# Marriage Age Preference, Desire to Have Children, Children's Value, and Family Readiness among Undergraduate Students of IPB University

**Shania Af'ida Faradilla[1], Euis Sunarti[1*)]**

[1]Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, Faculty of Human Ecology, IPB University, Jl. Kamper, IPB Dramaga Campus, Bogor, West Java 16880, Indonesia

*) Corresponding author: euissunarti@apps.ipb.ac.id

## Abstract

Family readiness is a way to measure a person's level of readiness to build a family and have children. This study aimed to analyze the influence of age preferences for marriage, desire to have children, and children's values on family readiness among IPB students. This study was attended by 206 respondents, aged 19-24 years, who were unmarried. Data were collected online using purposive sampling. The results showed that marriage age preference ranged from to 24-25 years, most of the samples stated their strong desire to have children, and the children's value and family readiness were in the moderate category. The correlation test showed that marriage age preference had a significant negative relationship with family readiness, while children's values and desire to have children had a significant positive relationship with family readiness. The PLS test results show that children's values have a significant positive effect on family readiness. The higher the value of the benefits of children owned by a person, the higher their readiness to start a family. This study suggests that it is important for young adults to build positive communication with their parents to increase positive values for children and families.

Keywords: childfree, children's value, family readiness, marriage age preference

## Abstrak

Kesiapan berkeluarga merupakan salah satu cara dalam mengukur tingkat kesiapan seseorang untuk membangun keluarga dan memiliki anak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh preferensi usia menikah, keinginan memiliki anak, dan nilai anak terhadap kesiapan berkeluarga pada mahasiswa IPB. Penelitian ini diikuti oleh 206 responden, berusia 19-24 tahun, dan berstatus belum menikah. Pengambilan data penelitian dilakukan secara online menggunakan metode *purposive sampling*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan preferensi usia menikah berkisar antara 24-25 tahun, sebagian besar partisipan menyatakan keinginannya untuk memiliki anak, serta nilai anak dan kesiapan berkeluarga pada contoh terkategori sedang. Uji korelasi menunjukkan preferensi usia menikah berhubungan negatif signifikan dengan kesiapan berkeluarga, sedangkan nilai anak dan keinginan memiliki anak berhubungan positif signifikan dengan kesiapan berkeluarga. Hasil uji PLS, variabel nilai anak berpengaruh positif signifikan terhadap kesiapan berkeluarga. Semakin tinggi nilai manfaat anak yang dimiliki oleh seseorang dapat meningkatkan kesiapan berkeluarganya. Saran penelitian ini, penting bagi dewasa awal untuk membangun komunikasi positif dengan orang tua dalam rangka meningkatkan nilai positif tentang anak dan keluarga.

Kata kunci: *childfree,* kesiapan berkeluarga, nilai anak, preferensi usia menikah.

## Introduction

Forming a prosperous and harmonious family requires careful preparation from both potential partners. Family readiness is a new term introduced by Sunarti (2021) using the Siap-Ga instrument. Previous research related to family readiness, specifically using the Siap-Ga instrument, is still very limited, and several researchers have often examined a person's readiness to lead a family life using the term marriage readiness. According to Duval and Miller (Sari & Sunarti, 2013), marriage readiness is a state of being ready to relate to a partner, accept responsibility as husband and wife, engage in sexual relations, manage the family, and raise children. Family readiness is the output of individual development tasks, which is reflected in the degree of maturity (Sunarti, 2021). A lack of family readiness can lead to difficulties undergoing various changes in roles and the dynamics of problems that occur in a household. According to Tsania (2015), the lack of readiness for a family is one of the dominant factors in divorce. The better the couple's readiness to start a family, the better the fulfillment of basic and family development tasks (Sunarti, 2015). Holman and Li (1997) measured factors that can influence a person's readiness to start a family, including the level of education, income, and age maturity possessed by a person.

Marriage maturity is an important factor in achieving optimal family development tasks (Tyas et al., 2017). Zuhdi and Yusuf (2022) states that the ideal age that is believed to have matured a person's physiological condition to start a family is early adulthood. According to Erikson's psychosocial theory, in early adulthood, a person performs a developmental task in the form of intimacy versus isolation. At this stage, a person begins to be selective in building intimate relationships with certain people who have one 'sunderstanding of him. However, if a person does not have good skills in building relationships with others, feelings of isolation will increase (Thahir, 2018). Aderinto (1998) explains that, at this time, a person learns to master the tasks of choosing a partner, learning to live with a life partner, starting a family, raising children, managing a home, and earning a living. The problem of marriage in someone who has reached early adulthood often becomes a life crisis felt by many people (Herawati & Hidayat, 2020).

Marriage age preference is a person's tendency to decide on an early age of marriage. Marriage preference is influenced by a person's level of knowledge about marriage, family background, and preference for the desired number of children. Keldal and Yildirim (2022) stated that the maturity of marriage can increase the readiness of individuals to have a family. According to the United Nations Development Economic and Social Affairs (2010), Indonesia is the 37th country with a high percentage of young marriages, and the second highest country in ASEAN after Cambodia. Some of the dominant factors for marriage at a young age are a low level of education and family economic factors (Desiyanti, 2015). Based on previous research, it was stated that low education causes a low level of knowledge about the maturity of the age towards marriage. Therefore, students who are considered to have high knowledge regarding marriage age maturity are expected to have a more ideal marriage age preference than early adulthood students, who have a low level of education.

In a wider community, one of the reasons someone gets married is the desire to have children. Keldal and Yildirim (2022) state that a person will decide to marry if he/she

is ready to have children and can raise them properly. However, the emergence of issues related to the population and the phenomenon of childless marriages at this time have also changed a person's desire to have children. Studies related to a person's choice not to have children voluntarily or what is called childfree began to emerge and develop globally in 1980 (Blackstone & Stewart, 2012). However, this issue has only become a trending topic in Indonesia by 2021. Engwall (2014) stated that a person's decision not to have children is a fear of being bound by responsibility for children, not liking or not being interested in children, not wanting children, and lack of confidence in their ability to become a parent. It is feared that the issue of current childfree development will change people's view of the presence of children in the family.

