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## The Influence of Religious and Cultural Literacy on Early Marriage Tendencies and Contribution to Achieving the SDGs

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** This study aims to analyze the influence of religious and cultural literacy on the tendency toward early marriage among students at public high schools in Central Lombok. **Theoretical framework:** This research refers to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the concepts of religious literacy as proposed by Stephen Prothero and Diane L. Moore, cultural literacy as formulated by E. D. Hirsch, as well as early marriage as defined by UNICEF and BKKBN. These concepts are positioned as conceptual-theoretical frameworks for analyzing early marriage tendencies. **Literature review:** Previous studies have shown that early marriage is generally caused by many factors, including misinterpretation of religious teachings, cultural norms that support young marriage, economic pressure, and a lack of social control and reproductive awareness. However, little research has specifically reviewed the influence of religious and cultural literacy in that context. **Method:** This research uses a quantitative approach with an associative kind, 373 respondents selected using the cluster area sampling technique with a two-stage cluster. The data was analyzed using correlation analysis and simple linear regression. **Result:** The findings show that religious literacy significantly affects the tendency toward early marriage, with a contribution of 24.2% ( $Y = 68.729 - 0.460X_1$ ), while cultural literacy contributes 26% ( $Y = 67.277 - 0.448X_2$ ). The multiple regression equation  $Y = 71.896 - 0.237X_1 - 0.283X_2$  indicates that both religious and cultural literacy together explain 28.9% of the variation in early marriage tendencies. A negative correlation ( $r = -0.492$  and  $r = 0.510$ ) demonstrates that the higher the religious and cultural literacy, the lower the tendency toward early marriage. These findings emphasize that strengthening literacy in both domains effectively reduces early marriage rates by fostering critical understanding of religious teachings, constructive interpretation of cultural values, and rational decision-making among adolescents. **Implications:** This finding confirms the importance of integrating religious and cultural values education into the school curriculum and local policies to support the achievement of the SDGs (goals 3, 4, 5, and 8). **Novelty:** The novelty of this research lies in its focus on analyzing the influence of religious and cultural literacy, variables rarely studied in the context of the religious and cultural community of Central Lombok, and its relationship to the SDGs. This makes the results significant not only locally but also globally.

**Keywords:** religious literacy, cultural literacy, early marriage, students, sdgs.

## INTRODUCTION

Marriage in Islam is a sacred bond (*mitsaqan ghalīzan*) that not only connects two individuals but also unites two families in a bond that is religiously and legally valid [1]. Islam teaches that marriage must be based on physical, mental, and spiritual maturity to achieve the goal of forming a family that is *sakīnah, mawaddah, waraḥmah* [2]. Legally, Indonesia has established regulations governing the minimum age for marriage through Law Number 16 of 2019, which states that the minimum age for marriage is 19 years for both men and women [3]. This age determination is the result of a comprehensive study that considers various aspects such as biological, educational maturity, social, economic, and psychological [4]. Marriages performed before reaching that age limit are called early marriages.

In the context of the SDGs, early marriage is closely linked to several key goals. First, SDGs 3 (Good Health and Well-being), because early marriage increases the risk of pregnancy complications, maternal and infant mortality, and reproductive health problems [5]. Second, SDGs 4 (Quality Education), because many young women who marry early end up dropping out of school, limiting their opportunities for education and skills development [6]. Third, SDG 5s (Gender Equality), as this practice often reflects gender inequality and the subordination of women in family and social decisions [7]. Fourth, SDGs 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), because low levels of education and skills impact women's participation in productive work [8]. Thus, efforts to prevent early marriage through increased religious and cultural literacy become very important. A comprehensive understanding of religion and wise cultural values can foster awareness of the importance of education, health, and equality, thus directly supporting the achievement of the SDGs at both the local and national levels.

The phenomenon of early marriage in West Nusa Tenggara Province has shown fluctuations in recent years. The percentage of women married before the age of 18 was recorded at 16.59% in 2020, 16.23% in 2021, 16.61% in 2022, increasing to 17.32% in 2023, and sharply rising to 24.7% in 2024 [9]. Central Lombok Regency is one of the highest contributors with 41 cases from January to September 2022, a slight decrease from 42 cases at the end of 2021. Despite various prevention efforts, the practice of early marriage is still prevalent, especially among high school-aged adolescents. The Central Lombok Religious Court also recorded a surge in marriage dispensation applications from 33 cases in 2019 to 156 cases after the law was revised [10]. This shows that formal education alone is not yet effective enough to prevent early marriage.

The phenomenon of early marriage cannot be separated from various complex and interconnected factors, both culturally, technologically, socially, religiously, and parenting style [11]. As parents, we should apply the content of Al-Luqman verses 13-14 in terms of parenting [12]. Education must begin with the right parenting patterns as early as possible [13]. One of the main causes is the textual and partial interpretation of religious teachings, which is often used to justify child marriage [14]. For example, the concept of *Baligh* (puberty) in Islam is often narrowly understood as a sign of readiness for marriage, without considering aspects of psychological maturity, education, and social and economic readiness [15].

The hadith about Aisha RA's marriage to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, narrated by al-Bukhari (no. 3894) and Muslim (no. 1422), is often used as a basis for justifying early marriage. The hadith states that Aisha married at the age of six and lived with the Prophet at the age of nine. However, this literal understanding is considered to ignore the historical context. According to Muhammad Muhajir, the hadith was criticized from the perspectives of its chain of narrators (*sanad*) and its text (*matan*). Its main narrator, Hisham bin Urwah, was considered to have a weak memory in his old age, and Imam Malik did not narrate it, so its validity is doubted. Textually, the terms and age figures in the hadith are considered open to multiple interpretations, and transmission errors may occur. Based on historical

analysis, Aisha's age at marriage is estimated to be around 18–19 years old, not 6–9 years old. This indicates the need for a critical and contextual interpretation of the hadith [16]. Besides the hadith about Aisha RA's marriage, there are also hadiths narrated by al-Bukhari (no. 1905, 5065, 5066) and Muslim (no. 1905), which are often used as the basis for encouraging marriage. However, this hadith is addressed to *ash-shabab*, meaning young people who are physically and mentally mature. In the explanations of scholars such as an-Nawawi and Ibn al-Mulaqqin, the term *ash-shabab* encompasses the age after puberty until around 30–40 years old, depending on the context. This means that the recommendation to marry applies to those who are biologically, psychologically, and socially ready. In line with this, Al-Quran Surah An-Nur verse 32 emphasizes the importance of readiness and responsibility in marriage as a moral and social commitment, not merely the fulfillment of instinct. In addition, the Quran also emphasizes the importance of mental maturity and responsibility in preparing for marriage in Surah An-Nur, verse 32. The verse indicates that the primary condition for marriage in the Quran's view is not merely biological age, but psychological, social, and financial readiness. According to Quraish Shihab in Tafsir Al-Misbah, the word *ṣāliḥīn* in that verse contains an indication that prospective spouses must meet a number of non-material requirements before marriage. This is because marriage serves various functions: not only biological, sexual, and economic functions, but also religious, socio-cultural, educational, and protective functions. All of this demands thorough preparation; material readiness alone is not enough [17].

Deeply rooted cultural traditions, such as the practice of “*merariq*” (elopement) and stereotypical views of women who marry late, also contribute to the high rate of early marriage [18]. The “*merariq*” culture, known in Sasak society on Lombok as a form of “*elopement*” or “*symbolic kidnapping*” before marriage, is often used as a gateway to child marriage, especially when it is done without the full consent and understanding of the woman, who is often still a minor [19]. In some cases, this tradition is no longer purely understood as a form of cultural preservation but has undergone a functional distortion, where customary norms are used to justify the unequal power relations between men and women. Additionally, the stereotypical culture toward women who marry late, such as the belief that unmarried women in their late 20s are considered unmarketable or worthless, reinforces social pressure on women and their families to marry immediately, even before they are truly ready mentally, emotionally, or economically [19]. In societies that highly value family and women's honor, marriage is often used as an instrument to preserve dignity, even if it means sacrificing children's basic rights. Therefore, it is important to encourage critical cultural reinterpretation so that traditions are no longer tools of oppression, but rather means of empowerment and protection of children's rights, especially girls, with the main goal being to strengthen children's cultural literacy.

