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# Maturity as a Parameter of Readiness and Prevention of Early Marriage Risks: Medical and Sociological Review of Family Law

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## **Abstract:**

The problem that often occurs in early marriages is that they often experience arguments that stem from maturity issues. This has a huge effect on household harmony. Many young couples when faced with a problem, avoid it instead of solving it due to a lack of maturity. The researcher is a field researcher using a qualitative descriptive approach. This research was conducted in



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Punggur Subdistrict. The research findings are the parameters of women's maturity in family sociology, the age limit for marriage is 21 years for men and 18 years for women. Meanwhile, according to medical opinion, the maturity of women to marry by assessing the level of maturity of men and women to enter into marriage shows the age range above 20 years and above for women and 25 years for men. This is because getting married at the age of 20 in terms of health and psychological readiness is less risky, the fertility rate is higher and the eggs produced are good to reduce the risk of uterine cancer.

**Keywords:**

Maturity, Marriage Readiness, Family Sociology, Early Marriage

**Abstrak**

Perkawinan dini sering mengalami pertengkaran yang bermula dari masalah kedewasaan. Ini sangat memengaruhi keharmonisan rumah tangga. Disebabkan oleh ketidakdewasaan mereka, banyak pasangan muda menghindari masalah daripada menyelesaikannya. Penelitian lapangan ini adalah penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Studi tersebut dilakukan di Kecamatan Punggur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa parameter kedewasaan perempuan dalam sosiologi keluarga adalah batas usia menikah 21 tahun bagi laki-laki dan 18 tahun bagi perempuan. Dalam bidang kedokteran, parameter kedewasaan perempuan untuk menikah dengan menilai tingkat kedewasaan laki-laki dan perempuan untuk melangsungkan perkawinan adalah di atas 20 tahun untuk laki-laki dan 25 tahun untuk perempuan. Hal ini disebabkan oleh fakta bahwa menikah pada usia dua puluh tahun tidak terlalu beresiko dari segi kesehatan fisik dan mental, memiliki tingkat kesuburan yang lebih tinggi, dan memiliki sel telur yang diproduksi yang menurunkan risiko terkena kanker rahim.

**Kata Kunci:**

Kedewasaan, Kesiapan Perkawinan, Sosiologi Keluarga, Perkawinan Dini

**Introduction**

Adults usually marry without considering profession, religion, ethnicity, nation, poor or rich, or living in villages or cities. However, many people are already physically and mentally capable and will look for a partner according to their preferences (Muladi 2013). Marriage is a bond that lasts throughout human life. The essence and purpose of marriage is to obtain true happiness in the household (Ali and Puspita 2023).

In addition, early marriage is a problem that occurs when young couples get married and then experience arguments that are often caused by various problems, one of which is family finances. These young couples cannot live on their own as they depend on both parents to fulfill their needs (Marta 2023).

Besides economic issues, maturity issues also have a significant impact. Many young couples deal with problems by avoiding them rather than solving them. Therefore, these problems increase and accumulate and do not get resolved with time. Their relationships fall apart because of these problems.

This was the case in the villages of Nunggalrejo, Totokaton, and Srisawahan, which are located in Punggur Sub-district, Central Lampung District. In these three villages, there are several marriages where the women are under the age of 20, some even under 19. There are many reasons for this, including family customs (Suyono 2024) and economic circumstances that are not regulated by parents so that their children cannot get higher education, cannot afford it, there are also reasons why the abuse of social media often leads to negative sexual situations that lead to extramarital intercourse (Khoiriyatun 2023).

Data collected by the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Punggur Sub-district, Central Lampung District, shows that many women marry under the age of 20. Five to ten people marry each month. Interestingly, these marriages are carried out by people from various social groups, ranging from the financially and academically well-off to the financially and academically underprivileged.

According to medical experts in Punggur Sub-district, the best reproductive age is 20-30 years. Those below this age are at risk of health problems such as miscarriage, premature birth, birth defects (abnormal weight/disabled babies), anemia, and maternal (female) death due to abortion. Health conditions should be known because

they affect women's health. However, the growth of women and men affects the level of reproductive health (Antara 2023). However, given these conditions, the question of maturity is an important factor in marriage. The high rate of early marriage in Punggur Subdistrict is interesting to read about because maturity is one of the important factors in marriage.

