
**THE INFLUENCE OF EDUCATIONAL LEVEL, FAMILY ECONOMIC
CONDITIONS, AND SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS ON EARLY MARRIAGE IN
WANASABA SUBDISTRICT, EAST LOMBOK REGENCY**



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Abstract

This study is motivated by the persistently high incidence of early marriage in Indonesia, particularly in Wanasaba District, East Lombok Regency, despite the implementation of various governmental regulations and programs. This phenomenon has far-reaching implications for the educational, health, and socio-economic conditions of the community. The purpose of this research is to analyze the influence of educational attainment, family economic conditions, and socio-cultural factors on early marriage in Wanasaba District. The study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method and snowball sampling technique involving 60 respondents who married before the age of 19. Data were collected through closed-ended questionnaires using a Likert scale and analyzed through multiple linear regression. The findings indicate that educational attainment has a negative but statistically insignificant effect on early marriage (sig. 0.419), whereas family economic conditions and socio-cultural factors exert negative and significant effects (sig. 0.016 and 0.007, respectively). The simultaneous test yields a significance value of 0.005, demonstrating that the three variables collectively have a significant influence on early marriage, contributing 20.2% to the variation. These findings suggest that economic and cultural factors play a more dominant role than formal education; thus, efforts to prevent early marriage should focus on improving family welfare and fostering socio-cultural value transformation within the community.

Keywords: Education, Family Economy, Socio-Cultural Factors, Early Marriage

INTRODUCTION

Early marriage remains one of the most pressing social issues in many developing countries, including Indonesia. This phenomenon not only constitutes a violation of children's rights, but also generates multidimensional impacts on various aspects of life, such as reproductive health, education, poverty, and economic development. Children who marry at a young age tend to lose opportunities to pursue their education, face a higher risk of domestic violence, and encounter significant socioeconomic burdens. Thus, early marriage is not merely an individual concern, but a structural problem that hinders sustainable human development.

According to the 2020 UNICEF–UNFPA Global Database, Indonesia ranks tenth among countries with the highest absolute number of child marriages. It is estimated that around 1.2 million girls married before the age of 18, or approximately 1 in 9 women aged 20–24 (UNFPA Indonesia, 2020). These facts indicate that despite the presence of various regulations and policies aimed at protecting children's rights, the practice of early marriage remains prevalent. This discrepancy highlights a gap between the policies implemented and the actual conditions on the ground.

The government has undertaken several measures to address this issue, including revising Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage through Law No.16 of 2019, which raised the minimum legal age of marriage to 19 years, as well as implementing educational initiatives and national campaigns to prevent child marriage. However, these efforts have not yet produced optimal results. Based on data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS) in 2023, the proportion of women aged 20–24 who married before the age of 18 remained at 6.92%. Although this figure has declined compared to previous years, it still reflects substantial challenges in reducing early marriage rates, particularly in regions with low levels of education and welfare.

One of the provinces with the highest incidence of early marriage is West Nusa Tenggara (NTB). According to BPS data in 2022, the prevalence of child marriage in NTB reached 16.23%, increasing further to 17.32% in 2023. These figures are significantly higher than the national average, indicating that NTB faces substantial obstacles in protecting children's rights and improving human resource quality. Among the districts in NTB, East Lombok Regency ranks the highest, with marriage cases reaching 6,900 in 2022, decreasing to 5,824 in 2023, and 5,396 in 2024 (BPS NTB Province, 2024). Despite the overall decline in marriage numbers, early marriage remains prevalent, especially in rural areas where traditional customs are strongly upheld and economic limitations persist.

One such area reflecting these conditions is Wanasaba Subdistrict in East Lombok Regency. Wanasaba is characterized by a community that maintains strong adherence to traditional values and culturally rooted social norms. Most residents work in the agricultural sector, daily labor, or informal economic activities, with relatively low income levels. These circumstances limit access to education and information, particularly for adolescent girls. As a result, many families view early marriage as a practical option to reduce economic burdens while preserving family honor within a socially pressured environment.

