Economic, Social, and Cultural Contexts of Early Marriage in Bengkulu Province

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Background: Bengkulu Province is one of the provinces with the highest proportion of early marriages in Indonesia, and it is known that women are vulnerable to domestic violence, pregnancy complications, death during childbirth, and psychological risks, which can have a negative impact on the mother and fetus, both during pregnancy and the child's old age. Objective: This study aims to investigate the determinants associated with early marriage in Bengkulu Province. Method: This study used a cross-sectional study using an online questionnaire as the research tool. The target respondents in this study were mothers who married in Bengkulu Province. The data obtained were analyzed using regression techniques (bivariate and multivariate) to see the indicators associated with early marriage. Results: Factors significantly associated with early marriage were the father's education (AOR: 6.47; 95%CI: 4.67-9.003; P: 0.001), living conditions (AOR: 2.84; 95%CI: 1.75-4.6; P: 0.001), family support (AOR: 2.67; 95%CI: 1.65-4.33; p-value: 0.000), and community perspective (AOR: 2.28; 95%CI: 1.4-3.71; p-value: 0.001). Conclusion: Culture born from a community perspective, family support accompanied by living conditions influenced by the economy, and a father's education greatly affect the incidence of early marriage itself. A program that can raise public awareness of the negative impact of early marriage is needed.

INTRODUCTION

Child marriage is the practice of marrying a female under the age of 18 before she is physically and psychologically prepared for marriage and childbearing (Klaveren and Tijdens, 2012). Early marriage is prevalent and can result in a lifetime of deprivation and disadvantage (UNICEF, 2018). Marriages that occur before the age of 20 are more susceptible to problems such as partner violence, sexual abuse, and pregnancy complications than marriages that occur after the age of 20. A delay in marriage and pregnancy during adolescence afforded adolescent girls greater opportunities for health, education, and a higher quality of life (WHO, 2013). Teenage marriage is a complex issue. Some nations implement policies to improve conditions and mitigate this issue. However, the issue persisted and had a

negative outcome. Child marriage is fraught with difficulties, particularly for the girl, who is prone to abnormal pregnancies and has the highest risk of mortality for both mother and child. Girls are more fragile than boys. It may be conducted due to insufficient socialization, dropping out of school, physiologic, and psychological factors. (Nagi, 1993).

Indonesia is among the top ten nations with the greatest number of child brides. Approximately 1,408,000 women over the age of 20 were married before the age of eighteen in 2016 (UNICEF). One out of every seven females in Indonesia was married before the age of eighteen, according to estimates. In some regions, however, the incidence of early marriage is as high as 35%, according to recent research. According to Indonesia's Marriage Law (1974), the minimum age for marriage is 16. If they are under 16 years old, they must obtain parental consent. They can petition religious

tribunals to allow their children to marry at even younger ages. Global evidence suggests that child marriage is an indicator of an increased risk of maternal mortality, birth complications, and pregnancy. It is one of the leading causes of death among young women, along with poor nutrition and health outcomes. Births to mothers under the age of 20 are more susceptible than births to mothers over the age of 20. Married women are also more susceptible to domestic violence (UNICEF, 2016). According to the Family Planning Coordinating Board of Bengkulu Province, the upper national score for maternal morbidity has been reported. It allocated 162 per 100,000 births. Child marriage is the primary cause. (2016) According to the Family Planning Coordinating Board of Bengkulu Province.

