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Addressing Child Marriage in West Sulawesi: The Role of Islamic Institutions in Public Legal Awareness

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Abstract:

Child marriage remains a pressing issue in West Sulawesi, where its prevalence is notably high in Indonesia. This study aims to identify the root causes of child marriage and boost legal awareness through the role of Islamic institutions. We also seek to explore the relevance of contingency and power relation theories in understanding the factors contributing to child marriage. This study uses a juridical-sociological approach, integrating primary and secondary data sources. Data collection involved in-depth interviews with key informants, direct observation, and analysis of relevant documents. Two villages in Majene with the highest cases in West Sulawesi were selected. Data triangulation was employed to increase the validity and reliability of the findings. Our finding demonstrates that, based on contingency theory, the root causes of child marriage depend on stigmas rooted in parental attitudes, prevailing social norms, and individual characteristics. Understanding the driving causes of child marriage in West Sulawesi leads this study to propose a conceptual model for action. A wide range of root causes of child marriage calls for a power relation theory that links policy to its implementation. We advocate for collaborative initiatives through the introduction of village regulations and the involvement of Islamic institutions. To further explore this, we invoke the theory of power relations to enhance public awareness. It helps our scheme of collaborative initiatives for enforcing village regulations by connecting law to

social norms, enabling people in the village to respect and comply with the rules.

Keywords: child marriage; Islamic institutions; contingency theory; power relations; public legal awareness

Introduction

Child marriage remains an important issue in Indonesia.¹ The practice undermines children's reproductive health and educational opportunities. It is a significant obstacle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 3 on good health and well-being, and Goal 4 on quality education. In addressing this issue, all institutions must collaborate to enhance people's well-being to ensure a decent and healthy life by 2030. To prevent child marriage, community institutions, particularly Islamic religious organisations, play an important role in fostering legal awareness among the community. The relationship between community legal awareness and the effectiveness of collaborative efforts of Islamic institutions in reducing child marriage is complex, thereby demanding a deep understanding of the legal framework and cultural context. This study highlights the complexities of child marriage, influenced by cultural norms, economic conditions, and religious interpretations.

Child marriage in Indonesia, defined as marrying before the age of 18, remains a significant challenge with a high prevalence.² Approximately 10.5% of marriages each year involve minors, making Indonesia one of the countries with the highest rates of child marriage worldwide. Indonesia has the highest incidence of child marriage in the ASEAN region, as reported in UNICEF data from 2023, ranking fourth in the world with an estimated 25.53 million married girls.³ The regions with the recorded highest child marriage cases in 2023 are West Sulawesi, West Nusa Tenggara, Central Kalimantan, West Kalimantan, and Sulawesi Tengah.⁴ West Sulawesi has the highest child marriage rate in Indonesia, with Majene as the first-

¹ Muhammad Ishom, 'The Loose Interpretation of Dominus Litis Principle in Marriage Dispensation for Underage Marriage in Banten', *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 23, no. 2 (30 December 2023), <https://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/ahkam/article/view/29881>; Ali Imron et al., 'Baby Engagement within the Traditional Ulama of the Madurese Ethnicity: A Maṣlaḥa Analysis', *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan* 23, no. 2 (2023): 261–80, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijtihad.v23i2.261-280>; Rahmi Hidayati et al., 'Dynamics of Child Marriage in Suku Anak Dalam Community', *Justicia Islamica* 20, no. 2 (30 October 2023): 261–80, <https://doi.org/10.21154/justicia.v20i2.5975>.

² Anissa Rizkianti and Diah and Puspita Sari, 'Child Marriage and Its Impact on Reproductive Health and Rights of Girls in Indonesia', *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies* 20, no. 1 (2 January 2025): 35–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450128.2024.2361921>; Muhammad Fauzinudin Faiz, Zezen Zainul Ali, and Muhammad Taufiq, 'Underage Widows and Widowers before the Law: Problem, Contestation and Legal Certainty in Marriage Dispensation', *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 22, no. 2 (15 December 2023): 223–34, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v22i2.9097>.

³ Yoesep Budianto, 'Tingginya Angka Perkawinan Usia Anak di Indonesia', *kompas.id*, 8 March 2024, <https://www.kompas.id/baca/riset/2024/03/08/tingginya-angka-perkawinan-usia-anak-di-indonesia>.

⁴ Bestha Inatsan Ashila, 'Mendorong Peran Hakim Dalam Mencegah Perkawinan Anak', *IJRS (blog)*, 29 November 2023, <https://ijrs.or.id/2023/11/30/mendorong-peran-hakim-dalam-mencegah-perkawinan-anak-2/>.



ranked district.⁵ This phenomenon is alarming and needs scrutiny. Early marriage poses numerous risks for children. For instance, girls who marry before the age of 18 are four times more likely than other girls to fail to complete secondary education. Young women are particularly vulnerable to domestic violence and divorce.⁶ Thus, West Sulawesi has the highest rate of child marriage in Indonesia, with Majene emerging as the district with the highest cases. This alarming trend creates significant social and cultural challenges and drives the urgent need for interventions and education to protect vulnerable children from the harmful consequences of early marriage. This situation serves as a primary motivation for the significance of this study, which aims to highlight the widespread presence and impact of child marriage in Majene.

No previous studies have focused on the identification of the framework of the theory to explain the root causes of child marriage and the enforcement of public awareness. The existing studies are customary, examining child marriage from a legal perspective, like the one conducted by Ewa Batyra and Luca Maria Pesando.⁷ Furthermore, Tamara McGavock only investigates the effect of child marriage in her study,⁸ while Negar Omidakhsh and Jody Heymann focus on the relationship between child marriage and attitudes.⁹ Therefore, we offer the tenet of legal awareness, which should be elaborated in the case of child marriage. This certainly implies that legal awareness leads individuals to better awareness of the applicable law in relation to child marriage, including the law of marriage that is legally accepted in a country.

Raising legal awareness among parents and communities is essential to effectively combat child marriage and safeguard children's rights and development.¹⁰ Poor awareness of risks and consequences due to child marriage has been perceived as findings.¹¹ Making individuals aware of the consequences of early child marriage

⁵ Redaksi Sulbarexpress, 'Angka Pernikahan Anak di Sulbar Tertinggi di Indonesia', *Sulbar Express* (blog), 15 February 2023, <https://sulbarexpress.fajar.co.id/2023/02/15/angka-pernikahan-anak-di-sulbar-tertinggi-di-indonesia/>.

⁶ Risha Singh, Srinivas Goli, and Abhra Singh, 'Armed Conflicts and Girl Child Marriages: A Global Evidence', *Children and Youth Services Review* 137 (2022): 106458, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chidyouth.2022.106458>.

⁷ Ewa Batyra and Luca Maria Pesando, 'Trends in Child Marriage and New Evidence on the Selective Impact of Changes in Age-at-Marriage Laws on Early Marriage', *SSM - Population Health* 14 (2021): 100811, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2021.100811>.

⁸ Tamara McGavock, 'Here Waits the Bride? The Effect of Ethiopia's Child Marriage Law', *Journal of Development Economics* 149 (2021): 102580, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2020.102580>.