Previous research on a similar topic was conducted by A'yunina Mahanani by studying public opinion on the criteria for a woman's maturity in marriage in terms of *masalah al-mursalah* (Mahanani 2017). The results showed that the community has a view on the parameters of women's maturity in marriage, namely their ability to distinguish between benefits and harms, based on the age of maturity of women at 21 years old and men at 25 years old. Furthermore, Sucipto's research explored maturity in marriage using an interdisciplinary approach (Sucipto 2014). Marriage can provide extensive knowledge about the boundaries of maturity, as the issue of maturity is very complex.

In addition, Dede Choiriah investigated doctors' perspectives on marriage age limits. Doctors say that it is not advisable to get married at the age of 19 because women's reproductive conditions are not yet perfect and that getting married at the age of 20 is less dangerous from a health and psychological perspective (Choiriah 2021). Therefore, this study focuses on the most important factors influencing women's parameters for marriage and investigates household perceptions of medical skills and criteria for women's parameters for marriage in Punggur Sub-district, Central Lampung.

## Methods

The researcher conducted field research using a descriptive-qualitative approach. The study was conducted in Punggur Sub-district and involved the Head of the KUA (Religious Affairs Office), PLKB (Family Planning Officer), a doctor, and 2 women who studied in Pesantren and 2 women who studied in non-pesantren. Primary data came from field observations, field interviews, and interview results related to the research focus. The data collection methods used are the document method, observation method, and interview method. Data analysis in this study uses three steps that must be taken when

analyzing qualitative research data, namely (1) data reduction (data reduction); (2) data presentation (data display); (3) conclusion drawing and verification. That is the model part of data analysis.

## **Result and Discussion**

### ***Female Adulthood Parameters and Medical Development Phases of Adulthood***

According to what Allah SWT says in Surah An-Nisa verse 3, marriage is considered something that He has prescribed. The verse explains the maturity criteria for marriage. For this maturity, viz:

1. Psychological maturity commonly called maturity is the maturity to be able to carry out their responsibilities. Maturity itself is divided into several aspects, namely: emotional maturity, social maturity, spiritual or religious maturity, physical maturity, and economic maturity, all of which require a gradual and continuous learning process.
2. Emotional maturity is when a person can accept a situation or situation by evoking emotions that are following what is happening to them, without being excessive or explosive (Mukhlis 2015).
3. Social maturity is a behavioral capacity that shows the ability to participate in the environment, which is shown by the ability to work together in groups, the courage to express themselves according to their interests, the ability to show a sharing attitude, and the ability to act. Following environmental norms, the ability to be compassionate and rationally sympathetic, able to be friendly, not selfish, like to imitate positive behavior in the environment, and to have feelings for the closest people.
4. Religious maturity is a person's spiritual independence. This means that people can fulfill their standard spiritual needs without having to rely on others (Mustofa 2009). Spiritual maturity is characterized by one's ability to control lust, such as lust, anger, egoism, luxury, self-indulgence, or pride. Spiritual maturity is also seen in polite speech, polite behavior, integrity in thinking, and humility in behavior.

Therefore, Islam strongly encourages its followers to get married, but they should also consider age as a sign of readiness for marriage (Ahmad Masfufu Fuad 2016).

However, from a medical perspective, maturity is a phase. Each stage of development has unique characteristics. Like the developmental stages of early adulthood, men and women have variations and unique characteristics. Physically, a young or early adult exhibits optimal physiological development (Hurlock 1994). They appear to be active, creative, energetic, quick, and proactive because they have a good quality of health. Some of the advancements during adulthood include starting work, choosing a partner, learning to live with a partner, and starting a family (Dewi 2006).

