



## Dynamics of Subjective Well-being in Early Marriage: Phenomenological Review on Madurese Women

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### Abstract

The study aims to theoretically explain the dynamics of subjective well-being in the early marriage of Madurese women. This study used a qualitative research method with an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach. The data collection used the semi-structured interview with the interview guide containing questions that reflect the *ephocē*. The participants in this study were 9 Madurese women who lived in Bangkalan Regency, Sampang Regency, Pamekasan Regency, and Sumenep Regency. There were important points that became the findings of this study, including (a) Madurese women who married early could achieve subjective well-being proven with statements that indicated life satisfaction in their marriage and could feel positive emotions more often than negative emotions, and (b) The achievement of subjective well-being of Madurese women who married early could not be separated from their husband's acceptance and support.

## INTRODUCTION

Early marriage is a worldwide issue of concern. A number of data show that Indonesia is one of the countries that has a fairly high rate of early marriage in the world. In 2011, it was known that early marriage in Indonesia was ranked 37<sup>th</sup> out of 73 countries (Ministry of Health, 2015), while in Southeast Asia, Indonesia was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> after Cambodia (Kompas, 2017; Rachmad, 2017; Rubaidah, 2016). In 2012, out of 2 million marriages, there were 34.5% included in early marriage (Sudarto, 2014). In East Java Province based on (Statistics, 2016) in 2015 shows that early marriage is still quite high in East Java. In 2021, in East Java, based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (2022), the proportion of women aged 20-24 years who are married or cohabiting before the age of 18 years by province (percent) is 10.44% down from the previous year which reached 10.67. However, this data still shows a high percentage of early marriages in East Java.

According to the Head of the Youth Section of the National Family Planning Coordinating Board (BKKBN) of East Java Province, in East Java, early marriage occurred in Madura and evenly in four districts (Sakdiyah & Ningsih, 2013; Sulaiman,

2012). There are several factors why the rate of early marriage in Madura is still quite high. First, there is the tradition of arranged marriage (Fawaid & Hadi, 2015; Hairi, 2009; Karisyati & Hadi, 2017; Mardhatillah, 2014; Munawara, Yasak, & Dewi, 2015; Ningsih & Handoyo, 2015; Nuri, 2016; Rahayu & Bawono, 2017; Rohmah, 2016; Sa 'dan, 2015; Sadik, 2014; Sakdiyah & Ningsih, 2013; Sidiq, 2003). Second, the belief of *sangkal* is the belief that no young man will marry a woman for a long time if the woman rejects the proposal of the man who proposed (Arroisi & Quraysh, 2015; Bahrudin, 2016; Muthmainnah, 2018).

Third, a tradition that is believed to form a *sakinah* family, namely the tradition of *ngabulâ* before marriage. According to Mu 'in & Hefni (2016), this tradition is carried out by the bride-to-be in the *Kiai* residence for a week. In the tradition of *ngabulâ*, the bride-to-be gets knowledge related to the formation of the *sakinah* family. Fourth, there is a tradition of *ngalak tumpangan*, which is returning donations that both parents give to relatives or neighbors by making their children or siblings who are of child-age brides or to be married (Hidayati, 2017). The fifth is the economy and education factors (Sakdiyah & Ningsih, 2013; Yunitasari, Pradanie, & Susilawati, 2016). The sixth is the factor of the strong influence of Islam (Fawaid & Hadi, 2015; Rachmad, 2017) and the culture of the Madurese community (Rachmad, 2017; Sakdiyah & Ningsih, 2013).

Based on a number of these data, the six factors that corroborate the high rate of early marriage in Madura increasingly reveal that the phenomena of early marriages in Madurese have their own uniqueness, especially if the phenomena are associated with the culture and beliefs of its community. This gives rise to an understanding of why to date, addressing the issue of early marriage in Madura has not been easy; this is because Madura society considers marriage at a young age (*ngodheh* marriage) as a tradition inherent in Madura society that must be maintained and preserved because it is an ancestral heritage (Fawaid & Hadi, 2015; Jannah, 2011).

