

**Young Age Marriage and Its Implications for Child Rearing Patterns in
Potugu Village, Momunu District, Buol Regency**

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Abstract: Marriage at a young age places adolescent couples in household and parenting roles before their psychological maturity, knowledge, educational attainment, and economic independence are fully developed. This study aimed to describe the factors underlying young-age marriage and to analyze its implications for parenting practices in Potugu Village, Momunu District, Buol Regency. A qualitative descriptive field-research approach was employed. Data were collected through observation, interviews with young couples, parents, and village officials, and documentation. The analysis involved data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. Data credibility was strengthened through source and method triangulation, prolonged observation, and peer discussion. The findings indicate that the couples married between the ages of 14 and 19. Contributing factors included personal preference, premarital sexual relations, low educational attainment, inadequate family supervision, economic pressure, and parental acceptance of marriage proposals before the children completed school. In parenting, some couples lacked sufficient knowledge and skills to care for, protect, and educate children according to their developmental needs. Emotional immaturity was reflected in anger, shouting, pinching, or hitting when children cried or were difficult to manage. The couples also relied on parents or parents-in-law for bathing, feeding, and caring for their children.

Keywords: *Young-Age Marriage; Parenting; Emotional Maturity; Family; Child Education*

Abstrak: Pernikahan di usia muda menempatkan pasangan remaja pada peran rumah tangga dan pengasuhan sebelum kematangan psikologis, pengetahuan, tingkat pendidikan, dan kemandirian ekonomi mereka berkembang sepenuhnya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan faktor-faktor yang melatarbelakangi pernikahan usia muda serta menganalisis implikasinya terhadap praktik pengasuhan anak di Desa Potugu, Kecamatan Momunu, Kabupaten Buol. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan jenis penelitian lapangan. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara dengan pasangan muda, orang tua, dan aparat desa, serta dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahapan pengumpulan data, reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Kredibilitas data diperkuat melalui triangulasi sumber dan metode, perpanjangan pengamatan, dan diskusi teman sejawat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para pasangan menikah pada rentang usia 14 hingga 19 tahun. Faktor-faktor yang berkontribusi meliputi keinginan pribadi, hubungan seksual pranikah, rendahnya tingkat pendidikan, kurangnya pengawasan keluarga, tekanan ekonomi, dan penerimaan orang tua terhadap lamaran sebelum anak-anak menyelesaikan sekolah. Dalam hal pengasuhan, sebagian pasangan belum memiliki pengetahuan dan keterampilan yang memadai untuk merawat, melindungi, dan mendidik anak sesuai dengan kebutuhan perkembangannya. Ketidakmatangan emosional tampak dari sikap marah, membentak, mencubit, atau memukul ketika anak menangis atau sulit diatur. Pasangan tersebut juga bergantung pada orang tua atau mertua dalam memandikan, menyuapi, dan mengasuh anak-anak mereka.

Kata Kunci: *Pernikahan Usia Muda; Pengasuhan Anak; Kematangan Emosional; Keluarga; Pendidikan Anak*

Introduction

Marriage is a bond that forms a family and gives rise to new responsibilities for husband and wife. These responsibilities do not stop at meeting the needs of the spouse, but also include managing household finances, communication, conflict resolution, protection, and the education and rearing of children. Readiness for marriage is therefore related to physical, psychological, social, and economic maturity.

Young-age marriage is still found in various segments of society. Fadlyana and Larasati (2009) explain that the practice of early marriage continues to take place, particularly in areas with limited education, economic opportunity, and access to

information. Marriage during adolescence can halt education, narrow employment opportunities, increase economic dependence, and place couples in responsibilities they are not yet fully capable of carrying out.

Adolescence is a transitional period marked by biological, cognitive, emotional, and social change. At this stage, individuals are still forming their identity, learning to regulate their emotions, and developing decision-making abilities. When adolescents enter marriage and quickly become parents, their own developmental process runs in parallel with the demands of raising a child. This condition can create pressure when the couple does not yet possess adequate parenting knowledge, social support, and economic resources.

Parenting is the set of attitudes and actions parents undertake to meet a child's physical, emotional, social, moral, and intellectual needs. Subagia (2021) views parenting style as the way parents provide rules, rewards, punishment, authority, attention, and responsiveness to a child's needs. Appropriate parenting requires affection, communication, consistency, emotional regulation, an understanding of child development, and the ability to protect children from harmful actions.

