

Marriage Preparation Criteria among University Students: A Descriptive Quantitative Study of Family Life Education

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Abstract

This study examined marriage preparation among university students in Indonesia through Family Life Education (FLE). FLE was an educational program that aimed to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes to foster harmonious family relationships and prevent family problems. The objectives were to assess students' knowledge of family life, identify key materials in FLE, and explore preferred program formats. Research data were collected from 56 University of Education Indonesia and Bandung Islamic University students using an online questionnaire via non-probability sampling, specifically voluntary sampling techniques. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA to explore differences in knowledge, material importance levels, and implementation preferences based on gender and age group. The study revealed that students were exceptionally knowledgeable about family law, roles, responsibilities, parental responsibilities, family dynamics, and money management, deeming these subjects essential for marriage preparation. Students preferred flexible FLE implementation (in-person, online, or blended), a minimum duration of 24 hours, qualified speakers, and certification. No significant differences were found based on gender or age. Integrating the FLE program into the university curriculum was considered crucial for students to acquire comprehensive knowledge, skills, and attitudes for responsible married life and family responsibilities.

Keywords: family life education, marriage preparation, program implementation, students, university

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji persiapan pernikahan di kalangan mahasiswa di Indonesia melalui Edukasi Kehidupan Keluarga (FLE). FLE adalah program pendidikan yang bertujuan untuk mengembangkan pengetahuan, keterampilan, dan sikap guna memupuk hubungan keluarga yang harmonis dan mencegah masalah keluarga. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menilai pengetahuan mahasiswa tentang kehidupan keluarga, mengidentifikasi materi kunci dalam FLE, dan mengeksplorasi format program yang disukai. Data penelitian dikumpulkan dari 56 mahasiswa Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia dan Universitas Islam Bandung melalui kuesioner online dengan metode sampling non-probabilitas, khususnya teknik sampling sukarela. Data dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan ANOVA satu arah untuk mengeksplorasi perbedaan dalam pengetahuan, tingkat pentingnya materi, dan preferensi implementasi berdasarkan jenis kelamin dan kelompok usia. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa memiliki pengetahuan yang sangat baik tentang hukum keluarga, peran, tanggung jawab, tanggung jawab orang tua, dinamika keluarga, dan pengelolaan keuangan, dan menganggap topik-topik ini esensial untuk persiapan pernikahan. Mahasiswa lebih memilih implementasi FLE

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yang fleksibel (tatap muka, online, atau gabungan), durasi minimal 24 jam, pembicara yang berkualitas, dan sertifikasi. Tidak ditemukan perbedaan yang signifikan berdasarkan jenis kelamin atau kelompok usia. Integrasi program FLE ke dalam kurikulum universitas sangat penting agar mahasiswa dapat memperoleh pengetahuan, keterampilan, dan sikap yang komprehensif untuk kehidupan pernikahan yang bertanggung jawab dan tanggung jawab keluarga.

Kata kunci: edukasi kehidupan berkeluarga, mahasiswa, persiapan pernikahan, penerapan program, universitas

Introduction

Family life education (FLE) prepares students for marriage by providing essential knowledge and materials about family dynamics, responsibilities, and resources. FLE is technically described as the professional activity of educating and enabling family members to acquire information and skills that improve well-being and fortify interpersonal relationships through an educational, preventive, and strengths-based methodology (National Council on Family Relations, 2024). Young people should consider the importance of understanding various aspects of family life, such as parental responsibilities, family relationships, and the roles and responsibilities of spouses (Asim et al., 2024; Rean, 2018). Awareness of the importance of family life education in shaping individual readiness for marriage will contribute to forming healthy and prosperous family units. Most young people today no longer consider marriage and other social milestones (e.g., finishing school and becoming parents) as critical criteria for becoming an adult (Eliason et al., 2015; Settersten et al., 2015).

While there is broad recognition that FLE can improve young people's readiness for marriage, there remains a paucity of research focusing on university students' actual knowledge, perceptions of key FLE content, and preferences for program format and implementation in the Indonesian context (Rinekasari et al., 2024; Carson & Chowdhury, 2018). Therefore, this study aims to precisely assess university students' knowledge of family life topics, identify content areas they consider most important for marriage preparation, and explore their preferences for how Family Life Education programs should be delivered within higher education settings in Indonesia. Studies have shown that FLE programs support sufficient marital and family preparation among emerging adults, despite sociocultural, educational, and programmatic barriers (Piva & Garros, 2020; Idham et al., 2020). Integrating FLE into university curricula can help address these gaps and promote stable family formation (Faradilla & Sunarti, 2024).

