

Early Marriage Decision-Making Among Teenage Graduates of Prestigious High Schools

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ABSTRACT

Early marriage, defined as marriage before the age of 20, significantly affects women's prospects for employment, education, and overall well-being. Rather than being a mere outcome, early marriage entails a multifaceted decision-making process. This process involves several stages, including initiation, negotiation, and final decision-making. Marriage decision-making often influenced by family involvement, social influence, and individual considerations. This study investigates the factors influencing early marriage among high school graduates. Additionally, our research aims to assess the consequences of early marriage on these adolescents. This study employed a qualitative approach to analyze data obtained from structured interviews with three women who had firsthand experience with early marriage in Temanggung Regency, Indonesia. These individuals were selected through purposive sampling for their relevant experience with early marriage. The three individuals selected—SAK, EN, and NH—are young women from farming families who, after completing their high school education, entered into early marriages at the ages of 18 and 19. This study revealed that family dynamics significantly influenced the decision to marry early across all stages. Additionally, the subject's personal beliefs played a role in negotiation and final decision-making. Social influence and limited access to higher education were factors during the initiation stage. Post-marriage, individual underwent sociocultural adaptation, personality development, maladaptation, and reported marital satisfaction. The study highlights the need for comprehensive support systems, accessible education, and communication programs to address challenges related to early marriage.

Keywords: Decision Making, Early Marriage, Factors, Prestigious High School Graduate, Teenagers

Introduction

Adolescence is a period of growth and development that includes physical, psychological and intellectual aspects. During this period, adolescents are known to be highly curious, love challenges, and dare to face the consequences of their actions. Thalib (2010) outlines that adolescence can be divided into three stages: 13-15 years old as early adolescence, 15-17 years old as middle adolescence, and 18-21 years old as late adolescence. However, the ideal age of adolescence ranges from 12 to 18 years, during which a person experiences significant changes in their social environment (Ministry of Health, 2016).

Adolescents' interactions with their environment can influence the development of an individual's personality. During adolescence, individuals explore the family, school and community environments, which collectively contribute to the process of personality formation. Family, school, and community environments play an important role in shaping

and educating one's character (Wahidin, 2017). In addition, schools significantly influence adolescents' identity development. This influence occurs both unintentionally, where students receive indirect or implicit messages about how an adolescent should be, and intentionally, through learning experiences that help students identify interests, talents, and values that are important to the individual. Therefore, it is not uncommon for adolescents to choose a favorite school as part of the process of determining individual personal identity. Factors considered include the learning environment, the presence of an engaging curriculum, and the opportunity to optimally develop interests and talents (Verhoeven et al., 2019).

Favorite schools or excellent schools are educational institutions that are highly coveted by students and parents. Favorite schools also have the same meaning as achievement schools, superior schools, elite schools (Mu'alimin, 2014). Teenagers who can attend favorite schools are seen by the community as providing prestige and pride. Therefore, parents will try to send their children to favorite schools. The term "Excellent Schools" was first introduced by former Minister of Education and Culture Wardiman Djojonegoro in 1994. The term "excellent school" was born from a vision that reached forward, where it was expected that students in these excellent schools would be able to excel at the national and international levels (Djojonegoro, 1994). Therefore, although adolescents with good education tend to delay marriage, graduating from a favorite school does not guarantee that individuals do not marry at an early age, because they do not necessarily get a good education in a favorite school (Widyawati & Pierewan, 2017).

Early marriage is a marriage that is carried out by a pair of men and women who are still teenagers. Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, contained in Article 7 Paragraph 1, states that marriage is permitted if the prospective groom has reached the age of 19 (nineteen) years and the prospective bride has reached the age of 16 (sixteen) years. The amendment to the law is outlined in Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 16 of 2019. The age limit for marriage is stated in Article 7, which emphasizes that marriage is only permitted if the man and woman have reached the age of 19. However, in Paragraph (2) of the same article, it is stated that in the event of a deviation from the age provisions, the parents of the male and female parties may request dispensation to the court on very urgent grounds accompanied by sufficient supporting evidence. The court is also required to hear the opinions of both prospective brides who will enter into marriage (Almahisa & Agustian, 2021). Thus, couples who marry under the age of 19 are included in early marriage. Even so, early marriage still occurs frequently in Indonesia.

Research conducted by McDougal (2018) highlights that the practice of early marriage is not simply an end result, but involves a complex decision-making process. Meanwhile, Suharnan (2005) defines decision-making as the process of selecting or determining various alternatives in the midst of an uncertain situation. This process occurs when a person is faced with a situation that requires predicting what will happen in the future, selecting several alternatives, and making estimates about the consequences of the decisions taken. Where to get married at a young age, adolescents will go through the process of making these decisions.

One should not marry at an early age. This is because, although marriage can increase economic resources (Ross, Mirowsky and Golsteen, 1990), early marriage tends to provide lower economic benefits than marriage at a later age. Not marrying at an early age is considered to have greater potential to be a source of economic stability for the younger

generation (Teachman, Tedrow, and Kyle, 2000). Research also shows that delaying marriage can improve the well-being of women and families (Yameogo, 2017).

In 2022, there were more than 50,000 marriage dispensation cases filed with religious courts at the national level. Of these, around 34,000 cases were triggered by the love factor, where parents asked the court to immediately marry off their children. In addition, around 13,547 applicants applied for marriage due to pregnancy, while 1,132 applicants claimed to have had intercourse. Other factors included economic reasons, reaching the age of puberty, menstruation, and genital hair growth in boys (Media Indonesia, 2023).

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers with adolescents who made the decision to marry at an early age, early marriage was triggered by several factors. These factors come from their own will, environmental influences, and family or parental pressure. These factors greatly influence teenagers in making decisions. Meanwhile, teenage couples who are dating are ready to make the decision to get married at an early age because teenagers think that marriage is the best way when they love each other and are suitable for each other. Teenagers are not worried about the cost of marriage, because all costs are borne by parents. Even parents are willing to fund the legal process to obtain dispensation for the age of marriage that is not in accordance with Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Marriage. Early marriage in adolescents is not always influenced by education. Some teenagers who make the decision to marry at an early age are teenagers who graduate from a favorite and developed high school. However, less than a year after graduating from a favorite high school, some teenagers have decided to get married.

