

Original Article

**Correlation between the Level of Knowledge and Attitude Regarding Early Marriage among Female High School Students**

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**ABSTRACT**

The rate of early marriage in West Kalimantan in 2018 occupied the 14th place with a percentage of 21.22%, while in 2020 it increased to 24%. A study conducted at Kubu Raya District in 2014, showed that there were 63.6% of 88 prospective brides in the work area of Sungai Kakap Community Health Center who experienced unwanted pregnancies. The results of the Program Performance and Accountability Survey (SKAP) in 2019 showed that 63 out of 1,000 women in the age range of 15-19 years had given birth. This problem is also related to the incidence of unwanted pregnancies in West Kalimantan which reached 23.4% as reported in the 2019 SKAP survey data. This study aims to identify and analyze the correlation between the level of knowledge and attitude related to early marriage among female students at SMAN 1 of Sungai Kakap. This was a quantitative study using the cross sectional method. The study samples were selected using purposive sampling technique which obtained 81 respondents. The data collection instruments applied here were a questionnaire related to the level of knowledge regarding early marriage and a questionnaires related attitude regarding early marriage. The data collected were analyzed based on the frequency distribution and statistical test of the Spearman correlation test. The study findings based on the Spearman test obtained a significance value or p-value=0.000 (<0.005) and the correlation coefficient value of 0.556. Someone with a good level of understanding about early marriage would also have good character or an unsupportive attitude regarding underage marriage. Thus, it can be concluded that there was a significant correlation between the level of knowledge and attitude regarding early marriage among female students at SMAN 1 of Sungai Kakap. It is expected that the study finding can be applied as a guide for conducting further research, especially regarding the correlation between the level of knowledge and attitude regarding early marriage among female adolescents, as well as the basis for community service.

**Keywords :** Early marriage, Female Adolescent, Attitude, Knowledge level.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Marriage has been regulated in Law no. 16 of 2019 which reads "Marriage is only permitted if a man and a woman have reached the age of 19 (nineteen) years<sup>1</sup>. Based on data derived from the Indonesian Ministry of Health in 2014, Indonesia was one of the countries with the highest number of child marriages in the world, namely in the 37<sup>th</sup> rank. In ASEAN region, Indonesia ranked second after Cambodia<sup>2</sup>. Marriage of women aged 10-14

years accounted for 0.2%, or more than 22,000 women. The marriage rate among women aged 15-19 years was 11.17%, while among men it was 1.6%. Based on such facts, it can be concluded that underage marriage among women was higher than underage marriage among men<sup>3</sup>.

Impacts that may occur if an adolescent girl becomes pregnant at an early age include the aspects of education, health (birth complications) and employment opportunities which will further affect their lives in the future.

In addition, children born by underage women will also be at risk of death, stunting and low birth weight<sup>4</sup>. In some cases of underage marriages among couples who are not ready financially, they end up becoming financially dependent on their families<sup>5</sup>. According to a previous study, pregnancy and childbirth under the age of 20 can cause 2-5 times more maternal deaths than those between the ages of 20-29. In addition, young couples who are mentally immature can cause family problems that lead to divorce. Such finding is also supported by a study conducted by Fujiana which found that young women who had underage marriage were often treated less well at home. Besides that, there are problems such as lack of finances and abusive treatment towards the wife by the husband<sup>6</sup>.

Researchers from the Association of Indonesian Demographic Enthusiasts in West Kalimantan Province recorded that 22.9% of adolescents in West Kalimantan Province had given birth and were in the first pregnancy. A study conducted at Kubu Raya District in 2014, showed that there were 63.6% of 88 prospective brides in the work area of Sungai Kakap Community Health Center who experienced unwanted pregnancies<sup>7</sup>. In addition, the results of the Program Performance and Accountability Survey (SKAP) in 2019 showed that 63 out of 1,000 women in the age range of 15-19 years had given birth. This problem is also related to the incidence of unwanted pregnancies in West Kalimantan which reached 23.4% as reported in the 2019 SKAP survey data<sup>8</sup>.

Some respondents who had negative attitude regarding early marriage were also caused by a lack of education, so that understanding regarding early marriage was still far from the good category. Besides that, many underage marriages in the surrounding environment also influenced their attitude<sup>9</sup>. Such finding is also supported by a study conducted by Fujiana which found that female adolescents who had given birth were more vulnerable to health problems. In addition, pregnancy and childbirth are not only physically risky for the mother and fetus, but can also be related to the readiness of her new role as a mother. In this study, it was found that there was a lack of the role of female adolescents as mothers since pregnancy until the period of caring for the baby. This can be due to a lack of knowledge and experience to carry out their role as mothers<sup>10</sup>.

