



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Early marriage of Madurese women: A case study

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ABSTRACT

Early marriage in Indonesia has become an issue that has attracted the attention of various child and women's monitoring institutions since the proposed revisions to Marriage Law Number 1 of 1974, explicitly increasing the age limit for women's marriages from 16 years to 18 years. The effort to submit a revision to the law itself is based on various problems caused by the existence of early marriage. However, in contrast to the conditions in Madura, early marriage does not always cause problems such as these findings. Madurese women who marry early can also achieve happiness and harmony. This research aims to describe ethnic Madurese women who marry early using qualitative methods with a case study approach. The research participants were Madurese women who married under 18 years and the age of marriage under 10 years. Data collection is done using interviews. The data analysis technique uses the Miles & Huberman interactive model, starting with data collection, reduction, data display, conclusions, and drawing/ verification. The technique of checking the validity of the data is to test credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The study found that the participants initially perceived early marriage as unpleasant, but it has become suitable for their lives.

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INTRODUCTION

Humans in their life span will go through stages of development, from prenatal to adulthood (Sanrock, 2007; Zulkifli, 2001). One of the periods in the human life span is adolescence (Hurlock, 1994), which is divided into early adolescence (12–15 years), middle adolescence (15–19 years), and late adolescence (19–22 years) (Agustiani, 2009; Mönks et al., 2001). In adolescence, this data shows many marriages in Indonesia (Katalog Badan Pusat Statistik, 2016). Adolescents should prepare for marriage and family (Havighurst in Hurlock, 1994) but carry out marriage. Mönks et al. (2001) mention the condition of these adolescents as “adolescence shortened” because they are married and enter adulthood in adolescence. Data from the World Fertility Policies United Nations in 2011 shows that early marriage in Indonesia ranks 37th out of 73 countries, while in Southeast Asia, Indonesia is in second place after Cambodia (Kompas, 2017b; Rubaidah, 2016). In their development, Trihendrawan (2017) and Juniman (2017) even suggested that the United Nations (UN) itself classified Indonesia as number 7 in the world for the category of absolute early marriage. This data is also supported by a variety of information about early marriage in Indonesia, which can be found in various online media as follows: (1) Marriage of a 14-year-old couple in Bulukumba, South Sulawesi, on 13 July 2017 (Bahri,

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2017); (2) Marriage of a 15-year-old couple in Baturaja, South Sumatra, on 17 May 2017 (Kumparan, 2017); (3) A total of 333 adolescents from North Luwu Regency, Makassar City, Pinrang District, Sinjai Regency, Soppeng Regency, and Wajo Regency are married throughout 2017 (Fitriani, 2017); (4) Marriage in Jeneponto, South Sulawesi, on 29 May 2016, with a 13-year-old bridegroom and 14-year-old bride (Liputan6, 2016).

Early marriages that still occur in Madura cannot be separated from the power of Islam (Fawaid & Hadi, 2015; Rachmad, 2017) and the culture that is still firmly adhered to by the Madurese community (Rachmad, 2017; Sakdiyah & Ningsih, 2013; Yunitasari et al., 2016). According to Rachmad (2017), Madurese consider marriage to be an individual right and obligation, not the state that regulates it. The truth about early marriage is considered a form of moral embodiment in Islamic Madurese society and has become a cultural convention. Therefore, early marriage can be a cultural relativism of the Madurese people. Furthermore, Rachmad (2017) even stated that the government would not easily regulate Madurese people with a relatively solid Islamic culture because this culture is still upheld and maintained by the next generation.

Apart from the factors that influence the occurrence of early marriage in Madura, several pieces of literature have explored that early marriage can cause problems for couples, such as arguments, constant bickering, and clashes between husband and wife (Aryanto, 2017; Maemunah, 2008), disharmony, lack of awareness to be responsible in household life (Jannah, 2011), cut-off access to education (Sakdiyah & Ningsih, 2013), impact on reproductive health (Salmah, 2016), population explosion, economic and psychological problems, domestic violence, and divorce (Kompas, 2017a; Setyawan & Herdiana, 2016). However, as described above, early marriage's various problems and negative impacts do not constantly occur in Madurese women who marry early. This is because the results of other studies show that Madurese women who marry early can also achieve happiness and harmony in their formal marriages (Bawono & Suryanto, 2019; Zumriyah, 2016).

Based on the description, it can be said that these early marriages can also achieve happiness in their marriages and not end in divorce. This is in accordance with the findings of Diananda (2016) that the three research subjects achieved happiness in marriage even though they were teenagers. Hidayati and Uyun's research (2017) also found that of the four research subjects, three subjects were happy with their early marriage. Besides achieving happiness in their marriage, couples who get married early can also achieve subjective well-being. Miswiyawati and Lestari (2017) found that young married couples, ranging from parents to siblings, could show satisfaction with their families. Young married couples also feel positive effects, including being happy to live in a house with their partner because they feel loved by their partner and get support from the family.

