Original Paper

Exploring Women's Lived Experiences of Early Marriage in Rural Indonesia

Cahya H. Yunizar[1*], Zha B. Xiong[1] & Catherine Solheim[1]

[1] Department of Family Social Science, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN, USA

[*] Cahya H. Yunizar, Department of Family Social Science, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN, USA

Abstract

Early marriage is still a global concern, and Indonesia ranks second behind Cambodia in the number of early marriages within the ASEAN region. Despite the spread of technology and the influence of Western media, some Indonesian families, especially those who live in rural areas, continue to practice early marriage. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand the reasons behind early marriage based on the perspective of Indonesian women who were married before the age of 18. Based on a phenomenological approach, thirty women, ages 18-45, from the Madurese community in Situbondo, East Java participated in the study. Results showed that young Madurese women decided to get married for love and companionship, as well as for economic benefits and protecting the family's honor. Participants also believed that cultural norms and values related to marriage, sexual purity, and gender expectations play a role in early marriage. Suggestions for future studies and community interventions are discussed.

Keywords

Early Marriage, Indonesia, Madurese women, Culture

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, women have made some gains in education and labor force participation in Indonesia (OECD, 2019; Nobles & Buttenheim, 2008). Today, more women are delaying marriage to pursue their education and career goals (Ekoriano et al., 2023; Utomo, 2014). The average age of first marriage for men and women are increasing and more women are graduating from high school and attending tertiary education (OECD, 2019). Despite these gains, however, women, especially, young women in rural, ethnic communities continue to lag without opportunities due to early marriage. Early marriage refers to a matrimony where one of the partners is under the age of 18 with or without consent (United Nation, 1989). According to the UNFPA–UNICEF Global Program to End Child Marriage (2020), every year, 12 million women are married before the age of 18, and 650 million women today reported marrying as children. If this trend persists, global estimates project that by 2030 more than 120 million women will marry before the age 18. Women living in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and East Asia, especially those who live in rural areas, are most vulnerable to early marriage (McDougal et al., 2018). Research suggests several factors that are accounting for early marriage around the globe, including socio-cultural and religious beliefs (Martin-Anatias, 2019; Sarwono, 2017), poverty and lack of education (Bennett, 2014; Rumble et al., 2018), gender roles and safety concerns (Pandey et al., 2019), and geography, especially living in rural areas (Rumble et al., 2018).

Women who married early are facing with a myriad of problems, including health related risks (Sabbe et al., 2015), social and economic problems (McDougal et al., 2018; Solhi et al., 2021), educational disadvantages (Shaud & Asad, 2018), victims of child abuse (Verma & Nair, 2021), and marital dissolution (Widyastari et al., 2020). Specifically, research shows that early married women tend to have little to no decision-making power in their marital relationships (Knox, 2017; McDougal et al., 2018; Sabbe et al., 2015). As such, early marriage places young women at a higher risk for relational problems such as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) (Amoah et al., 2021; Kidman, 2017; Verma & Nair, 2021) and divorce (Widyastari et al., 2020), as well as educational outcomes, including dropping out of school before completing high school (Bennet, 2014; Brown, 2012; Delprato & Akyeampong, 2017). It also heightens the risk of reproductive health issues, such as unintended and high-risk pregnancy, maternal mortality during childbirth (Gibbs et al., 2012), and sexually transmitted infections (Bennett, 2014; Sabbe et al., 2015; Shaud & Asad, 2018).

Although the research on early marriage has focused on a multitude of factors such as culture, religion, education, poverty, geographical location, and parental circumstances, most of the studies tend to include people from Africa and South Asia (Bennett, 2014; Erfina et al., 2019; Grijns & Horii, 2018; Indriyati & Handayani, 2018; Laily et al., 2018; Muhith et al., 2018; Rumble et al., 2018). There are limited studies that investigate ethnic minoritized communities in Southeast Asia in general and the Madurese people living in Indonesia in particular (Rumble et al., 2018; Segal-Engelchin et al., 2015), especially about Madurese women's perceptions of their lived experiences. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine how Madurese early married women share their experiences about early marriage based on the

23

following research questions: Why did young Madurese women marry early, and how did Madurese women make meaning out of early marriage?

1.1 Early Marriage in the Context of Madurese Community in Indonesia

Indonesia is in Southeast Asia, located between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. It is the world's largest island country, containing 17,504 islands and 34 provinces, and about the size of Alaska (735,358 square miles vs. 663,267 square miles, respectively). Provinces in Indonesia are divided into regencies and cities, which in turn are subdivided into districts. Within the East Java province where the study took place, there are 29 regencies, 9 cities, and 666 districts. East Java is the second most populous province, with a population of 40,665,696 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020). Its population is ethnically diverse, including the Javanese, Madurese, Sundanese, and Chinese. However, the Madurese are the third-largest ethnic group. According to the 2010 national census data in Indonesia, the Madurese people make up 3.03% of the country's population, or around 7,179,356 people (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2011). About 96 percent of the Madurese are Muslims (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020) and many still live in poor households in rural areas (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Jawa Timur, n.d.). For example, 56% of children in East Java live below the national poverty line (National household surveys, n.d.). Accessing to education, especially secondary education, is limited since poor parents prefer to keep their children, especially girls, home to help with their agriculture enterprises (Herawati & Rohmah, 2020; National household surveys, n.d.; Widyastari, 2020). As such, Madurese women tend to have less access to basic formal education and have lower literacy skills (De Jonge & Nooteboom, 2006). Research shows that lower educational attainment is positively related to early marriage. For example, the sub-district Sumbermalang in Situbondo where most Madurese reside has the lowest age at first marriage and highest prevalence rate (64%) of early marriage. One in four Madurese women married before the age of 16 (Jones, 2001; Sa'dan, 2015).

1.2 Determinants of Early Marriage in Indonesia

The research on early marriage around the globe is extensive. In general, studies that investigate the underlying reasons for early marriage point to several multifaceted factors. First, studies found that girls from low-income families, who live in rural areas and lack access to education are more likely to get married before age 18 (Pandey et al., 2019; Rumble et al., 2018; Widyastari et al., 2020). For example, Berliana et al. (2018) analyzed the 2010 Census data in Indonesia and found that women with limited education were 7.25 times higher to marry early compared to women with a high school education. Further, they found that underprivileged women and women living in rural areas were also at higher risks to get married early or before age 18 than privileged and urban women. One study found that some parents married their daughters early because of the financial burden to care for them (Pandey et al., 2019).

