

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Marital satisfaction and subjective well-being of adolescents who marry due to premarital pregnancy

doi: <https://doi.org/10.32505/inspira.v5i1.8085>

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ABSTRACT

Marital satisfaction is an essential aspect of family life. Individuals who experience satisfaction in their marriage tend to exhibit positive emotions leading to happiness, which is associated with their subjective well-being encompassing their overall life satisfaction. Every individual naturally desires subjective well-being in their lives, including adolescents who marry due to unplanned pregnancies. Therefore, the aim of this research is to investigate the relationship between marital satisfaction and subjective well-being among adolescents who married because of unplanned pregnancies. The research methodology employed in this study is quantitative, with a total sampling technique used to select 64 adolescents who married due to unplanned pregnancies as participants. The data analysis method utilized in this study is the Pearson product-moment correlation. The analysis results reveal a correlation of $r = -0.356$ with a significance level of 0.004 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant relationship between marital satisfaction and subjective well-being. The positive direction of this relationship suggests that lower marital satisfaction corresponds to lower subjective well-being, and vice versa.

Article History:

Received 04 February 2024

Revised 24 May 2024

Accepted 29 June 2024

Keywords: adolescence; early marriage; emotional instability; risky dating; well-being

INTRODUCTION

Human life is a journey through various stages, each with unique tasks that individuals must fulfill, resulting in distinctive conditions and demands for each phase, one of which is the adolescent stage. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), adolescents are between 10 and 19 years old. G. Stanley Hall describes adolescence as a time of storm and stress, a period marked by tumultuous changes, psychological pressures leading to anxiety and sadness, as well as significant physical and emotional transformations in adolescents, resulting in emotional instability that gives rise to conflicts in their environment.

The changes that occur during adolescence give rise to various upheavals, such as conflicts between attitude and behavior, emotional instability prone to fluctuations, leading adolescents to display impulsive behavior, engaging in experimental methods without considering the consequences

How to cite (APA 7th Edition)

Septiana, R. S. A., Mukti, P. & Andrianie, P. S. (2024). Marital satisfaction and subjective well-being of adolescents who marry due to premarital pregnancy. *INSPIRA: Indonesian Journal of Psychological Research*, 5(1), 76–82. <https://doi.org/10.32505/inspira.v5i1.8085>



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of their decisions or actions (Agustriyana, 2017). Various social problems arise among adolescents, triggering deviant behavior in a negative direction, one of which is risky dating. Sugiyati (cited in Sirojammuniro, 2020) explains different forms of dating behavior ranging from holding hands, kissing on the lips, necking, petting to engaging in sexual relations. According to a survey by the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN) in 2010 (as cited in Hamzah, 2020), 5,912 women aged 15-19 years had engaged in sexual relations.

Pre-marital sexual relations can result in unintended pregnancies, thereby complicating the situation for adolescents. This is because out-of-wedlock pregnancies can lead to social problems, including dropping out of school, social ostracism by family friends, ridicule from neighbors, and forced marriages (Sumanti, 2014). The phenomenon of teenage pregnancies out of wedlock has led to a significant number of early marriages, as evidenced by a recorded 11.21% of females marrying under the age of 18 in 2018 (Octaviani & Nurwati, 2020).

According to a survey conducted by the National Population and Family Planning Board of Indonesia (BKKBN, as cited in Ali, 2015) in 2012, data on early marriages in certain provinces, such as South Kalimantan (35.48%), West Java (36%), and Central Java (27.84%), as well as in Central Sulawesi, where the overall percentage of marriage due to out-of-wedlock pregnancies was recorded at 46% (BKKBN and DP2KB, 2016). An initial survey carried out by researchers at the Wosu Community Health Center in Bungku Barat Subdistrict, Morowali Regency, Central Sulawesi, revealed an increase in the percentage of marriages resulting from out-of-wedlock pregnancies among adolescents from 2017 to 2020. The data showed a rise from 7.8% in 2017 to 27.12% in 2020, sourced from Maternal and Child Health officers, indicating a persistent increase in cases of teenage marriages due to out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

Marriage due to premarital pregnancy indicates long-term negative social impacts, as adolescents become pregnant prior to marriage, leading to prolonged trauma and a crisis of self-confidence (Ardianti et al., 2016). Research conducted by Sonata (2014) reveals that females experiencing early marriage due to premarital pregnancy exhibit low levels of subjective well-being, attributed to various determining factors perceived to influence the dynamics of subjective well-being.

