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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

ISSN: 2477-4073

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE OF MARRIAGEABLE AGE, EDUCATION, MATCHMAKING AND CHILD MARRIAGE IN FEMALES IN BANJARNEGARA INDONESIA

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Abstract

Background: Teenage marriage is still found in developing countries including in Indonesia. The percentage of teenage marriage in females in Indonesia in 2016 was 11.5%. Various factors related to teenage marriage are education, knowledge, economy, and culture. Impacts caused by teenage marriages include pregnancy in adolescence which results in increased maternal and infant deaths, dropouts, and poor quality of the family. The prevalence of teenage marriage in Banjarnegara in 2016 was 23% higher than the national prevalence.

Objective: This study aims to determine the correlation between factors related to knowledge of marriageable age, education, matchmaking and child marriage in females in Banjarnegara Indonesia.

Methods: This was a correlational cross-sectional study. There were 96 respondents selected using proportionated stratified random sampling. Chi square and logistic regression were used for data analysis.

Results: Findings show that there were statistically significant correlations between knowledge of marriageable age, education and child marriage. There was no significant relationship between matchmaking and child marriage. The respondents with low knowledge were 0.5 times more likely to have child marriage compared with those with high knowledge ($p = 0.001$, 95% CI = 0.320-0.782).

Conclusion: Knowledge of marriageable age was considered as the dominant factor affecting child marriage in Banjarnegara Indonesia. It is suggested that health care providers should continuously promote about the impact of child marriage to increase the knowledge of marriageable age.

Keywords: teenage marriage; knowledge; age marriage maturity

INTRODUCTION

Married at the age of less than 18 years is a reality that must be faced by some children in the world. More than 700 million women married as children. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in 2014 states that child marriage is a formal or informal marriage undertaken under the age of 18 years. The practice of child

marriage is still ongoing in various parts of the world and this reflects the protection of the neglected young age group's rights (UNICEF, 2014). According to IPPF (IPPF, 2006), child marriage is defined as marriage that occurs before the child reaches the age of 18 years, before physically, physiologically, and psychologically mature. In Indonesia, the

prevalence of marriage of girls aged 15-19 years is 11.5%. The highest prevalence is in the Bangka Belitung Islands, South Kalimantan and East Java. Bangka Belitung is a married area of adolescent girls with the highest prevalence, but the absolute number of adolescent girls ever married is one of the lowest in Indonesia. Viewed from absolute figures, East Java, West Java and Central Java have the highest number of adolescent girls ever married (236,404; 220,501; and 160,273 respectively) ([BPS, 2016](#)).

The intention-behavior relation can be disrupted if participants experience one affective state when their intentions are being assessed, and another when they perform the behavior. When different beliefs are activated in the survey context and in the behavior contexts, they will produce different attitudes, subjective norms and/or perceptions of control, resulting in different intentions. The intention assessed at the survey stage will then be a relatively poor predictor of actual behavior because a different intention is active in the behavioral context ([Ajzen, 2011](#)). The dictum that 'past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior' is supported by much empirical evidence. The finding of a strong correlation between past and later behavior attests to the temporal stability of the particular behavior and its antecedents. Moreover, it is often found that a measure of past behavior contributes to the prediction of future behavior even after the predictors have been accounted for ([Ajzen, 2011](#)).

Protecting girls from child marriage is an important factor in improving maternal and child health. Child marriage is closely related to pregnancy at a young age that endangers the health of young mothers. Pregnancy at a young age also increases the likelihood of maternal mortality at delivery ([UNICEF, 2007](#)). Study says that child marriage denies girls' right to make vital decisions about their sexual health and well-being. It forces them out of education and into a life of poor prospects, with an increased risk of violence, abuse, ill health or early death. Early pregnancy is one of the most dangerous causes and consequences of this

harmful practice. Girls married early are more likely to experience violence, abuse and forced sexual relations. They are more vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections (including HIV) ([Verma, Sinha, & Khanna, 2013](#)).

Young married girls face adverse effects on their health as a result of childbirth at an early age, increased risk of domestic violence, malnutrition, and sexual and reproductive health disorders. They experience poor conditions for all health, social, and economic indicators compared to girls delaying marriage age, including lower levels of education and higher poverty rates ([BPS, 2016](#)). Child marriage causes pregnancy and childbirth at a young age associated with maternal mortality because the female body is not fully mature to give birth. Girls aged 10-14 years are five times more likely to die in cases of pregnancy and childbirth than women aged 20-24 years. In general, pregnancy is the leading cause of death of girls ages 15-19 ([BPS, 2016](#)). Child marriage encourages gender inequalities in society. Child marriages can lead to continuing poverty cycles, illiteracy improvements, poor health to future generations, and depriving wider community productivity both in the short and long term ([BPS, 2016](#)).