24

Second, girls from families that adhere to specific cultural beliefs are more likely to get married early (Martin-Anatias, 2019; Sarwono, 2017; Pandey et al., 2019; Suhariyati et al., 2019). For example, in the Javanese culture, most children are taught to adhere to *adat*, which refers to traditions, customs, norms, or practices of the community. Pandey et al. (2019) conducted 14 focus groups with adolescents and 15 focus groups with parents in nine rural districts in India to explore reasons for early marriage and found that parents were worried about their daughters' sexual purity and marriageability. Specifically, they were deeply concerned about their daughters' pre-marital sexual activities that could shame the family and reduce her value on the marriage market. Widyastari et al. (2020) studied two families with three generations (grandmother, mother, and daughter) in Central Java, Indonesia and found that having daughters who could not be married and remained as a spinster was a real concern since a spinster "was viewed as unqualified wife-to-be" in the culture (p. 256).

Lastly, the interpretation of the Quran also has a considerable influence on how society views and practices marriage. In some Islamic communities, including the Madurese ethnic group, religious-based law serves as the most influential guideline to mate selection, marriage, and marital relationships. For example, women in the Javanese Muslim community are taught early in life to see men in general and husbands in particular as "the Imam or leader of the family" (Widyastari et al., 2020, p. 559). As Platt (2017, p. 18) stated, the value and norms in Islam "permeate" individuals' daily experience, including how they understand the concept of a relationship between a husband and wife, as well as the gender roles that are prescribed in the Quran (Martin-Anatias, 2019; Uddin, 2015).

2. Methods

Conducting cross-cultural research requires an in-depth understanding of the culture, and a phenomenological method was chosen to guide our sampling, interview questions, and analysis. Phenomenology is a method developed by Edmund Husserl (Wertz, 2005) to examine human experiences, especially the everyday, taken-for-granted reality. It tries to understand how individuals make sense of or assign meanings to different aspects of their lives (Daly, 2007). This method fits well with the current study since the participants were from an ethnic minority community that values oral traditions, adheres to religious teaching, and have limited experience taking surveys.

2.1 Site

The research site selected for this study is located in a sub-district of East Java that has the highest prevalence rates (64%) of early marriage in Indonesia. It is a sub-district of Sumbermalang (UNICEF, 2016). Sumbermalang is a sub-district in Situbondo Regency, East Java, Indonesia. This sub-district is about 55 km from the capital of Situbondo Regency to the southwest. Most of the Sumbermalang region is located on the slopes of the Argapura Mountains. It has nine villages: Alas Tengah, Baderan, Kalirejo, Plalangan, Sumber Argo, Taman, Taman Sari, Taman Kursi, and Tlogosari. The population of the Sumbermalang sub-district is about 26,352 and 99.99% of them are Muslims (BPS, 2019), and "Madurese people make up about 95% of that population" (K. Mawardi, Sub-district Secretary Office,

25

personal communication, May 11, 2019).

2.2 Procedures

In 2019, the first author, who is an Indonesian, traveled to nine villages (Alas Tengah, Baderan, Kalirejo, Plalangan, Sumberargo, Taman, Taman Sari, Tamankursi and Tlogosari) in the Sumbermalang sub-district to recruit Madurese women for the study. To be respectful to the local community, the <u>Mudin</u> was contacted first to ask for his assistance and connections. The Mudin is a representative appointed by villagers to oversee family activities and events such as childbirth ceremonies, weddings, or funerals in the neighborhood. As the village leader, the Mudin has access to most villagers' contact information. After the Mudin agreed to help with the study, a letter written in Bahasa Indonesia was sent to 36 eligible village women. To be eligible to participate in the study, women must be 18 years old or older at the time of the study and married before 18 years old. Thirty-three participants contacted the researcher after receiving the letter; however, three refused to participate after learning more about the study. Of the 30 participants who agreed to participant in the study, 24 were women married before age 18 and 6 were mothers to at least an adult child who married before age 18. Prior to the interview, a consent form was read to each participant, including the disclosure of the honorarium (IDR150,000 or $10 U.S. dollars in cash) for participating in the study.

2.3 Participants' Characteristics

Thirty Madurese women from nine villages in the Sumbermalang sub-district participated in this study. Twenty-four were classified as women who married before age 18, and 6 were mothers who have early married daughters. On average, 20 (83%) early married participants reported that they were married before age 18 and still married at the time of the study, three (13%) were married before age 18 but were divorced and remarried, and one (4%) participant reported marrying before age 18 but was divorced at the time of the study. The mean age of the first marriage was 15.75 years old (SD=1.18) and 19.42 years old (SD=2.78) for their spouses. Eleven of them (45.83%) reported that their marriages were arranged by their parents and 13 (54.16%) indicated that their marriages were "their own choice" or free-choice without parental arrangement (see Table 1). Most of them (n=19) stopped pursuing their education after primary school. Only six graduated from junior-secondary school. After marriage, 14 of the 24 participants became homemakers, and the rest of them decided to work as farmers or crafters (see Table 2). Regarding the six mothers of early married women, five (83%) reported that they were married at the time of the study. Only one person reported being divorced and remarried. The average age of these mothers' first marriage was 15.67 years old (SD=4.13), and the age of first marriage for their spouses was 22 years old (SD=2.75). Five of them (83%) reported that their marriage was arranged and one (17%) reported that her marriage was by choice. Only 3 participants finished primary school (See Table 1).

