

# Survey of Junior High School Students' Understanding of the Impacts of Early Marriage

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## Abstract

UNICEF reports that the rate of child marriage in Indonesia remains high, reaching approximately 23 percent. This study employs a survey method at Junior High School (SMP Negeri 1 Dau) with a quantitative descriptive approach. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to all eighth-grade students, with a sample of 57 students selected randomly. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics and percentages. The results indicate that the main indicators are an increased risk of domestic violence (101.16%) and significant pressure on adolescents (103.50%). Impacts on mental and emotional health, as well as personal and social development disruptions, are also of concern to students, with scores of 98.83% and 97.07%, respectively. The majority of students are aware of the negative impacts of early marriage on education (95.32%) and economic factors (97.66%). However, many students do not fully understand that early marriage can restrict career choices (93.56%) and increase physical health risks (94.73%). These findings suggest that although there is awareness of the negative impacts of early marriage, students' understanding needs to be enhanced to achieve a more comprehensive insight.

**Keywords:** Survey; Students' Understanding; Impacts; Early Marriage

## 1. Introduction

Education is a crucial foundation for character development and the enhancement of individual potential. One significant aspect of education is guidance and counseling, which serves to assist students in addressing various personal, social, and academic issues (Prayitno, 2004). At SMP Negeri 1 Dau, guidance and counseling services are implemented through various programs designed to meet the needs of students, both individually and in groups. The development of these programs is based on a needs analysis that includes personal, social, academic, and career aspects (Khoirunnisa, Setiyowati, & Tjalla, 2013).

One significant issue faced by adolescents is early marriage. Early marriage can have negative impacts on various aspects of life, including physical and mental health, education, as well as social and economic well-being. According to Murniyetti et al. (2016), education plays a crucial role in preventing early marriage by providing the necessary knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about the future. Quality education can be an effective tool for postponing early marriage and preparing students for a better future.

In Indonesia, the phenomenon of early marriage remains a serious issue that requires special attention. UNICEF has released a report analyzing child marriage data for the first time in Indonesia. The report indicates that the rate of child marriage, or marriage before the age of 18, remains high in Indonesia, approximately 23 percent. The Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) also notes that the incidence or prevalence of child marriage is more common in rural areas, with a rate of 27.11 percent, compared to urban areas, which have a rate of 17.09 percent. Data

show that early marriage has a significant impact on the continuity of education and the well-being of young people. Therefore, it is crucial for schools to provide students with a deep understanding of the negative effects of early marriage. Offering guidance and counseling services focused on this issue can help students better comprehend the risks and consequences of early marriage and encourage them to pursue education and personal development before deciding to marry.

Early marriage is a social phenomenon that has various negative impacts on individuals and society. These impacts encompass several aspects of students' lives as follows:

1. Challenges in Continuing Education

Research indicates that early marriage often obstructs the continuation of formal education. Children who marry at a young age are more likely to drop out of school due to the responsibilities of managing a household and caring for their own children (UNICEF, 2014). This loss of educational opportunities can have long-term consequences, diminishing their ability to secure better employment prospects in the future (Nguyen & Wodon, 2015).

2. Increased Risk of Physical Health Issues

Early marriage is closely associated with an increased risk of physical health issues, particularly among adolescent girls. Those who marry and become pregnant at a young age are more vulnerable to complications during pregnancy and childbirth, such as eclampsia, infections, and anemia (WHO, 2011). Additionally, babies born to adolescent mothers also face a higher risk of infant mortality and malnutrition (Raj et al., 2009).

3. Potential to Exacerbate Poverty and Economic Conditions

Poverty often serves as both a driving factor and a consequence of early marriage. Children who marry early are frequently from impoverished and less-educated families, and such marriages often exacerbate the economic conditions of the new family. They often lack the skills or education required to secure decent employment, thus remaining trapped in the cycle of poverty (Nour, 2006).

4. Potential to Limit Career Choices

With the interruption of formal education, career choices for those who marry early become significantly limited. They typically have access only to low-wage jobs that require no specialized skills, which often do not suffice to meet the basic needs of their families (Lloyd & Mensch, 2008).

5. Increased Risk of Domestic Violence

Research indicates that early marriage increases the risk of domestic violence. Adolescents who marry young often lack the emotional and psychological readiness to handle household pressures, which can trigger physical, emotional, and sexual violence (Kidman, 2016).

6. Impact on Mental and Emotional Health

The psychological impacts of early marriage are highly significant. Adolescents who marry young often experience stress, depression, and anxiety due to having to shoulder substantial responsibilities at a very young age. They may also feel isolated due to losing opportunities to interact with peers and to experience a normal adolescence (Le Strat et al., 2011).

7. Disruption of Personal and Social Development

Early marriage hinders individual personal and social development. Those who marry young miss out on opportunities to develop social skills and experiences necessary for healthy personal growth. Limited social interactions can also impede their ability to build strong social support networks (Parsons et al., 2015).

8. Reduction in Opportunities to Achieve Dreams and Life Goals

Children who marry early often have to relinquish their dreams and life goals. They are compelled to assume roles as wives and mothers at a very young age, which diverts their focus from personal and professional achievements (Jensen & Thornton, 2003).

9. Imposing Significant Pressure and Responsibilities on Adolescents

The substantial responsibilities that adolescents who marry early must assume, such as managing a household and caring for children, can place immense pressure on them. They are often not emotionally and physically prepared to handle such burdens, which can adversely affect their overall well-being (UNFPA, 2012).