According to E. Hurlock, the period of adult development can be divided into three periods, namely:

1. In the early adult stage, which covers the age range of 18/20 years to 40 years, individuals experience peak physical development and enjoy optimal health. This period is characterized by the highest level of well-being in society, largely due to the cultivation of positive habits and the adoption of a healthy lifestyle.
2. The Middle Age stage, spanning the ages of 40 years to 60 years, marks a period where physical capabilities begin to decline to some extent. This includes a slight weakening of the sensory organs and increased susceptibility to diseases such as rheumatism, gout, etc., which may not have been encountered before (Dewi 2006).
3. The Advanced Adulthood and Old Age stages cover the period from 60 years of age to death. During this period, individuals experience a gradual decline in physical and psychological capacities, including hearing, vision, memory, cognitive processes, and social interaction. Important developmental tasks at this stage include strengthening one's commitment to religious teachings. In addition, individuals must learn to deal with challenges such as reduced physical abilities, declining health, retirement, reduced income, and the loss of a spouse. It is also important to establish relationships with peers and

strengthen existing relationships with family members.  
(Hurlock 1994).

In terms of physical development, there are clear differences between males and females in average height, genital organs, breasts, mustaches, and hair growth patterns. In addition, physiological differences between males and females are affected by variations in biological traits, such as fertility, which is influenced by hormones. Women are more resistant to pain and illness than men from infancy to adulthood, although men are usually physically weaker. Boys are more susceptible than girls to various diseases.

### ***Parameters of Women's Maturity in Marriage: A Review of Family and Medical Sociology***

Today's adolescents are progressing in terms of biological age, which means they are maturing faster than adolescents of the past. However, they have decreased in terms of mental and social age, which means they are slower to mature and mature from a mental and social point of view compared to teenagers in the past. Indeed, these two things are contradictory, but in marital practice, mental and social maturity are the most important as these affect the formation of a harmonious family (Wawancara dengan Kepala KUA (Kantor Urusan Agama), di Tempat Kecamatan Punggur 2024).

The relationship and mutual influence between family members and social structures, social processes, and social change are discussed in the sociology of the family. It is a sociological reality about the interactions, patterns, forms, and changes that occur within the family that have an impact on changes in family society as a whole (Pegawai PLKB 2024).

In terms of mental maturity, there is now a decline in individual maturity. Due to environmental factors and social culture, modern people tend to take longer to develop mentally than biologically. In contrast, people who are possessed now develop biologically faster (Antara 2023).

If we look at the timeframe from 1974 to 2024, this is quite a long time. During this period, there are many factors, both internal and external, that cause developmental changes in individuals. However, external factors have the most influence on this phase of

developmental change. The progress of the biological developmental phase lasts for four months every hundred years. But this is not matched by other maturities.

To enter into marriage, not only physical and biological readiness is required. However, what must be noted is that the psychological, or mental, component is what drives the success of the household (Allen et al. 2014). Several signs indicate mental readiness for marriage. A sense of responsibility, ability to interact with others, social maturity, financial maturity, and rationality of thought emerge along with the emergence of individual independence (Pegawai PLKB 2024).

Family relationships are increasingly complex and complicated to understand and resolve by only looking at the biological and psychological parts because of the social changes taking place in society (Dariyo 2004). All families will experience gradual changes in their roles, and family members must be able to adjust.

A person's mental health today is affected by many external factors. Current social conditions are the most important. Currently, 19-year-old and 16-year-old boys and girls are only biologically mature; if considered adults, they may only be mature in some ways (Antara 2023). A person's maturity is also affected by his or her education, income, and place of residence.

Someone who can commit to building a house, planning for the future, and having a job is a sign that someone is psychologically mature enough to get married (Gunarsa 2004). These factors can be converted into a nominal form as the minimum age of marriage, which is 23 years for men and 20 years for women. In family sociology, a male and female couple between 1-5 years old is the ideal couple.

Islam, explains that forming a family that is *Sakinah, mawadah, warahmah*, means having all the outward, inward, spiritual, and social aspects needed to realize a happy home life. However, from a sociological point of view, early marriage can cause household disharmony and potentially lead to divorce (Aziz and Mangestuti 2021). This is due to the unstable and selfish emotions of each individual, as well as undeveloped logic, which allows for discord and chaos when facing problems in the household. Brides-to-be who want to build a family must get enough provisions, considering how much



influence the conditions that develop in a family have. Information on reproductive health is one of them.