One core problem facing marriage preparation among Indonesian adolescents is the limited and inconsistent implementation of Family Life Education (FLE). Despite widespread recognition of the importance of well-prepared transitions into family life, many Indonesian adolescents enter marriage without adequate formal education and training on crucial family, legal, and interpersonal skills (Irfan et al., 2021; Riany et al., 2023). FLE is internationally regarded as a preventive, strengths-based educational program providing adolescents with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to develop harmonious family relationships, promote resilience, and prevent family

breakdown. However, in Indonesia, however, implementing structured FLE programs—particularly as a formal prerequisite for marriage preparation among university students—remains limited and inconsistent (Latifah & Ritonga, 2022; Wahab et al., 2017). This voluntary nature—unlike the compulsory premarital programs found in countries such as Malaysia—means that adolescents often lack systematic access to quality information on subjects like marriage law, reproductive health, financial management, and conflict resolution (Bidayati et al., 2020).

This gap has significant implications. Indonesia is consistently in the top ten countries globally for child marriages, with many adolescents entering marriage before developing adequate psychological, relational, or financial maturity (Riany et al., 2023; Fitria et al., 2024). Insufficient FLE is associated with increased vulnerability to early divorce, gender-based violence, and socioeconomic hardships among young couples. The lack of FLE also undermines understanding of legal frameworks crucial for marital stability and child protection, leaving many young adults ill-equipped to navigate legal, social, and personal challenges in family life.

Kostic et al. (2020) emphasize the process of adulthood as a series of interconnected milestones influenced by life events like marriage, childbirth, and divorce. New forms of divorce and union, cohabitation without marriage and separation, gender and intergenerational changes, and a significant fertility decline are emerging (Sassler & Lichter, 2020; Di Giulio et al., 2019). Schoon and Heckhausen (2019) highlight the influence of institutions and social norms on age-appropriate expectations, while Liu et al. (2017) underline the significant variation in expected ages and sequences of transitions across societies and sub-populations, influenced by factors like gender, ethnicity, and religion. Musyafah (2020) and Ag (2019) accentuate the importance of marriage as a sacred agreement for building a happy household. However, many marriages are solely for their sake, neglecting the rights and obligations of both parties, including marital status, children, and wealth.

Understanding marital roles and household management is crucial for marital satisfaction, fostering mutual respect, and promoting active participation in the relationship (Piva & Garros, 2020). Communication skills are crucial in addressing issues and fostering understanding within the family, enhancing the quality of life (Ramadhanti et al., 2022). Individuals' marital satisfaction is significantly influenced by their adjustment patterns and communication in their relationship, highlighting the importance of these factors in maintaining a healthy relationship (Doho & Setiawan, 2022; Garg et al., 2023).

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of Family Life Education (FLE) in promoting healthy family relationships and marriage preparation, there is a notable scarcity of research focusing on FLE in the Indonesian context, particularly over the past five years. This gap persists due to several key challenges. First, most family and parenting education research in Indonesia remains fragmented, often targeting specific issues like child development or parenting strategies, without holistically addressing adolescents' and young adults' readiness for marriage and family life in the context of broader social change (Kiling-Bunga, 2020; Riany et al., 2023). Many previous studies have centered on immediate family interactions or child well-being, but rarely have they examined structural educational interventions aimed at equipping university students

for marriage and family responsibilities (Haar et al., 2023). Family life education interventions in university settings face limitations due to poor coordination, lack of systems, and disorganized operations. These interventions are scattered, small-scale, and lack robust theoretical guidance, complicating evaluation and understanding of effectiveness for diverse student groups (Ho et al, 2022; Wu, 2023).

The limited implementation of FLE is exacerbated by short-term initiatives, lack of qualified facilitators, culturally adapted materials, and cultural norms that often downplay the importance of structured marriage preparation. Sari (2021), Faradilla and Sunarti (2024) emphasize the importance of early adulthood, adolescence, responsibility, and family readiness. They suggest mentoring and counseling activities to optimize students' developmental tasks and enhance their understanding of values. Therefore, the meaning of marriage in adolescents significantly predicts transition into young adulthood, influenced by family experiences, education, and social environment, affecting developmental trajectories and family formation (Arocho, 2021; Johnston et al., 2021). The importance of identity development, adult status, and career direction in college students aged 18-25, transitioning from adolescence to early adulthood, requires responsibility (Putri, 2019; Abdurrahman et al., 2020).

