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THE PHENOMENON OF EARLY MARRIAGE AND MARRIAGE POSTPONEMENT IN INDONESIA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MASLAHAH MURSALAH

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Abstract

This study examines the phenomena of early marriage and delayed marriage in Indonesian society with the aim of identifying the underlying factors and their impacts from the perspective of maslahah mursalah. This study uses a qualitative method with empirical field research. The research subjects consisted of five informants, namely three individuals who married young and two who delayed marriage, while the research objects included the concepts of early marriage and delayed marriage, the driving factors, and the social implications. The results show that the decision to marry young is influenced by economic factors, personal desire, and parental pressure, while the postponement of marriage is influenced by a focus on education and career, not yet finding a suitable partner, and not yet achieving financial stability. This change in marriage patterns is not only an individual choice, but also has an impact on family structure and social construction in society. Early marriage and delayed marriage can be understood as adaptive responses to contemporary social complexities that reflect efforts to achieve maslahah through spiritual considerations, self-development, and readiness to build a quality family life.

Keywords: Maslahah Mursalah, Early Marriage, Delay of Marriage.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji fenomena nikah muda dan penundaan pernikahan dalam masyarakat Indonesia dengan tujuan mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang melatarbelakanginya serta dampak yang ditimbulkan ditinjau dari perspektif *maslahah mursalah*. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian lapangan (empiris). Subjek penelitian terdiri atas lima informan, yaitu tiga pelaku nikah muda dan dua pelaku penundaan pernikahan, sementara objek penelitian meliputi konsep nikah muda dan penundaan pernikahan, faktor-faktor pendorong, serta implikasi sosial yang ditimbulkan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keputusan menikah muda dipengaruhi oleh faktor ekonomi, kemauan pribadi, serta dorongan orang tua, sedangkan penundaan pernikahan dipengaruhi oleh fokus pada pendidikan dan karier, belum ditemukannya pasangan yang sesuai, serta belum tercapainya kemampuan finansial. Perubahan pola pernikahan ini tidak hanya merupakan pilihan individual, tetapi juga berdampak pada struktur keluarga dan konstruksi sosial masyarakat. Nikah muda dan penundaan pernikahan dapat dipahami sebagai respons adaptif terhadap kompleksitas sosial kontemporer yang mencerminkan upaya mewujudkan kemaslahatan melalui pertimbangan spiritual, pengembangan potensi diri, dan kesiapan membangun kehidupan keluarga yang berkualitas.

Kata Kunci: Maslahah Mursalah, Pernikahan Muda, Penundaan Pernikahan

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INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a sacred moment for prospective spouses to bind themselves in a lifelong holy vow. The marriage contract serves as real proof of love, where values and essence begin to emerge. In today's era, marriage is often used as a trend to enhance self-worth, especially among teenagers who are in the process of discovering their identity (Putra & Burhanusyihab, 2023).

The trend of early marriage reflects the tendency of the younger generation to enter into marriage upon reaching the minimum legal age and maturity. Generally, the definition of "young age" varies according to societal perspectives influenced by local socio-cultural conditions. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), adolescence is defined as the age range between 12 and 24 years, while Indonesia's National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) defines youth as those aged 10 to 21 years. Ideally, according to BKKBN, the appropriate age for marriage is 21 for women and 25 for men, as this is considered sufficient in terms of health and emotional development to face family life (Tsani, 2021).

On the other hand, the phenomenon of delaying marriage has also shown a significant trend within society. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in 2024 recorded a decline in the number of marriages in Indonesia in 2023, totaling 1,577,255. This number represents a decrease of 128,093 from the previous year, which had 1,705,348 recorded marriages in 2022. This decline is influenced by several underlying factors, including extended periods of education, prioritization of career development, and considerations of financial readiness. These factors are widely considered in society because marriage is viewed as a lifelong bond between a man and a woman, and thus requires serious readiness, especially in financial terms (Fauziyah & Putri, 2024).

