

## Original Research

### *Family Knowledge And Support Influencing Early Marriage*

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#### ABSTRACT

*Introduction: Early marriage is marriage under the age of <19 years, who are not mature enough to get married. Indonesia ranks 4th in the number of child marriage cases under the age of 19, with a 39,4% women married at that age. Purpose: This study aims to determine the factors that influence early marriage in Pondok Kelapa Village, Central Bengkulu Regency in 2025. Methods: This type of research is an analytical observational with a cross sectional approach. The sampling technique used total sampling with a total sample of 70 Fertile Age Couples and data collection using a questionnaire. The analysis was carried out using the Chi Square, and logistic regression tests. Result: The results of this study indicate that almost a portion (34.3%) of fertile age couples married at an early age, almost a portion (35.7%) of fertile age couples have low education, almost a portion (42.9%) of fertile age couples have insufficient knowledge, and almost a portion (30%) of fertile age couples have families that are less supportive. The results of statistical tests using the chi square test showed that there was a relationship between education ( $p=0.000$ ), knowledge ( $p=0.002$ ), and family support ( $p=0.018$ ) with early marriage. The results of multivariate analysis showed that the most dominant factor was education ( $B=41.000$ ). It is hoped that health workers will be able to work and collaborate across sectors with local community leaders in order to develop counseling and education programs about reproductive health for the community, especially teenagers.*

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#### Introduction

Marriage is a universal social institution, but in practice, there are variations in marriage age across countries, reflecting diverse social, economic, and cultural conditions. Data from Our World in Data shows that the percentage of women aged 15–49 who were married or cohabiting decreased from 69% to 64% in 2020 (Our World in Data, 2020). In the United States, approximately 133.1 million adults aged 15 and older were registered married in 2023, while in China, 6.84 million couples registered marriages in 2022, a 10.6% decrease compared to the previous year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023; Ministry of Civil Affairs of China, 2022).

The average age of marriage has also shifted, with European countries recording a marriage age of around 31.6 years, and Norway even reaching an average of 33 years. However, the situation in Indonesia is different. According to UNICEF data (2023), Indonesia ranks fourth in the world for child marriages under the age of 19, with a prevalence of 39.4% among women. Furthermore, data from the People's Welfare Indicator

shows that in 2024, 25.08% of Indonesian women married for the first time between the ages of 16 and 18, and 8.16% married between the ages of 10 and 15 (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, 2022). This situation indicates that early marriage remains a serious challenge at the national level. Although Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 16 of 2019 sets the minimum age for marriage at 19 for both men and women, the phenomenon of requests for child marriage dispensations remains high, with 55,000 cases recorded in 2022 (Law of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019; Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, 2023). Previous research has revealed that factors such as low education, limited knowledge, social pressure, and family support are the dominant causes of early marriage (Wulandari & Laksono, 2020; Pramitasari & Megatsari, 2022; Maharani & Zain, 2023).

Specifically, in Bengkulu Province, cases of early marriage are also relatively high. Data from the Bengkulu Province High Religious Court recorded 4,291 marriage dispensations in the past five years, with Central Bengkulu Regency ranking third highest (PTA Bengkulu, 2024). According to a report by the Central Bengkulu Regency Statistics Agency, Pondok Kelapa District was the area with the highest number of marriages in 2023, with 203 marriages, or 25.44% of the total marriages in the regency. Of these, Pondok Kelapa Village contributed 14.78%, the highest compared to other villages (BPS Central Bengkulu, 2023).

A preliminary survey conducted by researchers in Pondok Kelapa Village revealed a trend toward early marriage, driven by the interruption of education after graduation, a lack of understanding of the impact of early marriage, and family pressure to prevent children from becoming an economic burden (Primary Data, 2025). This phenomenon confirms that education, knowledge, and family support play a significant role in the decision to marry at an early age (Masyithah et al., 2021). This study aims to determine the factors influencing early marriage in Pondok Kelapa Village, Central Bengkulu Regency, in 2025, focusing on three main variables: education level, knowledge, and family support.

## Method

This study was a quantitative, observational, and analytical study using a cross-sectional approach. It was conducted in Pondok Kelapa Village, Central Bengkulu Regency, from May to June 2025. The population in this study was all couples of childbearing age (PUS) who married in 2024, totaling 70 people (35 couples), and the entire population was sampled using a total sampling technique.

Data collection techniques used a questionnaire that had been tested for validity and reliability, including: (1) respondent characteristics data, (2) a knowledge questionnaire on early marriage (16 multiple-choice questions), and (3) a family support questionnaire (with yes/no answers and percentage assessments). The independent variables in this study were education (categories: primary, secondary, tertiary), knowledge (categories: good if  $>50$ , poor if  $\leq 50$ ), and family support (categories: supportive if  $>50\%$ , not supportive if  $\leq 50\%$ ), while the dependent variable was early marriage (categories: yes if married  $<19$  years old, no if  $\geq 19$  years old).