Teenagers who get a good education, such as graduates of favorite schools, are often considered to tend to delay marriage. Adolescents with a good education tend to focus more on their careers rather than marrying early, due to the high expectations of families and society for graduates of these institutions (Duraku et al., 2020). However, researchers found from interviews and observations that there is a unique phenomenon among teenagers who graduate from favorite schools, where some of them choose to marry early. Although rare, this phenomenon piqued the researcher's interest because it goes against the general trend.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach, which focuses on the study of objects in natural conditions with the researcher as the main instrument. This approach emphasizes on understanding the deep and subjective meanings of participants. Qualitative allows participants to express their thoughts and opinions freely, without the restrictions often found in quantitative research. In addition, this approach pays attention to the social context and interactions between participants (Sugiyono, 2016). The method used is phenomenology, which focuses on subjective human experience and interpretation of the world. Phenomenological research seeks to explain and reveal experiential phenomena based on individual consciousness in natural situations without limitations in the interpretation of phenomena (Rahmat, 2009). Researchers try to understand the meaning of events and their relationship in the context of everyday life.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling technique, with the following criteria, married when under the age of 20, graduated from a favorite high school, domiciled in Temanggung Regency, the subject is willing to be involved in this study. This research was conducted in Temanggung with the selection of subjects based on certain criteria. The choice

of research location was considered to facilitate the researcher's access to informants, considering that the researcher lives in Temanggung. In addition, the rate of early marriage in Temanggung is still relatively high, with data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs showing that in 2023 there were 250 cases of early marriage in this district (iNews, 2023).

The data collection technique used is interviews. Interviews were chosen as a method to identify problems that need to be researched and to get a deeper understanding from respondents (Sugiyono, 2016). Researchers use source triangulation by comparing data from various sources, including interviews with several key informants and significant others. By conducting interviews with several key informants and significant others, the researcher can compare the data obtained in the study. Triangulation of data sources like this can help strengthen research findings and ensure that interpretations made by researchers are not overly dependent on a single data source.

Results

Participant Description

Key Informant SAK:

SAK, the first key informant, married at 18. She completed high school at SMA SW in Temanggung with a Djarum scholarship and worked briefly in a garment factory before marriage. Her family's economic situation was modest, and her wedding was simple, funded by her parents. Raised in a farming family, SAK often helped her parents and described her social life before marriage as average, noting she was somewhat shy and less socially active. After marriage, she adapted to her new responsibilities and views marriage as a partnership in building a household and sharing financial duties. She rejects the idea that a wife's role should be limited to homemaking.

SAK's Significant Other:

The significant other in this study is SAK's mother, who is a farmer with an elementary school education. Her husband is also a farmer, and they manage their own fields and work on others' fields when needed for additional income. The relationship between SAK and her mother is very close, with SAK being the youngest child and deeply cherished. SAK is described as understanding and making minimal demands on her parents, alleviating their financial burden through a high school scholarship. Her mother imposes reasonable restrictions, which SAK always follows. Economically, the family was stable when SAK decided to marry, covering all wedding expenses despite the modest nature of the celebration. The family supported SAK's decision to marry, focusing on her readiness and confidence rather than strict age limits.

Key Informant EN:

EN, a housewife and farmer, married at 19 after completing her education at a prestigious high school in her area. As an only child, she felt a strong sense of responsibility to her family, and a stable financial situation allowed for an early marriage. Despite facing some skepticism and mistaken assumptions about her reasons for marrying, EN has found peace with her decision. Her knowledge about marriage primarily comes from her parents, community, and social media, though she acknowledges the practical challenges of applying this knowledge in real life.

EN's Significant Other:

The significant other in this study is EN's mother, who has a junior high school education. Both EN's mother and her husband work as farmers and manage their own land. Their relationship with EN was described as good, with EN being a compliant and rarely argumentative child. The decision to marry was fully entrusted to EN, with the only stipulation being that she must graduate from high school first. Economically, the family was in a good position when EN decided to marry, and her parents covered the wedding expenses as their duty. While the immediate family was supportive, some extended relatives were surprised and mistakenly thought EN might be pregnant because she was engaged while still in her second year of high school. Overall, EN's family environment was supportive of her decision to marry, despite initial surprises from some family members.

Key Informant NH:

NH, born in Temanggung in 1999, married at 19. She completed high school in Magelang and initially struggled with discomfort at her boarding house, leading her to commute. Financially stable, her parents funded her wedding, though she had only worked for six months. NH's family life was harmonious, and her relationships with neighbors were good despite her limited participation in village activities. Her decision to marry at 19 surprised her family, as she had just graduated and planned to attend college. Despite initial concerns, NH felt confident due to her serious relationship and family support. Post-marriage, she faced challenges adjusting to life with her in-laws, differing from her expectations of marital independence.

NH's Significant Other:

Ibu NH, a farmer with a high school education, is NH's mother and her eldest child. Ibu NH has a good relationship with NH, noting that there were no issues before marriage. Although NH was not very social due to her distant school, she participated in local events when possible. Financially, Ibu NH described the family's situation as sufficient, and they covered the wedding expenses as best they could. The decision for NH to marry was made independently by NH, without any parental objections or pressure.

Results of the Thematic Analysis

The data analysis in this study follows the framework proposed by McDougal et al. (2018). This framework divides the process of early marriage decision-making into three main stages: initiation, negotiation, and final decision-making. The thematic analysis methodology is applied to identify the factors influencing early marriage decisions and their implications for the subjects involved. The data used in this analysis comes from interviews with three key informants, which are categorized according to the themes identified.

Initiation Stage

Question 1: What motivated you to marry at a relatively young age?

SAK: *“My friends said that marrying and having children at a young age means I will still be healthy and young when my children are teenagers or adults.”* (W1S1P34, 68). Label: Marrying young is considered a healthy choice

EN: “Yes, that's right. To have someone help with the farming. Also, I am the only hope for my family and I'm not allowed to go far. My husband proposed, and my parents supported it, so I got married.” (W1S3P35, 70). Label: Parental support

NH: “It was because of my husband. I initially planned to wait after graduation, but he was willing to wait for a year, so I decided to marry young.” (W1S5P34, 68). Label: Mutual agreement with the prospective husband

Question 2: Who initiated or started the conversation about marriage? And what was discussed?

SAK: “It wasn't me. My husband intended to marry and was looking for a partner. Despite my initial reluctance, he was persistent in getting to know me, encouraged by a relative who suggested he meet me.” (W1S1P36, 72). Label: Introduced by a relative “My husband was very persistent.

“Even though I initially tried to refuse, he insisted on meeting me in person. According to my father and religious teacher, if a man intends to propose, we should meet him and provide a kind response, whether accepting or rejecting. Rejecting rudely could lead to bad feelings and affect future prospects.” (W1S1P38, 76). Label: Husband's persistence in proposing

EN: “My husband. We had been dating for a long time, but another man proposed to me. Knowing this, my husband decided to propose.” (W1S3P36, 72). Label: Partner's proposal due to another suitor

NH: “It was because my husband's grandmother insisted on us getting married, so my husband discussed it with me.” (W1S5P37, 74). Label: Pressure from the prospective husband's family

“I felt very sad and conflicted, but I had already agreed to marry and couldn't back out at the last moment.” (W1S5P40, 80). Label: Feeling pressured before the wedding

“We hadn't planned on marriage yet; I intended to go to college. But since my sibling was starting middle school, I decided to work first to save money.” (W1S5P36, 72). Label: Financial considerations delaying higher education

Question 3: How did your parents react to your decision to marry?