Attempts to eliminate child marriage are a response to the growing number of evidences showing the scale and extent of the problem. The global consensus on the need for child marriage abolition, forced marriage, and marriage of child-age has risen in recent years. In 2014, the secretary-general of the United Nations (UN) recommends specific targets in post-2015 sustainable development goals to eliminate child marriage. This recommendation is supported by 116 member countries, including Indonesia ([United Nations, 2014](#)).

The cause of marriage at an early age in Indonesia is caused by many factors. Education, coercion of parents, promiscuity, curiosity about sex behavior, environmental factors and peers, economic factors, and low knowledge are also contributing factors to the high marriage of children in Indonesia. Child

marriage is also related to tradition and culture, making it difficult to change. Economic reasons, the hope of achieving social and financial security after marriage also caused many parents to encourage their children to marry at a young age ([Fadlyana & Larasaty, 2016](#)). Yarrow et al., research in Indonesia shows that people's knowledge about the age of marriage is still lacking. The results show that there is no right to identify the minimum age of marriage for girls, and only 1.6% correctly identify the minimum age for boys. There is only 17.9% of the 20.2% of respondents who answered correctly to the question of the legal minimum age correctly ([Yarrow, Apland, Anderson, & Hamilton, 2015](#)).

Analysis of geographic data from population census shows that many districts with high prevalence in Indonesia are neglected because these sub-districts are located in districts and provinces with a lower prevalence of marriage. At the same time, some districts and provinces with a lower prevalence have a larger population so that the lower prevalence still involves an enormous number of girls married before the age of 18 ([BPS, 2016](#)).

Banjarnegara Regency is one of the districts that entered in the top five highest child marriage rates in Central Java Province. Kabupaten Banjarnegara is also one of the districts with higher prevalence of child marriage from national prevalence, that is 26.74% ([BPS, 2016](#)). A preliminary study in Punggelan sub-district of respondents who married under the age of 18 found that 50% of respondents did not know the ideal age of marriage, 75% of respondents said that at the age of 17 years respondents are ready physically and mentally to marry, and 100% of respondents do not know impact of child marriage for health. The government has made various efforts to reduce the high number of early marriages one of them through the maturing program age marriage. The marriageable age program is also one of the programs to improve knowledge on reproductive health through counseling and integrating with adolescent reproductive health

activities (KRR). Programs are implemented in schools and activities in the community. Midwives as health workers have a role to help adolescents obtain information and reproductive health services as well as contraceptives, supervise women with pregnancy at a young age and participate in communities to prevent marriage at a young age to improve reproductive health and maternal and child health.

Protecting girls from child marriage is an important factor in improving maternal and child health. Various programs are encouraged to improve the knowledge of adolescent reproductive health, in the hope that adolescents can understand the benefits and risks of their behavior, but the child marriage rate is still high. Thus, this study aims to determine the correlation between knowledge of marriageable age, education, matchmaking and child marriage in females in Banjarnegara Indonesia.

METHODS

Study design

This was a correlational cross-sectional study.

Setting

The research was conducted at the sub-district level consisting of 17 sub-districts. Of the 17 sub-districts, 4 were randomly assigned, namely Kecepit, Sawangan, Tanjung Tirta and Tlaga sub-district. This study was conducted from March to December 2017.

Sample

Population in this research is married woman in Punggelan, Banjarnegara regency, Indonesia. The total sample was 96 respondents selected using proportionate stratified random sampling. The inclusion criteria of the sample were: (i) Married women of childbearing age, (ii) Living in Punggelan, Banjarnegara regency, Indonesia.

Instrument

To measure knowledge about marriageable age, the questionnaire modified from previous

study ([Lestari, Sunarti, & Pratiwi, 2014](#)) was used. The questionnaire consisted of 31 favorable and unfavorable questions with right and wrong choices, which is categorized into high knowledge (if mean ≥ 57.33) and poor knowledge (if mean < 57.33). The other variables such as married age, education, and matchmaking, age of married couple and job status were measured using demographic questionnaire. While child marriage events were also obtained from the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) and National Family Planning Coordinating Board (BKKBN).

Ethical consideration

This study has been approved by Universitas Aisyiah Yogyakarta with number: 01 / KEP-UNISA / IX / 2017. The researchers ensured that all respondents have obtained an appropriate informed consent.

