

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Discourse analysis on learners halting their education due to early marriage

Charriz S. Garcia<sup>1</sup>, Jere Mae P. Lastam<sup>1</sup>, Jason V. Chavez<sup>1\*</sup>, Magna Anissa A. Hayudini<sup>2</sup>, Shanaia-Shedri K. Tahil<sup>3</sup>, Sitti Khadija M. Dammang<sup>3</sup>, Nurmini U. Supian<sup>3</sup>, Elmelyn H. Askali<sup>3</sup>, Rufaida S. Salapuddin<sup>4</sup>, Sherwina I. Muddakir<sup>4</sup>, Lynie S. Kalayakan<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Graduate School, Zamboanga City State Polytechnic University, Zamboanga City 7000, Philippines

<sup>2</sup> College of Health Sciences, Mindanao State University-Sulu, Jolo, Sulu, 7400, Philippines

<sup>3</sup> College of Arts and Sciences, Mindanao State University-Sulu, Jolo, Sulu, 7400, Philippines

<sup>4</sup> Laboratory High School, Mindanao State University-Sulu, Jolo, Sulu, 7400, Philippines

\* Corresponding author: Jason V. Chavez, jasonchavez615@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

Early marriage, which can have a number of negative impacts, is one of the biggest social concerns facing students. This study looks at how dropping out of school to marry a young person or have a kid under the age of 18 affects education. There has been minimal research on the effects of early marriage on the academic experiences of high school students in one of the cities in Mindanao, Philippines, other than its effects on population growth, school dropout rates, and reproductive health. This research will help us understand the social effects of early marriages on students' academic achievement. By analyzing this issue, we can identify the reasons behind it and develop strategies to decrease its negative effects. This study used an exploratory research design. The Twenty (20) high school participants' comments were recorded during the interview process using purposeful sampling, which produced a qualitative data collection method. The study's conclusions highlight the societal and economic elements that influence students' decisions to leave school early in order to get married young. These elements have been connected to a number of outcomes, such as poor attendance, insufficient study time, and a change in emphasis away from academic achievement, all of which have the potential to periodically increase the dropout rate.

**Keywords:** early marriage, education, population growth, scholastic experiences, academic performance

## 1. Introduction

The National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) of 2017 found that 16.5% of Filipino females, or one in six, get married before turning eighteen. Early marriage is one of the most important social issues for young women and can have many consequences<sup>[1]</sup>. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), Muslim and indigenous populations engage in child marriage. Religious views, poverty, societal conventions, and cultural beliefs are some of the causes of early marriage. The most significant factors contributing to early marriage have been shown to be poverty, low literacy and ignorance among students and their parents, a lack of decision-making authority, obtaining social support and prestige, and lack of

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knowledge. There was a clear dropout rate among high school students as a result of early marriage, which puts them in difficult circumstances. This study examines the effects of early marriage on high school students' education and the reasons behind their decision to drop out of school.

Marriage is widely recognized as a joyous occasion and a significant turning point in an adult's life. Marriage is a sacred bond between two people, transcending emotional and physical connections. It is deeply influenced by religious views, with Christianity viewing it as a sacred sacrament and Hinduism as a holy obligation. These beliefs shape cultural customs, such as dowries and lavish wedding celebrations, and support moral ideals. They preserve traditions and build family relationships, ultimately fostering enduring relationships based on love, respect, and commitment. People who perceive their relationship partners as responsive feel close, satisfied, and committed to those relationships<sup>[2]</sup>. Thus, marriage-related cultural and religious beliefs contribute to the preservation of family traditions to overcome these potential obstacles in order for their marriage to work<sup>[3]</sup>.

The union of two individuals with dissimilar interests, wants, and desires, known as marriage, is a unique bond shaped by social norms and legal frameworks. It has a profound impact on people's personal growth and self-discovery<sup>[4]</sup>. Marriage is important for societies as it fulfills various needs, including love, biological, social, psychological, and motivational needs, brings new generations, fosters community, safety, cooperation, hope, pride, and normal sexual functioning<sup>[5]</sup>. The institutions of marriage and the family have remained universal and continue to be the fundamental building blocks of communities, despite changes in their size and makeup throughout human history<sup>[6]</sup>.

