

EMERGING TRENDS IN MARRIED BY ACCIDENT (MBA) MARRIAGES: THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS COUNSELING INVOLVEMENT IN KUALUH LEIDONG

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Abstract

This research paper investigates the phenomenon of Married By Accident (MBA) marriages in Kualuh Leidong, focusing on the contributing factors and the effectiveness of religious counseling in addressing this issue. The study aims to understand the social, economic, and familial dynamics leading to MBA marriages and the role of religious and community interventions in mitigating these occurrences. Utilizing a qualitative research approach, this study employs interviews with key informants, including religious counselors and local residents, alongside a review of relevant literature and socio-economic data. The data were collected through in-depth interviews and field observations in Kualuh Leidong, analyzed thematically to identify patterns and insights related to MBA marriages. The findings reveal that MBA marriages in Kualuh Leidong are influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. Internal factors include a lack of religious understanding and weak self-control, while external factors involve inadequate parental supervision, economic hardship, and social media's impact. The study also highlights the increasing trend of MBA marriages in 2024, attributed to insufficient religious counseling and the role of socio-economic challenges. This research provides a novel exploration of MBA marriages in a specific regional context, highlighting the intersection of religious, economic, and social factors. It offers new insights into the effectiveness of religious counseling in preventing MBA marriages and the impact of socio-economic conditions on family dynamics. The study underscores the need for enhanced religious education and community support to address the root causes of MBA marriages. It suggests that more comprehensive and culturally sensitive counseling programs are necessary to prevent early marriages and address the issues related to pregnancies outside of wedlock. Policy recommendations include increasing parental involvement and improving economic support to reduce the incidence of MBA marriages.

Keywords: Married by Accident (MBA), Religious Counseling, KUA, The Role of KUA.

INTRODUCTION

Teen pregnancies outside of marriage are alarmingly common in Kecamatan Kualuh Leidong. This issue stems from the lack of parental involvement, with many teenagers

not attending school and having no structured activities during the evening.¹ As a result, these teenagers often engage in late-night socializing without supervision, leading to risky behaviors like dating in secluded areas.² In addition, the community lacks proper social control and guidance, exacerbating the problem.³ Thus, the environment fosters a situation where premarital pregnancies are prevalent due to inadequate parental and societal oversight.⁴

Talking about sex is still considered taboo and unethical in many communities,⁵ including Kecamatan Kualuh Leidong. This cultural barrier prevents teenagers from receiving accurate and relevant information about sexuality and reproductive health from their parents. Studies have shown that when sexual education is withheld, adolescents are more likely to explore these topics on their own, often without proper knowledge or guidance. In Kecamatan Kualuh Leidong, this issue is compounded by the fact that most families are large, with 6-12 children per household, and economic hardships lead to many teenagers dropping out of school. Consequently, the lack of formal education further limits these teenagers' understanding of critical topics like sexual health.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the religious counselors from the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Kecamatan Kualuh Leidong in reducing the incidence of pregnancies outside of marriage. Specifically, it will examine the various factors contributing to the high rate of premarital pregnancies and assess the impact of religious counseling on mitigating these factors. The goal is to raise community

¹ Rizky Alikhsan and Endri Yenti, "Cultural Dynamics and Islamic Legal Realities of Bundo Kanduang in the Patriarchal System of West Sumatra," *Mazahibuna: Jurnal Perbandingan Mazhab* 5, no. 2 (2023): 166-82, <https://doi.org/10.24252/mazahibuna.vi.39207>.

² Imran et al., "Aspect of Justice of Marriage Dispensation and Best Interests for Children," *Jurnal Hukum Dan Peradilan* 13, no. 1 (2024): 63-88, <https://doi.org/10.25216/jhp.13.1.2024.63-88>.

³ Najwa Ainun Nabilah and Khaerunnisa Tri Darmaningrum, "Peran Penyuluh Agama Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Marginal," *Jurnal Bimbingan Penyuluhan Islam* 5, no. 2 (2023): 198-212, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32332/jbpi.v5i2.7914>.

