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ARTICLE

Between Religious Guidance and Shariah Legal Reform: Rethinking Indonesia's Premarital Guidance for School-Age Adolescents (BRUS) program

Fatiya Nadhrah^{*1}, Abd. Mukhsin², Shoaleh Hashemi³

^{*1}Correspondence

Fatiya Nadhrah

^{1,2} Universitas Islam Negeri
Sumatera Utara, Indonesia .

Email:
fatiya0201201006@uinsu.ac.id

³ Payame Noor University
Republic of Iran

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Abstract

Background: Early marriage continues to be a prevalent issue in Indonesia, notwithstanding the Ministry of Religious Affairs' implementation of the Premarital Guidance for School-Age Adolescents (BRUS) program. The deficiency of legal understanding among youngsters, inadequate communication tactics, and feeble institutional coordination hinder the program's efficacy

Purpose: to evaluate the implementation of BRUS at KUA Rambutan, analyzing its effects on legal knowledge and the prevention of early marriage, while also identifying policy and structural deficiencies

Methods: This study employed an empirical legal research methodology, gathering primary data via interviews with KUA officials and adolescents involved in the BRUS program. Secondary data were acquired from law papers, policy reports, and scholarly literature. The data were examined through the lenses of Legal Communication Dysfunction Theory and Legal Responsiveness Theory to assess the deficiencies in BRUS implementation

Results: The findings demonstrate that BRUS has a negligible effect on decreasing underage marriage rates, attributed to inadequate communication between KUA and adolescents, insufficient youth-oriented outreach initiatives, and the lack of legal enforcement measures.

Implication: This study enhances legal awareness and policy evaluation research by illustrating the necessity for religious institutions to align their programs with legal and social frameworks for efficacy. It proposes integrating *Maslahah* evaluations into judicial rulings on marital dispensations, improving multisectoral cooperation, and updating BRUS communication techniques

Originality: This research offers a comparative analysis between Indonesia and Algeria, illustrating how an integrated approach that combines religious counseling, legal enforcement, and community engagement can markedly enhance premarital education and mitigate underage marriage

INTRODUCTION

The Marriage, in Islamic law, is more than just a contract; it is a sacred covenant (*mitsaqan ghalidzan*) that binds a man and a woman both physically and spiritually, with the goal of establishing a harmonious and lasting family. The Quran, in Surah Ar-Rum, states:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ۲۱ (الرُّوم/30:21)

"And among His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find tranquility in them. And He placed between you love and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for people who reflect." (Ar-Rum/30:21) (Kementerian Agama RI, 2016:406)

The Qur'an, in Surah Ar-Rum (30:21), emphasizes the role of marriage in fostering love, mercy, and tranquility, providing a fundamental basis for its importance in Islamic teachings. In Indonesia, this religious foundation is institutionalized through state law, with Law No. 1 of 1974 defining marriage as a legal and spiritual bond aimed at creating a stable family unit. However, despite these legal and religious frameworks, early marriage remains a persistent issue in many parts of the country, including the Rambutan District, where the rate of underage marriages remains concerning.

The Premarital Guidance Program for School-Age Youth (BRUS) was introduced as a strategic policy intervention to reduce the prevalence of early marriage by equipping young individuals with legal, religious, and psychological awareness before entering marriage (Nasir et al., 2021). This initiative aligns with global efforts to prevent child marriage, as reflected in policies implemented in other Muslim-majority countries, such as Malaysia's Islamic Family Law Act 1984 (ÖZDEMİR et al., 2022) and Brunei's pre-marital counseling mandates (Syaputra et al., 2023). However, while similar programs exist in different legal contexts, Indonesia's Kantor Urusan Agama (KUA) plays a particularly crucial role due to its unique position as both a religious and legal authority overseeing marriage administration. The KUA is not only responsible for registering marriages but also for ensuring compliance with legal marriage age regulations, making it a key institution in the country's broader strategy for child marriage prevention (Fuadhi, 2022; Rizki, Zainudin & Rachman, 2023; Supriadi, 2021).

Despite its intended role in mitigating early marriage rates, the effectiveness of BRUS remains questionable, particularly in areas like Rambutan District, where child marriage rates have not significantly declined. One of the critical gaps identified in this study is the communication breakdown between KUA officials and the target audience (youth and parents). Drawing from Legal Communication Dysfunction Theory, one of the primary reasons for this ineffectiveness lies in the inability of legal authorities to effectively communicate legal norms in a way that resonates with local socio-cultural dynamics (Supriadi, 2021). Many adolescents and parents remain unaware of the program or fail to perceive its relevance, leading to low participation rates and minimal behavioral impact.

