

Vol. 3, No. 2, 2022

ISSN (Print) :2722-5453
ISSN (Online) :2722-5461

ACADEMIC JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELING

Pelatihan Pelajar Hebat Untuk Menurunkan Perilaku
Tidak Disiplin Siswa SMP Negeri 1 Yogyakarta
Ayatullah Kutub Hardew

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**Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Dakwah
Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta**

Vol. 3, NO. 2 Mei-Oktober 2022

ISSN: 2722-5453 (Print); 2722-5461 (Online)

ACADEMIC JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELING

ACADEMIC JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELING

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ACADEMIC JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELING

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EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES IN WOMEN WHO MARRIED AT EARLY AGE

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Abstract

Keywords:

early marriage;
emotion regulation;
happiness

Early marriage poses negative impacts on various aspects of life, including health, finance, and psychology. However, the number of underage marriage cases is increasing. This study aimed to identify emotion regulation strategies used by women who married young to find the meaning of happiness in marriage. The approach used was qualitative with the case study method. Data collection was carried out through interviews, observation, and documentation. Three female respondents were involved in the study, all married under 19. The results showed that the three informants used five strategies to manage their emotions, but their implementation differed according to their personal backgrounds and capacities. These five emotional regulation strategies can help them find the meaning of happiness in their young marriage.

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Kata kunci:
menikah muda;
regulasi emosi;
kebahagiaan

Abstrak

Pernikahan di bawah usia menimbulkan banyak dampak negatif, baik pada aspek kesehatan, ekonomi, sampai dengan aspek emosi. Namun, jumlah kasus tersebut semakin meningkat sehingga penting diteliti. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui strategi regulasi emosi yang digunakan oleh wanita yang menikah muda dalam mencapai dan menemukan makna kebahagiaan dalam pernikahan. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Terdapat tiga wanita muda yang terlibat dalam penelitian, semuanya menikah di bawah usia 19 tahun. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ketiga informan menggunakan lima strategi pengaturan emosi namun implementasinya berbeda sesuai dengan latar belakang dan kemampuan masing-masing informan. Kelima strategi pengaturan emosi tersebut dapat membantu mereka mencapai dan menemukan makna kebahagiaan dalam pernikahan muda.

How to cite this (APA 7th Edition):

Musyrihin, Z. & Hanifah, A. N. (2022). Emotion Regulation Strategies For Women Who Married At Early Age. *Academic Journal Of Psychology And Counseling*, 3(2). 203-222. <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpc.v3i2.5479>

INTRODUCTION

Marriage at a young age is not a new phenomenon. The phenomenon of marrying at a young age, which the general public usually calls early marriage, happens frequently across different regions. According to the National Population and Family Planning Board (Badan Kependudukan dan Keluarga Berencana Nasional/ BKKBN), the ideal marriage age for men is 25 years old and 21 years old for women. Thus, marriages carried out by people under the ideal

age are considered early marriages (Hermambang et al., 2021). Based on data from religious courts, in 2021, 65,000 dispensary applications for underage marriage were recorded, and in 2022 there were 55,000 filings. Many of those dispensary applications are related to premarital pregnancy and encouragement from parents who want their children to get married soon because they are already dating (Hukum, 2023). Meanwhile, according to data from Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistika), in 2022, 37.27% of women were 19 to 21 years old when they first married. In the same year, 26.48% of women married for the first time when they were 16 to 18 (Finaka, 2023).

Early marriage may happen for various reasons, such as economic situation. Parents may no longer have the capability of fulfilling their children's needs and therefore pushing them to marry at an early age. Another reason for parents to push marriage at an early age is the fear of irresponsible youth behaviors, such as unsafe sex and drug abuse. Some parents even marry off their children due to premarital pregnancy. Cultural factor also plays a role in early marriage (Mubasyaroh, 2016). Meanwhile, Hermambang et al. (2021) found that young women in rural area, unemployed, living in poverty, and uneducated are prone to being married off at early age.