⁴ Ayse Elmali-Karakaya, "Interfaith Marriage in Islam: Classical Islamic Resources and Contemporary Debates on Muslim Women's Interfaith Marriages †," *Religions* 13, no. 8 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13080726>.

⁵ Ibnu Amin, Faisal Efendi, and Hertasmaldi, "Mashlahah Married Pregnant Perspective Article 53 Compilation of Islamic Law," *Fokus: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman Dan Kemasyarakatan* 7, no. 2 (2022): 103-15, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jf.v7i2.5364>.

awareness about the dangers of such pregnancies and provide recommendations for improving the effectiveness of religious counseling in addressing this social issue.

The underlying argument of this research is that proactive religious counseling can significantly reduce the occurrence of premarital pregnancies in Kecamatan Kualuh Leidong. The study hypothesizes that structured and consistent guidance, combined with increased public awareness of the legal marriage age as stipulated in UU No. 16 Tahun 2019, can lead to a notable decline in these pregnancies. By implementing these measures, the community can strengthen its social fabric and align more closely with religious and cultural values that discourage premarital sexual activity.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design aimed at providing an in-depth understanding of the role of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in minimizing premarital pregnancies in Kecamatan Kualuh Leidong. The design focuses on gathering detailed insights into the effectiveness of KUA's interventions over the past three years. By using a combination of primary data from KUA records and field interviews, the research seeks to create a comprehensive portrayal of the current situation. This approach ensures that the study accurately reflects the realities faced by KUA in addressing this social issue. The primary data for this research was obtained from the KUA, specifically focusing on records of premarital pregnancies over the last three years. This data is crucial in understanding the trends and frequency of such cases in Kecamatan Kualuh Leidong. To complement this quantitative data, field interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including KUA staff and community members, to explore the underlying causes of these pregnancies. These interviews provided valuable qualitative insights, enriching the overall analysis by revealing the social dynamics and challenges contributing to the issue.

The data collected from KUA records and field interviews were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. This technique involved identifying recurring patterns and themes within the qualitative data to understand the factors contributing to premarital pregnancies. The quantitative data from KUA records was also analyzed statistically to

identify any significant trends or correlations over the three-year period. By combining these methods, the study was able to draw meaningful conclusions about the effectiveness of KUA's efforts in reducing premarital pregnancies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Role of Islamic Religious Counselors at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Minimising Marriages of Pregnant Women Outside of Marriage

The involvement of Islamic religious counselors at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Kecamatan Kualuh Leidong is crucial in preventing premarital pregnancies. The KUA counselors have implemented several methods, including community socialization on the dangers of free association, religious study sessions with the youth to create a positive environment, and guidance for parents on the legal marriage age as stipulated by Law No. 16 of 2019. These efforts, however, have shown varying effectiveness, with a decrease in premarital pregnancies in 2023, followed by an increase in 2024.

The results suggest that the effectiveness of KUA's initiatives has broader implications for community health and social stability.⁶ By effectively reducing premarital pregnancies, these programs not only prevent early marriages but also promote healthier psychological and physical outcomes for the youth.⁷ The need for ongoing community engagement and education highlights the crucial role that religious⁸ and governmental institutions play in addressing social issues, emphasizing that these efforts must be prioritized and maintained over time.⁹

⁶ Masithah Masithah, "Peran Kua Dalam Mewujudkan Konsep Moderasi Beragama," *Journal Of Education Science* 7, no. 1 (2021): 54-67, <https://doi.org/10.3314/jes.v7i1.1336>.

⁷ Shella Oetharry Gunawan and Syamsul Bahri, "Impacts of Early Childhood Marriage in Indonesia Viewed from Child Protection Laws Perspectives," *El-Ussrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 6, no. 2 (2023): 362-80, <https://doi.org/10.22373/ujhk.v6i2.20262>.