Additionally, from the perspective of Legal Responsiveness Theory (Hoffman, 2003), a one-size-fits-all approach to premarital guidance may fail to address localized socio-cultural factors that influence marriage decisions. Unlike in Algeria's Code de la Famille, where religious leaders play a formalized role in enforcing family law (Cervilla Garzón, 2024), Indonesia's decentralized legal system means that BRUS must be adapted to regional cultural contexts to ensure effective engagement and compliance. The failure to localize program delivery mechanisms and integrate culturally sensitive communication strategies has contributed to continued high rates of early marriage, despite the program's nationwide implementation.

Given its dual function as a religious and legal institution, KUA's role extends beyond mere program implementation—it must actively foster legal awareness and behavioral change among youth and their families. However, behavioral change theories suggest that legal awareness alone is insufficient; effective socialization and community involvement are

also necessary for shifting deeply ingrained cultural norms surrounding early marriage. Thus, for BRUS to succeed, it must go beyond content delivery and focus on responsive and culturally attuned communication.

Despite the implementation of BRUS (School-Age Youth Premarital Guidance Program) as a national initiative to prevent early marriage, existing studies primarily focus on its objectives and legal framework rather than its effectiveness, adaptability, and reception among target communities. Prior research has extensively examined child marriage from a policy and Islamic legal perspective but has yet to critically analyze how legal communication barriers (Muller, 1990), socio-cultural responsiveness (Fausi & Asmuni, 2024), and institutional engagement impact BRUS implementation at the grassroots level (Hamidiyah & Fikawati, 2024). Additionally, comparative studies on premarital programs in Muslim-majority countries such as Malaysia and Brunei remain limited, leaving a gap in understanding best practices and cross-national applicability. This study contributes novelty by integrating legal communication dysfunction theory and legal responsiveness theory to examine how the KUA's communication strategies, cultural adaptation, and community engagement shape BRUS effectiveness. Unlike previous research that treats BRUS as a policy-driven initiative, this study emphasizes the intersection of policy, legal pluralism, and behavioral change theories, offering a comprehensive evaluation of how BRUS can be restructured to enhance its impact on preventing early marriage in Indonesia

This study aims to fill the existing research gap by analyzing how KUA in Rambutan District navigates these challenges in program implementation. Specifically, it will explore:

1. How effectively BRUS is communicated to its target audience.
2. The role of local socio-cultural dynamics in shaping participation and compliance
3. Comparisons with similar programs in other Muslim-majority countries to identify best practices in legal awareness campaigns.

Ultimately, this study argues that the success of BRUS depends not only on its content but also on its delivery mechanisms. Without effective, responsive, and culturally sensitive communication, premarital counseling alone cannot significantly reduce early marriage rates. By integrating insights from policy evaluation, Islamic legal pluralism, and behavioral change theories, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how BRUS can be optimized to better serve its intended purpose – protecting young individuals from the risks associated with early marriage while ensuring compliance with Islamic and legal principles

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Legal Communication Dysfunction Theory

Maqāsid Al Shari'ah is Legal Communication Dysfunction Theory explains how legal information fails to reach its intended audience due to ineffective dissemination strategies, misaligned communication channels, or cultural barriers. The theory posits that when legal frameworks, such as marriage age regulations, are not effectively communicated, individuals remain unaware of their rights and obligations, resulting in non-compliance (Fitriani, 2023). In the context of Premarital Guidance for School-Age Adolescents (BRUS), this theory is relevant because many adolescents are either unaware of the program or do not fully understand its implications for preventing early marriage.

The theory has evolved to incorporate interdisciplinary insights from sociolinguistics, behavioral psychology, and legal studies. Early studies focused on how legal texts were

written and interpreted (Ginting & Purnama, 2023), but contemporary research extends this to how legal messages are received and processed by different social groups (Angeli & Salvini, 1990). Recent developments emphasize the role of digital platforms and mass media in legal dissemination, showing that traditional, top-down communication strategies are often ineffective for engaging younger audiences (Huzaimah et al., 2024).

Previous studies have applied this theory to analyze legal awareness in public health policies, environmental regulations, and family law. In Indonesia, research by (Sudirman & Ramadhita, 2020) found that the failure of many social policies stems from a lack of legal communication between government agencies and the public. In the context of premarital guidance, (Nabila et al., 2021) examined the dissemination of Islamic marriage regulations and found that many adolescents rely on peer discussions or informal social norms rather than official guidance from KUA.

Despite these findings, existing studies rarely address the specific role of religious institutions, such as KUA, in legal communication dysfunction. Additionally, few studies have critically assessed the effectiveness of digital communication in religious-based premarital guidance (Nasrulloh et al., 2024a). This gap indicates that while legal communication issues are well-documented, the intersection of religious messaging, legal awareness, and adolescent engagement requires further exploration.