Social transformations occurring within contemporary society have created complex dynamics in determining the appropriate timing for marriage. This phenomenon generates tension between traditional values and modernity faced by the current generation. On one hand, there is religious encouragement to marry at a mature age to avoid engaging in immoral behavior. On the other hand, the demands of the 4.0 industrial revolution era have brought about new problems, where modern socio-economic and professional demands foster pragmatic considerations that lead individuals to postpone marriage.

According to research by Wifa Lutfiani Tsani, early marriage has become a popular trend on social media, often framed within religious values, giving the impression that religion encourages early marriage. In addition, the trend is influenced by public figures who marry young and promote the success of early marriage, thereby becoming role models for society to engage in marriage at a young age. This becomes a contributing factor to early marriage, influenced by technological development and increasingly liberal social interactions (Tsani, 2021). Further research by Doni Azhari, Arif Sugitanata, and Siti Aminah found that the trend of promoting early marriage is driven by several factors, including strong feelings of love, premarital pregnancy

(accidental), parental pressure, and adherence to local traditions. In Islamic teachings, early marriage is subject to certain requirements. According to the Maliki and Shafi'i schools of jurisprudence, both the male and female must have reached puberty to marry. Meanwhile, according to Indonesian positive law, the Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974 stipulates that marriage is allowed if both parties are at least 19 years old (Azhari et al., 2022).

Although both phenomena have been widely studied, there remains a significant gap in the existing literature. This study focuses on the trends of early marriage and delayed marriage within Indonesian society, using interviews with several youths who have engaged in early marriage or postponed it, examining the underlying factors and resulting impacts. The findings are analyzed through the lens of *maslahah mursalah* to identify the benefits inherent in early and delayed marriage. This research is expected to offer a complex and comprehensive explanation of contemporary developments and challenges, particularly in the field of Islamic family law.

METHODS

This research is a qualitative study employing a field research or empirical study approach, (Muhamimin, 2020) aiming to examine in depth the phenomenon of early marriage and marriage postponement in Indonesia. The subjects of the research (Nashrullah et al., 2023) are individuals who have experienced early marriage and those who have delayed marriage, consisting of three early marriage participants and two marriage postponement participants. Meanwhile, the object of this research includes the concept of early marriage and marriage postponement in Indonesia, the factors underlying the decisions to marry early or postpone marriage, and the resulting impacts of both practices. The research data comprises all information obtained through interviews with informants and from various relevant literature on early marriage and marriage postponement. The primary data sources were individuals who had married between the ages of 19 and 25, and those who had postponed marriage between the ages of 29 and 40, selected based on specific criteria. Secondary data (Sembiring et al., 2024) sources were gathered from journals, articles, and books discussing the phenomena of early marriage and marriage postponement. The data collection (Sugiono, 2013) technique employed in this study was the interview method, conducted both online and offline.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Early Marriage and Marriage Postponement

Every living being is created in pairs to provide love and peace. This expression implies that such a bond occurs through marriage to form a happy and lasting family according to each individual's beliefs. Therefore, thorough preparation is required from both parties, both male and female.

In the past, early marriage was commonly practiced in society as part of tradition and local customs, often influenced by religious teachings and parental demands. However, as time progresses and technology rapidly advances, the problems surrounding marriage have become increasingly complex—particularly the growing trend of early marriage among individuals just entering adulthood.

By definition, early marriage refers to marriage conducted at a young age—specifically when someone has reached the minimum legal marriage age as stipulated by the Marriage Law, which is 19 years for both men and women (Hutabarat, 2024). According to Indonesia's National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN), early marriage refers to marriage by individuals under 21 for women and under 25 for men. This classification is based on considerations of readiness in terms of health, mental maturity, and economic stability (Wartuti, 2021).

This differs from the definition of child marriage, which refers to marriage that fails to meet the legal minimum age requirement—19 years for both males and females. According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), child marriage is defined as a marriage that occurs before the prospective bride and groom reach the minimum age established by the Marriage Law.

