

IMPLEMENTATION OF PRE-MARITAL GUIDANCE REGULATIONS AS AN EFFORT TO PREVENT EARLY MARRIAGE IN EAST LOMBOK REGENCY

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Abstract

The problem of early marriage in East Lombok is a complex issue because it is influenced by social, cultural, economic, and community legal literacy factors. This study aims to analyze the gap between the policy design of Premarital Guidance in the Regulation of the Director General of Islamic Guidance No. 373 of 2020 and its implementation practice in the working area of the Ministry of Religion of East Lombok Regency. The research uses a qualitative approach based on literature studies through regulatory reviews, implementation reports, and relevant literature, which are analyzed using content and thematic analysis techniques. The results show that the effectiveness of the policy is still limited because the approach applied is not fully adaptive to the socio-cultural context and religious values of the local community. The novelty of this research lies in the emphasis on the integration of Islamic legal approaches that are beneficial, education based on local wisdom, and community participation in the design and implementation of premarital guidance. Theoretically, this study enriches the study of Islamic family law policy by placing premarital guidance as a prevention instrument based on social justice and child protection. This research contributes to the development of the study of Islamic family law by emphasizing the importance of cultural and participatory approaches in the implementation of state policies. The implications of the study confirm the need for a transformative, inclusive, and consistent premarital guidance policy reformulation to strengthen efforts to prevent early marriage in East Lombok.

Keywords: *Early Marriage; Premarital Counselling; Policy Implementation; East Lombok*

Abstrak

Permasalahan pernikahan usia dini di Lombok Timur merupakan isu yang kompleks karena dipengaruhi faktor sosial, budaya, ekonomi, serta tingkat literasi hukum masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis kesenjangan antara desain kebijakan Bimbingan Pranikah dalam Peraturan Dirjen Bimas Islam No. 373 Tahun 2020 dengan praktik implementasinya di wilayah kerja

Kementerian Agama Kabupaten Lombok Timur. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi pustaka melalui telaah regulasi, laporan implementasi, dan literatur relevan, yang dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis konten dan tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa efektivitas kebijakan masih terbatas karena pendekatan yang diterapkan belum sepenuhnya adaptif terhadap konteks sosio-kultural dan nilai keagamaan masyarakat setempat. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada penegasan pentingnya integrasi pendekatan hukum Islam yang bersifat maslahat, edukasi berbasis kearifan lokal, serta partisipasi komunitas dalam desain dan implementasi bimbingan pranikah. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini memperkaya kajian kebijakan hukum keluarga Islam dengan menempatkan bimbingan pranikah sebagai instrumen pencegahan berbasis keadilan sosial dan perlindungan anak. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan kajian hukum keluarga Islam dengan menekankan pentingnya pendekatan kultural dan partisipatif dalam implementasi kebijakan negara. Implikasi penelitian menegaskan perlunya reformulasi kebijakan bimbingan pranikah yang transformatif, inklusif, dan selaras dengan prinsip maqashid al-syariah untuk memperkuat upaya pencegahan pernikahan usia dini di Lombok Timur.

Kata Kunci: Pernikahan Dini; Bimbingan Pranikah; Implementasi Kebijakan; Lombok Timur

Introduction

Marriage is a sacred institution that serves as the starting point for the formation of a family as the smallest unit in society.¹ In the ideal teachings of religion, particularly Islam, marriage is not only understood as a physical bond between a man and a woman, but also as a spiritual bond full of responsibility, spiritual, emotional, social, and economic maturity.² Marriage undertaken with both physical and spiritual readiness becomes the main foundation for building a family that is *sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah*.

وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتَامَىٰ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغُوا النِّكَاحَ فَإِنْ آنَسْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ رُشْدًا فَادْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ...

"And test the orphans until they reach marriageable age. Then, if you deem them competent (sane and mature), hand over their possessions to them..."(QS. An-Nisā' [4]: 6)

¹ Nova Sari Siregar, "Peran Pendidikan Pra Nikah Dalam Membangun Kesiapan Menikah dan Membentuk Keluarga Sakinah di Lembaga Klinik Nikah" KLIK" Cabang Kota Medan" (Skripsi, Jakarta, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2022), 34.

² Nasrul Ritonga, "Perkawinan Di Bawah Umur Akibat Sanksi Lambat Mulak Margandak Di Kab. Padang Lawas Utara Perspektifundangundang Nonor 16 Tahun 2019" (Disertasi, Riau, Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, 2024), 32.

The verse indicates that to undertake a marriage, biological maturity alone is not sufficient; it must be accompanied by mental maturity (al-rushd) before one assumes the responsibilities of family life.

