expectation about early marriage
Audio 2	you have to be capable of handling everything. You're forced to be mentally and emotionally prepared.	Emotional Challenge during married life
Audio 2	Rather than burdening the parents with having to support their child, they prefer to find a spouse for them	Economic factors supporting underage marriage

Audio 2	But sometimes, when my husband gets stressed from work, he can become physically abusive because we're both still emotionally unstable and our egos are still high	Emotional Challenge during married life
Audio 2	I decided to work to help him, especially to prepare for the birth of our child, rather than continuing to argue over money.	Economic challenge during married life
Audio 2	In our culture, once you're 16 or 17, you're expected to marry, If you date for too long, it's considered a disgrace, so you're pressured to marry.	Culture factor supporting underage marriage
Audio 3	I wanted to get married young because my family encouraged it	Reasons that directly led to the marriage decision.
Audio 3	There were economic challenges ,wasn't working and hadn't graduated from high school, so finding a well-paying job was impossible without a diploma	Economic Challenge during marriage life
Audio 3	Before marriage, I thought it would be nice, having someone to provide for me	Positive expectation about early marriage
Audio 3	Neighbors would sometimes say, "Just get married; it's better than committing sin,"	Culture factor supporting underage marriage
Audio 3	My parents would encourage me, saying, "Just be patient, every problem has a solution	Emotional support from family

Audio 3	Instead of spending money on school fees, they decided to marry me off to a man they thought was good.	Economic factor support underage marriage
Audio 4	I married young because, first and foremost, I got pregnant	Reasons that directly led to the marriage decision.
Audio 4	My family has encouraged me to stay strong and manage our small family	Emotional support from family
Audio 5	I was arranged to marry	Reasons that directly led to the marriage decision.
Audio 5	Not mentally ready, not ready to take on all the responsibilities of being a wife and a mother	Emotional Challenge during marriage life
Audio 5	They would say things like, "Why don't you get married young?" because they believed it would be better	Cultural factor supporting underage marriage
Audio 5	You wouldn't have to rely on your parents anymore. You could be more independent	Economic factor supporting underage marriage
Audio 5	"You should get married, or you might end up not getting married at all." They thought it was okay to get married at my age.	Cultural factor supporting underage marriage
Audio 5	they said it was okay to get married young, that it was okay to have many children, and that the money would come	Positive expectation about early marriage
Audio 5	"why date for a long time if you're just guarding someone else's match? If possible, do it quickly."	Cultural factor supporting about early marriage

Audio 6	I married young because my parents arranged the marriage	Reasons that directly led to the marriage decision.
Audio 6	Economic factors also played a role; I wanted to reduce my parents' burden because, by marrying	Economic factor supporting underage marriage
Audio 6	it felt like marrying a stranger because we didn't know each other's personal backgrounds, characters, or anything about each other	Emotional Challenge during marriage life
Audio 6	My parents were influenced to arrange my marriage quickly to avoid criticism for delaying	Cultural factor supporting underage marriage
Audio 6	I had to work to contribute financially and not rely solely on his income	Economic Challenge during marriage life
Audio 7	it was my own desire	Reasons that directly led to the marriage decision.
Audio 7	In my village, people don't like relationships lasting too long because they're worried about gossip and shame.	Cultural factor supporting underage marriage
Audio 7	The experience itself was fine at first; it was happy in the beginning	Positive expectation about early marriage
Audio 7	I experienced domestic violence	Emotional Challenge during marriage life
Audio 7	Neighbors often said things like, "Just get married, so you don't end up pregnant out of wedlock."	Cultural factors supporting underage marriage
Audio 7	I thought it was the right decision, believing he was a	Positive expectation about early marriage

	good, responsible person, but it turned out differently	
Audio 7	My family farming income wasn't enough to support the family, especially for education.	Economic factors supporting underage marriage
Audio 7	In the beginning, the financial support was enough, but after a few months, when my ex-husband got into online gambling, it wasn't enough.	Economic Challenge during marriage life

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