



The role of the Office of Religious Affairs in the Dau Subdistrict to minimize cases of underage marriage during and after the pandemic

Nasrulloh^{a,*}, Muhammad Nuruddin^b, Muhammad Handika Suryanto^{b,†}

^a *Al-Qur'an and Tafseer Sciences Department, Syariat Faculty, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Malang, Jawa Timur 65144, Indonesia*

^b *Islamic Family Law Department, Syariat Faculty, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Malang, Jawa Timur 65144, Indonesia*

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Abstract

One of the big marital problems that still exist, especially after the pandemic, is underage marriage. This issue is clearly related to The Office of Religious Affairs. The method of this research is empirical research with qualitative approaches, which means taking the data directly from the field then analyzing them. This research produces some factors behind underage marriage at the Dau Subdistrict Religious Office at Malang Regency during and after the pandemic (2020–2022) such as socio-cultural in the form of strict habits and mindsets of the community, the factor of religious issues with parents' concerns about the behavior of their children's relationships, social freedom factors that can lead to pregnancy outside of marriage, economic factors that make the son in law a co-worker as a farmer, and also a flaw of education. All of these factors are the background for legalizing underage marriage with marriage dispensation requests. First, the role from Head of the Religious Service through counseling and socialization, restricting marriage registration and twinning sectoral cooperation. Second, the role of religious instructors is by leading society forums and giving some advice to the bride and groom. Third, the role of the village apparatus by educating society with counseling and advising on the postponement of underage marriages. This research gives the message that counseling and mentoring activities to the community need to continue to be carried out with models and concepts that are more modern, and by the existing conditions in society.

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* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: nasrulloh@syariah.uin-malang.ac.id (Nasrulloh).

† Co-first authors.

E-mail address: 220201210008@student.uin-malang.ac.id (M. H. Suryanto).

Introduction

Based on *world health organization* (WHO) data as of Wednesday, March 11, 2020, it has been determined that a *Corona Virus Disease 2019* (COVID-19) outbreak has become a global pandemic. The outbreak, which began in Wuhan, China, was determined to be a pandemic after experiencing a spread of 118 thousand cases spread across 114 countries including Indonesia. The first positive case of COVID-19 in Indonesia was officially delivered by the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, on Monday, March 2, 2020. Up until now, cases have continued with rising and falling numbers of patients, which is due to various policies that have been issued by the Indonesian government such as Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) and the Implementation of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM), which in this case, was through the task force for the acceleration of handling COVID-19. Limiting activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, does not necessarily prevent people from carrying out marriages, especially underage marriages. According to data from the Directorate General of Religious Justice Agencies processed by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, from January to June 2020 alone, there were around 34,000 cases of marriage dispensation applications registered with Religious Courts throughout Indonesia. When compared to the overall data of marriage dispensation applications in 2019, there was an increase of about 10,300 applications nationwide. Of the 34,000 applications, 97 percent of those applications were granted. So, it can be interpreted that there were around 33,000 underage marriages in just 6 months, from January to June 2020.

The number of underage marriages increased nationally during the COVID-19 pandemic, but unique data were found in the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) Typology C in Malang Regency, namely, the Office of Religious Affairs (*Kantor Urusan Agama/KUA*) of Dau Subdistrict. Cases of underage marriage in KUA Dau Subdistrict decreased in number. According to data on marriage events that entered the Religious Affairs Office of Dau Subdistrict, Malang Regency, the number of couples who performed marriages under the age of 19 years based on article 7 paragraph (1) of Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage was recorded at 24 cases from January to March 2020, or 3 months before the COVID-19 pandemic was even a month confirmed in Indonesia. Compared to data 3 months after the pandemic,

namely, April to June 2020, cases of underage marriage decreased, namely, only 9 cases. Then, the number of cases of underage marriage also experienced dynamics during the pandemic from July 2020 to November 2021 with a total of 65 cases of underage marriage. So, the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was accompanied by various government policy responses, had an impact on cases of underage marriages in the Dau Subdistrict KUA

Table 1 Quantity of underage marriage in Dau Subdistrict

Data Sample Comparasion about Underage Marriage in Dau Subdistrict	Before	After
	Pandemic	Pandemic
	24 cases	9 cases

The decline in cases of underage marriages that occurred in the KUA of Dau Subdistrict was inseparable from the role of the parties in it, namely, the sole ruler who also concurrently served as the head of the KUA, religious extension workers, and village religious functionary (*modin*) in each village. They are the parties who should best understand the regulations for underage marriage based on Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 because they must socialize appropriate and ideal marriages based on the law to the community both through official forums held by the Ministry of Religion and KUA as well as unofficial forums through recitation in villages (Rais, 2020).