Apart from the factors that influence the occurrence of early marriage in Madura, literature mentions that early marriage can cause problems such as quarrels, clashes between husband and wife (Aryanto, 2017; Maemunah, 2008), disharmony, lack of awareness of being responsible in married life (Jannah, 2011), disconnection of access to education (Eriani, 2015; Sakdiyah & Ningsih, 2013), its impact on reproductive health (Hanum, 2015; Salmah, 2016), economic, psychological problems, domestic violence until divorce (Octaviani & Nurwati, 2020; Setyawan & Herdiana, 2016) so that adolescents are expected to delay marriage from early marriage (Dariyo, Hadiati, & Rahaditya, 2020).

Various problems and negative impacts of early marriage as described above, it turns out that it does not always occur to Madurese women who are married early (Bawono & Suryanto, 2019; Bawono, Suminar, & Hendriani, 2019; Hairi, 2009; Setyawan & Herdiana, 2016; Zumriyah, 2015). This phenomenon that is apparent in Madura is what makes it interesting to study. This is because other research data shows

that Madurese women who are married early can also achieve relatively good happiness, harmony, and quality of life in their early marriage (Setyawan & Herdiana, 2016; Zumriyah, 2015).

Revealing how this relatively good happiness, harmony, and quality of life can be achieved by individuals who experience early marriage directly will open up opportunities for information and understanding of the psychological development of individuals amid certain social symptoms in society. The experience of Madurese women who get married early in achieving relatively good happiness, harmony, and quality of life is expected to be an important indication of how in not ideal marriage conditions, they can strive for this condition to be maintained positively so that individuals can minimize problems in their early marriage so that it does not lead to divorce.

Conceptually, satisfaction, positive affectivity, and negative affectivity are terms in the subjective well-being component. According to Diener (1984), subjective well-being includes three components, namely life satisfaction which is characterized by satisfaction with the life experienced, the number of positive affectivity, and the lack of negative affectivity felt by individuals. Individuals are said to have high subjective well-being if they are personally satisfied with their life. And in carrying out their daily roles, they are often surrounded by positive feelings in their daily lives and rarely negative feelings in their lives.

Preliminary studies conducted by researchers on Madurese women also found that Madurese women who were married early could feel positive affectivity in the form of pleasure and comfort with their partners. Nevertheless, they still feel negative affectivity in their marriage, such as anger and resentment toward their partner (Bawono et al., 2019).

Up until this exposure, researchers caught two contradictory things. On the one hand, early marriage has been stated in various literature that it can have various negative impacts on individuals who do it (Afriani, 2016; Minarni, Andayani, 2014; Sangaji, 2017). However, on the other hand, data on the people who marry early, especially in Madura, are not always like that (Bawono & Suryanto, 2019; Bawono et al., 2019; Hairi, 2009; Setyawan & Herdiana, 2016; Zumriyah, 2015). This is characterized by the presence of individuals who can show subjective well-being in their marriage. Individuals are satisfied with their lives and tend to be overwhelmed by positive feelings in their daily lives.

Regarding the above description, the question then arises concerning how some Madurese women who are married early can achieve subjective well-being in their early marriage. Even though their age at marriage is not ideal as stipulated by the National Family Planning Coordinating Board (Kartika, Darwin, 2016). The results of previous studies have not been able to explain the achievement of subjective well-being of Madurese women who are married early (Fatayati, 2015; Hairi, 2009; Zumriyah, 2015). Based on this description, the research questions include the following what is the description of the subjective well-being of Madurese women who marry early and What

are the dynamics of the subjective well-being of Madurese ethnic women in their early marriage.

## **METHOD**

This research used the qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach with the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) which was used to assist researchers in exploring the meaning of the specific experiences of individuals and people involved in their experiences in depth. IPA seeks to understand "what" from the participants' points of view to be able to stand in their position. "Understanding" has two meanings, namely, understanding-interpretating in the sense of identifying or empathizing and trying to interpret. IPA emphasizes the formation of meaning from both the participants' and researchers' sides so that cognition becomes the central analysis. This means that there is an interesting theoretical alliance with the cognitive paradigm often used in contemporary psychology that discusses mental processes (Hujaroh, 2010).