SAK: “My parents supported me because I was ready.” (W1S1P41, 82). Label: Parental support

EN: “My parents supported me because my grandmother insisted I shouldn't continue my education. She believed women shouldn't pursue higher education.” (W1S3P39, 78). Label: Family's insistence on not pursuing higher education

NH: “My parents said if I was ready, then it was okay.” (W1S5P43, 86). Label: Conditional parental support

Question 4: How did the people around you (family, friends, community) react to your decision to marry?

SAK: “There is a strong stigma; many say that women shouldn't pursue high education and that working too long without marrying is not good.” (W1S1P44, 88). Label: Societal belief that women shouldn't pursue higher education

SAK: *“If I had the financial means, I would have continued my education.”* (W1S1P48, 96). Label: Financial constraints hindering higher education

EN: *“The community was neutral because they knew I had been dating my husband for a while, and marrying at my age was common. However, distant relatives were shocked and thought negatively.”* (W1S3P40, 80). Label: Community perspective on young marriage

NH: *“My family was supportive if I was ready. The community didn't mind because marrying young is common here. My friends joked about me marrying someone from our village after studying in the city.”* (W1S5P44, 88). Label: Family and community perspective on young marriage

Table 1. Data Labels from Interviews at the Initiation Stage

No	Label	Category
1	Marrying young is considered a healthy choice	Social Influence
2	Introduced by a relative	
3	Husband's persistence in proposing	
4	Partner's proposal due to another suitor	
5	Community perspective on young marriage	
6	Mutual agreement with the prospective husband	
7	Family and community perspective on young marriage	Family Dynamics
8	Parental support	
9	Pressure from the prospective husband's family	
10	Feeling pressured before the wedding	
11	Conditional parental support	Limited Access to Higher Education
12	Family's insistence on not pursuing higher education	
13	Societal belief that women shouldn't pursue higher education	
14	Financial constraints hindering higher education	

Negotiation Stage

Question 1: How was the communication process with your family and prospective partner when deciding to marry, and what was discussed?

SAK: *“After I returned from Semarang, we met. The introducer shared information about us. My husband said he was ready to start a family and was looking for a wife. Even though we had just met, he was confident about me because the introducer was trustworthy and honest, and asked for my response. For some reason, his story and future vision made me confident.”* (W1S1P50, 100). Label: Confidence in the prospective partner’s integrity and vision

SAK: *“Yes, I started to be confident, but after our meeting, I prayed and asked for guidance from Allah. After praying, I became more confident. I then discussed it with my parents. Initially, they were hesitant about letting me move with my husband, but since I have an unmarried older brother, my parents eventually agreed. We are still in the same district, so I can visit them anytime.”* (W1S1P51, 102). Label: Gaining confidence through prayer and consultation with parents

EN: *“When my husband found out I was being courted by someone else, he said he wanted to take our relationship to the next level. Before talking to me, he had already consulted with his parents. I was shocked at first because I was still in the 2nd year of high school, but he was my boyfriend. I agreed to his proposal but left the final decision to my parents. He agreed to discuss it with them.”* (W1S3P47, 94). Label: Delegating the decision to parents

EN: *“My parents left the decision to me. If I was sure, they would support it. I had already agreed when my husband said he wanted to wait until after graduation. My parents advised me to think carefully before making a decision.”* (W1S3P50, 100). Label: Gaining certainty after discussing with the prospective partner

NH: *“My husband and I had a deep talk. After we both agreed, I spoke with my parents, and he spoke with his. Then his parents formally proposed at my home. My parents agreed, and we set a date for the engagement.”* (W1S5P46, 92). Label: Agreement between both families

Question 2: How was the wedding planning process carried out?

SAK: *“During the discussion between both families, my father decided the wedding date using traditional Javanese calculations. Each side covered their own expenses: my family handled the event at our place, and the groom’s side covered the event at their place.”* (W1S1P55, 110). Label: Father’s dominant role in wedding planning

EN: *“Everyone played a role, but parents were the most involved. They managed all the arrangements.”* (W1S3P55, 110). Label: Primary role of parents in wedding planning

NH: *“After the engagement was official, my husband’s parents and he came to my home to set the wedding date and discuss where we would live. His parents preferred us to live in their house, and my parents agreed.”* (W1S5P47, 94). Label: Discussion between both families on wedding date and living arrangements

Question 3: What was the role of both families in the marriage agreement process?

SAK: *“The family agreed with my marriage, so they only needed to confirm that my husband was a good person from a good family. Fortunately, my family accepted him.”* (W1S1P58, 116). Label: Family sees the prospective husband as a good individual from a good family

EN: *“The family was actively involved in the marriage process, including the court’s dispensation since I was below the legal age for marriage.”* (W1S3P56, 112). Label: Family’s active role in marriage dispensation

NH: *“During the discussions, it was like we were all already familiar with each other. Everyone listened and respected each other, and decisions were made collectively without any pressure.”* (W1S5P52, 104). Label: Compatibility of both families

Table 2. Data Labels from Interviews at the Negotiation Stage

No	Label	Category
1	Confidence in the prospective partner’s integrity and vision	Personal Believe
2	Gaining confidence through prayer and consultation with parents	
3	Gaining certainty after discussing with the prospective partner	
4	Delegating the decision to parents	Family Dynamics
5	Agreement between both families	
6	Father’s dominant role in wedding planning	
7	Primary role of parents in wedding planning	
8	Family sees the prospective husband as a good individual from a good family	
9	Family’s active role in marriage dispensation	
10	Compatibility of both families	

Final Decision-Making Stage

Question 1: What makes you confident that marrying at a young age is the right

decision? **SAK:** *“In my opinion, it's right if the person is straightforward, ready to build a household, and, most importantly, willing to work.”* (W1S1P60, 120). Label: Belief that the prospective spouse is the right match

EN: *“I'm confident because I've also been praying at night, so I'm more certain, plus I've received support from my parents.”* (W1S3P57, 114). Label: Gaining confidence through spiritual practice

NH: *“I used to be unstable, maybe blinded by love. I thought my husband was truly committed to me, my parents allowed it, and my family agreed. So, I felt it was meant to be. But it turned out not as expected.”* (W1S5P53, 106). Label: Feeling blinded by love with the partner

Question 2: Before the marriage, did you consult with others before making this decision? If so, what did you discuss?