Previous studies on adolescents receiving premarital school training aimed to improve family welfare, prevent child marriage, and improve human resources. The program also provided entrepreneurship training to improve their understanding of family welfare (Riany et al., 2023). Research on Family Life Education (FLE) in Indonesia is limited, with most studies focusing on specific family dynamics rather than comprehensive curriculum-based programs. Empirical data on students' knowledge, assessment, and preferences for FLE programs is scarce. This gap hinders the development of practical and culturally relevant FLE initiatives and limits understanding of the best ways to prepare young adults for the responsibilities of marriage and family (Faradilla & Sunarti, 2024; Jatiningsih et al., 2021). The models of family education developed have some similarities but also bring unique perspectives and emphases that are important in developing effective prevention programs (Darling et al., 2022). The objectives of this study are twofold. First, it aims to assess the level of university students' knowledge regarding key topics in Family Life Education (FLE) as preparation for marriage. Second, it seeks to identify the content areas of Family Life Education and the preferred program implementation formats that students consider most important for adequate marriage preparation.

Methods

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to analyze the criteria for marriage preparation among university students, focusing on their knowledge of Family Life Education (FLE), important materials to be learned, and preferred forms of FLE program implementation.

Participants

The research was conducted at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) and Universitas Islam Bandung (UNISBA). Participants must be full-time undergraduate

students enrolled at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia and Universitas Islam Bandung, aged 18-23, and unmarried. Participants are required to voluntarily agree to participate and provide informed consent through an online questionnaire distributed via WhatsApp. Data collection occurred during 2024, as indicated by the research grant acknowledgment. The study employed a non-probability voluntary sampling method, which may limit the generalizability of the findings beyond the study population. A total of 56 respondents participated: 41 from UPI (90.2% female, 9.8% male) and 15 from UNISBA (93.3% female, 6.7% male). The age distribution was 18–20 years and 21–23 years, with the majority from UPI.

This study does not use formal approval from a university ethics committee but follows institutional guidelines. This research was conducted in a university setting. Official approval from the University Ethics Committee was still pending at the time the research was completed, and the manuscript had to be published. However, the researchers still applied research ethics principles by ensuring that participation was voluntary. They obtained informed consent from all respondents, maintaining anonymity by removing personal identities and reporting data in aggregate, and minimizing potential harm to respondents. Informed consent is a process whereby all potential participants are provided with and comprehend all necessary information to make an informed decision on their participation. This aspect encompasses information regarding the research's risks, funding, benefits, and authorization. Typically, you will furnish participants with a text for their review and inquire if they have any questions. Should they consent to participate, they may sign or initial the consent form (Ederio et al., 2023). Without formal ethics committee approval, the researchers bear full responsibility for the integrity of the research process and the scientific claims presented in this article.

Measurement

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The questionnaire comprised 26 statements divided into three main aspects. The research team developed a new instrument to assess university students' knowledge, priorities, and preferences regarding family life education (FLE) for marriage preparation. The questionnaire items were original content, not adapted from existing standardized instruments, ensuring contextual relevance and alignment with FLE domains and academic recommendations. The aspect of students' knowledge about family life, including laws like marriage law, domestic violence, and child protection, and the roles and responsibilities of spouses, was assessed. The second aspect addressed family life education materials, focusing on family types, goals, relationships, cycles, and parental duties. The third aspect of FLE program implementation examined students' preferences for formats, ideal duration, learning approaches, resource qualifications, and certification inclusion. Each aspect used a Likert scale to rate knowledge, materials, and implementation items, with each rated from strongly disagree to agree strongly.

After conducting validity and reliability tests using SPSS on 10 statements measuring students' knowledge of family life education (FLE), it was found that there were three invalid statements. These three statements were discarded and not used in

further analysis. Thus, only seven statements were deemed valid and reliable for measuring students' knowledge of FLE. All statements regarding important FLE content (6 questions) and FLE implementation (10 questions) were deemed valid and reliable. The instrument used met statistical validity criteria and can be used for accurate and consistent data collection in research. The instrument's reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.848, indicating high internal consistency, with 23 valid items retained after reliability testing.

