



SOCIALIZATION AND EDUCATION ON EARLY MARRIAGE PREVENTION EFFORTS IN PEDAWANG VILLAGE, KARANGANYAR DISTRICT, PEKALONGAN REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

Early marriage remains a significant issue in rural areas, especially in Pedawang Village, Karanganyar Subdistrict, Pekalongan District. This study aims to assess the success of a socialization and education program in improving the community's legal understanding and awareness of the social and economic impacts of early marriage. Using a descriptive-evaluative qualitative method, the study used a pre-test and post-test to measure changes in participants' understanding. The results showed that economic factors, cultural norms, lack of legal awareness, and the influence of social media are the main triggers of early marriage. This study emphasizes the importance of continuous legal education and community involvement in preventing marriage at a young age. The implications of this research underscore the need for more intensive policy interventions and advocacy approaches to build a younger generation that is better prepared in legal, social, and economic aspects.

Keywords: *Early Marriage Prevention, Legal Awareness, Social Education, Pedawang Village*

ABSTRAK

Pernikahan dini masih menjadi isu yang signifikan di wilayah pedesaan terutama di Desa Pedawang, Kecamatan Karanganyar, Kabupaten Pekalongan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menilai keberhasilan program sosialisasi dan edukasi dalam meningkatkan pemahaman hukum serta kesadaran masyarakat mengenai dampak sosial dan ekonomi dari pernikahan dini. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif-evaluatif, penelitian ini menggunakan pre-test dan post-test guna mengukur perubahan pemahaman peserta. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa faktor ekonomi, norma budaya, minimnya kesadaran hukum, serta pengaruh media sosial menjadi pemicu utama pernikahan dini. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya edukasi hukum yang berkelanjutan serta keterlibatan masyarakat dalam upaya pencegahan pernikahan di usia muda. Implikasi penelitian ini menggarisbawahi perlunya intervensi kebijakan dan pendekatan advokasi yang lebih intensif untuk membangun generasi muda yang lebih siap dalam aspek hukum, sosial, dan ekonomi.

Kata Kunci : Pencegahan Pernikahan Dini, Kesadaran Hukum, Edukasi Sosial, Desa Pedawang

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a significant part of the life cycle in Indonesian society, particularly in rural areas such as Pedawang Village, Karanganyar District, Pekalongan Regency. Many adolescents marry under the age of 20 due to economic reasons, cultural influences, or social pressure. The practice of early marriage is often considered a solution to alleviate the parents' financial burden, maintain the family's reputation, or stems from the assumption that the couple is financially stable, despite being psychologically and socially immature.

Early marriage remains a serious issue in various regions of Indonesia, including Pekalongan Regency. This phenomenon not only affects the lives of the individuals involved but also carries serious long-term consequences. These include mental unpreparedness in building a household, lack of knowledge in child-rearing, and increased risks of health problems, structural poverty, and divorce.

In rural areas, marriage at a young age is still considered a normal occurrence. There remains a prevailing view that a woman who is unmarried by the age of 20 or older will be labeled an "old maid," which creates social anxiety among parents. Several factors triggering early marriage include low education levels, environmental influences, poverty, and a lack of understanding regarding the negative impacts of marrying young. Additionally, the development of technology and social media plays a role in accelerating interactions among adolescents, which sometimes culminate in the decision to marry early.

Broadly speaking, the phenomenon of early marriage in Pekalongan Regency, including Karanganyar District, still shows relatively high figures. This practice poses a serious challenge to human resource development as it is closely linked to increasing rates of stunting, maternal and infant mortality, as well as school dropouts among adolescents.

Local governments, educational institutions, and the community have attempted various socialization and education programs to reduce early marriage rates, including counseling activities in schools and youth forums. As a preventive measure, the Law Faculty Student Study Institute of Pekalongan University (LKM-FH UNIKAL) conducted socialization and administered pre-tests and post-tests to measure public understanding of legal aspects of marriage, ideal age for marriage, children's rights, and the negative impacts of early marriage.