According to a study conducted by Putri, it was found that poor understanding was due to the respondents got information from sources with unknown accuracy. In addition, the information obtained by adolescents also varied so that it could affect the level of knowledge and understanding of adolescents about the risks of underage marriage. Inaccurate information will result in suboptimal knowledge<sup>11</sup>. Based on the data derived from a preliminary study conducted at the high school, there were still some students who did not know about early marriage and its effects. One of the students stated that there had been no counseling about early marriage so they did not know about it. This study aims to identify and analyze the correlation between the level of knowledge and attitude related to early marriage among female students at SMAN 1 of Sungai Kakap.

## METHOD

This was a quantitative study with a correlative analytical study design. This study has obtained ethical review approval determined in Pontianak on March 9, 2022 by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine of Tanjungpura University through ethical approval registration number No. 1683/UN22.9/PG/2022. Data collection was carried out at SMAN 1 of Sungai Kakap in March. The study samples were selected using purposive sampling technique which obtained 81 respondents. The variables in this study consisted of two variables, namely the independent variable (level of knowledge) and the dependent variable (attitude). The data collection instruments applied here were a questionnaire related to the level of knowledge regarding early marriage (adopted from the study conducted by Aisah (2017)<sup>12</sup>) and a questionnaire related attitude regarding early marriage (Adopted from the study conducted by Habibah (2017)<sup>13</sup>). The questionnaire related to the level of knowledge consisted of 32 with 19 positive questions and 13 negative questions with "true" and "false" answer choices. Whereas the questionnaire related to attitude consisted of 20 questions with 8 positive questions and 12 negative questions with the answer choices of "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Rather Agree", "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree". Data were analyzed using the Spearman rank test to determine the correlation between variables since the data were not

normally distributed. Statistical analysis was performed by using SPSS software.

**Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Characteristics.**

	Data on Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Age	15 Years	8	9.9%
	16 Years	35	43.2%
	17 Years	25	30.9%
	18 Years	13	16.0%
Major	Science	39	46.9%
	Social	42	53.1%
Class	X	30	37%
	XI	26	32.1%
	XII	25	30.9%

Based on the data presented in table 1, it was shown that most of respondents who filled out the questionnaires aged 16 years with a percentage of 43.2%. Furthermore, most of

respondents were those in Social major with a percentage of 53.1%. Most of respondents were those in class X with a percentage of 37%.

**Table 2. Distribution of Knowledge Level and Attitude.**

Variable	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Knowledge level		
Good	26	32.1
Moderate	48	59.3
Poor	7	8.6
Attitude		
Supported	0	0
Did Not Support	81	100.0

The results of the study showed that 59.3% of respondents had a moderate level of knowledge, 32.1% of respondents had a good level of knowledge, and 8.6% of respondents

had a poor level of knowledge. In addition regarding attitude, all respondents (100%) did not support early marriage.

**Table 3. Correlation between knowledge level and attitude related to early marriage among high school students.**

Knowledge Level	Attitude				Total	
	Supported		Did Not Support		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
Good	0	0.0%	26	32.1%	26	32.1%
Moderate	0	0.0%	48	59.3%	48	59.3%
Poor	0	0.0%	7	8.6%	7	8.6%
			<b>Total</b>		81	100%
<b>p-value = 0.000</b>						
<b>Correlation coefficient = 0.556</b>						

The results of statistical test through the Spearman test obtained a p value of 0.000 (0.000<0.05). Such finding indicated that there was a significant correlation between the two variables. Furthermore, it was obtained a correlation coefficient of 0.556 which indicated a strong correlation between variables (0.51-

0.75). The correlation coefficient showed a positive value, so that the two variables were declared to be in the same direction.

## DISCUSSION

This study was conducted among 81 female high school students with the characteristics of the respondents of age, major

and class. Age has an important role in forming knowledge and attitudes towards early marriage. The older a person is, the more comprehension and mindset will develop which further lead to better knowledge and attitudes<sup>14</sup>. According to Batubara, the age of 15-18 years is the period when adolescents begin to develop behavioral maturity, learn to control impulsivity and can make early decisions related to the vocational goals to be achieved<sup>15</sup>.

