

# Analysis of Early Marriage Satisfaction in Muslim Families

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## Abstract

Early marriage is a significant sociocultural phenomenon, especially among Muslims, which is influenced by various religious, economic, and social factors. This study aims to analyze the marital satisfaction of couples who married at a young age. This research was conducted using quantitative methods with a survey approach. The data source was taken using a questionnaire from 32 married couples who married at a young age with the category that the husband was under 25 years old at the time of marriage, while the wife was under 21 years old. All data was then analyzed using SPSS Windows Version 20 software. Overall, the statistical analysis results showed that 32 married couples stated that they were satisfied with their partners while building a household. Marital satisfaction in question is measured through six aspects, namely; aspects of communication, conflict resolution, finances, sexual relations, the role of each husband and wife in the family, and religious life. This means that the six aspects used as instrument items in this research were felt to be satisfactory by all married couple after getting married. The results of this study have at least refuted the assumption that marrying at a young age tends to fail. In other words, age at marriage does not determine success in the household. The success of a marriage is determined if the husband and wife know their respective roles and responsibilities well.

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## INTRODUCTION

Marriage is one of the important stages in a human's life cycle (Rindfuss & VandenHeuvel, 2019). However, if you think about it carefully, wedding trends are like clothes, weddings have fashion trends that continue to change according to changes in social life (Carter & Duncan, 2017; Kwon, 2017). Wedding trends from several decades ago may no longer be used today, for example, parents commonly carried out the wedding trend known as the story of Siti Nurbaya in the past, but now wedding trends like this are rarely found anymore because they are not in line with current developments (Nyfhodora & Soetjningsih, 2021).

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However, a new trend emerged at the end of the 21st century, where, especially among teenagers, there is now a trend of getting married at an early age for the reason of preventing adultery, and there is even a trend of getting married without going through an introduction process or what is commonly known as dating. Research results of Ardhianita & Andayani, (2015); Utomo et al., (2016) found that marriages without the introduction of "dating" were carried out either with a partner of one's own choice or with someone sought by a second party such as a friend, parent, teacher, or even a religious teacher.

In principle, marriage is carried out by humans to fulfill psychological, sexual, material, and spiritual needs (Bilal & Rasool, 2020). Ideally, a marriage offers intimacy, commitment, friendship, affection, sexual satisfaction, companionship, and opportunities for emotional growth as well as a new source of identity and self-confidence (Bhattarai et al., 2022). Although basically, the purpose of marriage is to bring peace and happiness to life for people, not all of these goals and desires are realized according to the expectations of the marriage itself. Quite a few marriages bring new life problems for both partners after marriage.

Based on several previous studies, marriage problems arise due to age maturity, in other words, both partners are still young at the time of marriage. Marriages under 21 years of age are often referred to as young marriages. According to Anwar & Rahmah, (2017) young marriage is a marriage carried out by a couple or one of the partners is still categorized as a teenager under 20 years of age. Couples who marry at a young age are not psychologically and physiologically mature so they are vulnerable to problems (Ardiningrum et al., 2021). The research results of Taufik & Hariko, (2017) found that couples who married young experienced problems in every problem area studied, including aspects of personal circumstances, economics and finances, work, religion, values and norms, and sexual relations.

Another factor that becomes a problem is that couples who marry at a young age sometimes meet during a short acquaintance period, of course, the two individuals do not yet know each other's characters well. According to Lavner et al., (2018), before an individual decides to marry his prospective partner, he should recognize the personality patterns, temperament (character), interests, values, way of life, and course the character of his prospective partner. Regarding character, this aspect is very important to pay attention to because marriage is a long journey, so if the two individuals who are getting married have strong character, they will become strong individuals with the characteristics of being willing to work hard, be independent, be responsible, care for each other. , value. On the other hand, a fragile character will easily lead someone to give up easily, be pessimistic, and even run away from responsibility (Murniyetti et al., 2016; Agusti et al., 2018; Zafirah et al., 2018).