Early marriage has serious multidimensional impacts. From a reproductive health perspective, it shows that a high percentage of pregnant women in their teenage years experience pregnancy complications, and the maternal mortality rate in this age group is relatively higher than average [20]. Other health risks include anemia, premature birth, and stunting in the children born [21],[22]. Educationally, many early marriages result in school dropout. This creates a cycle of sustained poverty because low educational qualifications limit access to decent employment [23]. Other studies also show that early marriage has detrimental effects, both biologically and psychologically. Restapaty, Ratna, once researched efforts to prevent the increase in early marriage through local wisdom literacy in Selaparang Elementary Education. In his research, he views the high number of early marriages as being caused by a lack of child literacy, particularly regarding their local wisdom [24]. As for another study conducted by Sekarayu & Nurwati, which examined the impact of early marriage on reproductive health, it showed that several factors contribute to early marriage, such as low education levels, cultural norms that encourage early marriage, financial pressure, uncontrolled social interactions, and free sexual behavior that can lead to premarital pregnancy [25]. Meanwhile, Karlina et al. highlighted that in this decision-making process, internal aspects such as religiosity play an important role as a

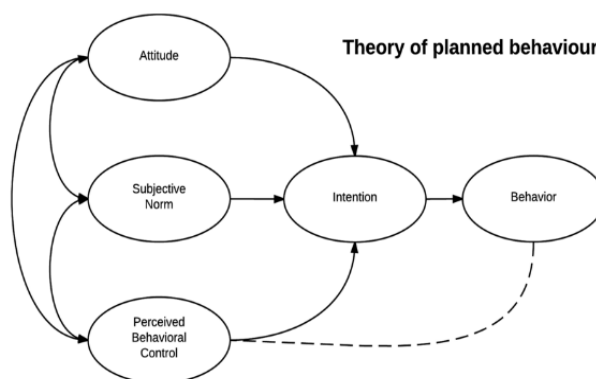
reinforcement for individuals who choose to get married at a young age [26]. Then, other factors that contribute to early marriage include low levels of education, cultural norms that encourage early marriage, financial pressure, uncontrolled social interactions, and free sexual behavior that can lead to premarital pregnancy and parenting style [27]-[28]. This finding is also consistent with the research by Puspasari & Prawitaningtyas, which found that reasons for early marriage include efforts to prevent free sexual behavior and out-of-wedlock pregnancies, economic factors, concerns about delayed marriage, and the influence of a socio-cultural environment that recognizes marriage at a young age [29].

The novelty of this research lies in the in-depth analysis of the influence of religious and cultural literacy on the tendency toward early marriage in Central Lombok, a variable that is still rarely studied in Indonesia. Focusing on understanding religious and cultural teachings within a unique local context, with high rates of early marriage, contributes academically while also providing an empirical basis for early marriage prevention strategies. This research also supports the achievement of the SDGs, particularly health and well-being (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), and inclusive economic growth (SDG 8), bridging local wisdom and global development goals. This study aims to analyze and examine the influence of religious literacy and cultural literacy on the tendency toward early marriage among students at public high schools in Central Lombok Regency. Specifically, this research explores the extent to which religious literacy influences students' views and behaviors regarding early marriage, and how cultural literacy contributes to understanding and practices related to this trend.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a psychological theory that explains the relationship between beliefs and behavior. TPB states that behavioral intention, as the main predictor of social behavior, is formed by three core components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. This theory was developed by Icek Ajzen as an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by adding the element of perceived behavioral control to improve the prediction of behavior [30]. TPB has been widely applied in various fields, including health, education, finance, communication, and sustainability. Here are the components of the Theory of Planned Behavior.



**Figure 1. Theory of Planned Behavior**

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/>

In the context of this research, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains that the tendency to marry early is influenced by students' behavioral intentions, which are shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Religious literacy plays a role in shaping more reflective and responsible attitudes toward marriage, as well as

strengthening self-control based on understanding religious values. Meanwhile, cultural literacy influences subjective norms by equipping students with the ability to understand and critique local cultural practices, such as the merarik tradition, so that they are not accepted without question. The combination of religious literacy and cultural literacy strengthens behavioral control and decision-making rationality, which ultimately reduces the likelihood of early marriage.

### **Religious Literacy**

According to Stephen Prothero and Diane L. Moore's concept of religious literacy, as cited in Pietro Marcus, religious literacy plays a significant role in shaping individuals' attitudes and behaviors toward various social issues [31]. Then Stephen Prothero and Diana Moore in Pietro Marcus and Ralph also emphasized that a good religious understanding not only includes memorizing doctrines, but also a deep understanding of the moral, ethical, and social values contained in religious teachings [32]. This understanding is reinforced by Abdullah Sahin, who emphasizes that the essence of religious literacy is not merely a technical ability to read sacred texts, but a deep understanding that encompasses the historical, social, and cultural context of each religious teaching [33].

The study by Barkah & Qodariah, "*The Manipulation of Religion and The Legalization of Underage Marriages in Indonesia*," reveals that the practice of early marriage is often perpetuated through the partial and textual use of verses from the Quran and Hadith. This manipulation of Islamic teachings is used to legitimize underage marriages without considering the health and well-being of the couple [34]. Meanwhile, the African Union study "*The Effects of Traditional and Religious Practices of Child Marriage on Africa's Socio-Economic Development*" shows that families with good religious literacy, including understanding Islam, do not encourage early marriage, but emphasize physical, mental, and financial maturity, as well as children's education, in accordance with the principles of maqashid syariah, to prevent harmful practices [35].

### **Culture Literacy**

Cultural literacy is the ability to understand, appreciate, and internalize the values, norms, and cultural expressions of a society, as well as to actively participate in their development [36]. According to E.D Hirsch, cultural literacy is a person's ability to understand and use cultural information and symbols prevalent in their society. Cultural literacy is not just about general knowledge of culture, but also includes the ability to critically and functionally interpret cultural meaning in everyday life [37].

Yudha Bawono's research shows that culture in some areas still encourages early marriage, such as in Tana Toraja and Madura, where young marriage is considered a social norm and ancestral heritage [38]. Meanwhile, Ida Ayu Nyoman Saskara (2018) explains that in Sasak society, the tradition of *merariq* (elopement) often leads to early marriage because the eloped girl must be married immediately without considering the consent and readiness of the female party [39].

The tradition of *merariq* or eloping in Central Lombok Regency is a unique Sasak cultural practice that is still carried out today. This tradition goes through a process of customs rich in meaning and rules, starting from the agreement of both parties to the family discussion and determination of the dowry after the couple is found [40],[41]. While reflecting the freedom to choose a partner without being bound by rigid social structures, dating also presents challenges in social acceptance and relationship sustainability [42].

### **Early Marriage**

Early marriage refers to the practice of marriage occurring at a very young age, where most of the couples are still below a certain age limit set by official institutions, such as the

National Family Planning Coordinating Board (BKKBN), and is legally regulated by Marriage Law No. 16 of 2019 [43]. The age limit for this early marriage is under 19 for women and men.

According to UNICEF, in Gunawan and Bahri, child marriage is a violation of children's rights because it hinders access to education, health, and social protection. Children who marry early are at higher risk of experiencing domestic violence, early pregnancy, and intergenerational poverty [44]. UNICEF emphasizes the importance of education-based, policy-driven, and adolescent empowerment interventions to curb early marriage rates.

