

## Who Have Higher Psychological Well-Being? A Comparison Between Early Married and Adulthood Married Women

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### Abstract

Theoretically, marriage and age is two aspects related to level of psychological well-being (PWB). A person who married will be healthier physically and psychologically, so it can increase the PWB. The PWB will be higher for adult rather than younger. The question is, what about someone who got married at an early age? Is there any difference between the level of PWB on early married women and women who married in adulthood? Therefore, this study aimed to see differences between those two subjects. The research used survey methods, with PWB scale as the instrument. Subjects in this study were women aged 20-30 years, who married at the aged under 20 years and above 20 years. Subjects in this study 67 people. The results showed significant differences in levels of PWB among women who married early to married adult women ( $t = 3.816$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ). Adulthood-married women had a higher level of PWB than early age married women.

**Keywords:** psychological well-being, early marriage, adulthood marriage

### Introduction

Psychological well-being (PWB) is the concept of psychological well-being of individuals who able to accept who they are, PWB does not have symptoms of depression and always have purpose of life influenced by the function of positive psychology in the form of self-actualization, social environmental mastery and personal growth (Ryff, 1989).

PWB is very important, because the value of positive mental health makes the individual can identify what is missing (Ryff, 1995 & Keyes, 1995). Individuals who have a high PWB is an individual who is satisfied with their life, a positive emotional condition, be able to through bad experiences, have positive relationship with others, be able to determine their own will without depend with others, control the environmental conditions, have a clear purpose in their life,

and be able to develop themselves (Ryff, 1989). Someone called well-being if the individual have positive emotion (+) bigger than negative emotions (-), and keep positive emotions (+) and also fix the negative emotions (-) on themselves.

Marriage helps someone be healthier in physically and psychologically, and also brings a positive effect on a person life (Wilson & Oswald, 2005). Marriage (good marriage) also protects husband/wife from stress (Kurniawan, 2012). It is means marriage can increase the PWB. But, the existence of family violence, divorce, or unprepared couples can also make a person have a low PWB. The disharmonious of a marriage can disturb psychological and physical health of someone and also have a bad effect to the health of the individual (Kurniawan, 2012).

The rate of divorce in Indonesia increased 70% by 2005 - 2011. Since 2006-2010 Malang became city with the highest rate of divorce across Indonesia. Meanwhile, in 2011 became city of East Java province with the highest divorce rates than other provinces. The dominant factor of divorce is disharmonious married, while economic factors have a small percentage of divorce (Entin, 2012; Andi, 2011; www.republika.co.id, 2012). There is many opinion said that economic factor or the third person is the main factor of divorces, based on the above opinion the main factor of divorce is disharmonious marriage. There is a lot of factor cause the family disharmony, one of them is the immaturity of the age of the husband or wife who causes strife between them.

Being parent is not only prepare about material, but also they have to prepare the mentality of

being parent as a dominant aspect. Wife have a important duty on a family. A wife should be able manage the family finances properly, manage and take care of the household in order to achieve prosperity in the family. When the couple was blessed with a child, the responsibilities of a wife will increase, as a wife and a mother, they should be able to give a good education to their children, and manage their time to finish their household duty. Therefore, a women need a good prepare to be a wife. No doubt that the age is a main factor on it, because when the individual enters their adulthood, psychologically would be ready, because one of the developmental tasks in the adulthood is nurturing a family.

Early marriage or underage marriage became a trending topic recently. The survey that conclude by suara merdeka on 2011, 44% of women married at an early age. Young age makes them hang on one of the parent of both couple, which makes a limitation of their freedom. At Balikpapan, early marriage contribute many divorce (Wibisono, 2012). Early marriage is also known to be one of the potential family violence (Family Violence) (Christina, 2012). It can also caused by women who categorized as a teenager. There is so many thing that to be achieve when someone enter their adolescence, it's a normal on their age, adolescence age range is 11 to 19 (Grinder, 1978 and Hurlock, 2004) Adolescence feels happy to spend their time with their friends rather than their family.

Early marriages lead in increasing dropout rates. Most of the women who early married quit school at the level of Junior High School (SMP).