Today, early marriage is increasingly prevalent in society, especially in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, where individuals are expected to keep up with rapid technological advancement. This trend is evident on social media, for instance, through campaigns with hashtags like @Gerakannikahmuda (Early Marriage Movement). Many cases of early marriage today are linked to factors such as liberal social interactions, facilitated by unrestricted access to technology. A lack of parental attention and supervision leads young people to imitate the behaviors and lifestyles of influencers they see on their social media feeds, affecting their psychology and pushing them toward early marriage—particularly among those already in romantic relationships (Putra & Burhanusyihab, 2023).

Early marriage has become a common phenomenon in contemporary society. As a growing social trend, it has the potential to shape deep-rooted social norms. However, it is important to recognize that early marriages undertaken without psychological and spiritual maturity may lead to various household problems. This situation causes a shift in social construction, where individuals who are still developing emotionally and mentally are forced to shoulder the heavy responsibilities of marriage.

Meanwhile, the term used for delaying marriage is *waithood*. Generally, *waithood* refers to a prolonged stage of emerging adulthood, where young men and women delay marriage—sometimes indefinitely—and even develop the desire not to marry at all. *Waithood* is no longer foreign in contemporary society, as it is increasingly practiced and discussed, especially on social media. Choosing *waithood* does not mean delaying adulthood, because maturity cannot be measured solely by marital status. Rather, it reflects a conscious decision to postpone marriage, based on well-thought-out personal considerations (Wulandari, 2023).

Marriage postponement is a phenomenon that can be explained through the theory of delay of gratification, which describes how individuals deliberately choose to delay gratification in life to achieve greater long-term goals. In the context of marriage, this process involves a complex framework in which individuals decide to defer forming a marital bond based on factors such as mental and financial preparedness. However, it is important to understand that the decision to postpone marriage results from a web of interrelated factors, not just those two alone (Dariyo et al., 2019).

According to Kartini Kartono, one reason individuals delay marriage is the lack of true maturity. Maturity is not limited to physical readiness, but also includes psychological and social development. Social maturity enables an individual to transition from a self-centered, childish phase to full acceptance of responsibilities as an adult in society (Kartono, 2006). Maturity plays a dominant role in marriage, as it requires a mature attitude and a deep sense of responsibility toward one's family.

Today, the age at which people marry continues to rise, and many individuals choose to delay marriage for a variety of reasons. It is undeniable that the demands of modern times are far more complex than in the past, prompting adults to become more aware and reflective regarding marriage. Perspectives on marriage have shifted—young adults no longer see it as a competition, but are increasingly aware of its consequences. Therefore, delaying marriage also has both positive and negative impacts, particularly in terms of preparing to build a prosperous and harmonious family life, free from problems that could lead to divorce (Wulandari, 2023).

Factors Behind Early Marriage and Marriage Postponement Among Indonesian Society

Early marriage and marriage postponement are phenomena that have become increasingly common in Indonesian society. Several factors influence individuals in choosing either to marry young or to delay marriage. These factors were identified through interviews with individuals who have experienced early marriage or have chosen to postpone marriage, particularly in specific regions, both rural and urban. Therefore, the findings from these interviews provide a broad and complex explanation of the reasons behind early marriage and the postponement of marriage.

a. Personal Willingness

Internal factors, such as personal desire, are one of the primary motivations behind early marriage. This happens when young couples, both male and female, feel a strong emotional bond and have already established a commitment to each other (Tsani, 2021).

b. Economic Factors

Economic conditions serve as a driving force for some individuals to marry at a young age. Financial hardship can heavily influence household decisions, especially in families living below the poverty line (Tsani, 2021). Research show that economic factors are among the primary determinants of early marriage in Indonesia, as financial constraints often push families to view marriage as an

immediate solution to economic burdens (Hermawan et al., 2021). Some parents may believe that marrying off their daughters could ease the family's economic burden. Due to poor financial conditions, societal perspectives on children shift—rather than viewing children as future contributors to the household income, they may be seen as an economic burden. In such cases, marrying off a child is perceived as an easy and instant solution to achieve a better life (Putra & Burhanusyihab, 2023).

