

THE ROLE OF FAMILY IN LEGITIMIZING EARLY MARRIAGE IN CENTRAL LOMBOK DISTRICT: A PERSPECTIVE ISLAMIC FAMILY LAW

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Abstrak: Fenomena pernikahan dini masih marak terjadi di berbagai wilayah Indonesia, termasuk Kabupaten Lombok Tengah, Nusa Tenggara Barat, yang mencatat jumlah kasus tertinggi kedua di provinsi ini. Meskipun secara yuridis Undang-Undang Nomor 16 Tahun 2019 telah menetapkan batas usia minimum perkawinan, praktik pernikahan dini terus berlangsung, terutama karena pengaruh nilai budaya, tekanan ekonomi, dan pertimbangan moral yang didukung oleh keluarga. Dalam banyak kasus, keluarga bukan hanya memberikan restu, tetapi menjadi aktor utama dalam pengambilan keputusan pernikahan dini, dengan alasan menjaga kehormatan, mengurangi beban ekonomi, atau melanjutkan tradisi seperti merariq. Penelitian ini menggunakan jenis penelitian netnografi dengan pendekatan deskriptif-analisis melalui studi pustaka dengan analisis teori konstruksi sosial Berger dan Luckmann yang meliputi proses eksternalisasi, objektivasi, dan internalisasi. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa keluarga berperan sebagai agen konstruksi sosial yang melegitimasi pernikahan dini sebagai suatu realitas sosial yang dianggap wajar, bahkan ideal. Realitas ini pada akhirnya melemahkan fungsi normatif hukum perkawinan, karena nilai-nilai sosial yang dibentuk keluarga seringkali lebih kuat daripada regulasi formal negara. Oleh karena itu, intervensi sosial perlu diarabkan tidak hanya pada individu, tetapi juga pada struktur sosial keluarga melalui edukasi, pemberdayaan, dan transformasi nilai.

Kata Kunci: Pernikahan Dini, Peran Keluarga, Konstruksi Sosial, Lombok Tengah.

Judul: Peran Keluarga dalam Melegitimasi Pernikahan Dini: Studi di Kabupaten Lombok Tengah

Abstract: The phenomenon of early marriage is still rampant in various parts of Indonesia, including Central Lombok District, West Nusa Tenggara, which recorded the second highest number of cases in the province. Although juridically Law No. 16/2019 has set a minimum age limit for marriage, the practice of early marriage continues, mainly due to the influence of cultural values, economic pressure, and moral considerations supported by families. In many cases, the family not only gives its blessing, but becomes the main actor in the decision-making of early marriage, for reasons of maintaining honor, reducing the economic burden, or continuing traditions such as merariq. This study uses netnography research with a descriptive-analytical approach through literature study with Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory analysis, which includes the processes of externalization, objectification, and internalization. The results of the analysis show that the family acts as a social construction agent that legitimizes early marriage as a social reality that is considered normal, even ideal. This reality ultimately weakens the normative function of marriage law, because the social values formed by families are often stronger than formal state regulations. Therefore, social interventions need to be directed not only at individuals, but also at the social structure of the family through education, empowerment, and value transformation.

Keywords: Early Marriage, The Role of Family, Social Construction, Central Lombok



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INTRODUCTION

Early marriage is a social phenomenon that is still rampant in various parts of Indonesia, including in Central Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. Based on the results of data analysis in 2024 from the Office of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning (DP3AP2KB) of West Nusa Tenggara Province, it was recorded that Bima District had the highest number of child marriage cases with 235 cases. In second place is Central Lombok with 148 cases, followed by West Lombok and North Lombok, which each recorded 135 cases. Meanwhile, Dompu recorded 128 cases, Sumbawa 117 cases, East Lombok 43 cases, West Sumbawa 16 cases, and Mataram City 8 cases. This data shows that Central Lombok District has the second highest number of early marriage cases in West Nusa Tenggara.¹

Although national regulations, such as Law No. 16/2019 on the Amendment to Law No. 1/1974 on Marriage, have raised the minimum age of marriage to 19 years for both women and men, the practice of early marriage continues, often under cultural, economic and religious pretexts. One of the main factors influencing the occurrence of early marriage is the role of the family, both as a supporter and as a party that encourages the marriage.²

In Central Lombok, early marriage is not only considered a solution to avoid promiscuity or maintain family honor, but is also seen as an economic strategy to ease the burden on the household.³ In this context, families are often the main actors who make decisions based on local values, social pressure and other pragmatic considerations. Family support in early marriage can take the form of parental approval, marriage facilitation, and opinion formation that leads to the justification of the practice. In line with the latest news from Central Lombok, as reported by BBC on March 28, 2025, the marriage between RN (17) and YL (14) occurred due to a request from the parents on the grounds that the male party had taken the female party away for two nights. Village officials had forbidden this marriage, but it failed due to pressure from the families of both parties.⁴

