"I AM SATISFIED WITH MY MARRIAGE": AN EXPERIENCE FROM MADURESE WOMEN WHO MARRIED EARLY

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ABSTRACT

The research aimed at examining ways by which Madurese women could achieve satisfaction in early marriage. Its used a qualitative research method with an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). To understand the meaning of one's experience by looking for themes from available data, IPA rested on three pillars, namely phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography. The researchers used semi-structured interviews to collect data and purposive homogeneous sampling. The participants involved were three married women under 18 years old who were living in Madura. The results of the research show that the three women are satisfied with their marriage. The satisfaction of their marriage can be seen from taking care of each other when sick, giving her enough money, and always happy with her husband, not far apart. Furthermore, Madurese women dissatisfaction in her marriage can be seen from anger if she is not given money and is not helped in doing household.

Keywords: marital satisfaction, early marriage, Madurrese women

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the countries with high rates of early marriage in the world. In ASEAN, Indonesia ranks even number two under Cambodia (Rachmad, 2017). In East Java, there are 25,87% early marriage in 2013 and 24,45% in 2015 (BPS, 2016). There are several terms used to describe early marriage. UNICEF in John et al. (2018) uses term child marriage that is defined as marriage before the age of 18 years, while Hajihasani and Sim (2018) have used the term early marriage that refers to marriage at the age of lower than 18 years old.

In this research, the researchers use the term early marriage, which means a marriage that is below the age limit of adulthood. Marriage is to be an early marriage if one married under the age of 18 (Greene in Van der Kooij, 2016). According to the East Java Provincial Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) Youth Section Head, in East Java many early marriages occur on Madura Island and are evenly distributed in four districts, namely: Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep (Sakdiyah & Ningsih, 2013; Sulaiman, 2012). These data are supported by East Java Provincial Statistics Agency (BPS) data regarding the percentage of East Java women aged 10 years and over who are underage married (less than 17 years) according to

districts/cities in 2012-2016, especially for Madura Island.

Several factors explain the increasing number of child marriages in Madura. First, early marriage is caused by the Madurese community that is still holding the tradition of arranged marriages (*pajhudan*) (Mahfudin & Waqi'ah, 2016; Munawara, Yasak, & Dewi, 2015; Ningsih & Handoyo, 2015; Rahayu & Bawono, 2017). The arranged marriages in question have been carried out since they were still in the womb (Mardhatillah, 2014; Munawara, Yasak, & Dewi, 2015; Sa'dan, 2015) called *bhāākāl ekakoãghĭ* (Fawaid & Hadi, 2015; Karisyati & Hadi, 2017) and have moved since the time of childhood known as the *tan-mantanan* tradition, which is a tradition of child brides (4-10 years old) as practiced by adult brides. It is carried out from the beginning of the engagement process (*bebekalan*) to the wedding reception process (Nuri, 2016).

The second factor is the local belief factors. If there are women who have reached the age of 15-18 years and are not married, then the woman will be the subject of gossip. Unmarried women will be mocked by the denial of *sangkal* that there are no more young men who are willing to marry the girl for a long time (*ta 'paju lake'*). From this nickname, there is no abstinence for a woman to refuse applications from men who come to propose (Arroisi & Quraisyin, 2015; Muthmainnah, 2018; Muzaffak, 2013; Susilo, 2017).

Parents who have a psychological burden if their daughters will become 'spinster' finally decide to marry off their children immediately (Sumbulah & Jannah, 2012; Susanti, 2018) if their daughters have reached a sufficient age (*baligh*) (Sakdiyah & Ningsih, 2013).

Third, there Mu'in tradition that is believed to form a *sakinah* family, namely the tradition of *ngabulâ* before marriage. According to Mu'in and Hefni (2016), the tradition of *ngabulâ* is only done by prospective brides at the residence of the Kiai for a week. The tradition of *ngabulâ* is believed to influence the formation of a sakinah family for young couples. This is due to the tradition of *ngabulâ*, and the bride-to-be is getting knowledge related to the formation of a *sakinah* family. These sciences include knowledge that is directly conveyed by the *Kiai's* family regarding good family management or even knowledge that can indirectly be learned by observing how the *Kiai's* family lives their daily lives with their family. The *ngabulâ* tradition is also a manifestation of the community's last respect for the *Kiai's* family before a young couple enters the home world.