### **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global development agenda established by the United Nations in 2015 as a continuation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They contain 17 goals and 169 targets to achieve human well-being, social justice, and environmental sustainability by 2030 [45]. The SDGs emphasize a holistic approach that includes dimensions of education, health, gender equality, and sustainable economic growth [46].

In the context of this research title, the SDGs are clearly evident through their contribution to several key goals, namely SDGs 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDGs 4 (Quality Education), and SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), and indirectly support SDGs 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Increased religious and cultural literacy can reduce early marriage, which has negative impacts on the health and psychological well-being of adolescents, supporting the achievement of SDGs 3. Correct understanding also fosters awareness of the importance of education (SDGs 4), strengthens gender equality by eroding discriminatory interpretations and norms (SDGs 5), and opens up educational and skills opportunities for women to support sustainable economic growth (SDGs 8).

### **METHODOLOGY**

This research was conducted using a quantitative method, which emphasizes the use of numerical data and statistical analysis techniques to address the formulated problems and test the predetermined hypotheses [47]. The type of approach used in this research is an associative approach, which aims to determine the relationship or influence between two or more variables [48]. This approach aims to understand the extent to which one variable affects another, both directly and indirectly. The population in this study consists of all public high school students in Central Lombok Regency, totaling approximately 13,000 students. To determine the sample size, the researcher used the cluster area sampling technique with a two-stage cluster sampling approach, which is a sampling method conducted through two stages of regional (cluster) grouping to obtain a sample that is more representative of the population efficiently. Based on calculations using the Isaaq and Michael formula with an error rate of 5%, a sample size of 373 respondents was obtained, distributed proportionally across all public high schools in Central Lombok Regency. Here is the classification of respondents by gender, school, and class.

## Gender Classification

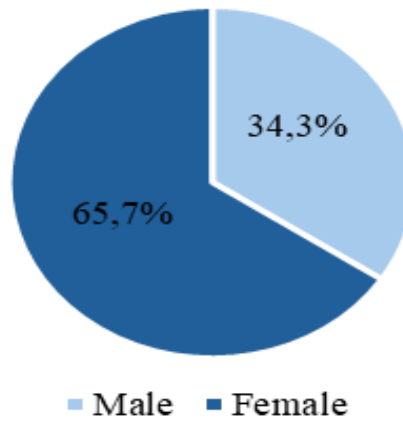


Figure 2. Gender Classification

Based on the figure above, it is known that the number of male respondents is 34.3%, or equivalent to 128 out of the total data. It is also known that the number of female respondents is 65.7%, or equivalent to 245 out of the total data. Here is the school classification used in this study.

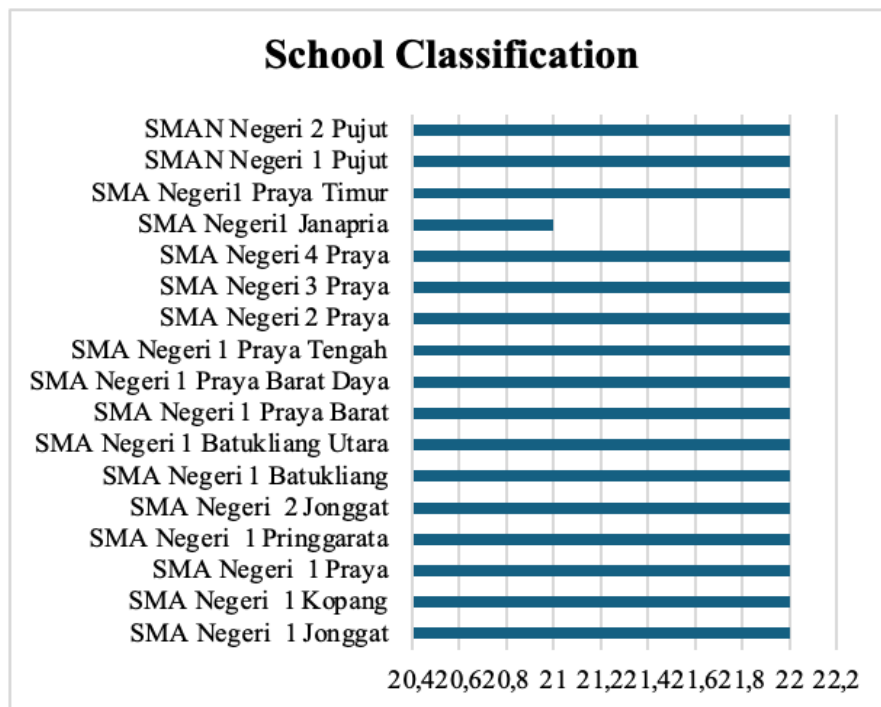
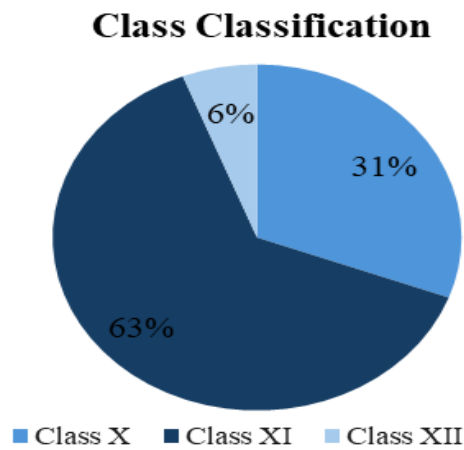


Figure 3. School Classification

This relatively even distribution of respondents reflects that the research was conducted proportionally across each school, so the results obtained can be considered representative of the overall condition of public high schools in the area. With almost equal representation, this data serves as a strong foundation for analyzing subsequent research findings, particularly in understanding respondent characteristics based on their educational institution background. Here is the class classification in this study.



**Figure 4. Class Classification**

Based on the image, the class classification of the respondents in this study consists of three grade levels: X, XI, and XII. Out of a total of 373 students, 114 students (30.5%) are from class X, 236 students (63.6%) are from class XI, and 22 students (5.9%) are from class XII. This percentage indicates that the majority of respondents are class XI students. The main research instrument for this study is a questionnaire to measure religious literacy, cultural literacy, and the tendency toward early marriage. The data were analyzed through several stages: basic and classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity), autocorrelation test, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and hypothesis testing to determine the influence of religious and cultural literacy on the tendency for early marriage among high school students in Central Lombok. In the second stage, after the research results are obtained, the findings regarding the influence of religious and cultural literacy will be linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). If proven to have a significant impact, these results can contribute to SDGs 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDGs 4 (Quality Education), and SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), and indirectly support SDGs 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Thus, this research is expected to have not only local relevance but also global significance in supporting the sustainable development agenda.