Table 1. Participants' Aggregated Characteristics

Characteristics	N	Mean	SD
Early Married Women	24		
Age		21.8	3.9
Age at First Marriage		15.8	1.2
Husband (or ex)'s Age at First Marriage		19.4	2.8
Type of Marriage			
Arranged	11		
Free-choice	13		
Marital Status			
Married	20		
Divorced	1		
Re-married	3		
Employment			
Employed	1		
Unemployed (housewife)	14		
Self-employed (fish box craftsman)	5		
Farmer	4		
Education			
Some Primary School	2		
Completed Primary School	8		
Some Middle School	3		
Completed Middle School	6		
Some High School	2		
Completed High School	3		
Mothers of Early Married Women	6		
Age		40.8	4.6
Age at First Marriage		15.7	4.1
Husband (or ex)'s Age at First Marriage		22	2.7
Types of Marriage			
Arranged	5		
Free-choose	1		
Marital Status			
Married	5		
Divorce	0		

Re-married	1
Employment	
Employed	1
Unemployed (housewife)	0
Self-employed (fish box craftsman)	2
Farmer	3
Education	
Some Primary School	0
Completed Primary School	3
Some Middle School	2
Completed Middle School	0
Some High School	0
Completed High School	1

2.4 Interviews

Based on the phenomenological method (Daly, 2007), all interviews were conducted face-to-face in participants' homes or at places that were convenient to them. To be attuned to the culture, all interviews began with these questions, "How are you? What do you usually do this time if I am not here?" These questions allowed the researcher to connect with the participant before the interview. Once the connection was made, the following sample questions and probes were asked: "Can you tell me a little bit about your marriage? What is the meaning of marriage? Why did you decide to get married and at what age? What is like to get married before age 18? What is your experience like?" All interviews were conducted in the Indonesian national language, Bahasa Indonesia, a language most Madurese speak. Each interview lasted 90 minutes and was audio and video recorded for later analysis.

2.5 Transcriptions

The transcription process involved six individuals, including the first author, three Indonesian graduate students from the university, and two Indonesian-English sworn translators. All individuals were fluent in English and Bahasa Indonesia, and one person was fluent in Madurese. First, the first author transcribed all recorded audio interviews in Bahasa Indonesia, an official and national language of Indonesia. Idioms expressed by the participants in Madurese were noted and the two sworn translators who are fluent in Madurese language were asked to listen to the audio to clarify their meanings. Next, 13% of the transcriptions were randomly selected to the three trained graduate students to verify (i.e., to listen to the interviews and read the transcripts) to ensure the transcriptions were accurate.

2.6 Data Analysis

All transcripts were analyzed using a content analysis method that is commonly used in phenomenological studies (Özyiğit, 2017). According to Özyiğit (2017), data analysis tends to follow the following five steps: preparation for analysis, draft coding, coding, organization of the data, and reporting. First, during the initial step, *preparation for analysis*, the first author created pseudonyms for every participant's transcript to hide their identity and assigned each participant an identification number for reference. Next, during the *draft coding* step, transcriptions were read one at a time first to gain a deeper understanding of the overall interview. Then, each transcript was re-read again for the second time to make notes on specific meaning units (Note 1). Meaning units were cut and pasted into a codebook, along with the specific texts or quotations that reference specific paragraphs, page numbers, and participants by pseudonyms. Third, during the *coding* phase of the analysis, quotations and meaning units were read again and similar meaning units were grouped together to create themes and subthemes. To enhance the trustworthiness of the analysis, two randomly selected transcripts were assigned to three trained graduate students who are fluent in English and Bahasa Indonesia to code using the same protocol. Meaning units of the two transcripts from the first and three graduate students were compared and discussed when discrepancies arise. Fourth, during the *organization of the data* step, quotations used to illustrate the themes and subthemes were re-read again to ensure they do not capture the same themes and subthemes. Themes and subthemes related to the two research questions were cut and pasted into the final table, which includes quotations used to highlight the themes or subthemes and the frequency counts. Lastly, to *report* the results, themes and subthemes that received the most frequency counts were selected to be reported. In order to honor the voices of the participants, Table 2 was created to show the specific information about each participant using their pseudonyms.

Table 2. Participants' Individual Characteristics

ID	Pseudonym	Age	Education	Age of first marriage	Marital status	Occupation	Role
1	Magnolia	22	Some Elementary School	15	married	Farmer	Early married woman
2	Aren	40	Some Elementary School	17	re-married	Farmer	Mother of early married woman
3	Dandelion	18	Junior High School	17	married	Crafter	Early married woman
4	Cendana	38	Elementary School	12	married	Farmer	Mother of early married woman
5	Lotus	23	Elementary School	16	married	Crafter	Early married woman
6	Randhu	35	Elementary School	12	married	Crafter	Mother of early married woman

7	Jati	40	Some Elementary School	14	married	Crafter	Mother of early married woman
8	Bougainville	18	Elementary School	15	married	Homemaker	Early married woman
9	Oak	44	Some Elementary School	16	married	Farmer	Mother of early married woman
10	Sunflower	20	Junior High School	15	married	Homemaker	Early married woman
11	Alamanda	25	Elementary School	16	married	Homemaker	Early married woman
12	Lily	26	Elementary School	17	married	Homemaker	Early married woman
13	Crisan	24	Elementary School	13	married	Crafter	Early married woman
14	Jasmine	35	Some Elementary School	17	married	Farmer	Early married woman
15	Lavender	28	Elementary School	14	re-married	Farmer	Early married woman
16	Daisy	22	Elementary School	16	married	Farmer	Early married woman
17	Gardenia	19	Some Senior High School	16	married	Homemaker	Early married woman
18	Peony	19	Junior High School	17	married	Homemaker	Early married woman
19	Poppy	19	Elementary School	13	married	Crafter	Early married woman
20	Primrose	20	Some Junior High School	16	married	Homemaker	Early married woman
21	Maple	48	Senior High School	23	married	Office employee	Mother of early married woman
22	Rose	18	Some Junior High School	16	married	Homemaker	Early married woman
23	Dahlia	18	Some Junior High School	16	married	Homemaker	Early married woman
24	Amarylis	20	Junior High School	17	married	Homemaker	Early married woman
25	Marygold	20	Junior High School	16	married	Homemaker	Early married woman
26	Lilac	22	Some Senior High School	17	married	Pre-K teacher	Early married woman
27	Buttercup	22	Senior High School	15	married	Homemaker	Early married woman
28	Aster	21	Senior High School	17	re-married	Homemaker	Early married woman
29	Cherryblossom	23	Senior High School	16	re-married	Crafter	Early married woman
30	Flamboyan	21	Junior High School	15	Divorced	Homemaker	Early married woman

3. Results

This study aimed to explore two primary questions: Why did young Madurese women marry early, and how did Madurese women make meaning out of early marriage? Our analysis found four major themes emerged from participants' explanations about the reasons they decided to get married at an early age, and two themes appeared to speak directly to the meanings women constructed to explain the practice and perpetuation of early marriage. Note that when quotations were included to illustrate the subthemes, the role of the participants (an early married woman participant vs. a mother of an early married daughter) was specified with their assigned pseudonyms.

