

CATWOE Analysis in the Phenomenon of Early Marriage in Malang Regency

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Abstract. This research builds upon previous studies conducted in 2023 on the phenomenon of early marriage in Malang Regency, East Java, Indonesia. Notably, Malang Regency ranked first in East Java in 2022 for the highest number of child marriage dispensations, with 1,434 cases. This study aims to deepen the understanding of this complex phenomenon through the application of CATWOE analysis. Utilizing a qualitative research approach, data was collected through interviews, observations, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis. The findings reveal that early marriage in Malang Regency is a multifaceted issue influenced by a confluence of factors, including cultural norms, social structures, regulatory frameworks, and economic conditions. The study emphasizes the critical need for collaborative efforts among various stakeholders, including government agencies, the private sector, community organizations, and non-governmental organizations, to effectively prevent and mitigate the prevalence of child marriage.

Keywords: CATWOE analysis, child marriage, stakeholder involvement

1 Introduction

Malang Regency consistently ranks among the highest in East Java Province for child marriage dispensation applications. Between 2021 and 2022, it held the top position, with 1,711 applications in 2021 and 1,393 in 2022. While the number decreased to 936 in 2023, placing it second after Jember, Malang remains within the top five.

Within Malang Regency, Poncokusumo Sub-district reported the highest number of child marriages with 59 cases, followed by Sumbermanjing Wetan (57), Pujon (52), Wajak (46), and Jabung (46). These figures indicate a high prevalence of child marriage within the region. Notably, Kasembon Sub-district reported zero cases in 2023. However, the Head of the Malang Regency DPPKB cautioned that this does not necessarily signify the absence of child marriage but rather potential underreporting.

Existing research consistently highlights the detrimental consequences of early marriage, particularly for young women. These include limited educational attainment, lower social status within the marital home, restricted reproductive health choices, increased risk of maternal mortality and domestic violence, and compromised physical and mental health due to premature childbirth. This study aims to investigate the underlying factors contributing to the prevalence of early marriage

in Malang Regency and explore potential solutions by examining the roles and responsibilities of key actors and institutions in addressing this critical issue.

2 Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design. Data collection was conducted through focus group discussions (FGDs), participant observation, and document review. FGD participants included representatives from relevant government agencies (Malang Regency Education Office, Women and Children Empowerment Office, Population Control and Family Planning Office, Ardiwaluyo Health Center), as well as key community members such as the Village Midwife, Deputy Village Head, Katin Cadre (bride-to-be) from Wonorejo village, and the Counseling Teacher of Wonorejo One-Stop School. Interviews and FGDs were conducted to explore the multifaceted interactions and relationships between individuals, groups, and social structures within the rural community that influence the practice of early marriage. The study aimed to understand the impact of early marriage on individual, family, and community development across social, economic, and health domains. Furthermore, it sought to identify key actors involved in the context of early marriage within the rural community. CATWOE analysis was utilized to effectively understand the diverse perspectives of each stakeholder. By employing triangulation of sources, time, and methods during data collection, this study aimed to achieve a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the phenomenon of early marriage.

3 Result

Early Marriage Cases in Malang Regency, Factors Affecting the Occurrence of Early Marriage

3.1. Economic Factors

Poverty in the countryside has become a common thing and we encounter many things. Poverty greatly influences major decisions on behaviour and habits in the village environment. The economy is often used as a strong reason for some people to decide to marry their children at an early age. The many burdens borne by the family have triggered some parents to immediately marry their children even though they have not reached the minimum age limit for marriage. Likewise, the phenomenon of early marriage occurs in Malang Regency. Based on data mining through observations and interviews with early marriage perpetrators, the reason to get a better economic life, reducing the burden on parents are some of the strong reasons for them to decide to marry early. The parents' expectations are quite simple, the most important thing is that their children have someone to finance and can meet their needs, so it is enough to be used as an excuse to release their daughter to marry. This phenomenon is further strengthened by the low knowledge and education level of parents [1].

3.2. Village Community Culture (*Arisan* or *Delehan System*)

Based on findings from two focus group discussions (FGDs), it is evident that the prevailing

cultural norms within rural communities significantly influence individual decisions regarding early marriage [2]. This study identifies several cultural factors within Malang Regency that contribute to the perpetuation of early marriage. Firstly, the social stigma associated with rejecting a marriage proposal reinforces the pressure to accept, creating anxiety about future marriageability. Secondly, a negative perception exists towards women who marry later, with the belief that they become less desirable to potential spouses. This is further compounded by the societal assumption that highly educated women are less appealing to men.

Furthermore, the prevailing cultural belief that women's primary roles lie within the domestic sphere – “kitchen, bed, and childbirth” – diminishes the perceived value of higher education for females. Finally, the traditional “*Delehan*” system, where families receive substantial gifts and donations upon their child's marriage, incentivizes early unions. These cultural factors collectively contribute to and reinforce the phenomenon of early marriage within the studied community.

