



Psychoeducation to Prevent Early Marriage in Neighborhood Unit X, PTM Village, Community Service Center

Alensi Alqomaria Yusafitri^{1*}, Hikmah Husniyah Farhanindya²

Professional Education of Psychologist, University of August 17, 1945
Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Alensi Alqomaria Yusafitri : alensiyusafitri@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Early marriage among adolescents is a problem influenced by various factors, including individual, family, and social environment. This condition was also found in RW X, which is characterized by cases of school dropouts, unplanned pregnancies, and adolescent interactions with peers and the opposite sex that are not accompanied by adequate boundaries and supervision. This study aims to identify problems related to the vulnerability of early marriage and determine the effectiveness of psychoeducation in improving adolescents' understanding, attitudes, and behavioral tendencies, as well as parents' understanding in accompanying adolescents. The study used qualitative and quantitative approaches through observation, interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and questionnaires regarding perceptions of early marriage. Subjects consisted of 15 adolescents aged 14–16 years and 15 parents. Interventions were carried out through psychoeducation for parents with the theme "Accompanying Adolescents Growing: Understanding Developmental Tasks and Preventing Early Marriage" and for adolescents with the theme "Know Yourself, Plan Your Future: Smart Teenagers Prevent Early Marriage". The results showed an increase in understanding among the parents, with an average pre-test score of 5.53 to 7.87 in the post-test, a 42.3% increase. Among the adolescents, improvements occurred in the cognitive aspect by 35.8%, the affective aspect by 52.8%, and the conative aspect by 29.2%. Overall, the average adolescent score increased from 49.33 to 68.41, or 38.7%. Prevention of early marriage needs to be carried out sustainably by involving adolescents, parents, and the social environment.

INTRODUCTION

This psychological service was conducted in one of the neighborhood units (RW) X in the PTM sub-district, a sub-district in the S District of the City of S. This sub-district is located in the western part and covers an area of 135 square hectares. This sub-district has 12,473 families with a population of approximately 35,458. The number of children is approximately 4,780, the number of teenagers is approximately 5,673, the number of adults is approximately 20,620, and the number of elderly is approximately 4,385. The number of poor people is approximately 825, comprising 286 families, 3,217 pre-poor, 1,014 families, and 2,371 prosperous, 802 families.

The majority of the PTM sub-district population is Muslim. The majority of residents are private sector employees and self-employed. This sub-district has long been known as a densely populated village with a mix of traditional economic activities, with the majority of its residents being small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Traditionally, Ptm Sub-district was also known as Tempe Village because in the mid-20th century, many of its residents were tempeh makers and sellers along small alleys. Over the following years, with urbanization and economic changes, this primary activity evolved and shifted to a variety of other culinary businesses, including being known as Kampung Lontong, a local MSME product.

This sub-district consists of 18 Rukum Warga (RW) and 123 Rukun Tetangga (RT). RW X itself has a population of 2,914 people, with 907 households (KK), consisting of 1,498 males and 1,416 females. There are 149 data on toddlers (0-5 years), 445 children (6-15 years), 372 teenagers (16-24 years), 1075 adults (25-49 years), 587 elderly (50-65 years), and 282 elderly (66+ years). Then there is data on poor 92 people, 38 families. Pre-poor 240 people, 67 families, prosperous 2371 people, 802 families. RW X has 5 RTs where each RT has different characteristics and problems.

Specifically, in RW X, there are several issues related to adolescents, the most common of which are school dropouts and early marriage. In 2023, a case of early marriage occurred among adolescents without formal administrative procedures. This was revealed after a report from the community health center to the village office regarding stunting among toddlers in the PTM village area. The examination revealed that the mother of the toddler was very young, which was caused by her immature reproductive organs and lack of knowledge regarding marriage. Furthermore, this was revealed when the mother went to the community health center for medical treatment for herself or her child, requiring the village office to submit requirements for BPJS (Social Security) administration, such as a family card (KK) that was missing or had been processed at the time of marriage. The KSH (Social Security) office, which typically handles official marriage legalization through mass weddings held by the city government, was also required. Based on complaints and initial information obtained from the sub-district, the head of the neighborhood association (RW), and local community leaders, there are concerns about the increasing risk of early marriage among teenagers in RW X. These concerns arose after reports of early marriage cases triggered by unplanned pregnancies and the