SAK: *“I consulted with my parents. I follow my parents' commands; if they say no, I can't disagree. When they allowed it, I felt confident to proceed.”* (W1S1P61, 122). Label: Parental approval of marriage

EN: *“No, I just prayed regularly, seeking guidance from Allah, as He knows what's best for me. So, I left everything to Him.”* (W1S3P58, 116). Label: Entrusting everything to Allah

NH: *“Many people were involved. We gathered everyone, not just parents but extended family like grandparents, uncles, and aunts. We discussed my readiness, family finances, and answered questions. They all supported and gave a lot of advice.”* (W1S5P57, 114). Label: Extended family support in marriage preparations

Question 3: Who was the most convincing when you decided to marry? And how did they convince you?

SAK: *“My father. He said if you're really ready, then it's okay to proceed, don't back out.”* (W1S1P64, 128). Label: Father's encouragement to proceed with marriage

EN: *“My parents. They convinced me by giving marriage advice and supporting me, which motivated me to proceed.”* (W1S3P59, 118). Label: Parental encouragement to proceed with marriage

NH: *“My husband. He convinced me by discussing our future, both good and bad aspects. After considering it, I felt marrying him would be better for us, so I was confident afterward.”* (W1S5P59, 118). Label: Gaining a vision of life after marriage

Table 3. Data Labels from Interviews at the Final Decision-Making Stage

No	Label	Category
1	Belief that the prospective spouse is the right match	Personal Belief
2	Gaining confidence through spiritual practice	
3	Feeling blinded by love with the partner	
4	Gaining a vision of life after marriage	
5	Entrusting everything to Allah	
6	Parental approval of marriage	Family Dynamics
7	Extended family support in marriage preparations	
8	Father's encouragement to proceed with marriage	
9	Parental encouragement to proceed with marriage	

Post-Early Marriage Impact

Question 1: How did you adjust after getting married at a young age? Were there any challenges?

SAK: *"It's clear, hehe, adjusting to local customs, habits, and so on."* (W1S1P67, 134). Label: Adjustment to local customs in a new area

EN: *"Yes, I learned to be more open with my husband, but I'm still learning, so when things settle down, I talk things over calmly to resolve issues slowly."* (W1S3P63, 126). Label: Increasing openness in relationship with partner

NH: *"Adjusting to the husband's environment or neighbors wasn't too difficult since it's just a different RT in the same village. However, adjusting to in-laws was tough."* (W1S5P61, 122). Label: Adjusting to the husband's environment/neighbors and in-laws

Question 2: How is your marriage currently?

SAK: *"I'm happy, especially since we have a child now. It makes the family feel complete."* (W1S1P69, 138). Label: Happiness in household with presence of children

SAK: *"Alhamdulillah wasn't really part of my experience at that time. I had just graduated from school, and I didn't have much experience. But fortunately, my parents, husband, and in-laws supported me. Since I lived with my in-laws, I was grateful that they helped take care of the baby. I was also learning, and that was how I adjusted myself."* (W1S1P71, 142). Label: Family support in adapting to new roles as a mother and daughter-in-law

EN: *"It was difficult at first, but eventually, I managed. Since I was married, I had to mature. Hehe."* (W1S3P65, 130). Label: Maturity after marriage

NH: *"Alhamdulillah, I'm happy and we have a child."* (W1S5P63, 126), *"It's great to have entertainment at home. When my husband is out, there's someone to keep me company. Now that I can speak fluently, we play and laugh together at home."* (W1S5P66, 132). Label: Joy from having children

Question 3: What is your current economic status after marriage?

SAK: *“After getting married, the economic status is moderate, but sufficient. The important thing is to be grateful and live according to needs, not prestige.”* (W1S1P72, 144). Label: Gratitude for economic status after marriage

EN: *“It's the same, before marriage, I was supported by my parents, and now, alhamdulillah, my husband has a business so all needs are met.”* (W1S3P67, 134), *“Yes, I feel very fulfilled in terms of needs.”* (W1S3P68, 136). Label: Feeling fulfilled after marriage

NH: *“Yes, it's quite sufficient, although it's unpredictable. The photography business is busy when there are jobs or wedding seasons, but alhamdulillah, it supports daily needs. Crop yields depend on the weather, and prices fluctuate. In this area, the highest income from farming is during tobacco season; if the price is high, it's more, but if not, it's still sufficient.”* (W1S5P72, 144). Label: Feeling sufficient with economic status after marriage

Question 4: How is your social relationship now after marriage?

SAK: *“Social relations are going well. By the way, my father-in-law is the RT head, so I am active in activities like PKK or other events.”* (W1S1P74), *“Hehe, yes, I'm learning to be confident. It's not nice to stay home all the time with my husband without socializing with the surroundings. People might talk, you know.”* (W1S1P75, 150). Label: Active in social activities to boost self-confidence

EN: *“No, not really. I rarely go out; it's just family if we do go anywhere, and that's rare. I actually miss my friends, but what can I do? I have my own family now; I can't be like before.”* (W1S3P71, 142). Label: Changes in social circle

EN: *“Hmm, not really. Sometimes I visit neighbors and chat, and there are a few neighbors of the same age, so we still connect, but it's not as close as my high school friends.”* (W1S3P73, 146). Label: Maintaining some social connections but missing high school friends

NH: *“There is contact, but it's rare; it's just through WhatsApp now, and even that is infrequent. I only reach out when something comes up.”* (W1S5P75, 150), *“It's usual; living next to neighbors is normal. Not too close, but not distant either. I mostly chat with the neighbors next door.”* (W1S5P76, 152). Label: Limited and formal social interactions

Question 5: How is your family environment now after marriage?

SAK: *“Yes, I feel very welcomed by my husband's family. Even before the marriage, I felt a good match.”* (W1S1P78, 156), *“Not exactly, but sometimes I pick up things, or it can be several days. I still have belongings there, and my parents and siblings often visit. We've blended as one family.”* (W1S1P80, 160). Label: Integration in inter-family relationships

EN: *“I'm not very close; I still feel a bit awkward with them. If there's an event, I sometimes go if my husband insists, but it's not certain that I will attend. I actually feel a bit annoyed with my in-laws sometimes, and with other relatives, it's sometimes awkward.”* (W1S3P76, 152). Label: Sporadic and occasionally tense relationship with husband's family

NH: *“Yes, I live with my husband's family, so there were some differences. At first, I accepted it, but after a few days, I got irritated. They also speak a bit harshly compared to my family. I was once told I spent too much time in my room, even though I didn't feel I was in there that often. I only read books and didn't disturb anyone. Sometimes I felt misunderstood because I'm just like this, but that was in the past. Now I can accept it, and everything is fine; there are no more issues.”* (W1S5P79, 158). Label: Maintaining good relations with husband's family after adaptation

Question 6: What difficulties have you faced during this marriage?