The state, through official regulations, also recognises the importance of marriage being conducted responsibly and with careful planning, as stipulated in Law Number 1 of 1974. Law Number 16 of 2019 on Marriage explicitly raises the minimum marriageable age for women from 16 to 19 years, in order to mitigate various negative impacts of early marriage practices.³

As a proactive and educational measure, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has also developed a Marriage Guidance programme for Prospective Brides and Grooms (Catin) as regulated in the Regulation of the Director General of Islamic Guidance No. 373 of 2020.⁴ However, empirically, the practice of child marriage remains high in West Nusa Tenggara. Data from BPS shows a rate of 17.32%, with East Lombok Regency being one of the areas with prominent cases. The driving factors include economic conditions, low levels of education, socio-cultural pressure, and the perception that marriage is a solution to adolescent problems. Many marriage dispensation applications are still being submitted, particularly involving girls under the age of 19 who are not yet physically and mentally ready.⁵

East Lombok Regency is one of the regions facing serious issues concerning child marriage practices. Culturally, the communities in this area have a deeply rooted value system that favours early marriage. This tradition is reinforced by various factors, including weak economic conditions, low levels of education, social pressure, and a culture that views marriage as a solution to the challenges faced by adolescents. Data from the Religious Court and the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of East Lombok Regency in recent years indicates that applications for marriage dispensation remain relatively high.⁶

Child marriage has wide-ranging impacts, from maternal and child health risks, school dropouts, economic vulnerability, to high rates of divorce and domestic violence. This practice can also hinder the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of premarital counselling as a policy instrument for preventing

³ Hamsah Hudafi, "Pembentukan Keluarga Sakinah Mawaddah Warahmah menurut Undang – Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 1974 dan Kompilasi Hukum Islam," *Al Hurriyah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 5, no. 2 (31 Desember 2020): 72, <https://doi.org/10.30983/alhurriyah.v5i2.3647>.

⁴ Arditya Prayogi dan Muhammad Jauhari, "Bimbingan Perkawinan Calon Pengantin: Upaya Mewujudkan Ketahanan Keluarga Nasional," *Islamic Counseling: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam* 5, no. 2 (7 November 2021): 223, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jbk.v5i2.3267>.

⁵ Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat, "Pernikahan Usia Dini" (Nusa Tenggara Barat, 2025), <https://ntb.bps.go.id/id>.

⁶ Pengadilan Agama Selong, "Dispensasi Pernikahan dibawah umur" (Lombok Timur, 2025), <https://pa-selong.go.id/>.

child marriage is needed, particularly in East Lombok, which has a high level of vulnerability.

This issue has previously attracted the attention of several researchers. Firstly, research conducted by Muchamad Habi Hendarso et al. indicates that the success of pre-marriage counselling programmes largely depends on the methods employed and the readiness of facilitators to deliver the material in an interactive and relevant manner for the prospective couples.⁷ Rizky Amelia and colleagues then studied the low understanding of adolescents regarding reproductive health issues, which is caused by a lack of education in both school and family environments, making them vulnerable to being pushed towards early marriage decisions.⁸ Wike Nur Lutfiana in her research indicates that the role of religious counsellors in delivering pre-marriage guidance material is very strategic, but hindered by limited human resources and the brief duration of its implementation.⁹ Furthermore, the research by Wirani Aisiyah Anwar et al. highlights the existence of social resistance to the implementation of premarital counselling, particularly in communities still strongly influenced by traditional values that regard early marriage as normal and not requiring state intervention.¹⁰ Adelia Winda Hapsari and colleagues stated that the lack of involvement of customary and religious leaders in the premarital guidance programme resulted in the material presented not being fully accepted by the community, especially in rural areas.¹¹

Although these five studies make important contributions to understanding the issues of early marriage and premarital guidance, most still have limitations in their approach, which tends to be generally descriptive and has not yet been able to reveal the complex local dynamics in depth. Research that specifically traces how premarital guidance regulations are implemented at the sub-district or village level is still very limited. Few studies have fully answered questions about who the actors involved in the implementation of this programme are, how the synergy between institutions such as the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), the Health Service, educational institutions,

⁷ Muchamad Habi Hendarso, Linda Firdawaty, dan Ariel Alvi Zahry, "Efektivitas Program Konseling Pra-Nikah dalam Mengurangi Konflik Rumah Tangga: Studi Perbandingan di Indonesia, Malaysia, dan Uni Emirat Arab," *Bulletin of Islamic Law* 2, no. 1 (2025): 1–20.

⁸ Rizka Amelia dkk., "Kesadaran Pelajar Sman 1 Gunung Tuleh Pada Dampak Kesehatan Dan Hukum Perdata Dalam Mencegah Pernikahan Dini Melalui Edukasi Pemberdayaan Peran Keluarga," *HUMANITIS: Jurnal Homaniora, Sosial dan Bisnis* 3, no. 4 (2025): 798–810.