30

3.1 Reasons to Get Married Early

3.1.1 Marriage for Love, Happiness, and Companionship

Love, happiness, and companionship were the most common phrases participants (72% of the cases) used to express their reason to marry early. First, participants mentioned love (*cinta*), even though the majority of the participants' marriages were arranged (53.3%). Gardenia, an early married woman participant, shared her story of how she felt in love with her husband and wanted to marry him this way:

> Because of love, if I think about it again, getting married early is hard. I didn't even
> finish my study in senior high school, so it's hard for me to find a proper job. The
> point is love is blind. I didn't think about it thoroughly before... [however] I am
> happy because I have someone who looks after me and who always accompanies
> me. I feel safe to tell everything to my husband.

Besides love, participants (72% of the cases) also admitted that the main reason they wanted to get married, even at a young age, was happiness (*kebahagiaan*). These participants said that being with someone they love made them happy, and there was no reason to postpone the marriage, as long as both of them were in love. As Magnolia, an early married woman participant, stated:

> We didn't date back then. He was my parents' choice, not mine. I was 15 years old
> when we got married... We both loved each other, even though he was not my own
> choice but my parents'. I was happy. Now, I have a child, and I'm happy.

When participants talked about love and happiness, they also mentioned companionship. According to the participants, they were happy because they had someone to accompany them, either to talk to about their future plans together, share their experiences, or help in life, especially in the family and the farm. Oak, who also married young but now is a mother to a married daughter, said the reason for her daughter's marriage was to have someone there to talk to her: "If she is married, she will be able to discuss [her plans] with her partner. If she stays single, she won't have a partner to share her problems with."

3.1.2 Acceptance of Arranged Marriage

About 33% of the participants talked about their arranged marriage without any input in the process. Some of these participants emotionally stated that their parents did not tell them about their arranged engagement until a few weeks prior to the marriage ceremony. Sandalwood, an early married woman participant, said,

> I was betrothed to him [husband] by my parents when I was still in the sixth grade
> in elementary school. Of course, I was shocked. Three months later, we got married.
> I was afraid I might not be able to eat and work [carry out household chores]
> properly.

Another woman participant, Teaktree, also shared her story by saying, "At first, I didn't know my husband. I just knew him after we got engaged. Two months later, we got married. I used to dislike him since he was my parents' choice. I used to be afraid of my husband". However, most of the participants' stories seemed to suggest that agreeing to marry someone who was chosen by their parents showed that they were good daughters—being obedient, respectful, and reserved. Although arranged marriage was not the preferred way for these participants, they also said that eventually, they learned to like their husbands as stated by Crisan, an early married woman participant:

> My parents had betrothed me since I was 8 or 9 years old. After graduating from
> elementary school, we got married. I was betrothed when I was still young, so I felt
> I wasn't ready. However, my parents convinced me to continue our engagement. I
> have become interested in him [husband] since then.

3.1.3 Marriage for Economic Reasons

In addition to love and arranged marriage, 27% of the participants also talked about economic benefits as a reason for marrying early. These participants' stories shared a common theme about their impoverished conditions while living with their biological parents. To them, the way out of poverty was through marriage. They reasoned that when married, they could work to help their husbands or have an employed husband to support them. As Sandalwood, an early married woman participant, stated, "When I was a child, I was very poor, and it was difficult to afford enough food to eat. But since I have my husband, we can earn money for our needs. My life becomes better". Another woman participant with a similar experience, Bougainville, said:

> Most people think that getting married at a young age makes us always depend on
> our parents, but my husband is exceptional. He works on his own... and he is able to
> give money to his wife and child. He does not depend on my parents.

3.2 Making Sense of Early Marriage in the Community

To address the second research question, we examined the underlying explanations for the perpetuation of early marriage in the participants' community. Based on the analysis, two intertwined cultural values (marriage and sexual purity) emerged to help make sense of early marriage.

3.2.1 Marriage is the Goal for Girls

According to the participants, early marriage is not a stigma in the community since getting daughters to be married is the goal. As such, girls were trained at a young age to be good wives. A good wife is someone who is obedient, patient, reliable, and responsible. She knows how to take care of the house, cook, run errands, and care for her husband. Once a girl possesses these traits and learns all the skills, she is ready to be married regardless of her age. According to 53% of the participants, whenever the neighbors saw any young women that seem to be mature, they would urge them to get married. They rarely consider other factors such as her mental age, health, financial and psychological conditions, as well as her personal desires to get married. Lavender said, "Here, people look at their appearances. If physically they look big enough, then they will be married, even though they are still young". Palmtree,

32

another participant, also agreed: "If women are not married early, it will be so hard for them to get someone to marry. Also, it is better to get married early than to get pregnant out of wedlock".

3.2.2 Sexual Purity is Valued

To be a good marriage prospect in a tight-knit community, the sexual purity of girls is utmost important. According to 53% of the participants, women who are virgin, young, and obedient tended to be more attractive as marital prospects. They are more likely to be treated with respect, and parents tend to gain a good reputation from their chastity. Maple, a mother of one of the participants, explained the reason behind this value this way:

> A woman is like a pearl or a diamond, pretty and beautiful, but only one crack
>
> [because she loses her virginity] can make it worthless. That's why, we, as parents,
>
> not only have to pray for our daughters but also make a big effort to protect them.

Therefore, protecting girls' sexual purity is a top priority for parents and for others in the community. Participants talked about how their parents monitored and shielded them from interacting with boys during their adolescence. For example, they stated that their parents expected them to stay home, help their mothers care for the family, and avoid contact with the opposite sex. As they matured physically and began to menstruate, their parents' worries seemed to grow and became more controlling. As such, they were subjected to stay home most of the time with limited opportunities to be outside with their friends. When they were allowed to be outside, members of the community also kept an eye on them and spread gossip around, especially on those who violated this cultural norm. As Dandelion stated:

> I had to be more careful if I wanted to hang out with my friends. My neighbors
>
> would start making rumors if I hung out with someone else but my fiancé… We
>
> [she and fiancé] were allowed to hang out together, but we were prohibited from
>
> hanging out at night, or our neighbors would start making rumors.