Everyone has the freedom to choose marriage, even in the era of the Romans. International human rights instruments have long recognized the right to exercise that decision as a fundamental legal concept, dating back to Roman times. However, a lot of girls and some boys get married without having the opportunity to exercise their freedom to choose. A girl or boy's childhood experiences are frequently shortened and their fundamental rights are violated when a marriage partner is forced upon them. Even if a girl is only twelve, it is assumed that once she is married, she has matured into a woman. Equally, where a boy is made to marry, he is now a man and must put away childish things. While the age of marriage is generally on the rise, early marriage – marriage of children and adolescents below the age of 18 – is still widely practiced<sup>[7]</sup>.

Child marriage has far-reaching and numerous negative effects on both boys and girls. These effects include the denial of education, the continuation of poverty, and an increased chance of early pregnancy, childbirth, maternal mortality, and sexual violence. One in six females in the Philippines get married before they turn eighteen. Child marriage causes a series of human rights breaches that persist throughout an individual's life and has a variety of detrimental effects on the health and lifestyles of young people, particularly young females. In order to change social norms and attitudes, the new law requires the Department of Education to create a sexual education curriculum that includes discussions about the effects of child marriage and culturally particular topics. The law also mandates that other government organizations create campaigns and programs to safeguard victims and increase public awareness of the negative impacts of child marriage.

In conclusion, it is critical to understand that early marriage has a substantial impact on male students as well as female students. We can better understand the many variables that contribute to this problem and seek to provide more equal educational opportunities for everyone by using discourse analysis as a research tool. Individuals of whatever gender or marital status should have equal access to education.

## 2. Research question

The purpose of the study is to determine the factors that influence the learner's decision to halt their education due to early marriage in high school under Ayala district. Specially, it sought to answer the following queries upon its very completion:

1. What do you think are the factors that led you to stop from schooling when you married?
2. What difficulties have you experienced as a student in an early marriage?
3. Do you think as a student who married early, can still study? Kindly elaborate.
4. What did you learn from being a student with regards to marrying early in relation to your studies?

## 3. Literature review

Early marriage has a big impact on students' decisions to stop their schooling. Girls in rural areas are disproportionately impacted since they are frequently married off at an early age, which has a terrible impact on their ability to learn in the future. Early marriage has become more detrimental to educational achievement for people of both sexes, with women continuously having a higher chance of having less education<sup>[8]</sup>. Early motherhood and the early end of romantic relationships have a detrimental effect on women's aspirations to further their education, particularly for those from lower socioeconomic origins<sup>[9]</sup>. When it comes to high school students, things like peer pressure, cultural norms, and the lack of in-person learning opportunities can cause them to marry young and stop their schooling. The problem is made worse by the absence of reproductive health resources and instruction about early marriage in schools<sup>[10]</sup>.

*Factor that led students to stop from schooling when they got married.*

A few reasons why students dropped out of school after getting married are that marriage and education are incompatible, that there are more obligations on top of their coursework, that time is limited, that priorities change, and that interactions change<sup>[10]</sup>. Marital status has been discovered to be a predictor of later school dropout<sup>[11]</sup>. Due to a sense of duty to their roles, married or parent women are less likely to attend college<sup>[12]</sup>. Changes in teenage relationships and social behavior, which result in pregnancy before marriage and dropping out of school, are the main causes of the large number of child marriage instances<sup>[13]</sup>.

*Perspectives of high school students in an early marriage in the context of education continuity.*

Different high school students have different opinions about early marriage in relation to continuing their studies. Some students have a moderate understanding of the risks and repercussions of getting married young; their decision to marry young is influenced by a variety of reasons, including cultural norms, familial pressure, and the lack of in-person instruction. This theory is consistent with Chavez's<sup>[14]</sup> research, which shows that normalization occurs as a way of life that lightens the tone of talks and makes them intentionally enjoyable. Schools have a critical role to play in addressing early marriage, but their ability to do so is limited by the absence of marriage-related content in the existing curriculum<sup>[10]</sup>. Teenagers in small-town and rural high schools are less likely to have heard of marriage education programs, which emphasizes the need for effective educational initiatives that emphasize conflict-resolution and communication skills<sup>[15]</sup>. Moreover, there is a correlation between female students' attitudes and knowledge about early marriage, indicating that a favorable view of underage marriage is linked to a thorough understanding of early marriage<sup>[16]</sup>.