c. Premarital Pregnancy

Marriage by accident (MBA), or marriage caused by premarital pregnancy, has become a dominant factor contributing to the high rate of early marriages in society (Putra & Burhanusyihab, 2023). MBA is a consequence of the complex social problems facing teenagers today, including the decline of moral values, weak parental supervision, and easy access to inappropriate digital content that violates social and religious norms. These factors lead to deviant behavior among youth, which can result in premarital pregnancies and force them into marriage at an age when they are not yet psychologically or socially mature.

d. Parental or Family Pressure

Pressure from parents or family is another contributing factor to early marriage. Some parents may push their children into marriage even though they are still young and mentally unprepared. This is often driven by concerns over modern social interactions, socio-economic considerations, or efforts to strengthen familial ties through marriage alliances (Zamzami et al., 2023).

In addition to early marriage, the decision to postpone marriage is also influenced by several factors. Choosing to delay marriage is a rational decision, as it reflects a person's sense of responsibility and desire to be fully prepared—mentally, emotionally, and financially—before taking on the role of a spouse.

The following are some key factors behind marriage postponement:

a. Career or Education Focus

Career and education are major reasons why individuals choose to delay marriage. Career ambitions may lead someone to prioritize professional goals over marriage, believing that a stable and successful career will ensure a better and more secure family life in the future. Similarly, pursuing education can also lead to marriage postponement, as individuals prefer to focus on their academic goals without the distraction of marital responsibilities. As a result, marriage is postponed in favor of long-term benefits (Riska & Khasanah, 2023).

b. Financial Instability

Marriage is a lifelong commitment and requires careful preparation in terms of psychological, social, and especially financial aspects. Financial issues are often the root of many household problems. Financial instability can create significant stress in a marriage, particularly for men, who are traditionally seen as the primary breadwinners. Therefore, many individuals, especially men, delay marriage until they are financially secure. This is a common and acceptable reason for delaying marriage in many communities (Rozak et al., 2020).

c. Not Yet Finding the Right Partner

Not finding an ideal partner is another reason people postpone marriage. The selective process of choosing a life partner is not only a preventive measure against future divorce but also reflects an awareness of the importance of balance and compatibility in marriage. Religion recommends selecting a partner based on several criteria—physical attributes, wealth, lineage, and most importantly, religious values. In today's society, arranged marriages are becoming less popular, with individuals preferring to choose their partners independently. This shift indicates a transformation in social values and a rise in personal autonomy in making marital decisions.

d. Trauma or Fear of Marriage

Fear of marriage is another factor behind marriage postponement. This fear may stem from past traumas or the influence of social media, which often highlights failed marriages. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as *marriage is scary*. This trend is particularly prevalent among women, who may fear entering a marriage with a patriarchal, unfaithful, abusive, or unsupportive partner. These fears reflect rising expectations among women regarding their future spouses. As a result, psychological distress such as anxiety and fear can cause individuals to delay marriage until they feel emotionally ready (Asy'ari & Amelia, 2024).

From the explanation of the factors above, it can be concluded that both early marriage and the postponement of marriage are personal choices—whether based on one's conscience or due to external pressures. These decisions are rooted in patterns of thought shaped by various internal and external influences. Internally, individuals may be driven by factors such as parental or family encouragement to marry at a young age. Externally, factors such as the “marriage is scary” phenomenon, largely influenced by social media, significantly impact a person's psychological state. Therefore, it is important to possess broad insight, maintain healthy social interactions, and filter information circulating on social media, in order to avoid deviating from moral and religious norms.