SAK: *“Usually, it's small issues related to daily life, like household chores where it's sometimes hard to ask for help from my husband, or disagreements about child-rearing with my in-laws. Sometimes it's about free time; for example, when I'm bored and really want to go out, but my husband prefers to stay at home. But it's okay, I don't get upset or anything.”* (W1S1P84, 168). Label: Difficulties in marriage can be managed effectively

EN: *“There are many, for example, financial issues or business matters that often make me emotional, because I'm frequently excluded from decisions and he still feels it's all his. Then there are disagreements about spending priorities, what's more important to buy, and I have to control my ego.”* (W1S3P79, 158). Label: Feeling excluded in decision-making by husband

EN: *“Yes, but it's up to him how he wants to handle things, or issues with managing time between his business and spending time with the family that often clash. Basically, there are many things.”* (W1S3P80, 160). Label: Perceived lack of time allocation by husband for family

NH: *“There are many, starting from controlling our egos, adjusting to the environment and family. Adjusting to being a daughter-in-law and a mother. I even had baby blues after giving birth.”* (W1S5P81, 162). Label: Adapting to the role of daughter-in-law and mother

Question 7: How do you handle problems in your marriage? Do you receive support?

SAK: *“As much as possible, if there's a problem, we discuss it calmly and face it with patience. Even though we live in the same house as my in-laws, I try not to let them know or get involved in our problems.”* (W1S1P86, 172). Label: Learning to handle problems more maturely

EN: *“Whenever there's an issue, my husband always goes to his parents' house, and we don't chat much. If we do, it's usually arguments and not acknowledging mistakes. We often choose to remain silent, lower our egos, and it turns out we reconcile just like that.”* (W1S3P83, 166). Label: Difficulty communicating to resolve issues with husband

NH: *“There's no one else but my husband. My father used to advise me before marriage to keep problems private and solve them together as much as possible. I used to never share my problems, keeping everything to myself. Until one day, I felt a heavy chest and after sharing with my husband, I felt relieved and comfortable. So, now my only confidant is my husband.”* (W1S5P86, 172). Label: Communication and support from husband in solving problems

Question 8: How do you feel about your marriage so far?

SAK: *“I feel truly fortunate and blessed. I feel like I have a life partner who supports me and we understand each other well.”* (W1S1P90, 180). Label: Feeling fortunate to have a compatible partner

EN: *“I'm happy to be spending full time with my family, and having a child adds color and joy to our home...”* (W1S3P86, 172). Label: Children adding joy and color to family

EN: *“...But sometimes I feel sad because friends my age are still in school and free to go wherever they want. When there are problems, I feel like I want to go back to school because I used to be quite smart and often won awards. If I had gone to college, I feel like I could have been like that again.”* (W1S3P86, 172). Label: Nostalgia for pre-marriage times

NH: *“I didn’t expect to come this far. Going through happy and tough times together. I’m grateful to have a patient and caring husband, who is a good father to our child.”* (W1S5P88, 176). Label: Grateful for a patient and kind partner

Question 9: How happy are you in your marriage so far?

SAK: *“Well, I’m grateful and happy, especially since we have a child now, which completes our happiness.”* (W1S1P92, 184). Label: Presence of children completing happiness

EN: *“Happiness cannot be expressed in words anymore.”* (W1S3P89, 178)”, *“Well, since the birth of our child, I have never felt happier. I still remember from the hospital, I don’t think I’ve ever been happier than I was at that time.”* (W1S3P92, 184) Label: The presence of a child as a source of happiness

NH: *“There’s a lot, even though there are challenges in the marriage, I still feel this was the right choice for me.”* (W1S5P89, 178), *“I’m happy because we have a child; it’s great to have someone to keep me company and make me laugh.”* (W1S5P90, 180). Label: Satisfaction with decision to marry and have children

Question 10: Are there things that make you feel stressed or anxious about this marriage?

SAK: *“Well, it’s something that has happened, so I just try to accept it. I once had the desire to start a business but didn’t have the capital, so I got married instead. But in my opinion, for those who are already married, it’s best to find a stable job first so that when you get married, you already have a steady job. Like me, being young but struggling to find work, I even asked neighbors about job openings, and they said to look for someone who is still single.”* (W1S1P95, 190). Label: Difficulty finding employment after marriage

EN: *“Yes, because my husband is still influenced by his family. For example, things are fine at home, but as soon as he comes back from his parents’ house, problems arise between us. Financial issues are also a problem, as his parents and family still interfere, requesting things they shouldn’t be involved with because we are already married and have our own needs.”* (W1S3P94, 188). Label: Influence of husband's family on household life

EN: *“Yes, my husband’s cousin, who is 27 and still unmarried, often seeks attention from my husband. She always looks for opportunities to be close to him.”* (W1S3P101, 202). Label: Interference from outsiders in household

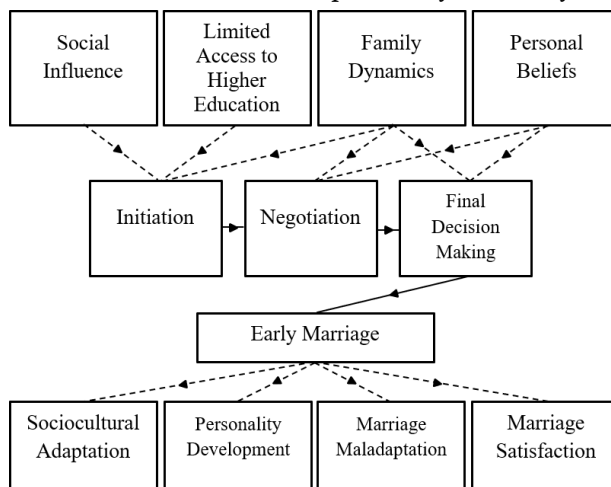
NH: *“My in-laws are still very focused on their daughter, even though she is married. Whenever they have something, they always remember their daughter, while my family seems indifferent. It feels like I’m not acknowledged. When my sister-in-law talks about my in-laws, instead of giving advice, it seems like they’re just encouraging her. It often feels unfair.”* (W1S5P92, 184). Label: Perception of unfair treatment by in-laws

