

Adolescents' Perceptions of Marriage Age Maturity through the Generation Planning Program in Sanetan Village, Rembang Regency

Persepsi Remaja tentang Pendewasaan Usia Perkawinan dalam Program Generasi Berencana: Studi di Desa Sanetan, Kabupaten Rembang

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Received: June 1, 2025 | Revised: October 27, 2025 | Published: December 31, 2025

Abstrak: Pernikahan dini masih menjadi persoalan penting di Indonesia karena berdampak pada kesehatan reproduksi, pendidikan, dan masa depan remaja. Namun demikian, terdapat celah penelitian karena belum banyak studi yang secara spesifik menggali persepsi remaja terhadap pendewasaan usia perkawinan (PUP) dalam konteks lokal, seperti di Desa Sanetan, Kecamatan Sluke, Kabupaten Rembang. Penelitian ini mengisi celah tersebut dengan menelaah pengalaman dan pandangan remaja, baik yang tergabung dalam Pusat Informasi dan Konseling Remaja (PIK-R) maupun yang tidak, dalam kerangka Program Generasi Berencana (GenRe). Melalui pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini menggali secara mendalam pandangan, sikap, dan pengalaman remaja melalui wawancara mendalam dan observasi dengan remaja, kader Bina Keluarga Remaja (BKR), serta Petugas Lapangan Keluarga Berencana (PLKB). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa remaja yang tergabung dalam PIK-R memiliki pemahaman yang lebih baik mengenai risiko pernikahan dini serta pentingnya kesiapan fisik dan mental sebelum menikah. Sebaliknya, remaja yang tidak terlibat dalam PIK-R cenderung memiliki persepsi yang terbatas dan dipengaruhi oleh norma budaya serta tekanan sosial. Temuan ini menekankan pentingnya perluasan akses dan partisipasi remaja dalam program PIK-R guna meningkatkan pengetahuan dan kesadaran terkait PUP. Berdasarkan hasil tersebut, disarankan kepada DPR RI, khususnya Komisi IX, untuk mendorong pemerintah dalam rangka penguatan Program GenRe melalui pendekatan berbasis komunitas yang lebih komprehensif. Kebijakan yang didukung oleh data



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Kata kunci: pencegahan pernikahan dini; pendewasaan usia perkawinan; persepsi remaja; Pusat Informasi dan Konseling Remaja (PIK-R); Program GenRe

Abstract: Early marriage remained a significant issue in Indonesia due to its impact on adolescents' reproductive health, education, and future. However, there was a research gap, as few studies examined adolescents' perceptions of delayed marriage age (PUP) within local contexts, such as in Sanetan Village, Sluke District, Rembang Regency. This study addressed that gap by exploring the experiences and perspectives of adolescents, both those involved in the Youth Information and Counseling Center (PIK-R) and those who were not, within the framework of the Generasi Berencana (GenRe) Program. This study used a qualitative approach to investigate adolescents' views, attitudes, and experiences through in-depth interviews and observations with adolescents, Youth Family Development (BKR) cadres, and Family Planning Field Officers (PLKB). The findings indicated that adolescents who participated in PIK-R demonstrated better understanding of the risks of early marriage and the importance of physical and mental readiness before entering marriage. In contrast, adolescents not engaged in PIK-R tended to have limited perceptions, which were strongly influenced by cultural norms and social pressures. These findings underscore the importance of expanding access to and participation in PIK-R programs to enhance adolescents' knowledge and awareness of PUP. Based on these results, recommendations were directed to the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, particularly Commission IX, to encourage the government to strengthen the GenRe Program through a more comprehensive, community-based approach. Locally informed and data-driven policies are essential to promote PUP and to reinforce adolescent reproductive health education in Indonesia.

Keywords: adolescent perception; delayed marriage age (PUP); early marriage prevention; GenRe Program; Youth Information and Counseling Center (PIK-R)

Introduction

Population issues have remained one of the significant challenges in national development, including in Indonesia. One of the fundamental problems lies in the high population growth rate and the imbalanced age structure. According to the Ministry of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) (2017), the productive-age group (15–64 years) accounted for 68.7 percent or approximately 183.36 million people. This condition indicated that Indonesia was experiencing a demographic bonus projected to last until 2045 (Daiyah et al., 2021). While this demographic dividend offers significant opportunities for national development, its potential can only be realized if the younger generation is adequately prepared through strategic programs to enhance creativity, human resource quality, and family resilience.

As part of the productive-age population, adolescents play a vital role in determining the future quality of national development. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescents as individuals aged 10–19 years (Beckwith et al., 2024), whereas in Indonesia, definitions vary: 10–18 years according to the Ministry of Health Regulation No. 25 of 2014, and 10–24 years (unmarried) according to the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN). Adolescence is a transitional phase toward

adulthood, encompassing biological, psychological, and social dimensions. Therefore, special attention is required to ensure adolescents grow into healthy, independent, and responsible individuals (Bulan, 2023).

Amid rapid technological advancement and globalization, adolescents face increasingly complex challenges. Vulnerability to drug abuse, risk of HIV/AIDS transmission, and unhealthy premarital sexual behavior remain prevalent. The Ministry of Health (2006) reported that 8 percent of males aged 15–24 years had used drugs, while the 15–19 age group accounted for 3.02 percent of AIDS cases in Indonesia (Na'imah et al., 2018). These findings highlight that risky behaviors among adolescents directly affect the long-term quality of Indonesia's human resources (Purwati & Faiz, 2023; Safitri et al., 2022).