⁹ Wike Nur Lutfiana, Tial Widhiyaningrum, dan Andhita Risko Faristiana, "Remaja Dan Hubungan Seks Pra Nikah," *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Kebudayaan Dan Agama* 1, no. 3 (2023): 21–30.

¹⁰ Wirani Aisiyah Anwar dkk., "A Perkawinan Dini di Era Modern: Analisis Relevansi, Tantangan Penetapan dan Implementasi Batas Minimal Usia Nikah," *DIKTUM* 1, no. 1 (2024): 45–69.

¹¹ Adelia Winda Hapsari, Ade Nur Atika Sari, dan Achmad Nasrulloh, "Strategi Psikologi Komunikasi Mengurangi Pernikahan Dini Untuk Meningkatkan Kemakmuran Pada Kelurahan Teluk Dalam Banjarmasin," *Jurnal Mutakallimin: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 7, no. 1 (2024): 88.

community leaders, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) is formed, and what the actual obstacles and challenges they face in practice are.

Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in its evaluative and contextual approach to the implementation of premarital guidance policies as a preventive strategy to reduce the incidence of early marriage, with a particular focus on local dynamics in East Lombok Regency. This study not only describes the phenomenon but also analyses the effectiveness, quality, and sustainability of the premarital guidance programme implementation based on the unique socio-cultural realities of the local community. With this approach, the research is expected to provide a more comprehensive and realistic picture of how national policies interact with local cultural structures, as well as how value adaptation and negotiation processes occur within a rural community context.

This research occupies an important position at the intersection of public policy, gender studies, family education, and public health. It reflects the understanding that child marriage is not merely an individual issue, but a structural one involving various aspects, ranging from the education system, cultural and religious values, state policy, to the economic conditions of the community. The approach used in this study consciously integrates regulatory, educational, and cultural perspectives to produce an analysis that is not only theoretical but also applicable in formulating policy interventions that are more contextual and responsive to community needs.

Research Methods

This research employs a library research method with a qualitative approach.¹² The research focuses on examining Pre-Marriage Guidance policies as a strategy to prevent early marriage through the investigation and analysis of various written sources. The data sources include government regulations, institutional documents, journal articles, research reports, and official publications from relevant agencies. The use of this method enables the researcher to obtain a comprehensive overview of the normative foundations, implementation dynamics, and local context in East Lombok Regency.

Data collection techniques are carried out through the identification and selection of various relevant written sources, including legislation, technical policies of ministries or related agencies, institutional reports, field practice documents, and academic literature.

The data obtained were analysed using content analysis and thematic analysis methods. This approach allows researchers to identify the main themes emerging from documents and literature, such as the effectiveness of premarital counselling implementation, the role of local actors (such as religious

¹² Yogi Sopian Haris dan Betty Mauli Rosa Bustam, "Reconciliation Amongst Islamic-Based Groups as a Solution to the Tolerance Issue and the Accomplishment of Religious Moderation in Indonesia," *Jurnal SMART (Studi Masyarakat, Religi, dan Tradisi)* 10, no. 2 (2024): 141–54.

advisors, community leaders, and village officials), and the challenges of implementation in the field.