Analysis

The study collected online student responses from two universities and various study programs, analyzing their knowledge, perceived importance of materials, and expectations for FLE program implementation. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic profiles and determine trends and distributions. One-way ANOVA tests were used to analyze the differences in knowledge, material importance, and implementation expectations among students based on demographic variables like gender and age. The results showed no significant differences, indicating homogeneity among respondent groups. Key findings included high student knowledge, identification of essential FLE materials, and preferred program implementation methods.

Findings

Demographic Distribution and Student Perception

Table 1 shows the demographic distribution of respondents regarding gender and age. Most of the demographic profile of the respondents was female students, who comprised 91.1% of the sample; males accounted for just 8.9%. This significant female majority implies that the results of this study might mirror female viewpoints on Family Life Education (FLE). Regarding age, respondents were split almost evenly between two age groups: 48.2% were 18 to 20, and 51.8% were 21 to 23. This data suggests that the sample primarily comprises students within the standard university entry age range, with a slight majority in the older age categories.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Gender and Age

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	5	8.9
	Female	51	91.1
	Total	56	100.0
Age Group (years)	18 – 20	27	48.2
	21 – 23	29	51.8
	Total	56	100.0

The ANOVA results in Table 2 examine whether there are statistically significant differences in respondents' opinions on three aspects of Family Life Education (FLE)-knowledge, implementation, and materials- based on gender and age.

Table 2 shows the findings of a one-way ANOVA test conducted to investigate whether respondents' views on family life education (FLE) components- knowledge,

materials, and program implementation- differed significantly by gender and age. Regarding gender, the F values for knowledge ($F = 1.203$, $p = 0.276$), material relevance ($F = 0.001$, $p = 0.971$), and program implementation ($F = 1.584$, $p = 0.214$) showed no statistically significant differences between male and female respondents. This finding implies that opinions regarding these elements of FLE are consistent across genders. In 2015, Jalovaara and Fasang's research revealed that within educational groups, gender differences in family-related knowledge and trajectories are negligible, suggesting that education, rather than gender, is the primary driver of knowledge in this area. Preparing for family life has become increasingly complex and nuanced in the context of shifting social values and evolving perceptions of marriage among young adults. University students, standing at the threshold of adulthood, face many challenges and expectations as they contemplate marriage and family formation. Recognizing the critical role of Family Life Education (FLE) in equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for building harmonious and resilient families.

Table 2. ANOVA results comparing aspects of family life education (fle) by respondents' gender and age

Aspect of FLE	Grouping Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Knowledge of FLE	Gender	0.637	1	0.637	1.203	0.276
	Age	0.027		0.027		
Importance of FLE Materials	Gender	0.003	1	0.003	0.001	0.971
	Age	0.503		0.503		
Implementation of the FLE Program	Gender	0.123	1	0.123	1.584	0.214
	Age	0.098		0.098		

Knowledge about Family Life Education (FLE)

Figure 1 presents the percentage of students affirming various aspects of knowledge related to family life. The results indicate that most respondents know key family life concepts and legal frameworks. About 75.60% of students reported that their parents have provided them with knowledge about family life, suggesting that family remains a primary source of foundational information. An overwhelming 95.83% believe that special knowledge about family life is necessary, reflecting a strong recognition of the importance of targeted education in this area. 86.31% of people know that husbands and wives have specific roles and responsibilities, indicating widespread understanding of marital dynamics. About 87.50% of respondents know of the Child Protection Law, demonstrating a high legal literacy regarding children's rights. About 83.93% know the Law, showing that most students recognize legal protections against domestic abuse. There are 95.83% who acknowledge that both husband and wife have defined roles within the family, underscoring the importance placed on role clarity in marital relationships. Only 52.98% reported knowing the contents of the marriage law, indicating a significant gap in detailed legal knowledge about marriage.

The data reveals a strong foundational awareness of family dynamics among students, with 95.83% recognizing the necessity of specialized family life knowledge and

87.50% aware of child protection laws (Fig. 1). However, only 52.98% understood marriage law specifics, highlighting a critical gap in legal literacy. These findings are consistent with studies emphasizing that a legal framework is crucial for marital stability (Piva & Garros, 2020), yet gaps persist despite government initiatives (Idham et al., 2020).