This research took place in four districts in Madura, including Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep. There were 9 participants involved in this study, with characteristics including (1) Madurese women, (2) Aged 18 years and under when getting married, and (3) Willing to be involved in research.

The data collection used was semi-structured interviews. If the participants in giving the answers were considered still lacking, the researchers could use the techniques of prompting and probing. Prompting means proposing a prompt which is a question intended to encourage participants to tell more about their experiences, while probing means proposing a probe which is a question intended to ask for further clarification about certain terms or expressions that are unclear or still vague (Kahija, 2017).

The data analysis technique in this study used IPA. The steps are as follows (Kahija, 2017; Langdridge, 2007; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009): (1) Reading and re-reading; (2) Initial noting; (3) Developing emergent themes; (4) Compiling superordinate themes; (5) Proceeding to the next case; (6) Finding intercourse patterns; and (7) Arranging all superordinate themes.

Credibility is the most chosen term to replace the concept of validity, intended to summarize the discussion concerning the quality of qualitative research (Poerwandari, 2011). Some activities carried out by researchers to obtain a high level of credibility include trying to confirm and clarify the data obtained with participants or member checks (returning to participants after conducting data analysis).

The term reliability in qualitative research is known as dependability. According to Brink (in Afifyanti, 2008), there are three types of tests that can be done to assess the dependability of qualitative research data, namely: stability, consistency, and equivalence. Stability was tested when asking a variety of identical questions from a participant at different times resulting in consistent or the same answers. Consistency was tested when the interview list used by the researchers to interview participants resulted in

an integrated participant answer in accordance with the questions or topics given. Finally, equivalence was tested with the use of alternative forms of questions that have similar meanings in one single interview and produce the same data.

## RESULTS

Based on the data analysis that has been done in this study, twelve superordinate themes with two emergent themes emerged. In summary, both the emergent themes and the twelve superordinate themes can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Emergent and superordinate themes

No	Emergent Themes	Superordinate Theme
1	Description of subjective well-being	Satisfaction Dissatisfaction Happiness Unhappiness Positive affect Negative affect
2	Personal dynamics of subjective well-being	Married because of arranged marriage Married of her own free will Conflict in marriage Conflict management in marriage Acceptance of the husband Husband support

### ***Description of Subjective Well-being***

Madurese women who were married early were described as able to achieve subjective well-being through statements that showed satisfaction in their marriage, such as being satisfied and happy. In this study, the form of satisfaction from participants can be known through statements such as (a) Economically established and (b) Psychologically mature. The benchmark of economically established is how participants can be materially fulfilled and can manage it, while psychologically mature can be known through how they keep themselves from slander and can maintain politeness. In addition to achieving satisfaction in their marriage, the participants were also described as being able to feel positive affectivity more dominant than negative affectivity. This positive affectivity appeared in statements such as: feeling happy, comfortable, likeable, peaceful, and patient.

The form of this positive affect is the expression of pleasure shown by In, such as (a) Comfortable if the husband and wife have the same opinion; (b) Happy if they do not quarrel, are always together, and are not distant from the husband; (c) Husband understands the wife's situation; and (d) Happy to be surprised and happy if hanging out with her husband.

Furthermore, the positive affectivity that can be seen from SY was that she felt comfortable with her husband. ZN, the positive forms of affectivity include: (a) A good husband that can make the wife feel happy; (b) The wife and husband rarely quarrel and

understand each other; (c) Happy if she is sick and her husband is treating for her and doing household tasks, and (d) Comfortable and satisfied when a husband gives money for shopping when going to work. While EF described positive affect including: (a) Living a marriage patiently, not with emotions, and (b) Feeling comfortable) when accompanying the husband to sleep.

Another description of positive affectivity was stated by Za who said that she felt happy to marry with the wanted person and could avoid slander. However, in contrast to Za, the positive affectivity experienced by Yu include (a) already having affection for the husband, (b) being grateful when there is still fortune every day, and (c) the husband is not angry and plays with the child.