Based on interviews conducted by the researcher with several informants regarding the trend of early marriage and marriage postponement, three informants were early marriage cases and two were cases of marriage postponement. The first informant explained that her early marriage was based on her own will and without coercion. The decision was influenced by personal readiness—financially and mentally. This was conveyed by EL (23):

“I got married in 2022 when I was 21, and my husband was also 21. I married him at the same age and it was entirely my own decision because I had already been in a long-term relationship with him. I believed that marrying young would allow me to accompany my children through their growth for a longer time. Besides that, I wanted to marry to avoid committing zina (sexual immorality) and to prevent being the subject of slander from society.” (EL, 2024)

This response reflects a mature perspective on marriage. They do not view marriage as a competition, but rather as a means of perfecting religious observance and a preventive measure against sinful behavior. The internal factor influencing the decision to marry young is evident in the strong emotional bond and deep commitment between partners, which is seen as justification and legitimacy for the union.

This is further elaborated by another informant, ARM, regarding her initial reluctance and eventual willingness to marry:

“Alhamdulillah, I got married at 19 after completing my community service. At first, I did not want to get married, especially not at a young age, because I wanted to focus on my next goal, which was fashion design. I wanted to study at UNY, but my parents did not allow it. Then a friend introduced me to someone who was looking for a wife, and I said *bismillah* and agreed to the marriage because I had a reason—I wanted to become a better person.” (ARM, 2024)

Another informant stated that early marriage occurred due to encouragement from family or relatives. The marriage was arranged with the intention of providing the best choice for their child. This was shared by FLH (23):

“I got married at the age of 23, and my wife was 22. It was an arranged marriage by my parents. Although I was financially ready, I was not mentally prepared because there were still many things I needed to learn about marriage and religious teachings.” (FLH, 2024)

Arranged marriage is still common in many communities, where parents play a central role in choosing a life partner for their children. The main motivation behind arranged marriages is the desire to provide safety and well-being for the child through a carefully chosen match that aligns with social norms. Interestingly, even if the child may not feel mentally ready, there is often strong trust in the wisdom of the parents. Parents are seen as having sound judgment in selecting a suitable partner to ensure stability, security, and prosperity for their offspring.

In contrast, interviews with individuals who have postponed marriage revealed different influencing factors. One of the informants, IBL (29), shared:

“The reason I delayed marriage was due to several factors. First, I am still pursuing my education and I want to complete it first. In addition, I haven’t yet found a partner who matches my criteria.” (IBL, 2024)

Marriage postponement is not solely driven by career or education, but also by financial readiness. This was stated by another informant, KHL (34):

“I am still unmarried because I am the eldest child, and my father passed away after I graduated from high school. So I am responsible for supporting my family, especially financing my younger siblings’ education.” (KHL, 2024)

The postponement of marriage is a complex phenomenon developing within society. Based on the interviews above, the factors influencing marriage postponement are relatively reasonable. This is because such delays are often driven by constructive motivations and aim to achieve well-being, both for the individual and their family environment.

Impacts of Early Marriage and Marriage Postponement

Early marriage and postponement of marriage each have their own impacts, both positive and negative. The effects of early marriage and delaying marriage are quite complex within society, as experienced directly by several informants interviewed by the author. These impacts are divided into two categories: the positive and negative consequences of early marriage and marriage postponement.

a. Positive Impacts of Early Marriage

The positive impact of early marriage from a religious perspective is that it prevents individuals from engaging in adultery and premarital sex, as their sexual needs are already fulfilled. Moreover, early marriage can positively affect child development, as individuals who marry young are less likely to have young children in old age. This was expressed by an informant named EL (23):

“I got married in 2022 when I was 21, and so was my husband. We married at the same age and based on our own will, because I believed that marrying young would allow me to accompany my child’s growth for a longer time. Besides that, I wanted to get married to avoid sinful acts and slander from society. So far, I have felt many benefits: my husband keeps me away from negative social influences, and I feel safer because he always protects me.” (EL, 2024)

Another informant, identified as ARM, who also married by personal choice, described the positive impact of early marriage:

“The impact of early marriage for me—initially I was disrespectful, unable to apply my knowledge, and emotionally immature. But Alhamdulillah, by getting married, I have someone who advises me, and I’ve started to manage my emotions better.” (ARM, 2024)