Another pressing issue is the high prevalence of early marriage. Globally, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2023) reported that one in five young women (aged 20–24 years) was married before the age of 18 (Ahinkorah et al., 2023). In Indonesia, child marriage remains widespread, particularly in rural areas. Statistics Indonesia (BPS) (2020) noted that one in nine girls is married before turning 18, with the highest proportion in the 15–19 age group. Recent studies further revealed that economic hardship, cultural norms, peer pressure, and unintended pregnancies are among the main drivers of early marriage (Lubis & Nopriani, 2023; Putri, 2021).

In response, the Indonesian government, through BKKBN, launched the Generation Planning (Generasi Berencana/GenRe) Program, with one of its key components being the delayed marriage age (pendewasaan usia perkawinan/PUP). This program emphasizes the ideal marriage age of 21 for women and 25 for men, highlighting the importance of physical, psychological, social, and economic readiness prior to marriage (Nisa et al., 2022; Simorangkir et al., 2022). The program is implemented in schools and communities through Youth Information and Counseling Centers (PIK-R) (Puspita et al., 2023).

Despite these initiatives, implementing PUP through the GenRe Program has not achieved optimal effectiveness. Previous research has highlighted the role of educational media in improving adolescents' knowledge (Arriza et al., 2023), the importance of cross-sectoral support (Yastirin, 2020), and the influence of parental education on children's marriage age (Aldiantoto et al., 2020). While quantitative studies have identified determinants such as knowledge and peer influence in shaping adolescents' perceptions of early marriage (Abbas & Merben, 2024; Nafisah et al., 2023), and some qualitative research has explored community perceptions or local phenomena (Sulistyawati et al., 2024; Tiruk & Ula, 2022), there remains a lack of in-depth, village-based qualitative studies comparing the perceptions of PIK-R participants and non-participants regarding PUP. This research gap is what the present study seeks to address, particularly within the rural context of Sanetan Village.

The issue of adolescents' perceptions of PUP in the GenRe Program is highly relevant. It should be communicated to the House of Representatives (DPR RI), particularly Commission IX, as it directly relates to reproductive health, family resilience, and youth development. Findings from Sanetan Village may provide valuable insights for the DPR RI in carrying out its legislative, budgetary, and oversight functions in population and family planning policies. This study, therefore, aims to contribute to evidence-based policymaking that prioritizes young people and ensures the effectiveness and relevance of the GenRe Program at the grassroots level, especially in rural areas.

Based on these considerations, the research questions formulated were: (1) How do adolescents in Sanetan Village perceive the concept of PUP within the GenRe Program? Moreover, (2) What factors shape their perceptions of the GenRe Program and PUP? A qualitative approach was employed to explore these questions in Sanetan Village, Sluke District, Rembang Regency. The study targeted unmarried adolescents aged 10–24 years, including both PIK-R participants and non-participants, to capture diverse perspectives and compare how varying levels of program exposure contribute to different understandings and experiences. In addition, youth family development (BKR) cadres and family planning field officers (PLKB) were included to provide complementary institutional insights.

Data were collected over three months through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, with interview guides and audio recorders serving as the primary data collection instruments. Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The validity of the findings was ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking. Ultimately, this study sought to describe adolescents' perceptions of the GenRe Program, identify contextual factors that shape or relate to these perceptions, and examine their awareness, attitudes, and behaviors regarding PUP.

Perception Theory

Etymologically, the term “perception” originates from the Latin word *perception*, which means “receiving” or “taking”. In psychology, perception refers to assigning meaning to sensory stimuli based on experience and information received through the senses (Rakhmat, 2011; Walgito, 2010). According to William James, perception is shaped by memory and environmental information (Rączaszek-Leonardi & Zubek, 2023), while Assael (1983) defines it as the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting sensory data to understand reality. Perception is inherently subjective and plays a crucial role in determining individual behavior. For example, in the context of health, a positive perception of treatment can enhance patient compliance, which is in line with the health belief model, which emphasizes the influence of perception on behavior (Lismiana & Indarjo, 2021). Thus, how individuals perceive the world significantly impacts their daily decisions and attitudes.

In contemporary studies, social, cultural, and educational factors shape adolescents' perceptions of PUP. Wibowo et al. (2021) found that adolescents in rural Indonesia perceive early marriage not merely as an individual choice but also as a consequence of social norms and family pressures. Similarly, Kohno et al. (2021) demonstrated that cognitive aspects (knowledge of health and educational risks), affective aspects (emotions linked to family pressure and stigma), and conative aspects (behavioral tendencies aligned with social norms) collectively play a significant role in shaping adolescents' perceptions of PUP.

Walgito (2010) outlined three fundamental components of perception: cognition (knowledge), affection (emotions), and conation (motivation and behavior), which continuously interact with one another. The perceptual process begins with stimuli received by sensory organs, which are then transmitted to the brain for psychological processing. Attention plays a crucial role, as only stimuli attended to will be processed further, indicating that experiences and cognitive schemas strongly influence perception and subsequent behavior. Consequently, understanding adolescents' perceptions requires a conceptual framework highlighting the interplay of cognitive, affective, and

conative dimensions. The cognitive aspect reflects the extent of adolescents' awareness regarding the consequences of early marriage on reproductive health, education, and future economic stability. The affective aspect is related to emotions such as fear, anxiety, or acceptance, often shaped by environmental pressures. Meanwhile, conative refers to behavioral tendencies, such as whether adolescents reject or accept early marriage, often influenced by family and community norms.

This conceptual framework illustrates that adolescents' perceptions of PUP are not solely determined by knowledge but rather emerge from the interaction between cognition, emotion, and behavioral tendencies, which collectively inform final decisions. These insights underscore the importance of further research to capture the dynamics of adolescents' perceptions within local contexts, thereby enabling the development of more targeted and effective intervention strategies (Yang et al., 2022).