tendency of teenagers to have high-intensity dating relationships without adequate supervision. Then after the emergence of several cases of junior high school dropouts recently and deciding to marry. Early marriage is a marriage that occurs at an age below the minimum limit stipulated in the Marriage Law. Psychologically, early marriage is often associated with the less than optimal emotional and social readiness of teenagers in carrying out their roles as partners and parents. Adolescence is a transitional period characterized by the search for self-identity, emotional instability, and the tendency to make decisions based on affective impulses rather than long-term rational considerations (Hurlock, 2002).

Santrock (2012) explains that during adolescence, self-control and consideration of long-term consequences are not yet fully developed. This makes adolescents more vulnerable to social pressure, especially from peer groups. In this context, the decision to marry at an early age can be a response to emotional pressure, a romantic relationship that is considered serious, or certain situations such as an unplanned pregnancy, dropping out of school, or social demands from the surrounding environment. From a social psychology perspective, Sarwono (2015) explains that adolescent behavior is strongly influenced by group norms and their social environment. If the environment tends to normalize early marriage as normal, then adolescents can internalize these norms as an acceptable choice. Therefore, based on these complaints, a tentative suspicion arises that there is a vulnerability in adolescents' understanding, attitudes, and psychological readiness regarding marriage. Furthermore, environmental factors such as parenting styles, peers, and social norms also contribute to this tendency.

FRAMEWORK OF THINKING

Early marriage among adolescents can be understood as a form of risky behavior that arises from the interaction of internal and external factors. According to Sarwono (in Adam, 2019), adolescent behavior is not influenced by a single factor, but rather the result of the interaction between individual conditions and their environment. In the context of RW X, the decision to marry at an early age was influenced by a lack of knowledge about marriage, social pressure, and environmental norms that view early marriage as normal.

Internally, adolescents are in the identity-searching phase described by Erikson (1950) as the Identity versus Role Confusion stage. At this stage, adolescents seek to recognize their potential, form a personal identity, develop values and beliefs, and determine the direction of their future education, work, and social roles. However, when this process is not supported by adequate guidance and support, adolescents can experience role confusion and tend to make immature decisions.

This condition aligns with Havighurst's (1972) Developmental Task Theory, which explains that during adolescence, individuals face developmental tasks that must be completed: achieving emotional independence from parents, establishing healthy social relationships with peers and the opposite sex, developing a system of values and social responsibilities, establishing a self-identity, and gradually preparing for education, careers, and adult roles. At this stage, adolescents should still be exploring themselves and developing various psychological and social skills before entering adulthood. Therefore, if these

developmental tasks are not completed, adolescents are at risk of experiencing obstacles in navigating the next stage of development. Individuals may experience identity confusion, high emotional dependence, lack of maturity in decision-making, and lack the ability to manage conflict and responsibility effectively. In the context of early marriage, this condition creates a developmental gap, a situation where adolescents are required to carry out adult developmental tasks before completing the developmental tasks of adolescence. Adolescents who marry early must fulfill the role of life partner, manage the household, meet the family's economic demands, and even assume the role of parents, even though psychologically and socially they are still in the stage of searching for identity and preparing for adulthood. This developmental gap has the potential to cause stress, marital conflict, dependency on others, hindered education and career development, and difficulty adaptively fulfilling roles as a partner or parent. Furthermore, Goleman's (1995) theory of emotional maturity explains that the ability to recognize and manage emotions, control impulses, empathize, and make decisions develops gradually. In general, adolescents are still in the process of developing emotional intelligence, so they tend to be more influenced by emotions and less considerate of long-term consequences. This condition causes some adolescents to view early marriage as a quick solution to the pressures they face without considering the psychological, social, and economic readiness necessary for married life.