Furthermore, the description of positive affectivity from Pu is comfortable because the husband obeyed her will, and the husband was willing to stay with her mother in Sampit, even though it only lasted for six months. Other things happened with Nu, who said that her positive affectivity was feeling happy to have a family. Nu, who was no longer living in the same house with her parents, was happy to live with her new family consisting of her husband, children, parents-in-law, and sister-in-law.

Conversely, Madurese women who were married early were described as unable to achieve subjective well-being through statements that showed dissatisfaction in their marriage, including (a) Lack of money for shopping. ZN said that the dissatisfaction was in the form of a lack of money for shopping from the husband. However, ZN realized that the lack of money for shopping she received could be because his husband needed more money, such as to buy gasoline, food, or cigarettes. As a wife, ZN felt she had to understand her husband's financial condition; (b) The husband does not understand the wife's wishes. In addition to the dissatisfaction in the form of lack of money for shopping, the dissatisfaction felt by the participant was the husband's lack of understanding of the wife's wishes. According to Za, she feels dissatisfied when she is away from her parents. Za also said she was unsatisfied because her husband did not understand what she wanted, and vice versa.

Based on the description above, the dissatisfaction expressed by participants was not only in terms of material (money for shopping) but also psychological (willingness and ability to understand the wife). They were also described to feel more dominant negative affects than positive affects, including negative feelings as shown in In as follows: (a) She pity parents if they cannot stay together with her husband; (b) Unhappy if the husband plays mobile phone and continues to silence her; (c) Fear of their husbands cheating, and (d) Feeling regret seeing her unmarried friends.

Negative affectivity in the form of pity was also conveyed by SY, who said, "It is a pity, sir, if we continue to fight, then our fortune will decrease. our child is old and wants to go to school" (SY, lines 108-110, interview-2). While ZN expressed negative affectivity in the form of (a) Being sad if her husband does not obey her desire, (b) Being unhappy if her husband does not help her, (c) Feeling annoyed because when she is tired

but her husband does not help, and (d) Feeling annoyed when her husband comes home from work then he is angry.

Furthermore, EF said that the negative affectivity she felt was in the form of wanting to get angry because she asked for her husband's money, but the husband did not give it. While NS suggested that the negative affectivity she felt was in the following forms: (a) Feeling regret but she still lives her marriage; (b) Feeling regret because she was not being able to study at college; (c) Feeling hard facing her marriage; (d) Stressed with a husband who did not allow her to go anywhere; and (e) No feeling of pleasure at all with her marriage.

Another is Yu, who has negative affectivity such as: (a) Feeling sad because the husband was not her own choice, (b) Feeling sorry if the husband is sick, and (c) Feeling regret for choosing to marry instead of continuing school.

"Yes, I am sad because he is not my own choice, the recognition is still not too long, I am still shy" (Yu, lines 124-126). "Yes, I pity if he is sick. I have pity. If at first, it was common, like, 'foreigners'" (Yu, lines 148-150). "Yes, I am resentful because I don't continue my study, right? I am still young... not going to school, and choosing marriage. People say Madura is a *kastah*. Know the language? What language it is..." (Yu, lines 187-191).

The form of negative affectivity from Pu is described as follows: (a) Uncomfortable after going home from Sampit because her husband maltreated her; and (b) Upset because her husband only gave fifty thousand rupiahs to shop. More clearly, the description of subjective well-being in the early marriage of Madurese women can be summarized in the following table:

Table 2. Subjective well-being in the early marriage of Madurese women

No	Participants	Description
1	In	Achieving subjective well-being in her early marriage
2	SY	Achieving subjective well-being in her early marriage
3	Yu	Achieving subjective well-being in her early marriage
4	Pu	Not Achieving subjective well-being in her early marriage
5	Nu	Achieving subjective well-being in her early marriage
6	NS	Not Achieving subjective well-being in her early marriage
7	ZN	Achieving subjective well-being in her early marriage
8	EF	Achieving subjective well-being in her early marriage
9	Za	Achieving subjective well-being in her early marriage

### Personal dynamics of subjective well-being

After deciding to get married, both through the process of arranged marriage (*pajhudan*) and at their own desire, in living their marriage, Madurese women are faced with conflict and how to manage the conflict so that they can still achieve their subjective well-being. In addition, the acceptance and support provided by the husband during her marriage can also be said to be a supporting factor in achieving subjective well-being.