### *Difficulties the students have experienced as a student in an early marriage.*

Being married young while a student might come with a lot of challenges. One problem is the tension that exists between the needs of schooling and marriage obligations<sup>[17]</sup>. This theory is consistent with Chavez's<sup>[18]</sup> research, which found that the respondents' health anxieties comprised despair, anxiety, trepidation, and fears. more girls will be at risk of early marriage and teenage pregnancy with their related health consequences<sup>[19]</sup>. One of their adaptive methods was to communicate openly with others. Furthermore, the transfer from parental relationships and personal autonomy may provide difficulties for recently married student couples<sup>[20]</sup>. Additionally, the early years of a marriage during which one is a student may be a period of adjustment and possible marital distress, which may have an effect on the success of the marriage as a whole<sup>[16]</sup>. This concept is consistent with Chavez's<sup>[21]</sup> research, which can be used to better plan and manage time. One such tool used in schools includes built-in timetables, to-do list, media player (such as podcast), online writing tool, online dictionary, and file storage capabilities. These issues show how students planning early marriages require guidance and instruction to deal with the particular obstacles they may encounter.

### *Learning insights of high school students with regards to marrying early in relation to their studies*

High school students' academic performance may be impacted by an early marriage. Studies have indicated that young married students encounter a number of difficulties and hazards that may have an impact on their academic achievement. Early marriage is influenced by a number of factors, including peer and family pressure as well as cultural norms<sup>[22]</sup>. Furthermore, it has been discovered that high school courses on marriage and relationship education improve students' interpersonal abilities<sup>[23]</sup>. In addition to teaching students about happy marriages and relationships, these classes may influence their views on cohabitation avoidance and pre- and post-marital counseling. For these programs to be effective, it is critical to investigate how course effects differ throughout schools and take student demographics into account.

In addition to supporting students who may be at danger of quitting school early because of an early marriage, this study can raise the awareness of all to address this problem. Then and only then will we be able to guarantee that every person has the chance to follow their educational dreams and realize their full potential.

## **4. Methods**

This study investigated the variables that affect a learner's decision to drop out of school because of an early marriage. The experiences of students who got married young were examined in this study. These stories touched on many of the advantages and disadvantages of getting married young.

### *Research Design*

In order to ascertain the variables influencing the learners' decision to discontinue their education owing to an early marriage, this study employed an exploratory research approach. The study created a thorough grasp of the experiences of the students who married young by using an exploratory method.

The preliminary research that serves as the foundation for more conclusive research is known as exploratory design. According to Singh <sup>[24]</sup>, it can also be useful in deciding on the research design, sampling strategy, and data collection technique. This study mostly uses an interpretative method in order to describe the factors that influence the learner's decision to stop their education. The interviewees' tales, however, simply project their experiences rather than offering definitive empirical findings.

#### 4.1. Participants

The study adopted purposive sampling via one on one interview, and Twenty (20) participants of married students from select schools in Zamboanga Peninsula. The participants were 18 years old above and they have at least one child. These individuals were chosen for a one-on-one interview so that participants in personalized interviews may examine the data from different perspectives.

#### 4.2. Instrument

This study created a research tool to record participant replies according to the study's goals. Relevant experiences were gleaned from interview questions in order to identify the elements that affected the decision to drop out of school because of an early marriage. The purpose of the interview questions was to provide participants the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings, and worries around getting married early. These interview questions and their objectives are detailed in **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** Instrument of the study.

Objectives	Interview Questions	Participants	n
Determine the factors that influence the learner’s decision to halt their education due to early marriage in high school under Ayala district.	1. What do you think are the factors that led you to stop from schooling when you married?	married learners from different grade levels of Ayala District.	20
	2. What difficulties have you experienced as a student in an early marriage?		
	3. Do you think as a student who married early, can still study? Kindly elaborate.		
	4. What did you learn from being a student with regards to marrying early in relation to your studies?		