Data analysis

Chi square test was used to see the significance of the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. And logistic regression was used to determine which variables that have the most effect on child marriage.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows that the number of respondents who married at the age of <18 years was 50%. The number of respondents with high and low knowledge was 50% respectively, 81.25% of respondents with low education, and 64.6% of respondents unemployed. Majority of the respondents' married couples aged ≥ 18 years (97.92%), and most of them were not matched (77.1%).

Table 1 Characteristics of respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Knowledge		
High	48	50
Low	48	50
Child marriage		
yes	48	50
No	48	50
Education		
Low	78	81.25
High	18	18.75
Matchmaking		
Matched	22	22.9
Unmatched	74	77.1
Age of married couple		
<18 years	2	2.08
≥ 18 years	94	97.92
Job status		
Unemployed	62	64.6
Employed	34	35.4

Table 2 Relationship between knowledge about marriageable age with child marriage

Variable	Child Married		Total		<i>P-value</i>	CI (95%)	PR (Risk Prevalence)
	Yes (n)	%	No (n)	%			
Knowledge							
High	16	33.3	32	66.7	48	100	0.001 0.320-0.782 4
Poor	32	66.7	16	33.3	48	100	

Table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship between knowledge and child marriage. Respondents with poor knowledge

have 4 times more likely to have child marriage than those with high knowledge (RP = 4; *p* value = 0.001; 95% CI = 0.320-0.782).

Table 3 Logistic regression analysis of the relationships of knowledge of marriageable age, education, matchmaking and child marriage

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Knowledge			
<i>p</i> value	0.01	0.004	0.007
OR (CI 95%)	4 (1.712-9.346)	3.688 (1.519-8.957)	3.448 (1.403-8.471)
Education			
<i>p</i> value		0.009	0.10
OR (CI 95%)		0.164 (0.042-0.639)	0.166 (0.042-0.656)
Matchmaking			
<i>p</i> value			0.148
OR (CI 95%)			2.277 (0.746-6.948)
R ²	0.143	0.243	0.267
-2 Log likelihood	122.211	113.780	111.604
Overall Percentage	66.7	70.8	68.8

Based on data analysis with 3 models in multivariate analysis as shown in the **Table 3**, the second model was chosen. The selection of this model not only takes into account the R² value alone, but also considers the OR value, overall percentage, and the number of significant variables.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study showed that the number of child marriage in females was 50% of respondents. Child marriage in Punggalan district Banjarnegara is more common in females. The data shows that, from 96 respondents, only 2 (2.08) respondents whose

age of the spouse (husband) at marriage is <18 years. Survey results show that married girls tend to have low education. Women who were married before they were 18 were considered less educated. Married girls not only lose their childhood, but also are often socially isolated, disconnected from family and friends and other sources of support, with limited opportunities for education and employment. Households usually make decisions about education and marriage of girls together, not sequentially, and education tends to lose. Thus, lower levels of education are found among married women at child ages (UNICEF, 2014). The results of this study are consistent with the results of previous research in 3 Asian countries, which show that the

average age of marriage in women is lower than that of men. The majority of respondents agreed with the statement "younger brides are better because they are more obedient and respectful to their husbands" ([Yarrow et al., 2015](#)). Child marriage essentially violates the rights of girls to equality and impedes the ability of girls to live equally in society. There is a widespread view that having the age difference between husband and wife is necessary to maintain male dominance in the household. The idea of gender and sexuality encourages the subordination of girls to boys.

The results showed that 22 (22.9%) of the respondents were matched their parents and 15 (68.2%) of the respondents were matched by parents <18 years old. One of the driving factors for parents to marry their daughters early is adherence to girls in choosing a partner when they are young. Girls tend to comply with the desire of the family to be married to a predetermined husband. Girls and boys barely meet their spouses before marriage ([Alexander & Garda, 2009](#)).

Age <18 years is not the ideal age for marriage and is likely to be detrimental for many women. Married at the age of the child leads to pregnancy and early childbirth associated with high mortality and abnormal conditions for the mother because the female body is not fully mature to give birth. Pregnancy at the age of less than 17 years increases the risk of medical complications, both in the mother and in the child. Girls aged 10-14 years are five times more likely to die during pregnancy or labor than those in the 20-24 age group, while the risk is doubled in the 15-19 age group ([Fadlyana & Larasaty, 2016](#)).