The perception that a person has the presence of children so that they can determine their desire to have children is called the value of children. Villa et al. (2020) state that the value of a child is a psychological perception that sees children in terms of the benefits and costs they incur. One of the factors that can affect a child's values is the cultural and socio-economic values he believes in. Having a high child benefit value is an important factor affecting the achievement of good child development.

Students were chosen as the focus of the research participants on the grounds that students are individuals who are in early adulthood but still have developmental tasks to complete their academic studies and must continue to prepare for a family. Based on the various issues and conditions described above, researchers are interested in conducting research on family readiness and linking it to preferences for marriage age, desire to have children, and the value of children possessed by early adult college students. This study aimed to analyze the influence of age preferences for marriage, desire to have children, and children's values on family readiness.

## Methods

### Participants

This study used an explanatory design. The research location was the IPB University Campus. The criteria for the research sample were undergraduate students aged 19–24 years and unmarried. The research sample was obtained through a non-probability sampling method with sampling techniques, namely purposive sampling and voluntary sampling. Data were collected from July to September 2022 and 206 samples were obtained. The study population comprised 48 men and 158 women.

### Measurements

The primary data in this study were obtained by distributing questionnaires online using WhatsApp and Instagram. Marriage age preference is a person's tendency to target their future marriage age. The measurement of this variable uses four measurement indicators developed by Sunarti (2022), which include the ideal age for marriage, age to marry, marriageable age, and late age for marriage, with answers to the ratio scale in the form of years old. The reliability value of the marriage age preference variable is 0.807. Desire to have children as the number of children one wants in one's life. The desire to have children affects the decision-making process of immediately having children or postponing children. The desire to have children was measured using three measurement indicators developed in this study: desire to have children (3=yes, 2=doubt, 1=no), the

desired number of children (ratio scale in the form of the number of people), and child sex preference (3=boys, 2=girls, 1= the same for boys or girls). The reliability value for the desire to have children was 0.729.

A child's value is a value or basic belief that someone has to view the presence of children in a family. This variable can be measured using a modified Value of Children (VOC) scale developed by Buripakdi (1977) and modified by Oktriyanto (2015). The research instrument consists of two measurement dimensions, namely, the child benefit value and child cost value, with a total of 32 measurement indicators. The measurement scale for this variable used a Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree). The reliability of the children's value was 0.867.

Family readiness is a measure of a person's maturity when starting a family. The instrument for family readiness developed by Sunarti (2021) was the Siap-Ga questionnaire. This instrument has five measurement dimensions, namely mental-intellectual maturity, social maturity, emotional maturity, moral-spiritual maturity, and family life skills, with a total of 30 measurement indicators. The measurement scale for this variable used a semantic scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high). The reliability of the family readiness variable is 0.941.

## Analysis

The data obtained in this study were processed using Microsoft Office Excel 2015, SPSS for Windows 25, and SmartPLS version 3. Processing was carried out through editing, coding, scoring, data entry, and data cleaning. The data used in the questionnaire included nominal, ordinal, and ratio scales. Data from the questionnaire was processed using a computer. The first activity in data processing is carried out by compiling a codebook to guide the entry, processing data, and cleaning it to ensure that there are no errors in presenting the results.

In measuring the index value of the child's value variable, there are three categories with cut-off values: low (index value <60), medium (index value 60-80), and high (index value> 80) (Oktriyanto 2015). According to Sunarti (2021), the index value for the family readiness variable is divided into three categories with a cut-off: very low (index value 0.00-0.19), low (index value 0.20-0.49), moderate (index value 0.50-0.79), and high (index value 0.80-1.00).

The statistical analysis used in this study included descriptive statistical analysis using Microsoft Office Excel 2015 and SPSS 25 for Windows to present the distribution of data in the form of early adulthood characteristics, family characteristics, marriage age preferences, desire to have children, children's values, and family readiness. Inferential analysis was performed using Spearman's correlation test with SPSS 25 for Windows to examine the relationship between early adulthood characteristics, family characteristics, marriage age preferences, desire to have children, children's values, and family readiness. The partial least squares (PLS) test is used to test the direct or indirect effect between early adulthood characteristic variables, family characteristics, marriage age preference, desire to have children, children's value, and family readiness.

## Findings

## Early Adulthood Characteristics

The early adults involved in this study totaled 206 students, consisting of 48 males (23.3%) and 158 females (76.7%) from ten faculties at IPB University. More than one-

third of the sample in this study (31.1%) were students of the Faculty of Human Ecology (FEMA) (Figure 1).
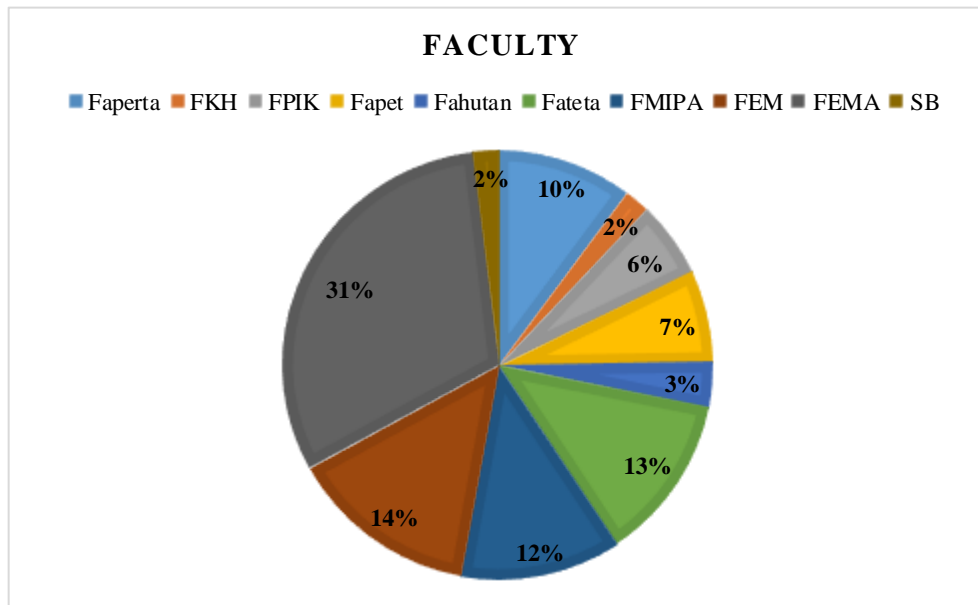