⁸ Abdu Ihram Prakon, Siti Aisyah, and Ahmad Fauzan, "Examining the Position of Women in Traditional Polygamy; Insights from Islamic Jurisprudence in the Cultural Context of East Flores," *Mazahibuna: Jurnal Perbandingan Mazhab* 5, no. 2 (2023): 149-65, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24252/mazahibuna.vi.39903>.

⁹ Ahmad Kamal, "Early Marriage in the Perspective of Islamic Law : A Case Study in Indonesia Ahmad Kamal," *Fitrah: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 10, no. 1 (2024): 45-60, <https://doi.org/10.24952/fitrah.v10i1.11146>.

To find out the role of Islamic Religious Counselors in Kualuh Leidong District in preventing the occurrence of Marriages of Pregnant Women Outside of Marriage / MBA Mr Haidir Siregar S.H provides an explanation of what is done by Islamic Religious Counselors in an effort to prevent these marriages. The following is his explanation:

“For the problem of prevention efforts in preventing pregnant marriages outside of marriage, we extension workers carry out several methods such as conducting socialisation to the community about the dangers of promiscuity that can trigger marriage due to pregnancy outside of marriage, holding recitations with young people in the kualuh leidong sub-district with the aim that young people in the kualuh leidong sub-district are in a positive environment and increase the religious knowledge they have, and also we provide guidance to parents regarding Law no 16 of 2019 concerning marriage, that the marriage of a man and woman has reached the age of 19 years.”¹⁰

While the study sheds light on the important role of KUA counselors in preventing premarital pregnancies, it has certain limitations.¹¹ The data relies heavily on self-reported measures and may be influenced by social desirability bias, potentially leading to underreporting of premarital pregnancies. Additionally, the study’s scope is limited to a specific geographic area, which may not fully capture the complexities and variations of these issues in other regions.

Explore the long-term impact of KUA interventions on community behaviors and marriage practices, possibly extending the study to other regions for a more comprehensive understanding.¹² Investigating the specific factors that contribute to the variability in intervention effectiveness, such as cultural differences or economic conditions, could also provide valuable insights. Furthermore, longitudinal studies that track changes over time would offer a clearer picture of the sustained impact of these preventive measures.

2. Causes of Marriage of Pregnant Women Outside of Marriage in Kualuh Leidong Sub-district

¹⁰ Haidir Siregar, “Interview with KUA Islamic Religious Counselor, Kualuh Leidong Sub-District, 20 July.”

¹¹ Achmad Nasrulloh, “Tinjauan Masalah Mursalah Terhadap Fenomena Penentuan Wali Nikah Anak Hasil Di Luar Nikah Di Kantor Urusan Agama,” *Hukum Islam* 22, no. 2 (2022): 176, <https://doi.org/10.24014/jhi.v22i2.16414>.

¹² Saif 'Adli Zamani, “PENGHULU SEBAGAI WALI HAKIM DALAM AKAD NIKAH (Studi Terhadap Penghulu Kantor Urusan Agama Di Wilayah Kota Yogyakarta),” *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 12, no. 2 (2020): 173, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ahwal.2019.12205>.

The research identified several internal and external factors contributing to the occurrence of premarital pregnancies, or Married by Accident (MBA), in Kecamatan Kualuh Leidong. Internal factors include a lack of religious understanding, poor self-control, and insufficient knowledge about marriage and its potential negative consequences when rushed due to pregnancy. External factors encompass inadequate parental supervision, the influence of free association among youth, and the impact of social media, which often leaves young individuals seeking information from unreliable sources. Additionally, the economic and educational landscape in Kecamatan Kualuh Leidong plays a significant role, with many children from large families, often led by fishermen, not continuing their education. This lack of focus on schooling, especially among young women, increases the likelihood of early marriage and premarital pregnancy. Family dynamics and social environment further exacerbate this issue, particularly in cases of broken homes or where parents fail to provide adequate attention, leading youth to seek solace in relationships that may result in MBA. The stigma associated with premarital pregnancy often pressures families to push for marriage as a means to protect their reputation and avoid further social shame.