Externally, peer influence plays a significant role. This is reinforced by Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which explains that behavior is formed through observation and imitation of models deemed relevant or socially acceptable. Furthermore, early marriage among adolescents can be understood through Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), which explains that individual development is influenced by interactions between various environmental systems, from family and peers to broader social norms. At the microsystem level, the lack of effective supervision and communication within the family and the strong influence of peers directly influence adolescent behavior. At the mesosystem level, weak synergy between family and the social environment increases adolescent vulnerability. Meanwhile, at the macrosystem level, cultural norms that tolerate early marriage and the stigma against premarital pregnancy reinforce the decision to marry as a social solution considered normal. Therefore, based on Sarwono's theory, early marriage among adolescents in RW X is the result of an interaction between identity crisis, emotional immaturity, peer pressure, family parenting styles, and permissive social norms. The decision to marry is often not based on mature psychological readiness, but rather as a response to situational pressures and the need for social acceptance. Therefore, interventions need to target both internal factors of adolescents and external factors that shape their thought patterns and behavior.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed qualitative and quantitative approaches, employing assessment methods including observation, interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and a questionnaire using the perception scale for early marriage. Subjects in this study consisted of 15 community adolescents aged 14-16, while 15 parents of these adolescents were included in the microsystem and mesosystem.

RESEARCH RESULT

Based on the results of a psychoeducational study on the theme "Supporting Adolescents as They Grow: Understanding Developmental Tasks and Preventing Early Marriage" provided to 15 parents in Neighborhood Unit X, it can be concluded that the activity went well and received a positive response from participants. Parents showed enthusiasm in following the material and actively participated in the discussion. Participants also gained new insights into adolescent developmental tasks, the role of parents in supporting their children during adolescence, and the importance of implementing positive parenting styles in supporting child development and preventing the risk of early marriage.

Based on the results of the pre-test and post-test evaluations, there was an increase in parental knowledge after participating in the psychoeducational activity. The average pre-test score of 5.53 increased to 7.87 in the post-test, representing an average increase of 2.34 points. Compared to the average pre-test score, this increase was approximately 42.3%. These results indicate that psychoeducation positively contributed to increasing parental knowledge and understanding of adolescent development, the role of parents, and parenting styles that support adolescent growth and development.

In addition to improving scores, the discussion results showed that several participants began to reflect on the parenting styles they had been applying to their children. This indicates that the activity not only provided theoretical knowledge but also encouraged parents to evaluate and consider implementing more positive parenting styles that align with adolescent developmental needs. However, several participants expressed that the material felt too early to learn because their children were still in the early stages of junior high school. This can be understood as a form of parental readiness to acquire knowledge early on, so they can prepare themselves to accompany their children through the next stages of adolescent development. Overall, the intervention's objectives were achieved, as evidenced by a 42.3% increase in knowledge scores, positive participant responses, active engagement in discussions, and reflections on parenting practices at home. Therefore, psychoeducation for parents can be a preventative measure to increase parents' capacity to positively support adolescents, meet their developmental needs, and help prevent risky decisions and behaviors, including early marriage.

Furthermore, results were found in 15 adolescents, who underwent psychoeducation with the theme "Know Yourself, Plan Your Future: Smart Teens Prevent Early Marriage." Based on the cognitive aspects, pre- and post-test results showed an increase in participants' knowledge and understanding after receiving psychoeducation regarding early marriage prevention, adolescent

developmental characteristics, adolescent developmental tasks, building healthy relationships with the opposite sex, and applying assertiveness techniques to deal with invitations or pressure to engage in risky behavior.

This improvement indicates that cognitively, participants gained new information and understanding that can help them recognize the characteristics and changes that occur during adolescence. Participants also demonstrated a better understanding of the developmental tasks that need to be achieved during adolescence, including the ability to recognize oneself, build healthy social relationships, develop independence, and make developmentally appropriate decisions. This understanding is expected to help adolescents consider the consequences of various choices and behaviors, particularly those related to relationships with the opposite sex and the risk of early marriage. Furthermore, from a cognitive perspective, participants gained an understanding of the characteristics of healthy relationships, such as mutual respect, good communication, personal boundaries, responsibility, and the absence of coercion or pressure from either party. Participants were also introduced to assertiveness techniques, namely the ability to express opinions, feelings, boundaries, and refusals firmly and clearly, while maintaining respect for themselves and others. This knowledge is expected to help adolescents recognize situations that have the potential to lead to risky behavior and choose safer and more appropriate responses.