To understand this phenomenon more deeply, the author uses social construction theory developed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann. In their view, social reality is the result of human construction through the process of externalization, objectivation, and

¹ Riwayati Malika et al., Hubungan Pengetahuan dan Sikap Remaja Putri tentang Dampak Pernikahan Dini bagi Kesehatan Reproduksi di Mts Nu Qamarul Huda Bagu. *Jurnal Tampiasih*, 3 (1), 45, 2024.

² Indanah et al., Faktor yang Berhubungan dengan Pernikahan Dini, *Jurnal Ilmu Keperawatan dan Kebidanan*, 11 (2), 282, 2020.

³ Siti Sanisah et al., Menekan Angka Pernikahan Dini Melalui Awiq-Awiq Dise. *JCES (Journal of Character Education Society)*, 5 (1), 82, 2022.

⁴ Abdul Latief Apriaman, Pernikahan anak NTB: Viral video 'tradisi' pernikahan anak di Lombok Tengah, diselesaikan dengan pidana. 2025. Diakses tanggal 10 Juli 2025 dari <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/c4g2kmx3wvlo>.

internalization.⁵ Through this process, the norms and values that encourage early marriage are internalized by family members as a social truth that is passed down from generation to generation. In this context, the role of the family is not merely individual or functional, but also a social agent that reproduces the structure and meaning of early marriage as part of a social reality that is considered normal and even ideal.

With reference to the above explanation, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the social reality in Central Lombok Regency. This study uses Peter L. Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory to analyze how families play a central role, both as decision-makers and as providers of normative justification for early marriage, through social pressure, moral considerations, and economic and honor-related reasons, thereby forming a social reality that considers early marriage to be normal.

The phenomenon of child marriage in Indonesia is a complex issue that is not only influenced by legal factors, but also by the social and cultural constructions of society. Sherly Kurnia Dafani et al.⁶ examined the meaning of child marriage from the perspective of youth in Taman Baru Village, West Lombok. In her study, it was found that the meaning of child marriage is divided into two poles: positive and negative, both of which are shaped by the socialization process, personal experience, and environmental influences. Although regulations such as Law No. 16 of 2019 and NTB Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2021 have been made, cases of child marriage remain high, indicating that changes in legal norms have not fully permeated the social consciousness of the community.

Similar research was conducted by Tri Ambarwati et al.⁷ in Pasirgombong Village, Banten, which also used Berger and Luckmann's social construction approach. The results show that the practice of early marriage is driven by negative community perceptions of teenage relationships as well as social and economic pressures. The process of objectivation, internalization, and externalization takes place simultaneously, reinforcing the social reality that marrying off children is considered a solution to various social risks, even though it is contrary to applicable regulations.

Meanwhile, Wildan Barisa through a phenomenological approach, revealed that in Karangharjo Village, Jember, early marriage is influenced by social stigma, poverty, and local

⁵ Berger, Peter L, and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*. London: Penguin Group, 26, 1966.

⁶ Dafani, Sherly Kurnia, Maya Atri Komalasari, and Hafizah Awalia, Konstruksi Sosial Pernikahan Terkait Isu Perkawinan Anak Di Desa Taman Baru, Kecamatan Sekotong Kabupaten Lombok Barat. *RESIPROKAL*, 2019.

⁷ Tri Ambarwati, Wahid Abdul Kudus, and Rizki Setiawan, Konstruksi Sosial Masyarakat pada Pernikahan Dini di Desa Pasirgombong Kecamatan Bayah. *Edu Sociata: Jurnal Pendidikan Sosiologi*, 7 (2), 384-391, 2024.

culture.⁸ In a society that still sees marriage as worship or an effort to avoid adultery, social construction is a strong instrument in perpetuating the practice. There are differences in community attitudes, ranging from those who see early marriage as a positive thing to those who consider it a potential threat to domestic violence.

A more complex perspective was put forward by Ludfi in his study of marriage dispensation in Madura.⁹ This study shows that despite tightened regulations, the practice of marriage dispensation creates a legal paradox that strengthens the legitimacy of child marriage. Using Berger & Luckmann's social construction theory and Foucault's power approach, as well as Nawal el-Saadawi's feminist perspective, the author highlights how the dominance of patriarchal norms and local religion shapes people's perceptions of child marriage as an economic solution, but actually reinforces gender inequality and structural poverty.