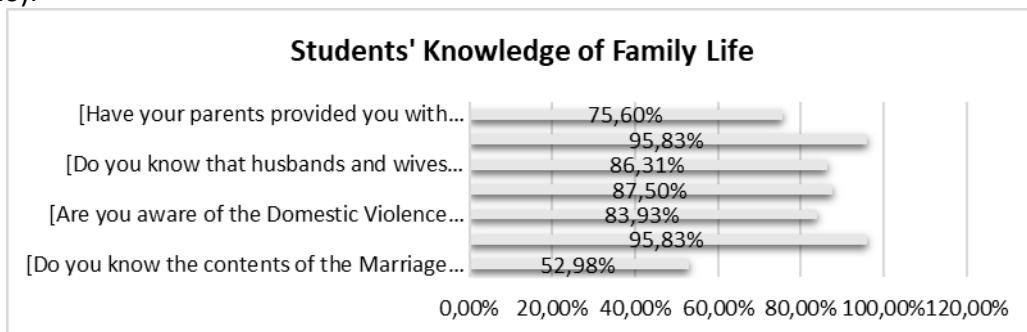


Figure 1. Students' level of knowledge related to family life

Important Materials for Family Life Education (FLE)

The selection of materials included in FLE programs profoundly shapes the quality and relevance of marriage preparation. Educators and policymakers can tailor curricula that address emerging adults' real needs and concerns by identifying which topics students deem essential, from parental responsibilities to family economics. Overall, respondents answered that the Family Life Education program material, which asked for marriage preparation, was essential. This result indicated a more than 66.67% value as an important category in answering each question (Figure 2).

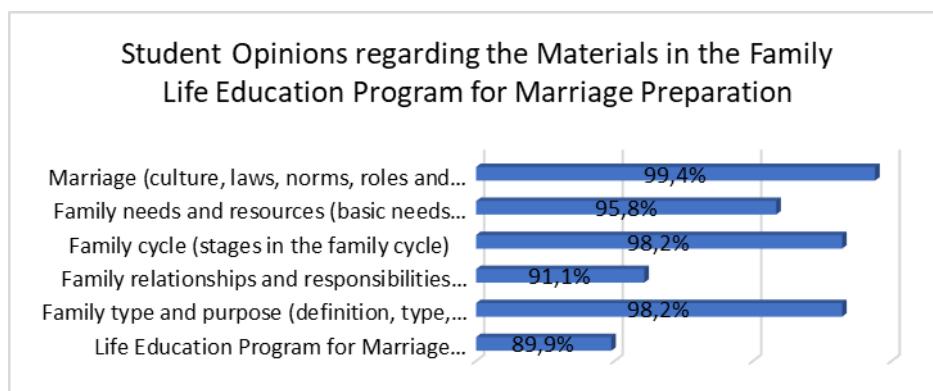


Figure 2. Important materials provided in the program family life education for marriage preparation

The order of materials categorized as necessary by respondents is parental responsibilities (roles, responsibilities, parenting, family planning) at 99.4%; the same value for the material Family needs and resources (basic needs and family resources, family economy), and Family relationships and responsibilities (the concept of relationships, rights, and responsibilities in the family, conflicts, duties in maintaining family welfare, 98.2%); Marriage (culture, laws, norms, roles and responsibilities of

husband and wife) at 95.8%; and the figures for the last two are 91.1% for Family cycle (stages in the family cycle), 89.9% for Family types and purposes (definition, types, and functions of the family). The essence of modern relationships reflects a broader social shift toward economic stability and shared responsibility (Sassler & Licher, 2020). This consensus highlights the role of FLE in addressing evolving family structures and financial pressures, which are the primary triggers for divorce (Latifah & Ritonga, 2022).

Family Life Education (FLE) Program Implementation

In the implementation section of the FLE Program for marriage preparation, several statements were stated as very good to be implemented, namely the implementation was carried out offline (81.4%); resource persons from marriage consultants (88.2%), religious leaders (86.1%), and professionals in their fields (89.3%) such as doctors, psychologists, accountants; and there was a certificate after attending the marriage preparation guidance (88.6%). According to the respondents, the excellent category is if the learning approach is done independently (67.9%) and classically (75.4%), the implementation is done online (68.2%) and blended, namely online and offline (76.8%), and the implementation time is 24 hours for three days according to the applicable guidelines in Indonesia (70.0%) (Figure 3). These preferences mirror global trends where structured, credentialled programs enhance marital readiness (Yunos, 2024) and align with Indonesia's premarital certification policies (Ramadhan & Cahyani, 2021).

