



The Economic and Legal Imperatives of Marriage Age Regulation: A Posnerian Analysis of National Productivity and Welfare

Imperatif Ekonomi dan Hukum Regulasi Usia Pernikahan: Analisis Posnerian tentang Produktivitas dan Kesejahteraan Nasional

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Article News**Keyword:***Marriage Age Limit;
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The enforcement of Law No. 16 of 2019 Amending the Marriage Law (No. 1 of 1974), which revised Indonesia's minimum marriage age, requires robust complementary policies to unlock its full socio-economic potential. This study analyzes the regulation from a Posnerian law and economics perspective, which posits that legal rules should be evaluated based on their capacity to maximize social benefits and minimize social costs. The research employs qualitative method with a normative legal approach, examining statutory provisions, legal doctrines, and international literature. Our findings indicate that raising the marriage age is a critical intervention for optimizing human capital by extending educational attainment and skill acquisition, particularly for women. This delay directly correlates with increased labor productivity, higher lifetime earnings, and enhanced family welfare, thereby reducing the long-term economic burdens of structural poverty and public health costs associated with early marriage. However, the policy's effectiveness is constrained by persistent cultural resistance and social norms in various Indonesian communities. The analysis reveals that without effective enforcement and socio-legal adaptation strategies, the intended economic benefits remain unrealized. The conclusion is that for the marriage age law to serve as a productive instrument for national development, it must be integrated with widespread public education, targeted economic empowerment programs, and consistent legal enforcement to internalize the negative externalities of child marriage and foster sustainable national welfare.

Kata Kunci:*Batas Usia Perkawinan;
Efisiensi Ekonomi;
Hukum dan Ekonomi;
Hukum Perkawinan;***Abstrak**

Penerapan UU No. 16 Tahun 2019 tentang Perubahan UU Perkawinan (No. 1 Tahun 1974), yang merevisi usia minimum perkawinan di Indonesia, membutuhkan kebijakan pelengkap yang kuat untuk membuka potensi sosial-ekonominya secara penuh. Studi ini menganalisis regulasi tersebut dari perspektif hukum dan ekonomi Posnerian, yang menyatakan bahwa aturan hukum harus dievaluasi berdasarkan kemampuannya untuk memaksimalkan manfaat sosial dan meminimalkan biaya sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode

Kesejahteraan Nasional.

kualitatif dengan pendekatan hukum normatif, meneliti ketentuan undang-undang, doktrin hukum, dan literatur internasional. Temuan kami menunjukkan bahwa peningkatan usia perkawinan merupakan intervensi penting untuk mengoptimalkan modal manusia dengan memperpanjang pencapaian pendidikan dan perolehan keterampilan, khususnya bagi perempuan. Penundaan ini berkorelasi langsung dengan peningkatan produktivitas kerja, pendapatan seumur hidup yang lebih tinggi, dan peningkatan kesejahteraan keluarga, sehingga mengurangi beban ekonomi jangka panjang dari kemiskinan struktural dan biaya kesehatan masyarakat yang terkait dengan perkawinan dini. Namun, efektivitas kebijakan tersebut dibatasi oleh resistensi budaya dan norma sosial yang terus-menerus di berbagai komunitas Indonesia. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa tanpa penegakan yang efektif dan strategi adaptasi sosial-hukum, manfaat ekonomi yang diharapkan tetap tidak terwujud. Kesimpulannya, agar undang-undang usia pernikahan dapat berfungsi sebagai instrumen produktif bagi pembangunan nasional, undang-undang tersebut harus diintegrasikan dengan pendidikan publik yang luas, program pemberdayaan ekonomi yang tepat sasaran, dan penegakan hukum yang konsisten untuk menginternalisasi dampak negatif pernikahan anak dan mendorong kesejahteraan nasional yang berkelanjutan.