On the other hand, Rahmadhani highlights how customary marriage traditions, such as "*bajapuik*" in Pariaman culture, are reconstructed by the Minangkabau community in Palembang.¹⁰ Although not directly addressing child marriage, this study shows how the community maintains marriage traditions through the process of internalization, objectivation, and externalization. In certain contexts, this cultural construction also has the potential to strengthen discriminatory practices against women if not balanced with an understanding of gender justice.

Based on previous studies, the author seeks to examine how the family plays an active role in legitimizing early marriage in Central Lombok Regency, thereby shaping and reinforcing the social constructs that support the continuation of this practice. This role not only reflects acceptance of tradition but also contributes to the weakening of the normative functions of Indonesia's Marriage Law, which ideally protects children's rights and establishes a minimum marriage age. In this study, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann's social construction theory is used as an analytical tool to trace how families shape social reality through the ongoing processes of externalization, objectification, and internalization. Through this approach, the author aims to demonstrate that social legitimacy for early marriage does not occur naturally but is consciously constructed through the values and norms institutionalized within family and local community structures.

⁸ Wildan Barisa, Konstruksi Sosial Masyarakat dalam Fenomena Pernikahan Dini di Desa Karangharjo, Kabupaten Jember. *Publico: Jurnal Ilmiah Politik, Kebijakan dan Sosial*, 6 (1), 41–47, 2024.

⁹ Ludfi, Dispensasi Nikah dan Paradoks Kawin Anak di Madura: Studi Tentang Dampak Regulasi Terhadap Praktik Perkawinan Anak. *Jurnal Mediasas: Media Ilmu Syari'ah dan Ahwal Al-Syakhsiyah*, 7 (2), 738–768, 2024.

¹⁰ Rahmadhani, Kontruksi Komunikasi Masyarakat Asal Minangkabau di Palembang tentang Tradisi Pernikahan Pariaman. *Journal of Social and Political Science*, 1 (1), 1–10, 2024.

METHOD

This research uses a type of netnography research with a descriptive-analytical approach that focuses on extracting data through website networks as the main data source. The secondary data in this study were collected through searching various academic literature, including books, journal articles, research reports relevant to the issue of early marriage in Central Lombok. This approach was chosen to explore an in-depth understanding of the social construction behind the family's role in legitimizing the practice of child marriage. To analyze the data, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann's social construction theory is used, which includes three main stages: externalization, objectivation, and internalization.¹¹ Through this research framework, the author examines how social values regarding early marriage are constructed, institutionalized, and internalized in family life and Sasak society, resulting in a social reality that can undermine formal legal norms regarding marriage age limits.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Normative Framework for Marriage Age in Islamic Family Law

Indonesia has a law that regulates the age of marriage, namely Marriage Law Number 1 of 1974. This law sets a minimum age limit for marriage, which is 19 years for men and 16 years for women. If the prospective couple has not reached the age of 21, they are required to obtain permission from both parents before entering into marriage. Although this law allows women to marry at the age of 16, this age is still considered a child. At this age, both physically and mentally, they are considered vulnerable and not mature enough to deal with the consequences of marriage.¹²

The legal policy that gave birth to Law Number 1 Year 1974 concerning Marriage basically aims to improve the dignity of women, one of which is by setting different age limits for marriage between men and women, which are then agreed upon nationally. Empirically, the regulation of the age limit of marriage is motivated by the rampant cases of domestic violence (KDRT) experienced by women. The impact of these cases is not only felt by women, but also affects the education, health and psychology of their children in the future.¹³

However, over time, the implementation of Article 7 paragraph (1) has created various loopholes that have the potential to trigger the rise of child marriage in a number of regions in Indonesia, especially in rural areas, and strengthen the practice of discrimination against women. This is further exacerbated by the provisions of Article 6 which states that "marriage

¹¹ Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckmann, "The Social Construction of Reality."

¹² Marwa, Muhammad Habibi Miftakhul, Pengaturan Batas Usia Perkawinan Perspektif Keluarga Sakinah Muhammadiyah. *JUSTISI*, 7 (1), 4, 2021.