According to estimates, approximately 700 million living women were married before the age of 18. There are 33% who were married before the age of 15. South Asia has the greatest prevalence of child marriage worldwide. 56% of women between the ages of 20 and 49 in this region were married before the age of 18. 46% of West and Central African countries marry before the age of 18 years old. Niger has a remarkable rate of 76%. On the other side of the globe, thirty percent of married women in Latin America and the Caribbean were married before their eighteenth birthday. Middle South and North Africa have a rate of 24% for women who married as children. The region of South Asia and the Pacific is next on the list, with a 21 percent prevalence. In countries such as Vietnam, the prevalence falls to 11% (Worldatlas, 2017; Amber Pariona). The prevalence of child marriage is as high as 8.9%, according to research conducted in the United States in 2011 with 24,575 participants to ascertain indicators of education, income, and residence in relation to child marriage (Strat, 2011). In 2017, around 18% of children in rural Bangladesh were married (Yount, 2017). In Indonesia, the prevalence of juvenile marriage has reached 15% (Ramble, 2018). According to the 2012 Indonesian National Socio-Economic Survey, only 40.8% of child brides complete primary school, 26.6% complete junior secondary school, and 5.1% complete senior secondary school.

Consideration of the causes of child marriage is still inconclusive, but there are risk factors associated with child marriage. Child marriage is determined by environmental and parental factors (Astuty, 2011), parents in family communication, parental education, respondents' education, respondents' employment (Desiyanti, 2015), marriage timing, school enrollment decisions (Hotchkiss, 2016), health outcomes, empowerment, agency, support, and stress (Groot, 2018), ethnic origin, household wealth (Hotchkiss, 2016), knowledge (Mourtada, 2017), income, indicators or risk factors for child marriage include education, health, employment, personal security, residence, spiritual or religious beliefs, cultural diversity, participation in cultural activities, gender, discrimination, environment, community relations, social support, subjective wellbeing, value, life satisfaction, economic welfare, politics, and institutions. Objective: This study seeks to examine the factors that contribute to early marriage in Bengkulu Province.

METHODS

Participants characteristics and research design

Respondents in this survey had to be female, marriage, residents of Bengkulu Province for at least one year, and willing to participate. This research employed cross-sectional study.

Sampling procedures

Procedures for selecting participants were multistage random sampling. The research was conducted in Bengkulu Province, which is comprised of nine regions: Mukomuko Regency, Rejang Lebong Regency, Lebong Regency, North Bengkulu Regency, Central Bengkulu Regency, Bengkulu Municipality, Seluma Regency, South Bengkulu Regency, and Kaur Regency. Ethical clearance approved by University of Bengkulu Ethical board already before doing research.

Sample size, power, and precision

The total number of respondents in this study was 576 participants. For collecting data, the research used the online questionnaire as a research tool. The questionnaire was adopted from previous research that related with variables that was taken in research, including father's education, household income, ethnic, community perspective, family support, community support, living condition, place and marriage. The data collecting was taken two-month.

Measure and covariates

The research was used primary data that collected by enumerators in each region, with a total of five enumerators per region. The enumerators were training first before doing collecting the data.

Data analysis

There are two categories of data: numeric and categorical. The descriptive terms for numerical data are mean, median, maximum, minimum, and standard deviation. While categorical data uses diactomous. Included in the independent variables are the father's level of education, household income, ethnicity, community perceptions, family support, social support, living conditions, and location. While the dependent variable is marriage at a young age. Data will be analyzed using univariate tests, simple logistic regression, and multiple logistic regressions in order to determine the factors associated with early marriage in Bengkulu Province. All data will be analyzed with version 14.0 of Stata.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Demographic characteristics of respondents.

From the univariate test, it was found that more than half of the respondents' fathers had a primary school education (52.78%), more than half had a household income below the minimum wage (52.95%), most were indigenous to Bengkulu Province, more than half of the community had a positive perception (54.34%), more than half of the respondents' families gave positive family support for immediate marriage (57.64%), more than half of the community also supported immediate marriage (53.82%), more than half of the respondents had poor living conditions (54.51%), and more than half of the respondents lived in rural areas (55.38%).