Table 4. Data Labels from Interviews on Post-Early Marriage Impact

No	Label	Subcategory	Category
1	Adjustment to local customs in a new area	Assimilation	Sociocultural Adaptation
2	Adjusting to the husband's environment/neighbors and in-laws		
3	Changes in social circle		
4	Integration in inter-family relationships	Family Integration	
5	Maintaining good relations with husband's family after adaptation	New Roles	
6	Adapting to the role of daughter-in-law and mother		
7	Nostalgia for pre-marriage times		
8	Difficulty finding employment after marriage		
9	Family support in adapting to new roles as a mother and daughter-in-law		
10	Maturity after marriage	Intrapersonal Skills	Personality Development
11	Learning to handle problems more maturely		
12	Active in social activities to boost self-confidence		
13	Difficulties in marriage can be managed effectively	Interpersonal Skills	
14	Communication and support from husband in solving problems		
15	Increasing openness in relationship with partner	Communication Problems	Marital Maladaptation
16	Difficulty communicating to resolve issues with husband		
17	Sporadic and occasionally tense relationship with husband's family		
18	Limited and formal social interactions	Insecurity	
19	Perceived lack of time allocation by husband for family		
20	Perception of unfair treatment by in-laws		
21	Influence of husband's family on household life		
22	Interference from outsiders in household		
23	Feeling excluded in decision-making by husband	Maternal Satisfaction	
24	Happiness in household with presence of children		
25	Joy from having children		
26	Children adding joy and color to family		
27	Presence of children completing happiness		
28	The presence of a child as a source of happiness		
29	Satisfaction with decision to marry and have children	Gratitude	Marriage Satisfaction
30	Feeling fulfilled after marriage		
31	Feeling sufficient with economic status after marriage		
32	Feeling fortunate to have a compatible partner		
33	Grateful for a patient and kind partner		

Based on the thematic analysis conducted, this study identifies four primary factors influencing the decision to marry early among the subjects: dynamics within the family context, the influence of the social environment, limitations in accessing higher education, and individual personal beliefs. Additionally, the study also reveals the impacts resulting from the subjects' decision to marry early, including sociocultural adaptation, personality development, maladaptation within the marriage, and marital satisfaction.

Figure 1. Results of Factor and Impact Analysis in Early Marriage



Based on the data illustrated in Figure 1, this study finds that the subjects' decision to marry early is influenced by several factors at each stage. Family dynamics have an impact throughout all stages of the early marriage decision-making process, including initiation, negotiation, and final decision. In contrast, limitations in access to education and social influences affect only the initiation stage. Personal beliefs influence the negotiation process and the final decision-making. The impacts of early marriage decisions include sociocultural adaptation, personality development, maladaptation, and marital satisfaction.

Results of the Descriptive Analysis from Significant Others

Findings from significant others are used to compare with the findings related to family dynamics, personal beliefs, social influences, and limitations in access to higher education in early marriage decisions, as identified from key informant interviews. Descriptive analysis is applied to the data from significant others to compare with the findings from key informants.

a. Family Dynamics

Based on the interviews with key informants, this study reveals that family dynamics play a role in the decision-making process for early marriage. These findings are further supported by data obtained from interviews with significant others. For instance, SAK's mother demonstrated supportive attitudes and provided freedom for SAK to make the decision to marry at her age. SAK's mother stated:

"I am confident and allow you, but the decision is entirely in SAK's hands. If she is indeed certain, then so be it." (W1S2P17, 34)

"SAK has already graduated from school, and in the village, that age is considered appropriate for marriage. So if the child is ready, the parents should also be ready." (W1S2P18, 36)

These statements reflect that the decision is based on the belief that SAK is mature enough and has met the social norms in her community for marriage. The approval and support from SAK's parents mirror the acknowledgment of SAK's maturity and acceptance of social norms within their community. This reinforces the findings from the key informant SAK, who indicated that SAK's parents supported her marriage.

Additionally, findings from the interview with EN's mother, who expressed similar support for different reasons, further illustrate how social pressure influences parental decisions regarding early marriage. EN's parents felt it was necessary to support the marriage to avoid negative remarks from the community. EN's mother stated:

“As parents, my husband and I support you.” (W1S4P25, 50), “No, it's not that, but it's uncomfortable to have been dating for a long time. To avoid negative gossip from the community, it's better to formalize it. Besides, the marriage will wait until EN graduates.” (W1S4P26, 52)

This quote highlights how social pressure can play a role in EN's parents' decision regarding early marriage. Their support is not only based on EN's wishes but also on a desire to avoid social stigma associated with a long-term relationship without formal commitment. This confirms the findings from the key informant EN, who reported parental support for her marriage, although the social pressure influencing EN's parents' support was not mentioned by EN.

Furthermore, EN's parents showed support for early marriage by taking the necessary legal steps to obtain a marriage dispensation. EN's mother also stated:

“We agreed, without imposing any burden on each other. The wedding will be held after EN graduates because at that time EN was still underage, so we needed to handle the necessary permissions first.” (W1S4P31, 62)

This statement indicates a strong determination to allow EN to marry despite being underage, which is not legally permissible under marriage laws. This finding aligns with the key informant EN's report of an active role of the family in obtaining a marriage dispensation from the court.

Similarly, NH's parents provided similar approval as EN's and SAK's parents. They showed an open attitude towards NH's early marriage decision. NH's mother expressed:

“As far as I know, NH initially discussed with BW. NH also mentioned that she wasn't ready yet. Since it was quite sudden, NH gave BW the option to either wait a year or find someone else ready for marriage. BW agreed to wait for NH, and NH then decided to commit. Only then did she speak to us, agreeing for the following year. Well, what can we do, it's hard to oppose when they both love each other. So we allowed it.” (W1S6P21, 42)

NH's mother's statement reveals that, despite a desire to delay the marriage until NH was fully ready, they ultimately gave permission due to empathy and understanding of NH's romantic relationship. This shows that parental empathy and concern for NH's happiness played a key role in allowing early marriage. This supports the key informant NH's finding that her parents granted her freedom in deciding on marriage, provided she felt ready and confident in her choice.

In addition to parents, other family members also play a significant role in family dynamics affecting the decision to marry young. In NH's case, early marriage decisions involved not only her parents and NH but also NH's grandmother. NH's mother mentioned:

“She intended to go to college, but with her younger sibling starting junior high, we asked her to wait. Next year, she can start college while working and saving up, switching places with her sibling, as having both in school at the same time would be costly. But then, BW's grandmother proposed to NH's

grandmother, which we as parents were unaware of. That was a discussion between the grandmothers.” (W1S6P17, 34)

This quote illustrates that despite different initial plans from NH and her parents, the grandmother’s decision to accept the proposal indicates that family traditions and respect for the wishes of older family members still influence the family dynamics surrounding NH’s decision. This aligns with the key informant NH’s report of the grandmother’s important role in the marriage decision.