Early marriage may happen for various reasons, such as economic situations. Parents may no longer be able to fulfill their children's needs and therefore push them to marry at an early age. Another reason parents push marriage early on is the fear of irresponsible youth behaviors, such as unsafe sex and drug abuse. Some parents even marry off their children due to premarital pregnancy. Cultural factors also influence early marriage (Mubasyaroh, 2016). Meanwhile, Hermambang et al. (2021) found that young women in rural areas, unemployed, impoverished, and uneducated, are prone to being married off at an early age.

Early marriage poses several negative consequences. People who marry early are more vulnerable to reproductive health issues. Their reproductive organs are not mature enough to perform their functions. Additionally, early marriage can lead to difficulty obtaining job and education opportunities. It mainly happens to women, who are expected to be a homemaker. Another negative impact that may happen to women marrying early is vulnerability to domestic abuse and economic problems. Early marriage can lead to risky pregnancy and anxiety (Noor, Fatimah, Rahman, Laily, & Yulidasari, 2021). Those who marry early are more likely to develop depression, emotional disorders, antisocial behaviors, and general unhappiness (Burgess, Jeffery, Odero, Rose-Clarke, & Devakumar, 2022). Children coming from parents who married early are also susceptible to experiencing domestic abuse as young parents' emotional maturity is not yet optimal (Hardianti & Nurwati, 2021).

One of regions where early marriage is still prevalent is Banyusoco Village, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta. Couples who got married young might really have an intention or married for certain reasons, such as premarital pregnancy. Many underage marriage cases occur because the couples got pregnant beforehand. These young couples are often forced to get married to avoid social prejudice. It happens because the lack of understanding about the risks of marrying young.

One of the regions where early marriage is still prevalent is Banyusoco Village, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta. Couples who get married young might have an intention or marry for specific reasons, such as premarital pregnancy. Many underage marriage cases occur because the couples got pregnant beforehand. These young couples are often forced to get married to avoid social prejudice. It happens because of the lack of understanding about the risks of marrying young.

So far, there is nothing wrong with the decision to get married. Marriage is an effort to fulfill one's psychological, biological, and

spiritual needs. According to Santrock (2011, 2023), marriage is the union of two unique individuals, bringing together cultural backgrounds and experiences. Marriage is also one way to continue the descendants of a particular group or community. Marriage is not just the union of two individuals but the merger of two family systems and the creation of a new one.

A marriage is ideal if the man and woman are mature physically and psychologically. Men are considered mature for marriage when they are 25, while women must be at least 20 (Anshori, 2019; Rohman, 2017). When men and women have reached their ideal marital age, they have an understanding of the rights and obligations in a marital relationship. It makes it possible to build a harmonious marriage.

Individuals who marry young will automatically experience complex changes in their roles. Furthermore, there are many other demands, such as the role of husband and wife in a matrimonial bond. Many couples desire to build a happy, harmonious family whose members love each other. Happiness is a state of well-being and satisfaction, namely the pleasant state when individual needs and expectations are met. Happiness can be created when everyone feels well-treated, fulfilled, given attention and affection, and can overcome negative emotions (Awaludin, 2017; Hurlock, 2017; Seligman, 2002). Happiness comprises several aspects, namely positive relationships with others, full engagement, the finding of meaning, optimism, and resilience (Seligman, 2002). In the context of marriage, happiness is represented by good relationships among family members and with others outside of the family, full engagement in performing duties as a husband or a wife in the family, finding a positive meaning in marriage and future challenges, optimism in dealing with family issues, and high resilience.

Early marriage refers to a marital relationship when one or both partners have yet to be 19 or are considered adolescents. Young people

belong to the category of adolescence, where they are still transitioning from childhood to adulthood. Santrock (2017) stated that adolescence is a transitional development from childhood to adulthood that involves biological, cognitive, and social-emotional changes. During this transition period, a new journey begins for a teenager. According to Ali (2015), adolescents are developing their emotional capability, intelligence, and physical prowess to live a better life for their future. People who spend their youth chasing self-development will have an easier time preparing for their future. They develop favorable habits that can help them tackle future problems in adulthood.

One of the hallmarks of early adolescence is the instability of feelings and emotions. Casey et al. (2010) and Hashmi (2013) said adolescence is a sensitive period. Adolescents experience 'stress' and 'storms' in their feelings and emotions, especially in their relationships. Therefore, it is natural that teenagers tend to be unstable, lacking control in decision-making and problem-solving, psychologically immature, and emotional. Therefore, adolescents who get married may experience emotional problems along the way.