Some previous research will be explained. First, a study conducted by Maulana Muzaki Fatawa, a student of the Faculty of Sharia and Law, UIN Walisongo Semarang, under the title *The Role of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Minimizing Early Marriage (Case Study in KUA Mranggen District, Demak Regency)*, a thesis published in 2018, discusses the role of the KUA of Mranggen District to minimize cases of early marriage in the people of Mranggen District, Demak Regency (Fatawa, 2018).

Second, a study conducted by Kina Rina, a student of the Faculty of Dakwah, Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi State Islamic University, under the title *The Role of Islamic Extension Workers in Preventing Early Marriage in Kumpeh District, Muaro Jambi Regency*, a thesis published in 2019, explains the role of religious extension workers in KUA Kumpeh District, Muaro Jambi Regency, who provide religious and health counseling to brides-to-be to prevent early marriage (Rina, 2019).

Third, research conducted by Teddy Parhan, a student of the Faculty of Sharia and Law, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, with the title *KUA Preventive Efforts*

in Handling Underage Marriages during the COVID-19 Pandemic (KUA Study Gunung Putri district), a thesis published in 2021, explains the portrait of underage marriage in KUA Gunung Putri District during the COVID-19 pandemic and the preventive efforts of the KUA to face the phenomenon of underage marriage (Parhan, 2021).

Based on all prior research, this research has the novelty, which is about the role of the office of religious affairs in Dau Subdistrict that is more comprehensive than prior research. Data were collected from 3 stakeholders in the office of religious affairs in Dau Subdistrict, namely, the head or chief (*Penghulu*), sakinah and functional family religious extension workers (the extension workers who are expert in family religious sector), and also village religious functionary (*Modin*). The stakeholders provided much insight and data about the problems, and holistic and comprehensive solutions for this research. Also, this research has a more complete timeline, namely, during and after the pandemic (2020–2022).

Methodology

This research method applies a qualitative type of research and an empirical approach. The qualitative type is descriptive research from many sources in the field (Rahmadi, 2011). An empirical approach means that the truth can be proven in reality or can be felt by the five senses (Sonata, 2014). So, the data sources are taken from primary and secondary data sources, and data collection techniques in the form of *field research* with interviews and documentation as well as *library research* by studying various literature. The discussion in the previous research included the role of KUA in a narrow scope in the form of efforts to prevent underage marriage, while this study discussed the role of KUA in a broader scope and was not limited to preventive efforts, and was more focused on efforts to minimize underage marriage. The similarity of these two studies is that both discuss the phenomenon of underage marriage in KUA during the COVID-19 pandemic and have empirical research methods.

This type of research is with empirical legal research. The research approach used is a qualitative approach with direct and natural research in the field. The method of determining the subject in this study used the method of determining *the subject of Purposive Sampling* (Garaika, 2019). This is used to obtain research subjects who have certain characteristics, namely, the stakeholders of the Dau Subdistrict KUA who are involved and play

a direct role in the field to minimize underage marriages, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data sources in this study were obtained from primary data sources by collecting data through direct interviews with stakeholders in the Dau Subdistrict KUA, namely, the Head of KUA, Religious Extension Workers, and Village Religious Functionary (*Modin*). Furthermore, secondary data sources were also used in this study, obtained by collecting data from document studies of court determinations on marriage dispensation applications and several other supporting kinds of literature. Data processing methods with several stages included data inspection, data classification, data verification, data analysis, and conclusions.