"Yes, perhaps as time goes by. I can accept him for who he is. Even though I didn't know him at first. Well, what would be ... [unclear word spoken] after being lived, we must be happy" (ZN, lines 96-99). "Well... one month, two months maybe..." (ZN, line 102). "The process was started from engagement... what... not, not until one month. I mean, Sir, I can be happy with him after marriage" (ZN, lines 106-109). "Yes, I can accept. Oh, it turns out that the guy is like, like this. He is good, actually. That is, it... Why, from the beginning, it was .... I mean.... I disliked him. And, actually, this person is good. He can make me happy" (ZN, lines 111-115).

The seven participants showed subjective well-being in their marriage. This could be seen through how Madurese women who are married early can evaluate their lives, both the cognitive and affective evaluation. Madurese women who are married early are described as having high subjective well-being if they rate their life satisfaction to be high and feel positive affectivity more often than negative affectivity. Conversely, two Madurese women were known to have low subjective well-being. This is indicated by low life satisfaction and feeling negative affectivity more often than positive affectivity. The dynamics of subjective well-being in the early marriage of Madurese women can be described in the following chart:

### The experience of Madurese women in early marriage

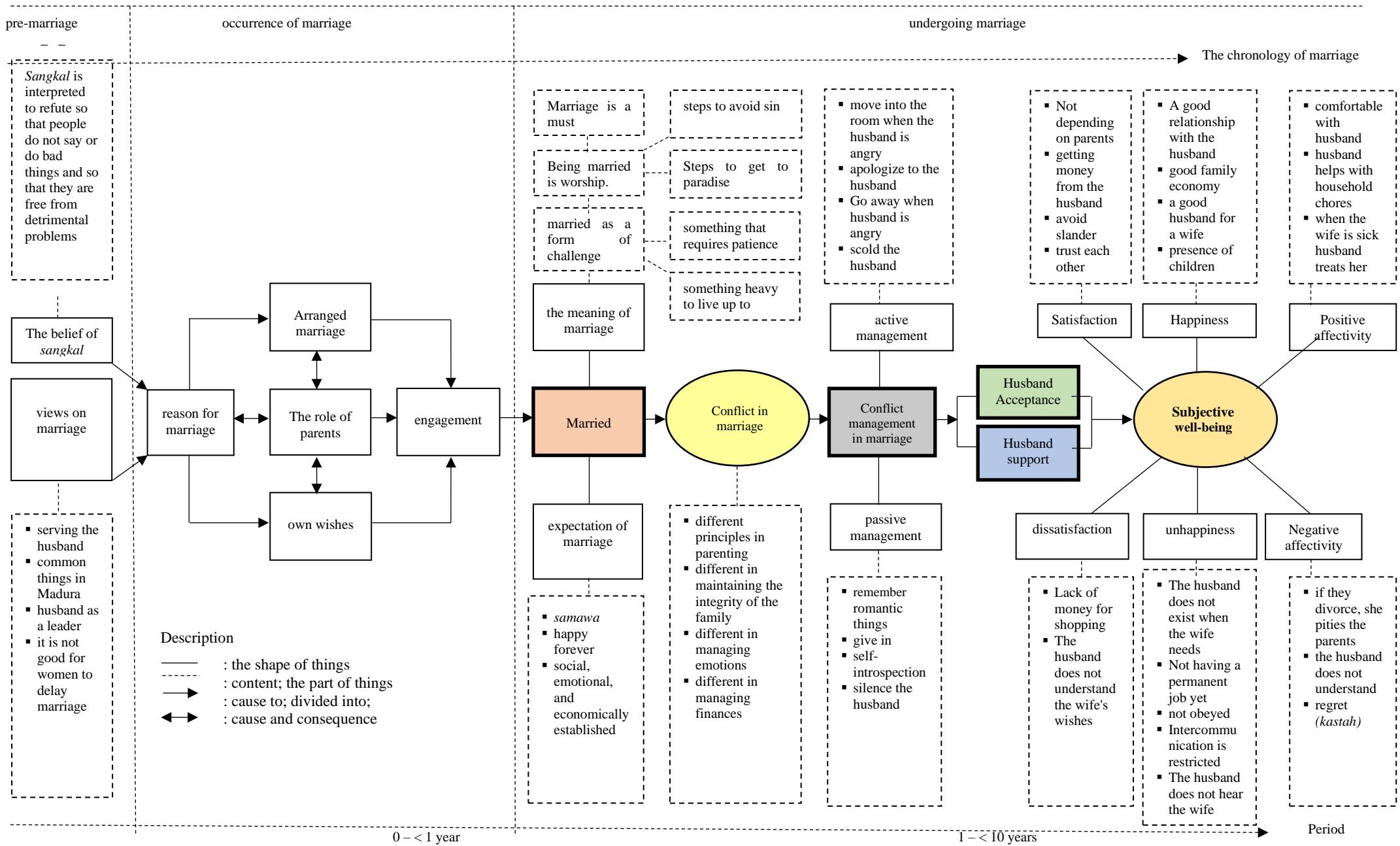


Figure 1. Madurese Women's Personal Dynamics of Early Marriage in Achieving Subjective Well-being

Although the seven participants were able to achieve their subjective well-being, the other two participants were not able to achieve their subjective well-being. This was manifested in negative affectivity, which was more dominant than positive affectivity. Here is the excerpt from the interview:

“Not arranged marriage. At first, I thought about how I could be like that... even though the others were still studying, having fun at school, and still studying in college. Am I right, Sir? Well, if now, I also want to be like others still studying school... having fun with the same friends, that's it. But whatever will be, will be, it has been arranged so Sir” (NS, lines 58-65). “I do not understand how that is after having a marital relationship. My husband ... doesn't permit me to go everywhere, what is it... super... eh protective... yeah, what is it, Sir. I think after getting married, I can come out with friends and can still go to college too. Uh, my husband is different from others, not as I expected” (NS, lines 69-77). “If Now.... there is a regret sir, but let's just live it, like that Sir ” (NS, lines 80-82). “If I am now... there is regret Sir, but let's just live it, yes, like that Sir” (NS, lines 84-90).

