



Psychosocial Aspects of Anthropology of Adolescent Mothers During Pregnancy and Childcare

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the role of midwives in health promotion from sociological and anthropological perspectives. Midwives, as frontline healthcare professionals, function not only as clinical practitioners but also as social agents and cultural intermediaries within the community. From a sociological perspective, this study examines how social structures, power relations, and the social positioning of midwives influence the effectiveness of health communication and the dissemination of health-related information. From an anthropological perspective, the study investigates the ability of midwives to negotiate and integrate modern biomedical systems with local healing practices, traditional beliefs, and socio-cultural values associated with pregnancy, childbirth, and maternal care.

The findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of health promotion conducted by midwives is substantially influenced by the availability of social capital and the capacity to apply culturally responsive approaches in healthcare practices. Midwives who are capable of incorporating local cultural values into health services tend to establish stronger trust and social legitimacy within the community. Nevertheless, significant challenges emerge when formal healthcare policies and biomedical standards encounter resistance from local traditions and culturally embedded beliefs that continue to persist within society.

This study concludes that strengthening the role of midwives in health promotion requires a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics of local communities in order to encourage sustainable health behavior transformation. Furthermore, the findings of this study have been



disseminated through a published book entitled Psychosocial Aspects of Reproductive Health, with ISBN 978-634-97007-1-9.

Keywords: *Sociology of Health, Medical Anthropology, Midwives, Health Promotion, Cultural Negotiation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence and Pregnancy

Adolescence is a crucial transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, characterized by significant biological, cognitive, and psychosocial changes. However, pregnancy during adolescence, particularly between the ages of 14–19 years, often disrupts these developmental tasks because adolescents generally lack reproductive maturity and psychological readiness for parenthood. Adolescent pregnancy is not only a medical and public health issue, but also a complex psychosocial challenge, as many pregnancies at this age are unplanned.

Psychologically, adolescent mothers are vulnerable to prenatal distress, anxiety, fear, and depression due to feelings of unpreparedness in facing the major responsibilities of motherhood. Socially, pregnancy during school age frequently results in school dropout, social exclusion, and negative stigma from the surrounding community, which further worsens the mental health condition of adolescent mothers. Such stigma often creates a vicious cycle that limits access to social support, education, and future economic opportunities.

Local Culture and Myths

From an anthropological perspective, adolescent pregnancy and parenting experiences are strongly influenced by local cultural values, traditions, and community norms. Previous studies demonstrate the strong influence of local myths and culturally inherited practices in infant care, particularly those transmitted through extended family systems.

In several Indonesian communities, early marriage is frequently viewed as a cultural mechanism to avoid social sanctions or violations of religious and customary norms, despite adolescents not yet achieving psychological and economic independence.

Parenting Challenges and Long-Term Impacts

The transition to parenthood during adolescence creates a period of instability because adolescents must complete their own developmental stages while simultaneously caring for a child. Limited parenting readiness may lead to suboptimal parenting practices, which can negatively affect child development and health outcomes, including low birth weight (LBW) and stunting.

Therefore, support from family members, partners, healthcare professionals, and the broader social environment is essential in helping adolescent mothers adapt psychosocially to their parenting roles.



Research Objectives

This study aims to analyze how the interaction between individual psychological conditions and socio-cultural constructs influences parenting readiness and childcare practices among adolescent mothers. A deeper understanding of these aspects is expected to provide a foundation for developing interventions that are culturally sensitive and responsive to the psychosocial needs of adolescent mothers.

Anthropological and Psychosocial Aspects

1. Anthropological Perspective: Culture and Tradition

Anthropologically, marriage and parenting practices in Indonesia are strongly influenced by local cultural values and social structures.

a. Ethnoparenting

Ethnoparenting refers to parenting models based on local wisdom that emphasize spirituality, identity formation, and environmental preservation. In Indonesia, parenting practices commonly involve extended family members and the broader socio-cultural environment in shaping children's identities and behaviors.

b. Rite of Passage

In many traditional communities, early marriage is perceived as a social transition from childhood to adulthood. This transition is regulated through customary norms and cultural expectations that define social maturity and family responsibilities.

c. Culture and Norms

In several ethnic communities, such as Batak and Sundanese societies, child marriage still occurs due to the interaction between customary traditions and religious interpretations. These socio-cultural practices sometimes conflict with national laws concerning child protection and minimum marriage age regulations.