They decide to leave their education once they marry. Challenges that exist in marriage are, the first is financial problems, and a wife has duty to manage all living given by the husband as best as possible, an independent wife will be easy to manage household finances. From the results of observations conducted by researchers in the mid 2012 at the Kraguman and Wajak village shows that women tends to early married are still confused in managing finance provided by her husband, especially women who early married also tend to still live with his parents or the parents of the husband so most of them are still cleaved to their parents. The second is big family, even they have their own family, and they can't simply ignore their big family. Moreover, if the couple still live with their family, so they have to follow the rules that made by their big family. Disagreements between outside the main family members can cause a friction between husband and wife itself. Especially if they already has children, it would involve the member of family at that house to enter at the parenting problem. In this case, it will not be a problem if the member of family at that house have the same method to educate their children, but it will be a problem when wife is not ready to have children and she has to take care of her children at the husband's family home. The dependence of wife to take care of the child to the mother-in-law will give a negative effect. Third is descendants, each newly married couple demanded to have children soon. However, women who early married have more risk for maternal mortality and making the individual more susceptible to complications during pregnancy or at delivery.

Many early marriage related news making researchers wanted to examine whether there are differences in levels of psychological well-being in women who early married to women who married in the adulthood. The purpose of this study was to determine whether there are differences in the level of PWB among women who early married and the married women in adulthood.

### *Psychological Well-Being*

Psychological well-being (PWB) is the concept of psychological well-being of individuals who are able to accept who she/he is, does not have symptoms of depression and always have a purpose in life is influenced by the function of positive psychology in the form of self-actualization, social environmental mastery and personal growth (Ryff, 1989).

Aspects that indicate a person has a high PWB level, include: first, self-acceptance, an individual who can accept themselves has characteristics such as: have a positive attitude to them, admitted and accept that there are various aspects, and feel positive for what happens in the past. Individual who knows him/herself well means knowing all the strength in him/her and accept all the weakness. When people want to turn into her/his advantage, it will be the difference between the others. Characteristics of individuals who can't accept her/his self which is: unsatisfied with her/his self, upset for what happened in the past, have problems in personal qualities, blame situation that affect negative things to her/him. Individuals who couldn't accept her/his self will

use to compare themselves with the others, that what make him/her not feeling better.

Second, positive relations with others, individuals who have positive relationships with others have characteristics such as: warm people, related based on trust, caring with the welfare of others, have empathy, and understanding the aspects of giving and receiving in a relationship. The other way, individuals who have negative relationships with others have characteristics such as: hard to open, less of empathy, and selfish. Individuals, who have positive relationships with others, will feel more comfort with the environment because they will be trust the others.

Third, autonomy, independent individuals have characteristics such as: not dependent on the environment, able to survive under pressure, able to regulate their behavior, and can evaluate themselves. Whereas individuals are not independent characteristics such as: dependent and expects the evaluation of others, rely on the others to make important decisions, does not have strong principle on her/his self. Independent individuals will not waiting for others to do something or decide something.

Fourth, environmental mastery, individuals who can master its environment has the characteristics such as: able to control the rules that comes from external events, can be effectively take advantage of opportunities, and is able to control and manage a competent environmental. While individuals who have not been able to mastering the environment has the characteristics such as: find it difficult to manage her/his life, lack of attention to the opportunities, and feel was

not able to change or improve things around. Individuals who can master the environment will be more adaptable than people who have not been able to master their environment.

Fifth, purpose of life, individuals who have a purpose in life has characteristics such as: feeling that there is meaning in life, cling to beliefs that give meaning to his life, and had a goal and final goal. In contrast, individuals whose goal in life to have immature characteristics such as: not having clear dreams for her/his future, her/his life felt less of means and not able to see the purpose of life in the past. Individuals who have a purpose in life that mature will be more productive and creative than individuals whose goal in life is not yet mature.

Sixth, personal growth, individuals who have a personal grow characteristics include: being able to see themselves as individuals grow and develop, open to a new experience, aware of the potential it has, and is able to understand the development of the self and behavior at all times. Conversely, individuals who do not grow up to have personal characteristics include: feeling life isn'thappy, the stuck feeling, bored with her life, and afraid to change his habits. Private individuals grew more able to enjoy life as private individuals grew more open to new things, while individuals who do not grow more afraid of changing things that become habits despite the change towards the better.