In conclusion, findings from interviews with significant others reinforce the key informant findings, demonstrating that family dynamics play a crucial role in the decision-making process for early marriage.

b. Personal Beliefs

Based on interviews with key informants, this study reveals that personal beliefs also play a significant role in the decision to marry early. These findings are further supported by data from interviews with significant others. For example, SAK’s mother observed that SAK made the decision to marry based on her own personal desire. SAK’s mother stated:

“Yes, but my husband and I only gave advice, not required SAK to marry. It seems that SAK made the decision on her own.” (W1S2P39, 78), *“Initially, I didn’t know; maybe she was still unsure. But I saw that she eventually decided to go ahead after some consideration.”* (W1S2P40, 80)

These statements reflect the parents’ understanding that SAK had the right to determine her own path, including making the decision to marry, without external pressure or coercion. This aligns with the key informant SAK’s report that the decision to marry was SAK’s personal choice.

Additionally, findings from NH’s mother suggest that NH was ready and in love with her partner. NH’s mother expressed:

“I am confident because the child is also ready, and before the marriage, they were advised about married life. If the child is ready and in love with her partner, that’s fine.” (W1S6P33, 66)

This quote indicates NH’s mother’s belief that readiness and mutual love between NH and her partner are sufficient grounds for starting a marriage. It shows that NH’s personal conviction in deciding to marry is supported by her mother. This reinforces the key informant NH’s report of feeling deeply in love with her partner, which led her to decide to marry.

Moreover, SAK’s personal beliefs rooted in spiritual practices, as mentioned by SAK, are also corroborated by findings from her mother. SAK’s mother stated:

“There was consideration, as marriage needs careful thought. I kept asking EN if she was truly certain with IR, and so on. EN said she had done istikharah and was confident, so my husband and I were actually ready for them to marry. They had an engagement first.” (W1S4P24, 48)

This statement highlights the role of religious practices in SAK’s decision-making process for early marriage. It confirms the key informant SAK’s finding that personal beliefs, such as seeking guidance through prayer and spiritual reflection, are elements influencing the decision to marry early.

In conclusion, findings from interviews with significant others strengthen the key informant findings, demonstrating that personal beliefs play a crucial role in the decision-making process for early marriage.

Based on interviews with key informants, this study reveals that social influences also play a role in the decision to marry early. These findings are reinforced by data obtained from interviews with significant others. For instance, SAK's mother highlighted the impact of social influence in the form of recommendations from relatives who introduced SAK's future spouse as a factor in the decision to marry early. SAK's mother stated:

“Coincidentally, the person who introduced SAK’s husband is a relative of mine, and he said that the person was straightforward and diligent in his work.” (W1S2P16, 32)

This statement indicates that the recommendation from a relative played a role in SAK's decision to marry early, underscoring the influence of social factors in this decision. This aligns with the key informant SAK's report that the introduction process, which led to her decision to marry early, began with the recommendation of her future spouse by someone else.

Additionally, findings from EN's mother also illustrate the role of social influence in EN's decision to marry early. The decision to marry early was a response to a proposal from another party. EN's mother expressed:

“Previously, EN was proposed by another man, even though she was in a relationship with IR. IR eventually proposed to EN first, and then EN discussed it with her parents.” (W1S4P23, 46)

This quote reveals how EN faced a complex social situation. The proposal from another man while EN was in a relationship demonstrates how EN's decision to marry was influenced by unexpected social interactions. This confirms the key informant EN's finding that her partner's proposal was influenced by a competing proposal from someone else.

Furthermore, social norms within the community also played a role in influencing EN's decision to marry at a young age. EN's mother described the community's reaction to EN and her partner's relationship:

“Here, the family responses are usual because everyone knows that EN and IR are dating. But some family members were surprised and wondered why. They had odd thoughts about it.” (W1S4P16, 32)

EN's mother's statement illustrates that in her community, early marriage, such as EN's case, is often viewed as a normal practice. This reflects the social norms that accept early marriage. It supports the key informant EN's finding that differing social norms about early marriage can be accepted or rejected in certain communities.

This finding is also supported by NH's mother, who mentioned that NH's family had an open attitude toward early marriage. NH's mother stated:

“It’s normal here because it is common to marry at a young age after finishing high school. The family is the same as me, depending on those who choose to marry. However, school friends were surprised and even disapproved.” (W1S6P27, 54)

NH's mother's statement reflects differing perspectives within her community, where family members are more accepting of early marriage, while school friends have varied

reactions. This confirms the key informant NH's finding about the social acceptance of early marriage in NH's environment, though differing opinions still exist.

In conclusion, findings from interviews with significant others reinforce the key informant findings, demonstrating that social influences play a significant role in the decision-making process for early marriage.

d. Limited Access to Higher Education

Based on interviews with key informants, this study reveals that limitations in access to higher education also play a role in the decision to marry early. These findings are supported by data from interviews with significant others. For instance, SAK's mother acknowledged that economic constraints were a barrier to SAK continuing higher education. SAK's mother stated:

“Yes, what can we do, honestly, if SAK wants to go to college, we can't afford it. If she wants to work far away, we don't allow it.” (W1S2P27, 54)

This quote from SAK's mother illustrates that economic factors play a role in limiting access to higher education. This finding aligns with the key informant SAK's report that financial constraints were a barrier to continuing higher education.

The finding from SAK's mother is also supported by findings from EN's mother, who indicated that limitations in access to higher education were not only financial but also related to family responsibilities. EN's mother explained:

“Well, what can we do? It's okay. I only have EN and can't be far from her. Although we have the funds for higher education, if EN goes to college, who will continue farming? My husband and I had to consider that; it's not that we don't care about EN.” (W1S4P28, 56)

EN's mother felt she had to choose between her child's education and the family's livelihood. Despite having financial means for higher education, family obligations such as farming influenced EN's decision not to pursue further education. This finding reinforces the key informant EN's report that there was a restriction on higher education, although EN mentioned that the restriction came from her grandmother, not her parents.

Another finding from NH's mother also reveals that NH faced limitations in accessing higher education. NH's mother mentioned that NH's plans for higher education were interrupted by a marriage proposal:

“NH intended to go to college, but with her younger sibling starting junior high, we asked her to wait a year, work and save money, and then go to college, taking turns with her sibling. If both went at the same time, the costs would be too high. Then, NH's grandfather proposed to NH's grandfather, and we as parents didn't know about it. That was a discussion between the grandparents.” (W1S6P17, 34)

This statement from NH's mother illustrates that NH's educational plans were halted due to a marriage proposal from another family, which was previously unknown to her parents. This indicates that NH's barriers to higher education were influenced by external factors beyond her parents' control. This confirms NH's concerns about how delays in higher education accelerated her decision to marry.

In conclusion, the findings from interviews with significant others reinforce the key informant findings, demonstrating that limitations in access to higher education play a significant role in the decision-making process for early marriage.