Thus, educational and socialization efforts are vital steps in building awareness among adolescents and the community regarding the risks of early age marriage. This research aims to explore the level of legal awareness in Pedawang Village regarding the practice of early marriage, identify the reasons behind adolescents' decisions to marry young, and understand the impact on social life and the future of the younger generation in the region. Through this research, it is expected that strategic recommendations will emerge to suppress early marriage rates and build a healthy, educated, and prosperous younger generation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study utilizes a qualitative method with a descriptive-evaluative approach. This approach is used to understand in depth the effectiveness of socialization and educational activities in preventing early marriage in Pedawang Village. The research also employs quantitative instruments in the form of pre-tests and post-tests to evaluate the increase in participants' understanding before and after the activities.

The subjects of this research include various individuals within the age range of 18–50 years in Pedawang Village as participants in the socialization activities. Relevant parties, such as community leaders and village officials, served as supporters of the early marriage socialization activities.

Data collection techniques were conducted through pre-tests and post-tests, where participants were given tests before and after participating in the socialization activities. The tests consisted of multiple-choice questions regarding the understanding of the ideal age for marriage and its impacts. The results of both tests were compared to measure the increase in knowledge.

The data analysis technique involves simple quantitative analysis; the results of the pre-tests and post-tests are compared using descriptive analysis techniques (means and percentages) to observe changes in participants' understanding. The validity of the research data was ensured using method triangulation, specifically by comparing pre-test results, direct observation, and activity documentation. This aims to ensure the validity of the findings holistically.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Many residents consider early marriage to be a common occurrence, and even a solution to family economic or social problems. In fact, legally, early marriage is a practice that can harm children and violate statutory provisions. In response to these conditions, we conducted legal socialization activities regarding early marriage aimed at increasing public awareness, particularly from legal, health, and social aspects. In addition to socialization activities, pre-test and post-test questionnaires were distributed to the community to determine the extent to which legal understanding and awareness regarding early marriage had changed.

Legal awareness of the Pedawang Village community toward early marriage is a vital aspect to analyze to understand the extent to which they recognize applicable legal rules. The socialization was conducted on September 28, 2024, and the pre-test stage was held to measure the community's initial understanding of the regulations governing early marriage. The results provide a general overview of their level of

legal awareness.

The pre-test results of the Pedawang Village community regarding early marriage, involving 50 participants including both adolescents and mothers, revealed several interesting patterns. A majority (54%) stated that the ideal age for men to marry is 25, although some still chose 23 as the ideal age. Meanwhile, 40% considered the ideal age for women to be 21. This indicates a perception that women should marry earlier than men, which may be influenced by cultural factors and the social environment.

In the Indonesian legal context, the minimum age for marriage for both men and women is 19 years, as regulated in Law Number 16 of 2019. However, this minimum age is not a benchmark for a person's readiness to marry. According to the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN), the ideal age for marriage for men is 25 years, while for women it is 21 years. This age is considered ideal because, within this range, an individual possesses more stable physical, mental, and economic readiness to build a household.

Regarding the definition of a child, 66% of respondents identified the age of 11 as the age limit for a child, showing variations in the understanding of this concept. According to Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, a person is categorized as a child if they are under 18 years old. This shows that public understanding of child age limits exists but still needs to be aligned with applicable legal regulations to ensure better legal awareness.

Furthermore, when considering marriage at the age of 20, 34% of respondents assessed that age as still being in the early stages of adulthood and therefore not yet appropriate for marriage. However, some respondents answered "yes" for two main reasons. First, they argued that by marrying at age 20, parents can immediately relinquish responsibility for their children. This view reflects the perspective that after marriage, a person is considered more independent in managing

their life, thus parents feel their duties are complete.

Second, they believe that children should be given the freedom to make their own decisions, including the choice to marry at an early age. This view is rooted in the concept of independence and individual rights, where the decision to marry is seen as a form of personal freedom that should not be overly regulated by parents or the social environment. These two reasons indicate differences in understanding among the community regarding readiness to marry at age 20. Some see it as a step toward faster independence, while others emphasize the importance of freedom of choice without parental interference. This divergence in views highlights the need for further education regarding marriage readiness from mental, emotional, and legal perspectives.

Regarding the main factors encouraging marriage before age 20, 46% of respondents identified out-of-wedlock pregnancy as the primary cause, while the remainder chose economic factors as the most influential reason. This indicates that the majority of early marriages occur due to urgent situations rather than psychological readiness and mature legal understanding. Additionally, 72% of respondents realized that the most significant negative impact is that young couples lack adequate knowledge on how to care for children. This shows that awareness of the challenges faced in early marriage is quite high, even though the practice still occurs in their environment.