¹³ Aristoni, Kebijakan Hukum Perubahan Batasan Minimal Umur Pernikahan Perspektif Hukum Islam. *JURNAL USM LAW REVIEW*, 4 (1), 406, 2021.

before the age of 21 years must obtain permission from parents." This provision shows how dominant the role of parents is in making decisions about their children's marriage, including in the case of marriages conducted at a child's age. As a result, marriage decisions are often more influenced by parental wishes than considerations of the child's own maturity and readiness.¹⁴

The birth of Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage can be understood as a progressive and responsive legal policy. In essence, the regulation in Article 7 paragraph (1) of Law Number 16 of 2019 is directed at preventing the practice of child marriage, restoring women's constitutional rights, and protecting children from all forms of exploitation. Therefore, the provisions of Article 7 paragraph (1) stipulate the same minimum age of marriage, namely 19 years, for both men and women. The passing of this law on October 14, 2019 was a historic moment in the renewal of marriage law in Indonesia, which has been in effect for almost half a century. This change marks a step forward in efforts to protect the rights of children and women and create equality in marriage law.¹⁵

In Islamic law, there are no explicit provisions regarding the minimum age limit for a person to enter into marriage. The Qur'an and Hadith only provide instructions in the form of gestures and biological signs as indicators of readiness to marry. Therefore, determining the appropriate age limit is the responsibility of the Muslim community to be adjusted to the social context and local conditions of each region. The determination must take into account the interpretation of the *shar'i* instructions as well as the relevance to the actual circumstances of the community where the law is applied.¹⁶

The determination of the age limit is not rigidly regulated in terms of numbers, but rather rests on the concepts of *bulugh* (puberty) and *rusyd* (emotional and intellectual maturity). The interpretation of the term *baligh* is relative because it is influenced by the social and cultural conditions of the local community. Therefore, the scholars of the madhhabs have different views on the age limit of maturity in the context of marriage. These differences include the determination of maturity based on a certain age or based on the appearance of other physical biological signs. The Shafi'i and Hanbali schools stipulate that the age of maturity begins at the age of 15. Although both schools recognize that maturity can also be recognized through biological signs, such as menstruation in girls and wet dreams in boys, but because these signs do not appear uniformly in every individual, the age standard is used as a definite measure. Maturity, for both men and women, is seen as equal because the basis

¹⁴ Aristoni, 406-407.

¹⁵ Aristoni, 407.

¹⁶ Hatta, Moh, Batasan Usia Perkawinan dalam Perspektif Ulama Klasik dan Kontemporer. *Al-Qānūn: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Pembaharuan Hukum Islam*, 19 (1), 68, 2016.

for its determination is reason. With the attainment of maturity of mind, a person is considered fit to accept the burden of law (*taklif*), and thus, becomes the subject of the application of sharia law.¹⁷

Meanwhile, according to Imam Abu Hanifah, the age of maturity is determined differently for men and women. He stipulates that maturity for men is reached at the age of 19, while for women at the age of 17. This provision shows a different approach in determining maturity compared to other madhhabs. According to Imam Malik, the age of maturity is set uniformly, both for men and women, at the age of 18 years. This determination reflects a moderate approach and considers the balance between biological factors and psychological maturity in determining a person's maturity.¹⁸

Ibn Kathir's opinion regarding the right time to get married is not solely based on the achievement of biological puberty, but also takes into account the factors of age and intelligence or maturity of thinking known as *rusyd*. According to Ibn Kathir, a person is said to be ready to marry when he has reached a sufficient age or has sufficient intelligence to assume the responsibilities of marriage. In his *tafsir*, Ibn Kathir explains that *baligh* is marked by the presence of wet dreams in men, which indicates biological readiness to produce offspring. However, he emphasized that this readiness must be accompanied by intellectual and emotional maturity so that marriage can run well and not cause harm. Thus, according to Ibn Kathir, the time limit for marriage depends not only on physical signs, but also on one's psychological maturity and intelligence in facing household responsibilities.¹⁹

The concept of *rusyd* in fiqh refers to the emotional, intellectual and moral maturity that enables a person to act independently and responsibly. *Rusyd* is important because marriage is not just a matter of fulfilling biological needs, but also building a life together that is full of responsibility. responsibility. The evidence underlying the importance of *rusyd* includes Surah An-Nisa' verse 6: "*And test the orphans until they reach the age of majority (rusyd). Then if you think they are intelligent (able to take care of property), then hand over to them their property.*" (Q.S. An-Nisa' [4]: 6).²⁰

Social Reality of Early Marriage in Central Lombok

The phenomenon of early marriage in Central Lombok is the result of complex interactions between social structures, local culture, economic pressures, and value constructions that are passed down between generations.²¹ In this region, the practice of

¹⁷ Shodikin, Akhmad, *Pandangan Hukum Islam dan Hukum Nasional Tentang Batas Usia Perkawinan. Mabkamah: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam*, 9 (1), 116, 2016.

¹⁸ Shodikin, 116-117.

¹⁹ Hatta, Moh, 70.