#### 4.3. Research procedure

The methods used to record the individuals' experiences with sexual orientation were qualitative data collection methods. Individual interviews that were semi-structured were the primary means of obtaining data from the participants. Additional information about each participant's unique experiences of being released from constraints and requirements in inclusive education may be revealed throughout the interviews.

This study collected consent forms before conducting interviews in order to collect data. In the consent form, the researcher included a section regarding the participants' voluntary involvement, the study's objectives, the use of the data, confidentiality, and sharing of the results. The researcher scheduled a time for a conversation and in-person interview after the sign-off. During the chat-based interviews, field notes were taken to capture contextual details and non-verbal clues.

#### 4.4. Data analysis

Data was collected during the focus group discussion. There is a reduction in information bias and an increase in data honesty when participants from various backgrounds are included in the data collection process. To gather thorough and in-depth viewpoints, the participants will be questioned. The interviews will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy during the data processing phase. We will be creating a number of open-ended questions to find out more about the experiences of the pupils. The primary focus of the research will be on the kind of material people consume and how it influences their self-perception. The interview will be recorded live by the researchers.

### 5. Results

**Objective 1:** Determine the factors that influence the learner’s decision to halt their education due to early marriage in high school under Ayala district.

*Question 1. What do you think are the factors that led you to stop from schooling when you married?*

### *1.1 SUPPORT LIVING*

Four (4) respondents state that they halted his education because he had to make a living to support his growing family as they are financially-stricken. When starting their own families, the respondents faced financial difficulties. They struggled with fulfilling the roles of son/daughter, husband, student, and most importantly, parent. Inevitably they considered quitting school and concentrating on supporting their respective families instead.

“My time management was so weak that it influenced me to actually stop schooling as I cannot balance education and being a tending wife. Moreover, some people told me to just stop my studies since I already got pregnant.”

“I considered quitting school so that I could work and take care of my wife and child's needs. Our parents were so enraged that they decided to marry us to avoid family shame since my father is a barangay servant. The people around us that time keeps on talking behind our backs because of what we have done which adds to the decision of both of our parents to marry us as soon as possible.”

### *1.2. DEMAND OF FAMILY*

Sixteen (16) respondents said that he halted his education for a year due to the demand of his father to marry early so he would learn how to be sane and responsible since he became the headache of his family. Moreover, judgments from other people demotivated him in continuing his studies that year. judgments from others had also a toll on his decision as to why he stopped his studies for a while. The data collected showed that poverty, parental decisions and judgments from the people around them are one of the reasons they halted their education for the mean time. After all, they are still teenagers at the time of their marriage and remain under the supervision of their guardians, so all they did was follow their parents' instructions and that is to continue their studies. Additionally, because they are still students, the parents were also responsible for supporting their new family. They struggle even more because of their dread of what others may say and think about them.

“I have to watch my health vigorously due to the fact that I am still a minor. My parents, on the other hand, have decided to let my husband live with us for additional help in our home, given that I am already pregnant and need frequent assistance. Pregnancy and being a student were difficult for me to balance, therefore, I decided also to, however, stop for a year.”

*Question 2. What difficulties have you experienced as a student in an early marriage?*

### *2.1 FINANCIALS*

Ten (10) respondents said that they faced numerous challenges as students in an early marriage, including anxiety and financial troubles. It's challenging to make a snap decision without considering their priorities in life as a family man. There are participants who used to work in a sardine plant where he obviously used force to cut as many fish as he could. He was able to help sustain his wife and child thanks to his job but undeniably, it is still not enough for them.

“I decided to halt my education because sometimes it's overwhelming and it feels like I have to choose one path between making a living for my family or to continue my studies.”

“As a wife, it is too hard to budget all the everyday expenses.”

## *2.2 RESPONSIBILITY*

Ten (10) respondents state that they considered quitting because of being overwhelmed with the responsibilities as a child, parents, partner and students. This made them decide to quit their studies because of his wife's jealousy-related arguments with him and felt anxious over them. They still manage to make things work well despite the tension that comes with entering married life at a young age.

“As a student, all the activities, quizzes, and exams were stressful enough that overwhelms me in the long run. Aside from that, I have to tend to my husband's needs sometimes as it is my responsibility also as a wife. Because of this, I frequently skipped my class.”