The real legal awareness is the awareness of the law that exists in humans. Therefore, legal awareness can be adapted to various patterns of situations. In other words, experiences related to the law and experiences related to legal rules can shape one's understanding and perception of the law. Also, according to legal understanding, interviewees do not understand if they do not understand the concept or knowledge.

If this question is based on Mental Science, it seems that the responsibility of building a household is not ideal if it depends on love alone. Love can build a household, but good love is followed by a sense of responsibility for self-expansion, i.e. extending oneself to one's partner so that they are considered part of oneself. That can only happen to a mature person. This is not the case with young marriages, which are one of the top reasons for divorce. From this, it can be seen that the level of maturity is an absolute requirement to achieve household harmony. In addition, due to the young age and lack of social and psychological experience, there is no responsibility for each party.

### ***The Urgency of Maturity Parameters as Marriage Readiness and Prevention of Early Marriage Risks***

Brides-to-be usually arrive at the gates of marriage with little preparation. Talking about reproductive health correctly and healthily is considered unreasonable in society. Therefore, it is not surprising that people's knowledge about reproduction often combines myths with facts (BKKBN 2002). Therefore, human responsibility can be controlled when applied. Hence, marriage plays an important role in the development of mankind into responsible beings.

All responsibilities associated with marriage are borne by both husband and wife. Society would be chaotic if there were no religious and medical rules that husband and wife must abide by. Without denying that marriage has benefits for men, Zakiah Daradjat says that the institution of marriage is very helpful and protective for women. Women will always be victims if the relationship between men and women is free (Adkiras 2021). Men are attracted to and pleased with her when she is young, healthy, and sound, but when she is old,

withered, sick, and weak, no one wants her. Keeping this biological perspective, we can further predict what will happen if the woman becomes pregnant and gives birth. Who is responsible for her children and herself (Daradjat 1990).

Responsible marriage can develop and nurture fatherly and motherly traits in a fertile manner. Both mothers and fathers will realize the roles and duties they play in the household. They can work together with patience, which will help the family unite and overcome any problems. This will boost morale and, of course, help to actualize personal abilities and talents when the household is disrupted and shifting (Syaltut 1996).

Thus, it is said that the problem of marriage is a big problem, and not everyone can solve it properly. Households are not necessarily perfectly built and established by people who are physically and mentally mature, let alone young people. We can logically say that the issue of maturity is a major issue that affects the success of the household (Pangestika, Purnamasari, and Kurniawan 2021).

This is in contrast to young marriage, which is one of the top reasons for divorce. This shows that maturity is an absolute requirement for domestic harmony (Dariyo 2004). In addition, due to their young age and lack of social and psychological experience, there is no responsibility for each party.

As reported by the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 16 million women aged 15-19 years give birth every year, which is 11% of all births worldwide. 95% of teenage births occur in developing countries, including Indonesia. In Indonesia, the maternal mortality rate (MMR) is still high. The government's Ministry of Health is trying to reduce it and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) (Puspitasari 2014).

There are two types of factors that lead to high maternal mortality rates: non-medical factors and medical factors. For non-medical factors, there is a relationship between education and the health of mothers who marry at a young age. Pregnant people need a lot of money for nutrition and support from their partners. Marrying too young, between 15 and 19 years old, is a problem. This age is very vulnerable (Ahya Robby and Siti Fauziah 2021).

From a psychological perspective, the emotional and mental state of adolescents under the age of 20 is unstable. At the age of 24, people begin to enter adulthood, and adolescence usually lasts until the age of 19. So, if the marriage is done before the age of twenty, teenagers' emotions still want to travel to find their true selves (Majalah Suara 'Aisyiyah 2014). The risk of developing cervical cancer is increased by early marriage, which means having sexual intercourse at an early age. The cells of a woman's cervix are immature in her teens. Human papillomavirus (HPV) transforms cell growth into cancer. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Health, there are about 90 to 100 cases of cervical cancer per 100,000 people in Indonesia. 200,000 cases of cervical cancer occur every year.