²⁰ Kementrian Agama RI, "Al Quran," 2022.

²¹ Suhardi, Muhammad, *Legal Pluralism and Cultural Legitimacy: Reframing Sasak Customary Law to Prevent Child Marriage in Lombok. Society*, 13 (1), 538–552, 2025.

marrying under the age of 19 is not an isolated phenomenon, but rather part of a system of values and norms that have been embedded in the collective consciousness of the community. Based on official data from the Central Lombok District P3AKB Office, the child marriage rate is still relatively high. In 2022, there were 362 cases of marriage involving adolescents aged junior and senior high school.²² In 2023, the number increased to 497 cases, and around 295 couples had children, indicating that early marriage not only occurs, but also continues in reproductive and domestic roles.²³

Meanwhile, in the first semester of 2024, the number had decreased dramatically to only 8 cases, compared to 24 cases in the same period the previous year.²⁴ However, this data does not necessarily indicate absolute success, as there are still many early marriages that take place informally or are not recorded in the state administration, such as *siri* marriages or silent *merariq*. Reporting from BBC, in mid-May 2025, an early marriage occurred in Central Lombok. The marriage between RN (17) and YL (14) occurred due to a request from the parents with the reason that the male party had taken the female party away for two nights. Village officials had forbidden this marriage, but it failed due to pressure from the families of both parties. Joko Jumadi, head of the Mataram City Child Protection Agency (LPA), stated that he would report the case to law enforcement officials. He also hopes that this step can prevent similar incidents in the future.²⁵

In the social construction of Sasak society, especially in rural areas of Central Lombok, the determination of the ideal age of marriage is not only based on biological aspects or legal provisions, but is more influenced by cultural and religious values that have been deeply rooted for generations. The local community views that a woman who has reached puberty is considered ready for marriage, because it is believed that the physical maturity achieved also reflects mental and social readiness to undergo the role of wife and mother. This view is reinforced by customary norms and religious interpretations that emphasize the importance of maintaining morality and avoiding the risks of promiscuity, so marriage at a young age is often seen as an appropriate solution as well as a form of practicing traditional values. Thus,

²² Redaksi Koranlombok, 362 Kasus Pernikahan Dini Terjadi di Lombok Tengah. 2024. Diakses tanggal 14 Juli 2025 dari <https://koranlombok.id/2024/08/20/362-kasus-pernikahan-dini-terjadi-di-lombok-tengah/>.

²³ Ambika, Turunkan Angka Stunting Dengan Kampanye Cegah Pernikahan Dini. 2025. Diakses tanggal 14 Juli 2025 dari <https://www.tvrnews.com/berita/tndmpej-turunkan-angka-stunting-dengan-kampanye-cegah-pernikahan-dini>.

²⁴ Akhyar Rosidi, Alhamdulillah!! Kasus Perkawinan Anak Di Lombok Tengah Turun. 2024. Diakses tanggal 14 Juli 2025 dari <https://mataram.antaranews.com/berita/358197/alhamdulillah-kasus-perkawinan-anak-di-lombok-tengah-turun>.

²⁵ Abdul Latief Apriaman, Pernikahan anak NTB: Viral video ‘tradisi’ pernikahan anak di Lombok Tengah, diselesaikan dengan pidana. 2025. Diakses tanggal 10 Juli 2025 dari <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/c4g2kmx3wvlo>.

cultural and religious considerations are the dominant factors that overcome modern rational thinking about marriage age limits.²⁶

The practice of *merariq* (elopement) in the Sasak community tradition still plays a central role as an integral part of the traditional marriage process. This phenomenon often creates a situation where the families of both parties feel a moral obligation to formalize the marriage immediately after the elopement, without considering the biological age or mental readiness of the couple. This social dynamic shows how the pressure to maintain family dignity and meet community expectations often takes precedence over the long-term psychological well-being and personal development of children.²⁷

Economic factors play a crucial role in the phenomenon of early marriage among the Sasak community. For many families, marrying off their daughters at a young age is seen as a strategy to relieve financial dependents while providing a guarantee of a more stable life. This practice is often justified as a wise step to overcome economic challenges, such as the high cost of education, as well as a preventive effort to avoid potential social problems such as extramarital relationships or unplanned pregnancies. In this perspective, early marriage emerges as a concrete solution that is considered capable of answering various economic and social problems at once.²⁸

In recent developments, there have been systematic efforts from various stakeholders, including local governments and NGOs, to deconstruct these traditional norms. One concrete example is the initiative promoted by the Chairperson of the Central Lombok TP PKK, Baiq Nurul Aini Pathul Bahri, who actively promotes the ideal marriage age standard, which is a minimum of 21 years for women and 25 years for men. This advocacy is in line with the national stunting prevention program, while representing a social transformation effort that seeks to combine public health considerations with sustainable development values. This age is also seen as a point of biological, emotional, and economic maturity, capable of supporting a healthy and productive household life.²⁹

The Role of The Family in Encouraging Early Marriage

As the primary social institution, the family plays a determinant role in the decision-making process of children's lives, including in terms of marriage. In the context of the Central Lombok community, the collective family structure tends to place parents and senior

²⁶ Suhardi, "Legal Pluralism and Cultural Legitimacy." 540-541.