Well-being is a desired aspect for every individual; hence, a positive life meaning is crucial in attaining happiness, constituting a part of subjective well-being (Damayanti et al., 2018). Subjective well-being represents an individual's subjective evaluation of emotional experiences, encompassing evaluations of their own life, characterized by high life satisfaction in marriage, positive affect, and low negative affect (Diener & Louis, 2015). Good subjective well-being is indicated by satisfaction in marriage and evaluations of important life domains such as health, work, and relationships (Wijayanti, 2016).

Every married individual naturally seeks marital satisfaction, which does not occur automatically, necessitating efforts from both spouses to create the expected satisfaction (Widodo, 2021). Marital satisfaction can have positive or negative impacts, where achieving marital satisfaction within a household influences well-being positively. In contrast, lack of marital satisfaction can lead to marital instability, potentially resulting in divorce (Darmaki et al., 2016). This study specifically aims to examine the relationship between marital satisfaction and subjective well-being in adolescents who married due to premarital pregnancy.

METHOD

The type of research used in this study is quantitative correlational, aimed at determining whether there is a relationship between the variables under investigation without manipulating existing variables (Faenken & Wallen, 2008). The population in this study consists of 64 adolescent females. The sample obtained for this research includes the entire population, which is all adolescent females married due to pregnancy outside of wedlock in the Bungku Barat Sub-District, Morowali Regency, totaling 64 individuals characterized as adolescents aged 13-19 years, pregnant outside of marriage, and already married.

Data collection in this study utilized subjective well-being and marital satisfaction by distributing questionnaires directly to respondents selected by the researchers. The instrument used to measure subjective well-being is the Mental Health Continuum comprising 10 components with a total of 20 items, where 6 items measure psychological well-being, 5 items measure social well-being, and 9 items measure emotional well-being, developed by Kyes & Rfly (2002) with response options of agree, strongly agree, strongly disagree, and disagree. This instrument demonstrated reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.875.

Marital satisfaction was measured using the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction instrument developed by Fower & Olson (1993), consisting of 10 indicators: communication, family and friend relationships, religious orientation, conflict resolution, financial management, child rearing, leisure activities, sexual relationship, personality issues, and role equality. This instrument showed reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.86. The data obtained were analyzed using the Pearson product-moment correlation to measure the strength of the relationship between marital satisfaction and subjective well-being, with tests for normality and linearity.

RESULT

The teenagers who marry due to pregnancy out of wedlock in this study show that the vulnerable age group of 14-19 years old has the highest frequency (46.9%), with the majority having completed junior high school education (53.1%) and marrying at the age of 1-4 years with a percentage of 62.5%. Conversely, the age range of 23-24 shows a lower percentage (20.3%) with a marriage duration of 5-7 years (25.0%).

The subjective well-being in this study indicates an empirical mean value of 47.34, while the hypothetical mean value is 50. Thus, based on these findings, it can be inferred that the subjective well-being of teenagers who marry due to pregnancy out of wedlock is relatively low. Regarding marital satisfaction, the empirical mean value is 36.44 compared to a hypothetical mean value of 37, suggesting a low level of marital satisfaction among teenagers who marry due to pregnancy out of wedlock. The subjective well-being in this study reveals a very low categorization criteria result for the subjects (26.6%). Similarly, marital satisfaction indicates the same value, which is very low (26.6%).

The research results utilizing linear regression analysis demonstrate that marital satisfaction significantly influences subjective well-being with an R square value of 12.6%. This indicates that the model explains that 12.6% of the variance in subjective well-being can be explained by marital satisfaction. In comparison, other variables outside the scope of this study influence the remaining 87.4%. Furthermore, the study also establishes a positive relationship with a correlation value (r) of 0.356 between marital satisfaction and subjective well-being with a statistical significance of 0.004 ($p < 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

Teenage pregnancies resulting from a lack of sex education, knowledge of reproductive systems, and permissive attitudes in social environments lead to a high incidence of extramarital pregnancies, which in turn contribute to early marriages among teenagers (Ismarwati & Utami, 2017). Extramarital pregnancies in teenagers can have serious physical, social, and psychological impacts; physically, early pregnancy poses risks such as pregnancy-induced hypertension (eclampsia), postpartum endometritis, and systemic infections (Samawati & Nurchayati, 2021).