Apart from that, couples who marry at a young age also cannot overcome problems and if this is allowed to continue it will lead to divorce, even too young an age is the main cause of divorce as a result of immaturity in physical and physiological aspects (Lase, 2021). Referring to several data, it was found that the percentage of young marriages in Indonesia is 11.9. Among the factors that encourage young marriages include poverty, education, low monthly income, fleeting feelings of love, elements of compulsion, and pregnancy out of wedlock (Aakhiruddin, 2016; Tyas et al., 2017).

In addition to the factors that influence young marriage and its impact on divorce, it is important to understand how marital satisfaction affects the quality of domestic life (Cantika et al., 2018; Satrianis et al., 2021). Marital satisfaction is an individual's subjective experiences, feelings, and attitudes that will influence the quality of an individual's marriage (Novianty & Aditya, 2020). Meanwhile, according to Tanjung & Ariyadi, (2021), satisfaction can be characterized by pleasant feelings in the marriage. Satisfaction in marriage can create overall happiness in domestic life.

Individuals who have high marital satisfaction are characterized by having a higher level of mental and physical health than couples who are dissatisfied in their marriage (Abreu-Afonso et al., 2022; Margelisch et al., 2017).

Furthermore, Tavakol et al., (2017) see marital satisfaction as satisfaction that includes satisfaction with the whole marriage, satisfaction with specific factors related to personality, communication, conflict resolution, finances, leisure activities, sexual relations, children and parenting, and family and friends. Friends, roles, and religious life. In other words, when a couple cannot achieve satisfaction in their marriage, their marriage tends to become unstable and their ability to overcome and overcome problems becomes low, which can ultimately result in divorce (Bradbury et al., 2001). According to Eekelaar, (2017), marriages carried out at a young age tend to hurt household life. A person's age is directly related to psychological, physiological, psychosocial, and spiritual aspects (Božek et al., 2020). Couples who marry at a young age are not psychologically and physiologically mature so they are vulnerable to problems in the household. Being too young is the main cause of divorce as a result of immaturity in physical and physiological aspects.

If we refer to previous literature, there are several criteria created by experts to measure the success of a marriage. These criteria include (a) the durability of marriage, (b) the happiness of husband and wife, (c) marital satisfaction, (d) sexual adjustment, (e) marital adjustment, and (f) unity of the couple (Widmer, 2016). From several opinions that have been explained previously, according to the author, satisfaction is something that results from an adjustment between what happens and what is expected, or a comparison of the actual relationship with the choice if the relationship is going to end. Both husband and wife can experience dissatisfaction in their marriage even though there is no conflict in the household. But they can also find great satisfaction in bonding with unresolved adjustment problems.

In a psychological context, satisfaction is strongly influenced by the magnitude of the benefits obtained from a relationship with the level of comparison. The comparison here is closely related to perceptions of fairness and high self-confidence (Belmi et al., 2020). According to Minuchin, (2018), satisfaction in marriage is influenced by the couple's expectations for their marriage, namely expectations that are too big, expectations about the values of marriage, unclear expectations, lack of sufficient expectations, and different expectations.

To determine a person's marital satisfaction, aspects are used that will be evaluated by a wife or husband towards their partner and their marriage. The aspects used in this research refer to the theory put forward by Breitenstein et al., (2018), including the social abilities of husband and wife (marriage sociability), marriage companionship, economic affairs, the strength of marriage, relationships with extended family, ideological similarities, marital intimacy, and interaction tactics. These aspects are important indicators in assessing marital satisfaction, but it is also important to note that marital failure can occur when one or more family members feel dissatisfied.

Marital failure comes when one or more family members feel dissatisfied. Obstacles in fulfilling the needs of one or more family members will cause dissatisfaction. In general, married couples will adjust well to their marriage after 3-4 years of marriage. Good adjustment will support increased marital satisfaction, marital satisfaction decreases linearly from the beginning to 30 years of marriage (Lee & McKinnish, 2018). However, according to Onandia-Hinchado et al., (2021) marital satisfaction peaks in the first 5 years of marriage and then declines until the period when children are teenagers or adults. After the children left home, marital satisfaction increased but did not reach the level of the first 5 years of marriage.