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INTRODUCTION

Background of Problem

The regulation of marriage age is a critical legal and social issue with profound implications for national development. In Indonesia, the legal framework governing marriage age was significantly updated through Law No. 16 of 2019 Amending the Marriage Law (No. 1 of 1974). This amendment equalized the minimum age of marriage for both men and women to 19 years, raising it from the previous requirement of 16 years for women. This legislative change was driven by a Constitutional Court decision (No. 22/PUU-XV/2017) that found the age discrepancy to be discriminatory, as well as by mounting social pressure to address the adverse consequences of child marriage (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak, 2021). Child marriage is not merely a violation of human rights but also a significant impediment to economic progress. It frequently curtails educational opportunities, elevates health risks for mothers and infants, and restricts future employment prospects, thereby perpetuating intergenerational cycles of poverty (UNICEF, 2022).

From the perspective of Richard Posner's law and economics theory, legal rules should be assessed not just on their normative content but on their economic efficiency—their ability to maximize social welfare and minimize social costs (Posner, 2006). Posner argues that law can serve as an instrument to internalize negative externalities, which are costs imposed on third parties by individual actions (Ulen, 1989). In this context, child marriage generates substantial negative externalities, including diminished labor productivity, increased public healthcare expenditures due to high-risk adolescent pregnancies, and greater state burdens related to structural poverty (Greene & Merrić, July, 2005). By mandating a higher marriage age, the state intervenes to correct this market failure, aiming for a more efficient allocation of human resources. When

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individuals, particularly women, delay marriage, they have a greater opportunity to invest in their human capital through education and skill development, which is a cornerstone of national economic growth (Becker, 1993; Mitra, et al., 2020). However, the efficacy of this legal reform is challenged by deeply entrenched cultural norms, poverty, and social pressures in many Indonesian communities, where early marriage remains a prevalent practice. This highlights a critical gap between the law as written (*de jure*) and the law as practiced (*de facto*), necessitating a more comprehensive implementation strategy.

Problem Identification

Despite the clear legal standard set by Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, the incidence of child marriage in Indonesia remains high, indicating a significant gap between legislative intent and societal practice. The core issue is that the law alone has proven insufficient to alter deep-seated behaviors and norms. Research across numerous developing countries demonstrates that legal reforms concerning marriage age often suffer from weak enforcement and a lack of public buy-in, particularly in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged areas (Collin & Talbot, 2023). The persistence of child marriage suggests that the perceived private benefits for families, such as reduced economic burden, outweigh the perceived costs, while the substantial long-term social costs are largely ignored. This creates a complex problem where a legally sound policy fails to achieve its intended socio-economic objectives due to implementation challenges and a failure to address the root causes of the practice.

Problem Formulation

This study is guided by the central question of how the legal framework governing marriage age in Indonesia can be optimized to function as an effective instrument for enhancing national productivity and welfare, in line with the principles of law and economics. To address this, the research formulates the following specific questions:

1. How does the policy on marriage age limits, as stipulated in Law No. 16 of 2019, influence economic efficiency and national productivity from a Posnerian perspective?
2. What are the primary social costs and negative externalities arising from the incomplete implementation of the marriage age policy, particularly within the diverse socio-cultural context of Indonesia?
3. What integrated policy measures and enforcement mechanisms are required to optimize the marriage age law to maximize national welfare while minimizing social costs?

Research Objectives and Benefit

Research Objectives

The primary objectives of this research are:

1. To analyze the economic impact of the marriage age limit policy in Indonesia through the theoretical lens of law and economics, focusing on its effects on human capital formation and labor productivity;

2. To identify and evaluate the social costs and implementation barriers that hinder the effectiveness of Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage; and
3. To formulate strategic recommendations for a more effective and efficient implementation of the marriage age law, integrating legal, economic, and social interventions.