While things can affect a person PWB, such as: age, gender, socioeconomic status (education level, income level, and the success of the work), social support, religiosity, and personality.

Ryff& Singer (in Ryff, 1989; Synder & Lopes, 2002; Fadli, 2012) said that women have higher levels of PWB than men, the difference between the mindset of men and women who will distinguish coping strategies, as well as women have better interpersonal skills than men. If an individual has right coping strategies, then the individual will be easier to avoid stress because it can resolve the problem well.

There are differences in level of PWB between individuals who are at early adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood (Ryff& Keyes, 1995). Individuals who are in the middle adulthood had the highest PWB (Papalia, Sterns, Feldman, & Camp, 2002). Aspects of autonomy and environmental mastery will kept increase with the individual ages, especially in early adulthood-middle adulthood, whereas the purpose of life and personal growth will decrease with the individual ages, especially during middle adulthood – late adulthood (Ryff& Keyes, 1995).

Social support also influence feeling accept of individual that will influence the level of PWB. In his research Fadli (2012) said there is a positive relationship between social supports with PWB. Social support also accepts influence of individual feeling that will influence the level of PWB. In his research Fadli said there is a positive relationship between social supports with PWB. Individual who was married will have a high level of PWB because individual who was married will get social support such as emotional support (love, protection, attention, and trust) who would make the individual feel comfortable, at ease, and will feel loved.

The level of education will affects the individual income when working. As we know, much kind of jobs provide bachelor for the minimal requisite and have a skills. This is that will be differentiating the individual income.

The individual that have obedient religious will not be feel loneliness and have higher a level of PWB than individual that not obedient religious. (Ryff, Singer, Hume, Ellison, et al in Clara, 2010).

### *Marriage*

Marriage is a bond between the inner and outer man and a woman as husband and wife with the intention of forming a family or household who are happy and eternal based on God. In a review of the Law Marriage, Article 7 (seven) mentioned requirements if an individual wants to get married is when a man has reached the age of 19 years and the woman has reached the age of 16 years.

However, based on a review of psychological age individual have a developmental task of looking for a mate and form a family is in early adulthood, which ranged in age from 20-30 years. Because in this age, the individual is considered having a mature emotional and able to be responsible for the existing liabilities. And considered to be ready became a wife who has a big responsibility to take the household duty. A person who was married between 20-30 years old categorized as a Adult Marriage.

However, early marriage become a trend wedding recently. Early marriage is a marriage

that was held when the prospective groom or female has not reached the recommended age or should be, in this case under 20 years old. Why is not advisable to marry at age <20 years? Because, psychologically, they still categorized as a teenager who search their identity, they still take their attention to the environment and find what was they looked. And it will be effect to their emotional adolescent. So, marriages that took place when she was aged under 20 years are categorized as Early Marriage.

Someone who had been satisfied with their marriage, automatically they have a good PWB. There is some aspects that exist in marital satisfaction, such as : first, communication which focuses on the couple level of comfort in receiving and distributing information. Lasswell (1991) divides communication into five basic elements of marriage, namely: the openness between partners, the honesty of the pair, the ability to trust each other, empathy toward partner, and the ability to be a good listener. If the individual already has five basic elements, good communication will be established. When communication between partners are good, it will be easier for couples to live as a family.

Second, spent spare time to choose activities to spend with family. This is important because both of them already spent their time at work, leisure or relax with friends would make each other closer.

Third, religious orientation that measures beliefs and practices within the meaning of marriage. Religion affect the quality of the marriage directly by maintaining a values of relationship,

norms and social support gives a great influence to the marriage and reduce certain behaviors that hurting your partner. A religious belief and worship tends to make individual psychological to be better (Gottman, 1998).

Fourth, Conflict Resolution, which measures the perception of the existence of the pair and resolution of conflict in the marriage relationship itself. This aspect focuses on openness between partners and the strategies to stop the conflict if there any fight of arguments in order to give support to their couples to built up the trust.