Education plays a crucial role in shaping decisions regarding the age at which individuals marry. Low educational attainment is closely associated with a higher risk of early marriage. Communities with lower levels of education often lack awareness of the

negative consequences of marrying young, from reproductive health risks to psychological and socioeconomic impacts. Conversely, higher levels of education correlate with greater awareness of the importance of delaying marriage in order to achieve financial independence and psychological readiness. Thus, education functions not only as a means of increasing knowledge, but also as a tool for cultivating critical and rational decision-making.

In addition to education, family economic conditions serve as a major contributing factor to early marriage in rural areas. Low-income families frequently struggle to finance their children's education. Under such circumstances, marrying off a child is often perceived as a strategy to reduce economic burdens. In Wanasaba Subdistrict, where livelihoods rely heavily on seasonal work and traditional agriculture, economic pressures often drive parents to marry off their daughters in hopes of securing social or financial stability.

Equally significant are socio-cultural factors, which exert strong influence on the persistence of early marriage practices. Traditions such as *midang*, a customary practice in which men visit women's homes during the courtship period, often lead to *merarik*, or "elopement," which typically culminates in marriage, even if initiated consensually. In Wanasaba, such practices are still considered acceptable and are regarded as cultural norms deserving respect. Furthermore, societal views that link marriage to family honor intensify social pressure on adolescents to marry young. Feelings of shame or fear of social stigma when a relationship is publicly noticed often compel young couples to enter marriage, even when they are not yet economically or emotionally prepared.

The interplay between education, economic conditions, and cultural norms forms a social cycle that is difficult to disrupt. Low educational attainment results in limited knowledge and skills, which in turn exacerbate economic hardship. Economic challenges then lead families to make pragmatic decisions, while conservative cultural values reinforce justification for such practices. Consequently, early marriage persists and becomes a tradition passed from one generation to the next.

Therefore, the phenomenon of early marriage in Wanasaba Subdistrict cannot be viewed as an isolated event, but rather as the outcome of complex interactions among educational, economic, and socio-cultural factors. These three factors influence one another and create social conditions that perpetuate early marriage practices. Given these circumstances, this study is essential to analyze the influence of educational attainment, family economic conditions, and socio-cultural factors on the occurrence of early marriage in Wanasaba Subdistrict, East Lombok Regency. The findings are expected to provide empirical insights into the root causes of early marriage and serve as a foundation for developing more effective policies and intervention programs to reduce early marriage rates in the region, thereby promoting more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable human development.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Human Capital Theory, introduced by Gary Becker, provides a foundational framework for understanding the relationship between education and early marriage. According to Becker, education is a long-term investment that enhances an individual's ability to acquire knowledge, skills, and future productivity. Individuals who attain higher levels of education tend to develop rational life orientations, long-term thinking, and a

tendency to delay marriage until they are economically and psychologically prepared. Education also broadens one's understanding of reproductive health, women's rights, and the social and economic risks associated with early marriage. In this context, the higher a person's educational level, the lower their likelihood of engaging in early marriage, as education strengthens awareness of independence and future planning.

Meanwhile, Oscar Lewis's Culture of Poverty Theory explains that poverty is not merely a lack of material resources but rather a system of values and lifestyles transmitted across generations. Within impoverished communities, patterns of thought and behavior often reflect resignation to circumstances and short-term orientation. These conditions frequently influence parents' decisions to marry off their children at a young age as a coping strategy against economic pressures. Early marriage is viewed as a means to reduce the financial burden on the household and ensure social continuity amid economic constraints. In the context of Wanasaba District, this theory is relevant, as most residents work in the informal sector with low incomes, making structural poverty a major factor sustaining the practice of early marriage.