Failing to train girls properly and protecting them from the gossip of the community could decrease their chance of getting married, especially before the age of 18. Participants stated that girls who postponed or did not get married before graduating from high school tended to be labeled as "spinsters". According to Sandalwood, an early married woman participant, "Any woman who stays single will be called a spinster here [in the community]. But, once we're married, we will have someone to protect us [from the label]". Being labeled as a spinster seemed to motivate young women to conform to the norm of getting married early. It also pressured parents to arrange their daughters to marry early when a suitable match is found to avoid the spinster label. Palmtree, another mother, said, "If women were not married early, it would be so hard for them to get someone to marry them". Similarly, Amaryllis and Bougainville, early married women participants, shared their experiences as follows:

> Before I got married, even my aunt kept mocking me. She said a "big girl" should
>
> be married even though I was still in seventh grade. Even my father was hostile
>
> [towards me] because I didn't want to get married yet (Amaryllis).
>
> They're okay with it [early marriage], [so] they will gossip about every woman who

33

is still single. They might as well gossip about me since I used to run away [with my boyfriend]. Even my sister, who went out to her boyfriend's house for one day, got her own gossip, let alone myself (Bougainville).

4. Discussion

Given the high prevalence rates of early marriage, this study examines the reasons and meanings of early marriage from a small group of Madurese women living in Sumbermalang sub-district, Indonesia. To answer the first research question, our results found that more than half of the Madurese women in this study (53.3%) report that their marriages were arranged by their parents. Although arranged marriage is not a preferred way for these participants, they believe their parents made the right decision to match them to their husbands. Some participants talk about the difficulty of adjusting to the marital relationship in the beginning, but most report that they eventually adjust to the marriage and develop an attraction to their spouses; a finding that has been found in a study with diverse, multinational samples (Epstein et al., 2013). Surprisingly, however, we found none of the participants talk about regrets or share any resentment about their marriages. Most of them state that they are happy to find a lifelong companion and believe their lives are much better after marriage. For example, 27% of the participants indicate that their lives have improved financially after marriage due to their husbands' employment. This finding is different from what other studies have found concerning the financial consequence of early marriage (Bajracharya & Amin, 2012; Bawono et al., 2019; Bennet, 2013; Niehof, 1985; Raj 2010; Santhya et al., 2006), partly because the husbands of the participants in this study are much older (mean ages=20.5 for men; 15.7 for women) and are more likely to be employed outside of the home. On the average, research shows that employed men are more likely to support their wives and meet their cultural expectations as the family provider (Utomo, 2014).

To address the second research question, the results suggest that parents' goal for their daughters is to get married and become a good wife. To achieve this goal, young girls are socialized to learn the responsibilities and qualities of a good wife early in life and be restricted to the home to maintain their innocence, including their sexual purity. The sexual purity of the girl seems to tie directly to her worth and value in the marriage market, especially in a community that still values arranged marriage such as the Madurese who live in rural areas (Dariyo & Tumanggor, 2022). For example, our findings suggest that women who are young and virgin are more attractive to marriage, especially to older men who are already have a job. These young women are more likely to be treated with respect and have a better chance for marriage proposals (Bawono et al., 2019; Bennet, 2019; Harahap, 2019). Conversely, girls who engage in pre-marital sex or get pregnant before marriage not only lose their value, but also be frowned upon, and this shame usually goes beyond the girl to her family, extended family members, and the surrounding neighbors (Karisyati & Hadi, 2017). For instance, most participants indicate that being single after the age of 18 tends to raise others' suspicion about a woman's quality and sexuality. Some of the participants report of being labeled as a spinster, unsaleable maiden, or an expired commodity (*ta

34

paju lake); a finding that is consistent with other studies (Bawono et al., 2019; Jannah, 2012; Susanti, 2018).

4.1 Contributions to the Literature

In sum, based on the stories, experiences, and interpretations of the 30 participants, this study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, the study found 46.7% of the participants married by their own choice based on love and happiness. Although we do not know the extent to which their parents were involved in their marriages or how much their parents accepted this type of marriage, none of the participants talk about their parents' reactions to their marriages negatively. This seems to suggest that the Madurese community is also open to a free-choice marriage if children are in love with one another, and this finding is in line with the changing marital attitudes in Indonesia in general (Suyanto et al., 2023). Of course, given the limitations of this study (convenient sample and small sample size), future studies need to investigate this alternative marriage mode further to support its generalizability to the whole Madurese community. Second, despite what the research said about the nature and consequences of early arranged marriage (Amoah et al., 2021; Widyastari et al., 2020), participants in this study seem to have a positive experience with their husbands. Only 17% of the participants (n=5) report of getting a divorce from their first husbands (see Table 2), and none of them share any evidence of abuse during the interview. Indeed, they believe they have found a companion in life who they can talk to, depend on, and sacrifice for. Some participants believe their financial situations are getting better as a result of their marriage, while others believe their marriage saves them from the community gossip and the potential harassment from other men. Although this finding is encouraging, it is advisable not to generalize it to the whole Madurese community since the sample is based on a convenient sampling approach and the participants in this study chose to be in the study. More studies are still needed to investigate this finding to learn more about the nuances and complexities of arranged marriage in the Madurese community.

Lastly, the goal for girls in rural Madurese communities where accessing to education (National household surveys, n.d.) and employment (OECD, 2019) is limited seems to be one of the main reasons for sustaining early marriage. For instance, in a community where early marriage is the norm (Sa'dan, 2015) and the community is small, it is difficult for parents not to conform to *adat*, which refers to traditions, customs, norms, or practices of the community. Given the context (rural) and adat of the community, the pressure to conform is the reality for most parents, since there is little incentive for parents to encourage their daughters to obtain a higher education. As discussed by the participants, the longer the daughter stays single, the more risks she will face regarding her sexuality and marriageability. As such, the sooner the daughter is married, the better it is for her and her family. This cultural nuance is crucial to efforts created by outsiders to mitigate the "problem" of early marriage.

4.2 Research Directions and Implications

Our study offers a unique perspective about the lived experience of early marriage for Madurese women living in a specific geographic and cultural community in rural Indonesia. Results underscore the importance of paying close attention to cultural context when examining this phenomenon. It was clear that for the women in our study, the experience of early marriage is deeply embedded in long-held and continually reinforced cultural traditions, values, and practices. Conducting similar studies on early marriage in additional geographically and culturally diverse communities will add to a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. We believe this type of understanding can be used to co-create culturally attuned initiatives to change early marriage on the ground up instead of using governmental and/or statistical data to build programs based on a top-down approach.

