



Generation Z's Perception of Marriage Age Restrictions and Arranged Marriage Phenomenon

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Keywords	Abstract		
Early Marriage; Arranged Marriage; Generation Z	Early marriage and matchmaking for children without involving children are still common, regardless of the established law. This study aims to examine how generation Z perceive these two phenomena: the limitation of marriage age and child matchmaking. This research is survey research using random sampling. The participants are those between 18-22 years who live in Palu and its surroundings. The study found that more than 75% of respondents supported the establishment of a marriage age limit. Interrelated with more than 80% of participants tend to reject matchmaking without involving children. This study conclude (1) Generation Z believes that the regulation of marriage restrictions can prevent early marriage, overcome mental and psychological health problems, and reduce the rate of divorce and domestic violence. (2) Generation Z tends to reject the matchmaking system without involving children because marriage is an individual human right, tends to reduce household harmony, and matchmaking is an out-of-date method. The results of this study provide a new perspective on the attitude of the younger generation in responding to rules and social dynamics, especially related to gender issues. This research can also be used as a basis for a broader study on gender and youth issues.		
Kata Kunci	Abstrak		
Pernikahan Dini; Perjodohan; Generasi Z	Pernikahan dini dan juga perjodohan terhadap anak tanpa melibatkan anak masih jamak terjadi, terlepas dari perangkat hukum yang sudah diatur pemerintah. Terkait hal tersebut, penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji bagaimana masyarakat muda melihat dua fenomena tersebut: pembatasan usia pernikahan dan perjodohan anak. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian survey dengan menggunakan random sampling. Menggunakan instrumen wawancara. Sampel penelitian merupakan kelompok masyarakat pada rentang usia 18-22 tahun yang berada di wilayah kota Palu dan sekitarnya. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa lebih dari 75% generasi Z mendukung adanya penetapan batas usia pernikahan. Hal ini juga berkesesuian dimana, lebih dari 80% generasi Z juga cenderung menolak perjodohan tanpa melibatkan anak. Kesimpulan penelitian ini (1) generasi Z percaya bahwa aturan pembatasan pernikahan dapat mencegah pernikahan dini, mengatasi masalah kesehatan mental dan psikologis, dan mengurangi tingkat perceraian dan kekerasan dalam rumah tangga. (2) Generasi Z cenderung menolak sistem perjodohan tanpa melibatkan anak dikarenakan pernikahan adalah hak asasi individu, cenderung mengurangi keharmonisan rumah tangga, dan perjodohan merupakan metode tidak pada zamannya. Hasil penelitian ini memberikan perspektif baru mengenai sikap generasi muda dalam menyikapi aturan dan dinamika sosial, terutama terkait isu gender. Penelitian ini juga dapat menjadi pijakan kajian yang lebih luas dalam isu gender dan generasi muda.		

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Introduction

Marriage is part of the life journey of most people. The sacredness of marriage itself is a universal value. In Indonesia, marriage is not only seen as a legalized relationship between two individuals but also as a value of worship. Therefore, marriage for the Indonesian people is not only bound by positive legal rules but is also closely related to religious rules.

Due to its sacredness, whether from a religious, legal, or social point of view, it is essential to maintain a marriage and its values. As the majority religion in Indonesia, Islam has established rules related to marriage, following human nature and the purpose of marriage.

On the other hand, the noble values of marriage are often violated by society's attitudes and interpretations, which still tend to contradict the goals and rules of marriage. The phenomenon that is still rife is the high rate of early childhood marriages. The phenomenon of early childhood marriage has for long become a concern of the nation, the Indonesian Women's Congress has even echoed it since 1928 (Mardiono, 2009).

Until this time, Indonesia still faces problems regarding childhood marriage and violation of human rights, especially to woman and children. In 2018, survey found that 1 out of 9 women between the age of 20-24 married before reached the age of 18, commonly known as early marriage or childhood marriage (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020). If based on the minimum age of marriage, it can be concluded that marriage by children under 19 years old is still high. Marriage for minors tends to carry a lot of risks. Unfortunately, these acts, in some cases legitimize by traditions and religions arguments which in fact commonly stand on misinterpretation and partial.