Benefits

This research offers significant theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, it contributes to the application of law and economics principles to family law in the Indonesian context, providing a nuanced analysis of how legal rules can shape economic outcomes. Practically, the findings will be valuable for policymakers, government agencies, and civil society organizations working on issues of child protection, women's empowerment, and national development. The recommendations will provide a clear, evidence-based roadmap for strengthening the implementation of marriage age laws, thereby helping to unlock the full potential of Indonesia's human capital and advance its national welfare goals.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research is anchored in the theoretical framework of Law and Economics, as pioneered by Richard Posner, and supplemented by the Human Capital Theory developed by Gary Becker (1993). The law and economics paradigm provides the primary analytical lens, asserting that legal rules, including those governing family matters, can and should be evaluated based on their economic efficiency and impact on social welfare (Posner, 2005). This approach moves beyond a purely deontological or rights-based analysis to a consequentialist one, examining whether a law achieves its stated goals at the lowest possible social cost. Posner's central thesis is that an efficient legal system is one that promotes wealth maximization by ensuring that resources are allocated to their most valued uses. In the context of marriage age, the law is viewed as an instrument to correct market failures and internalize negative externalities—such as the societal costs of diminished productivity and increased healthcare burdens—that arise from the private decisions of individuals to marry early (Ulen, 1989).

The conceptual framework of this study integrates Posner's efficiency principles with Becker's (1993) Human Capital Theory. This theory posits that education, skills, and health are forms of capital that individuals can invest in to enhance their productivity and future earnings. The decision to marry early directly competes with the opportunity to invest in human capital, particularly for women. By truncating education and limiting entry into the formal labor market, child marriage effectively depreciates an individual's potential human capital, leading to lower lifetime productivity and perpetuating poverty (Soler-Hampejsek, et al., 2021; Aditya & Waddington, 2021). Therefore, a law that raises the minimum age of marriage can be conceptualized as a state-led intervention designed to protect and encourage investment in human capital. This study operationalizes this framework by examining how Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage functions as a mechanism to (1) reduce the negative externalities of early marriage and (2) promote the accumulation of human capital, thereby contributing to national productivity and welfare. The interplay between the legal mandate (the law) and the economic outcome (human capital) forms the core of our conceptual model.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a normative legal research approach, which is centered on the analysis of legal norms, principles, and doctrines. This method was chosen to facilitate a systematic examination of the legal framework governing the marriage age limit in Indonesia, primarily focusing on Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage and its amendment, Law No. 16 of 2019. The normative approach allows for an in-depth analysis of the legal substance and its coherence with overarching principles of justice, human rights, and social welfare (Ariany & Santiago, 2025). The research evaluates the legal provisions not as isolated rules but as integral components of a broader socio-economic policy landscape.

The data for this research are primarily drawn from primary and secondary legal materials. Primary legal materials include the relevant statutes, namely Law No. 1 of 1974 and Law No. 16 of 2019, as well as the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and related government regulations. Secondary legal materials comprise a wide range of academic literature, including books, scholarly journals, and legal articles that discuss family law, law and economics, and human capital theory (Mania, 2023). To enrich the analysis, the study also incorporates findings from reputable international sources, such as reports and working papers from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and UNICEF, which provide empirical evidence on the economic impacts of child marriage. The analysis is conducted through a qualitative-dochtrinal lens, interpreting the legal texts and integrating them with established theories to build a coherent argument regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of the marriage age policy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The analysis of the legal framework and empirical data reveals several key findings regarding the impact of marriage age regulation in Indonesia. The enactment of Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, which raised the minimum marriage age to 19, represents a significant legal milestone aligned with international standards for child protection. However, its implementation is fraught with challenges. Data from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2024) continues to show a notable prevalence of marriage below the legal age, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged regions. This indicates a substantial gap between the law *de jure* and its enforcement *de facto*, indicating that the legal provision alone has not been sufficient to eradicate the practice (Metelska-Szaniawska & Lewczuk, 2022).

Law No. 16 of 2019 specifically amends Article 7 of Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage. Its most significant change is equalizing the minimum marriage age to 19 for both men and women, raising it from the previous limit of 16 for women. This aligns with international child protection standards and aims to reduce Indonesia's historically high rates of child marriage (Aulia, 2025).