In addition, the young couple who live the tradition of *ngabulâ* also hopes to get the blessing from God through their devotion to those who have the knowledge, in this case, the *Kiai*. Young couples who serve the *Kiai* hope that with this blessing, the family will be harmonious and loving (Mu'in & Hefni, 2016). This also makes the couple in Madura stays married young because they believe that they can also form a *sakinah* family through the tradition of *ngabulâ*, as happened in the Akor village community, Palengaan subdistrict, Pamekasan regency, which still lives it up to now.

Fourth, early marriages that still occur, especially among Madurese women, are inseparable from the strong influence of Islam (Fawaid & Hadi, 2015; Rachmad, 2017) and culture that is still strongly held by Madurese communities (Rachmad, 2017; Sakdiyah & Ningsih, 2013; Yunitasari, Pradanie, & Susilawati, 2016). Madurese considers if marriage is an individual's rights and obligations, not the state that governs it (Rachmad, 2017). The truth about early marriage is considered as a form of moral representation of Islamic Madurese people and becomes a cultural agreement in Madurese society. Therefore, early marriage can be a cultural relativism of the Madurese community. Furthermore, Rachmad (2017) even has suggested that the government would not easily manage the Madurese people who have a strong enough Islamic culture, because the culture is still held in high esteem and maintained by the next generation of Madurese people.

Another factor that makes early marriage still occur in Madura is also because it avoids the occurrence of promiscuity. The following is an interview excerpt from Muti'ah (2015) research.

> "The reason I got married was because it was arranged by my parents, they assumed and worried that I was falling into a banned association and also that someone would take care of me, because I was far from my parents, so maybe I was worried because now the association of teenagers was rather modern, small children I already know dating." (Muna, 16 years).

Apart from the factors that caused early marriage still occurs in Madura, based on previous research, the occurrence of early marriage can cause various problems in the couple. These problems include the occurrence of disputes, persistent squabbles, clashes between husband and wife (Aryanto, 2017), impact on reproductive health (Roswendi & Suhandi, 2014; Sumbulah & Jannah, 2012), domestic violence, and divorce (Kompas, 2017; Setyawan & Herdiana, 2016).

Even research conducted by John et al., (2018) in Ethiophia has found how early marriages are often unhappy because girls lack the physical and emotional maturity needed to handle marital responsibilities. A participant has stated:

> "Before there was no law against it (child marriage). A girl who gets married early gets traumatized, won't have a happy marriage, she will be physically abused. Nowadays, girls get married when they're older, when they're more physically ready and more mature and readier for a marriage."

However, in Madura, it is not always the case. These problems do not always occur in Madurese women who married early. Another research data actually shows that Madurese women who marry early can also achieve happiness and harmony in their early marriage (Zumriyah, 2015). This is also found by Bawono and Suryanto (2019) in their research, through the explanation of Melati (17 years). The following is the quotation result of the interview.

> "*Alhamdulillah* ... happy, happy. It turned out that the choice of parents was not as people say. They said it's not good Sir, *Alhamdulillah*, my parents' choice are good. Meet me with him..." (Melati, 17 years).

The phenomenon of early marriage in Madura, as described, has its own uniqueness related to the culture and beliefs of its people. In addition, another uniqueness is that various problems in early marriage do not always occur in Madurese women. Other research data shows that Madurese women who get married early can achieve happiness and harmony in their marriage.

Revealing how happiness can be achieved by individuals who experience this early marriage, it will open up opportunities to provide better information about the psychological development of individuals. The researchers are aware of the possibility of different interpretations regarding the purpose of this research. To anticipate this, affirmation is given at the end of this background description that the results of this research are not intended to support the occurrence of early marriage in Madura. However, the narratives obtained from participants' experiences are expected to be a clue to how in the conditions of her early marriage. A woman can seek happiness so that eventually, they can minimize the problems in their marriage so that it does not end in divorce.

METHODS

This research wants to find out the experience of Madurese women by exploring further and in-depth about her experiences in undergoing early marriage. In this research, the researchers use purposive homogeneous sampling. The participants have characteristics; (a) Madurese women who live in Madura; (b) married before the age of 18 years old; (c) marital duration is less than 10 years, and (d) willing to be involved in the research.

The participants are three women living in Madura and spread in two regencies; Bangkalan and Sumenep.

The researchers use semi-structured interviews (e.g., "Can you tell me about your marriage experience?"). The characteristic of semi-structured interviews is the use of interview guides or interview protocols. The interview guide is expected to contain neutral questions or questions that reflect *ephocē*, which have the meaning of putting effort into brackets. What is brackets is the knowledge already entrenched in the researcher, which has the potential to interfere in seeing other people's experiences as they are. By running *ephocē*, researchers commit to seeing others as they are without being distorted by assumptions/judgments/speculations/theories (Kahija, 2017).