At this level, the author captures a mismatch between the results of previous studies. On the one hand, it is said that early marriage has an adverse effect, especially on women. However, on the other hand, it is said that Madurese women who carry out early marriages can achieve harmony and happiness in their marriages. Furthermore, this study was conducted to determine the factors of early marriage and happiness in the early marriage of ethnic Madurese women.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative method with a case study approach. Participants in this study were six Madurese women living in Madura: two from Bangkalan Regency, one from Pamekasan Regency, and three from Sumenep Regency with criteria including Madurese women when married under the age of 18 years and the age of marriage under 10 years. Data collection used interviews. Data analysis techniques used are the interactive model of Miles & Huberman with the starting data collection, data

reduction, data display, conclusions: and drawing/verification. Figure 1 describes the data analysis technique in the research.

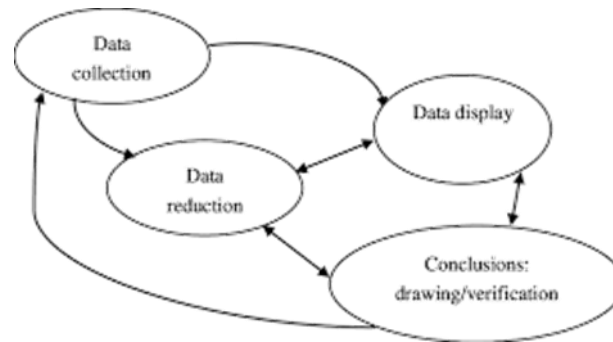


Figure 1. The interactive model of Miles & Huberman

The technique of checking the validity of the data in this study is to test credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

RESULT

Matchmaking (*pajhudan*) is one of the factors in early marriage in Madura

The authors found that two out of six participants from the Sumenep Regency married early because of an arranged marriage by their parents. They initially refused the match but eventually accepted it, engaged briefly, and finally carried out their marriage. When undergoing their marriage, they can finally feel satisfaction, happiness, and positive and negative effects on their marriage (participant interview 3 lines 27–35, lines 96–99, lines 111–115, lines 117–121, lines 279–281, lines 301–305, and lines 338–342; interview participants 4 lines 21–23, lines 37–39, and lines 46–50).

In this study, one participant from Sumenep Regency said that she married early because of an arranged marriage by her parents. She felt unprepared to get married, but she finally received an arranged marriage because she had to obey her parents. In contrast to Z, who initially did not want to be engaged, E, also from Sumenep Regency, said that if she received her marriage through an arranged marriage for her parents, Although initially upset and dizzy, she finally gave up her parents' marriage.

Happiness in the early marriage of Madurese women

In this study, although initially, Madurese women objected to their marriage, after undergoing it, they felt happy. It was also found in participants who married early because of their wishes; they also felt happy. The form of participant happiness can be found through answers such as: (a) Happy if there are no arguments (participant interview 1 line 108 and row 159; participant interview 4 line 17); (b) Happy if not lack of money (participant interview 4 line 18); (c) Happy when close to husband (participant interview 2 lines 29-31); (d) Happy if spoiled by a husband (interview participant 1 line 361-362); (e) Happy if the husband earns income (participant interview 1 line 379-380); (f) Happy if husband likes to joke (participant interview 2 lines 36-37); (g) Happy when sick take care of each other (participant interview 3 lines 65-66); (h) Happy if the husband is not often angry (participant interview 3 lines 307-308; participant interview 4 lines 109-112); and (i) Happy when sharing their experiences (participant interviews 4 lines 141-145).

DISCUSSION

Marriage usually occurs through careful planning and preparation. However, marriage can also occur without prior planning. Several previous studies have shown that teenagers who are still

teenagers end their teenage years by getting married early because they are pregnant first. In their research, Rahman, Syahadatania, Aprillisya, and Afika (2015) found that early marriage had to be done because young women were pregnant. Teenagers who get married because of pregnancy often undergo marriage compulsively, and many do not have any preparation. A marriage that is carried out with compulsion and without preparation will impact psychological and socio-economic conditions (Fajriyah & Laksmiwati, 2014). Adolescents who marry because of pregnancy are often blasphemed, rejected, considered bearers of disgrace, or become material gossip in their environment (Ikhsan, 2004). In addition to teenage pregnancy having a psychological impact, as outlined above, Sari (in Indriastuti, 2017) revealed that pregnancy in adolescents (aged less than 17 years) could increase the risk of medical complications for mothers and children. Pregnancy at a very young age correlates with maternal mortality and morbidity. The age at which sexual intercourse first occurs also increases the risk of sexually transmitted diseases and the transmission of HIV infection. Marriage at a young age is also a risk factor for cervical carcinoma.