Although our study, along with most studies on early marriage, tend to include only women in the samples, arranged and early marriages also affect young men. We need more research to understand young men's experiences as well. Additionally, studies examining the relationship dynamics of early-married couples and their relationships with their extended families are also needed since marriage is not between two individuals but between two families. To date, the majority of policies and projects designed by the Indonesian government to reduce early marriage tends to focus on increasing access to education (compulsory education) to reduce poverty. We suggest that these policies and programs incorporate the cultural contexts of rural ethnic communities as we have found in this study. For example, a focus on young girls' education can only be effective if girls have choices to delay marriage without the pressure and stigma of the community, and parents and the community are willing to accept girls' autonomy and the choices they make. Without a holistic approach to bring in changes at the community level, empowering young girls to delay marriage could only isolate them and put them at a greater risk to ridicule.

References

Amoah, H. A., Tenkorang, E. Y., & Dold, P. (2021). Experiences of intimate partner violence against women who married as child brides in Ghana. *Journal of Family Violence*, *36*(4), 455-466. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-020-00168-y

Arroisi, R. H., & Quraisyin, D. (2015). "Perjodohan" dalam budaya patriarkhi (Studi kasus komunikasi budaya pada pernikahan di desa Ambunten, kabupaten Sumenep) ["Arranged married" in patriarchal culture (Case study of cultural communication in marriage in Ambunten Village, Sumenep)]. *Jurnal Komunikasi*, *9*(2), 131-140.

Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Jawa Timur. (n.d.). *Sosial dan kependudukan [Social and Population]*. Retrieved   April   15,   2021,   from https://jatim.bps.go.id/subject/23/kemiskinan-dan-ketimpangan.html#subjekViewTab3

Badan Pusat Statistik. (2011). *Kewarganegaraan, Suku Bangsa, Agama dan Bahasa Sehari-hari Penduduk Indonesia Hasil Sensus Penduduk 2010 [Citizenship, Ethnicity, Religion and Daily Language of the Indonesian Population Census Results 2010]*. Jakarta: BPS.

Badan Pusat Statistik. (2017). *Perkawinan Usia Anak Di Indonesia 2013 dan 2015 Edisi Revisi [Child Marriage in Indonesia during 2013 and 2015 Revision Edition]*. Jakarta: BPS.

Badan Pusat Statistik. (2018). *Profil Anak Indonesia 2018*. Jakarta: Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak (KPPPA). Retrieved from https://www.kemenpppa.go.id/lib/uploads/list/74d38-buku-pai-2018.pdf

Badan Pusat Statistik. (2020). *Statistik Indonesia 2020*. Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik. Retrieved from https://www.bps.go.id/publication/2023/07/18/4a49f846d0708c1fe1117b5f/penduduk-indonesia-hasil-long-form-sensus-penduduk-2020.html

Bajracharya, A., & Amin, S. (2012). Poverty, marriage timing, and transitions to adulthood in Nepal. *Studies in Family Planning*, *43*(2), 79-92. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4465.2012.00307.x

Bawono, Y., & Suryanto, S. (2019). Does early marriage make women happy?: A phenomenological finding from Madurese women. *Journal of Educational, Health and Community Psychology*, *8*(1). https://doi.org/10.12928/jehcp.v8i1.12197

Bawono, Y., Suminar, D. R., & Hendriani, W. (2019). "I am satisfied with my marriage": An experience from Madurese women who married early. *Humaniora*, *10*(3), 197. https://doi.org/10.21512/humaniora.v10i3.5887

Bawono, Y., Suminar, D. R., & Hendriani, W. (2019). I am satisfied with my marriage: An experience from Madurese women who married early. *Humaniora*, *10*(3), 197-2020. https://doi.org/10.21512/humaniora.v10i3.5887

Bennett, L. R. (2014). Early marriage, adolescent motherhood, and reproductive rights for young Sasak mothers in Lombok. *Wacana (Depok, Bogor, Indonesia)*, *15*(1), 66-86. https://doi.org/10.17510/wjhi.v15i1.105

Bennett, L. R. (2019). Single women's s experiences of pre-marital pregnancy and induced abortion in Lombok, Eastern Indonesia. *Reproductive Health Matters*, *9*(17), 37-43. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0968-8080(01)90006-0

Berliana, S., Kristinadewi, P., Rachmawati, P., Fauziningtyas, R., Efendi, F., & Bushy, A. (2018). Determinants of early marriage among female. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijamh-2018-0054

Brown, G. (2012). *Out of wedlock, into school: Combating child marriage through education*. Office of Gordon and Sarah Brown Limited.

Daly, K. J. (2007). *Qualitative Methods for Family Studies & Human Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA Sage.

De Jonge, H., & Nooteboom, G. (2006). Why the Madurese? Ethnic conflicts in West and East Kalimantan compared. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, *34*(3), 456-474. https://doi.org/10.1163/156853106778048597

Delprato, M., Akyeampong, K., & Dunne, M. (2017). Intergenerational education effects of early marriage in sub-Saharan Africa. *World Development*, *91*, 173-192. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2016.11.010

Efevbera, Y., Bhabha, J., Farmer, P. E., & Fink, G. (2017). Girl child marriage as a risk factor for early childhood development and stunting. *Social Science and Medicine*, *185*, 91-101. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.05.027

Ekoriano, M., Muthmainnah, M., Titisari, A., Devi, Y. P., Widodo, T., & Purwoko, E. (2023). The average age of first marriage for Indonesian women in their reproductive period who give birth to an average of two children: National survey (2017-2019). [version 1; peer review: 1 approved with reservations]. *F1000Research 2023*, *12*(35).

Epstein, R., Pandit, M., & Thakar, M. (2013). How love emerges in arranged marriages: Two cross-cultural studies. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *44*(3), 341-360. https://doi.org/10.3138/jcfs.44.3.341

Erfina, E., Widyawati, W., McKenna, L., Reisenhofer, S., & Ismail, D. (2019). Exploring Indonesian adolescent women's healthcare needs as they transition to motherhood: A qualitative study. *Women and Birth*, *32*(6), e544-e551. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2019.02.007

Erulkar, A. (2013). Adolescence lost: The realities of child marriage. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *52*(5), 513-514. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.03.004

Gage, A. J. (2013). Child marriage prevention in Amhara Region, Ethiopia: Association of communication exposure and social influence with parents/guardians' knowledge and attitudes. *Social Science and Medicine*, *97*, 124-133. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2013.08.017

Gibbs, C. M., Wendt, A., Peters, S., & Hogue, C. J. (2012). The impact of early age at first childbirth on maternal and infant health. *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology*, *26*(SUPPL. 1), 259-284. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-3016.2012.01290.x

Giddens, A. (1987). *Social theory and modern sociology*. Stanford University Press.

