



MARRIAGE AS A RESPONSE TO PREMARITAL PREGNANCY: SOCIO-CULTURAL CONFINEMENT, LEGAL PLURALISM, AND RELIGIOUS PRAGMATISM IN NORTH HALMAHERA

PERNIKAHAN SEBAGAI RESPONS ATAS KEHAMILAN PRANIKAH: KUNGKUNGAN SOSIO-KULTURAL, PLURALISME HUKUM, DAN PRAGMATISME AGAMA DI HALMAHERA UTARA

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Abstract

Marriage involving pregnant women outside wedlock remains a critical socio-cultural and legal phenomenon in Indonesia, particularly in North Halmahera where family honor, religious authority, and customary law strongly influence communal life. This study aimed to explore how such marriages are understood, legitimized, and practiced by families, community leaders, and legal institutions. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with religious leaders, adat leaders, government officials, parents, and young women, complemented by participant observation and document analysis, and analyzed with an interactive model of reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that marriage is primarily arranged to safeguard family honor, with communities regarding it as the only socially acceptable corrective measure, while religious leaders across traditions adopt pragmatic interpretations, invoking public interest or redemption to justify the practice, and customary rituals together with state dispensations further reinforce its legitimacy. Although marriage resolves immediate stigma and reintegrates families socially, it simultaneously generates long-term vulnerabilities, including interrupted education, economic dependence, marital instability, psychological stress, and increased maternal and neonatal health risks. This study contributes to the sociology of law and religion by demonstrating how socio-cultural confinement, Islamic legal pluralism, and adat practices converge in eastern Indonesia, while underscoring the urgent need for holistic interventions that integrate sexuality education, family communication, religious engagement, and legal reform to protect women and children more effectively.

Keywords : premarital pregnancy, early marriage, family honor, legal pluralism, Islamic law



Abstrak

Pernikahan yang melibatkan perempuan hamil di luar nikah merupakan fenomena sosial-budaya dan hukum yang penting di Indonesia, khususnya di Halmahera Utara, di mana kehormatan keluarga, otoritas agama, dan hukum adat memiliki pengaruh besar dalam kehidupan masyarakat. Penelitian ini dengan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif menemukan bahwa pernikahan tersebut dipandang sebagai cara utama untuk menjaga kehormatan keluarga dan menjadi solusi sosial yang dianggap sah, didukung oleh tafsir pragmatis para pemuka agama yang menekankan kemaslahatan atau penebusan, serta diperkuat oleh ritual adat dan dispensasi negara. Meskipun mampu mengurangi stigma dan mengembalikan posisi sosial keluarga, praktik ini sekaligus menimbulkan kerentanan jangka panjang, seperti terhentinya pendidikan, ketergantungan ekonomi, ketidakstabilan rumah tangga, tekanan psikologis, serta meningkatnya risiko kesehatan ibu dan bayi. Studi ini menyoroti pertemuan antara kungkungan sosial-budaya, pluralisme hukum Islam, dan praktik adat di Indonesia timur, serta menekankan perlunya intervensi holistik melalui pendidikan seksual, komunikasi keluarga, keterlibatan keagamaan, dan reformasi hukum untuk melindungi perempuan dan anak secara lebih efektif.

Kata Kunci : Kehamilan pranikah, pernikahan dini, kehormatan keluarga, pluralisme hukum, hukum Islam

1. INTRODUCTION

Marriage remains one of the most significant social institutions in Indonesia, shaping not only individual trajectories but also community structures, cultural continuity, and religious legitimacy. Ideally, marriage is understood as a union designed to foster love, compassion, and stability, reflecting both religious teaching and national law. Yet, in practice, marriage frequently functions as a corrective response to social circumstances that deviate from such ideals. One of the most notable manifestations of this is marriage motivated by premarital pregnancy, a phenomenon that has grown increasingly visible in Indonesia over recent years. Recent studies show that applications for marriage dispensation have surged, with the majority linked directly to cases of premarital pregnancy, reflecting not only changing adolescent behavior but also systemic weaknesses in family communication, education, and preventive policies (Rahiem, 2021; Sundari & Retnowati, 2024).