Adolescent Theory

Adolescence originates from the Latin word *adolescere*, meaning "to grow up". It represents a critical transitional phase between childhood and adulthood, marked by significant physical, psychological, and social changes (Sari, 2017). Adolescents occupy a developmental stage that bridges childhood dependence and adult responsibility. The duration and nature of this stage are strongly influenced by surrounding social and cultural conditions (Maliki et al., 2020), indicating that adolescent development is shaped biologically and environmentally. The WHO (1974) defines adolescence through three key dimensions: biological (the emergence of secondary sexual characteristics), psychological (the formation of self-identity), and socioeconomic (the shift from dependence to independence) (Lindborg et al., 2024). Based on these criteria, adolescence is typically considered to span ages 10 to 21 years (Sebayang et al., 2018).

Beyond these definitions, adolescence is marked by emotional instability, the rapid development of abstract thinking, and an intense search for identity, factors that directly influence critical life decisions, including early marriage. For instance, the theory of future orientation posits that adolescents who hold an optimistic outlook on their future are more likely to avoid risks such as early marriage, whereas those who perceive their future as bleak or fatalistic tend to be more vulnerable to premature decisions (Lebni et al., 2023; Psaki et al., 2021; Skinner et al., 2022). In addition, adolescent egocentrism where adolescents feel they are constantly the center of attention or that their experiences are uniquely different, often intensifies social pressures and anxieties regarding others' perceptions. This, in turn, may accelerate the desire to marry to gain social acceptance (Banerjee et al., 2015; Wahyuningsih et al., 2025).

The Youth Generation Planning Program

The GenRe Program is a strategic initiative developed by BKKBN to foster a healthy, visionary, and high-quality youth generation capable of addressing demographic challenges. This program emphasizes the prevention of risks associated with the Adolescent Reproductive Health Triad, which includes premarital sexuality, HIV/AIDS, and drug abuse, while also preparing adolescents for family life through character development and life skills education (Anyelir, 2019).

The GenRe Program targets adolescents aged 10–24, their families, and youth-oriented communities, utilizing two main approaches: PIK-R/M (Youth Information and Counseling Centers in schools/universities) and BKR. The program is built around eight core components: drug abuse, premarital sex, HIV/AIDS, PUP, life skills, the

eight family functions, gender issues, and communication, information, and education (CIE).

PIK-R/M is managed by and for adolescents, serving as a hub for youth-oriented information, while BKR supports parents in guiding their teenage children. The goal of the GenRe Program is to shape a knowledgeable, healthy, and responsible young generation equipped to confidently navigate their future (Anyelir, 2019; BKKBN, 2014).

Several evaluative studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of GenRe Program in influencing adolescent behavior. For instance, research conducted in East Java by Siswantara et al. (2022) revealed that adolescents with higher levels of knowledge about GenRe Program including HIV/AIDS and reproductive health, were less likely to engage in early romantic relationships. Similarly, a study in Samarinda by Sari et al. (2024) found that PIK-R utilization was positively associated with improved knowledge, more favorable attitudes, and safer sexual behaviors. These findings highlight how GenRe Program, particularly through PIK-R/M, has successfully addressed adolescent development's cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions. At the same time, they provide an important comparative framework for the present study.

General Overview of the Research Location

Sanetan Village, located in the Sluke Sub-district of Rembang Regency, Indonesia, has a population of 1,788 residents as of March 2025, of whom approximately 15% (269 individuals) are adolescents aged 7–18 years. The village was purposively selected as the research site due to the presence of well-established and consistently active youth development structures, namely the Youth Information and Counseling Center (PIK-R) and the Youth Family Development group (BKR), both of which conduct regular monthly activities. Sanetan's PIK-R has also demonstrated notable institutional performance, evidenced by its achievement as the provincial champion of the Community-Based PIK-R Competition in 2016, and its designation as a Kampung KB within Rembang Regency. These characteristics reflect a mature and sustained implementation of youth-oriented programs, thereby providing a relevant and contextually rich setting for this study.

Table 1. Total Population by Gender

No	Gender	Total
1.	Men	914 people
2.	Women	874 people

Notes: Data as of March 2025.

Source: Population Data by Age Group (2025).

Educational attainment in Sanetan Village remains relatively low, as most residents have completed only elementary or junior high school, with limited access to higher education. These conditions shape adolescents' knowledge, attitudes, and awareness regarding social and reproductive health issues, particularly the importance of delaying marriage. The village's predominantly agricultural and informal economy further restricts young people's exposure to broader educational and empowerment opportunities, reinforcing structural and socio-cultural constraints.

To capture these dynamics, a small but purposefully selected group of informants was included: one adolescent not involved in PIK-R, two active PIK-R/FORGEN members, one BKR cadre, and two PLKB officers. This combination provides complementary perspectives from youth beneficiaries and program implementers. Over-

all, the interplay of modest educational backgrounds, limited informational access, and enduring traditional norms makes Sanetan a contextually significant setting for exploring how adolescents interpret and respond to the objectives of the GenRe Program and the Delayed Marriage Age (PUP) initiative.

Adolescents' Perceptual Process Toward the Delayed Marriage Age

In understanding adolescents' perceptions of PUP, Bimo Walgito's perception theory is particularly relevant. According to Walgito, as cited in Rifai and Wijaya (2019), perception consists of three key aspects: cognitive (knowledge), affective (emotion), and conative (behavior). These three components interact synergistically to shape adolescents' attitudes.

Adolescents' knowledge is influenced by their level of education and the information they receive; social norms and personal experiences shape their emotional responses, while their behavioral tendencies are driven by motivation to engage in educational activities or counseling. Together, these elements form the foundation of how adolescents respond and form attitudes toward early marriage issues.