*Question 3. Do you think as a student who married early, can still study? Kindly elaborate.*

### *3.1 NO REASON TO QUIT*

Twenty (20) respondents state a positive response when this question was raised. Which is great because despite all the challenges they faced juggling multiple obligations, they never lost sight of their dreams and goals, which were originally set for themselves and their families. The exact reason they started school and the work hard every day. They both agreed that there is no reason to quit studying as long as they can manage their marriage and education.

“I pondered quitting school since I needed to be financially independent and should be the one to support my spouse rather than my parents but I never lost hope and kept striving.”

“Because I was so hard-headed and had this happy-go-lucky attitude, my father told me to get married so I will learn my lesson and know the meaning of hardship so now I manage my education and time with my family.”

“My wife and I went through financial problems. My parents are the ones that cater for my wife's school needs because I am unable to do so. That's why I preferred to work over studying since one parent can study and the other one can work to balance the expense.”

*Question 4. What did you learn from being a student with regards to marrying early in relation to your studies?*

### *4.1 NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE*

Twelve (12) respondents said that Their early marriage prepared them for the challenges of raising a child, handling money, and juggling other academic responsibilities with being students. Delaying having children for a while is advised since it might be difficult to give a baby with necessities like milk, diapers, and other supplies, but that didn't stop them from trying and banding together to live. Fortunately, in spite of all the difficulties they have faced and still encounter as young married students, they have found happiness in the people they care about. As they worked toward the objectives they had set for their families, they learnt to draw inspiration from them.

“There is nothing impossible when it comes to a person who perseveres in life, most importantly in studying.”

“I overheard several judgmental remarks from those around me, which made me not want to attend to school due to the judgmental opinions of others but that did not stop me i still pursue my studies.”

#### *4.2 DEVELOP A RESILIENCE*

Eight (8) respondents state that their early marriage taught them the difficulties of parenting a child, managing finances, and balancing being a student with other obligations at school. Given that it's tough to provide a baby with basics like diapers, milk, and other supplies, advise delaying having children for a time. Thankfully, despite all of the challenges they have had and continue to face as young married students, both of them have found happiness in those they love. They learned to look at them for inspiration as they worked toward the goals that they had set for their families.

“It would all be possible if I will strive harder, be patient and develop resiliency.”

“am used on the people being judgemental but i did not care since they couldn't feed me and they did not raise me so I ignored them and found my own happiness.”

## **6. Discussion**

**Objective 1:** Determine the factors that influence the learner’s decision to halt their education due to early marriage in Ayala District High School.

*Question 1. What do you think are the factors that led you to stop from schooling when you married?*

The Findings of study demonstrates that a variety of variables, including financial, emotional, and sociocultural ones, contributed to the students' decision to stop their education in order to marry young. According to DepEd Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Service and Alternative Learning System G.H. Ambat, more female students dropout of high school because some find it difficult to balance their education with their responsibilities as mothers when they get pregnant or decide to marry young<sup>[25]</sup>. This theory is consistent with Chavez's<sup>[14]</sup> findings regarding these economic effects through adaptive strategies using trend analysis and diversification. Some students, however, chose not to continue their education because of the previously listed reasons, while some students resumed their studies after a temporary break.

One of the main causes of child marriage is poverty; in low-income families, early marriage develops into a means of surviving financially as the husband takes on the responsibility of providing for the needs of the family. This theory is consistent with Chavez's<sup>[26]</sup> findings, which suggest that women in the lowest income groups and those who did not complete college should receive more attention. Child marriage is a common result of poverty, which supports the cycle. To ease their financial burdens, families in poorer nations frequently marry off their daughters<sup>[27]</sup>. However, as married girls frequently drop out of school, restricting their possibilities for education and economic independence, child marriage simply serves to further maintain families in poverty. It is essential to deal with the fundamental root causes of poverty and fund initiatives that provide girls with access to economic and educational opportunities. In many cases, child marriage serves as a means of resolving obligations and is also a means of fortifying political alliances, clan and tribe ties, and family ties<sup>[28]</sup>.