The rise in premarital pregnancy among adolescents and young adults is closely tied to broader socio-cultural and structural changes. The expansion of digital technology and social media has reshaped norms surrounding sexuality, often weakening the influence of family, school, and religious institutions in guiding youth behavior. Adolescents are increasingly exposed to permissive peer cultures, pornography, and online relationships, while parents frequently struggle to provide adequate supervision due to gaps in digital literacy. Research demonstrates that open communication within families serves as a protective factor, but in many Indonesian households, sexuality remains a taboo subject, leaving adolescents to seek guidance from peers or online sources (Suazini & Humaeroh, 2021; Lubis & Muktaruddin, 2023). This communication gap not only fosters misinformation but also increases vulnerability to unintended pregnancies.

Premarital pregnancy is not merely perceived as an individual or private matter; it constitutes a communal concern, deeply embedded in cultural logics of honor and shame. In many Indonesian communities, the pregnancy of an unmarried daughter is considered a



profound violation of social and moral norms, creating stigma that extends beyond the individual to her family and kinship network. Families often respond by arranging marriage as an urgent measure to restore dignity and shield themselves from gossip or social exclusion. This cultural mechanism reflects a persistent patriarchal structure in which the burden of shame is disproportionately placed on women, while men are positioned as redeemers through marriage. Such dynamics illustrate how social control is enacted through marriage, with young women's autonomy often subordinated to communal expectations (Yorita et al., 2023; Alifah et al., 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified these dynamics. School closures, disrupted educational routines, and diminished community oversight created conditions that exacerbated risks of early and unplanned pregnancies. National records demonstrate that during the pandemic period, applications for child marriage increased significantly, with most dispensations granted in cases involving pregnancy (Rahiem, 2021; Sundari & Retnowati, 2024). These developments highlight the vulnerability of adolescent girls in times of social crisis, when marriage becomes the default corrective response rather than addressing underlying structural challenges such as inadequate sexuality education, economic stress, and weak social protection systems.

At the regional level, the Indonesian experience is consistent with broader Southeast Asian trends. Comparative studies indicate that early marriage in response to pregnancy is not culturally isolated but reflects common structural pressures across patriarchal societies, where family honor, gender inequality, and limited parental control converge to normalize such practices (Harvey et al., 2022). This demonstrates that while the Indonesian context has distinctive features shaped by Islamic jurisprudence, Christian ethics, and adat (customary law), the broader logic of safeguarding family dignity through marriage is regionally embedded.

Religious education plays an important role in shaping responses to premarital pregnancy, yet its impact remains uneven. Strong religious instruction is correlated with lower engagement in premarital sexual behavior, and communities often look to religious leaders for guidance on resolving cases of pregnancy outside wedlock (Saputra & Maradesa, 2023). However, studies also reveal the limitations of religious institutions in effectively reaching adolescents. Declining participation in informal religious gatherings, resource constraints, and the appeal of digital platforms have reduced the influence of traditional moral instruction (Fateh & Islamy, 2021; Faturhman et al., 2023). Consequently, while religious literacy may function as a protective factor, its practical implementation remains inadequate, necessitating collaboration between schools, families, and religious organizations.

Patriarchal cultural structures further exacerbate the challenges posed by premarital pregnancy. Families often perceive marriage as the only way to preserve moral capital, framing it as a solution that restores balance and prevents communal disgrace. This process effectively shifts responsibility onto young women, reinforcing gendered inequalities and normalizing coercion. Research indicates that cultural conservatism legitimizes such practices, presenting early marriage as socially acceptable even when it undermines women's rights and well-being (Lubis et al., 2025; Sabilillah, 2024). These findings underscore the need to critically analyze how cultural values perpetuate structural inequities under the guise of social stability.

