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## **EARLY MARRIAGE IN MALAYSIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Early marriage, is defined as the marriage between two people in which one or both parties are younger than 18 years of age. Early marriages are also an option for parents as they can protect their daughter's dignity. In addition, many parents agree to marry their daughter at a young age due to financial problems and so on, so they trust the men who will marry their daughter to take care of her. There are two types of early marriage. The first is because of parents' coercion, and the second is because of their own will. But for today's early marriage has become a trend for young people. This study involved 421 respondents who answered the questionnaires that had been distributed. The questionnaire are about the acceptance of public towards early marriage.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this age, early marriages has become a trends towards young people. This is because, today many young people are already have their own job and are able to bear their own families. But there are some young people who are forced to get married early because of their parents' coercion. However, when these young people get married early, there are many disadvantages that often happen in their lives. According to INSTAH.com (2009) there are some of disadvantages that happen in the young marriage couples. One of them is that, they are missing

out on the fun of teenage life and being young. The drudgeries of married life can get on to the unmatured minds. This affects the couples a lot because they do see their friends can still enjoy their teenager life while they have to manage their household.

Other than that new couples usually have a lack of responsibility. Responsibility has to be shouldered at a very young age. One has to take on household responsibilities, take care of the child things and else. There is no adult to guide or help out in case the couple are living alone. This will make them more stressful in their life. But early marriage also has its own advantages. According to TOPFOR.com the advantages of early marriage is, it will develop mental capabilities. It is the duty of a husband to go out and work for money to support their family. This is a must as he has to raise the family. In the same way, a wife have a responsibility to manage the households and the children. When the early marriage takes place, the younger couple would have enough time to develop better mental capabilities so that they can give a new edge to their lives and enjoy a bright future together.

Next is, it will help them to boost the energies for success. As compared to the old-age couples who usually don't even have time to think of their lives but profession and earnings to raise the families, the younger couples are more energetic. They can boost their energies more effectively and work hard for a better future together and a successful life ahead. Because they have each other to support what are they going to do. They will easily get motivated to do the things. So basically, early marriage has it owns disadvantages and the advantages. So, what is the acceptance of public towards early marriages?

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

There are a few problems that a couple can face when marriage happened at an early age such as financial problems. Early marriage happened at the age between 16 years old to 25 years old which means that a person has no strong financial to actually build a family yet. They are probably still studying or working in part time jobs and the money they received could barely be enough for them to support their family, so it's impossible for them to support their family.

Secondly, bad communications between the couple are also one of the problems. This is because they have no understanding between them and it's always the misunderstanding that get the best of them instead. This is why two ways communications is important to everyone so

that there won't be any problems at the end of the day but somehow people seems to take it for granted.

Thirdly, divorce could also happened when people get married at an early age. Mostly, divorce happen because the young couple still not matured and it is hard for them to understand each other. In this case, divorce are most likely to happen since a lot of problems occurred that young people could barely handle it in a matured way. So as a solution, they choose to divorce to settle up their problems.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW (2)**

Marriage is the legally or formally recognized union of two people as partners in a personal relationship (historically and in some jurisdictions specifically a union between a man and woman). Child marriage is any formal marriage or informal union where one or both of the parties are under 18 years of age. Each year 15 million girls are married before the age of 18. Child marriage is widespread and can lead to a lifetime of disadvantage and deprivation. According to Nour, NM (2009), child marriage affects both boys and girls, though the overwhelming majority of those affected are girls, most of whom are in poor, socioeconomic situations.

There are a few main types of early or child marriage:

1. Child marriage, in which children under the age of 10 are wedded.
2. Adolescent marriage, which involves girls aged between 10 and 15.
3. Promissory marriage, a verbal promise is made at infancy even childbirth by the parents to have their children get married.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW (3)**

### **FINANCIAL PROBLEM**

Financial problem is the most important type of problems that early married couple face. Most of the young couple, divorce because financial problems. This is because today's economic decline and it will give a big impact to the young couple. Moreover, nowadays most of the people are unable to get a stable job because the limited opportunity. Most of the couple make materialism become necessary. According to Nancy L Anderson (2011), Couples nowadays more valuing thing more than relationship. They felt like the household, furniture, jewellery and etc is more important than their spouse. This thing will lead to a higher chance to financial problem. The will have lack of money after spending a lot of things that is not too necessary.