This study applies Legal Communication Dysfunction Theory to assess how KUA's dissemination of BRUS is received by adolescents and their families. By evaluating KUA's outreach strategies, media usage, and public perception of BRUS, this research will identify whether communication breakdowns contribute to low legal awareness and continued early marriages. The findings will inform recommendations for improving BRUS messaging, integrating digital tools, and enhancing community engagement to strengthen legal awareness in premarital guidance.

2. Legal Responsiveness Theory

Legal Responsiveness Theory examines how legal systems and institutions adapt to social needs, cultural expectations, and public feedback (Rokhmad & Susilo, 2017). This theory asserts that legal policies should not be static, but must evolve based on real-world challenges and community engagement. In the context of early marriage prevention, the effectiveness of BRUS depends on KUA's ability to tailor the program to local socio-cultural conditions rather than merely following national guidelines.

Initially, Legal Responsiveness Theory emerged from research on law enforcement and judicial discretion, emphasizing how legal actors interpret and implement laws based on societal needs (Zakariyah, 2014). More recent applications focus on social policies and family law, where laws must remain flexible and responsive to cultural dynamics. Studies in Islamic legal pluralism highlight how Sharia-based institutions modify religious rulings to accommodate modern legal structures (Yacoob, 2024a).

Previous research in Indonesia and other Muslim-majority countries has demonstrated the importance of responsive legal policies in addressing social issues. In Malaysia, for example, studies by Kamarusdiana et al. (2022) indicate that premarital education programs are more effective when they involve parental engagement and flexible curricula. Similarly, in Algeria, research by Muller (1990) shows that religious counseling is directly linked to court decisions on marriage dispensations, making the system more legally binding and responsive to social concerns.

Despite these insights, many studies fail to critically evaluate whether religious institutions effectively modify their approaches to match community needs. Additionally, few works examine the structural challenges that limit KUA's ability to adapt BRUS to local realities. The gap in the literature suggests that while legal responsiveness is widely

recognized, its practical implementation in religious guidance programs remains understudied.

This study applies Legal Responsiveness Theory to analyze how well BRUS adapts to local socio-cultural dynamics in Rambutan District. By assessing feedback mechanisms, program flexibility, and KUA's interactions with community stakeholders, this research will evaluate whether BRUS is sufficiently responsive to the realities of adolescent marriage trends. The findings will highlight policy adjustments necessary to enhance KUA's effectiveness in implementing BRUS.

3. *Maslahah (Public Welfare) in Marriage Law*

Maslahah, or public welfare, is a fundamental concept in Islamic legal theory, referring to laws and policies that prioritize the well-being of individuals and society (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024). In the context of marriage and family law, *Maslahah* is often used to justify reforms that protect vulnerable individuals, such as women and children, from harmful practices. This concept is particularly relevant to early marriage regulations, where ensuring the welfare of adolescents takes precedence over rigid interpretations of religious doctrine.

Historically, *Maslahah* was applied in Islamic jurisprudence to introduce legal reforms that aligned with changing social conditions (Hakim et al., 2024). Over time, the principle has been integrated into modern legal systems in Muslim-majority countries, allowing for progressive interpretations of family law. In Algeria, for instance, judicial assessments of *Maslahah* are incorporated into marriage dispensations, ensuring that underage marriages are only approved when they serve the child's best interest ((Kamarusdiana et al., 2022).

Prior studies on *Maslahah* in marriage law emphasize its role in balancing religious, legal, and social interests. Research in Indonesia by Yusri (2020) found that courts often approve underage marriage dispensations based on economic and familial pressures rather than genuine welfare considerations. Similarly, Hidayat & Aziz (2024) examined how religious authorities in Malaysia apply *Maslahah* to justify modifications in marriage rulings, particularly regarding age requirements.

Despite extensive discussion on *Maslahah* in marriage law, existing studies rarely explore its practical implementation in premarital counseling programs. Moreover, few studies critically examine how *Maslahah* assessments could be formally embedded into Indonesia's legal framework for early marriage prevention. This gap highlights the need for a stronger connection between religious guidance and legal decision-making.

This study applies *Maslahah* as a guiding principle to evaluate how KUA's BRUS program can be improved to prioritize adolescent welfare. By comparing Indonesia's approach with Algeria's more legally binding system, this research argues that *Maslahah* assessments should be formally integrated into Indonesia's judicial review process for underage marriage dispensations. The findings will provide policy recommendations for aligning religious counseling with legal protections for minors.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilizes an empirical legal research methodology to analyze the execution of the Premarital Guidance Program for School-Age Youth (BRUS) in Rambutan District. Empirical legal research analyzes the application of legal rules in practice and identifies discrepancies between policy and real-world implementation. The research centers on KUA officers and young participants as primary informants, chosen for their direct engagement in BRUS activities. KUA officials are tasked with distributing legal knowledge and supervising program implementation, whereas young participants serve as the principal

beneficiaries of the program, offering insights regarding the efficacy of BRUS message communication and comprehension.