Islam emphasizes the relationship between men and women as an egalitarian relationship, where men and women should have the same opportunity to be the best version of themselves, based on the quality of piety and self-work (Nasution, 2007). Like this principle, marriage will always be based on and aim to bring benefit to both parties. There are at least three fundamental values of marriage; peace (Sakinah), love (mawaddah), and compassion (rahmah) (Khoiriyah, 2018). So, when marriage does not have these values, the value of the marriage should be doubted.

To ensure the preservation of the value and purpose, marriage should not be seen only as a social phenomenon but also as a legal event (Khoiriyah, 2018). Laws regarding marriage will directly become the basis of relations between individuals, communities, and even countries (Fakhri, 2015). The law ensures marriage as a forum that benefits the couple, their descendants, and the surrounding community. Early marriage should be seen with clear point of view, full consideration, and not just as an exit door from problems. To have this understanding is prominent and fundamental.

Early marriage has several negative aspects, including legal certainty, economy, human rights, and religion. First, early marriage is very detrimental in legality; especially early marriage actors often carry out through unregistered marriages. This unregistered marriage then becomes legally flawed. The substance of the marriage is not valid, and the divorce process can cause problems, the legal status of children, and financial security guarantees that can be violated (Ali, 2013). Second, economically there are still misconceptions related to early marriage. The idea that early marriage means reducing the economic burden often comes from families who allow, even encourage, their children to marry early (Arifin, 2020). As a result, early marriage tends to produce a vicious cycle of poverty. Third, from the aspect of human rights, especially for children and women. The right to grow and develop, access to education, a decent life, and the right to be free from violence are a few rights that tend to be violated (Arifin, 2020). Lastly, from a religious perspective, with early marriage, which tends to contain destructive aspects, the

public's perception of religion can be eroded. Moreover, religious arguments are often used as a justification for this action. Nevertheless, at a certain point it can crystallize understanding toward religion in modern society, which believes that there is justification for the attitude of inequality between men and women (Lukito, 2007).

Early marriage and arranged marriage are still a social phenomenon in society, especially in developing countries. Research about this phenomenon has been numerous. Susilo and his team conducted research regarding early marriage and the driving factors in Bawean Island, Indonesia. Their research focuses on what factors could lead the couple to marry early and what adverse effects happen to the early marriage couple. Factors such as matchmaking, avoidance of the social sanction of fornication and out-of-wedlock pregnancy, and as an economical solution for parents to shift responsibility (Susilo, Istiawati, Aliman, & Alghani, 2021). In line with this research, Nurmala and the team also looked for why women in Sumenep, Indonesia, continue the tradition of child marriage. Their findings show a correlation between child marriage and arranged marriage. The reasons for child marriage in Sumenep are married within a big family, adulthood, and a mandate from older people (Nurmala, Astutik, & Devi, 2020). Nur Azizah conducted another research. This research tried to analyse the minimum age determination for marriage in Islamic countries, including Indonesia. Using a juridicial normative approach, the research analyses minimum age determination for marriage from positive and Islamic law perspectives. The researcher found that minimum age regulation is not the source of the problem, but the social and educational conditions in which a person grows and develops (Azizah, 2018).

Given the complexity of the problems that can arise from early marriage, this discourse needs to be echoed to continue to raise awareness. Moreover, especially in the 21st century, the composition of society is increasingly filled by the younger generation and open access to information, where the perception that the younger generation has regarding the issue of early marriage is the social perception of the Indonesian people in the decades to come.

One of the important generations that is an indicator of people's social attitudes is Generation Z. Those who are in their teens to 20s today, are a generation that is considered to have higher self-awareness, independence, care, sense of responsibility, and determination (Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018), (Sakitri, 2021), (Turner & Turner, 2018). Awareness of social issues and the ability to live in a digital society make Generation Z an essential player in shaping character and noble values.

Seeing the cruciality level of the early marriage issue has made it attractive to experts to find the solution. Unlike previous research regarding the topics, this research offers a new perspective. This research highlights the view of young people, generation Z, about early marriage. The value and understanding that the young people hold are believed to be able to shape the future of this issue. This research has shown that Generation Z has raised their awareness regarding human rights, especially for women and children. There is a good construct about the core value of marriage. Generation Z is not only more used to open access to information but also more moderate and more straightforward in thinking.