10. Increased Risk of Divorce

Statistics indicate that couples who marry at an early age have a higher risk of divorce compared to those who marry at a more mature age. Emotional maturity and readiness for marital life are often not fully developed during adolescence, leading to relationship instability and a higher likelihood of divorce (Copen et al., 2012).

This study was conducted to assess the understanding of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Dau regarding the impacts of early marriage. Through this survey, it is hoped that a clear picture of students' knowledge about early marriage and its consequences can be obtained, as well as the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programs in raising their awareness of the issue. Additionally, the results of this survey may serve as a foundation for developing more effective intervention programs to prevent early marriage among students.

Education, particularly at the junior high school level, plays a crucial role in shaping students' perspectives and attitudes toward various social issues, including early marriage. Therefore, this study aims not only to evaluate students' understanding but also to enhance the effectiveness of existing guidance and counseling programs within the school. The goal is to create a tangible positive impact on students' lives in the future.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research Design

This study employs a quantitative descriptive approach. According to Sulistyawati (2022), quantitative descriptive analysis is a research method that describes, examines, and explains a state or phenomenon objectively using numerical data, without intending to test specific hypotheses.

### 2.2. Time and Location

This study was conducted on Tuesday, May 7, 2024, via WhatsApp, using a Google Form link distributed to the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Dau.

### 2.3. Subject

The subjects of this study are all eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Dau, with a sample consisting of 57 students from classes VIII-A, VIII-B, VIII-C, VIII-D, VIII-F, and VIII-G. Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire analysis, the sample includes 18 respondents from class VIII-A, 5 respondents from class VIII-B, 13 respondents from class VIII-C, 5 respondents from class VIII-D, 11 respondents from class VIII-F, and 5 respondents from class VIII-G.

### 2.4. Research Procedure

The research began with the development of the questionnaire instrument, which involved creating an item blueprint with a total of 10 statement items. The items were then input into Google Forms and were assigned evaluation criteria: a score of 1 for "not understanding," a score of 2 for "somewhat understanding," and a score of 3 for "understanding." The next step was to distribute the Google Form link to all eighth-grade classes at SMP Negeri 1 Dau. Data collection was conducted over one week from the time the link was sent to the students.

### 2.5. Instruments and Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis conducted by the author utilizes descriptive analysis techniques to determine the level of understanding among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Dau regarding the impacts of early marriage. The calculations used in this analysis are as follows and refer to Table 1.

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Note:

P = Percentage

F = Number of Responses

N = Number of Respondents

The criteria for assessing students' understanding of the impacts of early marriage will subsequently be analyzed using the following table:

No	Criteria	Interval
1.	Low	0% - 57%
2.	Moderate	57% - 114%
3.	High	114% - 171%

**Table 1. Criteria for Assessing Students' Understanding of the Impacts of Early Marriage**

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Result

No	Indicator	Result	Category
1.	Challenges in Continuing Education	95,32%	Moderate
2.	Increased Risk of Physical Health Issues	94,73%	Moderate
3.	Potential to Exacerbate Poverty and Economic Conditions	97,66%	Moderate
4.	Potential to Limit Career Choices	93,56%	Moderate
5.	Increased Risk of Domestic Violence	101,16%	Moderate
6.	Impact on Mental and Emotional Health	98,83%	Moderate
7.	Disruption of Personal and Social Development	97,07%	Moderate
8.	Reduction in Opportunities to Achieve Dreams and Life Goals	98,83%	Moderate
9.	Imposing Significant Pressure and Responsibilities on Adolescents	103,50%	Moderate
10.	Increased Risk of Divorce	103,50%	Moderate

**Table 2. Analysis of Students' Understanding of the Impacts of Early Marriage**

#### 3.2 Discussion

The results indicate that the eighth-grade students' knowledge regarding the impacts of early marriage shows significant findings. The majority of students are aware of the various negative consequences associated with early marriage. The most prominent indicators are the increased risk of domestic violence and the significant pressure and responsibilities placed on

adolescents, with scores reaching 101.16% and 103.50%, respectively. Additionally, impacts on mental and emotional health, as well as disruptions to personal and social development, also receive serious attention from students, with scores of 98.83% and 97.07%, respectively.

The majority of students also recognize that early marriage can negatively impact education, with 95.32% acknowledging that early marriage can hinder the continuation of education. Furthermore, 97.66% of students are aware that early marriage can exacerbate poverty and economic conditions. However, there are still some indicators that students do not fully understand. For example, 93.56% of students do not completely grasp that early marriage can limit future career choices, and 94.73% have not fully comprehended that early marriage can increase the risk of physical health issues.

These results reflect a relatively good understanding among students regarding the significant impacts of early marriage on various aspects of life, including education, health, economics, and psychosocial well-being. The predominance of the "Moderate" category across each indicator suggests that while students have some awareness, further educational efforts are necessary to deepen their understanding and mitigate the risks associated with early marriage, especially concerning aspects that are not yet fully comprehended by students.

#### 4. Conclusion

The findings of the study indicate that the level of understanding among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Dau regarding the impacts of early marriage falls within the moderate category. Most students are aware of various negative consequences of early marriage, such as the increased risk of domestic violence, significant pressure on adolescents, and disruptions to mental and emotional health. However, their understanding of the impact of early marriage on future career choices and physical health risks remains insufficient. These results highlight the need for further and more intensive educational efforts to deepen students' understanding of the long-term effects of early marriage, enabling them to make more informed and prudent decisions about their futures. Through more effective guidance and counseling programs, schools can assist students in comprehensively understanding the risks of early marriage, with the ultimate goal of reducing its prevalence among adolescents and encouraging them to focus on education and personal development.

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