The concept of education in this study refers to the definition in Indonesia's Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which stipulates that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning environment and learning process that allow learners to actively develop their potential. Education aims to develop individuals who are faithful, morally upright, competent, creative, and independent. With adequate education, individuals have greater opportunities to achieve a decent standard of living and escape poverty. Therefore, low educational attainment in a community increases the risk of early marriage due to limited knowledge, aspirations, and critical thinking skills in making life decisions.

The concept of household economics also plays an important role in this analysis. Household economics refers to a family's ability to meet daily needs through the management of income, expenses, and available assets. Limited economic capacity not only affects family welfare but also influences major decisions such as children's education and marriage. Families facing economic pressure often perceive early marriage for their daughters as a solution to reduce household expenses. This view reflects the strong connection between poverty and early marriage, which emerges not only due to financial constraints but also due to limited awareness of the long-term consequences of such decisions.

Beyond education and economic factors, sociocultural aspects significantly influence the prevalence of early marriage. Sociocultural factors encompass the values, norms, customs, and traditions upheld within a community. In traditional communities such as those in Wanasaba, early marriage is often considered a normal cultural practice intended to preserve family honor. Traditions such as *midang* (a social visit by young men to women they admire) or *merarik* (elopement) may trigger early marriages, especially when such relationships are publicly known and deemed to violate social norms. Strong social pressure to marry early in order to safeguard family reputation often leads young couples to proceed with marriage despite being unprepared economically and psychologically. This indicates that sociocultural factors have a substantial influence on early marriage decisions at the local level.

Early marriage itself is defined as a marriage conducted by individuals under the age of 19, as regulated by Law No. 16 of 2019 amending Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage. Early

marriage remains a serious issue in Indonesia. According to UNICEF (2020), approximately 1 in 9 women aged 20–24 years were married before turning 18. The province of West Nusa Tenggara ranks high nationally, with a child marriage prevalence of 24.3% in 2023 (BPS & KemenPPPA, 2023). These figures indicate that early marriage is a social phenomenon influenced by various structural and cultural factors.

The factors influencing early marriage include interrelated educational, economic, and sociocultural aspects. Low educational attainment limits life perspectives and aspirations, weak household economics encourage pragmatic decisions to marry off children, and sociocultural norms reinforce community acceptance of the practice. A study by Azmi et al. (2023) in Central Lombok shows that adolescents with lower levels of education are more vulnerable to early marriage compared to those with higher educational levels. This demonstrates that improving education can serve as a protective factor against early marriage.

Early marriage has significant consequences for individuals and society. From a health perspective, young brides face higher risks of pregnancy complications, maternal mortality, and delivering low birth weight infants (WHO, 2021). In terms of education, early marriage results in the loss of opportunities to continue schooling due to increased domestic responsibilities (UNICEF, 2020). Economically, early marriage can perpetuate the cycle of poverty, as young couples generally lack skills or stable employment. From a social standpoint, early marriage increases the risk of domestic violence and gender inequality.

Efforts to prevent early marriage require synergistic collaboration among various stakeholders. The government has established policies to increase the legal minimum age of marriage and implemented programs on reproductive health education for adolescents. Educational institutions play a role in fostering awareness of child rights and life skills, while families serve as the primary environment for value formation. Community and religious leaders also hold an important position in transforming social norms that support early marriage practices. Through coordinated efforts among government, schools, families, and communities, it is expected that the prevalence of early marriage can be reduced, allowing younger generations to grow optimally in educational, economic, and sociocultural aspects.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method to analyze the influence of educational attainment, family economic conditions, and socio-cultural factors on early marriage in Wanasaba District, East Lombok Regency. This type of research is grounded in the positivist paradigm as articulated by Sugiyono (2017), in which relationships among variables are examined objectively through measurable instruments. The research location was purposively selected in Wanasaba District because the area represents diverse social, cultural, and economic conditions relevant to the phenomenon of early marriage. The study population consists of all individuals who married under the age of 19, while the sample was determined using a snowball sampling technique. Initially, the number of respondents was estimated at around 30–50 individuals. However, during field data collection, a total of 60 respondents were successfully gathered. This technique was employed because official data on early marriage cases were not fully available.