Fifth, financial management that focuses on how couples manage their finances. Conflict bias arise if one of the pair showed distrust towards ability of partner in managing finances. The couple who manage the finances have to understand what the main priorities in the family.

Sixth, sexual orientation which measures feelings of affection and your partner about their sexual relationship. Sexual adjustment may be the cause of strife and unhappiness if they do not achieve satisfaction.

Seventh, family and friends that shows how the feeling of the couples when dealing with other family members or friends of the partner. This aspect also shows comfort in spending time with family and friends of the couple.

Eighth, children and parenting. Measures the attitudes and feelings about having and raising children. This aspect focuses on decisions relating to the rules that will apply to their child as well as what to prepare before having children.

Ninth, personal problems (personality issues) which measures individual perceptions about their partners in respecting behaviors at the level of satisfaction to the problems that exist.

Tenth, role equality that measures individual feelings and attitudes about the role of marriage and family. Inequalities in the role of a wedding can be the start of a dispute between the couple.

There are the aspects that have to be considered before someone start to marry and they have to consider about the age that become a very important aspect in order to get satisfaction at the family which can improve the physical wellbeing from the couple.

In this study, the proposed hypothesis is, there is any significant difference between the levels of PWB women who married early and married women in adulthood. Women who married at age adults have higher levels of PWB than women who married at an early age.

## **Method**

### *Participant*

Research participants in this study were 67 women aged between 20-30 years were married when aged under 20 years or over 20 years, and resides in Malang which includes Song-Song, Kraguman, Wajak, and Kendal Payak. Average value of the subjects in this study were 50, while for the standard deviation value were 10. Sampling technique in this research using purposive sampling, the techniques that take samples by determine the characteristics of the

subject research. The subject characteristic are women aged 20-30 years and were married.

### *Instrument and Procedure*

Methods of data collection in this study using PWB scale developed by Carroll D. Ryff (1989). Measured aspect in it were self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose of life, personal growth, with the value of internal consistency from .33 to .56 on each aspect (Liwarti, 2013).

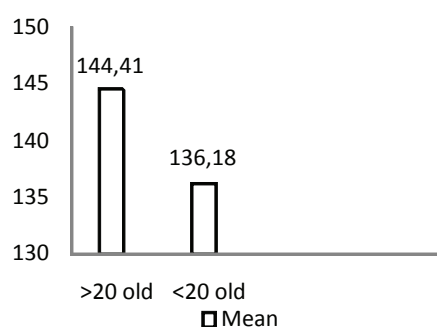
The scale totaled 42 items in which there are 6 (six) response options (strongly disagree, disagree, doubt, agree, strongly agree, and strongly agree). The instrument used in this research, translated into Indonesian by the Language Center at Muhammadiyah University of Malang, then researchers tested the instrument to 30 women aged 20-30 years, which consisted of 15 women who married at age below 20 years and 15 women who married at the age of 20 years. Researcher did try out to test the validity and reliability. Based on the results of tests performed in Malang, all 42 items in the scale is valid PWB with a validity test using SPSS version 17.00, with a reliability index of 0.345 to 0.736 and alpha 0.958. The scale of Ryff's PWB may otherwise be used for the next research instruments.

Scale deployment of research that has been declared valid was conducted from 25 March to 7 April 2013. Researchers deploy the scale of research in Malang, with help of friends who live in Malang to a married woman. Research scale distributed 100 scale, but only 83 scale were filled and scale that can be analyzed by 67

scale, which consists of 34 scales of criteria that married women over the age of 20 years and 33 scales of criteria that married women under the age of 20 years.

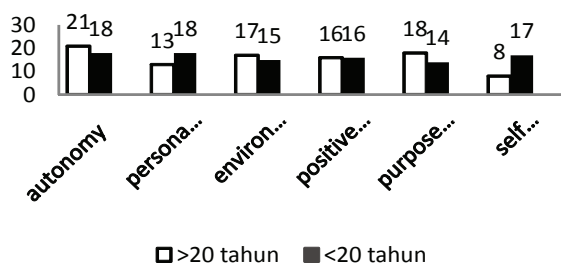
## Results

### The Description of Data



Graph 1. Comparison of PWB levels in women who were married over the age of 20 years with a married woman under the age of 20 years

Married women over the age of 20 years had an average value of 144.41. While married women under age 20 have an average value of 136.18. This means that married women over the age of 20 years is higher than married women under the age of 20 years.