⁹ Negar Omidakhsh and Jody Heymann, 'Improved Child Marriage Laws and Its Association with Changing Attitudes and Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence: A Comparative Multi-National Study.', *Journal of Global Health* 10, no. 1 (June 2020): 10707, <https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.10.010707>; Binu V.S. et al., 'Direct and Indirect Factors Associated with Child Marriage: Evidence from India Using NFHS-4 Data', *Child Abuse & Neglect* 131 (2022): 105785, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2022.105785>.

¹⁰ Sayyid Jamaluddin and Muhammad Andri, 'Pencegahan Perkawinan Di Usia Muda Di Kabupaten Jombang', *Justicia Journal* 12, no. 2 (2023): 240–58, <https://doi.org/10.32492/jj.v12i2.12207>.

¹¹ Negin Najjarnejad and Nicole Bromfield, 'Professional Stakeholders' Perceptions of Child Marriage in Lebanon among Syrian Refugees', *Children and Youth Services Review* 140 (2022): 106592, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chidyouth.2022.106592>.



can help influence the choices they make, and parents' concerns about their daughters' future should be addressed in social policy.¹²

Thus far, some existing studies have discussed the awareness of the law; however, they only find out why underage people would like to get married and whether they are aware of the applied law. As a result of this query, many people only have a little understanding of underage marriage, particularly when it comes to the legal age limit.¹³ In this study, we aim to scrutinise the drivers of child marriage deeply and how Islamic institutions can be integrated to fight against the increase of child marriage in Majene, recognised as a district with the highest level of underage marriage in Indonesia. The majority of underage marriages in West Sulawesi involve Muslim children, which highlights the need for these institutions to ensure that children and parents have an understanding. Their efforts are essential for making it easier for them to adhere to compliance, making the role of Islamic schools, agency and community, including Islamic University, Madrasah, Islamic boarding schools, National Amil Zakat Agency, Mosque, and Islamic-based foundation mandatory.

Al-Ghazali and Samuri highlight the detrimental effects of child marriage and advocate for legal reforms in line with international conventions such as CEDAW and CRC to protect children's rights and empower women through an Islamic perspective.¹⁴ Natsif explores the conflict between Islamic law and statutory law regarding the legal age of marriage, emphasising the psychological and social consequences of child marriage.¹⁵ Subsequently, Naimah et.al imply cultural traditions and economic pressures as the main factors that encourage underage marriage.¹⁶ At the same time, Humaeroh et al. emphasise the importance of legal awareness in society, proposing that a stable legal attitude can help reduce child marriage by promoting a better understanding of legal rights and responsibilities.¹⁷ Cultural norms are often prioritised over legal provisions, resulting in inconsistent enforcement of marriage age laws. Samsidar et al. advocate for a holistic approach that involves all relevant parties in addressing this issue.¹⁸ Collectively, these studies

¹² Zahra Mirzaee et al., 'Stakeholders' Perspectives on Girls' Early Marriage in Maneh and Samalqan, Iran', *Children and Youth Services Review* 122 (2021): 105900, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105900>.

¹³ Rian Rosita Sulaeman, 'Hak Pendidikan Anak Dan Kesadaran Hukum Masyarakat Mengenai Larangan Pernikahan Di Bawah Umur', *DIKTUM: Jurnal Syariah Dan Hukum* 17, no. 2 (2019): 211–22, <https://doi.org/10.35905/diktum.v17i2.814>; Sahrul Ramadan, 'Kesadaran Hukum Terhadap Larangan Pernikahan Dini', *Jurnal El-Thawalib* 3, no. 2 (2022): 262–74, <https://doi.org/10.24952/el-thawalib.v3i2.5297>.

¹⁴ Muhammad Al-Ghazalli Abdol Malek and Mohd Al Adib Samuri, 'Impak Perkahwinan Kanak-Kanak Terhadap Pemberdayaan Wanita Dan Pendekatan Islam Dalam Menanganinya', *Abqari Journal* 27 (29 September 2022): 46–67, <https://doi.org/10.33102/abqari.vol27no1.520>.

¹⁵ Fadli Andi Natsif, 'Problematika Perkawinan Anak (Perspektif Hukum Islam Dan Hukum Positif)', *Jurnal Al-Qadau: Peradilan Dan Hukum Keluarga Islam* 5, no. 2 (2018): 175–86.

¹⁶ Farida Ulvi Naimah et al., 'Internalization of Local Traditions in Child Marriage from the Perspective of Maqasid Al-Usrah', *El-Mashlahah* 14, no. 2 (14 October 2024): 237–58, <https://doi.org/10.23971/el-mashlahah.v14i2.7942>.

¹⁷ Humaeroh, Zakaria Syafei, and Nurul Ma'rifah, 'Formulation of Underage Marriage in The Perspective of Islamic Law and Legal Sociology', *KRTHA BHAYANGKARA* 17, no. 3 (2023): 673–86, <https://doi.org/10.31599/krtha.v17i3.795>.

¹⁸ Samsidar S, Misbahuddin Misbahuddin, and Kurniati Kurniati, 'Hukum Privat Islam Terhadap Pernikahan Dini Perspektif Sosial Budaya', *AL-SYAKHSHIYYAH Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam Dan Kemanusiaan* 6, no. 2 (26 December 2024): 272–91, <https://doi.org/10.30863/as-hki.v6i2.7715>.



suggest that increasing public legal awareness and encouraging collaboration between Islamic institutions are important for addressing child marriage. However, this requires a comprehensive strategy integrating legal, cultural, and educational interventions.

In the context of the role of institutions, developing legal awareness requires the education of young people.¹⁹ The institutions play a vital role in producing quality people and fulfilling their social responsibility to empower communities through education and outreach programs.²⁰ Spiritual awareness is cultivated to encourage them to be more law-abiding. This forward-thinking approach integrates academic knowledge with practical application, ensuring that theory aligns seamlessly with real-life situations.²¹ Educational institutions can play a vital role in promoting legal awareness and advancing social progress by aligning with the principles of social responsibility and the SDGs, while leveraging community networks and media platforms to disseminate information on child protection laws and raise public awareness about the importance of children's education and health.²²

By leveraging existing platforms, they can engage students in community service programs, such as addressing the issue of child marriage, through independent campus initiatives.²³ Such initiatives align with the evolving landscape of educating students, while research that sheds light on important social issues, such as child marriage, can be conducted. By utilising methodologies such as community-based participatory research, colleges can collect accurate data on the causal factors and impacts of child marriage within local communities.²⁴ This data can then be used to design more effective intervention programs aimed at combating child marriage

¹⁹ Ida Ayu Ketut Artami et al., 'The Awareness of Millennial Generation Towards Halal-Certified Products: An Empirical Study Potentially Influencing Policy-Making', *Jurnal IUS Kajian Hukum Dan Keadilan* 11, no. 2 (24 August 2023): 314–32, <https://doi.org/10.29303/ius.v11i2.1258>; Guo Xinghua, 'Why Do We Obey the Law? A Comparative Study of Legal Awareness Among U.S. and Chinese Citizens', *Chinese Sociology & Anthropology*, 1 December 2008, <https://doi.org/10.2753/CSA0009-4625410201>; Rustam Z. Abdulgaziev et al., 'Problems of the Formation of Legal Awareness of Youth in the Process of Digitalization in Russian Education', in *Economic Issues of Social Entrepreneurship*, ed. Elena G. Popkova and Bruno S. Sergi (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021), 469–79, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77291-8_43.