The family is a child's first educational environment. Through daily interaction, children learn language, religious values, social behavior, discipline, independence, and how to manage emotions. Parents become models the child imitates. Consequently, difficulties parents face in regulating their emotions, meeting needs, or providing stimulation can affect a child's physical and psychological development in the long term.

Young-age marriage does not always result in poor parenting. The quality of parenting is also influenced by education, personality, family support, economic conditions, access to health services, and the couple's willingness to learn. However, a very young age can become a vulnerability factor because the couple has not yet gained adequate experience and readiness. When this vulnerability coincides with poverty, dropping out of school, family conflict, and a lack of assistance, the risk of parenting problems becomes greater.

Potugu Village, Momunu District, Buol Regency, is an area where the practice of young-age marriage still occurs. According to research data, there are couples who married between the ages of 14 and 19, some of whom had not completed secondary education. The marriages were driven by the couple's own wishes, premarital sexual relations, low levels of education, weak parental supervision, economic conditions, and the view that marriage could reduce the family's burden.

The issue becomes even more pressing once young couples soon have children. Some couples admit that they have not been able to bathe, feed, dress, soothe, and understand the needs of their child on their own. They still require help from parents or parents-in-law. When tired and under pressure, responses such as anger, pinching, hitting, shouting, and neglect emerge. This condition shows that the prevention of young-age marriage needs to be linked with parenting education and child protection.

This study aims to describe the characteristics and background of young-age marriage in Potugu Village and to analyze its implications for child-rearing patterns. The study focuses on parenting readiness, emotional regulation, dependence on the extended family, the risk of violence, and the need for assistance. The findings are expected to serve as considerations for village governments, families, educational institutions, and communities in developing prevention programs and support for young families.

Method

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach in the form of field research. This approach was used to describe in depth the experiences of couples who married young, the factors underlying the marriage, parenting practices, and their implications for children and families. The research was conducted under natural conditions without manipulating any variables.

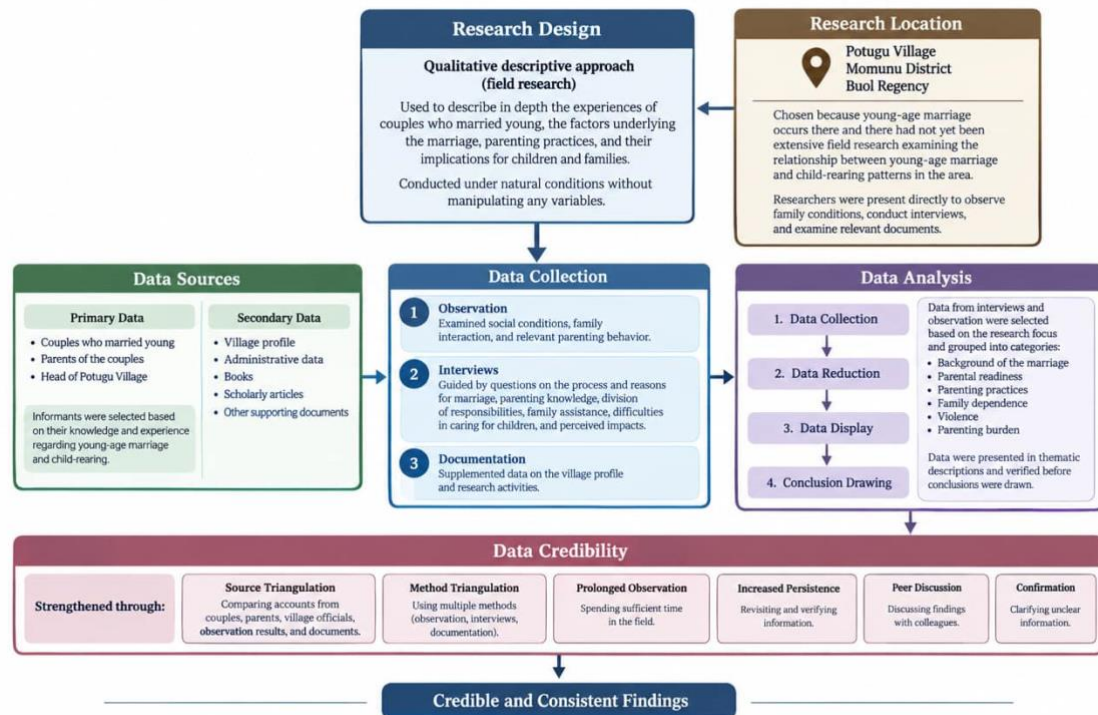


Figure 1. *Research Method Framework*

The research location was Potugu Village, Momunu District, Buol Regency. This location was chosen because young-age marriage occurs there and because there had not yet been extensive field research examining the relationship between young-age marriage and child-rearing patterns in the area. The researchers were present directly to observe family conditions, conduct interviews, and examine relevant documents.