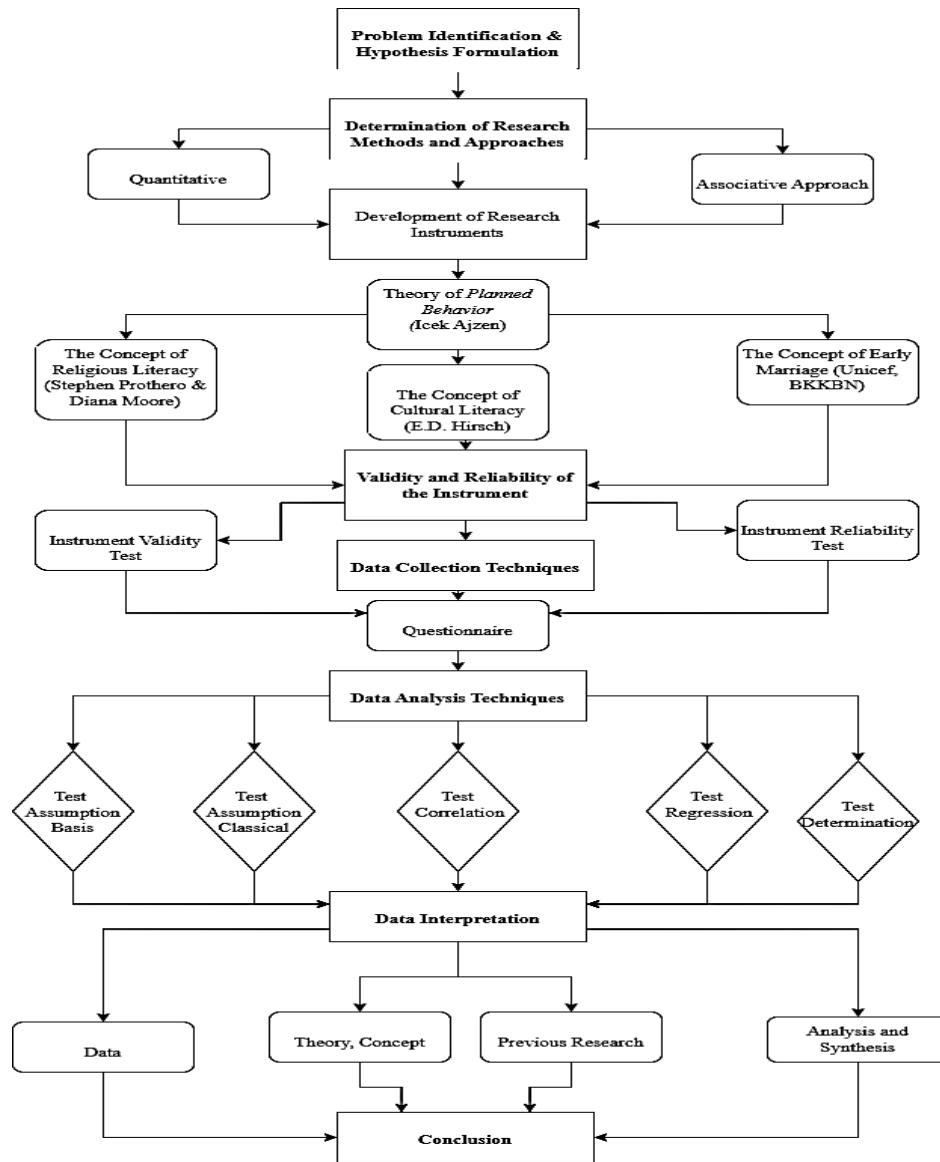


Figure 5. Research Process Flow

In the process of conducting this research, the researcher pays great attention to ethical considerations. Before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher ensures that each participant is given a clear explanation of the research objectives and that their participation is voluntary. The researcher also guarantees the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents' data and does not use the information provided for purposes other than this research. In addition, official approval from the school where the research was conducted was also obtained, as a form of respect for the educational institution and the students involved. Thus, the entire research process is conducted in accordance with the principles of academic ethics and professionalism.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Influence of Religious Literacy on the Tendency of Early Marriage Among Public High School Students in Central Lombok Regency

#### Basic Assumption Test

Normality, homogeneity, and linearity tests were conducted on the data for variable X1 (religious literacy) against Y (tendency toward early marriage) using the SPSS application.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results showed a significance value of 0.276 ( $>0.05$ ), indicating that the data were normally distributed. The homogeneity test using the Independent Sample Test yielded a value of 0.295 ( $>0.05$ ), indicating that the data were homogeneous. The linearity test through SPSS showed a Deviation from Linearity value of 0.814 ( $>0.05$ ), indicating a linear relationship between X1 and Y.

#### Classic Assumption Test

Heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation tests were conducted to ensure that the classical regression assumptions were met. The results of the heteroskedasticity test using SPSS show a significance value of 0.075 ( $>0.05$ ), indicating that there is no heteroskedasticity between variables X1 and Y. The autocorrelation test using the Cochrane-Orcutt method yields a Durbin-Watson value of 1.948, which falls within the range  $DU < DW < 4-DU$  ( $1.836 < 1.948 < 2.164$ ), indicating no autocorrelation in the data of X1 against Y.

#### Correlation Analysis Test

**Table 1. Results of the correlation test of X1 on Y**

Correlations			
		Variabel X1	Variabel Y
Variabel X1	Pearson Correlation		-.492**
	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	373	373
Variabel Y	Pearson Correlation	-.492**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	373	373

**\*\*.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Data source: SPSS data processing results

The results of the Pearson correlation test showed a value of -0.492 with a significance of 0.000 ( $<0.05$ ), so  $H_a$  was accepted, and  $H_0$  was rejected. This means there is a significant relationship between religious literacy (X1) and the tendency toward early marriage (Y). The negative correlation coefficient indicates that the higher the religious literacy, the lower the tendency toward early marriage, with a moderate strength of relationship.

#### Simple Regression Analysis Test

**Table 2. Regression Analysis X1 on Y**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	68.729	2.592		26.515	.000
	X1	-.460	.042	-.492	-10.897	.000

**a. Dependent Variable: Y**

Data source: SPSS data processing results

Based on Table 2 above, the result from the simple regression equation formula  $Y = 68.729 - 0.460 X_1$ . Based on the above equation, it can be concluded that if the value of

religious literacy (X1) is 0, the predicted value of the tendency for early marriage (Y) is 68.729. The negative regression coefficient indicates that for every 1-unit increase in religious literacy, the score for the tendency for early marriage will decrease by 0.460.

### Hypothesis Testing

#### Partial Hypothesis Test (t-test)

**Table 3. Coefficients X1 on Y**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	68.729	2.592		26.515	.000
	X1	-.460	.042	-.492	-10.897	.000

**a. Dependent Variable: Y**

Data source: SPSS data processing results

Based on Table 3, it is known that the calculated t-value is -10.897 and the t-table value is 1.649, which was calculated based on degrees of freedom (df) = 373 – 1 = 372 with a significance level of 5% (0.05). Since the calculated t-value is greater than the t-table value (-10.897 > 1.649), according to the decision-making criteria, H<sub>0</sub> is rejected, and H<sub>1</sub> is accepted. This means that variable X1 (Religious Literacy) significantly influences variable Y (Early Marriage Tendency). The negative sign on the t-statistic and regression coefficient indicates that this influence is negative, meaning the higher the religious literacy, the lower the tendency for early marriage.

#### Determination test( R2)

**Table 4. Determination Test X1 on Y**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.492 <sup>a</sup>	.242	.240	5,474

**a. Predictors: (Constant), VariabelX1**

Data source: SPSS data processing results

Based on Table 4 above, the R Square or R2 value of variable X1 on variable Y is 0.242. This value means that the contribution of the influence of variable X1 (religious literacy) on variable Y (tendency for early marriage) is 24,2 %, and the remaining 75,8% is influenced by other factors. Meanwhile, the R value of 0.492 means that the level of religious literacy with the tendency for early marriage among high school students in Lombok Tengah Regency is in the strong enough category.

### Discussion

This research was conducted at public high schools in Central Lombok Regency, with a population of 13,000 students, based on information from H. Wildan (Principal of SMAN 2 Pujut). The sample was taken using cluster area sampling with a two-stage cluster approach, totaling 373 students from 17 schools, based on calculations using the Isaac and Michael formula with an error rate of 5%. The sample consisted of 128 boys and 245 girls. The sample is divided by grade level: 114 students in 10th grade, 236 students in 11th grade,

and 22 students in 12th grade. The research variables include X1 (religious literacy), X2 (cultural literacy), and Y (tendency toward early marriage). The majority of students have low levels of religious literacy (42.9%), low cultural literacy (42.4%), and a low tendency toward early marriage (38.9%). The following is a visualization of the variable categories.