Grijns, M., & Horii, H. (2018). Child Marriage in a Village in West Java (Indonesia): Compromises between Legal Obligations and Religious Concerns. *Asian Journal of Law and Society*, *5*(March), 453-466. https://doi.org/10.1017/als.2018.9

Hajihasani, M., & Sim, T. (2018). Marital satisfaction among girls with early marriage in Iran: Emotional intelligence and religious orientation. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, *00*(00), 1-10.

Harahap, I. (2019). Determining the age of marriage in Indonesia; Family law reform on Al-Maslaha approach. *Jurnal AL-MAQASID: Jurnal Ilmu Kesyariahan Dan Keperdataan*, *5*(2), 159-171.

Herawati, N., & Rohmah, N. (2020). Culture matchmaking in Madurese ethnic: A study of the motives, factors and impacts in marriage life. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, *24*(1). https://doi.org/10.37200/IJPR/V24I1/PR200240

Husson, L. (1997). Eight centuries of Madurese migration to East Java. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, *6*(1), 77-102. https://doi.org/10.1177/011719689700600105

Indraswari. (1999). Fenomena kawin muda dan aborsi: gambaran kasus [The phenomenon of early marriage and abortion: Case study]. In S. Hasyim (Ed.), *Menakar "Harga" Perempuan*. Bandung: Penerbit Mizan.

Indriyati, & Handayani, D. (2018). Teen marriage and feeding behavior to children in Indonesia. *Malaysian Journal of Economic Studies*, *55*(2), 151-166. https://doi.org/10.22452/MJES.vol55no2.1

Jannah, U. S. F. (2012). Pernikahan dini dan implikasinya terhadap kehidupan keluarga pada masyarakat Madura (perspektif hukum dan gender) [Early marriage and its implications for family life in Madurese society (legal and gender perspective)]. *Egalita*, *7*(1), 83-101.

Jones, G. W. (2001). Which Indonesian women marry youngest, and Why? *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, *32*(February 2001), 67-78. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463401000029

Karim, N., Greene, M., & Picard, M. (2016). The cultural context of child marriage in Nepal and Bangladesh: Findings from CARE's tipping point project community participatory analysis: Research report. *Geneva: CARE*.

Karisyati, S., & Hadi, M. H. A. (2017). Tradisi Bhāākāl Ekakoāghĭ (perjodohan sejak dalam kandungan) di Desa Sana Laok, Kecamatan Waru, Pamekasan, Madura dalam perspektif hukum adat dan hukum Islam [The Bhāākāl Ekakoāghĭ Tradition (Marriage since in the womb) in Sana Laok Village, Waru District, Pamekasan, Madura in the perspective of customary law and Islamic law]. *Supremasi Hukum*, *6*(2), 25-48. https://doi.org/10.14421/sh.v6i2.2018

Katz, J. S., & Katz, R. S. (1978). Legislating social change in a developing country: The new Indonesian marriage law revisited. *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, *26*(2), 309-320. https://doi.org/10.2307/839677

Kidman, R. (2017). Child marriage and intimate partner violence: A comparative study of 34 countries. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, *46*(2), 662-675. https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyw225

Knox, S. E. (2017). How they see it: Young women's views on early marriage in a post-conflict setting. *Reproductive Health Matters*, *25*(sup1), 96-106. https://doi.org/10.1080/09688080.2017.1383738

Laily, N., Kania, N., Ilmi, B., & Marlinae, L. (2018). Differences in the influence of the quality of life on marital satisfaction in women early marriage and not early marriage. *Indian Journal of Public Health Research & Development*, *9*(6), 108-112. https://doi.org/10.5958/0976-5506.2018.00532.6

Larkin, M., Watts, S., & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 102-120. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp062oa

Martin-Anatias, N. (2019). On being a "good" Indonesian Muslim woman: An autoethnography. *Humanity & Society*, *43*(4), 351-374. https://doi.org/10.1177/0160597618814872

McDougal, L., Jackson, E. C., McClendon, K. A., Belayneh, Y., Sinha, A., & Raj, A. (2018). Beyond the statistic: Exploring the process of early marriage decision-making using qualitative findings from Ethiopia and India. *BMC Women's Health*, *18*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-018-0631-z

Muhith, A., Fardiansyah, A., & Saputra, M. H. (2018). Analysis of Causes and Impacts of Early Marriage on Madurese Sumenep East Java Indonesia. *1496 Indian Journal of Public Health Research & Development*, *9*(8), 1495-1499. https://doi.org/10.5958/0976-5506.2018.00944.0

National household surveys (SUSENAS, RISKESDAS, IDHS) and administrative data (Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Health). (n.d.). Retrieved October 18, 2023, from https://www.unicef.org/indonesia/sites/unicef.org.indonesia/files/2019-05/East_Java_ProvincialBr ief.pdf

Niehof, A. (1985). *Women and Fertility in Madura (Indonesia)*. Leiden University.

Nobles, J., & Buttenheim, A. (2008). Marriage and socioeconomic change in contemporary Indonesia. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *70*(4), 904-918. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2008.00535.x

OECD. (2019). *Education at a glance database*. Retrieved October 15, 2023, from https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2019_CN_IDN.pdf

Padilla-Walker, L. M., & Carlo, G. (2004). "It's not fair!" Adolescents' constructions of appropriateness of parental reactions. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *33*(5), 389-401. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:JOYO.0000037632.46633.bd

Pandey, N., Saxena, K., & Melnikas, A. J. (2019). *Examining early marriage in India: Qualitative findings*. New York: Population Council. https://doi.org/10.31899/pgy9.1025

Platt, M. (2017). *Marriage, Gender, and Islam in Indonesia: Women Negotiating Informal Marriage, Divorce, and Desire*. Taylor & Francis. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315178943

Rachmad, T. H. (2017). Kontestasi pernikahan dini dalam kajian budaya Madura. (dalam: Fenomena pernikahan dini di Madura [*Contestation of early marriage in the study of Madura culture.(in: The phenomenon of early marriage in Madura]* (N. D. Kurniawati, T. H. Rachmad, & Yuriadi, Eds.).