**Note:** Faperta: Faculty of Agricultural; FKH: Faculty of Veterinary; FPIK: Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Science; Fapet: Faculty of Animal Science; Fahutan: Faculty of Forestry; Fateta: Faculty of Agricultural Technology; FMIPA: Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences; FEM: Faculty of Economics and Management; FEMA: Faculty of Human Ecology; SB: Business

Figure 1. The distribution of participants based on faculty

All participants in this study were of age 19-24 years. The average age of participants was 21 years. More than half of the male (62.5%) and female (65.2%) participants reported moderate living costs. Most of the participants in this study stated that they had no income (not yet working). Nearly half of the male (45.8%) and female participants (38.0%) were first children. The majority of the participants had no married siblings. The presence of married siblings can provide participants with research on family life, which is expected to increase family readiness. Regarding relationship status, only a small proportion of the sample (13.1%) stated that they were in a dating relationship.

Table 1. The distribution of participants (%) based on sex, age, living cost, personal income, sequence of birth, have married siblings, and relationship status

| Early adulthood characteristic | Category | Male (n=48) | Female (n=158) | Total (n=206) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | % | % | % |
| Age | 19-20 years old | 29.2 | 38.0 | 35.9 |
| | 21-22 years old | 52.1 | 53.2 | 52.9 |
| | 23-24 years old | 18.8 | 8.9 | 11.2 |
| Min-max (years old) | | 19-24 | 19-24 | 19-24 |
| Average (years old) | | 21.29 | 20.93 | 21.01 |

*Continue from Table 1*

| Early adulthood characteristic | Category | Male (n=48) % | Female (n=158) % | Total (n=206) % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Living cost (IDR/month) | Low (700,000) | 18.8 | 25.3 | 23.8 |
| | Moderate (700,000 – 1,500,000) | 62.5 | 65.2 | 64.6 |
| | High (>1,500,000) | 18.8 | 9.5 | 11.7 |
| Min-max (IDR) | | 0 – 3,000,000 | 0 – 3,000,000 | 0 – 3,000,000 |
| Average (IDR) | | 1,102,083,33 | 975,316,46 | 1,004,854,37 |
| Personal income (IDR/month) | Not working yet | 75.0 | 84.8 | 82.5 |
| | <1,000,000 | 14.6 | 7.6 | 9.2 |
| | 1,000,000 - 2,000,000 | 4.2 | 6.3 | 5.8 |
| | >2.000.000,00 | 6.3 | 1.3 | 2.4 |
| Min-max (Rupiah) | | 0 – 3,000,000 | 0 – 5,000,000 | 0 - 5000,000 |
| Average (Rupiah) | | 350,000 | 162,974,68 | 206,553,40 |
| Sequence of birth | First child | 45.8 | 38.0 | 39.8 |
| | Middle child | 37.5 | 35.4 | 35.9 |
| | Last child | 16.7 | 22.2 | 20.9 |
| | Single child | 0.0 | 4.4 | 3.4 |
| Have married siblings | Yes | 31.3 | 29.1 | 29.6 |
| | Not | 68.8 | 70.9 | 70.4 |
| Relationship status | In a relationship | 2.1 | 16.5 | 13.1 |
| | Not in a relationship | 97.9 | 83.5 | 86.9 |

## Family Characteristics

The family characteristics of the sample were the current age of the parents, age at which the parents were married, last education of the parents, type of work of the parents, income of the parents, condition of the parents' marriage, and size of the family. The majority of the sample's parents were in the middle-adult category (41-60 years). The average age of parents at marriage where the father was 26.5 years old and the mother was 22.8 years old.

Table 2. The distribution of research samples (%) by parent age, and parent's marriage

| Family characteristic | Category | Total (n=206) % |
|---|---|---|
| Father's age | Middle adulthood (41-60 years old) | 93.7 |
| | Old (>60 years old) | 6.3 |
| Min-max (years old) | | 42-69 |
| Average (years old) | | 52.63 |
| Mother's age | Early adulthood (18-40 years old) | 2.4 |
| | Middle adulthood (41-60 years old) | 96.6 |
| | Old (>60 years old) | 1.0 |
| Min-max (years old) | | 39-62 |
| Average (years old) | | 49.02 |

*Continue from Table 2*

| Family characteristic | Category | Total (n=206) |
|---|---|---|
| | | **%** |
| Father married age | Under 19 years old | 0.0 |
| | 19-25 years old | 40.8 |
| | 26-30 years old | 45.1 |
| | Above 30 years old | 14.1 |
| Min-max (years old) | | 19-37 |
| Average (years old) | | 26.5 |
| Mother married age | Under 19 years old | 11.7 |
| | 19-25 years old | 67.5 |
| | 26-30 years old | 19.9 |
| | Above 30 years old | 1.0 |
| Min-max (years old) | | 14-32 |
| Average (years old) | | 22.83 |