Graph 2. Comparison between the values of every aspect of married women over the age of 20 years with women who married under the age of 20 years

Married women over the age of 20 years tend to be high on aspects of autonomy, environmental mastery, and purpose of life. While married women under the age of 20 tend to be high on the personal aspects of growth and self-acceptance, positive relationship to aspects with others both married women over the age of 20 years and who married under 20 years old have the same value.

On married women over the age of 20 years had a high value on marriage between age <10 years, while for married women >10 years tended to have lower levels of PWB. Whereas for the women who marry under the age of 20 years, the first 10 years of marriage PWB levels tend to be low and in other side at marriage age > 10 years PWB levels tend to be high. This suggests that the marriage age also affect the PWB level of someone who has been married.

By using in dependent sample t-test is obtained  $t=3,816$ ,  $p=0.000$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Means, there are different levels of PWB highly significant correlation between early married women with adult married women. Adult married women have higher levels of PWB than women who married early.

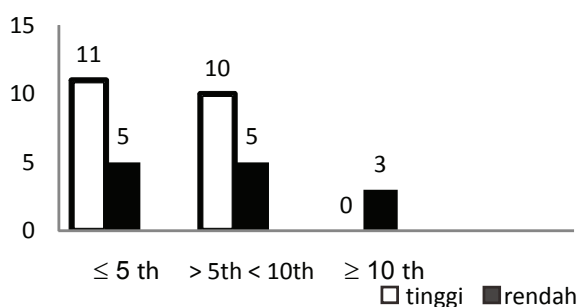
## Discussion

Results from this study is the significant differences between the levels of PWB married women over the age of 20 with a married woman under the age of 20 years. Married women over the age of 20 years have a higher level of PWB than women who marry under the age of 20 years. This result is the same with the results of

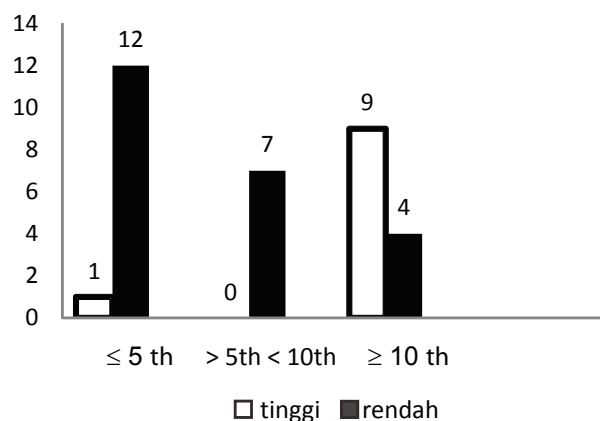


the Ryff PWB theory which states that the age is one of many factors that influence the PWB.

Related to the previous studies of PWB more associate PWB with other factors, one of them is religiosity (Ward, 2010; Ismail & Desmukh, 2012; Green & Elliot, 2010), in that studies described how the religiosity of a person can affect the physical health or psychological. in addition, previous studies also widely discuss about how to deal cope the stress with their PWB's level. Beside PWB's, most previous research using qualitative methods, for example to measure the level of PWB disease or psychological disorder or measure the level of PWB on the certain professions (Karyono, Goddess, & Lela, 2008; Kraaij, veek, Garnefski, Schroevers, Witlox, et al, 2007; Kertzner, Meyer, Stirratt, & Frost, 2009; Gray & Leyland, 2008; Angraeni & Cahyanti, 2012; Princess & Suryadi, 2007; Heiervang, Mednick, Sundet, & Rund, 2011). Not only to provide an additional relevant data that affects the marriage age on PWB as a contribution, but also the study contributed research using quantitative methods.



Graph 3. PWB level comparison between a married woman over the age of surveyed 20th of marriage age.