The results of this pre-test indicate that, overall, 52% of the community is aware of certain aspects of early marriage, but there are still gaps in legal awareness that require further education. Social and economic factors play a major role in early marriage decisions, and legal education is the key to increasing awareness to prevent it. Before the socialization activities, the community of Pedawang Village showed a low level of understanding regarding the legal aspects of early marriage. This was evident from the residents' minimal

knowledge regarding the minimum and ideal age for marriage, as well as ignorance of the legal and social consequences that can arise from early marriage practices.

After the legal socialization was implemented, post-test questionnaires were distributed to evaluate changes in public awareness regarding early marriage legally and socially. The results showed a significant increase in understanding among the residents of Pedawang Village. In the pre-test, the average level of understanding only reached 52%. However, after the socialization activities, that figure increased to 85%. This achievement demonstrates the success of the legal counseling activities in deepening public knowledge on the issue of early marriage. Respondents now better understand the appropriate age for marriage, the legal age limit for children, and the causative factors and negative impacts of early marriage practices.

These results confirm that well-designed educational activities can have a positive impact on the mindset and awareness of the community regarding the importance of delaying marriage until reaching a legally and socially mature age. This increase in understanding serves as a benchmark for the success of the legal counseling activities conducted in Pedawang Village in raising public awareness about early marriage.

Based on field observations, pre-test results, and post-tests conducted by the Law Faculty Student Study Institute (LKM-FH) of Pekalongan University in Pedawang Village, the reasons for adolescents engaging in early marriage are supported by several factors, including:

Family Economic Factors Early marriage becomes a kind of quick solution to overcome economic difficulties, without considering the psychological readiness or education of the child. Many families in Pedawang Village are in weak economic conditions. Marrying off a daughter is considered a solution to reduce the economic burden. Besides reducing the financial burden, there is also hope that

marriage will bring positive changes to the child's life, especially if the prospective partner is perceived to have a steady job or comes from a more affluent family. Unfortunately, these expectations often do not align with reality. Many young couples find themselves trapped in structural poverty because they lack the economic readiness and skills to be independent. Instead of improving family conditions, early marriage often widens the circle of poverty.

Cultural Factors and Social Pressure In Pedawang Village, cultural values and social norms are still very strong and constitute an important part of community life. There is a social view that women must marry quickly. Women who are unmarried by age 20 or older often receive negative labels, such as "old maid" (*perawan tua*). This term has a negative connotation that makes many young women feel driven or even forced to marry early to avoid social stigma and gossip.

Lack of Education and Knowledge Factors Legal understanding regarding the minimum age for marriage is still unfamiliar in Pedawang Village. Many adolescents and parents do not well understand the legal provisions concerning the minimum age to marry. Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Marriage stipulates that the minimum age for marriage is 19 years for both men and women. However, this minimum age limit cannot be used as a benchmark for the ideal marriage age. The lack of socialization and education causes the community to be unaware of the importance of marriage age limits. Consequently, limited access to information makes them not fully realize that such a decision can jeopardize their future.

Influence of Technology and Social Media Technological developments, particularly the internet and social media, provide easy access for adolescents to various types of information. Adolescents active on social media can be influenced by the content they see and view it as a standard or aspiration without considering the

consequences. Exposure to adult content can affect the mindset and behavior of adolescents, including in terms of sexual relations and their views on marriage. In some cases, this can drive adolescents to marry at an early age as a form of fulfilling desires due to the influence of the content they consume.

The various factors underlying the occurrence of early marriage in Pedawang Village show that this practice is not merely an individual decision, but rather part of a complex structural problem. Therefore, it is important to further examine how the impacts of early marriage affect the lives of adolescents and the community more broadly, in terms of health, psychology, education, and economy.

Physical Health Impacts Adolescents who marry at an early age often face serious health risks. Their bodies, which are not yet fully developed, make pregnancy and childbirth more dangerous. Risks of complications such as preeclampsia, anemia, and hemorrhaging increase significantly. Babies born to young mothers are also at high risk for Low Birth Weight (LBW) and premature birth, which can affect their long-term growth and development. Furthermore, early marriage can increase the risk of cervical cancer in young women. A lack of knowledge regarding reproductive health and limited access to health services further exacerbates these conditions.