Focusing on the role of generation Z, this study then tries to examine the perceptions that exist in generation Z in viewing social issues in the form of early marriage through the legal dimension, namely the rules for limiting the age of marriage. Taking the foothold that their perceptions can undoubtedly be a benchmark for people's mindsets. Also, the phenomenon commonly follows early marriage; marriage arrangements without considering the children, especially women.

The views and studies above are crystallized in this study's objectives: (1) What is the perception of Generation Z on the rules for limiting the age of marriage? (2) How is Generation Z's perception of women's rights determining their marriage? Therefore, the purpose of this research is to answer the research questions regarding the early marriage and woman's right in determining their marriage based on the perception of Generation Z.

Method

This research is quantitative. The research was conducted by collecting quantitative data and information quantitatively. The design used for this research is survey research, using large scale participants as representative of general opinion related to the views of generation Z on the regulation of minimum age for marriage in Indonesia (Cresswell, 2014; Geoffrey, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005; Kothari, 2004; Saris & Gallhofer, 2007).

The participants were those between 18 and 22, university students located in Palu city and surroundings. The participant total was 126 people, with the composition of male participants 66 people and females 60 people. The data collected in November-December 2021. The participants were chosen using the random sampling technique. This sampling technique gives people the same probability of being selected as the research participants. The composition of the participants is shown in the table below:

Table 1. Participants of	of the Research
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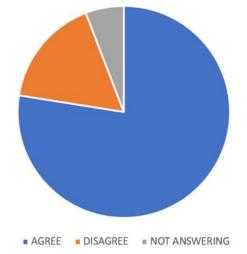
Male	Female	Total
Participants	Participants	
66	60	126

The participants were interviewed with an open-ended questions format related to the research objectives and the regulation of minimum age for marriage in Indonesia and arranged marriage phenomenon. The data were collected through phone calls and messages. The data analysis of the results was conducted in four steps: content analysis, tabulation, analysis, and reporting (Geoffrey et al., 2005). This step includes coding the interview results and the selective data entry process.

Result

The findings of the research were able to answer both research questions. The results were then analyzed and displayed in six findings, both the forms of narrative explanation and diagrams, as follows:

1. Based on the survey results regarding the marriage age restriction regulation, most of the respondents agree with implementing this regulation. 78% of respondents agree with the regulation, while 17% disagree, and 6% did not give their opinion. The result is shown in figure 1 as follows:





2. Regarding implementing the marriage age restriction regulation, those who agree gave several reasons for their opinion. The reasons are preventive acts for early marriage, avoiding mental health and psychological issues, reducing the divorce rate, and avoiding domestic abuse, religion-based and lawful-based. The results of the respondents are as follow; preventive act for early marriage 44 %, mental health, and psychological

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issues 26%, lawful-based 13%, reducing the divorce rate 6%, religion-based 1%, and domestic abuse 1%. Also, 9% of the respondents did not give any reason for their answers. The result is shown in figure 2 as follows:

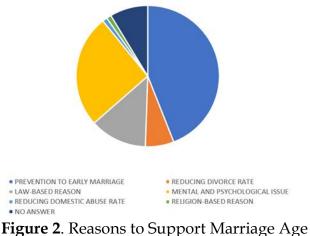
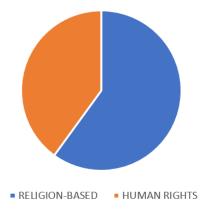
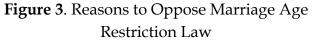


Figure 2. Reasons to Support Marriage Age Restriction Law

3. Regarding implementing the marriage age restriction regulation, those who disagree gave several reasons for their opinion. Among the reasons are religion-based answers and the rights of married people. The results of the respondents are religion factor 60% and human rights factor 40%. The result is shown in figure 3 as follows:





4. Based on the survey results regarding the role of the marriage guardian (family) in

marriage arrangement, most respondents disagree if the marriage guardian makes a marriage arrangement. 83% of respondents disagree with this act, while 9% agree, and 8% do not give their answer. The result is shown in figure 4 as follows:



AGREE DISAGREE NOT ANSWERING

Figure 4. Arranged Marriage by Marriage Guardian (*Wali*)