Another informant, FLH (23), also expressed the positive effects of early marriage:

“I got married at the age of 23, while my wife was 22. It was an arranged marriage by our parents. So far, I have felt many benefits because I can now share problems and find solutions with my wife. Even though I wasn’t mentally or emotionally ready at first, I learned to grow together with my wife, especially in terms of understanding religion. So for me, early marriage is enjoyable and brings happiness, as there is no gap between us.” (FLH, 2024)

Early marriage does not always bring negative impacts. In fact, it can bring positive changes to both individuals. As the informants stated, early marriage teaches society that maturity is not measured by age but by one's way of thinking. This proves that marriage can lead someone to think more rationally and maturely. Furthermore, early marriage can enhance the enthusiasm for learning, particularly in understanding religious teachings, since individuals feel a greater sense of responsibility and an obligation to support their family and guide them in the right path.

b. Negative Impacts of Early Marriage

Early marriage can lead to significant negative impacts on family dynamics and child development. Studies on adolescent psychology demonstrate that early marriage often results in emotional immaturity, as young couples typically lack the psychological readiness necessary for handling marital responsibilities and conflicts (Syalis & Nurwati, 2020). This is evident in empirical studies involving couples who marry due to unplanned pregnancies, often referred to as *marriage by accident* (MBA).

The complexity of issues faced by such couples indicates a weak marital foundation, often lacking mental, emotional, and economic readiness. In most cases, marriages resulting from unplanned pregnancies are not sustainable due to various internal problems. The most severe consequence is the status of the child born out of such situations, who may lose legal ties to their biological father.

Therefore, early marriage influenced by promiscuity and resulting in out-of-wedlock pregnancies requires serious attention from various stakeholders. This issue highlights that early marriage affects not only the couple but also has long-term consequences for the child's status and future. Preventive efforts such as sexual education, counseling, and reinforcement of moral values are necessary to prevent marriages based on coercion and unpreparedness.

c. Positive Impacts of Marriage Postponement

The issue of delaying marriage also presents complexities in terms of its impacts. The positive impacts include economic stability, self-development, and better partner selection. These benefits provide individuals time to achieve financial and emotional stability. They also have the opportunity to complete their education, build a career, and secure the resources needed to create a happy family life. This was shared by an informant, IBL (29):

"I have two reasons for delaying marriage. First, I wanted to focus on my education, as I still had valid religious reasons to postpone marriage. Second, I had not yet found a suitable partner who met both my criteria and my family's expectations. The impact I felt was that by delaying marriage, I was better prepared in terms of career and finances, so I could provide a proper life for my future family." (IBL, 2024)

Postponing marriage can indeed bring positive effects, as the informant noted, giving individuals time to prepare for a prosperous and harmonious household, both mentally and financially.

d. Negative Impacts of Marriage Postponement

Delaying marriage not only brings positive outcomes but can also result in negative effects, such as social and biological pressures, the risk of loneliness, and challenges in finding a suitable partner. The decision to delay marriage is often made after careful consideration, but it inevitably comes with consequences. One informant shared:

"The negative impact of postponing marriage that I feel the most is loneliness, especially since many of my friends are already married. I also experience pressure from various people urging me to get married soon. Many people talk behind my back and mock me for not being married yet, especially during holidays. That's something I often face, but I try to ignore the unpleasant comments." (KHL, 2024)

Marriage postponement can have significant effects, as expressed by the informant. Negative impacts such as social pressure can sometimes affect one's mental state. However, the informant emphasized the importance of disregarding others' negative remarks and focusing on personal readiness.

Analysis of Maslahah Mursalah on Early Marriage and Marriage Postponement

From the perspective of Islamic law, marriage is a sacred and significant moment for human beings. In Islam, marriage is regarded as a sacred covenant undertaken by every human being (Azhari et al., 2022). This has been regulated in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nur, verse 32:

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامِ مِنْكُمْ وَالصُّلْحَيْنَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَامَيْكُمْ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِيهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلَيْهِ

Translation:

"And marry off those who are single among you, and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His bounty. And Allah is All-Encompassing and All-Knowing."