**METHODS**

This research was carried out in Indonesia, to complete this study the author employed a quantitative method with a survey approach. Data was collected through questionnaires from 32 married couples who wed at a young age, specifically when the husbands were under 25 years old and the wives were under 21 years old. The collected data was then analyzed using SPSS Windows Version 20 to perform descriptive analysis. According to Han, (2018); Singmann & Kellen, (2019); Brandler & Roman, (2020), descriptive analysis is an effective method for simplifying the presentation of research results in quantitative studies. Engkizar et al., (2018) also highlighted that using SPSS software for descriptive analysis allows researchers to comprehensively describe the overall findings of survey research. This approach facilitates a clear and structured representation of the data, ensuring that the insights drawn from the study are accessible and understandable.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Previously, the author explained that all data in this study was taken using a questionnaire from 32 husband and wife couples who had been categorized as couples who married at a young age. After the author carried out an analysis of the data collected through a questionnaire, a description of the results of the analysis of the level of marital satisfaction of 32 couples who married at a young age was found as shown in table 1 below:

**Table 1. Description of Young Couples Marital Satisfaction Based on the Six Aspects Studied**

Six Aspects of Satisfaction Levels in Young Marriages	Score							
	Ideal	Highest	The lowest	Amount	Average	%	Standard Deviation	Information
Communication	50	50	27	2315	36.17	72.34	4.9	Satisfied
Conflict resolution	35	34	17	1767	27.61	78.89	3.8	Satisfied
Finance	35	35	21	1794	28.03	80.09	3.2	Satisfied
Sexual intercourse	35	35	19	1768	27.63	78.94	3.9	Satisfied
Role in the family	30	30	15	1427	22.70	75.67	3.5	Satisfied
Religious life	25	25	12	1123	17.55	70.20	4.2	Satisfied
Overall	210	204	125	10194	159.28	75.85	17.9	Satisfied

The description of the analysis results in table 1 above as a whole can be understood to mean that, in the six aspects used as instruments for marital satisfaction, 32 couples who married at a young age stated that they were satisfied with their partners while building their domestic life. This statement of satisfaction was accumulated by obtaining an average score of respondents' answers, namely 159.28, and with a total percentage of 75.85%. Furthermore, to make the six aspects of the results of the analysis above more interesting, the author will discuss them in detail as follows.

First namely the communication aspect, the results of the analysis found that 32 couples stated that they were satisfied with their partner with an average score of 36.17 with a total percentage of 72.34%. Referring to the assessment standards that the author used in this research, the average score and percentage in this aspect are in the satisfied category. In other words, these 32 couples were satisfied with the way of communication between the two of them while they were building a household. The aspect of communication is very important in a family, it could even be said that a person cannot do anything without communication. Likewise, in a family,

communication is expected to act as a bond between husband and wife to navigate the household, so a husband or wife must be able to understand each other, and protect and guide each other in correct and good ways of communicating. Communication within a family will also determine the children's personalities, whether they are open, flexible, friendly, or vice versa (Fallahchai et al., 2017).

Referring to the results of this research, good communication aspects have been proven to be able to enable married couple to survive and be happy throughout their married life, even though both of them married when they were still young. In the context of communication science theory, several characteristics can determine effective communication, namely: i) respect, meaning that the attitude, gaze, intonation, greetings, and sentences used by a husband/wife when communicating with their partner must show respect, not insult or put them down. ii) empathy, namely the ability of a husband/wife to place themselves in the situation or conditions faced by their partner so that both of them will understand what their partner is feeling. Both of them will not show joy when their partner is upset or sad. Apart from that, it will also not punish mistakes made due to ignorance. iii) audible, that is, husband/wife communication can be heard or understood well by their partner. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the frequency of sounds and the distance between them (talking face to face); no shouting at each other, focused conversation; not asking for serious conversations when your partner is busy with other matters that cannot be left behind. iv) clarity, namely openness and transparency. Husband and wife must keep suspicions away from their partner. v) humble, namely being humble, husband and wife do not act arrogantly towards their partner (Ardhianita & Andayani, 2015). So, according to the author, the methods as described above can at least be referred to by husband and wife couples in a family.