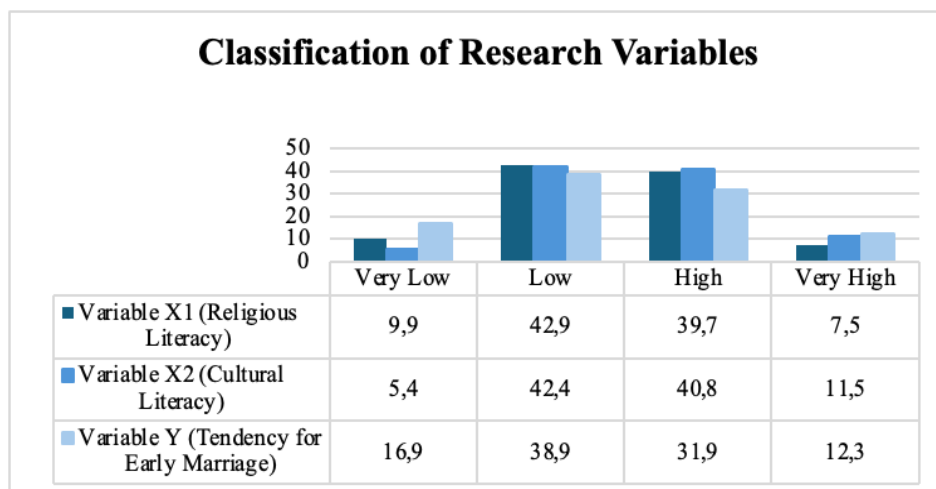


Figure 6. Classification of Research Variable Level

Analysis shows that religious literacy (X1) is significantly related to the tendency toward early marriage (Y), with a significance value of 0.000 ( $<0.005$ ) and a correlation coefficient of 0.492, which falls into the moderately strong category. The regression equation  $Y = 68.729 - 0.460 X1$  indicates that every 1-unit increase in religious literacy decreases the early marriage tendency score by 0.460. The t-test also showed a significant effect with a t-statistic of  $-10.897 > t\text{-table of } 1.649$ , indicating that religious literacy has a negative influence on the tendency toward early marriage: the higher the religious literacy, the lower the tendency toward early marriage.

As for the magnitude of the influence of religious literacy on early marriage, it is indicated by an R-squared value of 0.242. This value means that Variable X1 (religious literacy) contributes 24.2% to Variable Y (early marriage tendency), with the remaining 75.8% influenced by other factors. Other factors influencing early marriage are economic factors and educational factors [49]–[50], parenting style [51]–[52], factors of out-of-wedlock pregnancy [53]–[54], free association [55]–[56], Social media factors [57]–[58], financial literacy factors [59]–[60] and cultural factors [61]–[62].

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains that individual behavior, including the tendency to marry, is influenced by behavioral intention, which is formed by three main components: attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of this research, religiosity as reflected through religious literacy plays a role in shaping more reflective and responsible attitudes toward marriage, influencing students' beliefs about social norms, and strengthening self-control in decision-making, thereby reducing the tendency to marry early.

The results of this study are consistent with Pamessang, who found that Islamic religious education contributes to delaying early marriage and enhancing educational awareness [63]. Similarly, Pohan (2024) emphasized that school-based religious education strategies integrating spiritual and biological aspects are effective in preventing early marriage. These findings align with Prothero and Moore's perspective (as cited in Marcus) that strong religious literacy fosters mature, reflective, and responsible attitudes, including in decisions related to marriage.

Based on the Theory of *Planned Behavior* (TPB), religious literacy shapes students' attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral control toward early marriage. In Prothero's view, religious literacy emphasizes a rational understanding of religious teachings, while

Moore emphasizes understanding religion within a social and cultural context. The integration of these two dimensions fosters a reflective attitude and responsible decision-making, thereby reducing the likelihood of early marriage, although other social and economic factors still need to be supported.

### The Influence of Cultural Literacy on the Tendency of Early Marriage Among Public High School Students in Central Lombok Regency

#### Basic Assumption Test

Based on 373 respondents in Central Lombok, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test for variable X2 against Y showed a significance value of 0.537 ( $>0.05$ ), indicating that the data is normally distributed. The homogeneity test in this study was obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to 373 students as respondents. Using the basic assumption that if the Sig value is greater than 0.05, then the population variance and sample data are considered similar or homogeneous. However, the output of the Independent Samples t-test also includes an estimated t-statistic that is not based on the assumption of equal population variances. This alternative statistic, called the Welch's t-test statistic, can be used when equal variances between the populations cannot be assumed [64],[65]. The Welch t-test is a parametric test specifically designed for cases of variance heterogeneity and unequal group size [66]. The result of the homogeneity test of variable X2 on variable Y can be seen through the Independent Sample Test, which shows a value of 0,024 smaller than 0,05. This indicates that the variances of the two groups are significantly different (heterogeneity of variance), thus the assumption of equal variances is not met. Therefore, the Independent Samples t-test calculation was performed using the Equal variances not assumed row with the Welch's t-test. The SPSS calculation results show a t-value of 38.138 with  $df=731.741$  and a Sig. (2-tailed) value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the averages of the two groups. The linearity test showed a Deviation from Linearity of 0.325 ( $>0.05$ ), indicating a linear relationship between X2 and Y.

#### Classic Assumption Test

The heteroskedasticity test between variables X2 and Y shows a significance value of 0.806 ( $>0.05$ ), indicating no heteroskedasticity. The autocorrelation test using the Cochran-Orcutt method yields a Durbin-Watson value of 1.985, which falls within the range  $DU < DW < 4-DU$  ( $1.836 < 1.985 < 2.164$ ), indicating that the X2 data against Y does not exhibit autocorrelation.

#### Test of Correlation

**Table 5. Correlation Test X2 on Y**

Correlations			
		Variabel Y	Variabel X2
Variabel Y	Pearson Correlation	1	-.510**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	373	373
Variabel X2	Pearson Correlation	-.510**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	373	373

**\*\*.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Data source: SPSS data processing results*

The results of the Pearson correlation test show a significant relationship between X2 and Y with a coefficient of -0.510 and a significance of 0.000 (<0.005), thus H<sub>a</sub> is accepted, and H<sub>0</sub> is rejected. The negative value indicates that the higher X2, the greater the tendency of Y to decrease, with a moderately strong relationship.

Simple Regression Analysis Test

**Table 6 Regression Analysis X2 on Y**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	67.277	2.347		28.659	.000
	Variabel X2	-.448	.039	-.510	-11.424	.000

**a. Dependent Variable: Y**

Data source: SPSS data processing results

Based on Table 6 above, the result from the simple regression is  $Y = 67.277 - 0.448X_2$ . The constant value (a) of 67.277 indicates that if variable X2 is 0, the predicted value of variable Y is 67.277. The regression coefficient (b) value of -0.448 indicates that for every one-unit increase in variable X2, there will be a 0.448-unit decrease in variable Y.

Hypothesis Testing

(Partial Hypothesis Test (t-test))

**Table 7. Coefficient of X2 on Y**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	67.277	2.347		28.659	.000
	Variabel X2	-.448	.039	-.510	-11.424	.000

**a. Dependent Variable: Y**

Data source: SPSS data processing results

Based on the information presented in Table 7, thitung was obtained with a value of -11,424, and the specified t-table value is based on  $df=373-1$ , which results in  $df=372$ , so the t-table value at a significance level of 0.05 or 5% is 1.649. Therefore, the calculated t-value of -11,424 is higher than the t-table value of only 1.649. Therefore, considering the basis for decision-making, it can be concluded that variable X2 has an impact on variable Y. The regression coefficient of -0.448 indicates a negative relationship direction, meaning that for every one-unit increase in X2, Y will decrease by 0.448 units, and vice versa.