Cognitive Aspect

Adolescents not involved in PIK-R tend to have limited knowledge of the Delayed Marriage Age (PUP). Although they know the legal minimum age for marriage, they often lack a deeper understanding of its rationale and implications. They recognize potential risks such as domestic violence and postpartum depression, but rarely connect these issues directly to early marriage. Previous studies highlight that early marriage often leads to adverse outcomes such as divorce, poor communication, and financial instability due to emotional immaturity (Krisnawati et al., 2024).

From the perspective of BKR and PLKB, delaying marriage is viewed as a key strategy to reduce child marriage rates and their adverse effects on family well-being. Programs such as the BKR initiative and the "21-25 Keren" campaign have aimed to raise public awareness, though challenges persist in reaching adolescents effectively (Hapsari & Manggalou, 2025). Youths engaged in PIK-R generally demonstrate a stronger understanding of PUP, often rejecting early marriage due to awareness of its psychological and social consequences. This finding aligns with Putri et al. (2024), who note that PIK-R effectively promotes education and counseling to prevent early marriage.

On the other hand, non-PIK-R adolescents exhibit more pragmatic views. They tend to prioritize self-development and financial readiness before marriage. Following the enactment of Law No. 16 of 2019, BKR cadres have observed a decline in early marriage rates, though limited reproductive health education remains a concern. This underscores the need for continued efforts to enhance youth knowledge and reproductive health literacy at the community level.

Adolescents also acquire information about PUP through social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp, which serve as spaces for sharing experiences and learning. Studies show that social media campaigns effectively increase awareness about delayed marriage (Murtiyarini et al., 2019; Aminudin et al., 2025). However, excessive use of social media may negatively affect psychological well-being (Cahya et al., 2023). PIK-R adolescents are generally more selective and engage in educational webinars and discussions on reproductive health, showing balanced awareness of both the positive and negative sides of online content.

Personal experiences further influence adolescents' perceptions. Many respondents viewed early marriage as premature and detrimental to personal development, particularly among those who had witnessed family conflict or domestic violence. This is consistent with Mahendra et al. (2022), who found that exposure to broken home conditions can hinder socio-emotional growth. Thus, past experiences reinforce the view that marriage requires mental, emotional, and financial preparedness.

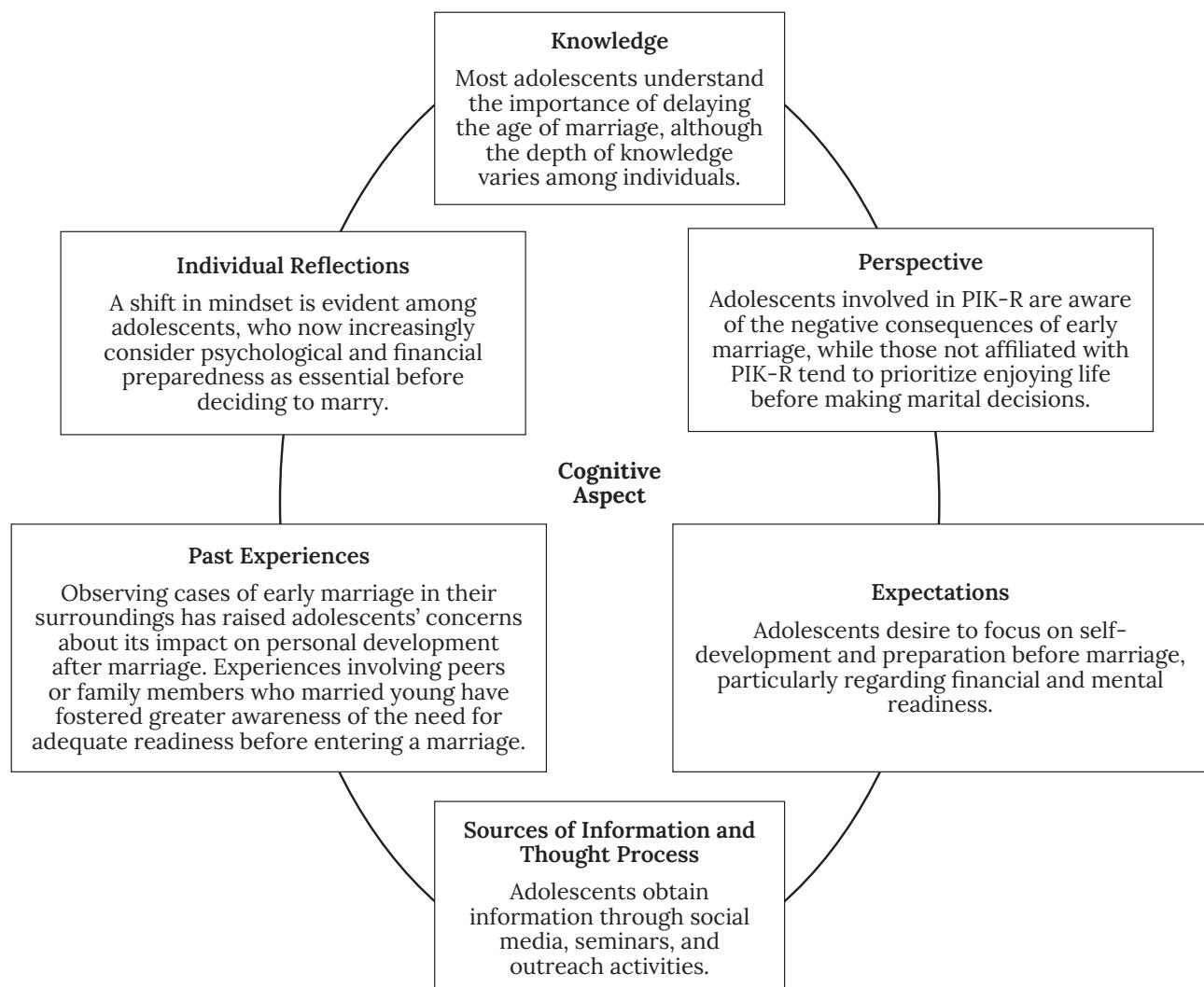


Figure 1. Cognitive Aspects that Influence Adolescents' Perception Processes

Source: Research data processed (2025).