Beside, extended family. According to James E. McWhinney (2015), Extended family is a real problem when it comes to financial problem. Imagine if the young couple marry at the early age around 18-25, and they still have their siblings to support them behind. It really cost them a lot of money use. Imagine if the young parent do not have enough income. It will be unfair if they treat on their side only. Other than that, some couple still adopting traditional roles when they don't fit. According to believe that men should handle the financial of the family. This type of tradition is wrong and will lead to unstable financial in marriage. Marriage will have a lot of problem from money side. This type of tradition may not fit to every couples

### **MISSING OUT TEENAGE LIFE**

According to INSTAH online (2009), Missing out on the fun of teenage life and being young if we marriage at the early age. The life of married life can get on to the unmatured minds. This affects the overall growth of individuals and in most of cases they do not turn up to be a responsible citizens. This might have health problems because they are always depressed and stress the couple has to go through when their minds are not capable to taking them up. Based on Simon Fuller (2017), teenagers are hardly grown up yet when they get married at the young age and this means that their behavior and attitudes are sometimes will be childish. This immaturity can cause both partners to make decisions without thinking wisely. Immaturity can also get in the way of the marriage, as the couple begins to annoy with each other's attitudes. According to Simon Fuller (2017), teens will always making decisions that they will later regret. Some teenagers might view marriage as a means to satisfy a desire and not an institution that demands commitment and responsibility. For an example, a teen couple might get engaged without really thinking through the implications of what they will go through later. Based on Top10For (2014) online, early age sexual relationship sounds interesting but it is not good from a health point. Chances are there that you won't be able to follow the precautionary measures during sexual relation and as a result various health issues can arise. The teenagers will don't even care about their health when it comes to this issue because they will take it for granted.

### **LACK OF RESPONSIBILITY.**

In every marriage, either woman or man has their own responsibility and they have to do the responsibility so that the couple will live together peacefully because each other have their own things to do. For example woman have to do house chores. That is actually a responsibility. Young couples who get married early do not know how to manage responsibility. They are still young in their mind set and still have to learn what a marriage is all about. According to Simon Fuller (2017), the teenage years are a period of formation for young people, in which part is that they started to learn something like who they are and what they want. A teen couple will discover they are less right for each other than they had thought. Based on Top10For (2014), when the boys at the age between of 16 or 17 are burdened with a wife and he has to work to raise the family and in addition if he already has a child then, that might be a problem for him,

then definitely he would find it to be quite hard to have a successful life. The same is the situation with a girl of this age group, she would have to run the whole house and manage the things, becoming a fulltime house-wife. That sounds quite complicated for the two to manage their live. Based on INSTAH online (2009) work opportunities are limited for the youngsters. Since their education levels are very low, they cannot get highly paid jobs or even a stable job. In addition since most are not able to complete even their high school education, they have to settle with menial jobs which are often not well paid.

### **MENTAL AND HEALTH PROBLEM OCCURS EARLY**

Many parent think that young marriage will give them very positive impact for them. But, in every action that you take, will have the bad effect. It will give them for those who married at the early stage will have both effect, from psychological and physical effect. According to Catherine Pearson (2011), she said that, girls under 18 who get married are more likely will have to experience mental health problem. This will give them anxiety, depression and bipolar disorders. This health problem will can cause them to take more alcohol, drugs and nicotine. According to Dr. Yann Le Strat, "With a 41 percent increased risk of mental disorder, child marriage should be considered a major psychological trauma" he added. According to Dr. Malik Haruna King (2013), those who involve in young marriage are still young and still growing. They have their own special immune and challenge s and peculiar illness, being children. They further depresses the immunity and are most likely to getting infection. Girls brides are more likely to become infected with STDs, especially HIV and HPV. Young people who get married at young age have poor relational skills. They missed the opportunities of bonding with their age mates. In fact, some are not given the rights to choose their life partner and most even hardly know their partner before marriage. So, no concerns, no full understanding of the terms of the marriage contract and no freedom of choice. (Dr. Malik Haruna King, 2013).

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Explanatory research was used in this research. According to Kowalczyk (2013), explanatory research is describe as an attempt to connect ideas to understand cause and effect, meaning

researcher want to describe what is happening. Explanatory research looks at how things come together and interact. This study employed the quantitative study approach (explanatory study) to identify the pattern and magnitude of relations and interactions existing between the pre-decided of independent variable (unstable financial in young marriage, missing out teenage life, lack of responsibility and mental and health problem occurs early) and dependent variable (acceptance of people toward early marriage) in order to understand about cases of incest in Malaysia. The study involved 421 respondents and a cross sectional survey and structured questionnaire were used for data collection. All variables were measured through scales previously used by other researchers. Google Docs and Microsoft Office Excel 2013 were used in the analysis. For this research, the first step is to measure the acceptance of people toward early marriage. Then, it is necessary to measure the content of early marriage such as unstable financial in young marriage, missing out teenage life, lack of responsibility and mental and health problem occurs early.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **a) Profile of the respondents**

The profile of the respondents is discussed in terms of six characteristics: age, sex, occupation, religion and marital status.