Table: Data

Code	Factor	Description
IN1	Lack of Religious Understanding	Insufficient knowledge and practice of religious teachings, leading to poor decision-making.
IN2	Weak Self-Control	Inability to resist temptations and peer pressure, resulting in risky behaviors.
IN3	Poor Understanding of Marriage	Misconceptions about marriage, especially when influenced by the urgency of pregnancy.
EX1	Inadequate Parental Supervision	Lack of parental oversight, allowing children to engage in unsupervised activities.
EX2	Free Association Among Youth	Engagement in unmonitored social interactions, leading to risky relationships.
EX3	Influence of Social Media	Exposure to misleading information online, without proper parental guidance.
EX4	Economic Challenges	Economic pressures leading to early dropout from school and increased independence among youth.

EX5	Educational Barriers	Lack of access to education, particularly for young women, contributing to early marriage.
EX6	Family Dynamics	Dysfunctional family relationships, such as broken homes, pushing youth towards seeking emotional support in relationships.
EX7	Social Stigma	Pressure from societal norms to marry when pregnancy occurs, to avoid dishonor and protect family reputation.

The data reveals a complex interplay between internal and external factors that contribute to premarital pregnancies in Kecamatan Kualuh Leidong. Internally, the lack of religious and marital knowledge, coupled with weak self-control, significantly increases the risk. Externally, inadequate parental supervision, the influence of peer groups, social media, and economic and educational challenges all play critical roles in shaping the environment that leads to MBA. Furthermore, the stigma surrounding premarital pregnancy compels families to enforce marriage as a solution, thereby perpetuating the cycle. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of the issue, highlighting the need for comprehensive interventions that address both personal and societal dimensions.

This is as stated by RK as the resource person. The following is the result of the interview:

"I got married because all this time it was my partner who gave me pocket money or so on, and my marriage was also a result of me not being able to refuse what my partner asked for because I had already spent a lot of his money. And also I don't go to school like other friends where my friends in the evening will do their schoolwork while I go out with my boyfriend on Thursday nights or Sundays."

The results of an interview with an informant named SD:

"What is a factor in the occurrence of pregnancy outside of marriage is because my association is quite free, after school I don't go straight home, I usually go with friends to hang out while telling stories, too often like that so my friends bring their girlfriends in the hangout then they introduce one of their male friends and we have a relationship without knowing parents."

The implications of these findings are profound, highlighting the need for multifaceted interventions that address both personal and societal factors contributing to

MBA.¹³ The results suggest that improving religious education and self-control among the youth could reduce the incidence of premarital pregnancies.¹⁴ Additionally, enhancing parental involvement and supervision, along with creating awareness about the risks of free association and unmonitored social media usage, is crucial.¹⁵ The findings also underscore the importance of addressing economic and educational barriers to ensure that children, especially girls, continue their education, which can serve as a protective factor against early marriage and MBA.¹⁶ The social stigma surrounding premarital pregnancies and the pressure to marry to protect family honor also indicate a need for community-based programs that promote alternative solutions and support systems.¹⁷

In this case in Kualuh Leidong sub-district, if a woman and man have intercourse without a legal marriage, they must be married to the man who impregnated her or to the woman who was impregnated. As found in Qs. An-Nur verse 3:

الزَّانِي لَا يَنْكِحُ إِلَّا زَانِيَةً أَوْ مُشْرِكَةً وَالزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنْكِحُهَا إِلَّا زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ وَحُرِّمَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"The male adulterer should not marry except the female adulterer or the polytheist, and the female adulterer should not marry except the male adulterer or the polytheist. That is forbidden to the believers."¹⁸

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, there are some limitations that should be acknowledged. The study is geographically limited to Kecamatan Kualuh Leidong, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions with different socio-economic and cultural contexts. Additionally, the study relies heavily on

¹³ Abd. Sattaril Haq, "Islam Dan Adat Dalam Tradisi Perkawinan Masyarakat Suku Bugis: Analisis Interaksionisme Simbolik," *Al-Hukama'* 10, no. 2 (2021): 349-71, <https://doi.org/10.15642/alhukama.2020.10.2.349-371>.