The number of questions asked range from 6-10 questions with a span of about 45-90 minutes, depending on the topic. If participants in giving answers are still deemed lacking, then researchers should immediately use the 'prompting' and 'probing' techniques. 'Prompting' means asking a 'prompt' that is a question to encourage participants to tell more about their experiences, while 'probing' means asking a 'probe' that is a question that is intended to request further clarification about certain terms or expressions that are unclear or still vague (Kahija, 2017; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

This research uses qualitative research with an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). IPA is an analysis of transcripts by carrying out three research pillars with IPA, namely; (1) phenomenology that relies on *ephocē*, (2) interpretation that relies on understanding each participant's statement without releasing it from all transcripts, and (3) idiography that pays attention to the uniqueness of the participant (Kahija, 2017).

The following are the steps in carrying out data analysis in science (Kahija, 2017; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009); first is reading and re-reading. The purpose of reading interview transcripts over and over is that the researcher becomes familiar or 'integrated' with the transcript because the transcript is actually the participant's experience in written form. The researchers do not need to rush to analyze. The researchers need to let the participant's 'awareness' in the transcript become familiar and integrated with the researcher's 'awareness'. Second is initial noting. After reading it many times and becoming familiar with the transcript, the researchers then make preliminary notes in the form of exploratory comments in the form of descriptive, conceptual, and linguistic comments. Before commenting, highlight the part of the transcript that feels important to highlight. Focus on the transcript, feel the transcript, and mark the important part of the participant's statement. After that, comment on the part that is considered important. What is meant by the comment here is the interpretive statement of the researchers towards the participant's statement, which is felt to be important in the transcript. The third is developing emergent themes. After making exploratory comments, the researchers then make an emergent theme. Researchers no longer make comments, but rather make themes. Themes created are basically compaction of comments made previously. The theme is no longer a statement but a word or phrase. Fourth is to arrange superordinate themes. Emergent themes are generally large in number and accommodated in one larger theme called the superordinate theme, which is a theme that accommodates several emergent themes that have a similar meaning.

The fifth is to continue to the next case. If the researchers have completed one case (participant) starting from reading and re-reading to compiling a superordinate theme, the next step is to solve the next case until all cases emerge as the superordinate theme. Sixth is look for patterns between cases. If all cases have been analyzed, the researchers can look for patterns or interwoven between the themes that have been obtained from all participants. Researchers need to focus on when paying attention to all themes from all participants. Seventh is arranging all superordinate themes. Look closely at the themes that emerge from all participants. The process of formulating the theme still needs to be continued. The formulation of the next theme focuses on how one participant's experience is connected with other participant's experiences, namely "superordinate themes between participants".

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of data analysis have found that there are two master themes with four superordinate themes. A summary of the master and superordinate themes can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Master and Superordinate Themes

Master themes	Superordinate themes
Positive emotions	• Comfortable
	• Happy
Negative emotions	• Angry
	• Annoyed

In this research, the researchers have found that early marriage can bring positive emotions to participants, which is comfortable and happy. The comfortable feeling is felt by SY (now 22 years), a participant from Bangkalan regency if she could be with her husband and could care for him when he was sick.

"I'm more comfortable together. I know he is sick or healthy. If he is in another country, who takes care of him?" (SY291018,58-61)

SY feels comfortable when she is near her husband and feels satisfied if always with him. She will know whether or not the husband sick; take care of him if sick. Although not sufficient, she feels comfortable if her husband is at home, not sailing or working in another country.

This feeling of comfort is also expressed by ZN (now 19 years), a participant from Sumenep regency, who has said that her husband is already kind to her and makes her comfortable so that she also feels comfortable. The following is the interview excerpts.

"Comfortable...Even though at first I didn't know him, yeah ... time went by I said, I could accept him for who he is. Well until now, he's fine. Make it comfortable." (ZN020219,301-305)

In contrast to SY, ZN initially does not feel comfortable with her husband at first. Their marriage occurs due to arranged marriage. However, the passage of time, ZN can accept her husband, and she feels comfortable. She feels her husband is a good person. Even ZN still allows continuing her education.

Besides being comfortable, the researchers have also found that the participants (SY, ZN, and EF) can feel happy in their marriage. The following is an interview excerpt from the three participants.