Discussions

This study investigates the factors influencing early marriage decisions among adolescents who have recently graduated from their preferred high schools and their subsequent marital experiences. The results indicate that family dynamics, including support and expectations, especially from parents, play a crucial role in the decision to marry early. This influence is evident at every stage of the decision-making process. These findings align with the study by Nabila, Roswiyani, and Satyadi (2018), which identified family ties as a significant factor affecting early marriage in Indonesia. Additionally, the involvement of extended family in discussions and approvals suggests that the decision to marry early is not solely based on the compatibility of partners but also on familial acceptance, indicating that early marriage is often a collective decision involving multiple family members rather than just the individuals getting married (McDougal et al., 2018).

Personal beliefs of the subjects also play a role in their decision to marry early. These beliefs are often grounded in the quality of interactions, value alignment, and shared vision with the partner, as well as spiritual and familial support. However, personal beliefs are less significant at the initiation stage. In other words, in early marriages, women do not exert much influence at this stage. Emotional factors such as love can also affect personal belief perceptions, indicating that early marriage decisions are not solely based on practical considerations but are also influenced by internal processes involving emotional and spiritual aspects of the individual. Muntamah, Latifiani, and Arifin (2019) found that personal beliefs in early marriage are challenging to avoid, as individuals feel they are in love regardless of their age, potential challenges, or future problem-solving abilities. This finding is supported by Kohno et al. (2019), who discovered that emotional factors like love can influence early marriage decisions.

The study also highlights the importance of social influence at the initiation stage, where societal norms, having a partner before marriage, and social pressures within the environment play significant roles in shaping perceptions of early marriage. These findings align with the research by Al-Muti'ah, Kristanto, and Putri (2021), which showed that social support significantly affects marriage orientation among individuals engaging in early marriage. Furthermore, Tewahido et al. (2022) found that social influence in the form of social norms and peer influence are among the many factors affecting early marriage. The study by Lowe et al. (2021) also indicates that social norms can sustain the practice of early marriage within a community, reflecting the importance of social influence in early marriage decisions.

Additionally, the study identifies limited access to higher education as a barrier for graduates to continue their education, affecting their decision to marry earlier, particularly at the initiation stage. The social environment of the subjects may perceive that women have limited opportunities for further education and career advancement, making marriage appear as the best option. Constraints include family prohibitions, stigma against women pursuing higher education, and financial limitations. These findings align with Giacobino et al. (2022), who showed that access to higher education for women can reduce the desire for early marriage. Lowe et al. (2021) also demonstrated that lack of access to education can sustain

the practice of early marriage in certain communities. This underscores that limited access to higher education is not only an individual issue but also a reflection of broader social and economic structures.

The study reveals that individuals who marry experience significant sociocultural adaptation, including assimilation with their partner's culture and integration with the new family. This aligns with the findings of Ataca and Berry (2002), which showed that post-marriage adaptation involves psychological and sociocultural aspects. Sociocultural adaptation after marriage encompasses not only adjusting to customs but also developing social skills within a new culture.

Furthermore, the results indicate that marriage contributes to personality development, with improvements in interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Subjects demonstrate maturity in handling marital responsibilities and learning to communicate effectively within the relationship. Abbasi (2017) explored how personal disposition affects marital relationships and found that marital experiences can reinforce or alter certain personality traits. Bühler, Krauss, and Orth (2021) also found that the maturation process in marriage can influence individual personality characteristics. These findings highlight that marriage can act as a catalyst for personal growth and development, including enhanced self-confidence and involvement in social activities.

The study also reveals that maladaptation in marriage, especially among recently married adolescents, is often marked by communication barriers and insecurity. Ineffective communication patterns, such as avoidance of confrontation and reluctance to engage in open dialogue, can lead to relationship tension. Fincham and Beach (2010) showed that negative communication in marriage can affect marital satisfaction and emotional well-being. Feelings of unfair treatment or neglect by partners and family can add complexity to household dynamics. Mikulincer and Shaver (2017) explored how attachment patterns influence relationship dynamics and found that insecure attachment correlates with more negative and unstable relationships.

Finally, the findings indicate that marital satisfaction occurring after the subjects' marriage is related not only to external factors such as economic conditions but also to emotional support and strong interpersonal relationships. Kaur (2016) emphasizes that marital satisfaction is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple variables, including functional interactions, individual traits such as personality and self-esteem, and partner characteristics such as communication and conflict resolution. The study also found that the presence of children contributes to marital satisfaction. However, other research suggests that the impact of children on marital satisfaction can be complex and variable. Kowal et al. (2021) found that the number of children is a significant negative predictor of marital satisfaction, although factors such as gender, education, and religiosity also interact with the number of children and marital satisfaction. Bogdan et al. (2022) also showed that children add stress to marriages, and marital satisfaction declines sharply when children are part of the marriage. These findings contrast with this study's results, which show that individuals experience increased marital satisfaction due to the happiness children bring into the family. Therefore, the presence of children can enhance marital satisfaction, depending on the specific dynamics and conditions of each couple.

This study has several limitations. Firstly, the sample, which is restricted to graduates of prestigious high schools, may not represent the broader adolescent population. Additionally, relying on subjective perceptions several years after marriage introduces potential recall bias. The influence of family dynamics and social factors in decision-making may not be fully captured, and the long-term impact of early marriage remains underexplored. Moreover, time constraints faced by the researcher could affect the data collection process, potentially limiting the quality and quantity of the collected data. To address these issues, future research could employ a more diverse sample and longitudinal design to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

The findings of this study have several implications for policy and practice. Firstly, there is a need for a comprehensive support system for adolescents considering early marriage, including counseling services addressing family dynamics and personal beliefs. Additionally, educational opportunities should be made accessible to mitigate the impact of limited access to higher education on early marriage decisions. Moreover, programs promoting effective communication strategies and adaptation in marriage could help address challenges reported post-marriage.

This study highlights the complexity of factors influencing early marriage decisions and experiences after marriage. Family dynamics, personal beliefs, social influence, and limited access to higher education are factors affecting early marriage decisions. Sociocultural adaptation, personality development, maladaptation in marriage, and marital satisfaction are key aspects of the post-early marriage experience. This research provides valuable insights for interventions and policy-making aimed at addressing early marriage and supporting adolescents who have married.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study elucidates the multifaceted factors influencing early marriage decisions and subsequent experiences. It underscores the pivotal role of family dynamics, personal beliefs, social influences, and educational access limitations in shaping the choice to marry early. The findings highlight that family support and expectations, particularly from parents, play a crucial role throughout the decision-making process. Additionally, personal beliefs and emotional factors, such as love, influence early marriage decisions, while social norms and pressures significantly impact perceptions of marriage at a young age. The study also reveals that limited access to higher education often drives individuals toward early marriage as a perceived alternative. Post-marriage, significant sociocultural adaptation, personal growth, and challenges in communication are observed. These insights are vital for developing effective policies and support systems aimed at addressing early marriage and supporting young individuals in navigating their marital and educational trajectories.

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