Legal scholarship highlights another dimension of this issue. Indonesian law, particularly following the 2019 amendment, sets the minimum age for marriage at 19, signaling a



commitment to child protection and gender equality. However, the persistence of dispensations, particularly in cases of premarital pregnancy, reveals a disjunction between policy and practice. The Compilation of Islamic Law explicitly allows marriage of a pregnant woman to the man responsible, reflecting a pragmatic orientation that aligns with community demands. Classical Islamic jurisprudence, however, remains divided, with Hanafi and Shafi'i schools permitting such marriages, while Maliki and Hanbali traditions require postponement until childbirth (Fauzi, 2020; Halimi et al., 2022; Sabir, 2021). The diversity of interpretations demonstrates how legal pluralism creates flexibility but also confusion in community responses, with families often prioritizing socio-cultural pressures over strict doctrinal positions.

The coexistence of state law, religious authority, and customary norms generates contradictions in practice. Communities frequently navigate these overlapping systems pragmatically, prioritizing immediate resolutions to stigma rather than long-term protections for women and children. Studies confirm that legal pluralism, while theoretically enriching, often produces fragmented outcomes, particularly when socio-cultural imperatives dominate decision-making (Wibisana, 2017; Suratno, 2018). This underscores the need for legal harmonization that can balance respect for cultural and religious traditions with commitments to gender equity and child protection.

The health consequences of adolescent pregnancy further complicate the issue. Medical evidence indicates that adolescent mothers face disproportionately higher risks of complications, including preeclampsia, premature birth, and neonatal mortality (Putri & Sari, 2024). These findings reinforce critiques of marriage as a "quick fix" solution, since it fails to address the long-term physical and developmental needs of young mothers and their children. Psychological studies also show that stigma and coerced marriage contribute to emotional distress, marital instability, and cycles of vulnerability, confirming that the social resolution of honor often comes at significant individual cost (Amri, 2022; Rahiem, 2024).

Shifting social values are also evident in the literature. Whereas premarital pregnancy was once considered an absolute taboo, communities increasingly normalize the phenomenon by framing marriage as an acceptable corrective measure. In urban areas, families may initially explore alternatives such as abortion, yet marriage remains the predominant strategy when pregnancies are carried to term (Aprianti et al., 2018; Chandra et al., 2020). In rural contexts, early marriage continues to be the dominant mechanism for managing shame, reflecting both continuity and adaptation in social sanctions. This normalization illustrates how cultural systems adjust to changing realities while maintaining underlying patriarchal logics.

Synthesizing these strands of evidence reveals several consistent patterns. First, premarital pregnancy in Indonesia is rarely treated as an individual concern but is embedded in collective dynamics of morality, honor, and community reputation. Second, while legal and religious frameworks provide varying degrees of legitimacy, socio-cultural imperatives frequently dictate outcomes. Third, preventive measures such as comprehensive sexuality education, open family communication, and stronger roles for religious institutions are widely recommended but remain poorly implemented. Fourth, the health, psychological, and social risks associated with early marriage highlight the inadequacy of marriage as a protective mechanism, underscoring the paradox of a practice that simultaneously functions as a solution and a source of harm.

Despite the breadth of existing research, significant gaps persist. Studies have primarily focused on Java and Sumatra, leaving eastern Indonesia, including North Halmahera,



underexplored. Yet this region presents a distinctive context where Islamic jurisprudence, Christian ethics, and customary traditions converge in unique ways. Localized research is therefore crucial for advancing both theoretical debates and practical interventions, as it illuminates how communities negotiate the tensions between preserving cultural values and addressing contemporary challenges of gender equity and child protection.

