



The Factors That Cause Early Marriage and the Impact on the Psychology of Couples in Rural Areas

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ABSTRACT

Early marriage is a global problem that has an impact on maternal and infant morbidity and mortality. The number of early marriages in Indonesia is increasing. The rate of early marriage in Ponorogo reaches 100%. The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that cause early marriage and its impact on psychology. This study used a cross-sectional design with a sample unit of 75 families of early married couples. The samples came from 3 sub-districts in the Ponorogo district, namely Sawoo, Ngrayun, and Pulung. The variables studied consisted of the dependent variable, namely the psychology of the couple, and the independent variable, namely the reason for marriage. The confounding variables are husband's age, wife's age, husband's education, and wife's education. The analysis used is logistic regression. The results show that there is no relationship between the reasons for getting married to the psychological condition of the couple. This happens because early marriage in rural areas has become commonplace so that psychological conditions with various reasons for marriage have the same psychological impact.

Keywords: *Early Marriage; Psychology; Rural Areas*

1. INTRODUCTION

Early marriage is a marriage that occurs at a young age, with an age range that varies from 15-19 years [1]–[5]. The prevalence of early marriage in South Asia reaches 21-62% [6], [7]. The results of the 2013 Riskesdas data show that the age of first marriage in Indonesia is 15-19 years old (41.9%) and there are still 4.8% who get married for the first time at the age of 10-14 years [8]. Meanwhile, according to Komnas Perempuan [9], the number of Indonesian women married for the first time under the age of 19 years is 45%. Based on UNICEF data, early marriage in the world reaches 12 million per year.

The causes of early marriage in Indonesia are influenced by many factors, including: low education, economic needs, young marriage culture, arranged marriages, premarital sex in adolescents, and religious understanding [10], [11]. Adolescents who marry early have several characteristics, including low levels of education or dropped-out of school, 15-16-year average age at marriage, and being economically under the responsibility of their parents [12], [13].

Married adolescents tend to experience conflicts by which it is indicated that they are emotionally unstable, making them unable to understand each other. Eventually, the family conflicts could be the trigger of domestic violence. Such family experiences might result in painful feelings that are likely ended up with stress in the family [14]. The causes of the conflicts could be economic problems, adjustments to each individual's personal characteristics, or interference from other families. Early marriage is also associated with poor mental health, such as suicide, lack of self-esteem and depression [15].

The frequency of early marriage in rural areas is 3 times higher experienced by those at the age of less than 18 years than in urban areas. Girls living in rural areas are more likely to experience early marriage than in urban areas. Therefore, religion can also be a cause of early marriage. In addition, low education, strong traditions and community perspectives can also lead to early marriage, especially in rural areas [16], [17].

Preventing early marriage is considered to be one of the most important things to be done. Children should be provided with education related to the consequences of

early marriage. Furthermore, regulations for the authorities about marriage over 19 years old should be made. It is also expected that the government provides educational assistance and motivates children to maximize their education in order to delay prevent early marriage [18].

2. METHOD

This study used a cross-sectional study design, with the sampling unit of early-married families, who were married in 2019-2021. The number of samples was 75 families. The data collection used was probability sampling technique, by administering cluster random sampling in each sub-district. The variables in this study consist of the independent variable, which was the cause of early marriage, and the dependent variable, which was

the psychology of the couple. Variables with potential confounding included husband's age, wife's age, husband's education and wife's education. This study used multiple logistic regression analysis. This research has passed the ethical test from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo with the number 99/ER/KEPK/2021 on June 18, 2021.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

In this section, the results of the percentage of respondents' characteristics will be discussed. The characteristics of respondents based on the sample of 75 families of early marriage couples are as follows:

Table 1 Respondent Characteristic

Variable	n	%
reason of married		
personal desire	60	80%
parents desire	3	4%
unwed pregnancy	12	16%
psychology		
Good	19	25%
Worse	56	75%
Husband's age		
Adolescent	61	81%
Adult	14	19%
Wife's age		
Early adolescent	9	12%
Late adolescent	66	88%
Husband's education		
Student	6	8%
Not student	69	92%
Wife's education		
student	10	13%
Not student	65	87%

Based on Table 1., most early marriages are due to personal desire that is as many as 80%. However, there are 16% cases caused by out-of-wedlock pregnancies. The decisions to get married in early ages are taken due to the huge love felt, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, pressures from parents, regional traditions followed that result in decisions taken based on the inner need, namely

happiness. The doers of early marriage receive a number of negative consequences from the early marriage such as experiencing some pressures such as sadness, confusion, discomfort, or regret [19]. However, a study in Gambia mentions that the causes of early marriage are the factor of ethnicity and practices regarding social norms and cultures [20].