Result and Discussion

Background Underage Marriage Factors during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Dau Subdistrict

Underage marriage has many negative impacts that come with it, but these marriages are legal in the state. As it is known, underage marriages can still be legalized by being registered with the local Office of Religious Affairs on the condition that they have applied for marriage dispensation to the Religious Court and are granted such by the judge of the application. So, brides-to-be, both men and women who age is still under 19 years old, can continue with their marriage both according to religious law and by existing laws and regulations. Even though it has been regulated in article 7 paragraph (1) of Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, which states that marriage should only be allowed for men and women who have reached the age of 19 years, underage marriage can still be allowed if there are urgent reasons and accompanied by supporting evidence so that a marriage dispensation can be submitted to the Religious Court as stipulated in article 7 subsection (2) of the same statute

The practice of underage marriage legalized by the marriage law also occurs in the KUA of Dau Subdistrict, Malang Regency. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, this did not dampen the intention of parents and their children to carry out underage marriages. So, this study described what factors become background factors in the underage marriage during and after the COVID-19 pandemic in KUA Dau Subdistrict, namely: (1) Socio-Cultural Factors, (2) Religious Factors, (3) Promiscuity Factors, (4) Economic Factors, and (5) Educational Factors.

First, socio-cultural factors are factors that arise because of problems related to the activities of a human being with other humans in social life including in small groups such as marriage. The socio culture factors referred to as the cause of underage marriage during and after the COVID-19 pandemic in Dau Subdistrict are related to the *mindset* of parents, which is a problem for their children (Suryadi, 2016). As stated by the Head of KUA Dau Subdistrict, Mr. Ahmad Imam Muttaqin, M.Ag. from his observations, the Dau community considers marriage as a culture or lifestyle, so when a daughter has applied for such, she will be married, despite being a minor, because she is worried about becoming a myth (Muttaqin, personal communication, 2020).

The reason for parents who are concerned about the application being rejected, in the context of this study, is that socio-cultural reasons have been one of the reasons for the determination of the granting of the application for marriage dispensation number 2113/Rev.P/2020/PA/Kab. Mlg, which states that the petitioner's child (parents) has made a proposal or has had fiancée for 2 years, so marriage must be carried out, despite being a minor, that is, the woman is 17 years and 7 months old at the time of this application Set (Regency, Determination No. 2113/Rev.P/2020/PA. Kab.Mlg on Marriage Dispensation, 2020).

The view that marriage is a lifestyle and culture in people's lives is indeed due to the customs that exist in society itself because marriage is more than just a culture but also a practice of worship in religion, which has even received emphasis as a strong contract or *mitsâqanqhalîzhan* as Allah SWT. said in the Qur'an Surah An Nisâ' verse 21. Then, the marriage which is a strong contract or covenant must be carried out with prudence in practice so that a *sakînah* (calm), *mawaddah* (love) and *rahmah* (mercy) family or household is realized. This is because the contract is of worship value, whose implications are also rewarded or sinful (Ghozali, 2015).

Marriage is not only limited to socio-cultural customary practices that must be hurriedly carried out because of shame and worry but must be carried out with careful readiness, including in terms of maturity of age. So here the government presents a marriage age limit to realize more benefits in marriage, namely, a minimum age of 19 years as regulated in article 7 paragraph (1) of Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage (Indonesia, 2019).

Second, is the religious factor. What is meant here is to refer to the following verse of the Holy Qur'an Surah Al-Isra' verse 32:

الْيَبْسَآءَ وَسَوْفَ يُعْشَرُونَ أَفَإِنَّ أَنْزَلَ أُوبِرَقَاتِ الْو (32)

And do not approach adultery; (fornication) is a heinous act and a bad way (Penerjemah, 2012)."

This verse does not explicitly advocate underage marriage, but the explicit meaning in it is that Muslims are forbidden by Allah to approach let alone commit adultery. This is what the people of Dau Subdistrict understand, so there is no other choice but marriage even though they are underage. As stated by the speakers, namely, Head of KUA, extension workers, and village religious functionary, many parents in Dau Subdistrict are worried that their children already have a relationship with the opposite sex, so to prevent adultery, marriage is carried out even though they are minors (Muttaqin, personal communication, 2020).

In practice, there has been a determination of the application for marriage dispensation, one of the reasons for which is the concern of the parents or the petitioners. The determination is Determination No. 1915/Rev.P/2020/PA. Malang is a district involving the petitioners who are from Selorejo Village, Dau Subdistrict. In the said determination, it is clearly stated that the petitioners or parents have advised their children who are not old enough to postpone marriage. However, their children still want to marry, so the parents are worried about things happening that are prohibited by religion and legislation; thus, they are forced to consent to underage marriages (Regency, Designation No. 1915/Rev.P/2020/PA. Kab.Mlg on Marriage Dispensation, 2020).