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents by Profile (n=421)**

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
13-17	18	4.3
18-25	373	89
26-30	22	5.3
31-35	0	0
36 and above	9	2.1
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	101	24
Female	320	76
<b>Religion</b>		
Islam	407	96.9
Hindu	3	0.5
Buddha	4	0.7
Christian	7	1.7
Others	0	0
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	390	93.1
Married	28	2.6
Divorced	0	0
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	379	90
Government sector	7	1.7
Private sector	27	6.4
Unemployed	8	1.9

Table 1 above shows the profile of respondents who participated in answering the questionnaires given about Early Marriage in Malaysia. Based from the findings, most of the respondents who answered the questionnaires are aged between 18-21 years old (89%), female (76%), students (90%), Islam in religion (96.9%) and single (93.1%).

**b) Financial Problems**

Based on the table below, the highest mean for the items factors of financial problems is  $M = 3.52$ . This shows that most of the respondents think that not everyone are from

wealth background. Besides that, the respondents also think that the Malaysia's economy is unstable at the moment as the mean is  $M = 3.4$ . It is stated in the Department of Statistic Malaysia itself that the economy in Malaysia is going downhill and if so, it may be impossible for young people to support their family needs in this economy.

**Table 2: Financial Problems**

ITEMS	MEAN (M)
I believe that not everyone are from wealth background.	3.52
Economy in Malaysia is unstable	3.4
I believe that younger people have a lot of thing they desires.	3.3
I believe that younger people still rely on their parents' financial.	3.02
Younger people does not have a proper job to support his family.	2.82
Overall	3.2

**c) Lack of Responsibility**

Table 3 shows that the highest mean is  $M = 2.90$  which the respondents believe that girl will struggle to take care of new born baby at an early age. It also shows that the respondents are agree with the statement, which makes those who are involved in early marriage are lack of responsibility. This follows with the mean  $M = 2.75$ , which makes the respondents think that younger parents are still unclear about parental guidance. The lowest mean is  $M = 2.40$  which our respondents think that younger woman/parents may not be able to provide appropriate care for child.

**Table 3: Lack of Responsibility**

ITEMS	MEAN (M)
I believe that girl will struggle to take care of new born baby at an early age.	2.90
I believe that younger parents are still unclear about parental guidance.	2.75
I think young boy will find it quite difficult to have a successful life.	2.64
Younger age are not matured enough to carry big responsibilities.	2.61
I believe that younger woman/parents may not be able to provide appropriate care for child.	2.40
Overall	2.66

**d) Missing Out Teenage Life.**

Based on Table 4, it shows that the highest mean for this factor is  $M = 3.1$  which the most agreed by the respondents. The respondents think that younger parents will be depressed thinking about their responsibilities in college and their family at the same time. This follows with the mean  $M = 2.69$  which stands for the time to spend between young couple and their friends will be neglect are chosen by our respondents as the second highest mean.

**Table 4: Missing Out Teenage Life**

ITEMS	MEAN (M)
Younger parents will be depressed thinking about their responsibilities in college and their family at the same time.	3.1
I believe time to spend between young couple and their friends will be neglect.	2.69
Teen couple are less right for each other than they had thought after married at young age.	2.68
I believe that mental disorder will occurs at young age.	2.65
Young parent have no time for entertainment.	2.55
Overall	2.73

**e) Mental and Health Problems Occurs Early.**

Based on the table 5, the respondents are mostly agree with first item with the mean of  $M = 3.34$ . This shows that they agreed that young people need to take care of their health before they turn old as they are still young and healthy. It also follows with the statement that girls are most likely to face health problems with the  $M = 2.77$ . This means that everyone should take care of their

Component	Number	Mean
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health in every situations and basically young people who are still healthy and living life without any health problems should always make sure it maintains that way. And surely, every disease has its own cures.

As stated in the Quran 26:80,

“There is no disease that God Almighty has created, except that He also has created its treatment.”

**Table 5: Mental and Health Problems Occurs Early.**

ITEMS	MEAN (M)
I believe that young people need to take care of their health before they turn old.	3.34
Girls are most likely to face health problems.	2.77
I believe that young people will get depressed if they get married at young age.	2.31
I believe that they will get suffer from STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) especially HIV and HPV.	2.11
I believe that young girl will face death if they get pregnant before 20s.	1.89
Overall	2.5

**CONCLUSION**

Financial Problems	421	3.2
Missing Out Teenage Life	421	2.73
Lack of Responsibility	421	2.66
Mental And Health Occurs Early	421	2.48
Overall		2.77

TABLE 5.1

Based on Table 5.1, it shows that the component with highest mean is financial problems with  $M = 3.2$ . Most of our respondents agreed with the statement everyone are not from a wealth family. Meanwhile, based on the statement that younger parents will be depressed thinking about their responsibilities in college and their family at the same time which is linked to the missing out teenage life component makes the component as the second highest mean with  $M = 2.73$ . It basically proves that the statement are to be accepted by most of our respondents. In this research paper, data analysis method, study results and the discussion of the findings has been presented. The results of this study has been proved to be successful ( $M = 2.77$ ). In addition, the acceptance of public towards early marriage has been explored.

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