The law includes a critical provision that creates a pathway for exceptions. Marriages below the age of 19 can still be conducted if the parties obtain a marriage dispensation (*dispensasi perkawinan*) from a Religious Court (for Muslims) or a District Court. Courts grant this after considering requests from parents, but data shows this mechanism is widely used. In 2021 and 2022, Indonesian Religious Courts recorded approximately 65,000 and 55,000 dispensation applications, respectively. The primary reasons cited for these applications are premarital pregnancy and parental pressure for children in relationships to marry quickly (Aulia, 2025).

Table 1. Summary of Key Provisions in Indonesia's Marriage Law No. 16 of 2019

Legal Provision (UU No. 16/2019)	Key Detail	Purpose & Mechanism
Minimum Marriage Age (Article 7)	Set at 19 years for both men and women.	To prevent child marriage, ensure physical/mental readiness, and promote gender equality.
Marriage Dispensation	Court-granted exception for underage marriages.	To handle exceptional cases (e.g., pregnancy) while maintaining judicial oversight; requires parental request and court approval.
Legal Loophole	High approval rate for dispensations.	Creates a gap between the law's intent and practice, as many underage marriages become legal through court approval.

Source: Research data (2025)

The Implementation Gap: Law vs. Reality

Despite the legal reform, a significant gap between the law (*de jure*) and its enforcement (*de facto*) persists. The high number of marriage dispensations indicates that the law has not fully prevented underage unions but has shifted them into the judicial process (Aulia, 2025). This aligns with global findings that legal changes alone, without strict enforcement and monitoring, often fail to achieve desired outcomes (Batyra & Pesando, 2021).

Evidence from regional data confirms this ongoing challenge. For instance, in West Java province, recorded marriages involving 16-19-year-olds in 2017 show a stark gender disparity, with far more brides than grooms (e.g., 432 girls vs. 101 boys in Bogor Regency) (data@jabarprov.go.id, 2025). While this data pre-dates the 2019 law, it illustrates the deep-rooted practice the law aims to address. Post-2019 national data likely reflects a similar pattern, moderated—but not eliminated—by the new age limit and the dispensation process.

Economic and Human Capital Consequences

The failure to effectively delay marriage has direct and severe economic repercussions:

- **Educational Disruption:** Early marriage is a leading cause of school dropout for girls, cutting short their education and skill acquisition.
- **Reduced Economic Productivity:** With lower education, women's participation in formal, paid work diminishes. A study in Malawi, relevant to similar economies, found only 7% of young married women were in paid work, compared to 42% of young men (Batyra & Pesando, 2021).
- **Perpetuating Poverty:** Families formed by young couples with limited education and economic prospects are more likely to experience chronic poverty, creating a "vicious cycle of poverty" where low income restricts access to education and capital for the next generation. In Indonesia, breaking this cycle requires targeted investments in human capital—education and health—beyond mere economic growth (Mariyanti & Mahfudz, 2016).

Intergenerational Social and Health Costs

Delaying marriage is not just an individual right but a critical public health strategy. Recent multi-country research shows that laws banning child marriage significantly improve child health outcomes, reducing under-5 and infant mortality by 19.7% and 14.2%, respectively. This is linked to older mothers having better health agency, being more likely to give birth in healthcare facilities, and ensuring their children are vaccinated (Hailu & Beyene, 2025).

In Indonesia, early marriage and childbirth are closely linked. The prevalence of premarital pregnancy as a reason for marriage dispensation suggests many young mothers may face higher health risks and have less capacity to seek optimal healthcare, potentially affecting their children's survival and development (Aulia, 2025).

Policy Implications and the Path Forward

The Indonesian experience and global evidence point to several crucial policy insights:

1. **Legal Reform is Necessary but Insufficient:** Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage was a vital first step, but its impact is diluted by the expansive use of marriage dispensations.
2. **Enforcement and Complementary Interventions are Key:** Effective policy requires strengthening judicial guidelines for dispensations to ensure they are truly exceptional, alongside investing in girls' education, expanding economic opportunities for women, and providing comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education (Aulia, 2025; Batyra & Pesando, 2021).
3. **Address Root Causes:** Sustainable change requires tackling the structural drivers of poverty and gender inequality that normalize early marriage (Hailu & Beyene, 2025). This includes social protection programs and community engagement to shift norms.