Furthermore, Bety (2013) and Thahura (2020) stated that early marriage is also challenging to achieve a successful marriage because, psychologically and spiritually, it is unstable. Early marriage causes a shocking role that causes frustration for the actual husband and wife, who are still adolescents, with the demands of their role as adults. This frustration can foster ignorance toward his new family so that a mismatch can end in a family split or divorce (Joko in Indriastuti, 2017).

In the previous studies, it was mentioned that early marriage in Madura occurs due to matchmaking (*pajhudan*) tradition, both in the womb and when children are born (Fawaid & Hadi, 2015; Munawara et al., 2015; Rahayu & Bawono, 2017; Sadik, 2014; Sakdiyah & Ningsih, 2013). Apart from the matchmaking that was initially not approved by Madurese women, the tradition of matchmaking that continues with the occurrence of early marriage in Madura has continued until now because Madurese women feel happy with their marriage. Although initially, Madurese women refused their marriage, they could accept it and feel happy after undergoing it. This is what she said:

"Yaa ndaklah. Menurut saya, yang lalu biarlah berlalu pak. Saya jalani yang sekarang. Soalnya saya kan sudah menerima dia. Yaa.. Alhamdulillah-lah seneng. Bikin dia seneng. Saya seneng juga. Jadi imam yang baik. Semoga suami saya menjadi imam yang baik, seterusnya.. ("I do not. In my opinion, then let it go, sir. I live now. The thing is, I already received him. Yes .. Alhamdulillah, it is happy. Make him happy. I am happy too. Become a good priest (imam). May my husband be a good priest (imam), so on ... ") (interview with Z, lines 338-344).

This finding supports previous research, which states that early marriage makes couples happier, even though they are still teenagers (Diananda, 2016). The research of Hidayati and Uyun (2017) also found that three of the four research subjects were happy with their early marriage. Happiness in early marriage is also found in Madurese women (Bawono & Suryanto, 2019; Zumriyah, 2016). Besides achieving happiness manifested in satisfaction in an early marriage, couples who get married early can also positively affect their marriage. Based on the results of their research, Miswiyawati and Lestari (2017) found that young married couples were able to show satisfaction with their families, ranging from parents to siblings. Young married couples also feel positive effects, including being happy to live in a house with their partner because they feel loved by their partner and get support from the family. Achieving a condition that is "fine" is what makes some people support the occurrence of underage marriage or early marriage. The community considers that it is a human right to get married according to the rules in Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights Article 10, which reads: "(1) Every person has the right to form a family and continue the descent through a legal marriage; (2) A legal marriage can only take place at the free will of the prospective husband and wife in accordance with the provisions of legislation" (Triyanto, 2013).

According to Triyanto (2013), religious norms (especially Islam) do not forbid or oppose underage marriage because the law is arbitrary (mubah). The Marriage Law provides dispensation to couples who are not old enough to get married. For Muslims, those ready to get married are required to marry rather than commit adultery. In the Marriage Law, the age limit for marriage for men is 19 years and 16 years for women. Whereas in the Child Protection Act, the age of marriage is 18 for both women and men. This is what causes the gap in early marriage.

In Indonesia, several regions, including Madura, still carry out the tradition of early marriage because of the strong culture and teachings of religion (Islam) that are held firmly there. Thus, efforts to revise the age limit for marriage need to be followed by other efforts. This is as stated by Sunarti (2018): an increase in the age of marriage to increase marriage maturity and readiness should be accompanied by a guarantee of child protection from pornography and sexual deviation. Without these guarantees, increasing the age of marriage increases the risk of sexual misconduct.

Based on the explanation above, many factors need to be considered when revising Marriage Law Number 1 of 1974, especially regarding the age limit for marriage. According to Riyono (2018), marriage is a solution that is both preventive and constructive at the same time to build a healthy and prosperous society. Early marriage is not an age problem but a multidimensional problem that must be solved comprehensively. When we misunderstand this problem, the limitation of the age of marriage, mainly if it is raised to the age limit, will not solve the problem. However, it will complicate the problem and threaten the nation's future.

CONCLUSION

This study found that early marriage in Madura is inseparable from the tradition of arranged marriages. In one area in Madura, even people consider this tradition to be preserved because it is inherited from the ancestors. The tradition of early marriage is ongoing because Madurese women, in early marriages, can achieve happiness. This condition makes Madura different from other regions in Indonesia, so it is necessary to consider how to find solutions comprehensively. Though ethnic Madurese women in their early marriages can achieve happiness, they still need assistance. This is because, in conditions of marriage age that are not yet ideal but can achieve happiness, their condition needs to be maintained so that it does not lead to divorce.

DECLARATION

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Author contribution statement

Yudho Bawono composed the research.

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Data access statement

The data described in this article can be accessed by contacting the author.

Declaration of interest's statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Additional information

No additional information is available for this paper.

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