This study includes a review of the communication tactics employed by KUA to convey information regarding BRUS, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of legal communication. This research examines the channels, styles, and media choices employed by KUA, recognizing that legal knowledge and behavioral change depend on successful outreach that corresponds with the communication habits of the adolescents in Rambutan District. Data was gathered via semi-structured interviews and direct observations, focusing on the methods KUA officers utilize to communicate BRUS information, the youth's perceptions of the accessibility and clarity of legal information, and the obstacles encountered in comprehending and applying the guidance offered by BRUS.

The data analysis employs qualitative thematic analysis, wherein interview transcripts and observation notes were coded according to emerging themes concerning legal awareness, accessibility of BRUS content, efficacy of communication methods, perceived influence on youth decision-making regarding marriage, and obstacles to program participation. The coding approach commenced with an initial open coding phase to discover reoccurring themes, succeeded by axial coding to delineate links between the transmission of legal information and participant replies. This systematic method facilitates a comprehensive comprehension of the efficacy of BRUS implementation and its congruence with behavioral change theories.

This study complies with ethical research norms to safeguard informants' rights and anonymity. Ethical issues encompass informed consent, whereby all participants, including KUA officers and juvenile informants, were thoroughly apprised of the study's objectives, voluntary involvement, and their right to withdraw at any moment. To safeguard privacy and sensitive information, all names and personal identifiers were anonymized, and interview recordings and transcripts were securely archived, ensuring that data usage was confined only to research objectives.

The selection of informants was predicated on their pertinence to the research aims. KUA officers were selected for their institutional role in managing BRUS and supervising marriage registration, rendering them essential participants in the execution and dissemination of legal directives. Concurrently, youth participants were chosen to evaluate the reception of BRUS messages and their impact on decision-making related to marriage. This research seeks to deliver a thorough assessment of BRUS implementation by integrating communication analysis, legal responsiveness, and behavioral change perspectives, so guaranteeing that legal awareness initiatives are both effective and culturally relevant to the target community's needs.

RESULTS

1. Legal Awareness of Adolescents Regarding Premarital Guidance in Rambutan Sub-district

In Legal awareness plays a crucial role in ensuring that individuals understand and comply with regulations. According to Soerjono Soekanto, legal awareness refers to an individual's knowledge of legal norms, even if they do not fully comprehend their philosophical and functional foundations. In the context of marriage, the minimum legal age for marriage has been established to prevent early marriage and its associated risks. However, many adolescents in Rambutan Sub-district have limited knowledge about Premarital Guidance Programs (BRUS) and the legal marriage age, highlighting a gap in the dissemination of legal information.

The following table presents the responses of adolescents in Rambutan Sub-district regarding their awareness of BRUS and the minimum age limit for marriage:

Table 1. Adolescent Awareness of the BRUS Program and Minimum Marriage Age

No	Name	Age	Awareness of BRUS Program	Understanding of Minimum Marriage Age
1	DheaAdhelia Nasution	15	Has never received information from KUA, only aware through general discussions.	Believes marriage age is when an individual is ready to fulfill responsibilities.
2	Dinda Puspita Sari	18	Did not receive information from social media or television.	Aware that the age limit is meant to prevent early marriage but does not believe it is widely enforced.
3	M. Gusty Billy Andreas	17	Never received formal information from BRUS or KUA.	Believes the appropriate marriage age is 21 for women and 25 for men.
4	Dinda Puspita Sari	18	Supports the age limit but thinks Islamic law does not set a specific requirement.	Considers the regulation feasible but believes its benefits should be better communicated.

Source: Interview, 2024

From the table 1, it is evident that most adolescents in Rambutan Sub-district lack direct access to information regarding the BRUS program. Many only become aware of the legal marriage age when they register their marriage at KUA, indicating that socialization efforts may not be reaching the intended audience effectively. Furthermore, some adolescents hold personal beliefs regarding readiness for marriage that do not necessarily align with legal regulations, showing a need for more targeted educational efforts.

2. The Role of KUA Rambutan in Implementing the BRUS Program

The Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) plays a central role in administering marriage regulations and premarital guidance programs. As part of its mandate, KUA Rambutan is responsible for ensuring that couples understand their legal rights and obligations before marriage. The effectiveness of this implementation largely depends on the collaboration between KUA, local stakeholders, and educational institutions.