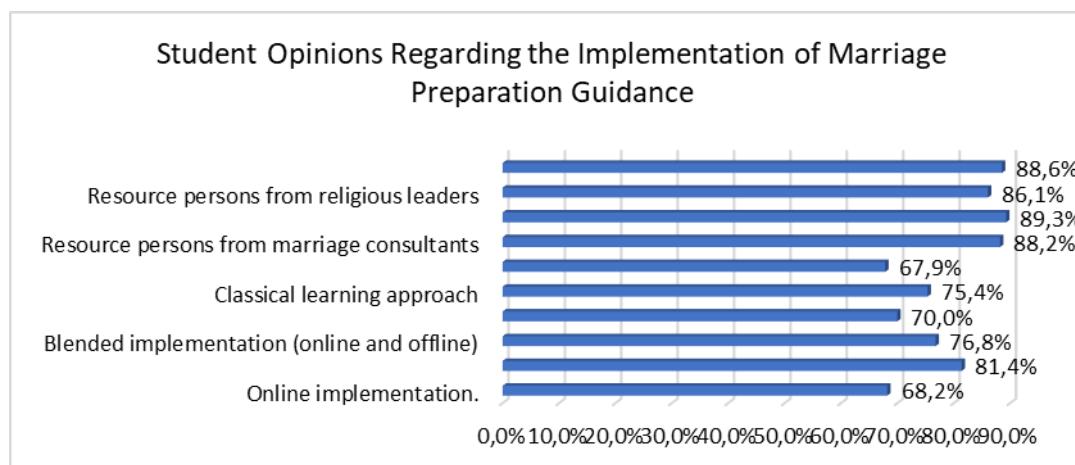


Figure 3. Form of implementation in the program family life education for marriage preparation

Discussion

In terms of the demographic results of the respondents, this study shows that the demographic breakdown of the study participants. This demographic structure indicates that the study predominantly captures the perspectives of young adult women, which aligns with known trends in voluntary sampling for topics related to family life and marriage education, as women often express higher engagement with such curricula (Asim et al., 2024; Abdurrahman et al., 2020). Previous ANOVA test results to analyze

differences in students' Family Life Education (FLE) knowledge, the perceived importance of FLE content, and preferences for program implementation, all by gender and age group. The study reveals that FLE knowledge and preferences are distributed fairly across genders and age groups, suggesting that educational exposure to FLE may serve as a leveling mechanism. The study supports the idea that well-structured curricula and inclusive delivery can reduce demographic disparities in higher education (Majdi et al., 2024; Darling et al., 2022), indicating a strong internal validity of FLE content exposure among Indonesian university students (Ho et al., 2022).

The study found no significant differences in knowledge levels between genders or age groups in Family Life Education (FLE) curricula within universities. The non-significant ANOVA results suggest that FLE knowledge variability is more likely due to individual differences beyond gender and age categories, indicating the program's uniform effectiveness (Field, 2024). This result supports the premise that universities can function as equitable platforms for disseminating family life education, crucial for preparing young adults for marital and family roles, as underscored by Asim et al. (2024) and Piva & Garros (2020), who highlight the importance of equal access to family-related knowledge for fostering healthy relationships.

In addition, this study found that Indonesian college students have a strong basic knowledge of important FLE topics relevant to marriage preparation. Specifically, almost all respondents recognized the importance of specific knowledge about family life, and more than half of respondents were aware of child protection laws. However, only a portion of respondents had an accurate understanding of the details of marriage laws, indicating a significant gap in legal literacy despite widespread awareness of the general family policy framework. The study reveals that university students generally possess a strong foundational awareness of family life policies and the legal frameworks that govern domestic relationships, such as Law No. 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence (Idham et al., 2020). This law, which prohibits physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence, is widely recognized among respondents as essential knowledge for future spouses. Students also demonstrate a solid understanding of child protection laws, acknowledging the importance of safeguarding children's rights and recognizing the state's role in upholding these protections (Hadiarni et al., 2024; Riyantika et al., 2024; Timomor & Lolong, 2023; Yuliantini, 2021). The awareness of these legal frameworks is crucial, as violations often lead to family dysfunction and have long-term negative impacts on children (Indriati et al., 2017).

Jatiningsih et al. (2021); Faradilla and Sunarti (2024) emphasize the importance of parental involvement in children's education, highlighting the need for positive communication between parents and young adults to foster positive values. Understanding the roles of husband and wife is crucial, as there can be imbalances in responsibilities, with men taking on family responsibilities while women manage the household, children, and husband (Darmawijaya & Hashanah, 2020). Abdurrahman et al. (2020) suggest that a harmonious family is built through clear roles and responsibilities, and this study emphasizes the importance of positive communication among young adults for fostering positive values.