²⁷ Lina Fitriani et al., Faktor Penyebab Pernikahan Dini dan Dampaknya terhadap Masyarakat di Desa Pengenjek Kec. Jonggat. Kab. Lombok Tengah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Multidisipliner*, 7 (12), 35, 2024.

²⁸ Wahyuningtyas, Indah Noviani, and Vannesa Almayra Nugroho, The Phenomenon of Child Marriage in Jepara and Its Prevention Strategies. *Kartini: Journal of Gender and Social Inclusion Studies*, 1 (1), 9, 2023.

²⁹ Pemerintah Kabupaten Lombok Tengah, Istri Bupati dan Istri Wakil Bupati Lombok Tengah Sosialisasi Bahaya Pernikahan Dini. 2023. Diakses tanggal 14 Juli 2025 dari <https://lomboktengahkab.go.id/berita/istri-bupati-dan-istri-wakil-bupati-lombok-tengah-sosialisasi-bahaya-pernikahan-dini>.

family members as the main actors who influence, and in many cases determine, the timing and marriage partners of children. This phenomenon indicates that marriage is not solely understood as an individual choice, but rather as a collective decision involving multi-generational considerations.³⁰

Family intervention in early marriage practices in this region is driven by a complexity of structural and cultural factors that intersect. Structurally, economic pressures and limited access to education often encourage families to view marriage as a pragmatic solution. Culturally, customary values such as *merariq* and religious views that emphasize the importance of early marriage to maintain morality also strengthen the legitimacy of this practice. These two factors create a social mechanism where families feel obliged to regulate children's married lives, often to the exclusion of individual psychological readiness.

This reality reveals that early marriage in Central Lombok is essentially a product of social construction formed through family consensus. The decision-making process not only involves the prospective bride and groom, but also takes into account considerations such as family reputation, customary obligations, and household economic stability. Therefore, early marriage reflects how social norms institutionalized in the family unit are able to overcome individual considerations, while reaffirming the central role of the family as the guardian of tradition and the determinant of the direction of its members' lives in Sasak society.

Economic Motivation

Economic conditions are the main driver of early marriage in Central Lombok. Poverty and limited access to education encourage parents to view child marriage as an economic solution, both to reduce the burden on the family by reducing dependents, and to gain economic benefits through dowries and financial support from the groom's family. This practice shows how economic pressures combined with cultural norms perpetuate early marriage as a problematic yet pragmatic survival strategy in Sasak society.³¹

In addition, marriage is considered a form of financial independence for children as well as a release of parental economic responsibility. Especially in the context of communities with limited access to formal employment, marriage is often perceived as the only way for girls to obtain a better economic status - a pseudo form of "empowerment". Ironically, this social construction is counterproductive, as the practice of early marriage actually cuts off access to education and limits opportunities to develop children's employability, thus prolonging a different form of economic dependency. This paradox reveals how economic

³⁰ Nurseha, and Wiwik Eko Pertiwi, Determinan Pernikahan Dini di Desa Semendaran Kota Cilegon. *Jurnal Kedokteran dan Kesehatan*, 15 (1), 32, 2019.

³¹ Rohana, Kartika Sri and Sainun, Pernikahan Dini dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam: Studi Kasus di Lombok. *Jurnal Intelektualita: Keislaman, Sosial dan Sains*, 13 (1), 126, 2024.

pressures and limited employment opportunities create a false social rationalization of what independence really means.³²

Honor Motivation and Social Control

In societies where moral values and the chastity of women are highly valued, the motivation to maintain family honor is a significant driver in the practice of early marriage. Virginity before marriage is not only seen as a personal attribute, but as a symbol of the dignity and reputation of the family as a whole. Concerns about the potential for social interactions that are considered deviant, including extramarital relationships, encourage parents to take preventive measures by marrying off girls as soon as they reach puberty. This practice is based on the belief that early marriage is an effective solution to avoid social disgrace, community gossip or stigma that could damage the family's social standing. Social pressure to maintain family values of purity and honor creates a strong social control mechanism, where the collective interests of the family often override considerations of the psychological development and reproductive rights of girls.³³