The concerns of parents in the Dau Subdistrict cannot be dismissed because parents pay great attention to their children who are already attracted to the opposite sex or have even established a close relationship, not wanting them to fall into adultery. So, the solution is to marry even though the child is a minor. Because it is legal to be husband and wife, the relationship between a man and a woman is lawful and even gets a reward. The definition of marriage according to Islamic law is that marriage is a contract that is justified and allowed by men and women to have fun (Ghozali, 2015).

Third, is the factor of promiscuity. Promiscuity, which is synonymous with the association of children or adolescents with deviant behavior, leads to sex acts. This phenomenon is usually called courtship. The impacts are such as adultery, pregnancy outside of marriage, birth outside of marriage, to the abortion of the baby. As stated by the ruler, Mr. Ahmad Imam Muttaqin, M.Ag. promiscuity that leads to pregnancy outside of marriage is an critical reason for underage

marriage. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, teenagers are experiencing online school boredom, so they are increasingly out of control on social media and when hanging out freely with their friends (Suhaida et al., 2018).

The statements made by the sources have shown that promiscuity is the root of this underage marriage problem. Adolescence is the beginning of an individual's transition from childhood to adulthood accompanied by changes in body, behavior patterns, interests, and emotions. When the association or environment that the teenager lives in is not positive, there is promiscuity, courtship, and pregnancy outside of marriage (Suhaida et al., 2018).

The data sources are valid because they are based on documentation that researchers have studied on the determination of marriage dispensation applications in the Malang Regency Religious Court, namely, the application for marriage dispensation for underage marriages occurring for urgent reasons, namely, getting pregnant outside of marriage. Some of these determinations are Determination No. 1755/Rev.P/2020/PA. Kb.Mlg, whose parties are from Sumbersekar Village, Dau Subdistrict, because the bride-to-be has been pregnant for 6 months due to being in contact with her future husband (Regency, Determination No. 1755/Rev.P/2020/PA. Kab.Mlg. on Marriage Dispensation, 2020). Then in 2021, it is also based on Determination Number 0022/Pdt.P/2021/PA. Mlg District, namely, the parties, came from Landungsari Village, Dau Subdistrict because the bride-to-be had been pregnant for 2 months due to such a close relationship (Regency, Determination No. 0022/Rev.P/2021/PA. Kab.Mlg. on Marriage Dispensation, 2020).

The association is increasingly unlimited because coupled with very rapid technological advances as Mrs. Miswati (Sakinah Religious Extension Workers) stated, the influence of cellphones or smartphones in which there are various social media is very worrying. Pornographic content to violent content can also be accessed by teenagers without a clear filter. This is also the case with teenagers in Dau Subdistrict (Miswati, Interview, 2020).

The intensity of cellphone use has also increased since the COVID-19 pandemic due to the time spent at home. As is known, various government policies to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus continue, such as PSBB and PPKM. So, teenagers who usually study at school are forced to study from home online according to the Circular Letter of the Ministry of Education and Culture Number 15 of 2020 concerning Guidelines for

Implementing Learning From Home in the Emergency Period of the Spread of COVID-19. This is indirectly, increasingly not limiting adolescent associations online on various existing social media.

Fourth are economic factors. The sector of economic activity widely carried out by the people of Dau Subdistrict is agriculture. There are two economic factors that cause underage marriage in Dau Subdistrict; first, the parents try to marry their children even though they are underage to ease the parents' financial burden. This is because by having carried out marriage, the child if a daughter, has become the responsibility of her husband to provide a living as well as the rights and obligations of the husband and wife in the household in general (Ghozali, 2015).