Teenage marriages resulting from extramarital pregnancies are closely linked to the perceived satisfaction within the marriages, aligning with research conducted by Indraswari (2019) indicating that marriage quality can predict subjective well-being. High levels of subjective well-being led individuals to feel satisfied in their marital life, experiencing more positive emotions and fewer negative ones. Conversely, individuals with low subjective well-being tend to view their lives negatively and perceive their experiences as burdens.

Marital satisfaction is an aspiration for every married couple, as feeling satisfaction in marriage is attained when individuals experience more positive and fewer negative emotions (Finchman et al., 2000). The fulfillment of marital satisfaction is indicative of meeting both spouses' needs, hopes, and desires within the marriage.

The social consequences experienced by adolescents who marry due to out-of-wedlock pregnancy include receiving negative stigma from their community, as well as being taunted and even ostracized by their surrounding environment (Romauli in Samawati, 2021). According to Malik et al. (2016), psychologically, teenagers experiencing pregnancies outside of marriage will feel confused, fearful, ashamed, and guilty, finding it difficult to adapt to their surroundings. Other impacts include emotional vulnerability, difficulties in problem-solving and trust crises in adult relationships (Knight et al., 2006).

Early marriage resulting from out-of-wedlock pregnancy can affect marital satisfaction and subjective well-being in individuals, aligning with research by Kurniawati and Nurrochman (2017) that shows individuals marrying young are at a higher risk of experiencing marital instability compared to those marrying in adulthood. Apart from age, educational level can also influence marital satisfaction and subjective well-being in individuals; individuals with higher education levels impact employment and income, so if parents have the ability and resources to provide for their needs, developmental tasks within the family can proceed optimally (Rizkillah, 2014). Sunarti's study (2014) indicates that mothers with lower education levels exhibit limited knowledge, leading to a need for more awareness of the importance of facilities and materials to stimulate child development.

Marital satisfaction plays a crucial role in household life, where marital satisfaction can evoke positive emotions, enabling adolescents to adapt to their experiences (Perez-Lopez, 2011). However, if adolescents do not experience satisfaction in their marriages and struggle to adjust to their surroundings, married adolescents may feel more stressed than individuals who marry in adulthood (Perez-Lopez, 2011). The lack of marital satisfaction can lead to adolescent unhappiness, where emotions related to feelings of rejection, loneliness, and unhappiness are associated with subjective well-being (Sonata, 2014).

The initial five years of marriage are considered a period of crisis or conflict due to the various dynamics, such as individual adjustment to married life, the arrival of children, and child-rearing. Although conflicts that arise in the early stages of marriage vary among couples, common conflict areas include differing habits, family economics, marital expectations, family issues, parenting styles,

and external commitments (Dewi & Basti, 2008). Therefore, the first five years of marriage are crucial in determining the future course of the marital relationship.

CONCLUSION

Adolescents who marry due to premarital pregnancy, aged 13-19 years, exhibit low levels of marital satisfaction, which are significantly associated with low subjective well-being (a correlation value of 0.3 is less than 0.5). The average educational attainment only up to elementary, junior high, and high school levels in adolescent females marrying due to premarital pregnancy reinforces this finding. Although this study provides valuable insights, there are several limitations, such as the specific sample constraints in particular age groups and measurements that may not encompass all variables influencing subjective well-being and marital satisfaction. The implications of this research are crucial for the field of psychology, especially in elucidating the psychological and social dynamics of adolescents who marry early due to premarital pregnancy. The results of this study are expected to prompt educational institutions to be more proactive in shaping students' characters early on with appropriate approaches, as well as provide information about the risks of premarital pregnancy, thereby guiding adolescents towards positive activities that support their development. Furthermore, the role of parents is vital in giving more attention to teenagers, strengthening their relationship with them, and providing adequate sex education to prevent the risk of premarital pregnancy in the future. Hence, this research enriches the psychological literature on early marriage and subjective well-being and offers practical recommendations for child education and upbringing.

DECLARATION

Acknowledgment

I extend my profound gratitude to the Morowali Regional Government, especially the Bungku Barat Sub-district, for allowing me to collect data related to the case discussed in this journal.

Indonesian Journal of Psychological Research

Author contribution statement

Ristie Suci Arya Septiana conducted research under Patria Mukti and Prilya Shanty Andrianie3, who served as academic advisors while writing the thesis article.

Funding statement

This research did not receive specific grants from public, commercial, or non-profit funding agencies.

Data access statement

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

Declaration of Interest's statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Additional information

No additional information is available for this article.

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