Mental and Psychological Health Impacts Early marriage often causes stress, anxiety, and depression in adolescents. They do not yet have the emotional maturity to face challenges within a household, such as conflicts with a partner or child-rearing. This can worsen their psychological condition, and they may even risk serious mental disorders such as anxiety disorders and depression. Additionally, this can lead to risks of Domestic Violence (DV).

Educational Impacts After marrying, adolescents tend to focus more on household affairs and child-rearing. Consequently, they lose the opportunity to pursue higher

education. Furthermore, their children are at high risk of experiencing health and educational problems, which can affect the quality of future generations.

Economic Instability Usually, young couples do not yet have the skills and education necessary to obtain decent jobs. As a result, they are trapped in a cycle of poverty due to limited income and dependence on parents or social assistance. A high economic burden at a young age can hinder young couples from achieving financial independence and affect the stability of their lives.

Inoptimal Parenting Patterns Early marriage can also affect parenting patterns. Parents who marry young are often not mentally and emotionally prepared to educate their children. The emotional instability resulting from this lack of readiness can affect parenting styles and create a family environment that is less supportive of child development, potentially worsening socio-economic conditions in the future.

To overcome the negative impacts of social media on early marriage, more intensive education and monitoring efforts are required. The government, educational institutions, and the community need to work together to provide understanding to the public.

Although various factors have been identified as causes of early marriage, the resolution still faces complex challenges. Various existing obstacles mean this problem has not been fully resolved in Pedawang Village. Therefore, based on information from the Pekalongan Regency Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection as cited by Radar Pekalongan, the early marriage rate in this region remains high. As of 2024, approximately 15% of total marriages occurred at an age under 19.

Furthermore, a number of parents submit dispensation requests to the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) so that their children can marry before reaching the

legally permitted age. This situation indicates that early marriage in Pedawang Village is not just an individual issue but is also part of a structural challenge requiring a more comprehensive approach.

Accordingly, prevention efforts must involve various aspects, ranging from education and the role of the family to state policy. Several strategic approaches can be taken to reduce the number of early marriages.

First, providing equal and high-quality formal education for both boys and girls is a crucial step. Children who receive adequate education tend to have clearer future aspirations and the ability to make rational decisions, thereby minimizing the tendency to marry at a young age.

Second, the implementation of socialization regarding reproductive health and sexuality education needs to be increased. Educating adolescents about reproductive health and sexual rights is important; with such an understanding, adolescents will be better prepared to maintain their health and reject marriage practices conducted at an immature age.

Third, community empowerment, particularly of parents as the environment closest to the child, plays a vital role in preventing early marriage. Many cases occur due to a lack of parental understanding of the importance of age maturity in building a household. Therefore, education must be provided to the community regarding the risks and negative impacts of early marriage from psychological, health, and social perspectives.

Fourth, by increasing the role of the government through the establishment of minimum marriage age limits and consistent law enforcement. This policy aims not only to protect children from medical risks like pregnancy complications but also to ensure emotional and social readiness for married life.

Fifth, encouraging the creation of gender equality. Young girls are more vulnerable to becoming victims of early

marriage due to societal perceptions and expectations regarding domestic roles. By building awareness about the importance of gender equality, women will have equal opportunities to develop educationally, economically, and socially without the pressure to marry at a young age.

CONCLUSION

Early marriage in Pedawang Village continues to occur, influenced by economic factors, culture, low levels of education, and uncontrolled social media use. Through the socialization and educational activities conducted by the Student Study Institute (LKM) of the Faculty of Law, Pekalongan University, there has been a significant increase in community understanding. This is evidenced by the improvement in post-test results regarding the ideal age for marriage, the impacts of early marriage, and the applicable legal provisions.

In line with this, to prevent early marriage, a comprehensive and sustainable strategy is required. This strategy includes expanding equal access to formal education, strengthening education for adolescents, empowering parents as primary supporting figures, enforcing strict legal policies, and building collective awareness regarding the importance of gender equality. Ultimately, these integrated efforts are expected to foster a healthy and educated younger generation capable of making independent and responsible life decisions.

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