## DISCUSSION

The culture and characteristics of the Madurese have been talked about a lot, but one almost forgotten is the Madurese's well-being (Herawati, 2015). Nowadays, well-being is an important topic to be concerned because a mentally healthy person is someone who is described as having high well-being in his life (Bawono, 2018); and a person who is said to be prosperous, as stated by World Health Organization (WHO) is someone who can manage reasonable life stress, to work productively and produce, and to play a role in his community (WHO in (Maharani, 2018).

In this study, the researchers focused on the data exploration in the field that revealed subjective well-being in Madurese women who were married early, where the results of this study showed the conformity of the subjective well-being component as stated by Diener (1984), namely the cognitive component (life satisfaction) and the affective component (happiness) which was divided into positive affectivity and negative affectivity. The results of this study also support previous studies that found a relationship between subjective well-being and marriage (Bawono, 2017; Botha & Booysen in Addai, Opoku-Agyeman, & Amanfu, 2015), including in early marriage (Indriastuti, 2017; Miswiyawati, 2017).

This finding is in line with the findings from Sudarto (2014), which state that women's emotions become more positive after marriage. These findings differ from the results of previous studies, which mentioned that women who marry early feel unhappy. This can be caused because, in previous studies, it was said that marriage was carried out by parental coercion, not because of the woman's desire. In contrast to marriage in the participants of this study, although there were arranged marriages, they began to feel love and affection for their partners over time.

A person is described as having high subjective well-being when they judge their life satisfaction to be high and feel positive affectivity more often than negative affectivity (Arbiyah, Nurwianti, & Oriza, 2008; Mothamaha, 2007; Nayana, 2013). In this study, the

form of satisfaction from participants can be known through statements such as economically established and psychologically mature. They said the economy was established from the material that was fulfilled and could manage the material. While concerning psychologically mature, it could be seen through how they could keep themselves from slander and could maintain politeness.