Determination Test( R2)

**Table 8 Determination Test X2 on Y**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,510 <sup>a</sup>	,260	,258	5,409
a. Predictors: (Constant), Variable X <sub>2</sub>				

*Data source: SPSS data processing results*

Based on the information from Table 4.8, the R Square or R<sup>2</sup> value for variable X<sub>2</sub> on variable Y is 0.260. This figure indicates that the contribution of Variable X<sub>2</sub> (cultural literacy) to Variable Y (tendency for early marriage) is 26%, while the remaining 74% is influenced by other factors. On the other hand, the R value of 0.510 indicates that the relationship between cultural literacy and the tendency for early marriage among high school students in Lombok Tengah Regency is classified as fairly strong.

## Discussion

For variable X<sub>2</sub>, the majority of students showed a low level of cultural literacy, with a percentage of 42.4%. Meanwhile, for variable Y, the tendency for early marriage was mostly in the low category, at 38.9%. Based on the analysis of the sample data, it was found that there is a relationship between religious literacy and the tendency for early marriage, as indicated by a significance value (PValue) < 0.005, specifically 0.000 < 0.005. This relationship is considered quite strong, with a correlation coefficient value of -0.510. The relationship between variable X<sub>2</sub> and Y is also reflected in the regression equation obtained, which is  $Y = 67.277 - 0.448X_2$ . In this equation, the constant value (a) of 67.277 indicates that if variable X<sub>2</sub> is 0, the predicted value of variable Y is 67.277. The regression coefficient value (b) of -0.448 indicates that for every one-unit increase in variable X<sub>2</sub>, there will be a decrease in variable Y of 0.448 units.

Additionally, cultural literacy also has a significant influence on the prevalence of early marriage. This is indicated by the obtained t-value, which reached -11.424, and the determined t-table value, which is based on  $df=373-2$ , resulting in  $df=371$ , so the t-table value at a significance level of 0.05 or 5% is 1.649. Therefore, the t-value of 11.424 is higher than the t-table value of only 1.649. The magnitude of the influence of cultural literacy on the tendency for early marriage is indicated by the R Square or R<sup>2</sup> for variable X<sub>2</sub> against variable Y, which is 0.260. This figure indicates that the contribution of Variable X<sub>2</sub> (cultural literacy) to Variable Y (early marriage tendency) is 26%, while the remaining 74% is influenced by other factors. On the other hand, the R value of 0.510 indicates that the relationship between cultural literacy and the tendency toward early marriage among students at State High Schools in Central Lombok Regency is categorized as quite strong, with the remainder influenced by other variables outside this study, such as economic factors [67],[68], educational factors, parenting style [69], factors of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, free association, social media factors, financial literacy factors and religious literacy factors [70]-[71].

The research results indicate a negative correlation between cultural literacy and the tendency toward early marriage among students at State Senior High Schools in Central Lombok Regency. This is indicated by a coefficient value of -0.448, which means that if the coefficient value for cultural literacy increases by 1, the coefficient value for the trend of early marriage decreases by 0.448. Every increase in the value of cultural literacy will be followed by a decrease in the trend of early marriage, and the negative value shown means that the higher a person's level of cultural literacy, the lower their tendency for early marriage. Conversely, the lower a person's level of cultural literacy, the greater their tendency for early marriage.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains that the tendency to marry early is shaped by behavioral intentions influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains that the tendency to marry early is shaped by behavioral intentions influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of Lombok culture, the *merarik* tradition plays a strong role as a subjective norm that pressures individuals to marry early in the name of custom and family honor. Low cultural literacy leads students to uncritically accept the practice of *merarik*, thus reinforcing a permissive attitude toward early marriage and weakening self-control. Conversely, good cultural literacy allows students to rationally understand, assess, and reflect on the marital tradition, enabling them to distinguish between cultural values worthy of preservation and practices that need evaluation, ultimately reducing the tendency to marry early. ap, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control

This finding aligns with the research by Ida Ayu Nyoman Saskara (2018), which states that the practice of early marriage in the Sasak community is influenced by cultural values, particularly the tradition of *merariq* (elopement), where a girl is kidnapped and forced into marriage. A lack of cultural understanding makes this practice run uncritically. High cultural literacy helps students understand, critique, and respond wisely to cultural values, distinguishing between noble values that need to be preserved and traditional practices that need to be evaluated.

This is also supported by Yudho Buwono et al., who found in Tana Toraja and Madura that there is a culture of marrying off children early because they are considered to be adults or as ancestral heritage. Research by Budiyan Arini, Mustamin Mustamin, and Muhammad Aprian Jailani shows that preventing early marriage through collaboration between village governments, community leaders, religious figures, and educational institutions is effective, although cultural challenges such as *merarik*, low education levels, minimal community participation, and premarital pregnancies still hinder the program [72].

The relevance of these findings suggests that low cultural literacy is one of the causes of high rates of early marriage. Adolescents who are unable to understand and critique local culture are vulnerable to social pressure and impulsive decisions. Therefore, cultural literacy is important for social decision-making related to children's rights, in addition to formal legal and policy aspects.

This research is also aligned with E.D. Hirsch's concept of cultural literacy, which emphasizes an individual's ability to critically and functionally understand and use cultural information and symbols. Good cultural literacy allows adolescents to critically evaluate traditions like *merarik*, distinguishing between values that need to be preserved and practices that need to be reexamined, which is relevant to the condition of adolescents in Central Lombok who are exposed to local culture but are not yet fully able to critically assess cultural values.

The research findings confirm that cultural literacy has a negative and significant influence on the tendency toward early marriage among high school students in Central Lombok. Low cultural literacy makes students more likely to uncritically accept early marriage practices, especially the *merarik* tradition as binding social norms. Within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), attractiveness serves as a strong subjective norm, while low cultural literacy weakens students' critical attitudes and behavioral control in decision-making. Conversely, increased cultural literacy strengthens students' ability to rationally understand, evaluate, and reflect on traditions, enabling them to distinguish between cultural values that need to be preserved and practices that need to be evaluated. These findings align with E.D. Hirsch's concept of cultural literacy and various empirical studies, which confirm that strengthening cultural literacy is a strategic factor in reducing the tendency toward early marriage, although it still needs to be integrated with broader social, educational, and policy interventions.

## The Influence of Religious Literacy and Cultural Literacy on the Tendency Toward Early Marriage Among State High School Students in Central Lombok Regency

### Basic Assumption Test

The normality test results using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method showed a significance value of 0.337 ( $> 0.05$ ), indicating that the data for variables X1 and X2 against Y are normally distributed. The homogeneity test with 373 respondents yielded a Sig. Value of 0.077 ( $> 0.05$ ), indicating that the data is homogeneous. The linearity test showed a Deviation from Linearity value for X1 against Y of 0.814 and for X2 against Y of 0.325 ( $> 0.05$ ), indicating a linear relationship between the variables.

### Classic Assumption Test

The results of the multicollinearity test show a Tolerance value of 0.448 ( $> 0.10$ ) and a VIF of 2.232 ( $< 10$ ), indicating no multicollinearity between the independent variables. The heteroscedasticity test using the Glejser method shows significance values of 0.253 for X1 and 0.995 for X2 ( $> 0.05$ ), which means the regression model is free from heteroscedasticity and has a constant residual variance (homoscedastic).

### Autocorrelation Test

**Table 9. Autocorrelation test of X1 and X2 on Y**

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,538 <sup>a</sup>	,289	,285	5,311	1,974
<b>a. Predictors: (Constant), Variabel X<sub>1</sub>, Variabel X<sub>2</sub></b>					
<b>b. Dependent Variable: Variabel Y</b>					

*Data source: SPSS data processing results*

Based on the table, it is known that the decision of no autocorrelation is  $DU < DW < 4 - DU$ . The results of the autocorrelation test and calculation show  $1.847 < 1.974 < 2.153$ . This indicates that the data for X1 and X2 against Y does not show autocorrelation.