Overall, adolescents' mindsets regarding PUP indicate positive progress. Access to education and information has shaped a more critical understanding that marriage readiness involves psychological, emotional, and financial stability rather than reaching a certain age. Nevertheless, some adolescents still hold conservative beliefs, such as marrying early to avoid premarital sex or the notion that girls do not need higher education, reflecting the persistence of gender stereotypes and traditional norms (Dewi et al., 2024; Ulum et al., 2024). These findings suggest that strengthening gender-sensitive education and expanding youth engagement programs remain essential for promoting delayed marriage and social inclusion.

Affective Aspect

The Delayed Marriage Age (PUP) initiative, implemented through the GenRe Program, has effectively shaped adolescents' understanding of early marriage. Adolescents actively involved in the Youth Information and Counseling Center (PIK-R) respond positively to educational activities concerning the ideal age of marriage, the risks of early marriage, and its connection to reproductive health issues such as pregnancy and stunting. They view the program as an important part of their personal growth and a means of raising awareness within their communities. This aligns with the findings of Kurniadi et al. (2023), who found that peer counseling and PUP training significantly improve adolescents' understanding of delayed marriage and reproductive health.

In contrast, adolescents who are not part of PIK-R tend to be less engaged and often perceive discussions about PUP as sensitive or uncomfortable topics. Family Planning Field Officers (PLKB) noted that some adolescents still show reluctance to discuss reproductive health openly. PLKB and local facilitators employ more empathetic and personalized communication approaches to address this. As Nabilah (2021) emphasized, coordination among stakeholders is crucial for strengthening GenRe's implementation and ensuring that PUP education reaches adolescents effectively.

Overall, most adolescents recognize the importance of delaying marriage until they achieve psychological and financial readiness. Suryanti (2023) found that adequate knowledge of PUP is closely related to adolescents' attitudes toward postponing marriage. From an emotional perspective, both PIK-R and non-PIK-R members express that adolescence should be a time for personal development rather than entering marriage based solely on emotional attachment. Many also stated that they do not feel pressured to marry early, as they perceive marriage as a long-term commitment requiring emotional and mental preparedness.

These findings suggest that adolescents' perceptions of marriage are shifting toward greater maturity and self-awareness. Educational initiatives through PIK-R and GenRe have successfully promoted a mindset emphasizing readiness, responsibility, and long-term well-being as key factors in marital decision-making.

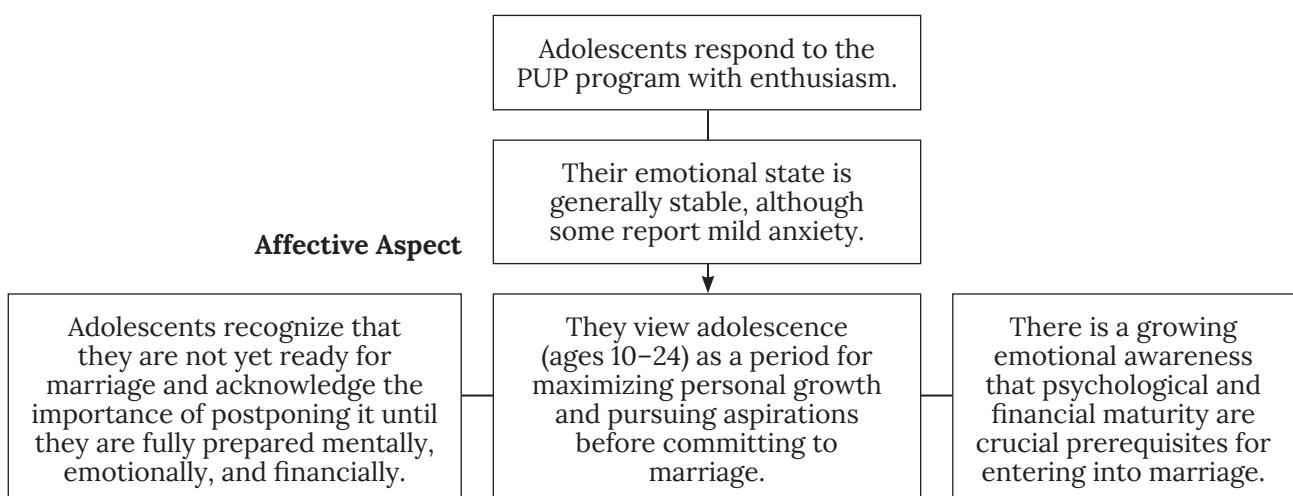


Figure 2. Affective Aspects that Influence Adolescents' Perception Processes

Source: Research data processed (2025).

Conative or Psychomotor Aspect

Adolescents participate in the GenRe Program primarily to prepare emotionally, psychologically, and financially for their future. They understand marital readiness goes beyond age and involves mental maturity and life stability. According to Putri and Rosida (2019), enhancing adolescents' knowledge through counseling and integrity pacts strengthens their commitment to delaying marriage. Both adolescents involved in PIK-R (Youth Information and Counseling Centers) and those outside the program share similar motivations, to achieve economic independence, make their families proud, and pursue higher education. This indicates that awareness of the importance of delaying early marriage has expanded even beyond formal program participants.

Adolescents' attitudes toward the PUP initiative generally range from neutral to supportive, particularly among those actively involved in PIK-R. However, some adolescents still lack a comprehensive understanding of the more profound social and psychological consequences of early marriage. They tend to recognize only general risks, such as losing independence or shifting priorities. This reflects the findings of Naghizadeh et al. (2021), who highlight that early marriage can lead to psychological distress, maladjustment, and limited social interaction.