¹⁴ Syariful Alam, "Reconstruction of Marriage Zonation in Islamic Law Perspective," *Legality : Jurnal Ilmiah Hukum* 27, no. 2 (2019): 161, <https://doi.org/10.22219/jihl.v27i2.10154>.

¹⁵ Binarsa and Khoiruddin Nasution, "Application of the Compilation of Islamic Law Article 53 Concerning Marriage to Pregnant Woman and Renewal of Marriage in Mlati District in Maqasid of Sharia Perspective," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* 20, no. 2 (2021): 327-54, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol20.iss2.art6>.

¹⁶ Muhammad Al-Ghazalli Abdol Malek, Mohd Al Adib Samuri, and Muhammad Nazir Alias, "Child Marriage in Malaysia: Reforming Law through the Siyasa Al Shar'iyah Framework," *Samarah* 7, no. 1 (2023): 58-83, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v7i1.16011>.

¹⁷ Ahmad Faris Hilmi and Muhammad Zawil Kiram, "The Under-Age Marriage during the Pandemic: The Best Interest of the Child Principle," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 6, no. 1 (2023): 71-80, <https://doi.org/10.31862/9785426311961>.

¹⁸ Kementerian Agama, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya* (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019).

qualitative data from interviews, which may be subject to bias or may not capture the full spectrum of factors contributing to MBA.¹⁹ The study also does not explore the long-term outcomes of MBA, such as the impact on the children born from such marriages or the socio-economic implications for the families involved.²⁰ These limitations suggest that the findings should be interpreted with caution and may require further validation through broader and more diverse studies.

Expand the scope beyond Kecamatan Kualuh Leidong to include other regions with varying socio-economic and cultural backgrounds to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to MBA. Studies could also incorporate quantitative methods to complement qualitative data, allowing for a more robust analysis of the factors at play. Additionally, future research should explore the long-term consequences of MBA on both the individuals involved and the broader community, including the psychological, social, and economic impacts. Research on the effectiveness of interventions aimed at preventing MBA, such as educational programs, parental involvement initiatives, and community-based support systems, would also be valuable in informing policies and practices to address this issue more effectively.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the incidence of premarital pregnancies, or Married By Accident (MBA), has increased in 2024 in Kecamatan Kualuh Leidong. The key contributing factors include the inadequate role of Islamic religious counselors in guiding the youth, insufficient parental involvement in their children's development due to economic and educational challenges, and the influence of social and environmental factors, particularly free association among peers. The findings also highlight that many of these marriages occur to protect the family's honor by concealing the perceived shame associated with premarital pregnancies. One of the strengths of this research lies in its comprehensive exploration of both internal and external factors contributing to MBA in a specific socio-cultural context. The study's qualitative approach, including in-depth

¹⁹ Alam, "Reconstruction of Marriage Zonation in Islamic Law Perspective."

²⁰ Mudofir Abdullah, "Marriage In Islam and the Problem of Gender Equality: A Philosophical Perspective," *Ulumuna* 22, no. 1 (2018): 57-76, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v22i1.333>.

interviews with affected individuals, provides a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between personal, familial, and societal influences. Additionally, the research offers valuable insights into the role of religious counseling and parental involvement, shedding light on areas where interventions could be most effective. By focusing on a specific community, the study provides a detailed case analysis that can inform localized strategies for preventing MBA. This study also has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. The research is limited to a single geographic area, which may restrict the applicability of the findings to other regions with different cultural and socio-economic conditions. Furthermore, the reliance on qualitative data, while rich in detail, may introduce bias and does not allow for the generalization of the findings to a broader population. Additionally, the study does not delve into the long-term effects of MBA on the individuals and families involved, which could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. These limitations suggest that further research is needed to validate and expand upon the findings.

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