3.3. The Role of Children in Schools: Human Resources and Education Levels

Rural communities often prioritize immediate, tangible outcomes. Based on focus group discussions, higher education is not always a top priority. This is attributed to the perception that academic qualifications may not directly translate into desired economic gains. Given the uncertainty of future economic prospects and the perceived lack of a guaranteed return on investment in higher education, many families opt to marry off their children rather than pursue further education.

3.4. Religion

Within rural communities, religious guidance plays a significant role in shaping social norms. Concerns about the prevalence of premarital sexual activity, particularly among young women, are prominent among parents. The fear of their daughters committing adultery, both a religious sin and a source of parental shame, motivates some parents to prioritize early marriage.

However, this decision often occurs despite the potential immaturity of the children and the significant responsibilities associated with parenthood. While acknowledging the importance of religious principles, it's crucial to recognize that early marriage may not always be the most appropriate solution.

The onset of puberty and the increasing exposure to romantic relationships further heighten parental anxieties regarding premarital sexual activity. While religious beliefs provide a strong justification for early marriage, a more nuanced approach is necessary, considering the emotional, social, and economic implications for both the young couple and their families.

3.5. The Role of Parents

Parental influence significantly shapes children's marriage decisions within these communities. Driven by a sense of religious and familial responsibility, parents often retain considerable control over their children's marital choices. Local cultural values regarding marriage, particularly the perceived stigma associated with unmarried women beyond a certain age, strongly influence parental attitudes.

The pressure to accept marriage proposals, regardless of the suitor's background, is particularly pronounced. This stems from a deeply ingrained belief that rejecting a proposal may hinder the daughter's future marriageability. This fear of social ostracism and the perceived

difficulty in finding a suitable partner for their daughters significantly influences parental decisions regarding early marriage.

3.6. The Role of Children in Promiscuity

The pervasive nature of information technology has undeniably impacted various aspects of society, including marriage practices. While technology offers numerous benefits, its misuse can contribute to social challenges, such as early marriage.

The widespread use of social media platforms can facilitate early romantic relationships among adolescents, potentially leading to unintended pregnancies and subsequent pressure to marry. This phenomenon is evident in cases of early marriage in Wonorejo village, where social media platforms played a significant role in initiating relationships that culminated in marriage.

Furthermore, the early onset of puberty, coupled with easy access to explicit content through smartphones, can contribute to increased sexual activity among adolescents in Malang Regency. This observation is supported by the experiences of health center midwives who frequently encounter cases of adolescent pregnancy.

It is crucial to acknowledge that these are complex issues with multifaceted causes. Addressing the issue of early marriage requires a multi-pronged approach that considers the impact of technology, socio-cultural factors, and the need for comprehensive sexual education and reproductive health services.

4 Discussion

4.1. C (Customers)

Customers are people who directly benefit or have the impact of the transformation process. This analysis examines the perceived benefits of early marriage from the perspectives of various stakeholders. Parents may view early marriage as fulfilling a perceived obligation to ensure their daughter's well-being and avoiding social stigma associated with an unmarried daughter. They may also benefit from the "*Delehan*" system, a traditional form of community support where families receive assistance during life events, with the expectation of reciprocation. For daughters, early marriage may offer a potential path to personal happiness if the marriage aligns with their desires and the chosen partner is suitable. It may also provide an alternative for young women who may not wish to pursue further education or face limited employment opportunities. However, it's crucial to acknowledge the potential drawbacks, such as the possibility of an unhappy marriage if the chosen partner is unsuitable. Early marriage can present significant challenges and hardships for young women who may not be emotionally or financially prepared for the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood.

4.2. A (Actors)

Actors are an individual or group that carries out the transformation process (T). Based on the results of data in the field, those who become actors in early marriage are differentiated based on their level of power, position and influence. Here is the categorization

Table 1. People involved in early marriages based on power, position and influence on transformation

No	Actor Categories	Power	Position	Influence
1	Primary (Early marriage perpetrators); Parents of children	Weak	Central	weak
2	Seconds (Toga, Toma, Todat, Media)	Highly influential	Semi sentral	Strong
3	Key Stakeholder (Kades, KUA, PA, Diknas, DinKes, DP3KB, DP3A)	Influential	Semi sentral	Very strong

From the table above, it can be explained that the primary actor has very strong power and influence to transform information; his position is central. This is because the culture that prevails in the village is still very attached to the community, so it is very possible to make changes in the family.

Secondary actors, including religious leaders (Toga), community leaders (Toma), and traditional leaders (Todat), wield significant influence within the community but may face limitations in driving transformative change. While cultural norms remain deeply ingrained, the role of media in shaping public discourse may be limited due to low media literacy and limited access to information among many villagers.