Economically speaking, it is evident that married high school students frequently interrupted their education since they were unable to continue after getting married due to financial constraints. Marriage Specialization where individuals within a marriage take on specific roles and responsibilities based on their strengths and abilities, through a customary gender division of labor<sup>[29]</sup> allows for greater efficiency and



productivity within the household, as each partner focuses on tasks they are best suited for. This idea is aligned with the findings of [30]. Early marriage is one of the major traditional practices that affects the life of both boys and girls in many different ways. In traditional societies, men often took on the role of breadwinner, while women were responsible for managing the household and caring for children. While modern society has seen a shift towards more egalitarian relationships, marriage specialization still plays a role in many households. Couples may divide tasks based on personal preferences or skills, creating a balance that works best for them. Furthermore, social pressure is present in communities that result in educational discontinuity for students, and noncompliance can have negative consequences for the family, such as embarrassment or rejection [31].

*Question 2. What difficulties have you experienced as a student in an early marriage?*

There is a close relationship between educational attainment and child marriage in the findings of the study. Students who marry young typically deal with a variety of stressors. This notion is consistent with research by Murro [32], which found that the majority of the families are low-income and struggle financially as a result of the additional costs associated with raising their children. These include persistently making unwarranted judgmental comments, time constraints, subpar jobs, low earnings, the burden of school, and family relationships. Married students who take on more responsibilities may experience higher levels of stress, despair, and anxiety [33]. These are the explanations for the decision made by high school pupils to stop their studies. When students try to balance their roles as high school students and married people, a number of difficulties occur [33]. It has traditionally been expected of married students to fulfill their academic obligations in addition to their roles as a wife and husband. Issues that arise in marriages include, but are not limited to, arguments between partners, feeling that you have to support your spouse, and fatigue from juggling work around the house and school.

*Question 3. Do you think as a student who married early, can still study? Kindly elaborate.*

The participants look at education continuity from the standpoint of a high school student entering an early marriage, since there are a lot of intricate factors to take into account. The possible disruption of education resulting from marriage and family duties is an important factor to take into account. Early-married high school students frequently have to balance the responsibilities of their marriage with their studies. For high school students who marry young, emotional and social adjustments may also have an impact on the continuation of their education. It could take a great deal of emotional maturity and support from others in your support system to adjust to marriage while you're still a student. Additionally, getting married young while still a student might lead to a number of challenges. One problem is the tension that exists between the needs of schooling and marriage obligations [17]. Furthermore, the transfer from parental relationships and personal autonomy may provide difficulties for recently married student couples [20]. However, it's crucial to remember that early marriage has a mixed effect on the continuation of education. For some students, security and motivation may come from an early marriage.

*Question 4. What did you learn from being a student with regards to marrying early in relation to your studies?*

The respondents pinpoint that in Early marriage can present a number of obstacles and challenges, most of which are related to inexperience and immaturity. Among the things to think about are taking care of a child, handling money, and juggling other academic responsibilities while being a student. Early marriage frequently results in the loss of formative years for personal development and self-discovery. Considering how difficult it is to offer a baby necessities like milk, diapers, and other supplies, it might limit chances. The idea is aligned with the findings of [34] Girls who are married early not only are at risk of health problems but

also are restricted in their education and work opportunities. In a similar vein, high school students' academic performance may suffer if they marry young. Studies have indicated that young married students encounter a number of difficulties and hazards that may have an impact on their academic achievement. Early marriage is encouraged by a number of factors, including peer and family pressure and cultural norms<sup>[22]</sup>.

## 7. Conclusion

This study was able to pinpoint the impacts of early marriage on specific students' education, including low attendance, little time for study sessions, and a shift in attention away from their academic achievement due to the demands of providing for their families. Early marriages worsen poverty for kids, endangering their ability to continue their education beyond high school and contributing to the rising number of dropouts. The report states that economic and sociocultural issues are the main causes of high school students in the Ayala area ceasing their studies because of an early marriage. An important finding of this analysis is the necessity of providing extensive support networks for young students who end up in such circumstances. It is obvious that solving this problem calls for a multifaceted strategy that includes granting young people access to education, giving them the freedom to make decisions about their futures based on their own knowledge, and confronting harmful standards of behavior.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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