- 5. Regarding the role of the marriage guardian (family) in marriage arrangement, those who agree have one single reason, respecting the family, especially the parents. 100% of the respondents stated that they agree with marriage arrangement by their guardian or family to respect the family's decision.
- 6. Regarding the role of marriage guardian (family) in marriage arrangement, those who agree gave several reasons for their opinion. Among the reasons are the rights of the brides or the children, religion-based, the lack of harmony after marriage, and not being suitable with today's condition. The results of the respondents are as follow; the rights of the children 86%, household harmony 7%, religion-based 2%, and outdated way 2%. Also, 3% of the respondents did not give any reason for their answers. The result is shown in figure 5 as follows:

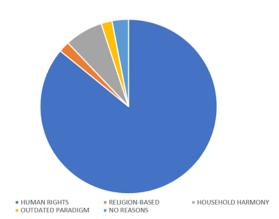


Figure 5. Reasons to Oppose Arranged Marriage by Marriage Guardian (*Wali*)

Discussion

The survey results show empirical proof that most of the generation Z has responded positively regarding the regulation of marriage age restriction. However, early marriage is seen as an act that could trigger numerous adverse effects. Despite it still has legitimation in some communities, which in some cases relies on custom and understanding of religions' law.

This result shows a shift in seeing a phenomenon and trends of the generation Z to see from a broad point of view. What should be highlighted is the reasons that led to 78% of the respondents' agreement with the age restriction rules. At least there are 5 major reasons why generation Z agrees with implementing the regulation: the divorce rate, to avoid domestic abuse, religion-based, and lawful-based. This sphere of the object is seen as a multi-dimensional phenomenon.

Early marriage has the most significant percentage, among other reasons. 44% of the participants who agree with this regulation stated this reason. Early marriage is seen as an act that could benefit the couple less or no benefit. This has also become one of the main issues in many countries, especially in Indonesia, which ranks second in ASEAN for child marriage.

The findings highlighted how the young generation sees the issue of child marriage as a crucial issue. This brings positive vibes, especially generation Z, who could do or arrange into early marriage. With high awareness in seeing the issue, it could be assumed that participants can see the spirit of this regulation.

Following the early marriage as, the biggest concerns in agreeing the regulation are the excess that could happen by child marriage, such as mental health of the couple (26%), higher divorce rate (6%), and domestic abuse (1%). Those are some conditions that easily happen for those who do not understand the value of marriage. The couple must face the shock because the change of status and environment is hardly inevitable. If the situation is not appropriately managed, mental health, divorce, or domestic abuse could happen.

The findings are good news as they led to an understanding that there is a paradigm among the young generation to see the core of marriage. Marriage is not only seen as an act to legalize the status of two individuals, both from religious and law perspectives. Marriage is also seen as an act to bring and explore the potential of two individuals to be the best of them. Therefore, marriage should not bring harm both physically and mentally, especially to those who are underage.

Among the participants, there is also an understanding of seeing the age restriction for marriage from a religious perspective. Despite the amount is small, only 1%, the reason given is believed to be prominent. At least two points of view could be assumed regarding this finding. Firstly, the age restriction can also be seen as how religion is not contradicted by positive law. Secondly, religion's law should stick to its principles, giving its believers protection and peace, which in Islam is commonly known as maqashid asy-syariah (the purposes of the Syariah).

Some responses could be classified as seeing the regulation as the way government manages the country appropriately. The answer is common in form by stating that the regulation is a lawful act (13%) or does not give any reason (9%). However, this 26% of respondents still responded positively regarding the regulation.

Although the regulation has been implemented, some participants disagree with the law. They make up 17% of the total participants who answered this question. There are two main reasons these participants still disagree: the human rights and religion-based answers. Although the number of these two reasons is almost similar, those who based their opinion on human rights is 40%, and the religion-based reason is 60%.

The number one argumentation uses a religious perspective. This argumentation is based on the construct that the concept of marriage in religion does not know the term 'age restriction'. If the individual has reached a specific biological condition, aqil baliq, they could be considered ready for marriage. Traditional understanding and customs around them commonly support this concept. Participants also rely on the knowledge of fate which is sometimes stated in "when the time comes, then the time comes (for marriage)". The fated momentum should not be restricted by regulation that is only based on human calculation.