In Figure 2, it can be seen that more than a third of the last education fathers (33.5%) and the last education mothers (36.9%) of the sample as a whole are high school graduates. It can be seen that the majority of the parents' sample has completed the 12-year compulsory education, and some of the parents in the research sample continued their education up to the undergraduate level (S1) to the postgraduate level (S2 & S3).
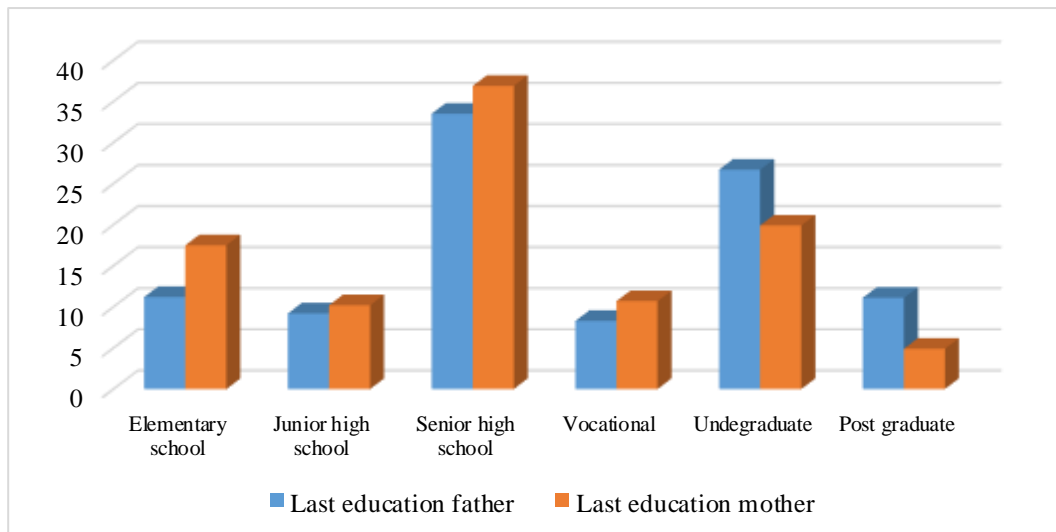


Figure 2. The distribution of parental last education

Furthermore, in Figure 3, the types of work of fathers in the research sample are scattered across all types of work mentioned in this study. Regarding the type of mother's occupation, more than half of the research samples (61.7%) had mothers who were housewives or did not work.
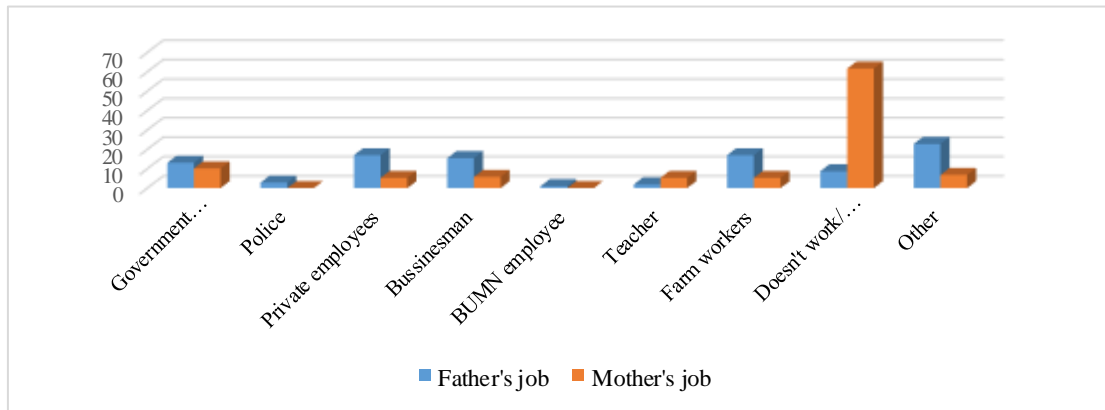
Figure 3. The distribution of parental work

In Table 3, almost half (47.6%) of the family incomes are categorized as high (above IDR 4,000,000). The condition of parents' marriage in the example of this study as a whole is a family with all parents. Large categories of families are grouped based on large categories of families by the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN). Nearly half (49.5%) of the study sample had moderate family sizes, and the average family size was 4.98 people.

Table 3. The distribution of research samples (%) by total parental income, parental condition, and family size

| Family characteristic | Category | Total (n=206) |
|---|---|---|
| | | % |
| Total parental income (IDR/month) | <1.000.000 | 7.3 |
| | 1,000,000 – 2,000,000 | 24.3 |
| | 2,000,000 – 3,000,000 | 10.7 |
| | 3,000,000 – 4,000,000 | 10.2 |
| | >4,000,000 | 47.6 |
| Min-max (IDR) | | 0 – 500,000,000 |
| Average (IDR) | | 9,435,031,22 |
| Parental condition | Whole parents | 80.1 |
| | Divorce | 8.3 |
| | One of the parents died | 11.2 |
| | Passed away all | 0.5 |
| Family size | Small (≤4 person) | 39.8 |
| | Medium (5-6 person) | 49.5 |
| | Large (≥7 person) | 10.7 |
| Min-max (people) | | 2-10 |
| Average (people) | | 4.98 |

**Marriage Age Preference**

Marriage age preference is described in the form of four question items: the ideal age for marriage, age to marry, marriageable age, and late age for marriage. Marriage age preference consistently shows that marriage age preference for males is higher than that for females. Overall, the average preference for ideal age for marriage (24.8 years), age to marry (25.04 years), and marriageable age (25.13 years) in the sample of this study were not much different. Lastly, the average preference for late age for marriage as a whole was 31.94 years.