In conclusion, premarital pregnancy and marriage in Indonesia, particularly in North Halmahera, represent a convergence of cultural, religious, and legal dynamics that illustrate both the resilience and limitations of existing social systems. While marriage is employed as a strategy to restore honor and maintain communal harmony, it perpetuates cycles of gender inequality, educational discontinuity, and health risks. This study contributes to filling critical gaps by focusing on a region that has received limited scholarly attention, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive yet rights-based interventions. By doing so, it seeks to deepen understanding of how communities balance tradition, law, and religion, while emphasizing the importance of safeguarding the dignity and well-being of women and children in contemporary Indonesia.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied a qualitative case study design to investigate the phenomenon of marriage involving pregnant women outside wedlock in North Halmahera, North Maluku Province. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables the exploration of meanings, social interactions, and cultural practices that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative methods. The research setting was chosen for its distinctive interplay of Islamic law, Christian teachings, and adat (customary law), which together shape local responses to premarital pregnancy. Participants were purposively recruited to ensure diverse perspectives, including religious leaders, adat leaders, government officials, parents, and young couples who had experienced premarital pregnancy, complemented by a snowball sampling strategy to reach other relevant informants. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant observation at community meetings and ceremonies, and analysis of documents such as marriage records, fatwas, and legal texts. These techniques allowed the researcher to capture both the articulated views of participants and the performative dimensions of cultural practices.

The data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were coded thematically, organized into matrices to identify recurring patterns, and interpreted inductively in relation to the research questions and theoretical frameworks. Trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation across data sources, member checking with selected participants, and maintaining an audit trail of coding and interpretations. Ethical protocols were rigorously observed: informed consent was obtained, participants' anonymity and confidentiality were safeguarded, and sensitivity was exercised to prevent stigmatization. This methodological framework enabled a rich and context-sensitive understanding of how socio-cultural confinement, legal pluralism, and religious interpretations converge in shaping the practice of marrying pregnant women in North Halmahera.



3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

The findings of this study demonstrate that the practice of marrying pregnant women in North Halmahera is sustained by deeply rooted socio-cultural imperatives, diverse religious interpretations, and pragmatic legal adaptations. Data from interviews, observations, and documents reveal that family honor, social cohesion, and community expectations are the primary drivers of such marriages, often overriding considerations of individual readiness, health, or long-term well-being.

A central theme emerging from the data is the primacy of family honor. Parents consistently described premarital pregnancy as a profound social disgrace that could damage not only the reputation of the nuclear family but also the standing of extended kinship networks. One father stated: "If my daughter is pregnant before marriage, it is not only her shame but our whole family's. People will talk about us every day. The only way to silence them is marriage" (Parent 1). This sentiment was echoed by another mother, who emphasized the communal dimension of shame: "Our neighbors will not see her as a girl anymore; they will see us as parents who failed. That is why we must marry her quickly" (Parent 2). Such accounts illustrate that decisions were rarely made with the young woman's individual needs in mind but were instead guided by collective considerations of honor and reputation.

The process of arranging marriages in these cases was typically rapid, often occurring soon after pregnancy was discovered. Families reported feeling pressured by extended relatives and community elders to act decisively. A young woman who was married while still in school recounted: "I did not want to marry yet. I wanted to finish school. But my parents said we must do it quickly before everyone finds out. I could not refuse" (Young Woman 1). This testimony highlights the limited agency of young women in decision-making, as well as the weight of communal pressures that overshadowed personal aspirations.

Weak family communication emerged as another significant factor contributing to premarital pregnancies. Parents admitted that they seldom spoke with their children about sexuality or reproductive health, often due to cultural taboos. One mother acknowledged: "I never explained about these things. We are ashamed to talk about it. But then our children learn from friends or the internet, and sometimes they make mistakes" (Parent 3). Young participants confirmed this gap, with one adolescent stating: "At home, we never talk about love or sex. I only knew from my friends and from social media. That is why I did not realize the risks" (Young Woman 2). These narratives demonstrate how silence at home contributes to adolescents seeking guidance elsewhere, often from unreliable or permissive sources.