The implementation of educational activities in Sanetan Village demonstrates that adolescents have begun applying the principles of marriage readiness by developing life skills and emotional awareness. Nevertheless, many consider the educational materials overly formal and less engaging. To address this, Putri et al. (2023) and Noftalina et al. (2024) suggest that creative media, such as animated videos and booklets, can enhance adolescents' understanding and attitudes toward delayed marriage. Similarly, Dewi et al. (2024) emphasize that interactive psychoeducational approaches can improve learning effectiveness and emotional engagement among youth.

Field observations also reveal that adolescents in Sanetan Village engage in diverse activities, from schoolwork and social interactions to household responsibilities and informal discussions about early marriage. Some express enthusiasm for participating in PUP campaigns, though communication barriers and lack of confidence remain challenges. Even those not affiliated with PIK-R display personal awareness of the need for emotional and financial readiness before marriage, especially those from less supportive family environments.

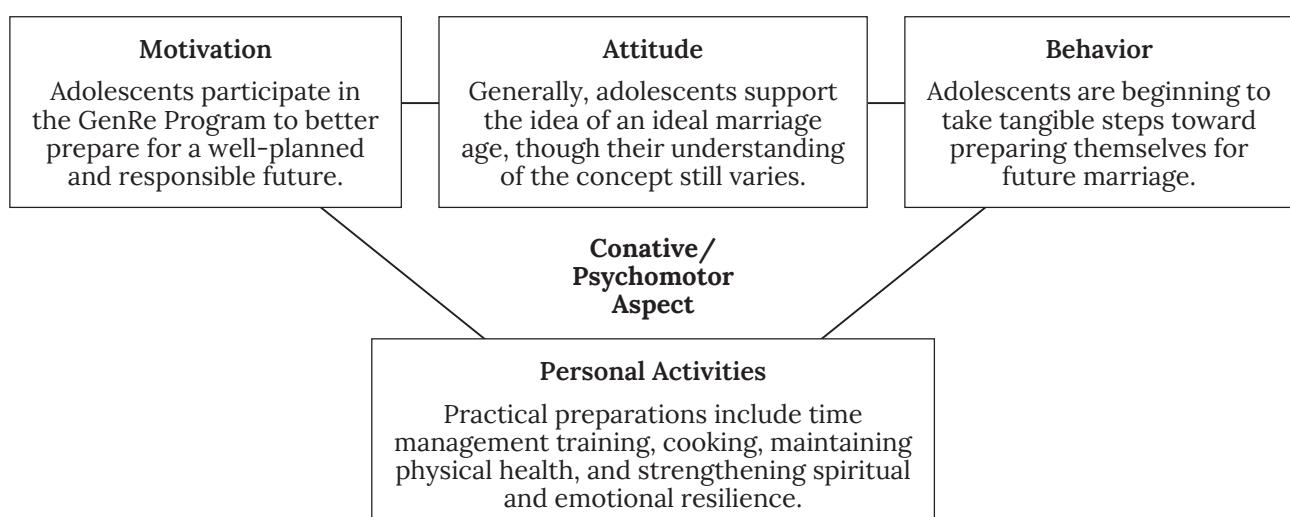


Figure 3. Conative/Psychomotor Aspects that Influence Adolescents' Perception Processes

Source: Research data processed (2025).

At the institutional level, PLKB officers and BKR groups have continued outreach programs, though the methods remain largely conventional. There is a growing recognition of the need for more contextual and participatory educational methods. BKR plans to introduce informal learning formats, such as casual discussions, to encourage open dialogue and reflection among adolescents. This shift aligns with findings by Fachrunnisa et al. (2024), who reported that community-based participatory discussions are more effective than formal counseling in shaping adolescents' perceptions and preventing early marriage.

Moreover, integrating digital media into outreach activities has become a strategic direction for PUP implementation. Wulansari et al. (2024) demonstrate that using social media and youth organizations (Karang Taruna) as educational channels can significantly increase adolescents' awareness of early marriage risks. Consistent with this, Maulana & Wijaya (2025) highlight that digital learning environments, such as interactive videos and educational games, can effectively engage youth in sensitive topics, including reproductive health and marriage readiness. Therefore, the initiative by PLKB to develop digital-based educational innovations represents a promising step toward more engaging, inclusive, and sustainable PUP education.