Health reviews show that cervical cancer, also known as cervix cancer, affects the lowest part of the uterus, which protrudes at the top of the coitus and is the second most dangerous cancer for women after breast cancer. Early sexual activity is one of the causes of cervical cancer (Rasjidi 2008) because young women have immature cervixes. In this case, maturity is not determined by menstruation, but by the maturity of the mucosal cells in the skin membrane. In most cases, cervical mucosal cells do not mature when women are over 20 years old. When women are under 18 years old, the condition of the cervical mucosal cells is not yet perfect to receive external stimulation, including from sperm. As a result, all mucosal cells can turn cancerous. Stimulation can increase the growth of potentially cancerous dead cells by changing the nature of the cells.

For women, the age of readiness to enter married life is 20 years, and for men, it is 25 years, based on health and social reviews (Karim 1994). According to Dadang Hawari, there are three reasons why the age for marriage and family planning is 20-25 years for women and 25-30 years for men. First, it is true that *aqil-baligh* children experience ejaculation (wet dreams) for men and menstruation (menarche, first menstruation) for women, but this does not mean that they are ready for marriage. These biological changes just show that the maturation process of the reproductive organs is starting to function, but the organs are not yet ready for reproduction (getting pregnant and giving birth). Secondly, from a psychological point of view, teenagers are not mature enough (mature, firm and stable). As a result, their mental state is still weak, and therefore not fully ready to become a spouse or parent. Thirdly, from an independence

perspective, teenagers are largely dependent on their parents and do not pay attention to the aspect of affection (love) (Hawari 1996).

According to medical books, Indonesia has the highest maternal mortality rate, especially in ASEAN. This shows that health services still need a comprehensive and high-quality overhaul (Manuaba 1996). Approximately 5,000,000 babies are born each year in Indonesia, resulting in a maternal mortality rate of 19,500-20,000 annually or every 26-27 minutes. The causes of maternal mortality are bleeding 30.5%, infection 22.5%, gestosis 17.5%, and anesthesia 2.0%. Infant mortality is 56/10,000 to about 280,000 or occurs every 18-20 minutes. The causes of infant mortality are neonatal asphyxia 49-60%, infection 24-34%, prematurity/BBLR 15-20%, delivery trauma 2-7%, and congenital defects 1-3%.

One of the reasons for a high-risk pregnancy in this context is a condition that may affect maternal and fetal optimization for the pregnancy at hand. According to this definition, some researchers define high-risk pregnancies as those in mid-pregnancy or early pregnancy. (Manuaba 1996).

The description above shows that young marriages under the age of 20 are still high, the interval between pregnancy and childbirth is still short, and the number of large children (*grand multipara*) is still high, threatening the health of women and children. Thus, from a medical perspective, the minimum age for marriage is 20 years for women and 25 years for men. Marriage between prospective husbands and wives who are underage must be prevented so that marriage does not end in divorce because marriage is related to population issues (Ayu Putri and Fajri Mekka Putra 2023). This is done to reduce the birth rate.

The higher birth rate is due to a lower age limit for a woman to marry than a higher age limit. With the Marriage Law setting an age limit for men and women to marry, the purpose of marriage can be achieved (Azizah and Wahid 2019). Because the purpose of marriage is to form a happy, lasting, and prosperous family. To achieve spiritual and material well-being, couples should help and complement each other.

## Conclusion

It seems that the minimum age of marriage stipulated in the Marriage Law needs to be revised based on the perspective of family sociology on the criteria for women's maturity for marriage. The standard requirement for marital maturity is 21 years for men and 18 years for women. The previous requirements were 19 years for men and 16 years for women. Senior high school is considered sufficient for a woman to get married. A man's readiness for marriage does not only depend on the level of education, i.e. graduating from high school; a man must also have financial maturity which can be seen from his current job. By the age of 21, a man is trying to set vocational goals and gain a sense of personal identity. A strong desire to be recognized and mature in peer groups and adults.

The medical view on the parameters of women's maturity for marriage explains that the medical paradigm assesses the level of maturity of men and women to enter into marriage at an age above 20 years (for women) and 25 years (for men). This paradigm sees the maturity level of men and women from a physiological and biological perspective. Underage people are highly susceptible to various reproductive diseases and other mental illnesses. According to gynecologists, getting married at the age of 20 is less dangerous from a health and psychological readiness perspective. This is because 20 years old is a productive age, where fertility rates increase and the number of eggs produced lowers the risk of developing uterine cancer.

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