Based on the analysis of Statistics and UNICEF, married girls tend to have lower levels of education ([BPS, 2016](#)). This is because marriage and education are considered contradictory when married girls face limited mobility, pregnancy and responsibility for childcare. Marriage at a young age weighs a girl with the responsibility of being a wife, a sex partner, and a mother. That role should be an adult, not a girl. Child marriage also creates

psychological and emotional burdens. The study supports the results of research showing 45 respondents (57.7%) who have low education get married at age <18 years. Married girls tend to be hampered to continue their education.

The results also showed that of 22 respondents who were matched by parents, 15 (68.2%) of respondents were matched at age <18 years. Parents have a role in child marriage cases. Many parents think that women are in charge of serving husbands and children, and spending much time in the kitchen, they consider continuing education as useless ([Landung, Thaha, & abdullah, 2009](#)). Parents of girls under the age of 16 may marry off their daughters while still very young by applying to a marriage officer or a religious state court to grant a dispensation. Over 90% of dispensation requests are accepted and the number of applications has increased in recent years ([BPS, 2016](#)).

The survey results show 48 (50%) of respondents have high knowledge and 48 (50%) of respondents have low knowledge. Most respondents with low knowledge were married at age <18 years i.e. 32 (66.7%) respondents. The results of a survey of knowledge showed that 70 respondents considered that 18-year-old women who had menstruation would be better to get married soon. Most respondents also do not know if labor at <20 years of age is at risk of increasing bleeding and can lead to low-weight babies. The results of research supported previous study, which states that most of the respondents who have child marriage do not know the negative impact of child marriage. Majority of respondents in this study do not know the impact of child marriage for health, psychological and education ([Nasrullah et al., 2014](#)). Reproductive health knowledge is very important given to the community so that they can make the right decisions to keep themselves and their health. A person with low reproductive knowledge tends to perform a variety of negative actions. Education also makes an important contribution to one's knowledge. The research results show that

66.7% of respondents who have higher education also have high knowledge about marriageable age. Low education causes the breakdown of information obtained at higher levels of education and vice versa ([Fadlyana & Larasaty, 2016](#)). It can be deduced that the higher their knowledge, then they will tend to be more careful in taking the step of life, considering the good and bad consequences that will be accepted. So the choice of their actions was really controlled ([Nasrullah et al., 2014](#)).

The high knowledge about marriageable age of those with higher education may also be influenced by the level of acceptance and information obtained by respondents. Respondents with higher education are more likely to receive knowledge provided by health workers so that they will be more knowledgeable and careful about their decision to marry ([Fadlyana & Larasaty, 2016](#)). A high level of formal education can form a person's progressive values, especially in accepting new things, including the importance of delaying marriage. The level of knowledge helps to more easily capture and understand an information, so it is easier to adopt new knowledge.

Expanding knowledge and empowerment of children is very important, especially for girls. Educated girls are less likely to agree to marry at a young age. Efforts to close gender gaps in education can include the establishment of child-friendly schools, cash incentives for the elderly and the expansion of non-formal education ([UNICEF, 2007](#)). Lack of knowledge gained will cause the mindset of a person to be narrow and unintended to think into the future so they chose to marry at young age. A person who acquires knowledge has a tendency to change his/her attitude and behavior in line with what is learned, but not always that tendency will apply because there are other factors beyond the level of knowledge that can be the cause.

The results of statistical tests in this study also show that the variables of knowledge and education are factors affecting child marriage.

Knowledge of marriageable age has the greatest influence on child marriage. Respondents with low knowledge were 3.688 times more likely to marry at <18 years of age than those with high knowledge (PR = 3.688, 95% CI: 1.519-8.957). However, there is no significant correlation between matchmaking and child marriage. It can be explained that a high level of education and knowledge will provide a mature understanding to someone to choose or decide a thing. They do not want bad things happen to them because of the decisions they have made ([Sari & Yanti, 2016](#)).

CONCLUSION

There are significant relationships between education, knowledge of marriageable age and child marriage. Therefore, it is suggested for healthcare providers to continuously promote about the impact of child marriage using health education.

Declaration of Conflicting Interest

None declared.

Funding

This study has been supported by Politeknik Banjarnegara, Indonesia.

Author Contribution

All authors contributed equally in this study.

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Cite this article as: Sumanti, R., Handayani, S., Astuti, D. A. (2018). The correlation between knowledge of marriageable age, education, matchmaking and child marriage in females in Banjarnegara Indonesia. *Belitung Nursing Journal*, 4(5), 502-509. <https://doi.org/10.33546/bnj.398>