To better understand the implementation strategies used by KUA Rambutan, the following table summarizes key responses from KUA officials and religious instructors regarding the BRUS program:

Table 2. Perspectives of KUA Officers on BRUS Implementation

No	Informant	Position	Key Statement
1	Zain Munawar	Religious Instructor	BRUS is centrally managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs but requires better adaptation at the local level.
2	Abd Yajid	Head of KUA Rambutan	KUA collaborates with local stakeholders and schools but still faces challenges in engaging students.
3	Sulaiman	Marriage Registrar	The BRUS program has been implemented since 2022, but initial training and dissemination were limited.

Source: Interview, 2024

The data suggests that while KUA Rambutan is actively involved in implementing BRUS, there are still challenges in engagement, outreach, and adaptation to local needs. The program is nationally structured but often lacks the flexibility to address local socio-cultural dynamics, which affects its effectiveness in preventing early marriages. Furthermore, officials acknowledge that training and resources for KUA staff remain limited, impacting their ability to deliver the program comprehensively.

3. Challenges in the Implementation of BRUS in Reducing Early Marriage

Despite its intended purpose, the BRUS program in Rambutan Sub-district faces several key challenges, including low community engagement, inadequate resources, and social-cultural resistance. Many adolescents still choose to marry early, sometimes due to peer pressure, lack of parental awareness, or economic factors, suggesting that legal interventions alone may not be sufficient.

The following table highlights the main challenges identified by KUA officials regarding the effectiveness of BRUS:

Table 3. Challenges in BRUS Implementation

No	Identified Challenge	Description
1	Limited Infrastructure	Lack of funding and facilities affects program execution.
2	Ineffective Socialization	Adolescents are not sufficiently exposed to BRUS messages.
3	Parental Influence	Many parents still encourage early marriage despite legal restrictions.
4	Socio-Cultural Norms	Some communities do not fully accept the importance of delaying marriage.

Source: Author Compilation, 2024

These challenges indicate that the effectiveness of BRUS is hindered by external social and economic factors. While the program provides legal education, its impact remains limited if families and communities do not fully support its objectives. There is a clear need for better communication strategies, stronger enforcement mechanisms, and integration with broader social programs to address the root causes of early marriage in Rambutan Sub-district.

DISCUSSION

1. Indonesia's BRUS: A Lesson from Algeria

The Premarital Guidance Program (BRUS) conducted by KUA Rambutan functions as an essential legal and religious measure to mitigate underage weddings. Nonetheless, its influence is constrained by structural, communication, and socio-cultural obstacles. According to Legal Awareness Theory, legal knowledge alone does not ensure legal compliance without robust enforcement measures and extensive public involvement (Rokhmad & Susilo, 2017).

A primary strength of BRUS is its incorporation of religious instruction, rendering it culturally acceptable to orthodox Muslim populations. Nonetheless, its shortcomings are equally substantial. The initiative predominantly functions within religious institutions, omitting other essential stakeholders including public health authorities, educational institutions, and child welfare organizations. The omission of secular viewpoints, especially from psychology, social work, and medical disciplines, constrains its comprehensive effectiveness.

Secondly, the legal ramifications of BRUS remain feeble. In contrast to Algeria, where premarital counseling is associated with judicial assessments of minor marriage exemptions, Indonesia imposes no direct legal repercussions for failing to complete BRUS. In Indonesia, marriage dispensations are issued independently of KUA evaluations, indicating that the program fails to effectively dissuade families from pursuing exemptions to the minimum marriage age legislation (Kamarusdiana et al., 2022).

Thirdly, public participation is minimal, as numerous youths in Rambutan Sub-district are uninformed of BRUS until they initiate the marriage registration process. This problem exemplifies Legal Communication Dysfunction, wherein a state-enforced legal policy falters due to inadequate communication methods (Kemenag, 2022). The absence of organized,

youth-oriented communication strategies obstructs adolescents from obtaining essential legal information, exacerbating the disparity between legal statutes and their practical application.

A comparative review of Algeria's compulsory premarital counseling system offers essential insights into the ineffectiveness of Indonesia's BRUS program. In Algeria, premarital counseling is not simply an advice program but a legal obligation overseen by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments. In contrast to Indonesia, where BRUS is frequently regarded as an elective course, Algeria's religious counseling is intrinsically linked to judicial determinations regarding underage marriage exemptions.

A notable contrast is the inclusion of *Maslahah* (welfare) evaluation in judicial evaluations. The Algerian system employs the idea of *Maslahah* as both a religious factor and a legal criterion for safeguarding adolescents. Judicial systems stress the wellbeing of the child above cultural norms, preventing early marriages unless they satisfy stringent social and psychological well-being standards (Himawan et al., 2018).