Based on the result of the study, it can be seen that the low level of knowledge could be due to the fact that many respondents were looking for inaccurate sources of information so that the knowledge of respondents about underage marriage became inaccurate as well. This fact resulted in sub-optimal knowledge so that they might misinterpret early marriage and its impacts.

In addition, the lack of knowledge regarding early marriage could be due to a lack of education provided regarding early marriage. Respondents in this study stated that they had never received counseling related to early marriage. However, there were several respondents who joined the PIK-R extracurricular at their school which discussed the mature age for marriage, and those who joined such activity knew little about underage marriages.

The result of the study showed that all respondents had attitude that rejected or did not support early marriage by 100%. Positive attitude (did not support) towards underage marriage could be due to female students had seen many facts in their surroundings that early marriage could cause the risk of divorce, domestic violence and so on. Such finding is also supported by a study conducted by Supriati, whulich found that female adolescents had a positive attitude regarding early marriage<sup>16</sup>.

Based on the test result, it was shown that  $H_a$  was accepted while  $H_0$  was rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that there was a significant correlation between the two variables, namely the level of knowledge variable and the attitude variable among female adolescents at SMAN 1 of Sungai Kakap. In addition, it was obtained a correlation coefficient value of 0.556 which indicated a strong correlation between variables (0.51-0.75). The positive correlation coefficient value indicated that the two variables were declared to be in the same direction. Therefore, the higher

the level of knowledge of the students, the higher their attitude.

The study finding is supported by a study conducted by Agtikasari (2017) which found that there was a significant correlation between the level of knowledge and attitude related to underage marriage. This is based on certain theory that the attitude framework consists of three mutually supportive components<sup>16</sup>. One of the three components is the cognitive component, namely the depiction of something that is believed by an attitude owner and relates to individual perceptions, knowledge and beliefs. The cognitive component includes stereotyped beliefs regarding something (opinions), especially those related to controversial issues or cases<sup>15</sup>. The study finding is also in accordance with a study conducted by Tambunan (2020) which revealed that there was a correlation between knowledge and attitude of female adolescents towards underage marriage with a p-value of 0.000<sup>17</sup>.

A study conducted by Sari (2016) revealed that if an individual had good level of knowledge, then he would also have a good attitude since knowledge was one of the factors that influenced the formation of an attitude<sup>18</sup>. Moreover, a study conducted by Ekawati and Indriyanti (2017) found that the better the understanding obtained, the better the attitude of the individual will be. Participants who had good level of knowledge would be unsupportive towards underage marriages and participants who had moderate or low level of knowledge usually tended to support underage marriages<sup>19</sup>.

Based on observations and interviews conducted by researchers with several respondents, they stated that there were many of their friends who should still be in high school but were already married either because of unwanted pregnancy or just wanted to get married rather than continue their study at school.

Several respondents also agreed to enter into early marriage if their parents asked them to marry because they were afraid it would be a sin if they did not follow their parents' wishes and hoped that they could lighten their parents' burden through their marriage. In addition, there were also several students who thought that if they didn't get married soon, even though they were still underage, they worried to be old maids.

Based on this, it can be seen that there are many factors for someone to get married early, namely economic factors, self-will, unwanted pregnancies, parents' wishes to marry off their children and environmental factor that was familiar with underage marriages. However, according to the researcher, there were still many participants with a good level of knowledge supported early marriage.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that there was a significant correlation between the level of knowledge and attitude regarding early marriage among female students at SMAN 1 of Sungai Kakap. People with a good understanding regarding underage marriage might have attitude that supported or did not support underage marriage. The results of the study showed that there was a positive correlation between the level of knowledge and attitude.

The limitation in this study was related to the collection of data originating from respondents that could not be carried out at the same time. The researcher had to adjust to the schedule provided by the school and there was still an effect of the Covid-19 pandemi, and the school divided the class into several sessions so that the researcher could not collect data at the same time. Therefore, at the time of data collection, the researcher divided several classes. Data were collected in some classes on the first day and the rest of classes were continued to be studied on the second day.

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that there was a significant correlation between the level of knowledge and attitude regarding early marriage among female students at SMAN 1 of Sungai Kakap. It is expected that the study finding can be applied as a guide for conducting further research, especially regarding the correlation between the level of knowledge and attitude regarding early marriage among female adolescents, as well as the basis for community service. In addition, the future research is expected to conduct an analysis on the correlation between parenting styles and culture with the incidence of early marriage.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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