Despite this high awareness, the findings indicate a significant gap in students' detailed understanding of the Marriage Act and the practical aspects of marital law

(Nguyen et al., 2024; Taufik et al., 2018). Many students are uncertain about legal requirements and the practical implications of marriage, highlighting the need for more targeted education in this area. Patel's study highlights youth's challenges in discussing topics like sexual and reproductive health, marriage, and family life due to cultural taboos and limited parental communication (Patel et al., 2025). Rahmah & Kurniawati (2021) emphasize the importance of family planning, focusing on delaying marriage and preventing pregnancy. Zulfa et al. (2024) highlight the need for counseling in schools and communities to educate students about marriage preparation. Family life education (FLE) programs, often conducted outside traditional school curricula, aim to strengthen family relationships and promote positive development in individuals, couples, and families (Duncan & Goddard, 2011).

The study "Students' Knowledge of Family Life" reveals students' awareness of family life concepts, including the legal framework and parents' role in knowledge transmission. However, there are gaps in understanding the Marriage Act. The FLE program strengthens attitudes towards family life, personal relationships, and sexual development. Understanding the family helps students learn social rules and influences young adults' family life and marriage priorities. Education programs help young adults align family ideals with their aspirations for a satisfying marriage (Keldal & Şeker, 2022). Families are uniquely positioned to perform this task because they are closest to us as individuals who need the information and guidance we need to learn to cope with our daily lives and the future.

This study's high level of FLE knowledge largely aligns with previous international findings that stress the need for structured, curriculum-based family education to support the transition to marriage and adult roles (Schoon & Heckhausen, 2019; Kostic et al., 2020). At the same time, the knowledge gap in marriage law specifics is consistent with broader concerns regarding legal literacy among young adults, despite ongoing governmental and institutional initiatives to address these issues (Idham et al., 2020).

Essential FLE content for marriage preparation includes family law, roles, responsibilities, family dynamics, healthy relationship skills, and money management, aligning with international perspectives on communication, financial management, and mutual respect (Piva & Garros, 2020; Garg et al., 2023). Latifah & Ritonga emphasize the importance of understanding family relationships, responsibilities, and the family cycle in marriage preparation. They highlight the complex issue of divorce, influenced by socio-economic, cultural, and interpersonal factors. Understanding these factors can reduce divorce risk and promote healthier relationships. Essential materials include marriage perspectives, law, norms, roles, responsibilities, and parental responsibilities. Ünal & Akgün (2022) and Bustan (2017) highlight the importance of premarital classes in reducing marital problems, such as irritability, hurtfulness, jealousy, and extramarital affairs, and the influence of age, involvement, and emotional intelligence on marital readiness. FLE provides essential knowledge, preparing individuals for marriage, thereby enhancing their intellectual readiness (Ningrum et al., 2021). Respondents provided insights into the implementation process of the family life education program, including its online, offline, or blended approach.

Respondents suggested implementing the FLE program for marriage preparation for 24 hours for three working days, with the course material provided for at least 16

lesson hours, and for 24 lesson hours for teenagers or prospective brides and grooms (Wahab et al., 2017; Hakim, 2017). Premarital guidance can be implemented in three days or multiple meetings, adjusting the time based on participants' opportunities. Although participants preferred classical, in-person formats such as lectures and discussions, recent research highlights the growing effectiveness of hybrid models in family life education. Studies by Ho et al. (2022) and Darling et al. (2022) show that well-designed online or blended learning methods can enhance engagement, inclusivity, and personalization. Thus, while students value face-to-face interaction—likely due to cultural norms around authority and relational engagement—current evidence suggests that flexibility in program delivery can extend reach without compromising quality.

Direct interaction between participants and teachers in a learning system positively impacts both parties. Social interaction occurs through contact and communication, with the effectiveness of offline, online, or blended learning approaches varying depending on the individuals involved. Factors to consider include instructor role, self-awareness, learning type, and domain (Arghode et al., 2017). Respondents suggest involving religious leaders, marriage consultants, and professionals in implementing the FLE program for marriage preparation. They value integrating religious perspectives into marriage preparation, as studies show it improves students' understanding and readiness for marriage (Riany et al., 2023). Regarding delivery formats, respondents preferred blended and offline implementations, while online-only approaches were less preferred. Yunos (2024) highlights the effectiveness of blended and face-to-face premarital education formats, despite concerns about digital platforms' limitations in handling complex topics, leading to less favored online implementation (Yunos, 2024).