Moreover, Algeria's legal structure mandates community engagement, necessitating the collaboration of religious leaders, medical specialists, and legal experts in providing premarital education. This comprehensive approach connects religious law, public policy, and grassroots advocacy, resulting in increased awareness and enhanced enforcement. Conversely, Indonesia's BRUS is detached from judicial proceedings, so constraining its legal enforcement authority. The program is deficient in organized community participation, rendering its outreach heavily reliant on the efficacy of individual KUA offices, which leads to inconsistent implementation throughout regions (Sharif et al., 2024).

The juxtaposition of Indonesia and Algeria underscores critical domains necessitating adjustment in the execution of BRUS (Premarital Guidance for School-Age Adolescents). Algeria's achievement in amalgamating religious counseling with legal enforcement and community engagement offers significant insights for enhancing Indonesia's methodology. BRUS in Indonesia functions mostly under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (KUA), although its efficacy is constrained by inadequate enforcement mechanisms, insufficient multisectoral collaboration, inefficient outreach methods, and socio-cultural resistance. Mitigating these restrictions necessitates a comprehensive strategy that integrates legal, educational, and community-oriented solutions.

The legal implications of BRUS must be reinforced. At now, participation in BRUS is non-binding, allowing adolescents who do not finish the program to still receive marriage dispensations from religious courts. Conversely, Algeria mandates premarital counseling as a condition for marriage registration. Indonesia might use a comparable strategy by mandating that KUA's evaluation of adolescent legal understanding and preparedness for marriage be factored into judicial determinations on underage marriage cases. This would guarantee that BRUS operates not merely as an advice initiative but as a fundamental element of formal marriage processes.

Alongside legal enforcement, multisectoral coordination is crucial to augment the efficacy of BRUS. Although KUA is crucial, Indonesia's Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education must also participate in providing comprehensive premarital education. Educational institutions ought to include BRUS content into their curricula, providing teenagers with early exposure to premarital education prior to contemplating marriage. In Algeria, premarital counseling incorporates insights from health specialists, psychologists, and legal experts, providing a thorough comprehension of marital obligations and potential hazards.

A vital element is the necessity to enhance communication and outreach efforts. The efficacy of BRUS is compromised by inadequate transmission of legal knowledge, leading to

diminished participation rates among adolescents. KUA ought to enhance its outreach approach by integrating youth-oriented communication channels, including social media campaigns, peer-to-peer education, and interactive digital platforms. Algeria's experience illustrates the significance of utilizing internet technologies and engaging community leaders, influencers, and educators to normalize discourse on marriage age legislation and enhance public awareness.

Moreover, socio-cultural adaption is essential for BRUS to effectively address local requirements. Legal Responsiveness Theory asserts that legal policies should be flexible and attuned to socio-cultural contexts, rather than employing a uniform approach. The efficacy of BRUS hinges on its capacity to tackle distinct regional difficulties, including parental pressure, economic instability, and community perceptions regarding early marriage (Hidayat & Aziz, 2024). KUA should implement organized feedback systems to collect insights from adolescents and families, assuring the program's relevance and efficacy.

Ultimately, it is essential to confront any biases in faith-based initiatives. A careful analysis is essential to ascertain whether BRUS predominantly fulfills religious purposes or wider societal objectives. Although religious institutions are essential for marital advising, it is imperative to incorporate secular legal principles, human rights perspectives, and issues of gender equality into BRUS courses. This will guarantee that the program conforms to global best practices while maintaining cultural and legal relevance.

The subsequent table presents a comparative analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of BRUS in Indonesia and Algeria, accompanied by suggested enhancements for improvement:

Table 4. Insight from Algeria

Aspect	Indonesia (BRUS)	Algeria (Premarital Counseling)	Recommendations for Indonesia
Legal Enforcement	Not legally binding; does not affect marriage dispensations.	Mandatory for marriage registration and court reviews.	Make BRUS legally binding by linking it to judicial decisions on underage marriages.
Multisectoral Collaboration	KUA-led, minimal involvement of health and education sectors.	Involves religious, legal, health, and educational institutions.	Involve the Ministry of Health and Education to deliver integrated premarital education.
Communication & Outreach	Limited socialization, reliance on traditional methods, low youth engagement.	Utilizes digital platforms, community leaders, and peer educators.	Modernize outreach using social media, influencers, and interactive digital tools.
Socio-Cultural Adaptation	Standardized approach, lacks regional flexibility.	Adapted to local socio-cultural conditions and community needs.	Implement region-specific BRUS models based on feedback from youth and families.
Integration of Legal & Religious Perspectives	Religious-oriented, limited focus on legal and human rights aspects.	Combines religious guidance with human rights and legal protections.	Integrate gender equality, human rights, and secular legal principles into BRUS curricula.