The present research was conducted in Banyusoco Village, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta. Based on the preliminary research, the number of early marriage cases in the research location for the past five years tended to increase. From 2016 to 2020, the village recorded 25 cases of young marriages involving women under 19. The results of preliminary interviews showed that women who marry at an early age experience many changes in roles and demands in social life. From a physical standpoint, they are not ready to get pregnant, give birth, or care for children. From a psychological point of view, teenage girls tend to be more emotional than their male counterparts. Their emotions are less stable than adult women who can control their emotions and recognize the impacts of mental pressures. Emotion regulation is needed to achieve well-being.

A wife must have good emotional regulation to help her manage marriage problems. Women have greater sensitivity (up-regulation) than men in forming emotional responses to negative stimuli (Gardener, Carr, MacGregor, & Felmingham, 2020). To achieve happiness in life, young women must be capable of managing their unstable emotions. Marital problems, inner pressures, and changing roles make young women experience complex emotional changes. In addition, managing emotions well can help an individual achieve and find the meaning of happiness in their marriage. According to Juwita & Sari (2021) and Mittal (2020), emotion regulation can help women find happiness and satisfaction.

Emotion regulation refers to one's capacity to manage, monitor, and modify emotions to achieve specific goals (H. Chen, 2016; Koole, 2009; Thompson, 1991). Emotion regulation contains several aspects: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation (Gross, 1998, 2002). Emotion regulation problems were prevalent in some women who decided to marry early at Banyusoco Village, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta. Therefore, researchers reckoned the need to study emotion regulation strategies among women who married young.

There are several studies related to emotion regulation in marriage. For instance, a study by Bloch, Haase, & Levenson (2014) revealed that emotion regulation can be a predictor of marital satisfaction. The study is supported by findings from Mazzuca, Kafetsios, Livi, & Presaghi (2019) and Riahi, Golzari, & Mootabi (2020), which revealed that emotion regulation strategies done by husbands and wives would lead to marital satisfaction. Meanwhile, Frye, Ganong, Jensen, & Coleman (2020) found that emotion regulation can mediate marital conflict and satisfaction in marriage. It means that emotion regulation in married couples can help them manage marital conflict, leading to higher satisfaction in marriage. Because of that, Frye-Cox, Ganong,

Jensen, & Coleman (2021) and Masumoto, Harada, & Shiozaki (2022) concluded that emotion regulation positively impacts the well-being of married individuals. Additionally, Insan & Rosdiyati (2022) studied the influence of emotion regulation on marital flourishing in married couples in Sumbawa. Another study by Medellu & Azzahra (2022) found that emotion regulation is a critical component in the decision-making process in a young marriage.

From some of the literature the authors reviewed, there was no specific discussion on the role of emotion regulation in achieving happiness for women who marry young, but several previous studies were relevant to this study. Most past studies linked emotion regulation with marital satisfaction and mental health. In addition, the difference between the present study and its predecessors was the study focus, namely, emotion regulation strategies for achieving happiness in women who married young. The research location was also specific. The results of past studies were used as references in conducting this research.

This study aimed to describe emotion regulation strategies implemented by women who married early in Banyusoco Village, Playen District, Gunungkidul Regency.

METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach with a study case method. A study case is a research method that aims to examine and unveil a unique or by-case phenomenon (Yin, 2014). This research method is suitable for this study due to the specific criteria used in the study, namely women who married young. The location of this research was Banyusoco Village, Playen District, Gunungkidul Regency.

The method of determining the participants in this study was purposive sampling, which is to determine the informant or data source based on specific criteria. Participants were selected according

to the following criteria: 1) married women; 2) married at 10 to 19 years old (based on conclusions from several experts and the Government Regulation regarding Marriage Law Number 16 of 2019); 3) had married for at least one year; 4) lived in Banyusoco Village.