The second reason is that those who see marriage are the individuals' choices. Those individuals have the right to decide when they want to marry. Forbid someone to marry just because of the consideration that the couple could not think the best for themselves is a violation of human rights. These arguments become the base for some participants to stand on their beliefs. This logic still happens in society despite the misconception of religion's teaching and human rights. Even for generation *Z*, who is believed to have more access to education and information, the paradigm is still rooted.

In line with the first research question, the second research question tries to determine how the marriage guardian, especially parents, arranges and decides the marriage for their children. Participants responded in quite a similar way with the first phenomenon in which most of them disagreed. 83% of the respondents state that they disagree if the marriage guardian (wali) arranges the marriage for the children or does the matchmaking. Only 9% of the respondents agreed, while the rest 8% did not give any opinion.

The responses given correlate with the previous questions, which could lead to the assumption that the respondents' second issue is also seen as a contributive factor to early marriage. Both research questions are responded to with more than a third quarter of the total responses. In the second question, those who disagree with the arranged marriage based their answer due to several reasons: human rights, household harmony, religious factors, and outdated paradigm.

Human rights are the top reason of the respondents. Around 86% of the respondents believe that marriage is the right of the children, and they are the ones who should decide first. Of course, parents could give their opinion; however, the kids' point of view should not be ignored and should be put as one of the main factors in marriage. From this answer, it could be seen that generation Z disagrees with an arranged marriage and understands the value of human rights that belong to all human beings, despite their status in the family.

Following the first reason, household harmony stands the second with 7% of the total response. The participants believe that arranged marriage has a higher tendency to create disharmony in the marriage. This factor is crucial for marriage. The purpose of marriage itself is to give the comfortability and peace to the couple. Arranged marriage is seen as giving less proportion for the couple to get to know one another.

The third point is related to the way of thinking and interpretation. The participants believe that arranged marriage is a wrong interpretation of religion (2%) and an outdated way of thinking (2%), which is not suitable for today's situation. Some of the respondents believe that being an obedient kid does not contradict having voices and opinions. Democracy is supported by religion; what is forbidden is an improper way to express an opinion. Arranging a marriage is also seen as an old-fashioned way of thinking and unsuitable for today's situation. The kids now tend to be more educated and have higher access to information. Therefore, they should be involved in every activity related to them, and ideas should not be pushed on them.

On the other hand, some participants agree with arranged marriage. Of the total respondents, 9% of the participants agreed with the notion that a marriage guardian (wali) could set the marriage for their children. Those who agree with this have a similar reason, respecting the parent.

100% of the respondents who agree say that they choose the answer because they must respect their parents. There is a common understanding that being an obedient child could also be expressed by accepting the parents' decisions, including marriage. This point of view should also be highlighted for the parents rather than the children. Parents should know that children put great beliefs in the parents' decisions. Therefore, it should be wise for the parents to give proportion for the children to speak and share opinions.

To be bluntly speaking that the changes of our society will always be followed by the responses of the society towards issues. Generation Z with their open-mind perception could bring hopes regarding the issues of gender, early marriage and human rights. However, this research highlight that our society should also ready to provide all elements necessary for this future generation.

Conclusion

The research found that generation Z has a positive perspective regarding early marriage and human rights. More than a third quarter of the participants agree with the regulation and effort to protect the kids from early marriage and believe they have the right to decide their future. Reasons regarding the phenomenon also show how young people see this issue: (1) Those who agree with age restriction regulation believe the law exists to prevent early marriage, cope with mental health and psychological problems, and reduce the divorce rate and domestic abuse. In contrast, those who agree to stand their argument that marriage is the couple's rights and to marry earlier are supported by the religious rule. (2) Those who disagree with the arranged marriage system believe that marriage is the children's rights to have household harmony and that arranged marriage is outdated. Those who agree with arrange marriage believe it is a way to respect their parent.

Early marriage and the rights of women and children are still and should be explored deeper. Suggestions for the future researcher: (1) To use more variative dimensions and aspects, including demography, specific educational background, social-economic status, and others. (2) Young generation, either generation Z or millennial, is still part of society that could be explored and developed. Understanding their actions and way of thinking are crucial for now and future.

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