The data were analyzed in three stages: univariate analysis to describe each variable, bivariate analysis using the Chi-Square test to examine the relationship between variables, and multivariate analysis using logistic regression to determine the most dominant factors influencing early marriage. The data analysis tool used was SPSS version 25.

## Results

The research results can be seen as follows:

**Tabel 1. Frequency Distribution of Education, Knowledge, Family Support and Marriage in Pondok Kelapa Village, Central Bengkulu Regency**

Variables	Frequency (n = 70)	Percentage (100%)
<b>Education</b>		
Primary	25	35,7%
Secondary	34	48,6%
Higher	11	15,7%
<b>Knowledge</b>		
Poor	30	42,9%
Good	40	57,1%
<b>Family Support</b>		
Supportive	49	70%
Not Supportive	21	30%
<b>Early Marriage</b>		
Early Marriage	24	34,3%
Not Early Marriage	46	65,7%

Source:

Based on Table 1, the results show that almost all (48.6%) have secondary education, most (57.1%) have good knowledge, most (70%) families still support, and most (65.7%) who do not marry at an early age <19 years.

**Table 2. Relationship between Education Variables and Early Marriage in Pondok Kelapa Village, Central Bengkulu Regency**

Variables	Early Marriage						<i>p-value</i>
	Yes		No		Total		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
<b>Education</b>							
Primary	20	80	5	20	25	100	0,000
Secondary	4	11,8	30	88,2	34	100	
Higher	0	0	11	100	11	100	

Based on Table 2, it was found that almost all (80%) of the PUS who married under the age of 19 years had primary education. The bivariate analysis results obtained  $p = 0.000$ , which means there is a relationship between education and early marriage in Pondok Kelapa Village, Central Bengkulu Regency.

**Table 3. Relationship between Knowledge and Early Marriage in Pondok Kelapa Village, Central Bengkulu Regency**

Variables	Early Marriage			<i>p-value</i>
	Y	No	T	
	e		ot	
	s		al	

	n	%	n	%	n	%	
<b>Knowledge</b>							
Poor	17	56,7	13	43,3	30	100	0,002
Good	7	17,5	33	82,5	40	100	

Based on Table 3, it was found that the majority of PUS who married under the age of 19 years (56.7%) had insufficient knowledge. The results of the bivariate analysis showed  $p = 0.002$ , which can be interpreted as indicating a relationship between knowledge and early marriage in Pondok Kelapa Village, Central Bengkulu Regency.

**Table 4. Relationship between Family Support and Early Marriage in Pondok Kelapa Village, Central Bengkulu Regency**

Variables	Early Marriage				Total		<i>p-value</i>
	Yes		No				
	n	%	n	%			
<b>Family Support</b>							
Supportive	12	24,4	37	75,6	49	100	0,018
Not Supportive	12	57,1	9	42,9	21	100	

Based on Table 4, it was found that a small proportion (24.4%) of those married under the age of 19 years had supportive family support. The bivariate analysis showed  $p = 0.018$ , indicating a relationship between family support and early marriage in Pondok Kelapa Village, Central Bengkulu Regency.

**Table 5. Results of the Analysis of the Most Dominant Factors Affecting Early Marriage in Pondok Kelapa Village, Central Bengkulu Regency**

Variables	B	S.E	Wald	df	P	Exp(B)
<b>Stage 1</b>						
Education	3.865	1.131	11.687	1	0.001	47.694
Knowledge	0.737	1.146	0.414	1	0.520	0.479
Family support	0.853	0.769	1.231	1	0.267	0.426
<b>Stage 2</b>						
Education	3.359	0.724	21.517	1	0.000	28.749
Family support	0.784	0.763	1.057	1	0.304	0.456
<b>Stage 3</b>						

Education	3.439	0.715	23.125	1	0.000	31.150
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Based on the results of the third stage of logistic regression analysis, it was found that the most influential (dominant) variable was education with a value of  $B = 31.150$ , which means that fertile age couples with basic education are at 31 times greater risk of marrying at an early age compared to fertile age couples with higher education.

## Discussion

Univariate analysis results indicate that almost all respondents had a secondary education. Bivariate analysis found that most women who married at an early age had a primary education, with a Chi-square test showing a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant relationship between education and early marriage. Education plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's mindset, awareness, and decision-making abilities, including planning for the future. Individuals with low levels of education tend to have limited access to information about the risks of early marriage, including the impact on reproductive health, school dropout, and economic constraints. Furthermore, as adolescents are still in the emotional and cognitive development stage, the lack of adequate education makes them more vulnerable to social and familial pressure to marry.