Table 4.  The distribution of research samples (%) by sex and marriage age preference

| Marriage age preference | Category | Male (n=48) % | Female (n=158) % | Total (n=206) % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ideal age for marriage | 20-22 years old | 2.1 | 5.7 | 4.9 |
| | 23-25 years old | 70.8 | 79.1 | 77.2 |
| | 26-28 years old | 22.9 | 14.6 | 16.5 |
| | 29-30 years old | 4.2 | 0.6 | 1.5 |
| Min-max (years) | | 22-30 | 20-29 | 20-30 |
| Average (years) | | 25.48 | 24.59 | 24.80 |
| Age to marry | 20-22 years old | 4.2 | 7.6 | 6.8 |
| | 23-25 years old | 54.2 | 64.6 | 62.1 |
| | 26-28 years old | 37.5 | 25.3 | 28.2 |
| | 29-30 years old | 4.2 | 2.5 | 2.9 |
| Min-max (years) | | 20-30 | 21-30 | 20-30 |
| Average (years) | | 25.54 | 24.89 | 25.04 |
| Marriageable age | 21-22 years old | 2.1 | 8.2 | 6.8 |
| | 23-25 years old | 47.9 | 62.0 | 58.7 |
| | 26-28 years old | 45.8 | 27.2 | 31.6 |
| | 29-30 years old | 4.2 | 2.5 | 2.9 |
| Min-max (years) | | 22-30 | 21-30 | 21-30 |
| Average (years) | | 25.71 | 24.96 | 25.13 |
| Late age for marriage | 24-29 years old | 14.6 | 29.7 | 26.2 |
| | 30-35 years old | 62.5 | 56.3 | 57.8 |
| | ≥36 years old | 22.9 | 13.9 | 16.0 |
| Min-max (years) | | 27-45 | 24-50 | 24-50 |
| Average (years) | | 33.10 | 31.58 | 31.94 |

**Desire to Have Children**

In Table 5, the distribution of the desire to have children by sex shows that 94.7 percent of the sample has a strong desire to have children, while the rest are examples of women who express doubts or even do not want to have children. More than half of the research participants (60.7%) stated that they wanted to have children with a range of to 3-5 children. On an average, the entire sample wanted 3.01 children. Meanwhile, in terms of child sex preferences, the majority of the research examples stated that boys and girls were the same.

Table 5.  The distribution of research samples (%) by sex and desire to have children

| Desire to have children | Category | Male (n=48) % | Female (n=158) % | Total (n=206) % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Decide to have children | Yes | 100.0 | 93.0 | 94.7 |
| | Doubt | 0.0 | 6.3 | 4.8 |
| | Not | 0.0 | 0.6 | 0.5 |
| The desire number of children | 1-2 child | 29.2 | 32.3 | 31.6 |
| | 3-5 child | 66.7 | 58.9 | 60.7 |
| | ≥ 6 child | 4.2 | 1.9 | 2.4 |
| | Not answer | 0.0 | 7.0 | 5.3 |
| Min-max (child) | | 2-8 | 1-6 | 1-8 |
| Average (child) | | 3.27 | 2.90 | 3.01 |

*Continue from Table 5*

| Desire to have children | Category | Male (n=48) | Female (n=158) | Total (n=206) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | % | % | % |
| Child sex preference | Just between boys and girls | 75.0 | 86.1 | 83.5 |
| | Boys | 22.9 | 6.3 | 10.2 |
| | Girls | 2.1 | 0.6 | 1.0 |
| | Not answer | 0.0 | 7.0 | 5.3 |

## Children's Value

The value of the child as measured in this study consists of two dimensions: child benefit value and child cost value. In the dimension of child benefit value, more than half of the samples (57,8%) were in the high category, with an average index score of 82,3 points. In the dimension of child cost value, almost all samples (90,8%) were in the low category with an average index score of 38,6 points. Overall, the average total score of the children was 71.9 points.

Table 6. The distribution of research samples (%) by category of children's value dimensions

| Dimension | Category | | | Min-max | Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Low (<60) | Moderate (60-79) | High (≥80) | | |
| | % | % | % | | |
| Child benefit value | 3.9 | 38.3 | 57.8 | 29-100 | 82.3 |
| Child cost value | 90.8 | 8.2 | 1.0 | 0-100 | 38.6 |
| Total | 14.6 | 62.1 | 23.3 | 34-100 | 71.9 |

## Family Readiness

Family readiness was measured on the basis of five dimensions: mental intellectual maturity, social maturity, emotional maturity, moral spiritual maturity, and family life skills. Moral-spiritual maturity was the dimension with the highest average index score of 0.79 points. Overall, the total family readiness in the study sample was in the moderate category (72.8%) with an average index score of 0.72 points.

Table 7. The distribution of research samples (%) by category of family readiness dimensions

| Dimension | Categories | | | | Min-max | Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Very low (0.00-0.19) | Low (0.20-0.49) | Moderate (0.50-0.79) | High (0.80-1.00) | | |
| | % | % | % | % | | |
| Mental intellectual maturity | 0.0 | 2.9 | 64.1 | 33.0 | 0.23 - 1.00 | 0.73 |
| Social maturity | 0.5 | 5.8 | 56.8 | 36.9 | 0.10 - 1.00 | 0.73 |
| Emotional maturity | 0.0 | 5.8 | 58.7 | 35.4 | 0.20 - 1.00 | 0.73 |

*Continue from Table*

| Dimension | Very low (0.00-0.19) | Low (0.20-0.49) | Moderate (0.50-0.79) | High (0.80-1.00) | Min-max | Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % | | |
| Moral spiritual maturity | 0.0 | 2.4 | 39.3 | 58.3 | 0.33 - 1.00 | 0.79 |
| Family life skills | 0.5 | 10.2 | 66.0 | 23.3 | 0.18 - 1.00 | 0.67 |
| Total | 0.0 | 3.4 | 72.8 | 23.8 | 0.25 - 1.00 | 0.72 |

**The Relationship between Characteristics, Marriage Age Preference, Desire to Have Children, Value of Children, And Family Readiness**

The results of the correlation test in Table 8 show that relationship status has a significantly positive relationship with the dimensions of family life skills (r=0.167; p<0.05). Someone who is in a dating relationship will prepare more quickly for his family life skills. Current parental age was significantly negatively related to the sample's social maturity.