Primary data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, supported by field observations to strengthen the findings. The research instrument was developed based on indicators of each variable: educational level (X1), economic condition (X2), socio-cultural factors (X3), and early marriage (Y). After data collection, validity and reliability tests were conducted to ensure instrument quality, followed by classical assumption testing to meet BLUE criteria. Data analysis was carried out using multiple linear regression to determine the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable, accompanied by t-tests and F-tests to examine the hypotheses both partially and simultaneously. The results of this analysis are expected to provide an empirical overview of the factors contributing to early marriage in Wanasaba District.

Research Hypothesis

Hypotheses are provisional assumptions that are formulated scientifically and can be empirically tested through data analysis. Based on the conceptual framework above, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

- H1: Educational level (X₁) has a significant effect on early marriage decisions (Y) in Wanasaba District, East Lombok Regency.
- H2: Poverty (X₂) has a significant effect on early marriage decisions (Y) in Wanasaba District, East Lombok Regency.
- H3: Sociocultural factors (X₃) have a significant effect on early marriage decisions (Y) in Wanasaba District, East Lombok Regency.

Research Model

This research model illustrates the relationship between the independent variables (level of education, family economic conditions, and socio-cultural factors) and the dependent variable (customer satisfaction). The model can be illustrated as follows:

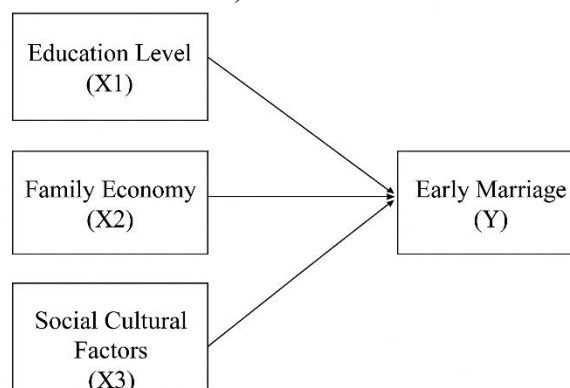


Figure 1.
Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model of this study illustrates that the three independent variables, level of education, family economic condition, and socio-cultural factors, have a direct relationship with early marriage as the dependent variable. This research employs a quantitative approach using a survey method, in which data were collected through the distribution of closed-ended questionnaires with a five-point Likert scale to respondents who married under the age of 19 in Wanasaba District. The sampling technique used was snowball

sampling, due to the unavailability of complete official data on the exact number of individuals who entered early marriage.

Data analysis in this study was conducted using multiple linear regression to examine the influence of educational level, family economic condition, and socio-cultural factors on early marriage. Prior to the analysis, the data were tested for validity and reliability and were ensured to meet the classical assumptions so that the resulting findings would be valid and reliable. The results of this study are expected to provide empirical insights and a deeper understanding of the factors influencing early marriage, thereby serving as a basis for government agencies and the community in formulating policies or programs aimed at preventing early-age marriage in Wanasaba District.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the research results obtained from the analysis using SPSS, namely:

Table 1.
Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	28.049	1.576		17.795	.000
	Education Level	-.038	.046	-.097	-.814	.419
	Family Economy	-.126	.051	-.298	-2.491	.016
	Social Cultural Factors	-.126	.045	-.338	-2.826	.007

Source: Data processed (2025)

Based on the regression analysis results obtained from the equation $Y = 28.049 - 0.038X_1 - 0.126X_2 - 0.126X_3$, it can be interpreted that the constant value of 28.049 indicates that if all independent variables—namely the level of education, family economic condition, and socio-cultural factors—are assumed to be constant or equal to zero, the prevalence of early marriage remains at 28.049. This suggests that even without the influence of these three factors, the incidence of early marriage in Wanasaba District remains relatively high. Thus, there are other factors outside the research model, such as family supervision, religious norms, and the broader social environment, that also influence the tendency to marry at a young age.