The premarital certificate recommendation is based on the absence of penalties for marriage preparation activities, but the government policy requiring premarital certificates for sons' guidance is invalid in Islamic marriage. Most respondents approve a certificate as proof of participation in marriage preparation guidance activities, as it authenticates participation in the premarital course, recommended for prospective couples post-marriage (Hidayat, 2020). Indonesia's Ministry of Religion mandates a premarital certificate for prospective brides to reduce divorces by providing comprehensive knowledge about family life and preparation (Ramadhan & Cahyani, 2021).

Indonesia's premarital programs require couples to complete legal, health, and relational counseling, reducing impulsive decisions and increasing awareness of domestic violence laws, promoting healthier marital foundations (Ismerina et al., 2025). Respondents' commitment to FLE aligns with international research indicating that comprehensive, immersive programs lead to more lasting improvements in marital readiness (Majdi et al., 2024; Sugandhi et al., 2021). However, Kostic et al. (2020) emphasize that the success of such programs hinges on their alignment with cultural values and effective skill transfer into family life. Moreover, durability is a key factor for respondents, but content relevance and interactive strategies are also essential for long-term behavioral change (Darling et al., 2022).

Indonesia and other countries are implementing premarital guidance and eligibility screening policies, focusing on structured family life education to reduce

domestic violence and improve marital standards (Ismerina et al., 2025). Preventive education literature suggests practical family skills application depends on quality training, ongoing support, and culturally sensitive adaptation of marital norms, highlighting the dynamic interactions between family structures (Feinberg et al, 2022; Wahab et al., 2017). Primary prevention-oriented family life education focuses on developing knowledge and skills to build strong relationships before problems arise, thereby preventing issues (Duncan & Goddard, 2011). *Maslahat*, or good conduct, is a principle in premarital certification that aims to reduce domestic violence, rights violations, and divorce cases, in line with Sharia's Islamic laws (Hidayat, 2020).

University students prefer flexible FLE program implementation formats, including a minimum 24-hour intensive, online, or blended format, with high-quality resource persons, classical learning methods, interactive assignments, and participant-facilitator interactions, and certification as an incentive. Research shows that comprehensive premarital programs improve knowledge and preparedness (Majdi et al., 2024; Sugandhi et al., 2021). , while certification and qualified speakers are valued in contemporary family life education practices (Wahab et al., 2017).

The study reveals that students with a higher interest in family life education have higher knowledge and positive attitudes, highlighting the importance of FLE programs in preparing individuals for marriage. Factors like cultural background, socio-economic status, and previous exposure to FLE play key roles. The study used a non-probability (voluntary) sampling method with a small sample predominantly composed of female students. Such a sample introduces possible selection bias and limits findings' external validity and generalizability to the broader Indonesian university population. Voluntary participation might lead to the overrepresentation of students who already possess or value FLE knowledge, potentially skewing results. Future research should use representative sampling, diverse university populations, longitudinal approaches, and explore barriers to legal literacy and engagement with critical marital law topics.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

This study set out to evaluate university students' knowledge levels regarding critical Family Life Education (FLE) topics, identify which FLE content areas and delivery formats students deem most important, and explore preferences for program implementation in the context of marriage preparation in Indonesia. The findings indicate that university students moderately understand key FLE topics relevant to marriage preparation. However, the data reveal no statistically significant differences in knowledge, the perceived importance of FLE materials, or preferences for FLE program implementation across gender and age groups. This result suggests a broad consensus among students, regardless of demographic differences, regarding the value and content of family life education for marriage readiness.

Despite acknowledging the importance of FLE, current program offerings and their implementation in higher education remain limited, primarily voluntary, and inconsistently delivered. Students universally recognize the need for comprehensive coverage of topics such as marriage law, reproductive health, financial management,

and conflict resolution, reflecting their desire for practical preparation for family life. Furthermore, students favor structured, accessible, and relevant FLE integrated within the university.

Recommendation

The study suggests universities should incorporate comprehensive Family Life Education (FLE) into their curricula to equip students with essential knowledge for marriage preparation. FLE programs should be flexible, accessible, and delivered by qualified professionals. Implementation requires collaboration among policymakers, universities, and stakeholders. Future research directions for Family Life Education (FLE) in higher education include qualitative studies, case studies, and examining stakeholders' perspectives to gain deeper insights into students' experiences, motivations, and challenges in preparing for marriage and family life.

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