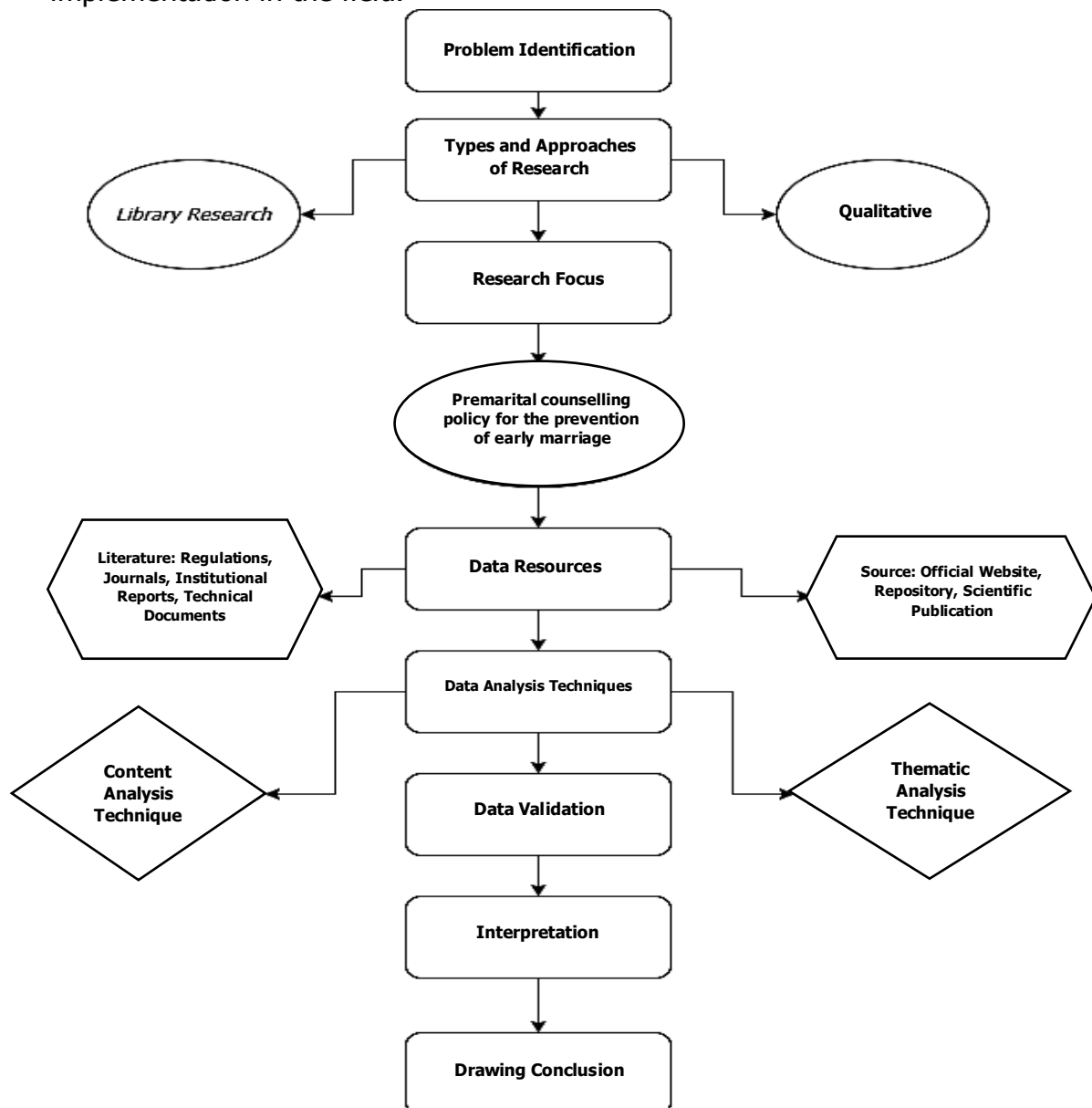


Image 1. Research Framework

The primary focus of this study is to evaluate the extent to which premarital guidance policies are truly implemented at the local level, who the actors involved in their implementation are, how inter-agency coordination patterns function, and what obstacles and challenges are encountered. Thus, the method used in this research is expected to produce findings that are relevant, meaningful, and applicable in efforts to prevent early marriage in areas with distinctive cultural challenges such as East Lombok.

The Phenomenon of Early Marriage in East Lombok

East Lombok, as one of the regencies with the highest population in West Nusa Tenggara Province, faces serious challenges regarding the practice of early marriage. According to data from the official website of the NTB Provincial Government, the child marriage rate in this area reaches 21%, exceeding the provincial average of 17.32%.¹³ This figure represents more than just statistics; it indicates a socio-cultural reality that has become deeply ingrained in the lives of the local community. Early marriage is not only seen as commonplace, but is also often regarded as a form of social achievement or even a solution to various family issues.

Structural factors such as poverty are one of the main driving forces. In a weak economic condition, girls are often seen as an economic burden that must be promptly "resolved" through marriage.¹⁴ This approach reflects a pragmatic survival strategy amid limited family resources. Many families believe that marrying off their daughters as early as possible will ease financial burdens and simultaneously provide social protection, particularly from the stigma of promiscuity or the shame of premarital pregnancy.

In addition to economic factors, the low level of education among the community also reinforces this practice. A lack of critical literacy regarding children's rights and reproductive health leads many parents and adolescents to not understand the negative impacts of early marriage, whether in terms of health, psychological, or social aspects.¹⁵ Limited access to information, particularly in rural areas that have not yet been reached by adequate digital infrastructure, makes the process of education and awareness very restricted.

Culturally, the people of East Lombok still uphold traditional values that regard marriage as a symbol of family honour. There is a strong belief that the sooner a daughter marries, the higher her esteem in the eyes of society.¹⁶ Such traditions not only operate symbolically but are also supported by patriarchal social structures. In this context, family authority, particularly that of the father or male relatives, plays a significant role in decision-making concerning the future of daughters.

This reality indicates that early marriage is not merely an individual issue, but part of a complex social construct. Therefore, a legal-formal approach such

¹³ "Pernikahan Usia Dini."