"Mmm… I'm happy when I'm sick or he's sick, taking care of each other (ZN020219,65-66). I'm happy when he comes home with souvenirs (oleh-oleh). I'm happy in the morning when he leaves for work, he says goodbye and gives me money. I feel comfortable and satisfied. Well...I'm not wasteful in shopping. I took a little to save, who knows there is an urgent need. Be economized a little. It's good, the wife can save, the husband works (laughs) (ZN020219,147-159). Not often angry. Don't.. make me upset. Can make me happy." (ZN020219,307-308)

"I'm happy to be close to my husband, not far from work, not far, I want to be together (SY171118,29-31). Happy if I have a lot of money, happy if I'm with my husband." (SY291018,45-46)

"Happy, yes, never fight. No shortage of money. There are no reasons to fight." (EF030219,17-19)

The three participants, SY, ZN, EF, show their happiness when they get money from their husbands. This finding shows that happiness in the early marriage of Madurese women is identical to the adequacy of money given by their husbands. It can be said that this financial factor has a role in the happiness of Madurese women who married early. In addition to money, Madurese women can also be happy with their marriage if they are always together with their husbands, and they feel comfortable being able to spend time with their husbands. They will be happy if there is no fight with their husbands.

Rumondor (2013) has developed marital satisfaction measurement for urban young adults and has found intimacy as one of the dimensions. Intimacy is a partner can comfortably spend time doing activities together without the presence of others. This statement is in line with the findings from Nindyasari (2018), who has found that early married couples can also achieve satisfaction in their marriage by doing activities at home together, including eating together.

In addition to comfort and satisfaction, happiness can also be achieved in early marriage, as stated by the three participants above. This is also in line with the findings of Diananda (2016) from the results of her research that all three research subjects are able to achieve happiness in marriage, even though they are still teenagers. Hidayati and Uyun (2017)'s research has also found that of the four research subjects, all three subjects are happy with their early marriage.

This research has found not only positive emotions but also negative emotions, namely angry and annoyed. In undergoing their marriage, participants also feel angry at their partners. This anger is related to money not given by the husband, as stated by EF (now 18 years), a participant from Sumenep regency in the following excerpt:

"Sometimes money is like that. I go to school, want to ask for money, something ... later... I want it.. I immediately ehmm.. angry (laughing) (EF030219,77-79). Yeah when I asked for money. Not given.. I feel like that. Want to be angry." (EF030219,131-133)

In contrast to the happiness that Madurese women feel when they get money, Madurese women will feel angry if they are not given money. This is as stated by EF. Besides angry, negative emotions that arise are annoyed. This feeling arises when participants feel tired while doing household chores but are not helped by her husband.

"Yes annoyed. I washed. Tired. Not helped (ZN020219,138-139). H..mm, not helped, came home from work then angry, not clear. I hate it." (ZN020219,406-407)

Based on the description, early marriage can also raise problems related to the anger of participants who are not given money by their husbands. Money (economic) problems are also a source of unhappiness that arises in women who get married early. This is as discovered by Bawono and Suryanto (2019) that the unhappiness is felt by the participants, who is the economy is not fixed, cannot build their own homes, and jobs are not fixed.

This research has found the three women are satisfied in their marriage. It can be seen from taking care of each other when sick, giving them enough money, and always happy with their husbands. However, they also feel dissatisfaction in her marriage; it can be seen from anger if they are not given money, and their husbands do not help them in doing household chores.

CONCLUSIONS

In marriage, various conflicts and problems will be encountered, including in early marriage. In early marriage, in addition to experiencing the effects of early marriage, they will also experience conflicts and problems in their marriage. So that conflicts and problems that cannot be resolved immediately can cause disharmony and unhappiness in their marriage.

However, in Madura, Indonesia, women who marry early do not always experience disharmony and unhappiness. The results of this research have found that a number of Madurese women could feel both positive and negative emotions in their marriage. Even though they feel negative emotions, they can compensate with positive emotions so as to ease the conflict in their marriage. This makes that they feel satisfied and happy with their marriage. This finding needs to be understood that in the condition of their marriage that is not ideal, they can still feel satisfaction and happiness in their marriage. This condition needs to be maintained and strived for its sustainability so that they avoid divorce.

The limitation of this research is that most of the participants are only conducted in Bangkalan and Sumenep districts, whereas Madura has consisted of four districts; the other two are Sampang and Pamekasan districts. In addition, the researchers are also constrained by the language used, where participants sometimes use the Madurese language when the interview is conducted.

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