Of the many subjects who met the criteria and were willing to participate in data collection, the researchers found three young women: 1) AS (initial), who married at 15. At that time, AS already had one son aged three years old. 2) MG (initial), married at 17. MG had a daughter aged four years old at the time of the research. 3) IIN (initial), who married at 18. IIN had been blessed with a few months old son during the research period.

Table 1.
Research Informants

No.	Initial	Birth Year	Marriage Year	Current Age
1.	AS	2002	2017	18
2.	MG	2000	2016	20
3.	IIN	2001	2019	19

In this study, researchers collected data via interviews, observation, and documentation. The observation approach that the author used was a non-participant method in which researchers were not directly involved in the respondents' daily lives. The authors observed respondents' backgrounds, living environments, and behaviors that indicated their emotion regulation.

The interview method used by the author was unstructured interviews. The author did not use interview guidelines, as each question was delivered according to the situation and conditions at the time of the interview. The authors conducted interviews more freely than structured interviews, which purpose is to explore the problem in-depth to obtain accurate data.

In the present research, the documentation studied was in the form of marriage certificates, the respondents' data, and several other documents needed to ensure that the data obtained were complete and accurate.

Concerning data validity, the authors used data triangulation techniques to check the validity of research data (Heale & Forbes, 2013; Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012). Triangulation in data collection is defined as combining various data collection techniques and existing data sources. In data triangulation, researchers collect data and simultaneously test the credibility of the data with various data collection techniques and sources. Technical triangulation means the researcher uses different data collection techniques to obtain data from the same source. Source triangulation means to get data from different sources with the same technique. Triangulation of data will increase the rigor of the data. In this study, the authors implemented a source triangulation technique to check the validity of research data. The authors worked with relevant parties or the respondents' significant others to crosscheck the data to ensure accuracy. Data analysis includes pattern matching, explanation, and timeline analysis (Yin, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Gross (1998, 2002), there are five steps of emotion regulation strategies. First, situation selection, or choosing activities, interpersonal relationships, social supports, and other situations to bring the specific impacts closer or further away (Gross, 1998, 2002; Kalat & Shiota, 2011). Based on the data analysis, each informant applied a situation selection strategy to overcome excessive negative emotions. They might choose to travel, play with children, eat, do homework, listen to music, and tell stories with trusted people.

Some studies have shown that someone can choose to be in certain situations that do not negatively affect their emotional state,

such as traveling. According to Zhu & Fan (2018), traveling can help someone develop positive emotions. Besides traveling, people with children often spend time with their offspring by playing together. Capurso & Pazzagli (2016) said playtime can be an effective coping strategy to regulate emotion. Listening to music also affects emotions (Ellis & Simons, 2005; Moore, 2013).

Second, situation modification, or modifying the external or physical environment. The emotion regulation process is the same as coping, a cognitive strategy for dealing with stress by trying certain activities to lessen the pressure, e.g., talking to others to calm negative emotions (Gross, 1998, 2002; Kalat & Shiota, 2011). Three research informants used the situation modification strategy when their emotions were heightened. They conducted activities to divert their focus, such as talking to their husbands and crying until they felt relieved.

Informants in this study mostly exercised emotion-focused coping. Generally, coping is categorized into emotion-focused and problem-focused coping. Problem-focused coping involves solving one's problem with practical solutions, while emotion-focused coping aims to bring down emotional tensions through venting (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Smith, Saklofske, Keefer, & Tremblay, 2016).

Third, attentional deployment, which is directing attention to other situations to regulate their emotions. For example, when a person faces an unpleasant situation, they will recall pleasant thoughts and feelings to overcome it (Gross, 1998, 2002; Kalat & Shiota, 2011). Research informants also used attentional deployment to overcome negative emotions. Each informant has different ways, such as self-isolation and contemplation. Then, MG chose to go for a walk with her child and remained silent until her negative emotions subsided. It was different with IIN, who chose to remain silent even though she

realized it might hurt, but IIN silently believed that it would not make things worse.

Although each respondent exhibited different behaviors, those behaviors can be categorized as self-centered behaviors. Some examples of self-centered behaviors are isolation and contemplation. Rokach (2018) said self-isolation is a form of coping strategy.