¹⁴ Lalu Ulung Ilham, "Efektivitas Peran Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan Dan Perlindungan Anak Dalam Mencegah Tindak Kekerasan Pada Perempuan Dan Anak Di Kota Mataram Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat," *Journal of Government and Politics (JGOP)* 1, no. 1 (2019): 5.

¹⁵ Budi Setiawan, "Tantangan Hukum dan Perlindungan Hak Anak: Analisis Perkawinan Anak di Bawah Umur," *As-Syar'i: Jurnal Bimbingan & Konseling Keluarga* 6, no. 2 (2024): 1915–24.

¹⁶ Diniyati Diniyati, "Nilai Dalam Tradisi Berapeq Pernikahan Pada Masyarakat Desa Kalijaga Kecamatan Aikmel Kabupaten Lombok Timur," *Berajah Journal* 2, no. 2 (12 April 2022): 247–56, <https://doi.org/10.47353/bj.v2i2.84>.

as the implementation of Law Number 16 of 2019 on minimum marriage age, although important, is not sufficiently effective in reducing this practice if it is not complemented by cultural and educational strategies oriented towards value transformation.¹⁷ Public education on the importance of education, reproductive health, and children's rights must be conducted in a participatory manner involving traditional leaders, religious figures, teachers, and women's groups at the local level.

Furthermore, the role of educational institutions is also highly significant in shaping the awareness of young generations. Schools, both formal and non-formal, need to strengthen curricula based on gender and children's rights, as well as create inclusive spaces for discussion regarding the future of adolescents and their life choices.¹⁸ In this context, the integration of structural (policy), cultural (local values), and educational (critical education) approaches becomes a necessity in addressing early marriage in East Lombok.

Implementation of Premarital Guidance Regulations within the Framework of Maqashid Al-Shariah

Since the issuance of the Regulation of the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance No. 373 of 2020 by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia concerning Guidelines for Marriage Guidance for Prospective Brides and Grooms, this policy is normatively intended to serve as a preventive instrument in reducing the risks of early-age marriage, domestic violence, early divorce, as well as other social problems arising from unpreparedness in managing household life.¹⁹

This premarital guidance essentially covers a fairly comprehensive range of material. The content provided includes spiritual and moral dimensions, such as reinforcing religious values within the family; psychosocial dimensions, such as communication skills and conflict resolution; and health dimensions, particularly concerning reproductive health and family planning.²⁰ Conceptually, this model aligns with the preventive family education approach, which emphasises the importance of family education before entering the marriage

¹⁷ lucky Bagus Setiawan, "Membuka Mata: Realitas Pernikahan Dini Di Indonesia Yang Memprihatinkan," *Jurnal Post*, 2024, <https://jurnalpost.com/read/membuka-mata-realitas-pernikahan-dini-di-indonesia-yang-memprihatinkan/15530/>.

¹⁸ Ahmad Qadir dkk., "Pentingnya Pendidikan Bagi Generas Muda Dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan," *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia* 3, no. 11 (24 November 2022): 1023–1033, <https://doi.org/10.36418/japendi.v3i11.1289>.

¹⁹ Hajar, "Nilai Kearifan Lokal Dalam Bimbingan Perkawinan Pada Kementerian Agama Kabupaten Luwu" (Doctoral Disertation, Palopo, Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Palopo, 2023), 79.

²⁰ Muhammad Khoirur Rofiq dkk., "Pembinaan Pranikah dalam Mencegah Pernikahan Usia Dini," *Jurnal Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat* 4, no. 2 (2024).

phase.²¹ However, there is a significant gap between the ideal concept and the practical reality.

In regions such as East Lombok, the implementation of premarital guidance faces various obstacles. According to data from the East Lombok Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Religious Court, requests for marriage dispensation, particularly for those under the age of 19, have continued to increase over the past three years.²² This indicates that the existence of the guidance programme has not yet been able to effectively change the public's paradigm regarding the importance of marriage readiness, nor to curb the practice of early marriage which is already deeply rooted socially and culturally.

One of the main issues lies in the implementation pattern, which tends to be administratively formal rather than serving as a transformative educational platform. Many premarital counselling activities are conducted only for a short duration, using a one-way lecture method with minimal participant engagement.²³ One of the main issues lies in the implementation pattern, which tends to be administratively formal rather than serving as a transformative educational platform. Many premarital counselling activities are conducted only for a short duration, using a one-way lecture method with minimal participant engagement.

This situation is exacerbated by the lack of adaptation of guidance materials to the local socio-cultural context. The people of East Lombok have distinctive value systems and traditions, such as the practice of merariq (elopement), which often serves as a cultural justification for child marriage. When guidance materials are not integrated with relevant local narratives, their educational message is difficult to fully comprehend²⁴.