Discussion

The findings of this study, interpreted through a Posnerian lens, affirm that Indonesia's Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage is fundamentally an efficiency-enhancing legal intervention. Its design functions as a *de facto* Pigouvian mechanism, aiming to internalize the profound negative externalities of child marriage—depressed human capital, gendered productivity losses, and intergenerational health burdens—that constitute a significant market failure. By recalibrating private incentives away from socially suboptimal early marriage, the law seeks to align individual family decisions with the Posnerian objective of societal wealth maximization. The primary channel for this is the preservation of human capital, particularly for girls, by legally extending the period for educational investment and skill acquisition, thereby fostering a more productive future workforce.

However, the law's elegant economic logic is critically undermined by a severe enforcement deficit. The high volume of marriage dispensations granted by Indonesian courts illustrates a systemic failure to impose the law's intended costs on non-compliance. This creates a perverse incentive structure. As rational actors respond to weak enforcement, a substitution effect occurs: families circumvent the formal law by opting for informal, unregistered unions. This paradoxical outcome, where stricter regulation begets less formal oversight, exacerbates negative externalities by pushing vulnerable women and children into legally unprotected arrangements, thereby increasing their precarity.

The enforcement gap is not random but systematically concentrated in rural and economically disadvantaged regions, where socio-cultural norms act as prohibitively high transaction costs. These entrenched norms, which may have had historical rationality, now inefficiently block entry into the modern skilled labor market. A purely coercive legal mandate is thus an inefficient tool for social engineering in this context. An economically astute strategy must lower transaction costs by complementing the law with investments in public education, community dialogue, and positive incentives like conditional cash transfers to offset the perceived opportunity cost for impoverished families.

The analysis reveals that the law's benefits are profoundly intergenerational. The documented causal link between marriage age laws and reduced child mortality transforms this legal reform into a powerful public health investment. By delaying motherhood, the law enhances maternal agency and health-seeking behavior, leading to a more efficient allocation of household resources toward high-return health investments. This saves significant future social costs and strengthens the human capital base of the next generation.

Consequently, the Indonesian case demonstrates that law alone is an instrument of limited efficacy. For legal reform to achieve its efficiency potential, it must be embedded within a coherent policy ecosystem that addresses the entire value chain of female empowerment—from educational quality and accessible childcare to non-discriminatory labor markets. Without this holistic architecture, which strategically combines deterrents, incentives, and normative shift, the law risks remaining a symbolic gesture, its substantial potential for enhancing national productivity and welfare left unrealized.

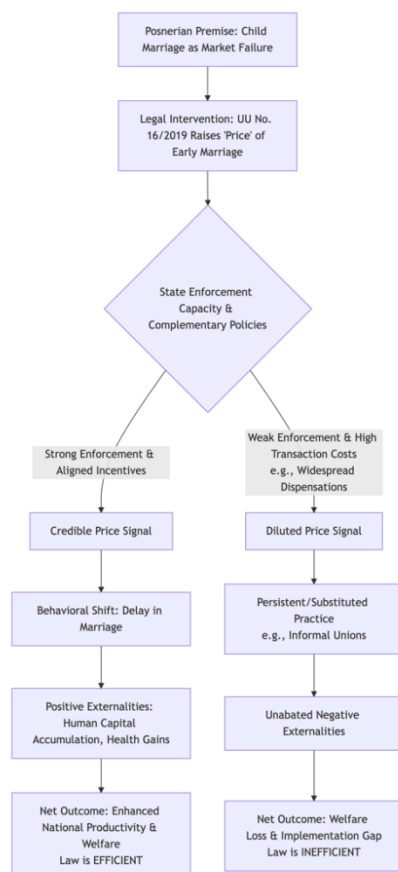


Figure 1. The Posnerian Analytical Framework: A Dynamic Model of Legal Efficiency