Second namely the aspect of conflict resolution, the results of the analysis found that 32 couples stated that they were satisfied with the way their partners acted when there was a conflict with an average score of 27.61 and a total percentage of 78.89%. Referring to the assessment standards that the author used in this research, the average score and percentage in this aspect are in the satisfied category. In other words, 32 couples were satisfied with the methods of resolving conflict used by both of them while building a household. Conflict in marriage is common in a household, but no conflict can be resolved if it is resolved in a good way. Currently, there are solutions offered to resolve various conflicts in the household, one of these solutions is with the help of marriage counseling. This means that if a married couple decides to seek counseling assistance as a solution to conflict resolution, this shows a strong desire to maintain a committed marriage relationship (Harahap & Lestari, 2018).

If viewed from marriage counseling, both husbands and wives who are involved in marital conflict sometimes have different perceptions, even in seeing the source of the problem. With the help of marriage counseling, each individual can go through the personal evaluation stages before being brought together in a counseling session. This means that counselors can have the opportunity to evaluate how each views the problem or conflict that occurs. As a result, the counselor gets the right formulation to address the real problem and suggests an appropriate therapy program (Charlot et al., 2022). The decision to seek marriage counseling requires mutual awareness and the intention to restore the relationship. Consequently, for therapy to be successful, each individual must be willing and able to accept the changes in the partner that are needed to achieve a state of mutual acceptance and understanding of each other. Understanding that husbands and wives have individual desires and hopes is an important start to realizing mutual respect (Ripley et al., 2023).

According to the author, a healthy marriage, however, requires mutual honesty, trust, respect, and equality. Marriage counseling aims to facilitate couples to be able

to build communication and the ability to empower each other as a couple. The hope is that in the future the couple will be able to resolve problems that reappear in the marriage. The therapy and methods that married couples get from counseling help each develop mutually constructive interaction patterns. Through communication and attitudes that mutually appreciate each other, husband and wife can grow into a stronger intimacy and a healthier marriage.

Third namely the financial aspect, the results of the analysis showed that 32 couples stated that they were satisfied with their partner's income with an average score of 28.03 and a total percentage of 80.09%. Referring to the assessment standards that the author used in this research, the average score and percentage in this aspect are in the satisfied category. This means that 32 married couple feel satisfied with their partner's financial aspects. The financial aspect is one of the problems that cannot be separated from a household. According to the research results of Karney & Bradbury, (2020), differences in husband and wife's income levels do not pose a threat to a person's marital satisfaction. However, dual income in a family can have a positive effect on marital satisfaction, for both husband and wife. The positive effect of couples who both work occurs when partners show mutual support, for example by listening to complaints, being sensitive to their partner's point of view, and being able to express approval of their partner's qualities.

Fourth namely the aspect of sexual relations, the results of the analysis found that 32 married couple stated that they were sexually satisfied with their partners with an average score of 27.63 and a total percentage of 78.94%. Referring to the assessment standards that the author used in this research, the average score and percentage in this aspect are in the satisfied category. This means that 32 married couple feel satisfied with their partners in terms of sexual relations while building a household. One of the problems that often arises and is often a problem for married couples is sexual problems. Sexual relations are a form of intimacy in a marital relationship, in other words, the more a couple enjoys their sexual relations, and the happier their marriage will be (Angin & Yeniretnowati, 2021). Experts even state that sexual relations in marriage occupy the first position of all aspects of the household. In addition, there must be a convincing relationship between sexual communication and marital satisfaction. Because good communication is the most important element in intimate relationships, this means that effective sexual communication is important for the success of a marriage (Frederick et al., 2017).