Conversely, the dissatisfaction experienced by other participants included a lack of money for shopping from husbands and husbands who were considered not to understand what the wife wanted. The dissatisfaction that often arises is susceptible to triggering conflict in their marriage. This conflict will intensify while these women also live with their parents-in-law. This became interesting because of nine participants; five others lived with parents-in-law. Whereas according to Sa 'dan (2016), after marriage, men are considered guests or immigrants by female families because the marriage system in Madura adheres to a matrilocal pattern, meaning that married women will remain in their parent's house or yard, while married men will move to their wife's house or yard or their parents-in-law.

Regardless of the post-marital residence pattern as described above, according to Sudarto (2014), women who live in their parents-in-law's house must make great adjustments and be able to better understand the situation of their in-laws. This is because parents-in-law usually tend to participate in their child's family, so it can bring up conflicts with the daughter-in-law. The conflict usually occurs between the daughter and mother-in-law (Sulistiyawati & Ariyani, 2018). The conflict between the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law is often a misunderstanding, which is then overreacted. In addition, the mother-in-law feels that she still has a stake in her son, and the lack of trust in the daughter-in-law to take care of her son is also one of the causes of conflict between the daughter and mother-in-law (Suciati, 2015).

In this study, in addition to the satisfaction and dissatisfaction experienced by the participants, happiness and unhappiness were also felt by the participants. The subjective well-being that is not achieved in both Madurese women can be caused by the history of attachment between individuals and their partners. Securely attached individuals will tend to have confidence in expressing their needs and being responsive to their partners' needs (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). However, individuals who are not securely attached will tend to develop emotional reactions that are self-focused (only oriented towards themselves) and do not pay attention to their partner's emotional needs (Latifa, 2015).

Both participants (NS and Pu) came from a broken home family. NS's parents divorced when NS was a child. After her parents divorced, her father remarried, and his whereabouts were unknown, while her mother did not remarry and worked in Bali. NS and her sister then lived with their grandparents in Pamekasan, Madura. Another participant was Pu; since she was a child, she did not live with their parents. Even since she was a baby, Pu was cared for and lived with one of the families of her parents.

The condition of NS and Pu is different from the other seven participants. Of the other seven participants, there was only one participant whose parents divorced as NS and Pu. She was Yu, who also lived in one village with Pu. Yu's parents, after separating, then settled in Sampit, Central Kalimantan, with their respective families while Yu was cared for and raised by her grandparents in Sampang, Madura.

Yu could achieve subjective well-being as the other six participants (In, SY, ZN, EF, Za, and Nu) because Yu has been able to accept her marriage and has felt affection for her husband. This condition was also supported by the presence of children among them. Yu was delighted when she saw her child and her husband could play together. Yu's husband also fulfilled the shopping needs of the family. This is different from NS and Pu, who also come from a broken home family like Yu. Still, their husbands do not provide support to them, so negative affectivity tends to be more dominant perceived by them compared to positive affectivity. NS and Pu underwent a process in their marriage to develop an insecure attachment.

## CONCLUSION

This study revealed the dynamics of subjective well-being in the early marriage of Madurese women. First, Madurese women's early marriage experience could be seen through how they began their marriage journey with the belief in *sangkal* which they believed. They also have a view on marriage that early marriage is common in Madura, including it is not good for a woman to delay her marriage, the husband is a leader for the wife, and the wife must serve the husband. Second, Madurese women who were married early were described as able to achieve subjective well-being through statements that showed satisfaction in their marriage, such as being satisfied and happy. In addition, they could feel positive affectivity more dominant than negative affectivity. Also, this study revealed Madurese personal dynamics of early marriage regarding subjective well-being. After deciding to marry, in their marriage, Madurese women were faced with conflict and how to manage the conflict. Besides, the acceptance and support provided by the husband during their marriage can also be said to be a supporting factor in achieving the subjective well-being of the wife. A husband who is full of acceptance and support for his wife can make his wife achieve her subjective well-being. Conversely, a husband who does not accept and does not provide support to his wife makes the wife incapable of achieving her subjective well-being.

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