Second, based on the statements of Mr. Imam Muttaqin, Mrs. Miswati, and Mrs. Tri Widajati, the livelihood of the Dau people is mostly farming, so when a marriage occurs, the farmer's family also gets additional new labor, the son-in-law. This is a unique factor, and is rarely found in other regions. The Dau community, in this case, take economic advantage of underage marriages. The statements from the speakers are in line with some of the documentation that researchers studied on the determination of the application for marriage dispensation at the Malang Regency Religious Court, whose parties are from the Dau Subdistrict. One of them is based on Determination No. 1228/Rev.P/2021/PA. Kab. Mlg., whose parties are from Gadingkulon Village, Dau Subdistrict, that apart from being pregnant out of wedlock being the main reason, the work of the future husband who is a farm laborer is the same as the work of the applicant or the parents of the future wife, namely, farmers (Regency, Determination No. 1228/Rev.P/2021/PA. Kab.Mlg. on Marriage Dispensation, 2021).

Fifth is the educational factor. Education is an effective and important effort to change people's mindsets to influence the way they look at things. Education plays an important role in the mindset of the people of the Dau Subdistrict. Most of the people who have underage marriages in Dau Subdistrict are children whose education is up to elementary and junior high school because after that they prefer to work and then get married. This is seen from the documentation in several determinations of marriage dispensation applications in the Malang Regency Religious Court, based on Determination Number 0022/Pdt.P/2021/PA. Kab.Mlg., whose party is from Landungsari Village. Then, Determination No. 1228/Rev.P/2021/PA. Kab. Mlg. whose party is from Gadingkulon Village, is the son of the applicants whose educational background

is elementary and junior high school. As seen from further documentation, through the 2020-2021 Marriage Event Data Book KUA Dau Subdistrict, the majority of those who carry out underage marriages have elementary and junior high school backgrounds. In addition, the factor of insufficient parental education is also a problem (Muamaroh, 2013).

If analyzed, the government has provided rules for compulsory education of 12 (twelve) years or up to high school and equivalent, which is also supported by the Smart Indonesia Program if needed. In addition, other additional education such as the tertiary level and Islamic boarding school education is also very useful for children to avoid underage marriage. All of these are important because taking learning and education is to deepen knowledge, insight, and experience so that in the context of this research, they can be more ready to carry out marriages and foster domestic life. Higher and sufficient education, both formal education and religious education must be possessed for both children and parents in Dau Subdistrict

The Role of All Stakeholders from Dau Subdistrict Religious Affairs Office to Minimizing Underage Marriage during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic

The first is the role of the Head of KUA or *Penghulu* (Chief). He has a socio-religious role in society, which is related to social and religious activities to provide good to its environment. In addition, he also plays a role in enforcing the law on Islamic marriage in Indonesia because Islamic marriage law has been accommodated by the state into national laws such as the Marriage Law and the Compilation of Islamic Law, which must be implemented by the Head of KUA against the people in their territory (Rais, 2020).

Penghulu in the KUA Dau Subdistrict, who also concurrently serves as head of KUA, also has a socio-religious role in the Dau Subdistrict community. Although KUA Dau is a Typology C KUA that has several referral marriages of under 50 events in a month, the only existing *penghulu*, Mr. Ahmad Imam Muttaqin, M.Ag., has a very strategic role in minimizing underage marriages during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first role of the *penghulu* is to carry out socialization and counseling. This role is the duty and function of the *penghulu* as a bureaucratic cleric representing the government present in the community. Likewise, the *Penghulu* KUA of Dau Subdistrict conducted socialization and counseling to the community, both parents and children, to minimize underage

marriage. When analyzed, the role of socialization and counseling by *penghulu* does play an important role in minimizing underage marriage in Dau Subdistrict. First, *penghulu* is a government bureaucratic cleric who is the leading *stakeholder* to socialize laws and regulations on marriage, especially regarding the minimum age limit. *Penghulu* expressly emphasized to the public not to marry if they are not yet 19 years old by article 7 paragraph (1) of Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage. This is important to convey because the age limit set by the government in the law, namely, 19 years, actually has a certain function and purpose. The age of 19 years is the age limit of adolescence, which is the beginning of the time an individual experiences a transition from childhood to adulthood accompanied by changes in body, behavior patterns, interests, and emotions. After the age of 19 years, the emotional, physical, and behavioral maturity of the individual can be realized. The age limit of 19 years also coincides with the completion of the compulsory education program of 12 (twelve) years or up to high school, equivalent to the Ministry of Education and Culture, so children can marry if they have finished their education in high school (Rais, 2020).