Table 1
Demography of respondents (n=576)

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Father′s education		
Primary school-middle school		
High school	304	52.78
University	104	18..06
	168	29.17
Household Income (Rp)		
≥ Regional Salary	271	47.05
< Regional Salary	305	52.95
Mean ± SD	1,838,742 ± 540,875.1	
Median (Min-Max)	1,670,000	
	(500,000-2,889,000)	
Ethnic		
Other	202	35.07
Local ethnic	374	64.93
Community perspective of child marriage		
Negative	263	45.66
Positive	313	54.34
Family support of child marriage		
Negative	244	42.36
Positive	332	57.64
Social support of child marriage		
Negative	266	46.18
Positive	310	53.82
Living condition		
Good	262	45.49
Bad	314	54.51
Place		
Urban	257	44.62
Rural	319	55.38

Prevalence consequence.

The prevalence of child marriage in Bengkulu Province is 53.47 percent, indicating that the incidence of child marriage in Bengkulu Province is high.

Table 2
Prevalence of Child Marriage

Child marriage	Number	Proportion	95% CI
No	268	46.53	42.47 – 50.63
Yes	308	53.47	49.37 – 57.52

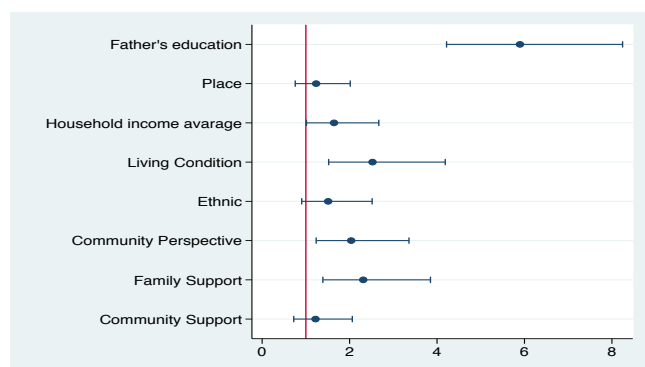## Significant factors in the prevalence of early marriage

The results of the basic logistic regression test reveal that the incidence of child marriage in Bengkulu Province is significantly related to the following variables: Father's education with COR: 104.13; 95%CI: 46.27-234.33; P-value: 0.001 for elementary and junior high school and high school COR: 23; 95%CI: 1.82-3.57; p-value: 0.001; household income with a large COR: 2.55; 95%CI: 1.82-3.57; p-value: 0.001; ethnicity with a large COR: 3.09; 95%CI: 2.16-4.41; p-value: 0.001; family support with COR: 5.49; 95%CI: 3.82-7.87; community support with COR: 2.01; 95%CI: 1.44-2.81; p-value 0.001; living conditions with COR: 7.17; 95%CI: 4.96-10.37; and place with COR: 2.12; 95%CI: 1.52-2.97; p-value: 0.001.

Table 3
Crude and adjusted odds ratio and 95% CI of child marriage is used simple logistic regression

Independent variables	Number	% child marriage	Crude OR	95% CI	P
Father′s education					
University	7	4.17	1	9.84 – 53.76	**<0.001**
High school	52	50	23	46.27 – 234.33	
Primary school-middle school	249	81.91	104.13		
Household Income (Rp)					
> Regional Salary	112	41.33	1	1.82 – 3.57	**<0.001**
< Regional Salary	196	64.26	2.55		
Ethnic					**<0.001**
Other	72	35.64	1	2.16 – 4.41	
Local ethnic	236	63.10	3.09		
Community perspective of child marriage					**<0.001**
Negative	116	44.11	1	1.44 – 2.81	
Positive	192	61.34	2.01		
Family support of child marriage					**<0.001**
Negative	74	30.33	1	3.82 – 7.87	
Positive	234	70.48	5.49		
Social support of child marriage					**<0.001**
Negative	90	33.83	1	3.26 – 6.59	
Positive	218	70.32	4.63		
Living condition					**<0.001**
Good	75	28.63	1	4.96 – 10.37	
Bad	233	74.20	7.17		
Place					**<0.001**
Urban	111	43.19	1	1.52 – 2.97	
Rural	197	61.76	2.12		