²⁰ Yanjun Luo, 'Research on the Cultivation Strategies of College Students' Legal Awareness', *International Journal of Education and Humanities* 5, no. 2 (2022): 84–86, <https://doi.org/10.54097/ijeh.v5i2.2112>.

²¹ Haochuan Wang, 'Research on the Quality Improvement Mode of Practical Education in Colleges', *The Educational Review, USA* 7, no. 8 (2023): 1189–92, <https://doi.org/10.26855/er.2023.08.027>.

²² Chih-Ling Huang, 'Innovative Community Care and the Sustainable Development of University Social Responsibility in the Post-Pandemic Era', *Hu Li Za Zhi The Journal of Nursing* 69, no. 3 (June 2022): 4–6, [https://doi.org/10.6224/JN.202206_69\(3\).01](https://doi.org/10.6224/JN.202206_69(3).01); Harika Suklun and Elif Bengü, 'Raising Awareness of Sustainable Development Goals in Higher Education Institutions', *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership* 9, no. 1 (30 March 2024): 39–72, <https://doi.org/10.30828/real.1357661>.

²³ Ke Wang, 'Design of College Community Management and Service System Founded on Particle Swarm Optimization Arithmetic in Cloud Platform', in *2023 3rd International Conference on Mobile Networks and Wireless Communications (ICMNWC)*, 2023, 1–4, <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICMNWC60182.2023.10435730>.

²⁴ Makenzie L Barr and Jade McNamara, 'Community-Based Participatory Research: Partnering with College Students to Develop a Tailored, Wellness-Focused Intervention for University Campuses', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 23 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192316331>.



and supporting those affected by it. In addition, various stakeholders can serve as valuable reference material for policymakers, assisting them in creating regulations more aligned with the community's actual needs. Islamic institutions can significantly address this critical issue through collaborative initiatives and drive positive societal change.

This backdrop indicates that there is novelty in our research to propose village regulation in increasing the legal awareness of the community not to enter into child marriage. Our study aims to identify the driving factors of child marriage and give a clear explanation of legal awareness efforts made by Islamic Institutions to discourage adolescents from marrying before reaching their legal age limit. A sustainable and collaborative approach between the village and Islamic institutions can foster positive changes in accelerating the elimination of the practice of child marriage. Increased legal awareness will pave the way for the younger generation to get a better education, thus contributing to sustainable social and economic development. Therefore, it is important for all parties, especially Islamic institutions, to participate in this endeavour to create a better future for children.

We argue that the fights against child marriage encompass a range of measures, involving the enforcement of legislation, the implementation of educational initiatives, and public awareness campaigns. These strategies are designed to safeguard children's rights and promote gender equality.²⁵ Addressing this issue is of paramount importance for the well-being and prospects of the nation, particularly for girls who are affected by early marriage. Therefore, this study can contribute to the advancement of SDGs in relation to indicator 3 through a healthy life and the welfare of the community. It also provides contributions to the evolving literature on contingency theory in elaborating on the driving factors of flourishing child marriage and offers the framework of power relation theory in modelling public law awareness. We propose a scheme not used in prior studies, and this scheme leads to the comprehension of a model and offers propositions that can guide new studies, considering new insights that may occur from the context scrutinised.

Methods

An empirical juridical method was used in this study to obtain clarity and understanding based on cases that occurred in the field.²⁶ It refers to an investigative strategy that focuses on the implementation of the applicable laws and regulations in society. From an empirical juridical point of view, the empirical aspect focuses on looking into the understanding, response and implementation of these legal provisions among the people. In the context of the juridical-empirical method, we adopt a descriptive-interpretative approach, a qualitative strategy focused on understanding the meanings given by social actors to the practice of child marriage. The interpretative approach was used to analyzed and interpret empirical data collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). This approach strengthens the empirical juridical framework by providing contextual

²⁵ Shella Oetharry Gunawan and Syamsul Bahri, 'Impacts of Early Childhood Marriage in Indonesia Viewed from Child Protection Laws Perspectives', *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 6, no. 2 (2023): 362–80, <https://doi.org/10.22373/ujhk.v6i2.20262>.

²⁶ Rohmah Maulidia, Khusniati Rofi'ah, and Lukman Santoso, 'Halal Regulation and Certification in the Catering Business: A Critical Review of Consumer Protection', *Jurisdictie: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syariah* 15, no. 1 (9 July 2024): 171–206, <https://doi.org/10.18860/j.v15i1.26988>.



insights into how the law is applied in everyday life, particularly with regard to child marriage. This allows for a deeper understanding of the theoretical framework in its social context, particularly by using contingency theory and power relation theory, to provide an overview of the social aspects of child marriage and legal awareness within the local community.

Interpretative data were collected throughout 2023, and we focused on exploring the marital process and livelihoods in depth. This study was conducted in West Sulawesi, located in Majene, with two villages, including Bonde Utara and Pamboborang. These sites were selected using the baseline data from the local government to identify enumeration villages with a high proportion of underage couples. According to the law, early marriage is defined as occurring before the age of 19. Therefore, any marriage involving individuals younger than this is considered an early marriage. As stated by the secretary of West Sulawesi province, the average age for marriage is between 12 and 18 years old. The active engagement of the district government to take this matter seriously is necessary.²⁷ We recruited 20 couples who had married underage to obtain data collected through Focus Group Discussion (FGD). In-depth interviews with adolescent couples and key informants, including village government officials, religious affairs officers, and academicians, were conducted to comprehend couples' perspectives. Each FGD session involved a note-taker and was audio-recorded for careful transcription. To ensure a uniform flow of conversation in each discussion, the moderator is provided with a structured guide. The questions posed by the moderator of FGD focused on a few key areas, including the motivations for marriage, the role of parental involvement, the experiences of couples who married early, and their expectations of support from the village government, religious organisations and educational institutions.

We utilised criterion sampling of couples according to marital status²⁸ and used the term *marriage* to refer to an officially accepted union. Based on Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law No. 1 of 1974 regarding Marriage, the minimum age for marriage is 19 years old.²⁹ The sample size was relatively small but considered sufficient based on the principle of data saturation in qualitative research, which makes it possible to identify social patterns, norms and motivations associated with early marriage. In the process, contingency and power relation theories were employed as the foundation to bridge empirical data with more comprehensive phenomena, which is the core of this study.

We would allow respondents to interpret what they consider marriage to be. FGDs and in-depth interviews were open-ended formats encouraging a free flow of perceptions from each respondent, and questions on marriage and the marital process were categorised. Data were recorded and transcribed from the local language into

²⁷ Sulbarexpress, 'Angka Pernikahan Anak Di Sulbar Tertinggi Di Indonesia', 15 February 2023.

²⁸ Jane Ritchie et al., *Qualitative Research Practice*, Second Edi (SAGE Publications Ltd, 2013).