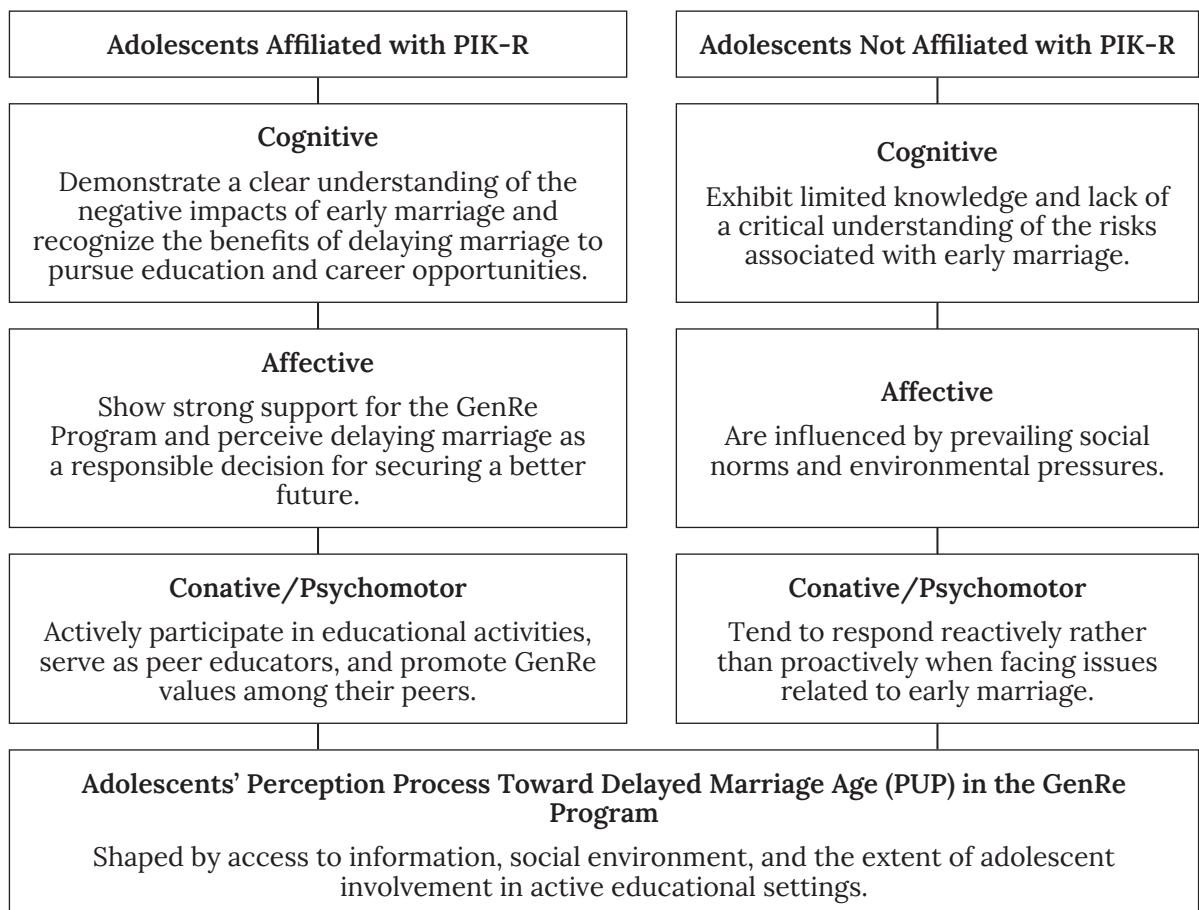


Figure 4. Adolescents' Perception Process of PUP in the GenRe Program
Source: Research data processed (2025).

Based on Figure 4, there is a clear distinction between adolescents involved in PIK-R and those who are not in terms of their perception of the Delayed Marriage Age (PUP). Adolescents participating in PIK-R show stronger cognitive awareness of the consequences of early marriage and recognize the importance of mental, physi-

cal, and financial readiness before marriage. They view delaying marriage not only as a personal choice but also as a social responsibility aligned with the values of the GenRe Program. From a behavioral perspective, they actively participate in educational and outreach activities and can share accurate information with their peers.

In contrast, adolescents outside PIK-R generally have a limited understanding and are more influenced by traditional cultural norms or family expectations. Their decisions regarding marriage often stem from external pressures rather than personal readiness. This difference emphasizes the importance of access to information and the role of community-based education in shaping adolescent awareness of PUP.

Participation in PIK-R has proven to influence adolescents' perceptions holistically, cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally. Musthafa (2023) found that involvement in PIK-R enhances students' motivation to learn and strengthens their problem-solving skills, illustrating the program's comprehensive developmental impact. Therefore, collaboration between schools, families, and local governments is essential to expand the GenRe Program's reach so that all adolescents, especially those not yet involved in PIK-R, can gain equal access to information and support related to marriage readiness.

Factors Influencing Adolescents' Perceptions of Delayed Marriage Age in the GenRe Program

Internal Factors

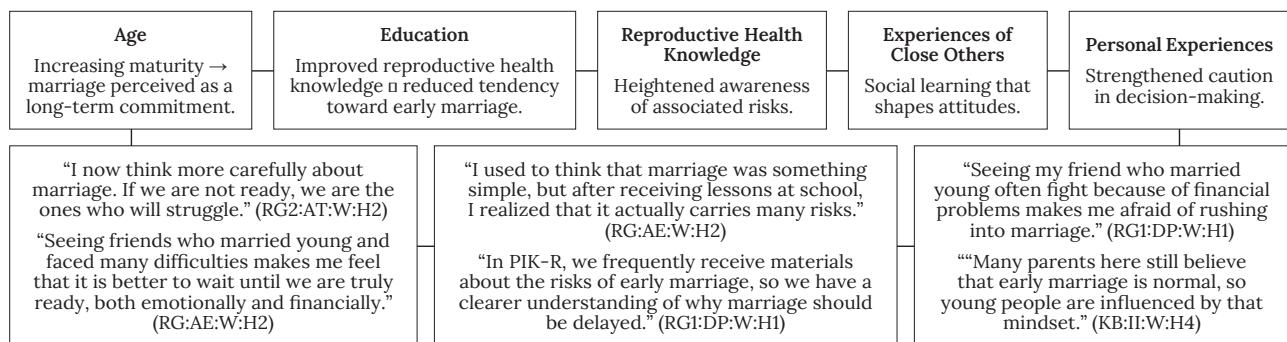


Figure 5. Internal Factors
Source: Research data processed (2025).

Age, education, and personal experience influence adolescents' perceptions of marriage. Older adolescents tend to perceive marriage as a long-term commitment requiring emotional and financial readiness rather than a mere expression of affection. However, as Kidman et al. (2024) noted, age alone does not sufficiently explain variations in adolescents' perceptions of early marriage, indicating that knowledge and peer influence play more decisive roles in shaping these views.