### Correlation Analysis Test

**Table 10. Correlation Test of X1 and X2 on Y**

Correlations				
		Variabel Y	Variabel X2	Variabel X1
<b>Variabel Y</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	-.510**	-.492**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	373	373	373
<b>Variabel X2</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.510**	1	.743**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	373	373	373
<b>Variabel X1</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.492**	.743**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	373	373	373
<b>**.</b> Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Data source: SPSS data processing results

Based on the results of the Spearman correlation test (Table 4.35), the significance values for X1–Y were 0.000 with a coefficient of -0.492, and for X2–Y were 0.000 with a coefficient of -0.510 ( $< 0.05$ ), indicating a negative relationship with moderate strength. The correlation between X1 and X2 was 0.743 ( $< 0.80$ ), indicating a strong but still acceptable relationship. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between X1 and X2 and Y, so  $H_a$  is accepted, and  $H_0$  is rejected.

Multiple Regression Analysis Test

**Table 11. Regression Analysis of X1 and X2 on variable Y**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	71.896	2.596		27.696	.000
	X2	-.283	.057	-.322	-4.918	.000
	X1	-.237	.061	-.253	-3.866	.000

**a. Dependent Variable: Y**

Sumber data: Hasil olah data SPSS

Based on Table 4.36, the multiple regression equation obtained is:  $Y = 71.896 - 0.237X1 - 0.283X2$ . The constant value indicates that when X1 and X2 = 0, then Y = 71.896. The regression coefficients for X1 (-0.237) and X2 (-0.283) indicate that an increase in religious and cultural literacy reduces the likelihood of early marriage. The significance values for both ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) indicate a negative and significant effect, both partially and simultaneously.

Hypothesis Testing

- Simultaneous Hypothesis Test (F-test)

**Table 12. F-test for Variables X1 and X2 on Y**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4240.106	2	2120.053	75.175	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	10434.586	370	28.202		
	Total	14674.692	372			

**a. Dependent Variable: Y**

**b. Predictors: (Constant), X2, X1**

Data source: SPSS data processing results

Based on the results of the ANOVA test (Table 4.37), it was found that  $F_{hitung} = 75.175 > F_{tabel} = 3.02$  with  $Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05$ , so the regression model is declared significant. This means that variables X1 (religious literacy) and X2 (cultural literacy) simultaneously have a significant effect on variable Y (tendency toward early marriage), and the regression model is suitable for further analysis.

b. Partial Hypothesis Test (t-test)

**Table 13. Coefficients X1 and X2 on variable Y**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	71.896	2.596		27.696	.000
	X2	-.283	.057	-.322	-4.918	.000
	X1	-.237	.061	-.253	-3.866	.000

**a. Dependent Variable: Y**

Data source: SPSS data processing results

Based on Table 4.38, the calculated t-values for X1 and X2 are -3.866 and -4.918, respectively, both of which are greater than the table t-value of 1.649, with a negative regression direction. This means that the higher the religious and cultural literacy, the lower the tendency for early marriage. The Beta X2 value of -0.322 is greater than the Beta X1 value of -0.253, indicating that cultural literacy has a more dominant influence in reducing the tendency for early marriage.

Determination Test (R2)

**Table 14. Test of Determination of X1 and X2 on Y**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.538 <sup>a</sup>	.289	.285	5,311

**a. Predictors: (Constant), VariabelX2, VariabelX1**

Data source: SPSS data processing results

Based on Table 4.39, the R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.289 indicates that religious literacy (X1) and cultural literacy (X2) contribute 28.9% to the tendency for early marriage, while 71.1% is influenced by other factors. The R value of 0.538 indicates a moderately strong relationship between the two.

## Discussion

This study involves three variables: X1 (religious literacy), X2 (cultural literacy), and Y (early marriage tendency). The analysis results show a significant relationship between X1 and X2 and Y, with a Sig. Value of 0.000 and correlation coefficients of -0.492 and -0.510, respectively. This indicates a negative relationship of moderate strength: the higher the literacy, the lower the tendency for early marriage.

The regression equation obtained is  $Y = 71.896 - 0.237X1 - 0.283X2$ , which indicates that an increase in religious and cultural literacy reduces the tendency for early marriage. The results of the simultaneous test show that  $F_{hitung} = 75.175 > F_{tabel} = 3.02$  (Sig. = 0.000), and the partial test shows that  $t_{hitung} X1 = -3.866$  and  $t_{hitung} X2 = -4.918 > t_{tabel} = 1.649$ , indicating that both have a significant effect. An R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.289 means that religious and cultural literacy contributes 28.9% to the tendency for early marriage, while 71.1% is influenced by other factors. Among them are economic factors, educational

factors, parenting style, Factors of wedlock pregnancy, free association, Social media factors, and financial literacy factors.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains that individual behavior is primarily determined by behavioral intention, which is shaped by three main components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. In this study, religious literacy influences students' attitudes by fostering a more contextual, reflective, and responsible understanding of marriage. Cultural literacy plays a role in shaping subjective norms by enabling students to critically assess social expectations and traditions related to early marriage. Both forms of literacy also strengthen perceived behavioral control by increasing students' self-confidence and self-regulation skills in dealing with social and cultural pressure to marry early. Thus, the higher the level of religious and cultural literacy, the lower the students' behavioral intention to engage in early marriage.

The findings of this study are consistent with the study by Nova Arikhman, Tri Meva Efendi, and Gusliani Eka Putri, which states that one of the main causes of early marriage is the misinterpretation of religious teachings due to low religious literacy. Local culture also plays a significant role, such as the tradition of arranged marriages, concerns about free association, and the view that women do not need to pursue higher education [73]. Hanapi and Fitri's research also supports these findings, showing that religious motivation is often cited as the main reason for early marriage, as a way to prevent adultery, even tho it may not be appropriate for adolescents' psychological readiness. Culturally, many communities still view child marriage as a way to preserve family honor and status, so children's rights to determine their future are often neglected [74].

The views of Stephen Prothero and Diana Moore in JC Wolfart (2022) emphasize the importance of religious literacy for understanding religious teachings contextually, rather than solely textually. This low literacy rate leads some people to misinterpret early marriage as a moral obligation [75]. Meanwhile, according to E.D. Hirsch, cultural literacy helps individuals think critically about local values and traditions so they are not accepted uncritically. Thus, increasing religious and cultural literacy becomes key in preventing early marriage. Both formed a society that is more critical, reflective, and adaptable to social change, making it less likely to fall into traditional practices that are detrimental to the future of young generations.

The research results indicate that religious literacy and cultural literacy have a negative and significant influence on the tendency toward early marriage among students at public high schools in Central Lombok Regency. The higher these two literacies, the lower the tendency for early marriage, because students are more capable of critically and contextually understanding religious teachings and cultural values. With a contribution of 28.9%, strengthening religious and cultural literacy can be positioned as an important educational strategy in preventing early marriage.

Overall, this research indicates that religious and cultural literacy play a significant role in reducing the likelihood of early marriage by fostering more reflective attitudes, critical social norms, and stronger self-control, as explained by the Theory of Planned Behavior. Contextual understanding of religion and the ability to critically evaluate culture prevent students from uncritically accepting early marriage practices. With a contribution of 28.9%, strengthening religious and cultural literacy can be positioned as an effective educational strategy in preventing early marriage among adolescents.

### **The Contribution of Religious and Cultural Literacy to Achieving the SDGs through Reducing the Tendency for Early Marriage**

Strengthening religious and cultural literacy plays a strategic role in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the context of preventing early marriage. Through an educational, moral, and social approach, this literacy becomes a means of shaping public critical awareness of human values, equality, and well-

being. Efforts to improve religious and cultural literacy not only impact individuals but also have a broad influence on social order and sustainable development, both locally and globally. The following table shows the contribution of religious and cultural literacy to preventing early marriage and achieving the SDGs.