Table 8. Correlation's coefficient of adulthood characteristics, family characteristics, marriage age preference, desire to have children, children's value, and family readiness

| Variable | Family readiness | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | KI | KS | KE | KM | KH | Total |
| Early adulthood characteristics | | | | | | |
| Age | 0.011 | -0.070 | -0.041 | -0.038 | 0.061 | -0.002 |
| Living cost | 0.031 | -0.009 | 0.097 | 0.062 | 0.026 | 0.046 |
| Personal income | 0.050 | 0.090 | 0.067 | 0.056 | 0.062 | 0.083 |
| Have married siblings | -0.064 | -0.088 | -0.078 | -0.060 | -0.065 | -0.084 |
| Relationship status | -0.033 | 0.066 | 0.056 | -0.023 | 0.167* | 0.096 |
| Family characteristics | | | | | | |
| Father's age | -0.112 | -0.157* | -0.130 | -0.052 | -0.059 | -0.118 |
| Mother's age | -0.057 | -0.168* | -0.161* | -0.040 | -0.076 | -0.123 |
| Father married age | -0.046 | 0.015 | 0.072 | 0.030 | 0.022 | 0.024 |
| Mother married age | 0.007 | -0.017 | 0.018 | 0.049 | -0.017 | 0.000 |
| Last education of father | -0.087 | -0.062 | -0.015 | 0.042 | -0.048 | -0.045 |
| Last education of mother | -0.099 | -0.062 | -0.024 | -0.007 | -0.073 | -0.070 |
| Total parental income | -0.046 | -0.038 | -0.181** | 0.002 | -0.056 | -0.075 |
| Family size | 0.005 | 0.003 | 0.014 | 0.012 | -0.021 | 0.000 |
| Marriage age preference | | | | | | |
| Ideal age for married | -0.016 | -0.075 | -0.070 | -0.071 | -0.092 | -0.089 |
| Age to marry | 0.057 | -0.095 | -0.017 | -0.021 | -0.045 | -0.040 |
| Marriageable age | 0.002 | -0.146* | -0.080 | -0.075 | -0.100 | -0.109 |
| Late age for marriage | -0.028 | -0.223** | -0.115 | -0.143* | -0.114 | -0.157* |
| Desire to have children | | | | | | |
| Desire to have children | -0.029 | 0.149* | 0.063 | 0.131 | 0.040 | 0.083 |
| The desire number of children | 0.141* | 0.236** | 0.175* | 0.192** | 0.116 | 0.205** |
| Children's value | | | | | | |
| Child benefit value | 0.187** | 0.323** | 0.208** | 0.232** | 0.086 | 0.232** |
| Child cost value | -0.082 | -0.114 | -0.045 | -0.091 | -0.049 | -0.088 |
| Total | 0.174* | 0.280** | 0.156* | 0.205** | 0.087 | 0.204** |

*Note:* ** significant at p<0.01; * significant at p<0.05; KI: intellectual maturity; KS: Social maturity; KE: Emotional maturity; KM: Moral spiritual maturity; KH: Family life skills

The higher the age of the sample's parents, the lower the social maturity of the sample. Total parental income had a significant negative relationship with emotional maturity (r= -0.181; p<0.01). The higher the parents' income, the level of emotional maturity the current example has is still low.

Marriageable age had a significant negative relationship with social maturity (r= -0.146; p<0.05). The higher the marriage age preference or marriageable age, the lower the level of social maturity. In addition, late age at marriage was negatively related to total family readiness (r= -0.157; p<0.05). The higher the preference for a late age for marriage, the higher the readiness for a family in the current example is still relatively low. The desire to have children had a significantly positive relationship with social maturity (r= 0.149; p<0.05). If someone has a strong desire to have children, then his social maturity is also high. Preference for the desired number of children has a significant positive relationship with total family readiness (r= 0.205; p<0.01). This shows that the higher the preference for the desired number of children, the higher the family readiness of the sample. A significant positive relationship was also found between total value of children and family readiness (r= 0.204; p<0.01). The higher the children's value owned by the example, the higher their family readiness.

**The Influence of Marriage Age Preference, Desire to Have Children, and Children's Value on Family Readiness**

The results of the influence test using PLS with a compiled model show a direct and indirect effect on the family readiness variable (Figure 4).
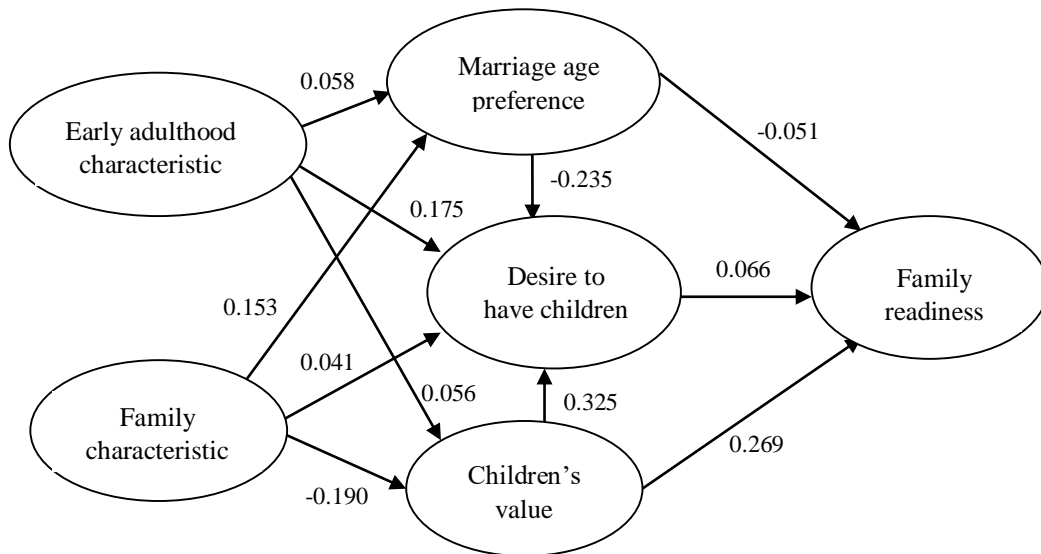


Figure 4. Model PLS test

Table 9 shows that children's values are directly and significantly negatively affected by family characteristics (β=-0.190; t>1.96). The desire to have children was directly and significantly influenced by early adulthood characteristics (β=0.180; t>1.96), marriage age preference (β=-0.235; t>1.96), and children's value (β=0.325; t>1.96). The desire to have children was also indirectly influenced by family characteristics (β=-0.098; t>1.96). The family readiness variable was significantly influenced by children's values (β=0.290; t>1.96). Meanwhile, marriage age preferences and the desire to have children had no influence on family readiness among IPB students.