Technology and digital culture also featured prominently in participants' accounts. Community leaders and parents frequently linked the rise of premarital pregnancy to unsupervised use of smartphones and social media. A religious leader observed: "Now young people are always with their phones. They chat with boys, they watch things we cannot control. It changes their minds and behavior" (Religious Leader 1). Parents similarly admitted their lack of digital literacy, with one father noting: "We do not know what they do online. We cannot follow them. That is why problems happen" (Parent 4). These perspectives highlight the intergenerational gap in digital competence, which weakens traditional parental authority and contributes to shifts in adolescent behavior.

Religious interpretations of marriage during pregnancy were found to be diverse. Islamic scholars in North Halmahera expressed differing views, reflecting the pluralism of classical jurisprudence. One ulama explained: "According to our teaching, it is allowed if she marries



the man responsible for the pregnancy. It is better than leaving her without a husband, which would create bigger problems” (Religious Leader 2). Another religious leader, however, held a stricter view: “Marriage should not be done until after the baby is born. But in our community, people insist, and sometimes we must allow it to avoid conflict” (Religious Leader 3). Christian leaders in the area also adopted pragmatic approaches. As one pastor noted: “We do not approve of premarital sex. But once a girl is pregnant, the only way to protect her is to let them marry. We see it as repentance” (Pastor 1). These statements illustrate how religious authorities negotiate doctrinal positions with community demands, often invoking *masalah* (public interest) or pastoral care to justify pragmatic accommodations.

Adat (customary law) practices provided additional mechanisms for resolving cases of premarital pregnancy. Community mediations were often convened to negotiate marriages, including symbolic compensation and rituals of reconciliation. An adat leader described: “When this happens, we gather the families. We ask the man’s family to give traditional goods, like betel nut or cloth, to show respect. This is our way to close the wound and restore harmony” (Adat Leader 1). Observations confirmed that such rituals functioned not only to legitimize the marriage but also to publicly reintegrate the woman and her family into community life.

Government officials played a critical role in formalizing these marriages through the granting of dispensations for underage unions. Court documents and interviews confirmed that dispensations were overwhelmingly sought in cases of premarital pregnancy. One official candidly remarked: “Almost all requests for dispensation here are because of pregnancy. We know it is not ideal, but if we refuse, the family will face shame and trouble. So, we accept” (Government Official 1). Such admissions highlight the tension between state commitments to child protection and the pragmatic accommodations made in response to local social pressures.

The consequences of these marriages for women and children were significant. Young brides often left school permanently, limiting future educational and economic opportunities. One participant shared: “After marriage, I could not go back to school. My husband said I must stay home and take care of the baby. I feel my life is finished” (Young Woman 3). Many described experiences of psychological stress and marital instability, often exacerbated by economic hardship. Health workers noted medical risks such as anemia, premature births, and inadequate prenatal care, consistent with global patterns of adolescent pregnancy. One midwife observed: “Most of these young mothers come late for check-ups, sometimes after six months. They are shy, they do not understand. That is why complications are common” (Health Worker 1).

Despite these challenges, families expressed relief once marriages were formalized. Parents described marriage as a solution that restored their dignity. As one father put it: “Now people cannot gossip anymore. Our family’s name is safe. That is the most important thing” (Parent 5). Religious leaders similarly reported that communities viewed marriage as moral redemption, transforming a stigmatized situation into a socially sanctioned one. Yet beneath this surface resolution, many marriages were fragile, with young couples lacking the maturity and resources to sustain stable households.

Preventive measures were found to be inadequate. Sexuality education was limited in schools and focused narrowly on biological aspects, while religious counseling emphasized prohibitions without providing practical guidance. Families expressed willingness to support preventive programs but cited lack of access and resources. A teacher noted: “We try to teach about health, but it is very little, and students are shy to ask. We need a better way to speak



openly” (Teacher 1). Community leaders acknowledged the importance of collaborative strategies but admitted that efforts were fragmented and inconsistent.