Regarding aspects of sexual relations in the household, it turns out that quite a few married couples are less aware that sexual activity in marriage is very important for achieving marital satisfaction (Reczek, 2020). Because enjoyable sexual activities will have a positive impact on marital satisfaction. It is hoped that sexual communication regarding what the partner wants can always be maintained so that the marriage is happy and marital satisfaction is obtained, but in reality, people stay away from discussing sex for various reasons, including embarrassment, feeling too personal, the mistaken opinion that the partner should already know what will be pleasurable, and not feeling comfortable guiding your partner for fear of hurting their feelings (Mallory et al., 2019; Schlagintweit et al., 2016). In essence, various problems in a household that surround marriage can still be resolved by each partner, if only sexual harmony can be built in the life of husband and wife. Quarrels in husband and wife relationships can be caused by less than harmonious sexual relations, a husband or wife may look for an outlet outside. Although it is not the only factor that determines marital happiness, the role of sex cannot be ignored.

Fifth namely the aspect of roles in the family, the results of the analysis found that 32 couples stated that they were satisfied with the roles played by both husband and wife in the household with an average score of 22.70 and a total percentage of 75.67%. Referring to the assessment standards that the author used in this research,

the average score and percentage in this aspect are in the satisfied category. In other words, 32 married couple felt satisfied with aspects of their roles in the family while building a household. Maintaining family harmony is certainly not an easy job, it requires the involvement of husband and wife. The husband's role is not just that of provider (breadwinner) and the role of the wife as housekeeper (household manager) as well as at the same time as housewife, but to maintain family integrity, these roles can be exchanged and flexibility in playing gender roles for both is required (Frederick et al., 2017). Sometimes married couples can play these roles well so that their household can run harmoniously and be saved from the threat of divorce, but in the other half of the family, the roles they play are more or less dysfunctional or do not reach the level of ability to realize Harmonious family standards have an impact on divorce.

As a husband or wife, both can play balanced roles, including First, sharing feelings of love and understanding the role, function, and position of husband and wife in social and professional life, providing mutual support for access, sharing roles in certain contexts and act out roles together in certain contexts as well. The regulation of roles based on gender is carried out based on a common vision and commitment the other day (let each other go) and be flexible so that they can adapt to changes. Second, positioning the wife as a mother, friend, and lover to her husband. Likewise, the husband is a father, friend, and lover, both of whom need attention, affection, protection, motivation, and suggestions and both have the responsibility to empower each other in social, spiritual, and intellectual life. The role of husband and wife in this context can develop feelings of *mawaddah*, *rahmah*, and *sakinah* because there are efforts to position both of them to obtain their basic rights properly. Third, become friends for discussion, and deliberation and complement each other in the decision-making process.

The role of decision-making role is quite urgent and heavy if it is only continuously assigned to one husband and wife so that neither husband nor wife can blame the other if negative effects occur from the decision. Fourth, In line with changes in situations and conditions that cause wives to also earn a living, the formal obligation to earn a living is the husband's, while earning a living for the wife is a moral and social responsibility, not because of an emergency but changes in social construction that require patterns of male and female participation, equally in various sectors of life. Therefore, for husband and wife relations to remain harmonious, changes are needed mainly set about income and also the image that the husband is the breadwinner while the wife spends it. Livelihood is wealth that God entrusts to a family with the means of working. Because the source of income may come from the husband, it can also come from the wife, which is basically for mutual welfare. If the wife works and earns more than her husband, the husband doesn't need to worry and be jealous or even feel oppressed, nor does the wife need to change her character as an oppressor. It is best to remain polite, respect each other in family life, and not harm the marital commitments that are fostered together (Gottman & Gottman, 2017; Putri & Lestari, 2015).

Sixth namely aspects of religious life, the results of the analysis found that 32 couples stated that they were satisfied with their partners, with an average score of 17.55 and a total percentage of 70.20%. Referring to the assessment standards that the author used in this research, the average score and percentage in this aspect are in the satisfied category. In other words, 32 couples stated that they were satisfied with aspects of religious life between them while building a household. Religion in individual life functions as a value system that contains certain norms (Sagiv et al., 2017). In general, these norms become a frame of reference for behaving and behaving in line with the religious beliefs one adheres to. As a value system, religion has a special meaning in an individual's life and is maintained as a special form.