- *The Economic and Legal Imperatives of Marriage Age Regulation: A Posnerian Analysis of National Productivity and Welfare; Pages 1957-1970* [Muhidin, Tuti Trihastuti Sukardi, Indra Lutrianto Amstono, Bambang Sujatmiko, Faisal Santiago]

A Posnerian analysis provides a precise framework for deconstructing the law's function as a mechanism to correct market failure as viewed in Figure 1. From this perspective, early marriage is not merely a cultural practice but an economically inefficient norm that generates negative externalities by prematurely removing girls from the human capital accumulation process. The law acts as a corrective price signal, increasing the "cost" of early marriage to align private incentives with public welfare. However, its efficacy is not inherent but contingent on the state's enforcement capacity, which determines whether this price signal is credible. The widespread use of marriage dispensations in Indonesia effectively subsidizes non-compliance, diluting the price signal and allowing the inefficient norm to persist. This creates a dynamic where the law's *de jure* efficiency gain is neutralized by *de facto* institutional weakness, illustrating the core Posnerian principle that a law's economic impact is determined not by its text but by its integration within the broader institutional environment that shapes behavioral responses.

Furthermore, a sophisticated Posnerian view must account for the transaction costs of norm evolution. Deeply entrenched social norms favoring early marriage represent a form of informal institutional equilibrium with high transaction costs for change. The law, as a formal institution, seeks to disrupt this equilibrium. However, if the law imposes high immediate costs (like loss of perceived familial honor or economic security) without providing lower-cost alternatives, actors will invest resources in circumvention (seeking dispensations, informal unions). Therefore, the law's ultimate efficiency depends on complementary policies—such as cash transfers for girls' education or vocational training—that reduce the transaction costs of compliance for families, making the legally prescribed behavior a rationally preferable choice. This transforms the legal framework from a blunt prohibition into a part of a re-aligned incentive structure, which is essential for achieving durable, welfare-enhancing social change.

Research Limitation

This study's analysis, while comprehensive, is bounded by several limitations. First, the granularity of causal attribution remains challenging; while national trends in marriage age, education, and health outcomes can be observed, isolating the specific, quantifiable impact of Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage from concurrent socio-economic developments (e.g., broader digital access, other poverty-alleviation programs) requires sophisticated longitudinal microdata that is still emerging. Second, the research heavily relies on macro-level datasets and secondary court statistics, which may obscure localized nuances, community-specific resistance mechanisms, and the subjective lived experiences of families navigating dispensation processes. Third, the Posnerian framework itself, with its focus on efficiency and aggregate welfare, provides a powerful but incomplete normative lens. It may insufficiently weigh non-quantifiable values like intrinsic human dignity, gender justice as an end in itself, and the protection of childhood, which are central to human rights-based critiques of child marriage.

Novelty and Contribution

This article makes a significant interdisciplinary contribution by operationalizing Posnerian law and economics theory to a concrete, pressing issue of global social policy. Its novelty lies in moving beyond a standard legal or sociological critique of Indonesia's marriage law to provide a rigorous economic efficiency audit of the regulation. It identifies the precise points of institutional failure—specifically, the dispensation loophole as a subsidy for non-compliance—that convert a theoretically efficient law into an ineffective one. Furthermore, the study contributes to broader development literature

by modeling child marriage not as a purely cultural artifact but as a rational but socially suboptimal response to market failures in credit, insurance, and labor. By framing the solution in terms of re-aligning incentives and lowering transaction costs for compliance, it offers a generalizable policy framework applicable to other jurisdictions struggling to bridge the gap between progressive legislation and transformative social change.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