Primary data sources were obtained from couples who married young, the parents of the couples, and the head of Potugu Village. Informants were selected based on their knowledge and experience regarding young-age marriage and child-rearing. Secondary data were obtained from the village profile, administrative data, books, scholarly articles, and other supporting documents.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to examine social conditions, family interaction, and relevant parenting behavior. Interviews were guided by questions concerning the process and reasons for marriage, parenting knowledge, the division of responsibilities, forms of

family assistance, difficulties in caring for children, and the impacts felt. Documentation was used to supplement data on the village profile and research activities.

Data analysis was carried out through four stages: data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. Data from interviews and observation were selected based on the research focus and then grouped into categories covering the background of the marriage, parental readiness, parenting practices, family dependence, violence, and the parenting burden. Data were presented in thematic descriptions and verified before conclusions were drawn.

Data credibility was strengthened through source and method triangulation, prolonged observation, increased persistence, peer discussion, and confirmation of information that remained unclear. Accounts from the couples were compared with accounts from parents, village officials, observation results, and documents. These procedures were used to increase the credibility and consistency of the findings.

Findings and Discussion

Factors Underlying Young-Age Marriage

The couples who were the focus of this study married between the ages of 14 and 19. At that age, some were still in junior or senior secondary school. Marriage caused their education to stop, and the couples entered household life before acquiring adequate skills and independence.

The first background factor was the couple's own wish. Some adolescents viewed marriage as a way to live together with someone they loved and to avoid a relationship considered to violate social norms. This decision was often made on the basis of emotion and hopes for a new life, without sufficient consideration of education, employment, household needs, and child-rearing.

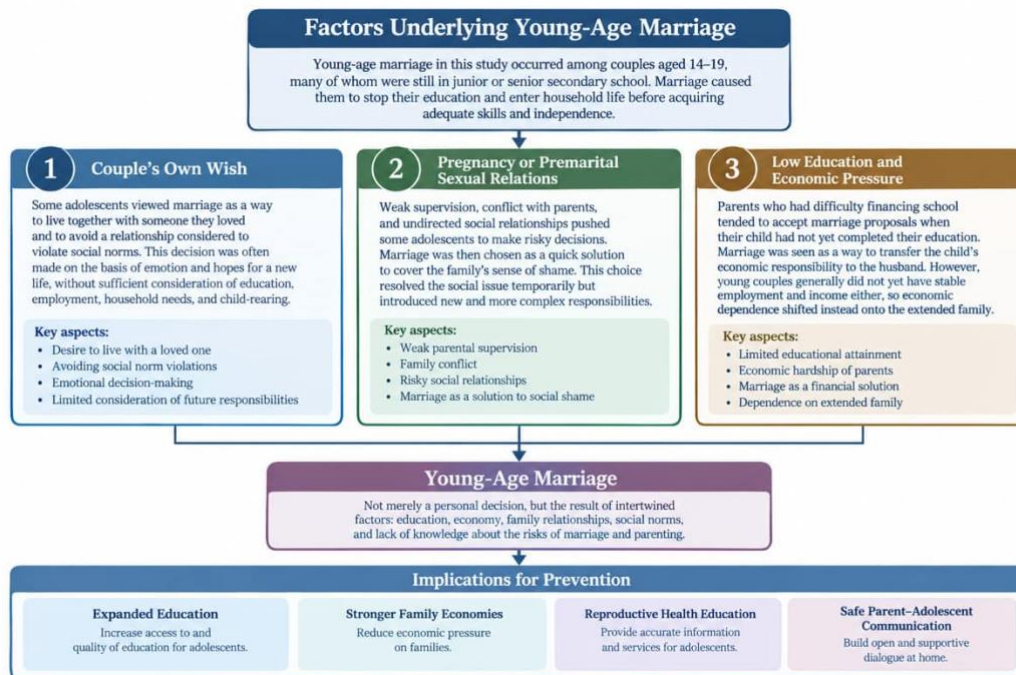


Figure 2. *Factors Underlying Young-Age Marriage*

The second background factor was pregnancy or premarital sexual relations. Weak supervision, conflict with parents, and undirected social relationships pushed some adolescents to make risky decisions. Marriage was then chosen as a quick solution to cover the family's sense of shame. This choice resolved the social issue temporarily but introduced new and more complex responsibilities.