Various factors encourage someone to be religious, according to Sagiv et al., (2017) six main factors cause someone to be religious. First, in life, humans face many life problems, so religious people feel comfortable with the presence of religion in their lives. Second, humans also experience uncertainty and indeterminacy, and cannot find anything that is truly reliable. With religion, humans hope to find a figure they can rely on, in the context of religious knowledge, they are usually known as their God. Third, humans also want to get answers to fundamental questions, for example, the origin of humans, the purpose of life, and what happens after death. With religion, humans hope to gain clarity on questions related to the mysteries of life. Fourth, religious people are also able to implement, preserve, and develop good life practices. Fifth, humans have religion to gain strength, encouragement, and stability in implementing life values. Sixth, humans in their lives also have a longing for God.

In this way, people adhere to religion because they want to obtain the satisfaction of their deepest desire, namely to find God themselves. This last reason shows that humans are essentially spiritual creatures because in their souls there is a longing for God. In connection with the various main factors that cause a person to be religious, faith also consists of two types, namely extrinsic faith and intrinsic faith. According to Carson, (2017), faith means firm belief in God and relying on God as a source of life. Meanwhile, extrinsic faith can be understood as faith for the sake of the personal interests concerned. Education in the family continues throughout life, through a process of interaction and socialization within the family itself. The essence of education is implied in the integrity of the family, both in communication between family members, in the daily behavior of parents and other family members as well as in other things that occur within the family, all of which are an educational process for children. Therefore, parents must always impart these religious values to the family.

According to the author, as the first educational environment, the family plays a very large role in shaping a child's personality pattern. Therefore, parents as those responsible for family life must provide education and teaching to their children by instilling religious teachings and morals. In the end, marriage is a general sunnatullah and applies to all of His creatures, including humans, animals, and plants. Marriage is a path chosen by God so that His creatures reproduce and preserve their lives. In the Islamic context, marriage is human nature so a Muslim can carry the greatest mandate of responsibility within himself towards the person who is most entitled to education and care. Marriage has the greatest benefits for other social interests. Social interests are maintaining the continuity of the human species, preserving offspring, safeguarding the safety of society from all kinds of diseases that can endanger human life, and maintaining peace of mind.

Marital satisfaction in family life is important for every human being because from the family an individual forms himself and from the family, the individual learns to interact with the external environment (Carson, 2017). There is a need to increase awareness about the importance of religion in family life because, for young couples, this can be done through providing guidance and counseling services to couples who marry young. Married couples who have high religiosity tend to live their lives based on the rules outlined by Allah SWT. He resolved his domestic life which was full of challenges with objectivity and grace based on the religious considerations he applied in his daily life. This is due to the belief that religion must underlie and color every step of one's life so that it has a positive influence on one's behavior and ultimately a satisfying marriage will be created (Wilcox & Wolfinger, 2016; Leavitt et al., 2024).



## CONCLUSION

This research successfully identified and analyzed the level of marital satisfaction among couples who married at a young age. The analysis was based on six key aspects: communication, conflict resolution, finances, sexual relations, roles within the family, and religious life. The results indicated that, overall, these young couples generally fall into the satisfied category in terms of their marital satisfaction. This suggests that despite the inherent challenges associated with marrying at a young age, such as potential immaturity and financial instability, these couples are able to maintain a relatively high level of satisfaction across various dimensions of their marital life. Effective communication and conflict resolution skills, in particular, seem to play a crucial role in fostering this satisfaction. Additionally, a shared approach to financial management and religious practices contributes to a stable and fulfilling marital relationship. Therefore, while young age can present certain obstacles, it does not preclude the possibility of a happy and satisfying marriage, as demonstrated by the couples in this study.

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