Second, the role of socialization of the *penghulu* is not comprehensive if it is only limited to conveying the content of the law on the age limit of marriage. However, the *penghulu* in KUA Dau Subdistrict also socialized that the law was regulated for the good of the community because marriage is not only a matter of biological lust but also concerns other factors, especially related to the dignity of the glory of human life. It is important to apply the age limit to provide mature readiness to the future bride and groom, who later when building a household, such can be realized a *sakinah, mawaddah, and rahmah* home life (Nurhadi, 2011).

Third, the target of socialization and counseling carried out by the *penghulu* of KUA Dau Subdistrict is right on target. Based on the statement of Mr. Ahmad Imam Muttaqin, M.Ag., socialization is usually carried out in two groups, namely, parents in the *dasawisma* mothers' forum, a group of mothers from 10 families (heads of families) in neighboring households to facilitate the running of a program, and among teenagers or youth in the cadet reef forum. It is important for these two groups to do in-depth counseling because, although those who marry underage are teenagers or youths, those who apply for marriage dispensation are the parents. As is known, underage marriages will be given a rejection letter form N7 from the KUA, so according to the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia Regulation Number 5 of

2019 concerning Guidelines for Adjudicating Marriage Dispensation Applications, parents or guardians can apply for marriage dispensation to religious courts to legalize the marriage of their children in the KUA (Muttaqin, Interview, 2020).

The next role of the ruler is with the tight marriage registration. Prospective brides who want to marry must register a marriage first with their guardian to the KUA. In the registration process, there will be a further process, namely, the marriage examination stage, or better known as *singles*, which is an examination of the data or files of the bride and groom and their guardians who have registered with a question-and-answer model with the KUA ruler (Rohmatin, 2017).

Penghulu KUA Dau Subdistrict also did the same thing when there were brides-to-be who wanted to register their marriage even though they were still during the COVID-19 pandemic with all the existing restrictions. The process of direct singles was still carried out in KUA with the implementation of strict health protocols. When the Singles process takes place, if it is known that the bride and groom are minors, the bride and groom try to convey that the marriage will be postponed until old enough according to the marriage law, which is 19 years old.

This registration tightening process is an effort to minimize underage marriages that do not have very urgent reasons as mandated by article 7 paragraph (2) of Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage. In principle, underage marriage is prohibited by the state, but when there is a very urgent reason as stated by the KUA Dau Subdistrict ruler like getting pregnant first, and having obtained a determination of marriage dispensation from a religious court, the marriage cannot be refused. This is to provide greater benefits for brides-to-be and their families, as the following rule of *fiqh* (islamic law):

حَلَّ أَصْلَ الْمَلِ الْجَلِّجِ وَالْعَمْدَقُ مِيسَافَ الْمَلِ الْغَرْدِ

That is to say: “Resisting the damage must take precedence over bringing about benefit.” (Ibrahim, 2019).

The damage that must be avoided in this context is the status of the child in the womb of a woman who is pregnant outside of marriage. If the marriage is not legalized in the KUA, then the unborn child does not have a clear status even if a *sirri* marriage (illegal marriage based on state regulation) has been carried out. This must take precedence over bringing benefits in the application of marriage age limits, that must be set aside in the event of an urgent matter like this.

Tightening registration is effective if applied to underage marriages that are not urgent and can be postponed. However, if there is a strong will and an urgent reason from the parents and children to carry out underage marriage, then the ruler still allows it. When efforts to minimize underage marriages have been made, the acceptance is returned to the community whether accepted it or not. In this context, KUA is not an authoritative institution that forces the community but a persuasive institution to invite the public to obey the regulations, namely, the marriage age limit of 19 years by article 7 paragraph (1) of Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage

The last role of the *penghulu* is to establish sectoral cooperation. KUA Dau Subdistrict is a KUA Typology C has only one *penghulu* with the additional task of being the Head of KUA. The role of the Head of KUA Dau cannot run optimally if done alone. The Head of KUA Dau, who is also the head of the *penghulu*, also established sectoral cooperation with several related institutions to minimize underage marriages during the COVID-19 pandemic. The sectoral cooperation carried out by the KUA Dau *penghulu* consists of internal and external. Internal cooperation is to establish synergy with religious extension workers and village religious functionary (*modin*) in KUA Dau Subdistrict to jointly provide counseling and socialization to the community about the importance of marriage when they are old enough by considering the existing laws and the benefits obtained. Then regarding external cooperation, the Head of KUA Dau synergizes with the Family Planning Field Extension Officer (PLKB) from BKKBN to provide socialization about the impact and risks of underage marriage to save the Dau community from doing so, and working with teachers in schools on the importance of education so that children and parents prioritize education first rather than choosing to carry out underage marriages.