This research identifies three key categories of actors involved in the phenomenon of early marriage:

- a. **Primary Actor** are actors who are directly related to the occurrence of early marriage. These include children/adolescents who enter into early marriages and their parents/families. As direct participants in the process, they experience both the negative and positive consequences of early marriage and play a crucial role in its occurrence.
- b. **Secondary Actors** encompass entities that are indirectly involved in the issue. These include local NGOs, schools, religious leaders, traditional leaders, and media outlets. While they may not have direct decision-making authority, they can significantly influence attitudes and behaviors related to early marriage.
- c. **Key Stakeholders** are entities with the authority to implement policies related to child marriage. They include the Religious Affairs Office, the Religious Court, the Education Office, educational institutions, the Health Office, the Population Control and Family Planning Office, and the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office.

4.3. T (Transformation)

Transformation is the process of transforming inputs (information, resources) into desired outputs (reduced rates of child marriage) faces significant challenges. Despite government efforts, the role of decision-makers at the village level may be limited, hindering effective implementation of policies aimed at preventing child marriage. This suggests that the transformation of information and resources into meaningful changes in cultural attitudes and behaviors related to early marriage has not been as effective as desired.

Several efforts can be made to make a series of changes in the management of the phenomenon of early marriage:

Education Process

Education plays a crucial role in preventing early marriage by fostering knowledge, understanding, and responsible decision-making. This necessitates a multi-pronged approach encompassing both formal and informal education programs involving various stakeholders.

School curricula should be enriched with comprehensive sex education, covering topics such as reproductive health, emotional health, the wise use of information technology, and the negative consequences of early marriage. This educational process should not be limited to adolescents but should also extend to parents, community members, traditional leaders, and community leaders to cultivate a societal environment that supports healthy and informed decision-making regarding marriage.

Furthermore, the implementation of Marriage Age Maturity (PUP) programs is crucial. These programs aim to enhance adolescent understanding of appropriate ages for first marriage, emphasizing the importance of mental, emotional, financial, and physical readiness. The goal is not merely to delay marriage but to encourage couples to enter into marriage when they are truly prepared to assume the responsibilities of family life, considering factors such as family planning, birth spacing, and overall well-being.

Regulatory Process

Regulations play a critical role in addressing the issue of early marriage. By establishing legal frameworks, regulations provide the necessary certainty and guidance for all stakeholders involved. Strengthening legal protections for children, including amending regulations on child marriage, enacting legislation on gender equality, implementing innovative programs for child-friendly public spaces, and strengthening regulations on women's empowerment and family welfare, are crucial steps toward effectively addressing the issue of early marriage. These legal measures will provide a strong foundation for preventing and mitigating the harmful consequences of early marriage.

4.4. W (Worldview)

A worldview is a perspective or viewpoint that gives meaning to the root definition in the context of system implementation. In this study, the author found several viewpoints that are considered to have a strong correlation in understanding the phenomenon of early marriage, namely:

- a. **Emphasis on family honor and tradition:** Proponents of early marriage often view it as a means of upholding family honor by preventing premarital sexual activity and demonstrating adherence to societal norms and moral values [1], [3].
- b. **Concerns regarding health and maturity:** Opponents of early marriage primarily emphasize the critical importance of physical and mental health. Concerns regarding reproductive health, maternal and infant health, and the psychological maturity of young individuals are central to this perspective. Previous research has highlighted the strong correlation between inadequate health and emotional preparedness and the negative impacts of early marriage [4].
- c. **Misconception about the role of education:** The belief that higher education does not guarantee a decent life persists among some segments of the population. However, education plays a crucial role in individual and societal development by enhancing critical thinking, problem-

- solving skills, and overall empowerment. Education is essential for achieving economic and social well-being [5].
- d. Domestic sphere and parental authority: In many rural communities, marriage decisions are often considered a private family matter, with limited community intervention. This is exacerbated by the prevailing power dynamics within families, where parental authority often dominates. Poor communication and limited child participation in family decision-making, often restricted by traditional norms and values, further contribute to the occurrence of early marriage [3].