Source: Author Compilation (2024)

Through the implementation of these reforms, Indonesia can augment the efficacy of BRUS, ensuring that legal awareness results in concrete behavioral change and that initiatives to prevent early marriage are effectively institutionalized. The efficacy of BRUS hinges on its capacity to harmonize religious guidance with legal accountability, implement contemporary outreach tactics, and involve a broader spectrum of stakeholders in marriage education. This discourse incorporates the theoretical framework of legal awareness, legal communication dysfunction, and legal responsiveness to contextualize the constraints of BRUS. The findings indicate that BRUS does not fulfill its intended impact owing to

structural deficiencies in legal communication, inadequate enforcement measures, and cultural opposition.

Moreover, KUA's institutional limitations—specifically budgetary constraints, dependence on religious rhetoric, and insufficient inter-agency collaboration—impede the program's efficacy. Insights from Algeria indicate that a more enforceable, legally integrated, and community-oriented strategy is essential to reconcile the disparity between legal theory and practical policy execution. By aligning BRUS with judicial decision-making, expanding intersectoral collaborations, enhancing outreach strategies, and confronting cultural resistance, Indonesia can improve the efficacy of its marriage prevention policies and ensure that legal awareness results in substantive behavioral change among adolescents.

The results of this study correspond with previous studies about legal awareness and premarital counseling programs in both Muslim-majority and non-Muslim-majority nations. Research on premarital counseling and the prevention of early marriage underscores the necessity of comprehensive, multisectoral strategies that include legal, educational, and community-oriented methods (Yaşar, 2024). Research by Nasrulloh et al. (2024b) indicates that insufficient legal understanding among adolescents significantly contributes to elevated rates of early marriage, akin to the circumstances reported in Rambutan District. Moreover, research by (Rahman et al., 2024) suggests that successful premarital education necessitates cooperation among religious institutions, educational establishments, and healthcare professionals, as exemplified by Algeria's comprehensive strategy. Previous studies indicate that religiously oriented premarital counseling programs frequently encounter difficulties when they neglect to include structural concerns, like economic instability and parental impact (Yacoob, 2024b). This paper compares BRUS in Indonesia with Algeria's approach, highlighting the deficiencies of single-agency implementation and advocating for a more comprehensive strategy to enhance legal literacy and policy efficacy in marriage regulation.

The results possess considerable theoretical and practical ramifications. This study theoretically contributes to Legal Communication Dysfunction Theory and Legal Responsiveness Theory by illustrating how the efficacy of BRUS is impeded by insufficient communication tactics and a lack of adaptation to local socio-cultural contexts. The research underscores the disparity between national marriage policies and their actual execution, supporting the assertion that centralized legal frameworks should be augmented with regional involvement initiatives (Idris et al., 2024). The report emphasizes the necessity for Indonesia to reform BRUS by establishing legally enforceable involvement, enhancing multisectoral collaboration with health and education institutions, and updating communication methods to effectively engage teenagers. Moreover, governments must reevaluate the function of religious organizations in marriage education, ensuring that BRUS harmonizes religious doctrines with gender equality, human rights, and legal safeguards. By addressing these deficiencies, the study establishes a framework for expanding premarital advice programs in Indonesia, thereby improving legal awareness, decreasing underage marriage rates, and fostering long-term social welfare.

2. Evaluating BRUS Implementation through the Lens of *Maslahah*

The Premarital Guidance Program for School-Age Adolescents (BRUS), executed by KUA Rambutan, has both advantages and drawbacks in its efforts to prevent early marriage. The program aims to enhance legal awareness among adolescents; nevertheless, its success is constrained by structural, cultural, and institutional limitations. Assessing BRUS through the framework of *Maslahah* (public welfare) facilitates a more rigorous evaluation of the program's alignment with the optimal interests of teenagers and its efficacy in reducing underage marriages. In Islamic jurisprudence, *Maslahah* is a fundamental principle that guarantees laws and policies emphasize human wellbeing, social justice, and the welfare of

marginalized people (Firdaus & Ahmad, 2023). Nonetheless, its utilization within BRUS remains predominantly implicit, rather than becoming a formalized element of marital dispensation evaluations.

A key difficulty noted in this study is that BRUS currently lacks enforceability, allowing adolescents who do not complete the program to still acquire marriage dispensations from religious courts. In contrast to Algeria, where religious counseling results are intimately associated with judicial determinations, BRUS functions as an independent educational initiative with no direct influence on legal choices concerning underage marriage. From a *Maslahah* standpoint, this disconnection undermines the efficacy of BRUS, as it lacks the legal authority to prohibit early marriages when teenagers do not fulfill its educational criteria. To adhere to the idea of public benefit, Indonesia might implement a model akin to Algeria's integrated system, wherein BRUS results are deemed a compulsory prerequisite for court marriage dispensations. This would guarantee that only teenagers exhibiting legal awareness and emotional maturity are permitted to marry at a young age.