Graph 4. PWB level comparison between women who married under the age of surveyed 20 th wedding age.

While previous studies linked early marriage to women's health especially the health of the female reproductive organs (Landung, Taha, & Abdullah, 2009; Damayanti, 2012; Imamate, 2009), in previous studies, explained that early marriage tends to increase the risk women's health impaired productive organ. And there is a research is linking early marriage with emotional maturity (Khairani & Young, 2008), which says that there is a difference between the emotional maturity of men and women who married early. Because there are no studies that reveal about whether there are any differences in the level of PWB among women who married early and the married adult woman, then this study gives a new knowledge about the relationship of age in the level of PWB.

From the research that has been done, the woman who married under the age of 20 years old have a lower tendency to the aspect of autonomy, environmental mastery, and purpose of life. When a married woman has not been able to

be independent, it will make her to be dependent on others, especially their parents. Women who marry under the age of 20 years old still do not understand properly their new responsibilities as a wife. In decision making, women who married under the age of 20 years old are notable to decide the matter itself. Related to the purpose of life, have a purpose in life is an important thing in this life, when a person does not have a purpose in life, they would let his life flow because there are no accomplishments to be achieved. Someone who does not have a purpose in their life can be easily influenced by others. Inability of a person to decide their goals because they haven't know their life so well, so they difficult to find their goal, women who married under the age of 20 can categorized as a teenager that doesn't know themselves so well, they still find their identity. Meanwhile, know yourself and be your self is one of the steps to achieve the PWB (Ryff & Singer, 2006). Married in relative young age than the other women in their environment, make them hard in mastering the environment where they life. In adapting at the environment, women who married under the age of 20 years old is more difficult to adapt than women who were married over 20 years old.

Married women under the age of 20 years old have a higher risk on personal growth and self-acceptance aspect. Its mean, women who married under the age of 20 still has the desire to continue to grow, and want to keep learning new things.

As for the positive aspects of relationships with others (positive relations with others) both married women under age 20 who are married

or over the age of 20 years have the same level. This can be caused by a subject who resides in the village, as we know in the village of ties between citizens more closely intertwined; it is not difficult for them to establish a positive relationship with each other. Inversely proportional to the women who married under the age of 20 years old, married women over 20 years old tend to be high on the aspect of self (autonomy), controlled environment (environmental mastery), and purpose (purpose of life), in other words, married women over the age 20 years is more capable of independent, married women over the age of 20 years will also be better able to withstand the social pressure to continue to think and act in a certain way, the other married women over the age of 20 years could be responsible to himself or others.

Married women over the age of 20 years are also more able to control the negative into something positive; because they have been able to control the environment well, other than that they are also able to effectively take advantage of existing opportunities. whereas women who married under the age of 20 years old, married women over the age of 20 years will undergo a more purposeful life because they have a clear purpose in their life. There are some significant differences between women who are married to women who married in early adulthood, and make the level of PWB married women over the age of 20 years is higher than women who marry under the age of 20 years.

The age of marriage also affect in a person's level of PWB. In women who married at the age

of 20 years, when the marriage age < 10 years PWB levels tend to be high, otherwise when the marriage age has entered in > 10 years of the PWB levels tend to be low. As the opposites, women who married under the age of 20 years, in the early days of his marriage PWB levels tend to be low; entering marriage age of 10 years and above its level tends to be high PWB. It can be caused due at the beginning of their marriage is still in adolescence, emotional instability which can make fights happen. From the results of this study are also known from the 67 subjects, 36 subjects of which have a high level of PWB while the other 31 subjects had lower levels of PWB.

The implications of this study include, for women is due to the age when she married someone associated with PWB level, it helps the women who were aged under 20 years of delaying his desire to get married in order to achieve the PWB for women. Because early marriage occurs due to lack of information about women's reproductive health, the importance of education and related matters in a marriage, it is better to hold a counseling related some of the above, in order to reduce the number of early marriages. As for the further research, are expected to pay more attention too the factors that may affect the PWB, further research can also connect PWB and early marriages with other factors such as socio economic status, religiosity, personality, level of education, and social support.

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