Sectoral cooperation is carried out because the *penghulu* and the Head of KUA not only act as government bureaucratic clerics who are obliged to socialize existing laws but also become religious elites who influence society. *Penghulu* must be able to embrace various other elements of society such as BKKBN and schools to work together to make efforts to prevent underage marriages, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which also remains high in number (Rais, 2020). The practice of the role of the *penghulu* to carry out sectoral cooperation, but which is not comprehensive due to the counter-regulation between these sectors such as in the standardization of

marriage age limits, in the formulation of government policies, it should be more able to synergize with legal unification which is effectively able to regulate what is the optimal standard in the age limit for marriage in Indonesia. So sectoral cooperation is built not only in practice in the field but also juridically and normatively in a regulatory manner.

The next stakeholder of the KUA Dau Subdistrict is the Sakinah Family Religious Extension Officer with Mrs. Miswati. One of the main supporting *stakeholders* in KUA is religious extension workers because religious extension workers are tasked and responsible for providing guidance, counseling, and religious development to the community within their agencies. In this context, religious extension workers, who have skills and expertise in the issues raised, are the Sakinah Family Religious Extension Officers in the KUA Dau Subdistrict. Their role in minimizing underage marriage is divided into 2, namely, in the Health Care Forum, and the NU Fatayat Forum.

The role of religious extension workers who synergize with the Health Care Forum is to provide socialization about underage marriage, especially focusing on conveying the impact and risks of underage marriage. The risks emphasized are health risks that have an impact, especially on mothers and children in households who are underage because they are prone to various diseases such as cervical cancer or other reproductive diseases due to the unpreparedness and maturity of underage couples to reproduce (Purwaningsih, 2014). In addition, this was also conveyed related to mental health risks that can also occur due to underage marriage because couples who are too young and not ready for their mental and emotional conditions are not stable, so they are prone to disputes, domestic violence, and even lead to divorce (Miswati, personal communication, 2020).

The next role of the sakinah family religious extension officer is to provide counseling at the Fatayat forum, which is a social organization that is also one of the autonomous bodies within the scope of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) (Warta, 2009). The role of religious extension workers with the Fatayat Forum also has an emphasis on counseling on the impacts and risks, especially the health of underage marriages, both physically and mentally (Miswati, personal communication, 2020).

The role of counseling and socialization carried out by sakinah family religious extension workers in KUA Dau Subdistrict targets parents because they are more aware of the impacts and risks presented. These parents can make efforts to prevent underage marriage of their children. The role of extension workers

during the COVID-19 pandemic is to be able to further innovate services and guidance to minimize underage marriage optimally and effectively. However, even though counseling and socialization have been carried out optimally and on target, not all people are willing to accept them. This goes back to the principle that KUA is a persuasive community service institution that provides guidance, solicitation, and advice to the community without being able to provide sanctions or punishments because it is not an authoritative institution (Muttaqin, personal communication, 2020).

The next role is the role of Functional Islamic Extension Officer with Mrs. Tri Widajati. This extension worker as in the organizational structure of the Dau Subdistrict KUA is an Extension Officer who is at one level directly below the *penghulu* so plays an important role in the KUA Dau Subdistrict. As such, religious extension workers are hierarchically subordinate to and directly responsible to intermediate high-ranking officials, primary high-ranking officials, administration officials, or supervisory officials who have a connection with the performance of the duties of the functional position of religious extension officer (Widajati, Interview, 2020).

The role of Functional Islamic Extension Officers to minimize underage marriage is to conduct counseling in *singles forums* or during the examination of prospective brides. This is by the duties of the functional Islamic religious extension office, namely, conducting guidance or counseling and developing religious guidance or counseling and development (Widajati, personal communication, 2020).