Concerns about rampant promiscuity, the risk of unauthorized pregnancies, and the negative impact of social media are driving many parents to hasten their children's marriages. This phenomenon often ignores the mental and emotional readiness of the prospective bride and groom, as the decision is based more on anxiety about the loss of parental control over their children's behavior and strong pressure from prevailing social norms in the community. In this context, early marriage is positioned as a form of family protection against perceived moral threats from the influence of modernization, although in practice it can create new problems for children's psychological development.³⁴

Cultural Motivation

In Central Lombok, local cultural values, particularly the *merariq* custom, are still the normative basis for marriage practices. *Merariq*, which is the practice of elopement as part of the Sasak traditional marriage system, is often interpreted as an expression of male courage and female readiness for marriage. In this context, families not only passively follow tradition, but also actively reproduce and internalize these values to the next generation. Some parents even encourage their children to follow in the same footsteps as they used to marry at a young age. This shows that families are not only recipients of cultural heritage, but also active agents in preserving and legitimizing early marriage as a legitimate and respectable social norm.

³² Afifah, Muru'atul and Amina, Implikasi Pernikahan Usia Remaja Terhadap Pola Asuh Anak dalam Keluarga. *Pedagogika: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Kependidikan*, 3 (1), 30, 2023.

³³ Qomariya, Ruwatul, and Moh Soleh, Analisis Faktor Penyebab dan Dampak Pernikahan Dini terhadap Anak di Bawah Umur. *Hukum Dinamika Ekselensia*, 6 (4), 338, 2024.

³⁴ Sevriana, Chennora Putri Elva, M Fashihullisan, and Heru Arif Pianto, Faktor-Faktor Penyebab Pernikahan Dini di Pacitan. *BAKSOOKA: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Sejarah, Sosial dan Budaya*, 2 (2), 181, 2023.

Patterns of Social Interaction in the Family and Community

Interactions between children, parents and the social environment in the context of early marriage are characterized by power relations that tend to be hierarchical. Children, especially girls, have a weak bargaining position in making decisions about their own bodies and futures. The decision to marry is often top-down, with parents acting as the full authority, with the justification that they "know best" for the child.³⁵ In some cases, children feel they have no choice but to comply with family decisions, due to psychological pressure, norms of conformity, and financial and emotional dependence on their parents. This interaction is reinforced by a social environment that tends to support the practice of early marriage through social and religious legitimization. Religious leaders, traditional leaders and neighbors are often not a counterweight, but instead part of a value system that condones and even encourages marriage at a young age.

Social Construction Analysis of Early Marriage

The phenomenon of early marriage in Central Lombok does not only occur spontaneously, but through a complex social process, which can be analyzed using the social construction perspective as formulated by Berger and Luckmann. This process includes three main stages: externalization, objectivation, and internalization. These three stages contribute to the perpetuation of the practice of early marriage as part of a commonly accepted social reality.

Externalization

Externalization is a fundamental mechanism in the process of individual adaptation to their social environment, where sociocultural aspects that are the result of human construction become the main frame of reference. This process is significant because it represents a critical moment when individuals interpret and internalize the values that develop in the surrounding society, thus forming a mindset and behavior that is in line with the prevailing norms. Through externalization, individuals not only adjust themselves, but also actively participate in reproducing the value system that exists in their social environment.³⁶

In the context of early marriage in Central Lombok, the family plays a role as the main agent that builds narratives to justify the decision to marry off children at a young age. Families often put forward pragmatic and normative reasons, such as economic reasons (reducing the family burden), maintaining honor (protecting girls from promiscuity), and continuing traditional traditions such as merariq. These narratives are not just logical reasons,

³⁵ Hanafi, Ika Putri, Hapsari Dwiningtyas, and Wiwid Noor Rakhmad, Memahami Narasi Perempuan yang Menikah Usia Dini. *Interaksi Online*, 11 (3), 3, 2023.

³⁶ Peter. L Berger & Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 68-70.

but are constructions of meaning that are produced and socialized within the family and community.

Families often put forward pragmatic and normative reasons, such as economic reasons (reducing the family burden), maintaining honor (protecting girls from promiscuity), and continuing traditional traditions such as merariq. These narratives are not just logical reasons, but are constructions of meaning that are produced and socialized within the family and community. For example, parents say that marrying off girls at a young age is a preventive measure to avoid the risk of pregnancy outside marriage and family disgrace. This narrative is then repeatedly conveyed in daily conversations, traditional rituals and religious teachings that reinforce the legitimacy of early marriage as the right and appropriate choice.