4.5. O (Owners)

Owners are individuals or groups who have authority over the system and can change or stop the transformation process. In an effort to overcome early marriage, this study seeks to map the actors involved and the roles that can be played by each. Here are some of the actors who play an important role in early marriage

- a. Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (DP3A): The DP3A plays a crucial role in preventing early marriage through various initiatives. These include strengthening child protection services, implementing family quality improvement programs (PUSPAGA), enhancing women's protection services, organizing children's forums and anti-violence workshops, raising awareness about the dangers of pornography and gadget misuse, and promoting the creation of child-friendly public spaces. These efforts align with research findings emphasizing the government's responsibility in preventing and addressing early marriage through policy and facilitation [6], [7].
- b. Education Office: The Education Office plays a significant role in preventing early marriage by promoting comprehensive education. This includes establishing study groups involving parents, training teachers to educate students about the negative impacts of early marriage and the importance of education for personal and professional development. Research has demonstrated that early marriage often interrupts education and negatively impacts child-rearing practices [4]. For this reason, training efforts are needed for teenagers who decide to get married early [8].
- c. Health Office: The Health Office addresses the significant health risks associated with early marriage, including increased risks of premature birth, infant mortality, and maternal and child health complications. Early marriage can also have detrimental effects on the mental and emotional well-being of young couples. The Health Office collaborates with village health cadres, midwives, and family assistance teams to provide education on reproductive health, maternal health, and family planning. These efforts are consistent with research findings that highlight the negative impacts of early marriage on maternal and child health [9].
- d. Population Control and Family Planning Office (DPPKB): The DPPKB plays a crucial role in addressing early marriage through initiatives such as marriage age maturity programs, family planning services, and programs to prevent the risks associated with adolescent pregnancy. The DPPKB also provides online counseling services on reproductive health and life skills for adolescents. These efforts align with research findings emphasizing the need for inter-sectoral collaboration and action in preventing early marriage [7], [10].
- e. Village Institution (Village Head/*Modin*): The village head and officials have the authority to determine the direction of development policies in their villages. The role of village authorities

is vital in determining the social, cultural, political, and economic aspects that develop in their villages [11]. They have the authority to approve or deny marriage applications within their jurisdiction. Given their intimate knowledge of the community, village officials are crucial in assessing the suitability of marriage applications, particularly those involving minors. While village officials have the authority to deny applications, they may sometimes issue letters of introduction for underage couples to seek marriage dispensation from the Religious Court. However, the primary responsibility for ensuring compliance with marriage regulations rests with the village institution.

4.6. E (Environmental Constraints)

This refers to obstacles to the transformation process, including regulations, budgets, and other resources. The complexity of the problem related to the phenomenon of early marriage causes efforts to prevent it must also involve and consider many aspects and stakeholders, both from the government, religious leaders, educational institutions, families and society in general. In its implementation, this effort cannot be separated from the emergence of several obstacles that affect the success of various programs to prevent and control early marriage. Some of them are:

- a. Regulation: While Law 16/2019 sets a minimum marriage age of 19, the provision for obtaining dispensations from the court based on “urgent reasons” creates a loophole that can be exploited. This legal ambiguity contributes to the continued occurrence of early marriages. To effectively address this issue, widespread public education campaigns are crucial to raise awareness about the negative consequences of early marriage on health, psychology, social well-being, and economic prospects [2], [12].
- b. Culture and low level of education: Culture, a complex web of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, plays a significant role in shaping societal norms and individual actions. While culture can foster positive development, it can also hinder progress. The prevalence of early marriage is often deeply intertwined with cultural norms and beliefs. This study, aligning with the findings of [13], highlights the influence of cultural beliefs, such as the stigma associated with unmarried women and the pressure to accept marriage proposals, in perpetuating early marriage. Similarly, [14] emphasizes the role of cultural factors, particularly the practice of arranged marriages, in facilitating early unions. Furthermore, research by [15] reveals that a significant portion of the population lacks awareness of the negative biological, psychological, and social consequences of early marriage. This finding is supported by [16], who emphasizes the strong correlation between low levels of education and the likelihood of early marriage. Individuals with limited education may have a reduced understanding of family life and its complexities, potentially increasing their vulnerability to early marriage.

5. Conclusion

The problem of early marriage has far-reaching consequences, impacting not only individuals but also the social, economic, and cultural fabric of society. It poses significant threats to public health, economic development, educational attainment, and can contribute to increased rates of juvenile delinquency.

Addressing this complex issue requires a multi-sectoral approach involving active participation from all stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community members.

Key strategies for preventing and addressing early marriage include:

- a. Comprehensive education: Implementing comprehensive sex education programs for adolescents and adults, covering topics such as reproductive health, gender equality, the negative impacts of early marriage, and the importance of delaying marriage until adulthood.
- b. Strengthening legal frameworks: Enforcing existing laws against child marriage and advocating for stronger legal protections for children.
- c. Empowering girls and women: Promoting girls' education, economic empowerment, and access to healthcare services.
- d. Community engagement: Fostering community dialogue and awareness campaigns to challenge harmful cultural norms and promote positive attitudes towards delaying marriage.
- e. Inter-sectoral collaboration: Enhancing collaboration among government agencies, non-governmental organizations, community leaders, and religious institutions to ensure a coordinated and effective response to the issue of early marriage.

By implementing these strategies, we can work towards creating a society where all individuals, particularly girls and young women, have the opportunity to reach their full potential and live healthy, fulfilling lives free from the constraints of early marriage.

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