The regression coefficient for the educational level variable (X_1), which is -0.038 with a significance value of 0.419, indicates that an increase in educational attainment has a negative but statistically insignificant effect on early marriage. This means that although higher education tends to reduce the rate of early marriage, the effect is not statistically strong within the Wanasaba community. This may be attributed to the still-limited awareness of the importance of higher education, particularly for women, as well as the strong social values that prioritize marriage over continuing education. Conversely, the family economic condition variable (X_2) has a coefficient of -0.126 with a significance level of 0.016, indicating a negative and significant effect on early marriage. The better the family's

economic condition, the lower the likelihood of marrying off children at a young age. This shows that economic pressure is a major driving factor behind early marriage practices, in which economically constrained families tend to view marriage as a solution to reduce financial burdens.

Moreover, the socio-cultural factor variable (X_3) also exhibits a negative and significant effect on early marriage, with a coefficient of -0.126 and a significance value of 0.007 . These findings confirm that the stronger the social norms that support education and gender equality, the lower the tendency for early marriage. However, in the cultural context of Wanasaba, local traditions such as *midang* (a customary courtship visit by the male partner to the female partner’s home) and *merarik* (a customary elopement practice) remain prevalent and indirectly contribute to early marriage. Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that family economic conditions and socio-cultural factors exert a more dominant influence on early marriage compared to formal education levels. These findings indicate that efforts to prevent early marriage in Wanasaba District should focus on improving family economic welfare and transforming socio-cultural values that continue to support early-age marriage practices.

Table 2.
T-Test Results (Partial Test)
Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta		
1	(Constant)	28.049	1.576		17.795	.000
	Education Level	-.038	.046	-.097	-.814	.419
	Family Economy	-.126	.051	-.298	-2.491	.016
	Social Cultural Factors	-.126	.045	-.338	-2.826	.007

Source: Data processed (2025)

Based on the analysis results, it can be interpreted that the Education Level variable does not have a significant effect on the occurrence of early marriage, whereas the Family Economic and Socio-Cultural variables are proven to have a significant impact. This indicates that economic and cultural factors play a more substantial role in encouraging early marriage compared to educational factors. It suggests that low family economic conditions and socio-cultural values that still support the practice of early marriage constitute the primary factors influencing the decision to marry at a young age.

Table 3.
F-test (Simultaneous Test)
ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	22.166	3	7.389	4.725	.005 ^b
	Residual	87.567	56	1.564		
	Total	109.733	59			

a. Dependent Variable: Early Marriage

b. Predictors: (Constant), Education Level, Family Economy, Social Cultural Factors

Source: Data processed (2025)

Based on the results of the F-test, a significance value of 0.005 (< 0.05) was obtained, indicating that Education Level, Family Economic Status, and Socio-Cultural Factors simultaneously have a significant effect on Early Marriage.

Table 4.
Results of the Determination Coefficient Test

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.449 ^a	.202	.159	1.250

a. Predictors: (Constant), Education Level, Family Economy, Social Cultural Factors

Source: Data processed (2025)

Based on the table above, the R Square value is 0.202, indicating that 20.2% of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained simultaneously by the three independent variables (X1, X2, and X3). The remaining 79.8% is accounted for by other factors outside this regression model.

The Adjusted R Square value of 0.159 shows that after adjusting for the number of independent variables, the contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable remains 15.9%, suggesting that the model has a reasonably good explanatory power, although there are still other influential variables not included in the model.

The Standard Error of the Estimate is 1.250, representing the magnitude of standard deviation in predicting the dependent variable. The smaller this value, the better the regression model fits the data.