On the other hand, family policy literature in Indonesia mentions that the effectiveness of premarital counselling depends on inter-agency synergy. A study by Kiki Endah and Windu Abdul Kholiq (2019) emphasised that the success of this programme is largely determined by coordination between the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A), educational institutions, and civil society organisations.²⁵

²¹ Zulkarnaen Zulkarnaen dkk., "Formulasi Pembekalan Pra Nikah bagi Generasi Z: Pendekatan Konseptual untuk Penguatan Ketahanan Keluarga di Era Digital," *Sulawesi Tenggara Educational Journal* 5, no. 1 (2025): 148–59.

²² "Dispensasi Pernikahan dibawah umur."

²³ M Djakfar Hasbi dan Teuku Amnar Saputra, "Media Online Dalam Melaksanakan Bimbingan Pra Nikah Era New Normal" 3, no. 1 (2023).

²⁴ Susiana Minawati dan Moh Gamal Rindarjono, "Pola Keruangan Budaya Merariq Masyarakat Lombok Timur (Implementasinya Sebagai Pengayaan Pembelajaran Geografi Kelas XI Pada Pokok Bahasan Budaya Nasional dan Interaksi Global)" 3, no. 1 (2017): 35.

²⁵ Kiki Endah dan Windu Abdul Kholiq, "Pelaksanaan Program Kampung Keluarga Berencana Oleh Dinas Keluarga Berencana, Pemberdayaan Perempuan Dan Perlindungan Anak (Kbp3a) Dalam Mewujudkan Kehidupan Masyarakat Sejahtera (Studi Desa Babakan Kecamatan Pangandaran Kabupaten Pangandaran)," *Jurnal MODERAT* 5, no. 2 (2019): 109.

However, at the sub-district and village levels in East Lombok, cross-sector coordination is still suboptimal. Many villages do not yet have trained facilitators or local cadres to deliver guidance materials using a participatory and community-based approach.

In response to these challenges, some literature suggests that premarital guidance models should be expanded in scope, both in terms of actors and methods. Guidance should not only be provided to prospective brides and grooms, but also to families, religious leaders, and local communities that have a strong influence on marriage culture.²⁶ This approach is known as the whole community approach, which emphasises the importance of collective involvement of social actors in preventing early marriage.

In addition, the transformation of premarital counselling into digital platforms or blended learning is also beginning to emerge as an alternative discourse.²⁷ Amid limited access and time, online training can serve as an effective complement if combined with contextual and participatory face-to-face training. However, this certainly requires strengthening information technology capacity in rural areas.

Thus, premarital guidance policies indeed have a strong normative foundation and a relevant strategic vision. However, their effectiveness as a tool for preventing early marriage largely depends on their ability to be translated into local programmes that are contextual, participatory, and cross-sectoral. In East Lombok, a reconstruction of the approach is required, involving customary community leaders and religious figures, as well as innovation in learning methods, to ensure that this programme genuinely impacts the transformation of societal paradigms and behaviours regarding marriage readiness.

From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, strengthening premarital guidance is fundamentally in line with the objectives of safeguarding religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), as it seeks to prevent the emergence of marriages that pose high risks to the welfare of family and children. Within this framework, the state, through premarital guidance policies, performs the function of a guardian of public affairs (*walī al-amr*) obligated to close the doors of harm (*sadd al-dharī'ah*) by ensuring that every marriage is conducted thoughtfully, responsibly, and oriented towards the public good (*maṣlaḥah 'āmmah*).

²⁶ Feky Manuputty, Afdhal Afdhal, dan Nathalia Debby Makaruku, "Membangun Keluarga Harmonis: Kombinasi Nilai Adat Dan Agama Di Negeri Hukurila, Maluku," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora* 13, no. 1 (2024): 93–102.

²⁷ Adiesti Mutia Ayu Fadhila, "Prinsip Toleransi Layanan Umat; Blended Learning Bimbingan Pranikah sebagai Model Pembelajaran Aplikatif," *Jurnal Bimas Islam* 15, no. 1 (t.t.): 108, jurnalbimasislam.kemenag.go.id/index.php/jbi.