Thus, the improved post-test results indicate that the psychoeducational intervention had a positive impact on adolescents' cognitive aspects, particularly in terms of increased knowledge, understanding, risk recognition, and the ability to consider the consequences of behavior related to social interactions, relationships with the opposite sex, and the prevention of early marriage. This knowledge provides an important foundation for adolescents to make wiser and more responsible decisions as they navigate their developmental stages. The affective aspect results found in adolescents through pre- and post-tests showed changes and improvements in their affective perspectives on early marriage. After participating in the psychoeducational activities, adolescents began to demonstrate emotional understanding and a more critical attitude toward early marriage and the factors that can lead to the desire to marry in adolescence.

Adolescents began to realize that early marriage is not the right solution to address various problems they face, such as the desire to avoid promiscuity, concerns about being a burden on parents, pressure from the environment, and problems in relationships with the opposite sex. This understanding demonstrates a shift in how adolescents interpret early marriage, from what was previously seen as a solution to a problem to a decision that requires careful consideration based on emotional, psychological, social, and responsibility readiness. Affectively, adolescents are also beginning to demonstrate a more positive attitude toward the importance of self-care, building healthy relationships, and resolving problems in a more adaptive manner. Adolescents are expected to develop an awareness that every decision has consequences and is not solely based on emotional states or the pressures of the current situation.

Furthermore, results from the pre- and post-tests revealed an improvement in the conative aspect, indicated by a tendency toward more positive adolescent behavior after participating in psychoeducational activities. Adolescents are beginning to demonstrate a readiness to make more informed, mature, and responsible decisions regarding marriage, rather than simply following momentary impulses or environmental pressures. Furthermore, adolescents are beginning to develop a tendency to reject early marriage and choose to pursue developmental tasks appropriate to their age. They are also beginning to demonstrate a drive to protect themselves, consider the consequences of each decision, and choose safer, developmentally appropriate behaviors. This demonstrates that psychoeducation not only increases adolescents' understanding but also begins to foster a tendency to act more positively in dealing with situations related to early marriage.

DISCUSSION

Based on a series of assessments conducted through observation, interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and questionnaires regarding understanding of marriage, it was found that adolescent vulnerability to early marriage in RW X is a multidimensional problem. This problem is not only related to adolescents' knowledge about early marriage but is also influenced by individual, family, and social factors. A relatively permissive environment for adolescent interaction, limited parental supervision, and cases of school dropouts and premarital pregnancies are factors that can increase adolescents' vulnerability to early marriage.

The assessment findings also indicate that some adolescents lack an adequate understanding of the impacts of early marriage, including psychological, social, health, and personal development. Furthermore, some adolescents still view early marriage as an acceptable option under certain circumstances, for example, as a solution to avoid promiscuity, address premarital pregnancy, or reduce parental burden. This suggests that decisions regarding marriage are not always based on developmental readiness but can be influenced by social pressure, family circumstances, and prevailing perceptions within the community. From a family perspective, limited parental supervision and support is also a factor that requires attention. The preoccupation with meeting economic needs and a lack of understanding of adolescent developmental tasks can lead to suboptimal communication and supervision of children's social interactions. In these circumstances, adolescents need appropriate guidance, not just prohibitions, but also open communication, clear boundaries, and support in decision-making. Therefore, preventing early marriage requires the involvement of parents as a key component in creating a safe developmental environment for adolescents.

The intervention results showed an increase in understanding after psychoeducation. In the parent group, the average score increased from 5.53 in the pre-test to 7.87 in the post-test, representing a 2.34-point increase. This improvement indicates that psychoeducation can help parents re-understand their role in supporting adolescents, particularly in understanding

developmental tasks, implementing positive parenting styles, and providing more appropriate supervision tailored to their children's needs.