Table 9. The results of the effect decomposition on the direct and indirect influence models

| Variable | Total Effect | Direct Effect | Indirect Effect |
|---|---|---|---|
| Marriage age preference | | | |
|    Early adulthood characteristics | 0.058 | 0.058 | - |
|    Family characteristics | 0.153 | 0.153 | - |
| Children's value | | | |
|    Early adulthood characteristics | 0.056 | 0.056 | - |
|    Family characteristics | -0.190* | -0.190* | - |
| Desire to have children | | | |
|    Early adulthood characteristics | 0.180* | 0.175* | 0.005 |
|    Family characteristics | -0.057 | 0.041 | -0.098* |
|    Marriage age preference | -0.235* | -0.235* | - |
|    Children's value | 0.325* | 0.325* | - |
| Family readiness | | | |
|    Early adulthood characteristics | 0.024 | - | 0.024 |
|    Family characteristics | -0.063 | - | -0.063 |
|    Marriage age preference | -0.067 | -0.051 | -0.015 |
|    Children's value | 0.290* | 0.269* | 0.021 |
|    Desire to have children | 0.066 | 0.066 | - |

*Note:* *Significant at $t>1.96$

## Discussion

Marriage age preference is measured by four indicators: ideal age for marriage, age to marry, marriageable age, and late age for marriage. The average ideal age for marriage in this study was 24.8 years old, while the age to marry and marriageable age ranges from 25 years. The results of the research on late age for marriage preferences stated by the samples of this study are at the age of 31.93 years old. The age of 20-25 years old is believed to be too late for a person's physiological condition to enter the world of marriage. Meanwhile, according to some people, getting married at the age of over 30 will take longer to adjust (Zuhdi & Yusuf, 2022).

Almost all of the participants in this study (94.75%) had a strong desire to have children. The average number of desired children was 3.01 children. This is in line with research by Arsyad et al. (2021), who found a preference for the desired number of children in millennial families who currently want more than two children. The preferred sex preference for boys was 10.2 percent and for girls was 1 %, while the rest stated that it was the same for both sexes. Oktriyanto et al. (2015) state that the reason someone who does not matter the sex of the child thinks that children are gifts from God so that regardless of the gender, they must still be grateful.

This study found that as many as 5.3 percent of the research examples stated that they doubted and did not want to have children. This is thought to have initiated the spread of childfree culture from Western countries. In developed countries, children are seen as an additional cost or economic burden to the family (Philipov et al., 2006). Recent research conducted by Neal and Neal (2021) states that community construction and academics view having children as being able to increase satisfaction and happiness in life, but on the other hand, there is recognition that having children requires significant time and financial costs so that it can reduce satisfaction and happiness in life. Based on the measurement of children's value, it can be seen that more than half of the research

samples had children's value in the moderate category, even though there was a lot of sample research with a low category for children's value.

In early adulthood, marriage is a period of adjustment to a partner's personality, which determines the continuity of further family life (Sunarti, 2013). Thus, family readiness must be considered before marriage. Sunarti et al. (2012) showed that the higher the readiness for building a family, the better the implementation of family development tasks. Judging from the dimensions of preparing for family readiness, the dimension of moral-spiritual maturity is the dimension with the highest. Overall, the average sample in this study had total family readiness in the moderate category. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Zajuli (2020), which shows that readiness for marriage among students at Majalengka University is moderate. This is due to the developmental phase of students, who still have to complete their studies or lectures and, in general, will continue their careers in their respective fields of work. Therefore, it is common to focus on having families sidetracked by the above.

The results of the correlation test on the family readiness variables indicated that the sample's dating relationship status was positively related to family readiness. As explained by Sari and Sunarti (2013), someone who is still single will begin to learn to commit, respect each other, and compromise, as well as introduce their partner and family through dating relationships. Parental income has a significant negative relationship with the dimensions of emotional maturity. The higher the income of the parents, the lower the level of emotional maturity. This is in line with Juwita and Mediasari (2021), who state that there is a difference in the average level of emotional maturity of students with middle-to-upper economic status, which is lower than that of students with middle-to-lower economic status. High parental income, of course, determines parents' working hours, which are quite solid, so the time allotted to looking after children is very limited. Togetherness that is not built causes the attachment of parents and children to be very low. This attachment between parents and children is less developed and can lead to low emotional maturity (Natalia & Lestari, 2015). A better level of emotional maturity will affect marital satisfaction (Zuhdi & Yusuf, 2022).

In this study, marital age preference had a significant negative relationship with social maturity. Goleman (2007) in Wahyudhi et al. (2019) stated that social maturity is the ability to understand other people and adapt to the local environment. The condition of a person being ready to marry must be accompanied by good social maturity. This is because marriage requires the ability to quickly adapt to new situations and environments. The longer a person's marriage age preference, the truer he is assessing his level of maturity, which still needs to be improved. In addition, a negative relationship was found between late age at marriage and moral maturity. The higher the age for marriage preference, the lower the moral and spiritual maturity. This is also mentioned in the research of Haq and Ahmed (2018), who state that religious values are strongly related to the age at marriage and the desire to have children. When someone has a strong religious understanding, it is likely to be faster to get married and desire a large number of children.