²⁹ Gandi Liyorba Indra, M. Yasin Al Arif, and Abdul Qodir Zaelani, 'The Ideal Age For Marriage in The Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) and Psychology', *Al-'Adalah* 20, no. 1 (20 June 2023): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.24042/adalah.v20i1.11598>; Zaitun Abdullah and Putri Ayu Maharani, 'Unveiling the Enigma: Exploring Regulated Marriage Age Limits from the Lens of Maslahah Mursalah', *Nurani: Jurnal Kajian Syari'ah Dan Masyarakat* 24, no. 1 (26 June 2024): 119–38, <https://doi.org/10.19109/nurani.v24i1.22370>; Iwan et al., 'Reconceptualizing the Marriage Age Limit in Indonesia: Efforts to Strengthen Family Resilience in North Sumatra', *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam*, 28 June 2024, 161–78, <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v18i1.11090>.



Indonesian for analysis before being further translated into English. Data reduction and verification were undertaken to present the findings on child marriage. Data triangulation was applied to validate the finding.³⁰ Through a careful process of categorisation and data summary, irrelevant information was filtered out, allowing for focused analysis. In addition, cross-checking data from multiple informant sources ensured a more comprehensive and accurate representation of the patterns and themes underlying child marriage.

Results and Discussion

Drivers of Child Marriage from a Contingency Theory Perspective

In legal FGDs for child marriage perpetrators, we discovered that parents' willingness, viewed as customs, is the primary reason for such marriages. They believe marriage is permissible once a child can financially support themselves, disregarding age limits. In other words, they do not care about the age limit of marriage as stated by IH, serving as the village head of Bonde Utara,

“When they are able to earn a living as fishermen in Bonde Utara village, they already consider themselves or their children to be able to live independently and support a family”.

Early marriages, common in Bonde Utara Village, follow customs from parents who have successfully married and raised children, where it is customary for people in their village to marry off their children after they can make a living, and religion allows it. For parents in Bonde Utara, going to school is not important. They think their children can live independently and support a family without formal education.

Identifying the reasons for delaying marriage and acting on them can be challenging, especially in environments with limited information about the consequences of child marriage and few alternative pathways.³¹ Informants argue that opposing child marriage also challenges the belief, as it is simply a social tradition embedded in the patriarchal values of Majene society. Therefore, resisting child marriage entails confronting these deeply held beliefs. Besides, Parents interfere in their children's decision-making.³² Adolescents gain understanding through strategic life choices, but the ability to make these choices depends on their agency.³³ Parents play a key role in their children's marriage, as parents are regarded as the

³⁰ Bojana Lobe, David Morgan, and Kim A. Hoffman, 'Qualitative Data Collection in an Era of Social Distancing', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 19 (2020): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920937875>; Lexy J. Moleong, 'Moleong, " Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif Edisi Revisi". Bandung : Remaja Rosdakarya.', *PT. Remaja Rosda Karya*, 2019.

³¹ Aprilia Hening Puspitasari and Widodo Muktiyo, 'Family Relational on Girl Child Marriage Decision: A Study of Communication and Conformity Orientation in Tegaldowo Village, Rembang Regency BT - Proceedings of the International Conference of Communication Science Research (ICCSR 2018)', in *Proceedings of the International Conference of Communication Science Research (ICCSR)* (Atlantis Press, 2018), 326–29, <https://doi.org/10.2991/iccsr-18.2018.72>.

³² João F Guassi Moreira et al., 'Parents Versus Peers: Assessing the Impact of Social Agents on Decision Making in Young Adults', *Psychological Science* 29, no. 9 (8 August 2018): 1526–39, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797618778497>.

³³ Naila Kabeer, 'Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment', *Development and Change* 30, no. 3 (1999): 435–64, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00125>.



primary change agents.³⁴ In West Sulawesi, girls have little control over marriage decisions, as community cultural factors significantly influence these choices. Furthermore, such control may take away the freedom to choose to postpone marriage from children.

Other results found in Pamboborang village are that child marriage occurs due to economic motives and the promiscuity factor. These are core drivers for parents having girls. Many children under the age of 19 who are not economically sufficient to continue their education are married off by their parents, and poverty plays a crucial role in early marriage.³⁵ In times of economic hardship, a family might be forced to marry a daughter at a young age to help reduce economic strain, secure financial assistance, and ensure the daughter's safety. This relationship highlights how economic hardship can limit choices and lead to decisions that affect children's futures. In terms of the promiscuity factor, parents choose to marry off their children immediately after discovering that their daughters are pregnant or have engaged in sexual intercourse, regardless of whether they are expecting. In other words, the motive of juvenile delinquency is closely linked to promiscuity, leading to out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with many parents preferring to marry off their underage children to avoid the stigma associated with out-of-wedlock births.

It claims that the environment surrounding an organisation shapes the most effective way to structure itself. The basic assertion of contingency theory is that the environment in which an organisation operates determines the best way for it to organise.³⁶ In the domain of sociology, it emphasises that individuals' actions and choices are shaped by the particular circumstances in which they find themselves.³⁷ In this way, we thus assert that contingency theory serves as a theoretical lens for understanding factors of child marriage. We conclude from child marriage in West Sulawesi, located in Majene, that its drivers are contingent upon various factors derived from stigmas built by parents and the local public due to cultural norms and individual characteristics. We designate contingency theory to underpin the underlying factors. Cases of marriage in Bonde Utara and Pamboborang are stigmatised around independence factors for boys and economic motives within the social norms, while the rest is based on individual characteristics regarding promiscuity stigma. These issues lead parents to marry off their children immediately. The contingency theory, also referred to as the theory of *situationalism*,

³⁴ Claudia A Johnson and Roger C Katz, 'Using Parents as Change Agents for Their Children: A Review', *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 14, no. 3 (1 September 1973): 181–200, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.1973.tb01186.x>.

³⁵ Mozghan Asnaashary et al., 'Economic Determinants of Child Marriage: Evidence from the Iranian Provinces', *Children and Youth Services Review* 159 (2024): 107518, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.107518>.

³⁶ W.R Scott, *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*, Englewood Cliffs, vol. 29 (NJ: PrenticeHall, 1992), <https://doi.org/10.2307/257765>.

³⁷ Edwards, 'Understanding Contingency Theory in Sociology', 2024.



is used in management;³⁸ however, it has been extensively employed in numerous disciplines, including psychology and sociology.³⁹

Raising Public Legal Awareness through Village Regulation under the Tenet of Power Relation Theory

Child marriage will persist, shaped by the circumstances of both parents and individuals. This is then influenced by situational social norms and individual characteristics. Boys are often seen as ready for marriage due to societal expectations of finding a life partner, while girls are frequently married off by their parents as a response to economic pressures. These attitudes are further reinforced by customary codes of behaviour regarded as normative within specific communities in West Sulawesi. Moreover, the urgency surrounding child marriage is intensified by fears of promiscuity, compelling parents to arrange marriages for their children as soon as they become pregnant or engage in sexual relations. Inadequate parenting and a lack of parental care contribute to the promiscuity that leads to early marriage in the village. These root causes of child marriage trigger parents to propose marriage dispensation that serves as a solution for prospective brides and grooms who have not reached the minimum age for marriage.⁴⁰ The dispensation is submitted to the religious court for emergency reasons and must be accompanied by supporting documents.⁴¹ When all dispensation applications are granted, efforts to prevent child marriage may be undermined, even though the original aim of raising the minimum age of marriage was to reduce the number of child marriages.⁴² However, most child marriages, in this context, are unregistered because the community and parents perceive the official process as lengthy and burdensome. To avoid what they consider complicated court procedures, they often choose not to register their children's marriages in the court.