The Role of the State, Customary Practices, and Religious Authorities in Preventing Child Marriage in East Lombok

The issue of early-age marriage is not only a demographic and health concern, but also involves social-cultural complexities, gender inequalities, and unequal access to education and information.²⁸ In order to comprehensively address this issue, the implementation of pre-marital guidance policies as a preventive measure requires the involvement of various stakeholders, including government authorities, civil society, and local indigenous communities.

a. Office of Religious Affairs (KUA): Between Authority and Capacity Limitations

As the spearhead in the implementation of premarital counselling, the KUA plays a central role in designing and delivering educational materials to prospective brides and grooms. The KUA is also responsible for verifying the age of the prospective spouses and educating them about their readiness to enter into marriage.²⁹ Nevertheless, based on data from several Office of Religious Affairs in East Lombok, there are still serious obstacles regarding the number of extension workers, limited operational budgets, and insufficient relevant training for religious extension workers.

b. Health Department: Opportunities for Integrating Reproductive Health Materials That Have Not Been Optimised

Premarital guidance should ideally not only address religious and social aspects, but also include understanding of reproductive health, physical and psychological readiness, as well as family planning.³⁰ In this regard, the Health Department actually holds a strategic position to contribute in developing and delivering educational and scientific material concerning body anatomy, the risks of early pregnancy, and reproductive rights.

c. Educational Institutions: A Critical Space for Early Intervention

Schools, as institutions closest to adolescent age, should play an active role in providing pre-marriage education and strengthening adolescents' capacity to make rational decisions regarding their future.³¹ However, to date there is no national curriculum that explicitly regulates premarital education at the school level. The opportunity to include such

²⁸ Mohd Khudry Mz, Ramlah Ramlah, dan Halimah Dja'far, "Dampak Pernikahan Dini Dan Hubungannya Dengan Tingkat Perceraian (Studi di Kecamatan Ranah Pembarap, Kabupaten Merangin)," *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research* 5, no. 2 (2025): 1381–95.

²⁹ Widya Alfiani, "Strategi Komunikasi Penyuluh Agama Dalam Bimbingan Perkawinan Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19 Di Kantor Urusan Agama (Kua) Pesanggrahan Jakarta Selatan" (Skripsi, Jakarta, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2022), 79.

³⁰ Arifa Usman dkk., *Buku Ajar Asuhan Kebidanan Pra-Nikah Dan Pra-Konsepsi* (Jawa Timur: Fatima Press, 2023), 69.

³¹ Fitri Hajar Purnama dan Santoso Tri Raharjo, "Peran Sekolah Dan Perilaku Remaja (The Role of School and Behaviour of Adolescents)," *Prosiding Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat* 5, no. 3 (30 Januari 2019): 205, <https://doi.org/10.24198/jppm.v5i3.18631>.

material is limited only to Islamic Religious Education or Guidance and Counselling lessons.

A study by Arman Bin Anuar (2025) shows that school-based premarital education is more effective in fostering adolescents' critical awareness if conducted in a dialogic and contextual atmosphere.³² However, implementing this model requires teacher training, curriculum updates, and policy support from the Education Department. In East Lombok, several private schools with a pesantren basis have begun integrating marriage education into extracurricular activities, but its coverage is still limited and not yet standardised.

d. Traditional and Religious Leaders: Social Agents with Moral Authority

In the society of East Lombok, which still strongly upholds customary and religious values, community leaders hold a strategic position in conveying norms and shaping public perception. The practice of merariq kodong, or elopement without parental consent, still occurs frequently and is seen by some teenagers as a form of "proof of love".³³ In such cases, customary leaders are often asked for their opinions and participate in mediating family conflicts.

Arifah (2022) emphasises that the success of a preventive approach to child marriage largely depends on the involvement of traditional and religious leaders in educational narratives.³⁴ They must be made active partners, not merely objects of policy socialisation. One successful programme is the training of religious leaders by the NGO Rumah Kita, which produced a preaching module on the dangers of early marriage from the perspective of Islam as rahmatan lil 'alamin.

e. Religious Instructors: Need for Competence Strengthening and a Participatory Approach

Religious counsellors, both formal and non-formal, play an important role as primary facilitators in premarital guidance. However, the quality of counselling varies significantly, depending on their educational background, experience, and training received. One-way lecture methods still dominate guidance sessions, even though participants' needs are more complex and require an experiential learning approach involving dialogue, case studies, and value reflection.

³² Arman Bin Anuar, "Meningkatkan Kesadaran Remaja Tentang Bahaya Pernikahan Dini Melalui Pendekatan Bimbingan Islami Di Mts Swasta Waburensen Buton Tengah," *Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat Patikala* 4, no. 4 (2025): 1354–59.

³³ Susiana Minawati dan Moh Gamal Rindarjono, "Pola Keruangan Budaya Merariq Masyarakat Lombok Timur (Implementasinya Sebagai Pengayaan Pembelajaran Geografi Kelas XI Pada Pokok Bahasan Budaya Nasional dan Interaksi Global)" 3, no. 1 (2017): 36.

³⁴ Rahmah Nur, "Perkawinan Di Bawah Umur (Analisis Terhadap Tugas, Fungsi Dan Peran Pemerintah Dalam Mengatasi Perkawinan Di Bawah Umur Pada Masyarakat Islam Kota Manado)" (Doctoral Disertation, Manado, IAIN Manado, 2021), 90.