In sum, the results show that marriage due to premarital pregnancy in North Halmahera is driven primarily by the imperative to safeguard family honor, supported by adat rituals, legitimized by flexible religious interpretations, and formalized through state dispensations. While marriage addresses immediate concerns of shame and reintegration, it often perpetuates cycles of educational discontinuity, health risks, and gendered vulnerability. The persistence of this practice reflects both the resilience of cultural traditions and the limitations of current preventive strategies. The voices of participants demonstrate the deeply human dimensions of this issue, revealing how individuals and families navigate the tensions between cultural obligations, religious teachings, and personal aspirations.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that marriage involving pregnant women in North Halmahera is shaped by a complex interplay of socio-cultural imperatives, religious pragmatism, and legal pluralism. The centrality of family honor in decision-making reflects broader anthropological theories about the role of shame and reputation in structuring social order within collectivist societies. Families’ immediate response to premarital pregnancy (pressuring daughters to marry) demonstrates how communal values override individual rights, thereby reinforcing structural inequalities, particularly those borne by women. This aligns with previous research that has documented how honor cultures in Indonesia and Southeast Asia prioritize communal reputation over personal well-being (Alifah et al., 2022; Yorita et al., 2023).

A notable dimension of the findings is the limited agency of young women in these processes. Testimonies revealed that many adolescents entered marriage reluctantly, often sacrificing education and personal aspirations. This outcome resonates with feminist critiques that situate early marriage as both a product and reinforcement of patriarchy, in which women’s bodies are treated as sites of communal morality. The persistence of such practices highlights how cultural logics of shame and honor can normalize coercion, disguising it as protection. While families view marriage as a corrective act, from a rights-based perspective, it perpetuates cycles of gendered vulnerability by curtailing opportunities for self-determination, education, and economic independence.

Religious interpretations were shown to be diverse, reflecting both classical Islamic jurisprudence and local adaptations. The pragmatic positions adopted by ulama and pastors suggest that community leaders often prioritize *maslahah* (public interest) over strict doctrinal adherence. Such interpretations highlight the flexibility of religious authority in responding to social pressures, yet they also raise critical questions about the consequences of privileging communal harmony over individual welfare. This negotiation between text and context illustrates the dynamics of Islamic legal pluralism in Indonesia, in which multiple schools of thought and local traditions coexist. However, while such pluralism allows for contextualized solutions, it can also legitimize practices that undermine child protection and women’s rights, thereby creating tension between religious pragmatism and international human rights frameworks.

The role of adat further underscores the cultural embeddedness of this phenomenon. Customary rituals and symbolic compensations were found to serve as mechanisms of reconciliation, transforming a socially stigmatized pregnancy into a culturally acceptable



union. From a structural-functional perspective, such practices can be understood as strategies to restore social equilibrium and prevent community disruption. Yet, as Merton (1968) observed, functional adaptations can generate latent dysfunctions. While adat rituals restore harmony on the surface, they simultaneously reproduce gender inequality by placing the burden of shame and correction on women, rather than addressing the structural causes of adolescent pregnancy.

The involvement of government institutions illustrates the complicity of legal systems in perpetuating these marriages. Court officials admitted that dispensations were granted predominantly in cases of premarital pregnancy, despite awareness of child protection mandates. This finding highlights the disjuncture between law in principle and law in practice, a recurring theme in socio-legal scholarship on Indonesia. Legal pluralism, while offering flexibility, often produces contradictions that are resolved pragmatically at the expense of vulnerable groups. This underscores the need for a more consistent alignment between national child protection frameworks and local practices, coupled with mechanisms to reduce reliance on marriage as a corrective solution.

The health and psychological consequences reported in this study resonate with global evidence that adolescent pregnancies are associated with elevated maternal and neonatal risks, as well as long-term socio-economic disadvantages (WHO, 2014). Participants' testimonies about stress, marital instability, and curtailed education confirm that marriage does not mitigate these risks but may exacerbate them. These outcomes illustrate the paradox inherent in the practice: while intended to protect women and families from stigma, marriage often creates new vulnerabilities that perpetuate cycles of poverty and marginalization.