However, the duties of an extension officer that have been carried out in the KUA of Dau Subdistrict cannot run optimally because from 2020 to 2021 it is still limited from conducting meetings or associations as stated by Mrs. Tri Widajati. All government policies, both central and regional, do not allow direct associations as well as counseling. Starting from the Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 21 of 2020 concerning Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) in the Context of Accelerating the Handling of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) to regulations regarding the Implementation of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM) always limiting the counseling program of extension workers. This happens because direct counseling is not urgently carried out, in contrast to KUA services for marriage, which cannot be eliminated because they are worried about causing a commotion in the community. However, even though there are still services, KUA implements strict health protocol arrangements as mandated by the Circular Letter of the Directorate General of Islamic Community Guidance of the Ministry of Religious

Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number: P-006/DJ. III/Hk.007/06/2020 concerning Marriage Services Towards a COVID-Safe Productive Society and Circular Letter of the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia Number: P-001/DJ. III/Hk.007/07/2021 about Catalog for Marriage Services at the Subdistrict Religious Affairs Office during the PPKM Era (Widajati, personal communication, 2020).

The last role was by *Modin* (Village Religious Functionary). The role of *modin* is important in minimizing underage marriage because, based on the author's documentation, the village in Dau Subdistrict with the highest number of underage marriages in 2020 is the village that does not have *modin*, namely, Selorejo Village. Likewise, the village that in 2020 had the lowest number of underage marriages is the village that has active *modin* as in Mulyoagung Village, Dau Subdistrict.

The counseling carried out by Mulyoagung Village *Modin* is to directly conduct counseling in the field during PKK and Posyandu meetings. Although normatively *modin* is a *stakeholder* who is not included in the KUA structure, it has the role of community helper in registering marriages through local villages as well as providing education, one of which is about the age limit of marriage (Solichin, personal communication, 2020).

Several models in villages other than Mulyoagung Village also play a role in minimizing underage marriages. The *modin* of Putungsewu Village, Mr. H. Solichin, plays a role in conducting direct counseling by inviting teenagers or youth in his village. The counseling carried out by Mr. H. Solichin in Putungsewu Village has been right on target for teenagers, the majority of whom are underage and still in school as the age limit of 19 years in Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage. However, it is the obstacles regarding the absence of these teenagers that are being evaluated by the village *modin* and other *stakeholders* in the KUA to make extension innovations to attract the interest of the community, including teenagers (Solichin, personal communication, 2020).

Another *Modin* who played a role was the *Modin* of Tegalweru Village, Mr. Mas'ud Liadi. He performed when he became a Marriage Assistant Officer or in managing marriage registration in the Dau Subdistrict KUA, by advising underage brides-to-be to postpone their marriage (Liadi, Interview, 2020). Although actually, *modin* does not have a clear *legal standing* because since the issuance of the Circular Letter of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Number Kw.06.02/I/kp.01.2/160/2015 concerning the Implementation of the Instruction of the Director General

of Islamic Community Guidance Number DJ.II/I of 2015 concerning the Appointment of Assistant Employees of the Marriage Registrar (P3N)/*Modin*, *Modin's* duties have been abolished. However, in practice in KUA, the Dau *modin* village still plays a role in helping the registration of marriages of people who are struggling. It was in the process of assistance that Mr. Mas'ud Liadi tried to give advice to the bride-to-be to postpone the marriage if they were not old enough. However, public knowledge of the legalization of underage marriages is an obstacle because they already understand the marriage dispensation process based on Article 7 paragraph (2) of Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, and Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia Regulation Number 5 of 2019 concerning Guidelines for Adjudicating Marriage Dispensation Applications (Yusroini, 2019).

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on research that has been carried out on the role of all stakeholders in Office of Religious Affairs to minimize cases of underage marriage during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, several conclusions can be drawn. Some of the factors that cause underage marriage during and after the COVID-19 pandemic in the Dau Subdistrict are socio-cultural factors, religious factors, economic factors, promiscuity factors, and educational factors. The role is divided into 3 *stakeholder* roles, namely, the *penghulu* and the Head of KUA with the role of counseling socialization, the role of strict marriage registration, and the role of twining cooperation in some sector. The function of the *sakinah* family religious extension workers and Islamic religious extension workers is functional both in the health care forum, the NU *fatayat* forum and in the *Singles* process, as well as the latter the role of *modin* through direct counseling in the field especially in adolescents and the advice of brides-to-be during marriage registration.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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