In the adolescent group, improvements occurred in the cognitive, affective, and conative aspects. The cognitive aspect increased by 35.8%, indicating increased knowledge and understanding among adolescents regarding early marriage, developmental tasks, healthy relationships, and risky behaviors. The affective aspect increased by 52.8%, indicating a change in adolescents' attitudes and perspectives on early marriage. Adolescents began to realize that early marriage is not the primary solution to their current problems. Meanwhile, the 29.2% increase in the conative aspect indicates the emergence of more positive behavioral tendencies, such as a readiness to consider decisions more carefully, reject early marriage, take care of themselves, and build healthier relationships. Overall, the increase in adolescents' scores from an average of 49.33 to 68.41, or 38.7%, indicates that the psychoeducational intervention resulted in positive changes in adolescents' understanding and attitudes. These findings demonstrate that providing information accompanied by discussions of real-life situations faced by adolescents, healthy relationship-building skills, and assertiveness techniques can help adolescents not only understand the risks of early marriage but also begin to consider how they can respond more appropriately to risky situations.

However, improvements in post-test results should be understood as indicators of short-term changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral tendencies, and therefore may not fully reflect real behavioral changes in daily life. More lasting changes require ongoing reinforcement through mentoring, communication between parents and adolescents, and support from the social environment. Therefore, psychoeducation should not be a one-time activity, but rather developed into a sustainable promotive and preventive program. Thus, the discussion of assessment and intervention results indicates that preventing early marriage in RW X requires a comprehensive approach involving various parties. Adolescents need to be equipped with knowledge, attitudes, and decision-making skills; parents need to be strengthened in their parenting, communication, and supervision capacities; and the community needs to create social norms that support adolescent growth and development. This approach is crucial to ensure that marriage is not positioned as a solution to adolescent problems, but rather as a decision that requires adequate psychological, social, health, educational, and responsibility preparation.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions obtained in this study based on a series of assessments conducted through observation, interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with adolescents, and a questionnaire or scale regarding understanding of marriage, it can be concluded that the problems in RW X are related to adolescent vulnerability to the risk of early marriage which is influenced by individual, family and social environmental factors. Then the RW X environment shows social characteristics that are still relatively permissive towards adolescent socialization, with parental control and supervision that is still relatively weak.

This is indicated by the attitude of adolescents who tend to have a high intensity of interaction with peers and the opposite sex without clear boundaries, while some parents have limited supervision due to economic busyness or a lack of understanding of adolescent developmental tasks. This condition is reinforced by cases of school dropouts and pre-marital pregnancies which in some situations lead to early marriage as a solution to social pressure. The results of the quantitative assessment or questionnaire before the intervention showed that most adolescents were in the category of less understanding of knowledge or understanding regarding matters related to early marriage, the psychological, social, and health impacts of early marriage. Then, they have not yet shown a complete rejection of early marriage and still view it as an acceptable option under certain conditions. Furthermore, some adolescents still have unclear behavioral tendencies and tend to be weak in responding appropriately regarding perceptions or understanding of marriage. Therefore, in response to these problems, a psychoeducational-based promotive and preventive intervention was carried out targeting parents, the community, and adolescents. The intervention was designed to increase understanding of adolescent developmental tasks, positive parenting patterns, the impact of early marriage, reproductive health, as well as skills for building healthy relationships and assertive techniques in refusing risky invitations. The results of the pre-test and post-test evaluations showed a significant increase in all target groups. For parents, there was an increase in the average score from 5.53 to 7.87 with a mean difference of 2.34 points, indicating an increase in understanding of the role and parenting patterns in accompanying adolescents. In the adolescent group, the cognitive aspect increased by 35.8%, the affective aspect increased by 52.8%, and the conative aspect increased by 29.2%. Overall, the average adolescent score increased from 49.33 to 68.41, representing an increase of 19.08 points (38.7%). These findings indicate that psychoeducation is effective in increasing adolescent knowledge about early marriage, fostering a more critical attitude toward it, and strengthening adolescent behavioral readiness to build healthy relationships and make more responsible decisions. Overall, the problem of early marriage in RW X is not solely caused by a lack of good intentions on the part of adolescents or parents, but rather by a combination of developmental unpreparedness, weak supervision and social boundaries, and a lack of structured education about developmental tasks and reproductive health.

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