³⁸ Mislav Ante Omazić, Davor Labaš, and Patricia Uroić, 'Contingency Theory', in *Encyclopedia of Sustainable Management*, ed. Samuel Idowu et al. (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 1–9, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-02006-4_1098-1.

³⁹ Babak Abedin, 'Managing the Tension between Opposing Effects of Explainability of Artificial Intelligence: A Contingency Theory Perspective', *Internet Research* 32, no. 2 (2022): 425–53, <https://doi.org/10.1108/INTR-05-2020-0300>.

⁴⁰ Muhamad Hasan Sebyar, 'Harmonization of Islamic Legal Institutions and Customary Law in Marriage Dispensation Cases at the Panyabungan Religious Court', *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 2, no. 2 (12 November 2023): 155–74, <https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v2i2.7809>; Yasin Yetta, Ahmad Rajafi, and Syahrul Mubarak Subaitan, 'Understanding the Implications of Marriage Law Amendments: Marriage Dispensation Cases in Indonesian Religious Courts', *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 9, no. 1 (30 May 2024): 121, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v9i1.8979>.

⁴¹ Ashabul Fadhli et al., 'Out-of-Court Assistance Based on the Principle of the Best Interests of the Child: Study on Examination Process of Marriage Dispensation Cases', *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 23, no. 1 (14 June 2024): 67–80, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v23i1.10281>.

⁴² Lilik Andar Yuni, 'Analysis of The Emergency Reasons in The Application of Marriage Dispensation at The Tenggara Religious Court', *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 5, no. 2 (26 December 2021): 976, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v5i2.9135>; Taufiqur Rohman et al., 'Preventing Violations of Religious and Social Norms: Judicial Interpretation of "Urgent Reasons" in Marriage Dispensation at the Wonosari Religious Court, Indonesia', *Journal of Islamic Law* 4, no. 2 (30 August 2023): 218–36, <https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v4i2.1535>; Syahrudin Hidayat, Abdul Ghofur, and Ummul Baroroh, 'The Norm of Marriage Age Limit and Cultural Contestation of Child Marriage Law in Rural Communities', *Jurnal Hukum Islam* 21, no. 1 (10 June 2023): 55–82, https://doi.org/10.28918/jhi_v21i1_03.



The comprehension of social structure found in Majene encourages this study to propose a conceptual model from idea to action. The diverse potential situations necessitate contingency theory that connects policy to implementation. A conceptual model is required to embrace this diversity and acknowledge that policy or program implementation failures are not an aberration.⁴³ As a result, we propose collaborative initiatives with the unified role of Islamic institutions through village regulation. To elaborate on this, we call for the theory of power relations. The practice of child marriage in Majene of West Sulawesi is shaped by a complex interplay of cultural norms and the unique characteristics of the children themselves, which are in turn influenced by a range of reasons, including parental decision-making and power dynamics. Parents frequently act as the primary decision-makers, exerting control over their children's lives with regard to marriage. The concept of power relations implies the influence of knowledge and power on individuals, particularly in decision-making.⁴⁴ We demonstrate power relations through the theoretical lens of Foucault, who posits that power is not a centralised entity but a complex network. This perspective enables us to comprehend the dynamics of parent-child relationships. In this context, power is not merely repressive but also productive, shaping knowledge and subjectivity through everyday interactions.

The concept of power relations suggests that knowledge and power significantly influence an individual's decision-making processes. The government exerts its power through the law, and its implementers conduct counselling to raise awareness of established laws. Similarly, parents exercise power by educating and controlling their children, which aligns with Foucault's notion that power is relational and pervasive, operating through various social spaces.⁴⁵ This dynamic becomes more comprehensible when all parties endeavour to collaborate. The issue lies in parental authority and the decision to allow their children to marry. In making this decision, children are influenced by individuals or circumstances holding a more powerful position than themselves. Meanwhile, individual characteristics of children may cause them to perceive their existence as a burden on their families and may lack comfort within their familial environments, preferring instead to socialise with their peers, which may contribute to instances of promiscuity. Parents must be legally aware of their obligations when their children are left unattended in their daily lives, as this is an integral aspect of the power relations between parents and their children.

Enforcement of Law Awareness through a Village Regulation

Making a village regulation to prevent child marriage is a crucial step in addressing this issue. This regulation will provide a legal framework to govern the practice of child marriage and serve as an educational tool for the community. Through this regulation, the village government can establish a minimum age limit for marriage and set the procedures that must be followed to conduct a marriage in

⁴³ Ernest R Alexander, 'From Idea to Action: Notes for a Contingency Theory of the Policy Implementation Process', *Administration & Society* 16, no. 4 (1 February 1985): 403–26, <https://doi.org/10.1177/009539978501600402>.

⁴⁴ Michael Gallagher, 'Foucault, Power and Participation', *The International Journal of Children's Rights* 16, no. 3 (2008): 395–406, <https://doi.org/10.1163/157181808X311222>.

⁴⁵ Donna Ladkin and Joana Probert, 'From Sovereign to Subject: Applying Foucault's Conceptualization of Power to Leading and Studying Power within Leadership', *The Leadership Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (2021): 101310, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2019.101310>.



the village. One of the key objectives of this regulation is to educate the community about the dangers and impacts of child marriage. By implementing effective outreach programs, this regulation can change people's perceptions and behaviours regarding child marriage. Education integrated into the outreach initiatives will equip parents and brides-to-be with essential knowledge about their rights, reproductive health, and the importance of education for children.

Despite the clear regulations established by Law No. 16 of 2019, which amends Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage and sets the minimum marriage age at 19, the practice of child marriage continues, particularly in rural areas. Village regulations are designed to ensure that information about the laws regarding early marriage and their associated penalties reaches the community. This situation not only jeopardises the well-being of young individuals but also hinders broader societal progress. Prevention efforts through regulation are crucial and should begin at the village level as a foundational community unit. Formal educational institutions are encouraged to collaborate in fostering early awareness and legal literacy regarding child marriage. A basic understanding of legal concepts and principles can significantly enhance the ability of families and children to engage with marriage-related issues. Those knowledgeable about the law can articulate their thoughts effectively and persuasively.

Furthermore, understanding the law enables individuals to grasp the implications of early marriage and acquiring legal knowledge is essential for navigating issues related to early marriage. Such awareness can be invaluable when advanced preparation and prevention of potential marital complications are crucial. Understanding fundamental principles will facilitate sound decision-making, helping to avoid financially burdensome mistakes or unfavourable outcomes. It is vital to be aware of relevant marriage legislation in villages to prevent families from hastily marrying off their children. This can be achieved by providing guidance and supervision to children until they reach the age of 19 or older. The emergence of compliance within everyday life and social groups begins with public legal awareness. Adherence to community legal norms is reflected in compliance with applicable marriage regulations. In other words, legal awareness can grow by providing an understanding of marriage law literacy.