The desire to have children and the value of children had a significant positive relationship with family readiness. This shows that the stronger a person's desire to have children and the better their perception of looking at children, the better their readiness to have a family. Kim and Song's (2012) research on marital values, gender roles, and children's values states that children's values are positively related to marriage. In Godly Indonesian society, marriage is the best way to fulfill sexual and biological needs and

multiply offspring. The quality of marriage is largely determined by the readiness and maturity of the two potential partners in family life (Kemenag, 2011).

Based on the effect test, family characteristics (age of the parents married, current age of parents, and parents' last education) proved to have a significant negative effect on children's scores. This means that the older the parents were when they married and the higher the level of education of the parents, the lower the value of the child. This is because the age of the parents at the time of marriage is getting older, and higher education makes a person focus on improving their career, so they tend to have a low child benefit value (Putri, 2016). The characteristics of the sample in terms of sample age proved to have a significant positive effect on the desire to have children. The higher the age of the sample, the stronger the desire to have children. This is in line with Herawati and Hidayat's research (2020), which states that the older a person is, the higher the pressure from the environment to have children, especially for women. Therefore, this is one of the factors that often becomes a crisis in an early adult who is not married.

The results of this study also show that age preference for marriage has a significantly negative effect on the desire to have children. Sari and Sunarti (2013) stated that couples who wish to have more children will marry younger. A social phenomenon that has occurred in Korea which is also described in Park et al. (2021) shows that the average age of first marriage for Korean adults increased to 29.9 years old, which was previously 25.8 years old in the 2010-2015 period. Along with this, the trend of the average age of women for first childbirth has also increased from 26.7 years in 1996 to 31.2 years in 2015. This has also caused most families in Korea to choose to have only one child because considering the age of his wife when giving birth to a second child, she has entered a vulnerable age at the age of giving birth again.

The children's value variable was also proven to have a significant positive effect on the desire to have children. This is in line with the research of Listyaningsih and Sumini (2015), who stated that the preference for the desired number of children depends on one's view that the value of children's benefits, such as children, can help parents, be a source of happiness for parents, as offspring, and children as guarantees for old age. Likewise, research conducted on adults in Korea (Park, Lee, & Kim, 2021) shows that a more positive perception of children's values will cause the desire to have children to increase. This study is not in line with the results of Oktriyanto et al. (2015), who state that children's values do not affect the number of children desired by a couple of childbearing ages. Specifically, the desire to have children is indirectly influenced by family characteristics based on children's values. This means that the desire to have children is also influenced by family characteristics in the form of parents' married age, parents' age, and parents' last education, coupled with positive children's values.

As the smallest social unit, the family plays an important role in the development of quality human resources (Sunarti, 2015). Human resources in the family, namely parents and children. How parents assess the presence of a child is called the child's value, whereas for someone who is not married, the value of this child is just the hope that one wants if they have children later, or what is commonly called the child's value. The results of this study indicate that children's values have a significantly positive effect on family readiness among IPB students. No previous study has discussed the influence of children's values on family readiness. However, Najah et al. (2021) stated that readiness for a family can be formed if a person has a positive perception of marriage itself, including the perception of the presence of children (child value). The higher the readiness of a couple to have a family, the better the implementation of family development tasks (Sunart et

al., 2012). The same was conveyed by Tsania, Sunarti, and Pranaji (2015) that a person's maturity before marriage affects his success in carrying out family development tasks.

The limitation of this study is that the research model built has not been able to describe the factors that can affect family readiness in the sample research. The results of this study cannot be generalized to describe family readiness in early adulthood because the sampling technique was carried out using non-probability sampling. Further research is needed to identify other variables that can affect family readiness in early adulthood.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

### Conclusion

The average marriage age preference in the study sample was 25 years, while the average preference for late-age marriage was 31 years. The majority of the participants stated their strong desire to have children. The average desired number of children by the sample is three, and the majority of the samples do not care about the sex of the child. Furthermore, for children's value variable, half of the samples in this study were in the moderate category. Finally, the family readiness variable showed that the majority of the samples in this study had family readiness in the moderate category.

The results of the correlation test conducted on sample characteristics, family characteristics, marriage age preferences, desire to have children, children's values, and family readiness show that dating status has a significant positive relationship with family life skills. Parental income had a significantly negative relationship with emotional maturity. Marriage preference has a significant negative relationship with social maturity. The desire to have children and children's values have a significant positive relationship with family readiness.

The results of the PLS test showed that children's value had a significant positive effect on family readiness, while marriage age preference and desire to have children did not have a significant effect on family readiness. For this reason, young adults need to increase their understanding of the value of their children because the better the children's values, the more prepared they are to have a family. High family readiness is an important factor in achieving optimal family development tasks to create prosperous families.

### Recommendation

The results of this study indicate that children's values positively influence family readiness. Better values can help improve family readiness in early adulthood. Family institutions play a very important role in instilling and internalizing positive values related to families and children in early adulthood. Educational institutions (campuses) are also needed to increase student readiness to have a family. One way to do this is to provide family readiness programs, such as premarital counseling or premarital education. Suggestions for the government are that it will continue to expand policies and programs to understand values in Indonesian families and to increase family readiness in early adulthood. This is important considering that early adulthood is the next generation of the nation to preserve Indonesian family values in the future. Collaboration with educational institutions and families with early adult children also needs to be carried out so that existing programs and policies can be properly socialized.

It is hoped that future researchers will be able to develop further research related to family readiness for early adulthood by examining other variables that are assumed to have a strong relationship and influence with family readiness in early adulthood, such as

understanding related to family development tasks and adopting socio-cultural values. It would also be more interesting in future research to include respondents who were more diverse in terms of education level, type of work, amount of income, and socioeconomic level of their families.

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