The context of marriage in today's era is quite complex, both in terms of early marriage and marriage postponement. Early marriage is often viewed as a solution to avoid undesirable behaviors, such as premarital relationships (adultery). On the other hand, the current generation also tends to prefer postponing marriage. They have their reasons for doing so, one of which is the ability to focus more on career and educational development. Financial considerations are also a major reason why someone chooses to delay marriage. They want to ensure they have stable economic readiness in order to build a happy household. However, this choice does not always go smoothly, as many face social pressure—such as questions about when they will marry—which can lead to mental stress.

This aligns with the statements of several informants interviewed, who expressed that there are various factors behind both early marriage and postponement of marriage, as well as the impacts that result from these choices. When viewed from the perspective of Islamic law, these factors aim to bring *maslahah* (benefit/welfare) either for the individual or their family, which is relevant to the concept of *maslahah mursalah*.

Maslahah mursalah is one of the legal principles in Islam that aims to bring benefit to the ummah (community) and to prevent harm (Muhammad, 2022). *Maslahah mursalah* is divided into three types: *Maslahah Dharuriyah* (essential/primary benefit), *Maslahah Hajiyah* (complementary/secondary benefit), and *Maslahah Tahsiniyah* (enhancing/tertiary benefit) (Miswanto, 2019). The practice of early marriage and postponement of marriage is commonly found in society, as reflected in the experiences shared by the informants. The reasons provided by these informants highlight the maslahah that such decisions bring to their lives.

Personal willingness and parental encouragement are the main reasons behind early marriage. This is based on preventive efforts to avoid free association and actions that violate religious norms. This concept, when viewed through the lens of *maslahah mursalah*, is highly relevant—because the effort to avoid actions that go against religious values contributes to *maslahah* by preserving religion (*hifdz al-din*), which falls under the category of *maslahah dharuriyah*.

On the other hand, focusing on career, education, and financial readiness are the primary reasons some informants chose to delay marriage. This decision is based on a desire to better prepare for a mature and stable family life. When examined from the perspective of *maslahah mursalah*, this aligns with the concept of *maslahah hajiyah*, which refers to secondary needs that help ease difficulties and prevent potential hardships.

Both early marriage and postponement of marriage are dynamic responses to the complexities of contemporary society. They represent thoughtful efforts to achieve *maslahah*, taking into account spiritual protection, personal development, and preparation for a high-quality family life. These decisions are made consciously, considering both personal and social contexts in a comprehensive manner.

CONCLUSION

The dynamics of marriage in the context of contemporary society reflect significant developments that illustrate the complexities of demographic, economic, and cultural changes. The phenomena of early marriage and the postponement of marriage cannot be understood in a simplistic manner; rather, they require comprehensive analysis that takes into account the various underlying factors.

Modern marriage phenomena are a direct reflection of shifting social paradigms, where individuals experience complex structural pressures, ranging from economic factors, parental encouragement, financial readiness, career or educational

focus, and more. These factors represent forms of social values that significantly contribute to individual decision-making patterns regarding marriage.

These changes in marriage patterns have substantial impacts. They are not merely matters of personal choice, but also influence family structures and shape societal perceptions of family life. Each choice—whether to marry young or to postpone marriage—carries complex and interconnected consequences.

Both early marriage and the postponement of marriage are dynamic responses to the complexities of contemporary society. They reflect thoughtful efforts to achieve *maslahah* (benefit or welfare), by considering spiritual protection, the development of personal potential, and preparation for a high-quality family life. Such decisions are individual choices that take into account both personal and social contexts in a comprehensive manner.

Finally, several recommendations are put forward. These suggestions are based on the findings of this study and may refer to practical actions, the development of new theories, and/or directions for future research.

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