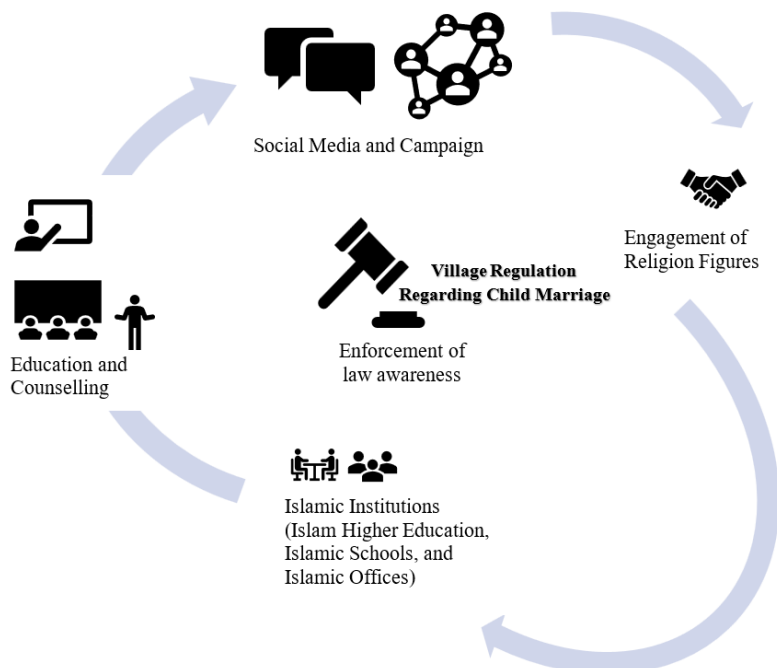
Strategic Initiatives to Enhance Public Legal Awareness

The objective of the initiatives is to facilitate greater awareness of the legal system of child marriage among the general public. Increasing the awareness about the consequences of early marriage requires a comprehensive approach and involves Islamic institutions. Based on Foucault's power relation theory, we depict the initiatives in Figure 1. A collaborative initiative in this study is viewed as an effort planned jointly by multiple individuals or groups to create a positive impact within the community. In Foucault's view, power is understood not negatively but as something productive and reproductive, meaning that power is not centralised; instead, it spreads and flows, becoming normalised through disciplinary practices. In this context, power manifests in the formation of norms derived from early marriage regulations, which are socialised until they become normalised as forms of discipline. A legal-rational authority that fosters the village community's trust in the established rules operates within society through the legitimacy of knowledge, leading to an awareness.



Marriage registration is essential for validating a marriage because it provides legal certainty for all parties (husband, wife, and children) regarding their rights, such as inheritance, access to a birth certificate, and eligibility for benefits like a living wage. Without registration, these rights cannot be fully realised. Sanctions involved in underage marriages, including guardians, witnesses, and adult grooms marrying minors, have been imposed, but only a few are aware of this imposition. In addition, the law must be congruent with the community's values and legal culture to ensure harmony with societal norms. Given the high prevalence and harmful effects of child marriage, there is an urgent need to reduce its incidence in Majene, West Sulawesi. Several interventions for policymakers involve the following: criminal sanctions should be imposed on those involved in child marriages; strict regulations could be imposed on the granting of marriage licences with fines; and an extensive public education effort is essential to inform the public about the consequences of child marriage.⁴⁶ We need *village regulation* as evidence of the enforcement of law awareness as a more valuable tool, entailing the design of interventions to delay child marriage, as shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Collaborative Initiative Model



Source: Author's work

Enforcement of laws prohibiting child marriage faces challenges in Indonesia, requiring strengthened law enforcement and strict sanctions for violators. Child marriage deprives children of important developmental opportunities and legal protections, leading to adverse lifelong consequences, especially for adolescent girls.⁴⁷ Despite legal provisions against child marriage, implementation remains ineffective,

⁴⁶ Mardi Candra, *Pembaruan System Dispensasi Kawin Dalam Sistem Hukum Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2021).

⁴⁷ Rebecca Probert and Sharon Thompson, *Research Handbook on Marriage, Cohabitation and the Law* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781802202656>.

with gaps in enforcement and ambiguity in sanctions.⁴⁸ Legal campaigns that emphasise the severe consequences for parents and individuals involved in child marriage are essential to deter potential abusers and raise awareness about the harmful impact of the practice.⁴⁹

Social media can also be utilised to disseminate information for a wider audience, especially the younger generation, as highlighted in various research papers. Teenagers often engage in platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, making these spaces ideal for campaigns.⁵⁰ Social media serves as a powerful platform for sharing moral messages on the importance of education and marriage at the right age, as seen in the context of spreading Islamic preaching among students.⁵¹ Utilising social media for health education can bridge the accessibility gap, reaching lay audiences and early career researchers in developing countries.⁵² Professionals are increasingly using digital platforms such as *TikTok* to provide customised health information to young audiences, demonstrating the potential of social media in spreading awareness about important topics among youth.⁵³ By strategically utilising popular social media platforms, campaigns can effectively deliver messages about marriage education and timing to a wide and diverse audience, ensuring the dissemination of important information to a younger demographic.

Increasing government action, collaboration, and issuing clear derivative regulations are essential to ensure the practical realisation of legal protection for children and persons with disabilities in Indonesia. Collaborative initiatives denote organised efforts that bring together various stakeholders to achieve shared goals or address the increasing growth of early marriage. These initiatives emphasise *Islamic institutions* among diverse groups such as Islamic colleges, madrasah, religious affairs offices, Islamic agencies, and mosques that seek to leverage resources for pressing the collective impact of child marriage. These initiatives rely on clear communication and trust among participants to ensure successful collaboration and achieve their goals. Effective collaboration often fosters lasting relationships among stakeholders, creating networks to tackle future challenges together. These are engaged with

⁴⁸ Ardian Kurniawan et al., 'Analysis and Legal Implications of the Policy on Sanctions for Marriage Registration Violations', *An-Nahdlah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, no. 2 (2024): 115–26, <https://doi.org/10.62261/annahdlah.v1i2.7>.

⁴⁹ Anamul Hoque and Mohammed Mamun Rashid, 'Knowledge and Attitude of Adolescent Girls on Child Marriage- Experiences from Bangladesh', *Advance Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Discoveries* 45, no. 5 (2020): 21–26.

⁵⁰ Julie M Shaw et al., 'Social Media Used as a Health Intervention in Adolescent Health: A Systematic Review of the Literature', *DIGITAL HEALTH* 1 (1 January 2015): 2055207615588395, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2055207615588395>.

⁵¹ Philippe Martin et al., 'Participatory Interventions for Sexual Health Promotion for Adolescents and Young Adults on the Internet: Systematic Review', *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 22, no. 7 (31 July 2020): e15378, <https://doi.org/10.2196/15378>.

⁵² Sely-Ann Headley Johnson and Tiffiny R Jones, 'Chapter 10 - Role of Social Media in Research Publicity and Visibility', ed. Kavita Batra and Manoj B T - *Effective Use of Social Media in Public Health* Sharma (Academic Press, 2023), 217–30, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-323-95630-7.00014-7>.