Furthermore, *Maslahah* mandates that legal laws should be contextually aware and adaptable to practical issues (Fikri et al., 2024). The current implementation of the BRUS program inadequately considers socio-economic factors influencing early marriages, including parental pressure, financial insecurity, and cultural traditions. The interviews in this study reveal that numerous adolescents and their families consider marriage as a remedy for financial difficulties rather than a long-term commitment necessitating preparation and maturity. A *Maslahah*-oriented approach necessitates that BRUS incorporate multi-sectoral interventions by cooperating with social welfare programs, economic empowerment efforts, and educational incentives to offer viable alternatives to early marriage. Malaysia has effectively executed financial support programs in conjunction with premarital counseling, guaranteeing that teenagers from low-income homes possess the resources to pursue education and professional advancement prior to marriage (Salleh, 2019).

Moreover, *Maslahah* underscores the significance of accessibility and inclusivity in legal education. A significant outcome of this study is that numerous youths are oblivious to BRUS due to inadequate communication techniques employed by KUA. Legal awareness efforts that do not effectively reach the intended audience are incompatible with *Maslahah* principles, as they do not promote the welfare of those most in need. To improve *Maslahah* compliance, BRUS must reformulate its outreach strategy by employing youth-oriented communication channels such as social media, interactive webinars, and school-based counseling initiatives. Countries such as Turkey and Jordan have effectively involved youngsters in religious and legal education by including these programs into school curriculum and digital learning platforms, so assuring extensive accessibility and involvement (Lestyanto & Sudarmo, 2024). By embracing a more inclusive strategy, BRUS can improve its efficacy in fostering legal awareness and encouraging appropriate marital choices among teenagers.

A significant issue from a *Maslahah* perspective is the gendered ramifications of early marriage and the manner in which BRUS tackles these concerns. The program offers generic marriage education but fails to adequately highlight the unique hazards encountered by adolescent girls, including health issues from early pregnancy, economic dependency, and susceptibility to domestic violence. Islamic legal experts contend that *Maslahah* ought to serve as a guiding concept in gender-sensitive legal policy, ensuring that laws and programs effectively safeguard the rights and welfare of women and children (Hidayat & Aziz, 2024). In this context, BRUS should integrate specific content on gender equity, reproductive health education, and women's legal rights to empower adolescent girls with the knowledge and resources necessary for making educated decisions regarding marriage

CONSLUSION

This study underscores the pressing necessity for a dual strategy in enhancing Indonesia's Premarital Guidance for School-Age Adolescents (BRUS), integrating effective legal communication techniques with a dynamic program design that adapts according to real-time feedback from youth and community stakeholders. The findings indicate that BRUS has not substantially diminished the incidence of underage marriage, mostly due to inadequate communication, restricted institutional cooperation, and feeble legal enforcement measures. KUA shall formulate customized legal communication strategies to guarantee that adolescents and their families obtain clear, accessible, and culturally pertinent information regarding marriage laws, legal obligations, and the ramifications of early marriage. This necessitates selecting suitable communication venues, employing digital tools, including community leaders, and sustaining an ongoing feedback mechanism with program participants.

The Algerian experience illustrates how a cohesive system may adeptly harmonize religious, legal, and communal frameworks to safeguard school-age children from early marriage. Compulsory prenuptial counseling, stringent legal supervision, and community-oriented initiatives guarantee that early marriages are meticulously assessed and regulated to safeguard teenage well-being. Conversely, Indonesia's BRUS functions predominantly in seclusion, lacking robust legal ties to marriage dispensations. Drawing from Algeria's approach, Indonesia's KUA should enhance collaborations with local courts, educational institutions, and health agencies, ensuring that BRUS outcomes directly influence judicial determinations regarding marriage dispensations for minors. This strategy would integrate religious guidance with legal enforcement and public health goals, resulting in a more comprehensive and effective premarital education system.

This study advocates for Indonesia to explicitly incorporate *Maslahah* (public welfare) assessment as an essential element of marriage dispensations for minors, as effectively executed in Algeria and other nations. This would guarantee that marriage approvals emphasize the child's welfare over socio-cultural pressures, so averting instances where early marriage results in enduring harm. Policymakers should incorporate *Maslahah*-based legal assessments into Indonesia's judicial review process, ensuring that cases of underage marriage are examined from the perspective of child welfare. By incorporating *Maslahah* principles, bolstering inter-institutional collaboration, and updating legal communication tactics, Indonesia can markedly raise the efficacy of BRUS, elevate legal awareness, and protect adolescent rights.

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