Raj, A. (2010). When the mother is a child: The impact of child marriage on the health and human rights of girls. *Archives of disease in childhood*, *95*(11), 931-935. https://doi.org/10.1136/adc.2009.178707

Rumble, L., Peterman, A., Irdiana, N., Triyana, M., & Minnick, E. (2018). An empirical exploration of female child marriage determinants in Indonesia. *BMC Public Health*, *18*(1), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-5313-0

Sa'dan, M. (2015b). Tradition of forced marriage in Madura: A perspective of sociolegal feminism. *Jurnal Perempuan*, *20*(1). https://doi.org/10.34309/jp.v20i1.52

Sabbe, A., Oulami, H., Hamzali, S., Oulami, N., Le Hjir, F. Z., Abdallaoui, M., … Leye, E. (2015). Women's perspectives on marriage and rights in Morocco: Risk factors for forced and early marriage in the Marrakech region. *Culture, Health, and Sexuality*, *17*(2), 135-149. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2014.964773

Santhya, K. G., Haberland, N., & Singh, A. K. (2006). *She knew only when the garland was put around her neck: Findings from an exploratory study on early marriage in Rajasthan*. New Delhi: Population Council. https://doi.org/10.31899/pgy5.1010

Sarwono, S. W. (2017). Women in Indonesia. In C. M. Brown, U. P. Gielen, J. L. Gibbons, & J. Kuriansky (Eds.), *Women's Evolving Lives: Global and Psychosocial Perspectives* (pp. 59-72). Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-58008-1_4

Schuler, S. R., Bates, L. M., Islam, F., & Islam, M. K. (2006). The timing of marriage and childbearing among rural families in Bangladesh: Choosing between competing risks. *Social Science & Medicine*, *62*(11), 2826-2837. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2005.11.004

Segal-Engelchin, D., Huss, E., & Massry, N. (2016). The Experience of Early Marriage: Perspectives of Engaged and Married Muslim Women in Israel. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *31*(6), 725-749. https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558415605167

Shaud, S., & Asad, S. (2018). Marital adjustment, convergent communication patterns, and psychological distress in women with early and late marriage. *Current Psychology*, *39*(6), 2326-2333. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-018-9936-1

Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2022). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research* (2nd ed.). SAGE.

Smith-Hefner, N. J. (2005). The new Muslim romance: Changing patterns of courtship and marriage among educated Javanese youth. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, *36*(3), 441-459. https://doi.org/10.1017/S002246340500024X

Solhi, M., Azar, F. E. F., Farahani, F. K., & Lebni, J. Y. (2021). Exploring the consequences of early marriage among Kurdish Women: A qualitative study in Western Iran. *Research Square*, *1*(2), 1-25. https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-55314/v2

Spencer, H. (2012). What is Culture? A Compilation of Quotations. *GlobalPAD Core Concepts*.

Sudarso, S., Keban, P. E., & Mas'udah, S. (2019). Gender, religion and patriarchy: The educational discrimination of coastal Madurese women, East Java. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, *20*(9), 2-12.

Suhariyati, S., Haryanto, J., & Probowati, R. (2019). Trends of Early Marriage in Developing Countries: A Systematic Review. *Jurnal Ners*, *14*(3), 277-282. https://doi.org/10.20473/jn.v14i3.17019

Susanti, E. (2018). Unequal gender relations in the practices of girl marriage in poor families at East Java Province. *Masyarakat, Kebudayaan dan Politik*, *31*(4), 440-450. https://doi.org/10.20473/mkp.V31I42018.440-450

Susilo, S. (2017). The Meaning of Early Marriage for Parents in Begging Communities in Pelanggaran Hamlet, Brata Tinggi, Tlanakan District, Pamekasan Madura Regency. In *Seminar Nasional Tahunan Fakultas Ilmu Sosial Universitas Negeri Medan* (pp. 472-476).

Uddin, M. E. (2015). Family socio-cultural values affecting early marriage between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, *35*(3/4), 141-164. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-06-2014-0046

UNICEF. (n.d.). *Child marriage: Child marriage threatens the lives, well-being, and futures of girls around the world*. Retrieved March 16, 2021, from https://www.unicef.org/protection/child-marriage

UNICEF-Indonesia. (2016). *Child marriage poverty makes girls more vulnerable to child marriage, (October), 2016*.

UNICEF-Indonesia. (2017). *Child Marriage in Indonesia: Progress on Pause*. *UNICEF*.

United Nations Population Fund. (2012). *Marrying Too Young: End Child Marriage*. New York: United Nations Fund for Population Activities.

Utomo, A. J. (2014). Marrying Up? Trends in Age and Education Gaps among Married Couples in Indonesia. *Journal of Family Issues*, *35*(12), 1683-1706. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X14538023

Van Nes, F., Abma, T., Jonsson, H., & Deeg, D. (2010). Language differences in qualitative research: Is meaning lost in translation? *European journal of aging*, *7*(4), 313-316. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-010-0168-y

Verma, S., & Nair, V. V. (2021). The association between early marriage and intimate partner violence in Egypt. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, *27*(5), 461-473. https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2021.2006970

Wertz, F. J. (2005). Phenomenological research methods for counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *52*(2), 167-177. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.167

Widyastari, D. A. (2020). Revisiting the New Indonesia's Marriage Act 2019: Will it be effective to prevent adolescent marriage. *Insights in Public Health Journal*, *1*(1), 3-7. https://doi.org/10.20884/1.iphj.2020.1.1.2657

Widyastari, D. A., Isarabhakdi, P., & Shaluhiyah, Z. (2020). Intergenerational patterns of early marriage and childbearing in Rural Central Java, Indonesia. *Journal of Population and Social Studies [JPSS]*, *28*(3), 250-264. https://doi.org/10.25133/JPSSv28n3.017

Widyastari, D. A., Isarabhakdi, P., Vapattanawong, P., & Völker, M. (2020). Marital dissolution in Postmodern Java, Indonesia: Does early marriage increase the likelihood to divorce? *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, *61*(8), 556-573. https://doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2020.1799308

Note

Note 1. Meaning units usually are phrases taken directly from the transcripts or labels created by the coder to capture a particular idea.