Table 2 The relationship between reasons for marriage and the psychology of early marriage partners

Variable	Category	Psychology				Total	P value	OR
		Worse		Good				
		n	%	n	%			
reason of married	parents desire	2	67%	1	33%	3	0.748	1.5
	unwed pregnancy	9	75%	3	25%	12	1,000	1
	personal desire	45	75%	15	15%	60	ref	
Husband's age	Adolescent	45	74%	16	26%	61	0.710	1.3
	Adult	11	78%	3	22%	14	ref	
Wife's age	Early adolescent	5	56	4	44	9	0.172	2.7
	Late adolescent	51	77	15	23	66	ref	
Husband's education	student	5	83	1	17	6	0.615	0.56
	Not student	51	75	18	25	75	ref	
Wife's education	student	7	70	3	30	10	0.716	1.3
	Not student	49	75	16	25	75	ref	

Based on the bivariate analysis results between main independent variables and variables with confounding potential, these show that the p-value > alpha. From the statistical analysis between independent and dependent variables, it shows that there is no correlation between both variables. It means that any reasons of early marriage couples have no influence of psychological condition of the couples. Even so, there is a tendency that worse psychological condition of early marriage couples

can be found among couples who get married due to out-of-wedlock pregnancies and among those getting married because of their own wish, among those with husbands who are in teen age category, wives in the late teen age, and among those dropping out of schools (Table 2). Next, multivariate analysis was taken to identify the correlation between the marriage reasons and variables with confounding potential simultaneously toward the psychological variable.

Table 3 Multivariate analysis of the relationship between reasons for marriage and the psychology of early marriage partners

Variable	Category	B	OR	SE	95% CI	P value
reason of married	parents desire	0,02	1,02	1,38	0,07-14,42	0,99
	unwed pregnancy	0,66	1,9	2,07	0,23-15,72	0,54
	personal desire		Ref			
Husband's age	Adolescent	-0,33	0,7	0,53	0,16-3,07	0,65
	Adult		Ref			
Wife's age	Early adolescent	-1,15	0,3	0,27	0,05-1,79	0,19
	Late adolescent		Ref			
Husband's education	student	0,60	1,8	2,35	0,14-22,8	0,64
	Not student		Ref			
Wife's education	student	-0,42	0,6	0,66	0,09-4,68	0,67
	Not student		Ref			

The results of multivariate logistic regression analysis indicate that among couples who get married due to out-of-wedlock pregnancies, the probability to have bad psychological condition is 1,9 times higher compared to those getting married based on their own wish. If seen from the p-value, there is no significant correlation between the marriage reasons couples' psychological condition. It happens because they live in villages having strong traditions where early marriage has become a common thing. Based on a study conducted in Pakistan, the results show that early marriage becomes a depression risk factor [6].

3.2. Discussion

Based on the psychological condition of early marriage couples, there are 56% couples having bad condition. It is in line with the research showing that early marriage becomes a depression risk factor (6). It indicates that the immature emotional age makes the early marriage couples unable to understand each other. Therefore, there are various conflicts triggering fights which sometimes result in domestic violence. This experience makes the early marriage couples are hurt by the negative experiences on the problems they are dealing with so that it triggers stress in family [14].

If seen from the age of the husband and wife, most husbands are in teen ages that is 81%. Meanwhile, the

wives are mostly in their late teen ages. From the previous research results, the average of the female teenagers when getting married is 17.7 years old or in the category of the late teen age (21). On the other hand, Shahabuddin's study confirms that the average of the female teenagers when getting married in Bangladesh is 16 years old or in the category of early teen age (3). The age gap when getting married between female and male teenagers is 6-0 years or the husband age when getting married is 20-30 years old meaning that the starting age of husbands is categorized as an adult age [3], [19]. Thus, this condition is in contrast with the results of the ongoing research.

Based on the educational condition when having early marriage, most husbands have been dropped out from schools which is 92%. Meanwhile, there is 13% of wives still attending schools. It is in accordance with the existing research that there is only a small part of these couples continuing their study after marriage. Most of them drop out of school before or after marriage with the husband's education level in junior high school [3], [19].

The decisions of having early marriage are the huge love felt, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, pressures from parents, regional traditions followed that result in decisions taken based on the inner need, namely happiness. The doers of early marriage receive a number of negative consequences from the early marriage such as experiencing some pressures such as sadness, confusion, discomfort, or regret (19). The immature emotional age makes the couple in early marriage unable to understand each other. Therefore, there are various conflicts triggering fights which sometimes result in domestic violence. This experience makes the early marriage couples are hurt by the negative experiences on the problems they are dealing with so that it triggers stress in family [14]. The factor of tradition becomes one of the early marriage causes in which daughters are considered as a burden so that through a marriage, the economic status will raise [20].

4. CONCLUSION

The research results present that there is no correlation between the reasons for marriage and the partner's psychological condition. It happens because early marriage in rural areas has become common so that any psychological conditions with various reasons for marriage have the same psychological impact.

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