⁵³ Marianna Lya Zummo, 'Young Generation and Accessibility to Health Dissemination: TikTok as a Case Study', *Journal of Language and Discrimination* 6, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1558/jld.21107>.



Islamic community figures. Community empowerment to prevent early marriage is one of the practical ways.⁵⁴

However, empowerment programs tend to fail to curb adolescent marriage.⁵⁵ Islamic institutions and religious leaders significantly influence people's views. Involving them in anti-child marriage campaigns can help to pass the message more easily, considering they have strong credibility and influence. Open discussions and dialogue with these figures can help to approach the community more effectively.⁵⁶

Furthermore, a Lack of clear direction and institutional support for collaboration, bottlenecks in monitoring, administrative challenges, and different perspectives on strategy among district leaders impede child marriage discouragement. Local government has not been considered successful in developing sustainable joint working mechanisms at the district level, although the program has contributed to coordination between various stakeholders.⁵⁷ The prevalence of early marriage can be further reduced if individuals and communities are empowered to disseminate awareness and optimise rules through interventions from education and counselling. Education programs play an important role in addressing child marriage in high-prevalence communities.⁵⁸ These programs can include seminars, workshops and dissemination of informative materials to educate individuals on the legal and social consequences of child marriage. Collaborating with Islamic institutions and local communities to organise such activities can significantly increase public awareness and understanding of the marriage issue.⁵⁹ Educational interventions have been successful in improving knowledge, attitudes and practices related to child marriage, demonstrating the effectiveness of such programs in preventing early marriage and empowering adolescents, especially in rural areas.⁶⁰ By engaging

⁵⁴ Masruroh Masruroh and Bernadeta Verawati, 'Community Empowerment As an Effort To Prevent Child Marriage', *Journal of Midwifery* 4, no. 2 (2020): 68, <https://doi.org/10.25077/jom.4.2.68-86.2019>.

⁵⁵ Nina Buchmann et al., 'A Signal to End Child Marriage: Theory and Experimental Evidence from Bangladesh', *American Economic Review* 113, no. 10 (October 2023): 2645–88, <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20220720>.

⁵⁶ Desliana Desliana, Duski Ibrahim, and Muhammad Adil, 'Pandangan Tokoh Masyarakat Terhadap Pernikahan Dini Pada Remaja Etnis Melayu Di Kota Palembang', *Intizar* 27, no. 1 (2021): 17–31, <https://doi.org/10.19109/intizar.v27i1.8435>.

⁵⁷ Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli et al., 'How Can Collective Action between Government Sectors to Prevent Child Marriage Be Operationalized? Evidence from a Post-Hoc Evaluation of an Intervention in Jamui, Bihar and Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan in India', *Reproductive Health* 15, no. 1 (2018): 118, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-018-0552-1>.

⁵⁸ Syahrudin Hidayat, Abdul Ghofur, and Ummul Baroroh, 'The Norm of Marriage Age Limit and Cultural Contestation of Child Marriage Law in Rural Communities', *Jurnal Hukum Islam* 21, no. 1 (2023): 55–82, https://doi.org/10.28918/jhi_v21i1_03.

⁵⁹ Mahmuddin Mahmuddin, Mansari Mansari, and Hasnul Arifin Melayu, 'Community's Role in Preventing Child Marriage: An Analysis of Models and Community Compliance with Village Policies', *Gender Equality: International Journal of Child and Gender Studies* 9, no. 2 (2023): 235, <https://doi.org/10.22373/equality.v9i2.19673>.

⁶⁰ Nashwa Saber Atia et al., 'Effect of Girl-Centered Empowerment Program on Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Rural Adolescents Regarding Health Consequences of Early Marriage', *Tanta Scientific Nursing Journal* 31, no. 4 (2023): 174–91, <https://doi.org/10.21608/tsnj.2023.319673>; Irzak Yuliardy Nugroho et al., 'Pendekatan Sadd Al-Dzari'ah Dalam Pencegahan Perkawinan Anak: Studi Kasus di Kabupaten Probolinggo: The Sadd Al-Dzari'ah Approach in Preventing Child Marriage: A Case Study in Probolinggo Regency', *LITIGASI* 26, no. 1 (30 April 2025): 67–101, <https://doi.org/10.23969/litigasi.v26i1.19478>.



various stakeholders and implementing comprehensive education initiatives, communities can work towards reducing child marriage.

An additional intervention offered in this study includes village regulation designed to enforce legal awareness in Majene and creating a policy that is not aimed to make child marriage more difficult, but rather to increase girls' capacity and equip them with the knowledge and skills to avoid child marriage and address social norms by sensitising parents and community members to the risks of child marriage. This intervention is intended to encourage them to continue their education as an alternative to marriage through economic support programs. This approach is expected to curb economic pressures and provide incentives for behaviours such as delaying marriage and keeping adolescents in school.

Unified Efforts by Islamic Institutions

The village regulatory proposal is likely to provoke a wide range of responses, reflecting the support and concerns of different communities. Some people are concerned that formal regulations would contradict local traditions or trigger resistance from influential community leaders. In general, the community, especially parents, are more likely to accept the regulation if it is accompanied by religious education and outreach programs, rather than focusing solely on legal penalties. Power relation theory can connect law to social norms. Legal education plays a crucial role in instilling legal values and enabling people in the village to respect and comply with village regulations on preventing child marriage. To achieve this, the implementation of village regulation should also be placed in the context of collaboration with Islamic institutions that play a proactive role in fostering community awareness about legal rights and protections.

Local government in Majene has taken several steps to reduce the number of child marriages, including building inter-agency cooperation. The local government has also begun to formulate how to take strategic and mitigating measures to curb child marriage. The multi-sectoral coordination involves the regional office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Islamic Boarding Schools, Islamic counselling offices, and the National Amil Zakat Agency to take strategic steps to address early marriage in West Sulawesi by conducting a campaign to ban child marriage. In addition, the action plan that will be implemented in the near future involves the Ministry of Religious Affairs inviting 438 Islamic teachers to participate in the campaign on the risks of early marriage, including in schools. However, the current role of local government will not be optimised if it is not integrated with the village. Therefore, village regulations should be made, and the village head must communicate them to residents.

Education programs provide the community access to quality education, such as free education initiatives, gender equality in educational opportunities, and increased literacy through online resources. Implementing an integrated monitoring system that assesses inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes is a key initiative to enhance the quality and reliability of self-reporting, thereby strengthening evidence-based policymaking for sustainable education.⁶¹ In the context of education, Islamic

⁶¹ Jorrit Holst et al., 'Monitoring SDG 4.7: Assessing Education for Sustainable Development in Policies, Curricula, Training of Educators and Student Assessment (Input-Indicator)', *Sustainable Development*, 1 August 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.2865>; Wahyuni Retnowulandari et al., 'The



institutions must play an active role in shaping and leading the agenda of SDG 4. The government must fully engage in the process instead of being passive observers.⁶² Public understanding of underage marriage should be initiated by conducting an outreach program. Citizen education should positively influence⁶³ and change the community's mindset regarding the consequences of underage marriage, both at school and in the community's social life, to make them good citizens and abide by the applicable laws and regulations. In this context, universities hold significant potential to enhance public awareness of child marriage, advocate for stricter law enforcement, promote reproductive health rights, and cultivate a culture that prevents early marriage. Through awareness campaigns and educational initiatives, they can play a crucial role in combating child marriage and protecting the rights and well-being of children in Majene.