Factors associated with the incidence of early marriage

The dominant factors that cause early marriage in Bengkulu Province include: father's education as the head of the family with a large AOR: 6.47; 95%CI: 4.67-9.003; P: 0.001; unfavorable living conditions with an AOR: 2.84; 95%CI: 1.75-4.6; P-value: 0.001; family support that encourages immediate marriage in adolescence with an AOR: 2.67; 95%CI: 1.65-4.33; p-value: 0.000; and community perspectives that think that marrying at a young age is good with a large AOR: 2.28; 95%CI: 1.4-3.71; p-value: 0.001.

Graph 1. Forest plot of multiple logistic regression

Table 4
Goodness of fit test for logistic model of child marriage

Number of observations	Number of covariate patterns	p-value
576	24	0.017

DISCUSSION

The results of the multivariate test above show that the main indicators associated with early marriage in Bengkulu Province include the father's education, living conditions, community perceptions, and family support. Early marriage is a phenomenon that occurs in developing countries due to the social and cultural aspects of the community itself, which are supported by the prevailing rules regarding the age limit for marriage. Indonesia is also facing the phenomenon itself, where it is noted that the 1974 regulation supports early marriage. Despite the renewal of the regulation, it still provides tolerance in the form of allowing underage marriages on the condition of obtaining permission from both parties (Natanael M. J., Fajar M. R., 2018). The community's perception of early marriage is a simple perspective based on existing observations and experiences. The perception that early marriage is a good and common thing is an existing culture and has become something that is passed down (Husna et al., 2018). This perspective is closely related to economic conditions, which are a trigger for finding solutions, and the solution itself is to encourage their children to marry immediately so that their duties as parents, especially as responsible for providing for the needs of their children, are fulfilled. For this reason, to change the community's perspective, institutions in charge and related to the issue must work together to create programs to raise awareness in the community of the impact of early marriage (Satria et al., 2018).

Family support is one of the triggers for early marriage. Family support is born from beliefs that are passed down from culture without any scientific study. If their children do not immediately marry, the community will provide discrimination to the family, which becomes a mental burden for parents and their children, which is the reason for encouraging their children to marry immediately (Wantu et al., 2021). Communities in rural areas have an average education in the form of primary school. Low education gives them limited knowledge and health literacy. This causes them to only stick to the principles of culture and customary norms that apply (Hotchkiss et al., 2016).

In fact, early marriage provides opportunities for women to experience domestic violence, divorce, pregnancy complications, stunting, non-communicable diseases, and even the risk of death in the mother and fetus because the mother's reproductive system is still not ready and their bodies are still in the developmental stage. Early marriage is a form of human rights violation because it is a form of restriction of children's enjoyment of adolescence and a form of coercion that can be a mental burden on the child himself (Bárcena et al., 2018). This mental burden creates changes in the child's psychology that can result in high levels of stress or severe depression (Burgess et al., 2022). This can increase poverty, which can lead to poor household conditions (De Groot et al., 2018). This can have a negative impact on both individuals and society (Phiri et al., 2023).

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was used cross sectional study and limited variables that not consideration friends' perspective, teachers' perspective, psychology of respondent, respondents' need, and respondents' motivation. The analysis was not used path analysis to know dominant indicators of child marriage.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study's objective was to identify the factors that contribute to early marriage in Bengkulu Province. There will likely be an increase in noncommunicable diseases in the future due to the high proportion of young marriages. In addition, economic development will progress slowly, causing the prevalence of early marriage to remain elevated. In the meantime, the government has issued new regulations concerning the marriage age and health promotion programs administered by health agencies. In order to reduce the rate of child marriage, it is necessary to study the effectiveness of raising awareness among adolescents, parents, and the community.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

This research was sanctioned by the Ethics Committee of Bengkulu University, Indonesia, with the approval number 218/UN30.14.9/LT/2021.

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