The third background factor was low education and economic pressure. Parents who had difficulty financing school tended to accept marriage proposals when their child had not yet completed their education. Marriage was seen as a way to transfer the child's economic responsibility to the husband. However, young couples generally did not yet have stable employment and income either, so economic dependence shifted instead onto the extended family.

These findings show that young-age marriage is not merely a personal decision. It is shaped by conditions of education, economy, family relationships, and social norms, as well as a lack of knowledge about the risks of marriage and parenting. Prevention, therefore, cannot be achieved through prohibition alone. It requires

expanded education, strengthened family economies, reproductive health education, and safe communication between parents and adolescents.

Implications for Parenting Practices

After having a child, some couples stated that they were not yet able to carry out basic care independently. They still needed help from parents or parents-in-law to bathe the baby, dress it, prepare food, soothe the child, and maintain hygiene. This dependence indicates that readiness for parenthood had not yet been established when the marriage took place.

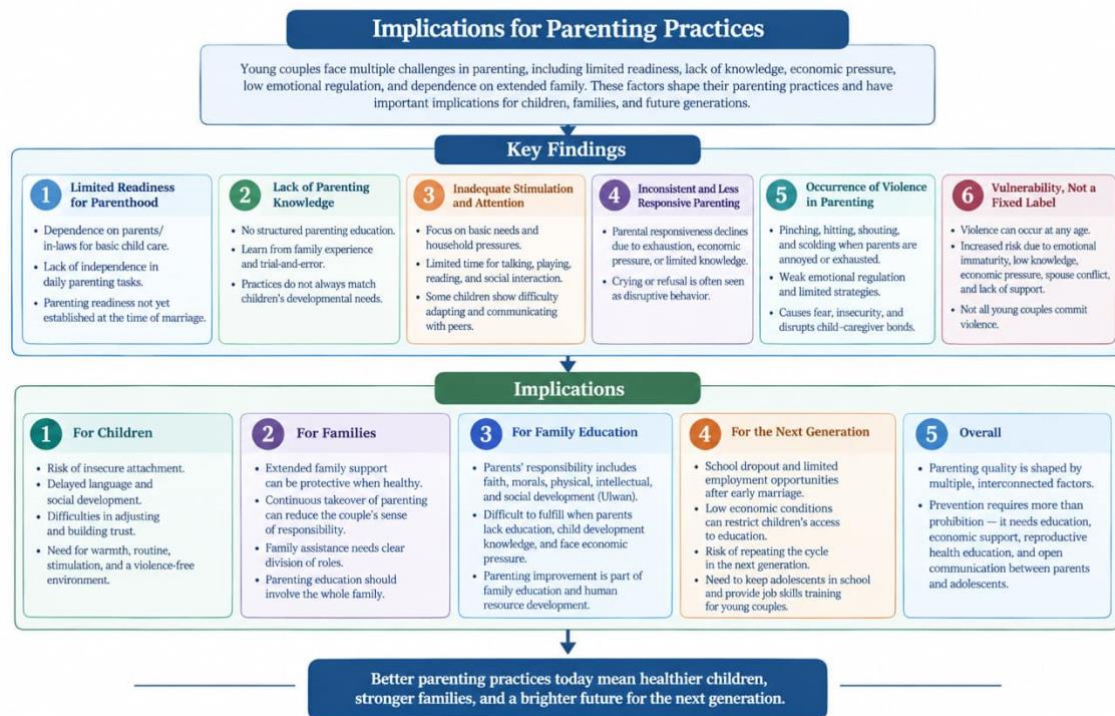


Figure 3. *Implications for Parenting Practices*

Child-rearing requires knowledge of nutritional needs, health, hygiene, safety, and language, emotional, and social development. The young couples in this study had not received structured parenting education. They tended to learn through family experience and to try to resolve problems only after difficulties arose. This approach can be helpful, but it does not always produce practices that match a child's developmental needs.