**Table 15. Contribution of Religious and Cultural Literacy to Achieving the SDGs**

SDGs	Contribution of Religious and Cultural Literacy	Impact on Adolescents & Society
<b>SDGs 3: Good Health and Well-being</b>	Religious literacy emphasizes physical and psychological readiness; cultural literacy re-evaluates harmful traditions.	Reduces early marriage, improves adolescent reproductive and mental health.
<b>SDGs 4: Quality Education</b>	Religious literacy highlights the obligation to seek knowledge; cultural literacy strengthens local wisdom and lifelong learning values.	Adolescents view education as the main path to improving life quality, rather than early marriage.
<b>SDGs 5: Gender Equality</b>	Religious literacy corrects discriminatory interpretations; cultural literacy emphasizes women's role as change agents.	Promotes gender equality and empowers women to make independent and responsible life decisions.
<b>SDGs 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth</b>	Religious literacy fosters work ethic and professionalism; cultural literacy encourages collective work and innovation.	Adolescents are better prepared for education and work skills, strengthening human resources and inclusive economic growth.

*First*, the contribution to SDGs 3 (Good Health and Well-being) is evident in how religious and cultural literacy can reduce the practice of early marriage, which often has negative impacts on the reproductive and mental health of adolescents, especially girls [76]. A comprehensive understanding of religion affirms that physical and psychological readiness are essential requirements for marriage. Islamic values, for example, emphasize the principle of *maslahah* (welfare) and the prohibition of doing anything that can cause *mudharat* (harm). Therefore, good religious literacy can change society's perspective on early marriage as a practice that is not in line with the principle of the common good. Meanwhile, cultural literacy plays a role in re-evaluating traditions that are less supportive of the health and well-being of the younger generation. The combination of the two led to a new awareness that delaying marriage for reproductive health is a form of moral and social responsibility.

*Second*, in relation to SDGs 4 (Quality Education), religious and cultural literacy provides a strong framework for understanding the importance of premarital education [77]. Islam places knowledge as the primary key to happiness in this world and the hereafter, as reflected in the Prophet's hadith, which emphasizes the obligation to seek knowledge for every Muslim man and woman. Good religious literacy can foster the understanding that completing one's education is part of worship and a form of devotion to Allah SWT. In addition, cultural literacy that values local wisdom, such as the values of cooperation and lifelong learning, becomes social capital in strengthening community awareness of the importance of education. With this increase in literacy, it is hoped that adolescents will no longer see marriage as the only path to social status, but rather view education as the primary means of improving their quality of life and future.

*Thirdly*, tangible contributions are also evident in SDGs 5 (Gender Equality). Religious and cultural literacy with a gender equality perspective plays a role in eroding patriarchal social norms and religious interpretations [78]. Correct religious understanding teaches that men and women have equal standing before God in terms of rights, responsibilities, and potential. Thus, religious literacy can correct misinterpretations that are often used to justify

discriminatory practices, such as forced marriage of girls. Meanwhile, cultural literacy helps communities revitalize local traditions that value the role of women as goalkeepers of values, educators of generations, and agents of change. The synergy of the two makes religious and cultural literacy an effective instrument in creating gender equality and empowering women to make their own life decisions independently and responsibly.

*Fourth*, indirectly, strengthening religious and cultural literacy also supports SDGs 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). With the delay of early marriage, adolescents have more time and opportunity to pursue education and develop work skills [79]. This impacts the increasing quality of productive and competitive human resources in the labor market. Religious understanding that fosters a work ethic, honesty, and professionalism, along with cultural literacy that instills a spirit of collective work and innovation, together create a young generation that is not only maturely ready for marriage but also prepared to contribute economically. In the long run, this condition will strengthen the economic foundation of families and communities toward inclusive and sustainable growth.

Strengthening religious and cultural literacy has a strategic contribution to reducing the tendency toward early marriage while also supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDGs 3, 4, 5, and 8. In line with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), both of these literacies operate through the formation of adolescents' behavioral intentions. Religious literacy shapes a more reflective and responsible attitude toward marriage by emphasizing physical, psychological, and moral readiness, while cultural literacy influences subjective norms by encouraging critical evaluation of social pressure and traditional practices that legitimize early marriage. Both literacies strengthen perceived behavioral control through increased self-confidence and decision-making ability. These findings are consistent with previous research showing that low religious literacy promotes uncritical acceptance of early marriage [80][81], and that low cultural literacy also encourages early marriage [82]. Meanwhile, strengthening both effectively delays the age of marriage, increases educational participation, improves reproductive health, strengthens gender equality, and prepares a more economically productive younger generation. Thus, religious and cultural literacy not only serves as an instrument for individual education but also as a strategy for sustainable social development.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that strengthening religious and cultural literacy plays an important role in reducing the tendency toward early marriage while also supporting the achievement of the SDGs. Within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), religious literacy shapes adolescents' attitudes toward marriage to be more reflective and responsible, while cultural literacy influences subjective norms by fostering a critical attitude toward social pressure and traditions that legitimize early marriage. Both also strengthen behavioral control by increasing self-confidence and decision-making abilities. The impact is evident in the delayed age of marriage, improved health and education, strengthened gender equality, and the economic readiness of young people. Thus, religious and cultural literacy becomes an important strategy for sustainable social development.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that religious literacy has a significant negative influence on the tendency toward early marriage among high school students in Central Lombok. This is evidenced by a t-statistic value of -10.897, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.649 with a significance level of 0.000 (<0.005), as well as a correlation coefficient of -0.492, indicating a moderate negative relationship. This means that the higher the level of religious literacy among students, the lower their tendency to marry at a young age. The regression equation  $Y = 68.729 - 0.460X_1$  indicates that every one-unit increase in religious literacy will decrease the early marriage tendency score by 0.460, with a contribution of 24.2%. Similarly, cultural literacy was proven to have a

significant effect on the tendency for early marriage, with a t-statistic of  $-11.424 > t$ -table of 1.649 and a significance of 0.000 ( $<0.005$ ). The correlation coefficient value of  $-0.510$  indicates a moderate negative relationship, and the regression equation  $Y = 67.277 - 0.448X_2$  indicates that every one-unit increase in cultural literacy decreases the tendency for early marriage by 0.448, with a contribution of 26%. The results of the simultaneous analysis show that religious and cultural literacy together have a significant effect on the tendency for early marriage, with an F-statistic of  $75.175 > F$ -table of 3.02 and a significance of 0.000. The multiple regression equation  $Y = 71.896 - 0.237X_1 - 0.283X_2$  shows that an increase in both forms of literacy is able to reduce the tendency for early marriage in adolescents. This finding confirms that improving religious and cultural literacy plays an important role in preventing early marriage practices, as both help adolescents comprehensively understand religious teachings, interpret cultural values constructively, and make more rational and future-oriented decisions. Additionally, the findings of this study also support the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by preventing health risks from early marriage and pregnancy, SDG 4 (Quality Education) by encouraging adolescents to continue their education, SDG 5 (Gender Equality) by raising awareness of women's rights, and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by opening opportunities for young people to develop skills, productivity, and participate in inclusive and sustainable economic development.

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### Author Contribution

Yogi Sopian Haris contributes to the theoretical framework, instrument development, data collection, and research data analysis. Djamaluddin Perawironegoro contributed to the preparation of proposals, theoretical review, instrument development, and research reports. Betty Mauli Rosa Bustam contributed to the analysis of research problems, the use of concepts and theory, the development of instruments, data collection, and the analysis of research data. Abdul Gafur Arifin contributed to the development of instruments, data collection, and analysis of research data.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that this research was conducted without any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as potential conflicts of interest. All authors confirm the originality of this work and ensure that no competing interests influenced the research process, data interpretation, or publication decisions. The study was carried out with full academic integrity and transparency.

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