Objectivation

After the narratives about early marriage are externalized through various social actions and communication between individuals, the next process is objectivation. This stage is the moment when values, beliefs, and practices that were previously formed subjectively begin to be seen as something objective, real, and independent of the individual creator. In this context, the practice of early marriage begins to be considered part of the established social order, no longer just the result of personal views or decisions. It is widely accepted by society as something natural, commonplace, and even as if it were natural, thus forming what is referred to as a "common reality" that is difficult to question or change.³⁷

In Central Lombok, early marriage is considered normal and commonplace by the community. This is reflected in social attitudes that do not oppose and even support the implementation of child marriage. Early marriage is not only seen as a practical solution, but also as an established social reality that is difficult to change. This objectivation is reinforced by the legitimization of various social institutions, such as traditional leaders, religious leaders and local governments, which are sometimes less assertive in enforcing marriage age limits. As a result, this practice undergoes social normalization, where the general public accepts early marriage as part of a legitimate and natural way of life.

Internalization

The internalization process is a stage where each individual begins to identify himself with the surrounding sociocultural world. In this stage, individuals slowly absorb, understand, and integrate the values, norms, and beliefs that apply in the social environment in which they grow up. These values are not only cognitively understood, but also lived and used as guidelines in acting and thinking. Thus, individuals do not just live in a society, but become an integral part of the sociocultural order, because the values and norms that were originally external are now embedded in themselves as part of personal identity.³⁸

³⁷ Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 68-70.

³⁸ Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 68-70.

The internalization stage is a process in which individuals, including children who marry early, personally adopt and accept these objectified social values, norms and meanings. They view early marriage not only as a practice that is accepted by society, but also as a norm that must be carried out and respected. Children and adolescent girls in Central Lombok often grow up in a social environment that teaches that marrying young is normal, an obligation, or even a social achievement. In the process of socialization, they learn that early marriage is the right way to obtain social status, economic security, and family honor.

As a result, some girls accept and undergo early marriage without significant resistance, because this social construction has been deeply embedded in their identity and worldview. They internalize early marriage as part of their "destiny" or "way of life". Therefore, the social construction process of early marriage in Central Lombok shows how this practice is not only the result of static economic or cultural conditions, but the result of dynamic interactions between families and communities in building, legitimizing and accepting early marriage as a social norm. The expected social transformation requires interventions that target all three stages, with integrated strategies of education, empowerment and value reform.

From the above discussion, it appears that the practice of early marriage in Central Lombok is not an isolated phenomenon, but the result of a dialectic between the social structure of the family, local cultural values, and the weak internalization of state legal norms. On the one hand, the family plays a role as the main actor in the process of externalizing customary and religious values that support child marriage; on the other hand, formal legal norms often lose their binding power because they are not in harmony with the social realities that live in the community. This dialectic shows a battle of meanings between state laws that try to limit the age of marriage and social constructions that families have inherited for generations. Therefore, understanding the role of the family within the framework of social construction is an important key to formulating intervention strategies that are not only legal-formal, but also touch deeper cultural and structural aspects.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study in this article, it can be concluded that the practice of early marriage in Central Lombok is a product of social construction that involves the active role of the family as its main agent. Factors such as economic pressure, concerns over family honor, and preservation of local culture such as *merariq* are the main drivers of families in encouraging children to marry at a young age. Through the process of externalization, objectivation and internalization as described by Berger and Luckmann's theory, these values become social norms that are considered correct and difficult to challenge, even if they contradict national legal provisions.

This phenomenon shows the disharmony between legal norms and social norms, where state regulations regarding the minimum age of marriage are often ineffective in the face of the strong influence of cultural values mediated by the family. Therefore, the solution to the practice of early marriage is not enough with a normative legal approach, but must involve a socio-cultural approach that targets the transformation of values and structures in family institutions, so that legal norms can be accepted and internalized effectively by the community.

Based on the findings and analysis presented, this study suggests the need for an interdisciplinary approach in addressing the issue of early marriage, with the family as the central point of social intervention. Preventive efforts are not sufficient through law enforcement and minimum age regulations alone, but must be accompanied by educational strategies that target value transformation within the family environment, such as reproductive health counseling, gender education, and children's rights. In addition, economic empowerment programs for poor families need to be strengthened so that early marriage is no longer seen as a pragmatic solution to economic pressures. Furthermore, this study is a literature review, so the empirical evidence presented is still very limited. Therefore, recommendations for future research include conducting field research.

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