Inadequate parenting was also reflected in a lack of stimulation. When parental attention was focused on meeting basic needs and coping with household pressures, activities such as talking, playing, reading, and encouraging interaction with the child became limited. One informant described a child who had difficulty adapting and communicating with peers. This finding cannot be interpreted as a single cause-and-effect relationship, but it does point to the importance of parental involvement in a child's social and language development.

Good parenting requires both warm responsiveness and consistent rules. Hermawan (2018) explains that parental responsiveness and demandingness are important elements of parenting style. In the families of young couples, responsiveness can diminish when parents are exhausted, under economic pressure, or do not yet understand the signals of a child's needs. As a result, a child's crying or refusal is often seen as disruptive behavior rather than as communication of a need.

The most serious finding was the occurrence of pinching, hitting, shouting, and scolding of children when parents felt annoyed or exhausted. Several informants admitted that they found it difficult to calm their child and reacted physically when the child kept crying or refused to eat. These actions point to weak emotional regulation and limited strategies for dealing with a child's behavior. Violence in parenting cannot be justified as a means of disciplining a child, since young children are not yet able to understand threats and punishment the way adults do. Shouting, hitting, pinching, and neglect can generate fear, disturb a sense of security, and affect the child's relationship with the caregiver. Repetition of such actions risks creating a family environment that does not support healthy development.

Young age is not the sole cause of violence, since violence can occur among parents of any age. However, emotional immaturity, low parenting knowledge, economic pressure, conflict between spouses, and a lack of support can heighten the risk. The findings of this study should be understood as a vulnerability arising from the convergence of several factors, not as a label implying that all young couples necessarily commit violence.

Young couples are also not yet fully independent, either economically or in terms of parenting. Parents or parents-in-law provide not only housing and financial assistance but also take over various child-care tasks. In some families, the grandmother acts as the primary caregiver because the young mother is not yet skilled or still shows more of her adolescent habits. Support from the extended family can serve as a protective factor when it is given in a healthy way, since the presence of a grandmother or grandfather helps ensure the child's needs are met and gives the couple an opportunity to learn. However, continuously taking over parenting duties can hinder the development of the biological parents' sense of responsibility. In addition, extended family members who had hoped that the marriage would reduce the economic burden instead find themselves carrying an additional one. Family assistance therefore needs to be directed toward a clear division of roles. Parents or parents-in-law can provide examples and supervision, but the young couple still needs to be trained to gradually carry out their primary duties. Parenting education should involve the whole family, since parenting decisions and practices are often influenced by the older generation.

Inconsistent and less responsive parenting can affect the formation of a child's sense of security, independence, language, social behavior, and motivation to learn. Children need warm relationships, routine, stimulation, and an environment free of violence. When these needs are not met, children can experience difficulties in adjusting and in building trust. The family is the first center of education, and Ulwan emphasizes parents' responsibility for a child's education in faith, morals, physical development, intellect, and social life. This responsibility is difficult to fulfill when parents themselves have not completed their own education, do not yet understand child development, and are under economic pressure. Improving the quality of parenting therefore needs to be viewed as part of family education and human resource development.

Educational implications also arise from intergenerational patterns. Adolescents who drop out of school because of marriage have more limited employment opportunities. Low economic conditions can restrict children's access to education, so the risk of dropping out and marrying young can recur in the next generation. Breaking

this pattern requires support to keep adolescents in school and to give young couples access to further education or job skills training.

Conclusion

Young-age marriage in Potugu Village occurs between the ages of 14 and 19 and is driven by the couple's own wishes, premarital sexual relations, low education, weak parental supervision, economic pressure, and the view that marriage can reduce the family's burden. After having a child, some couples do not yet have sufficient knowledge, skills, emotional maturity, and independence to carry out parenting. They still depend on parents or parents-in-law for child care. When faced with crying, refusal to eat, and difficulties in caring for the child, responses such as anger, shouting, pinching, or hitting emerge.

The implications of young-age marriage for parenting include the risk of violence against children, a lack of developmental stimulation, an inability to carry out parenting independently, and an increased burden on the extended family. Prevention and intervention require support through education, family communication, outreach on marriage readiness, positive parenting education, health services, psychosocial assistance, and educational or vocational opportunities for young couples.

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