This analysis affirms that Indonesia's Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage is a legally sound and economically rational instrument designed to correct a significant market failure. By raising the marriage age, the law properly seeks to internalize the profound negative externalities of child marriage—namely, the systemic depreciation of human capital, gendered losses in labor productivity, and elevated public health burdens. In principle, it is an efficiency-enhancing intervention aligned with the goal of long-term national welfare maximization. However, the law's theoretical potential is critically undermined by a stark implementation deficit. The pervasive use of marriage dispensations and the persistence of the practice reveal a failure to enforce the intended "price" on non-compliance. This enforcement gap, concentrated in regions where socio-cultural norms and economic pressures are strongest, allows the inefficient practice to continue, often shifting into informal, unregistered unions that leave women and children more vulnerable. Consequently, the regulation remains a partially realized tool, its promise for driving development constrained by the very institutional and normative contexts it aims to transform. Therefore, the central challenge is not the law's design but its integration into a coherent policy ecosystem. For the law to transition from a symbolic mandate to a tangible catalyst for productivity and justice, its prohibition must be actively supported by a holistic strategy that reshapes the underlying incentive structures for families, communities, and the state itself.

Recommendation

To bridge the gap between legislative intent and societal outcome, a concerted, multi-dimensional effort is required from all stakeholders.

For Policymakers:

1. **Develop an Integrated Policy Package:** Immediately move beyond a standalone legal approach. Design a multi-sectoral policy that bundles enforcement with strong positive incentives. This must include the nationwide scaling of conditional cash transfers explicitly tied to keeping adolescent girls in secondary education and unmarried until 19, directly offsetting the economic drivers of early marriage.
2. **Strengthen Enforcement through Institutional Reform:** Establish a specialized, inter-ministerial task force to unify enforcement protocols across legal, religious, and social sectors. Mandate the development of a real-time, digitized national registry to monitor marriage applications and decisively prevent the circumvention of the law through dispensations or fraud.
3. **Invest in the Quality of Alternatives:** Allocate substantial resources to improve secondary education and create economic pathways. Investments must target school infrastructure, relevant vocational training, and programs that provide young women with direct access to capital, skills, and market opportunities, making delayed marriage a gateway to empowerment.

For Practitioners (Civil Society, NGOs, Community Leaders):

1. **Execute Culturally-Resonant Advocacy:** Launch sustained awareness campaigns co-created with local religious and customary leaders. Messaging should transcend legal dictates to communicatively articulate the proven economic, health, and social benefits of delayed marriage for entire families and communities.
2. **Build Community-Based Safeguards:** Create and scale local support systems, including safe spaces and mentorship programs for adolescent girls. These initiatives should provide comprehensive education on rights and health, while engaging local leaders as core advocates to shift community norms from within.

For Academics and Researchers:

1. **Pioneer Causal and Longitudinal Studies:** Prioritize rigorous, quasi-experimental research to isolate the causal impact of specific interventions like cash transfers or education programs on long-term life outcomes. Longitudinal cohort studies are essential to track sustained effects.
2. **Investigate Informal Practices and Enforcement Politics:** Dedicate specific research to map the prevalence and consequences of informal unions that emerge as substitutes for formal child marriage. Concurrently, conduct political economy analyses to diagnose the institutional incentives and bottlenecks that hinder consistent enforcement across different regions of Indonesia.

Only through this unified and sustained commitment can the efficiency envisioned in Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage be fully realized, transforming it from a symbolic reform into a foundational driver of Indonesia's human capital, productivity, and intergenerational well-being.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Muhidin: Conceptualized the core research theme alongside the supervisor, developed the Posnerian law and economics theoretical framework, and contributed to the overall structuring and intellectual direction of the study.

Tuti Trihastuti Sukardi: Conducted the primary literature review and legal analysis of the Indonesian marriage law framework, providing the essential historical and doctrinal context for the study's normative examination.

Indra Lutrianto Amstono: Focused on gathering and analyzing economic data and international case studies, contributing to the empirical and comparative evidence discussed in the results and analysis sections.

Bambang Sujatmiko: Collaborated on the collection and analysis of economic data and global evidence, helping to integrate international findings into the discussion of the law's socio-economic impacts.

Faisal Santiago: Provided supervisory oversight, co-conceptualized the study's foundational approach, and contributed to manuscript review and finalization to ensure scholarly coherence and rigor.

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