Islamic schools can create curricula that include both compulsory and elective courses addressing the legal, health, social, and economic dimensions of child marriage. Insights from studies on the effectiveness of marriage education programs can inform colleges in organising seminars, workshops, and public discussions that engage students, faculty, and the community, raising awareness and fostering a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding this issue. Additionally, recognising the link between girls' education and reduced early marriage rates can guide colleges in developing educational strategies that help keep girls in school longer, serving as a vital preventive measure.⁶⁴ By integrating these approaches, colleges can play a significant role in the fight against child marriage through targeted education and awareness initiatives.

Educational institutions play an active role in providing a basic understanding of a more mature mindset for children through the lecture process, such as character education courses at the Higher Education level. Interview with Novitasari, serving as an academician of Sulawesi Barat, states:

"Opportunities to value themselves more or human values, which indirectly also affects the mindset of parents where it creates a paradigm 'the higher the level of education of the child, can be very helpful in reducing the number of early marriages in Majene because by continuing education at the tertiary level, children will be better able to manage their future and reach their goals one by one, while for parents, it can change their mindset from thinking that education is not so important for their children to the thought believing that it is important by seeing changes in their children to become educated human beings.'" ⁶⁵

Prevalence Of Child Marriage: Comparative Study Of Indonesia And Other South Asian States', *Jambura Law Review* 6, no. 2 (24 July 2024): 339–66, <https://doi.org/10.33756/jlr.v6i2.24257>.

⁶² Therese Ferguson and Carmel Geneva Roof, 'SDG 4 in Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities', *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* 21, no. 5 (10 June 2020): 959–75, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-12-2019-0353>.

⁶³ Nazli Hossain, 'Child Marriages', *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 73, no. 9 (2023): 1778–79, <https://doi.org/10.47391/JPMA.23-62>.

⁶⁴ Deane Tameshnie, 'Secondary Schooling Education as a Strategy to Combat Child Marriage', *African Journal of Gender, Society and Development (Formerly Journal of Gender, Information and Development in Africa)* 12, no. 1 (1 March 2023): 87–106, <https://doi.org/10.31920/2634-3622/2023/v12n1a5>.

⁶⁵ NVT, *Interview* (Sulawesi Barat: 22 October 2023).



Islamic education institutions in West Sulawesi, such as Madrasah, the National Amil Zakat Agency and Islamic college known as STAIN, are viewed as significant breakthroughs in promoting the prevention of early marriage. Through their initiatives, the community receives explanations about the psychological and health impacts on children who marry before reaching maturity. One of the main contributions made by the National Amil Zakat Agency in addressing child marriage is the zakat-based scholarship program. This recent initiative provides financial support to teenagers at risk of dropping out of school due to economic constraints. The program's main objective is to extend the duration of education for teenagers, thereby reducing the likelihood of early marriage driven by economic pressures within the family. Additionally, these institutions provide information on the legal consequences faced by parents and guardians who force or persuade minors to enter into marriage. Academician in STAIN Majene acting as the Chief Executive of Gender and Child states:⁶⁶

“Our programs have focused on the community, considering the issue of child marriage. Every year, our colleague conducts education and counselling, particularly on how adolescents become aware of marriage law and its consequences”

Such initiatives not only align with the core values of socialist modernisation and moral education at universities,⁶⁷ but also contribute to fostering an inclusive society by enhancing social skills, values and community involvement among students.⁶⁸ Through collaborative community service activities, universities can play an important role in preventing child marriage and promoting a culture of respect for legal rights and human dignity. In addition, Islamic higher education institutions play an important role in conducting scientific research that can contribute significantly to impact studies and solutions related to child marriage. They participate in providing data sourced from working papers that can be used as a reference for policy making by the local government; they can also collaborate with related institutions or agencies such as Religion Unit Office and the Court to be able to take part in disseminating information on the prevention of early marriage to the community. In addition, it can also answer all the worries and fears of ordinary people about the rule of law, which results in them preferring to marry secretly, often termed *sirri*.⁶⁹ Consequently, implementing unified initiatives to enhance public legal awareness would enable Islamic institutions to collaborate with local government officials to formulate village regulations pertaining to child marriage.

⁶⁶ NAK, Interview (Majene: 25 October 2023).

⁶⁷ Zhiwei Lv, Changtian Ying, and Jiayi Chen, ‘The Impact of Volunteer Service on Moral Education Performance and Mental Health of College Students’, *PLoS ONE* 19, no. 4 April (2024): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0294586>.

⁶⁸ Sandeep Singla, ‘How Community Service Programs in Educational Institutions Contribute to the Inclusive Development of Society: A Survey-Based Stakeholders Analysis’, *Scholedge International Journal of Multidisciplinary & Allied Studies ISSN 2394-336X* 10, no. 5 (2024): 48, <https://doi.org/10.19085/sijmas100501>.

⁶⁹ *Nikah sirri*, or in Arabic known as *zawaj as-sirri*, is a marriage that is conducted in secret and not officially registered at the marriage registrar's office.



Conclusion

The urgency of this study lies in the in-depth exploration of the roots of the problem of early marriage, which has rarely been studied comprehensively using the contingency and power relation theories. Therefore, this study seeks to identify the driving factors of early marriage by elaborating on the contingency theory framework, and proposes strategic collaborations to increase public legal awareness through the framework of power relation theory. The findings of this study underline two important points. First, the practice of child marriage in West Sulawesi, taking place in Majene, can be analysed through the lens of contingency theory, which highlights the influence of social stigma, both from parents and the wider community that is shaped by prevailing norms and individual characteristics. Second, child marriage prevention efforts should not rely solely on formal legal mechanisms. Rather, their success depends on implementing collaborative strategies involving Islamic religious institutions, which wield significant influence in society. By looking at existing power relations, this study confirms that sustainable social change requires an integrated approach that harmonises legal frameworks, social norms and the active involvement of respected institutions.

In this study, we conclude that the prevalence of child marriage is shaped by the specific circumstances that individuals encounter. Meanwhile, low legal awareness and strong social norms reinforce each other, creating significant challenges in prevention efforts. In this case, village regulations can serve as a means for legal empowerment, motivating community members to recognise the consequences of early marriage. The collaboration model proposed in this study can improve awareness of legal rights and protections. An important aspect of our findings is the application of contingency theory to explain the issue of child marriage, alongside power relation theory to design strategic initiatives. Our findings offer a new perspective to inform targeted interventions and policies to address the driving factors of child marriage. Therefore, the theoretical implications of this study refine our understanding of the factors contributing to child marriage by integrating contingency theory. The practical implications are also provided, as we provide recommendations that can be acted upon by policymakers and regulators. Socially, custom leaders are becoming increasingly aware of the legal framework. This awareness enables them to support local governments in preventing child marriage. However, discussing the implementation of the village regulation is critical until the proposed regulation is finalised and passed by the village government. This effort will be a key idea for future study. We also recognise the potential for selection bias due to the limited accessibility and sensitivity of personal experiences, a common challenge in qualitative research addressing complex cultural issues.

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