Agni Rahmah Fadilah (2024) recommends the need for training in participatory methods and intercultural approaches for extension workers, so that they are able to address the dynamics of multicultural and multigenerational communities.³⁵ In East Lombok, extension workers who have undergone training based on the BKKBN life skill for marriage module demonstrate better performance in building relationships with participants.

Thus, it can be understood that the success of the premarital guidance programme as a strategy to prevent early marriage in East Lombok does not solely depend on the existence of regulations, but is highly determined by institutional capacity, cross-sector partnerships, and collective awareness to undertake value transformation.

Evaluation and Theoretical Implications of Premarital Guidance as an Effort to Prevent Early Marriage in East Lombok

This study provides an in-depth overview of the role of premarital counselling as a preventive tool against child marriage practices, particularly in regions with complex cultural and social dynamics such as East Lombok. Although normatively this programme is regulated at the national level and supported by religious institutions such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the reality of its implementation shows a gap between the ideal objectives and the practice on the ground.

From an evaluative perspective, premarital guidance essentially has great potential as an educational vehicle capable of equipping prospective spouses with fundamental understanding of family life, the rights and duties of husband and wife, reproductive health, as well as family future planning.³⁶ However, this potential has not yet been optimally realised due to several structural, cultural, and institutional constraints as previously described. In other words, the presence of premarital guidance as a preventive instrument remains latent and has not fully become an agent of change in addressing child marriage.

The evaluation of the implementation shows that a policy reformulation has become an urgent need. Some aspects that require attention can be seen in the following table.

³⁵ Agni Rahmah Fadilah, "Strategi Pencegahan Pernikahan Dini Melalui Edukasi Dan Pemberdayaan Anak Di Pedesaan," *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Non Formal*, 2024, 106.

³⁶ Winny Kirana Hasanah dkk., "Analisis Pelaksanaan Edukasi Pranikah Terkait Kesehatan Reproduksi Pada Pasangan Calon Pengantin Muslim (Literature Review)," *HEARTY* 10, no. 2 (2022): 53–66.

Table 1. Evaluation and Solutions

Strategic Aspects	Description	Concrete Implementation
Facilitator Capacity Building	Improving the competence of facilitators is key to building educational and dialogic communication with prospective brides and grooms. Facilitators who have a deep understanding of the local cultural context will be more effective in delivering relevant and contextual material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular training in participatory methodology • Facilitator certification and accreditation • Formation of a cross-sector facilitator forum (KUA, Health Office, NGOs, academics)
Adaptation of Material Based on Local Wisdom	National premarital counselling material needs to be adapted to the local cultural context so that educational messages can be received more widely. This approach strengthens the programme's acceptability and avoids cultural resistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of local modules based on Sasak culture • Involvement of traditional and religious leaders as resource persons • The use of local languages in extension programmes
Integration with the Education and Child Protection System	To strengthen the preventive impact, premarital counselling must be integrated with the formal education system and child protection policies. This extends the reach of education from adolescence and creates synergy among related institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of reproductive health and family education curriculum in junior and senior high schools • Partnership with the Child Protection Agency • Collaboration with NGOs for child marriage prevention campaigns

Theoretically, the findings of this study affirm the importance of synergy between structural and cultural approaches in the design and implementation of public policy. Conventional public policy theory tends to emphasise regulatory and administrative aspects, but in social contexts such as East Lombok, this approach is insufficient. Thus, integration with a socio-cultural

approach that views the community as active subjects with values, norms, and practices deeply rooted in daily life is required.

Conclusion

Child marriage in East Lombok is a socio-cultural phenomenon influenced by economic, educational, and traditional factors. The Pre-Marriage Guidance policy as regulated in the Director General of Islamic Guidance Regulation No. 373 of 2020 actually has a strong foundation as a preventive instrument. However, its effectiveness is still limited as it has not fully adapted to the local context and tends to be administrative. Therefore, the prevention of child marriage needs to be carried out through a more holistic, participatory, and community-based approach, involving religious leaders, traditional authorities, educational institutions, and women's organisations.

Theoretically, this study affirms that strengthening premarital guidance aligns with *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, particularly the protection of life, intellect, and progeny. In this context, the state acts as *wali al-amr*, obliged to prevent harm through socially beneficial policy design. Normatively, it is recommended to strengthen a culturally responsive and *maqāṣid*-based premarital guidance curriculum, enhance facilitator competencies using an andragogical approach, establish cross-sector partnerships, and conduct program evaluations that measure reductions in child marriage. The implications of this study for the reform of Islamic family law in Indonesia underscore the need to understand premarital guidance as an integral part of child protection and family resilience strengthening, thereby reinforcing its role in the national Islamic family law system in the future.

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