The findings also highlight the inadequacy of preventive measures. Limited sexuality education, cultural taboos on discussing reproductive health, and narrow moralistic approaches from religious institutions have failed to equip adolescents with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate relationships responsibly. The gap between traditional educational strategies and contemporary digital realities leaves youth particularly vulnerable. Parents' admissions of digital illiteracy further exacerbate the challenge, weakening the effectiveness of traditional authority structures in a rapidly changing technological landscape. This confirms previous scholarship that emphasizes the need for comprehensive, culturally sensitive sexuality education that integrates family, school, and religious institutions.

Importantly, the results from North Halmahera reveal both continuities and transformations in social responses to premarital pregnancy. While the underlying patriarchal structures and honor logics remain intact, there is evidence of gradual normalization of the phenomenon, with communities increasingly viewing marriage as an acceptable corrective solution rather than a deep social taboo. This shift may reflect broader processes of social change, in which traditional sanctions are adjusted to accommodate modern realities. However, such adaptation does not necessarily equate to progress, as it continues to compromise the well-being of women and children.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings illustrate the utility of combining structural-functional, symbolic interactionist, and conflict perspectives. Structural-functionalism explains how marriage serves as a mechanism to restore social order, symbolic interactionism highlights how meanings of shame and honor are constructed and negotiated, and conflict theory illuminates the power imbalances that underlie coercive decision-making. Together, these perspectives provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the persistence of this practice despite its evident risks.



In conclusion, the discussion underscores that marriage following premarital pregnancy in North Halmahera functions simultaneously as a solution and a problem. It resolves immediate concerns of honor and social reintegration but generates long-term challenges for women, children, and communities. Addressing this issue requires holistic interventions that move beyond reactive solutions. Policy recommendations include strengthening sexuality education, fostering open family communication, enhancing the role of religious and adat leaders in preventive rather than corrective functions, and ensuring stricter alignment of legal dispensations with child protection principles. By situating the findings within broader debates on legal pluralism, patriarchy, and social change, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how cultural values, religious interpretations, and legal frameworks intersect in shaping marriage practices, and highlights the urgent need for interventions that prioritize the rights and well-being of women and children.

4. CONCLUSION

This study has shown that marriage following premarital pregnancy in North Halmahera is not merely an individual or familial choice but a socially structured practice shaped by the imperatives of honor, the pragmatism of religious interpretations, and the adaptability of legal pluralism. The findings reveal that families act swiftly to arrange marriages primarily to safeguard collective dignity, often at the expense of young women's agency, education, and health. Religious leaders, both Muslim and Christian, frequently adopt flexible interpretations to justify the practice under the principle of *maslahah* or redemption, while adat rituals and government dispensations further legitimize and formalize these unions.

While marriage provides an immediate resolution to stigma and restores social harmony, it simultaneously generates long-term challenges. Young women are exposed to educational discontinuity, domestic vulnerabilities, and adverse health outcomes, while children born into such unions face heightened risks of poverty and limited opportunities. The results also highlight the inadequacy of preventive measures, with family communication, sexuality education, and religious counseling failing to address the realities of modern adolescence shaped by digital culture. These dynamics underscore the paradox of marriage as both a solution and a source of new vulnerabilities.

The contribution of this research lies in its empirical illumination of how socio-cultural confinement, religious diversity, and legal accommodations converge in a specific eastern Indonesian context that has been underrepresented in scholarship. By foregrounding local voices and practices, the study enriches the sociology of law and religion, particularly debates on Islamic legal pluralism and the sociology of marriage. It also offers policy-relevant insights by demonstrating the need for holistic, context-sensitive interventions that balance cultural values with child protection and women's rights.

Future research should further explore comparative regional dynamics across eastern Indonesia, investigate the long-term trajectories of couples and children involved in such marriages, and assess the effectiveness of integrated educational and preventive programs. By doing so, scholarship can continue to inform policy and practice aimed at transforming marriage from a reactive corrective mechanism into a proactive framework for protecting dignity, health, and rights.



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