This finding aligns with various previous studies, including those from UNICEF (2020), the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA) (2021), the WHO (2021), and the UNFPA (2020), which state that low levels of education increase girls' vulnerability to early marriage due to weak bargaining power and a lack of knowledge about reproductive rights. Amin (2011) of the Population Council stated that education provides girls with broader aspirations and life goals, making marriage less of an option. Previous research by Pramitasari et al. (2022) and Handayani (2022) also showed a significant relationship between education level and early marriage.

The results of this study also found that most respondents had insufficient knowledge. Knowledge is a crucial cognitive aspect in decision-making, as explained by Notoatmodjo (2012) and Azwar (2015), who stated that a lack of knowledge will lead someone to act based on emotions, habits, or social pressure. Bivariate test results showed that the majority of fertile-age couples (PUS) who married early (56.7%) had low knowledge, with a significance value of  $p=0.002$ . This indicates a significant relationship between knowledge levels and early marriage in Pondok Kelapa Village.

This lack of knowledge leads many adolescents to lack understanding of the social, health, and economic impacts of early marriage. Therefore, education about marriage and reproductive health should be provided starting at the elementary or junior high school level, considering that many cases of early marriage occur before the age of 19. This is supported by research by Khodijah et al. (2024), which states that adolescents from environments with limited education are more likely to view early marriage as normal or a solution to social and economic problems.

Research by Andriani et al. (2024) shows that educational interventions can significantly improve adolescents' knowledge and attitudes toward early marriage, while Siregar et al. (2024) found that students with low knowledge are at greater risk of early marriage. Situmorang et al. (2025) also confirmed that low knowledge among mothers who married as teenagers correlates with reproductive health problems. Other studies by Safitri et al. (2023) and Pramitasari et al. (2022) also found a significant relationship between low knowledge and the likelihood of early marriage, reinforcing the finding that increasing knowledge is a strategic approach to reducing early marriage rates.

Table 4 shows that the majority of families (70%) support early marriage. This suggests that family support plays a significant role in the decision to marry at a young age. Family support, in this case, can take the form of approval, encouragement, or subtle pressure based on cultural, social, or economic reasons. Friedman (2013) states that family

support is a form of interpersonal care that can influence the decisions and psychological well-being of family members.

A chi-square test yielded a p-value of 0.018 ( $<0.05$ ), indicating a significant relationship between family support and early marriage. Many young people who marry early report not receiving advice or information regarding the reproductive health or socioeconomic risks of marriage. Lack of family education, particularly parental education, leads to early marriage decisions being driven more by anxiety, tradition, or social pressure than by rational considerations.

This research is supported by various previous studies. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (2022) emphasized the importance of the active role of families in preventing child marriage. UNICEF (2019) noted that in traditional societies, early marriage is often seen as an effort to maintain honor and reduce economic burdens. Wahyuni & Syafitri (2020) added that parental encouragement is the primary factor in the decision to marry early, rather than the child's own wishes.

Fitriani & Handayani (2022) revealed that parents in rural areas marry off their children due to fear of promiscuity. Yuliyanti et al. (2020) showed that a lack of family support increases the risk of early marriage due to weak communication and supervision. Conversely, Masyithah et al. (2021) found that protective family support (such as encouragement to continue school) can prevent early marriage. Pramitasari et al. (2022) also noted that family support has a significant negative influence on the practice of early marriage. Overall, inadequate family support is a major driving factor for early marriage, and therefore educational interventions must include the participation of parents and families in prevention efforts.

Multivariate analysis results indicate that of the three independent variables studied—education, knowledge, and family support—education is the most dominant factor influencing early marriage. Couples of childbearing age with low levels of education are 31 times more likely to marry young than those with higher education ( $B = 31.150$ ). This confirms that low levels of education significantly increase vulnerability to early marriage.

These findings suggest that prevention efforts should focus on improving access to and the quality of education, particularly for adolescents in rural areas. Furthermore, adequate knowledge and positive family support need to be strengthened to enable adolescents to make more informed and responsible decisions regarding marriage. The practical implication of this research is the importance of cross-sector collaboration—particularly between health workers and community leaders—in developing reproductive health education programs and outreach on the impacts of early marriage. This comprehensive approach is expected to create a healthier, more independent, and more planned young generation.

## Conclusion

Early marriage in Pondok Kelapa Village is significantly influenced by three main factors: education, knowledge, and family support, with education emerging as the most dominant factor ( $B = 31.150$ ). The majority of respondents had low educational attainment, insufficient knowledge, and family support that encouraged early marriage..

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