Educational attainment remains the most significant determinant in adolescents' awareness of the consequences of early marriage. Adolescents with higher levels of education are generally more informed about reproductive health and demonstrate greater critical thinking when making life decisions. Azmi et al. (2023) found that early marriage is more prevalent among individuals with lower educational backgrounds, particularly elementary school graduates. Consistent with this, Peni et al. (2023) observed that educational interventions enhancing reproductive health literacy contribute to reducing early marriage rates. These findings emphasize that education broadens adolescents' knowledge and strengthens their capacity for informed decision-making regarding marriage.

Differences between adolescents involved and uninvolved in the Youth Information and Counseling Center (PIK-R) further highlight the importance of targeted education. Participants of PIK-R display higher levels of understanding about reproductive health and the risks of early marriage, suggesting that PIK-R effectively serves as a platform for internal capacity-building. In contrast, adolescents who are not engaged in PIK-R are more likely to rely on emotional factors or peer experiences, often without access to accurate information. This distinction underscores the role of structured peer-based education in shaping responsible attitudes toward marriage.

Personal experiences, either direct or vicarious, also play a critical role in influencing adolescents' attitudes. Those who have witnessed the adverse consequences of early marriage, such as domestic conflict or economic hardship, tend to adopt more cautious perspectives (Dewi et al., 2024; Hanifa, 2024). These experiences are powerful social learning mechanisms, reinforcing the importance of delaying marriage. Therefore, effective educational strategies should deliver factual information and incorporate emotional and experiential learning approaches. By contextualizing education within adolescents' lived realities, programs can foster deeper awareness and encourage rational decision-making consistent with the principles of the GenRe Program.

External Factors

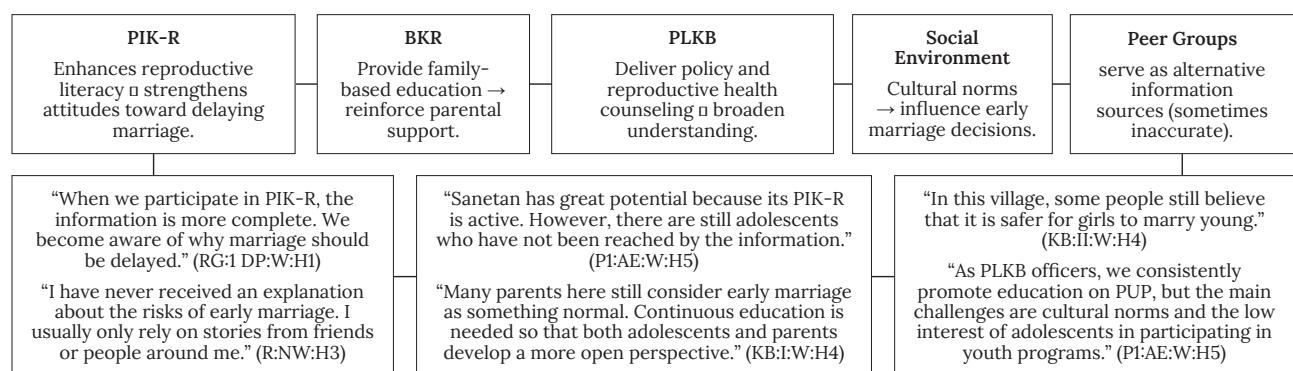


Figure 6. External Factors
Source: Research data processed (2025).

External factors such as family, peers, media, and local culture strongly shape adolescents' perceptions of early marriage. The family is the primary socializing agent in transmitting values and decision-making norms. When parents emphasize education and psychological maturity before marriage, adolescents tend to adopt similar attitudes and delay marriage decisions. However, persistent social expectations and traditional norms often hinder this process, especially in rural contexts where marriage is still perceived as a cultural milestone.

Peers also play a crucial role. Dwipayana et al. (2023) highlight that peer influence is one of the most dominant factors affecting adolescents' perceptions of early marriage. Adolescents surrounded by peers who value education and future planning are more likely to resist pressure from early marriage. In contrast, those in environments that tolerate premarital relationships or social stigma related to pregnancy may face higher risks.

Media exposure contributes both opportunities and challenges. Social media can promote awareness of early marriage risks, yet limited digital literacy often prevents adolescents from critically evaluating the information they receive (Wahyuni et al., 2025). In Sanetan Village, social pressure remains evident through repeated inqui-

ries such as “When will you get married?”, even though cultural values do not directly endorse early marriage. Adolescents engaged in PIK-R activities demonstrate greater resilience to these pressures, supported by consistent information from BKR and PLKB. Conversely, non-participants are more susceptible to social and peer influence due to limited access to educational reinforcement.

Therefore, effective educational interventions must target adolescents and involve families and community leaders. Strengthening family communication and peer-based education can transform local social norms and promote a shared understanding of the importance of delaying marriage until psychological and financial readiness is achieved.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that adolescents' perceptions of delayed marriage age (PUP) are primarily shaped by their participation in structured youth development programs, notably the Youth Information and Counseling Center (PIK-R). Active engagement in PIK-R enhances adolescents' comprehension of early marriage risks and strengthens their psychological, social, and financial readiness for marital life. Conversely, adolescents who lack access to such programs tend to adopt less informed perspectives, often influenced by entrenched cultural norms and social pressures.

The findings underscore the necessity of reinforcing the GenRe Program through community-based approaches, particularly in rural settings such as Sanetan Village. Legislative and institutional support from the House of Representatives (DPR RI), especially Commission IX, remains crucial to advancing PUP initiatives. Strengthening legal protection, expanding reproductive health education, and ensuring continuous monitoring and evaluation are strategic measures required to reduce early marriage prevalence effectively.

In conclusion, adolescents' perceptions of PUP reflect the intersection between cultural values and access to reliable information. Sustainable improvement demands coordinated and multi-sectoral efforts among policymakers, educators, and community stakeholders to promote adolescent well-being. By doing so, Indonesia can move closer to achieving a resilient, informed, and health-conscious young generation.

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