The Influence of Education Level on Early Marriage

The study results indicate that the education level (X_1) has a regression coefficient of -0.038 with a significance value of 0.419 (> 0.05), implying that it does not have a significant effect on early marriage in Wanasaba Subdistrict. Although the negative direction of the coefficient suggests that higher education is associated with a lower tendency to marry early, the effect is not statistically strong. This condition illustrates that education has not fully become a determining factor in decision-making regarding marriage at a young age, as in some cases, the community still views marriage as a symbol of social maturity rather than academic achievement.

These findings differ from some previous studies. For comparison, Nafisah & Perdana (2024) found a significant influence of education level on early marriage. Thus, although prior research indicates a significant effect of education, the present study highlights that the influence of education on marriage is not necessarily uniform across populations and requires further understanding of local factors affecting decisions to marry at a young age.

Therefore, the results of this study reinforce the perspective that increasing education alone is insufficient to reduce early marriage rates. Efforts such as guidance and counseling, emphasizing the importance of long-term education, particularly for adolescent girls are necessary to foster awareness and independence in determining their future without being trapped in the practice of early marriage.

The Influence of Family Economy on Early Marriage

The partial test results show that the family economic variable (X_2) has a coefficient value of -0.126 with a significance level of 0.016 (< 0.05), indicating a negative and significant effect on early marriage. This means that the better the family's economic

condition, the lower the likelihood of early marriage. This finding indicates that economic pressure is a major driving factor in early marriage in Wanasaba District, as families with limited financial resources tend to consider marriage as a solution to reduce their economic burden.

These results align with research by Wulandari & S Sarwoprasodjo (2014), which showed that family economic status is the most significant factor influencing motives for early marriage in rural areas. This confirms the importance of family economic conditions as a primary determinant of the decision to marry at a young age, although educational factors and social motivations also play a role. Research by Ferdiana, Bachtiar, and Ariyanto (2023) found that family economic well-being plays a significant role in determining decisions to marry at a young age in Indonesia, where lower economic conditions tend to increase the risk of early marriage.

Based on these results, it can be concluded that improving family economic well-being through community empowerment, skills training, and wider access to employment opportunities can be an effective strategy to reduce the rate of early marriage. By meeting a family's basic needs, the economic pressures that often lead to early marriage can be minimized.

The Influence of Family Economy on Early Marriage

The results of the partial test indicate that the family economic variable (X_2) has a coefficient value of -0.126 with a significance level of 0.016 (< 0.05), which means it has a negative and significant effect on early marriage. This implies that the better the family's economic condition, the lower the tendency for early marriage to occur. These findings suggest that economic pressure is one of the primary driving factors behind the practice of early marriage in Wanasaba Subdistrict, as families with limited financial resources tend to view marriage as a solution to alleviate economic burdens.

This result is consistent with the study by Wulandari & S. Sarwoprasodjo (2014), which showed that family economic status is the most significant factor influencing motives for early marriage in rural areas. It underscores the importance of family economic conditions as a key determinant in decisions to marry at a young age, although educational factors and social motivations also play a role. Similarly, research by Ferdiana, Bachtiar, and Ariyanto (2023) found that family economic welfare plays a crucial role in determining early marriage decisions in Indonesia, with lower economic conditions tending to increase the risk of early marriage.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that improving family economic welfare through community empowerment, skills training, and broader access to employment opportunities can serve as an effective strategy to reduce the rate of early marriage. By fulfilling the basic needs of families, the economic pressures that often serve as a justification for marrying off children at a young age can be minimized.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that the level of education does not have a significant effect on early marriage in Wanasaba District, whereas family economic factors and socio-cultural factors have a significant negative effect. This indicates that the economic conditions and cultural values of the community play a dominant role in encouraging the occurrence of early marriage. Collectively, these three variables have a

significant impact on early marriage, contributing 20.2% to its occurrence, while the remaining portion is influenced by other factors beyond the scope of this study, such as environmental conditions, psychological factors, and government policies.

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