Fourth, cognitive change. It refers to a change in how a person perceives something in a certain situation to lower their emotional tensions, either by changing the way one thinks about the situation or the ability to manage needs (Gross, 1998, 2002; Kalat & Shiota, 2011). Of the three informants, AS and MG applied these strategies by responding directly to something or someone that triggered their negative emotions. Meanwhile, IIN because when there was a problem, she responded by remaining silent and relenting when experiencing negative emotions.

Fifth, response modulation. It is an effort to influence the physiological and behavioral responses to negative emotions. For example, performing prayers to reduce or eliminate aggressiveness when feeling angry and consuming drugs to reduce physiological responses such as muscle tension or migraines due to stress, eating, and so on (Gross, 1998, 2002; Kalat & Shiota, 2011). The three informants used different response modulation tactics, such as venting on social media (Whatsapp stories), talking to their husbands, consuming drugs, and hurting themselves, e.g., beating their chest.

A person can experience and find the meaning of happiness if one or all aspects of the three aspects of happiness can be fulfilled, namely emotional (hedonic), cognitive (eudaimonia), and behavioral aspects (including social and religious). The researchers found that each informant felt different aspects of happiness. The emotional aspect emphasizes that someone can feel happiness when they are calm and grateful even though the situation is challenging, achieving a peaceful life, and being full of positive feelings.

The cognitive aspect of happiness is the capability to interpret and understand a problem to find an effective solution. In addition, this aspect can be achieved when the person can evaluate life and feel it is according to plan. The behavioral aspect consists of social and religious emphasis that someone feels happy when they are close to God. They do not feel burdened regardless of the continuous difficulties in life. In addition, happiness is interpreted as a situation when someone can understand the value of social relationships, such as being helpful to others and making those closest to them happy.

AS said that she felt happiness emotionally and cognitively, while MG experienced the cognitive and behavioral aspects of happiness. IIN reported emotional and behavioral aspects of happiness. It can be seen that each informant felt happiness from different aspects. This difference is natural because it depends on how they interpret happiness, which is influenced by personal conditions and backgrounds.

Emotion regulation contributes to happiness (Chen, Huang, & Lin, 2022; Cunha, Bonfim, Santos-Lima, & Siquara, 2022) because emotion regulation helps individuals manage their emotions. When someone can manage their emotions, they are less vulnerable to negative stimuli. They will be less likely to feel sad or pressured. An individual with emotion regulation capability can implement a good coping strategy.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

The study concluded that the happiness experienced by women marrying at a young age varies in standards. AS felt happiness in terms of emotional and cognitive aspects. MG showcased happiness in cognition and behavior. Meanwhile, IIN displayed the emotional and behavioral aspects of happiness.

The difference in the aspects of happiness experienced by each informant was caused by their varying point of view in interpreting happiness from every difficulty or problem they faced. It indicates that young married women can achieve happiness if they regulate their emotions well. The description of happiness from the three subjects in the study is inseparable from the regulation strategy used to increase happiness in women who marry young.

All informants in this study applied five emotion regulation strategies: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. However, the implementation of each strategy was different across respondents. They applied emotion regulation strategies in the following ways: 1) Situation selection strategies by keeping themselves busy, listening to music, and sharing stories with trusted people. 2) Situation modification strategies by diverting their focus to doing homework, discussing fun things, and crying for relief. 3) Spreading attention by isolating oneself, contemplating, and being silent. 4) Cognitive change strategy by responding to something or someone directly; some choose to be silent and keep their emotions in check. 5) The response change strategy is carried out by venting negative emotions on objects, crying, posting on social media, taking medicine to calm down, and sharing stories with husbands or parents.

In essence, implementing the five emotion regulation strategies by respondents helped them feel relieved, become more sincere, be grateful, and experience joy while dealing with problems that occurred in early marriages.

Suggestions

This study had several limitations, such as the small number of respondents (three people). Therefore, future research is expected to expand the number of respondents so data will be more varied and in-

depth. Furthermore, this study also describes how women who married young achieved happiness. Married women can work to improve their emotion regulation skills to enhance their well-being. Although people who marry early can use emotion regulation to achieve happiness, the ability to manage emotions depends on age and experience. The older someone is, generally means the better ability to regulate emotions.

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