2. Psychosocial Aspects: Development and Identity

This aspect emphasizes adolescents' psychological and emotional readiness to undertake parental responsibilities.

a. Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development

According to Erik Erikson, adolescents are in the stage of identity formation. Adolescents living in environments characterized by limited economic resources, low educational attainment, and restricted access to information are more likely to engage in risky self-exploration behaviors, including early marriage.

b. Readiness to Become Parents

Parents' psychosocial parenting styles significantly influence children's emotional and social development. Young couples often demonstrate limited parenting knowledge and inadequate emotional readiness due to adolescent egocentrism and immature coping abilities.



c. Marital Intentions

Peer influence and self-efficacy play important roles in shaping adolescents' intentions to marry at an early age. Social acceptance from peers and communities may strengthen adolescents' perceptions that early marriage is a socially appropriate choice.

3. Impact of Teenage Marriage on Parenting

Marriage during adolescence has direct implications for parenting practices and family functioning.

a. Parenting Style Typology

Adolescent couples tend to adopt more extreme parenting styles, including:

- **Authoritarian Parenting**
Parenting characterized by excessive control, strict discipline, and restrictive behavior toward children.
- **Permissive or Neglectful Parenting**
Parenting characterized by indifference, inconsistent supervision, or excessive freedom due to emotional and mental unpreparedness.

b. Parenting Quality

In contrast, couples who marry at the legally recommended age (minimum 19 years) generally demonstrate more democratic, stable, and sustainable parenting practices because they possess greater emotional maturity and economic readiness.

4. Legal and Policy Framework in Indonesia

a. Marriage Law

Based on Law Number 16 of 2019, the minimum legal age for marriage in Indonesia has been revised to 19 years for both men and women. This policy aims to reduce the prevalence of child and adolescent marriage.

b. BKKBN Recommendation

The National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN) recommends the ideal marriage age as 21 years for women and 25 years for men to ensure adequate physical, emotional, and psychological readiness for family life.

Psychosocial Aspects

1. Theoretical Basis of Psychosocial Development (Erik Erikson)

Adolescents who marry early often experience the *Identity vs. Role Confusion* stage.

a. Identity Crisis

Adolescents are still in the process of discovering and developing their personal identity. However, early marriage forces them to immediately assume adult roles as spouses and parents before achieving emotional and psychological maturity.

b. Emotional Immaturity



Due to incomplete identity formation, young couples frequently demonstrate low emotional control, which may trigger marital conflict, parenting stress, and difficulties in family adjustment.

2. Ecological Theory (Urie Bronfenbrenner)

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory explains that parenting practices in adolescent marriages are influenced by multiple interacting environmental systems.

a. Microsystem

The microsystem refers to direct interactions within the family environment. Limited parenting literacy and inadequate childcare knowledge often contribute to inappropriate parenting practices.

b. Mesosystem

The mesosystem involves interactions between the young family and the extended family environment. In Indonesia, parents or in-laws commonly intervene in parenting decisions because adolescent couples are perceived as not yet financially and emotionally independent.

c. Macrosystem

The macrosystem includes cultural beliefs, customs, and societal norms. In several Indonesian communities, early marriage remains socially normalized, creating significant social pressure that encourages adolescents to marry at a young age.

3. Implementation of Parenting Styles

Research findings in Indonesia indicate that adolescent parents often implement less-than-optimal parenting styles.

a. Authoritarian Parenting

Due to limited patience, emotional instability, and inadequate parenting knowledge, young parents may rely on coercive discipline methods or physical punishment in managing children's behavior.

b. Permissive or Neglectful Parenting

Some adolescents who feel they have "lost their youth" tend to become indifferent toward parenting responsibilities or provide excessive freedom to children because they are psychologically unprepared for childcare obligations.

c. Impact on Children

Children raised in early-marriage families are at higher risk of impaired psychosocial development, emotional instability, and health problems such as stunting due to inadequate nutritional and parenting knowledge.

4. Long-Term Psychosocial Impact

a. Family Stability



Limited psychological maturity among adolescent couples is strongly associated with higher levels of marital conflict and increased divorce rates.

b. Character Education

Young parents frequently experience difficulties in becoming effective role models for their children. Consequently, character education and moral development within the family environment may not be optimally established.

II. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the psychosocial and anthropological dimensions of adolescent pregnancy, early marriage, and parenting practices in Indonesia. Qualitative methods were selected because they enable researchers to understand participants' lived experiences, cultural meanings, emotional conditions, and social interactions in a comprehensive and contextual manner.

2.1. Research Approaches

a. Qualitative Phenomenology

The phenomenological approach was used to understand participants' lived experiences in depth, particularly regarding the reasons adolescents decide to marry early and how young mothers interpret their parenting roles. This approach emphasizes subjective experiences, emotions, perceptions, and meanings constructed by participants in their daily lives.

b. Ethnography

The ethnographic approach focused on anthropological and socio-cultural aspects of parenting practices within local communities. This method examined how culturally based parenting patterns, such as Javanese or Sasak parenting traditions, are implemented in everyday family life. Ethnography also enabled researchers to understand the influence of local beliefs, customs, and kinship systems on parenting behavior.

c. Case Study

The case study approach was applied to analyze specific social units in depth. This method was particularly useful for examining parenting patterns in multiethnic families, family adaptation processes, and psychosocial dynamics among adolescent couples in different cultural settings.

d. Literature Study (Systematic Review)

A systematic literature review was conducted to analyze scientific journals, policy documents, laws, and previous studies related to child marriage and adolescent parenting in Indonesia. This approach provided theoretical and empirical foundations for understanding the broader context of adolescent marriage and psychosocial development.

2.2. Data Collection Techniques

a. In-Depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with adolescents who married early, their parents, traditional leaders, religious leaders, and community figures. This technique aimed to



obtain an *emic perspective*, namely the perspective and interpretation of individuals directly involved in the cultural phenomenon under study.

The interviews explored participants' experiences, motivations, emotional conditions, parenting challenges, family relationships, and cultural expectations regarding marriage and childcare.

b. Participatory Observation

Participatory observation involved researchers directly engaging in community social interactions to observe parenting practices and family dynamics in natural settings. Through this technique, researchers were able to examine how childcare activities, family communication patterns, and cultural parenting traditions were implemented in everyday life.

c. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted by gathering several informants, such as healthcare providers, village officials, community leaders, and parents, to discuss social norms and cultural perceptions related to early marriage and adolescent parenting.

FGDs provided collective insights into community attitudes, cultural pressures, and institutional responses regarding adolescent pregnancy and family formation.

2.3. Research Subjects and Informants

Research participants were selected using purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques. These sampling methods were chosen to ensure that participants possessed relevant experiences and knowledge concerning adolescent marriage and parenting practices.

The subjects and informants involved in this study included:

a. Adolescents Who Married Before the Age of 19

These participants were selected as primary informants because they directly experienced adolescent marriage, pregnancy, and parenting responsibilities.

b. Parents of Adolescent Couples

Parents were included to provide information regarding family support systems, cultural expectations, and intergenerational parenting practices.

c. Community Leaders and Village Officials

Community leaders, religious leaders, and village officials involved in marriage administration processes were interviewed to understand the socio-cultural and institutional factors influencing adolescent marriage within the community.

2.4. Data Analysis

a. Thematic Analysis



Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns, categories, and themes emerging from interview transcripts, observational findings, and discussion results. Common themes included economic factors, cultural pressures, educational limitations, gender expectations, and religious values.

b. Miles and Huberman Model

Data analysis also followed the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which consists of three stages:

1. **Data Condensation** – selecting, simplifying, and organizing relevant research findings.
2. **Data Display** – presenting data systematically in narrative, matrix, or conceptual forms.
3. **Conclusion Drawing and Verification** – interpreting findings and validating conclusions based on empirical evidence.

c. Descriptive Psychosocial Analysis

Descriptive psychosocial analysis was conducted to assess adolescents' emotional, mental, and social readiness in facing marriage, parenthood, and family responsibilities. This analysis emphasized emotional maturity, coping mechanisms, social adaptation, and parenting preparedness among adolescent mothers and fathers.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

1. Parenting (Anthropological and Psychosocial Aspects)

Research concerning parenting practices in Indonesia frequently applies an ethnoparenting approach, which examines how cultural and religious values shape parental behavior and child-rearing practices.

a. Anthropological Aspects (Culture and Local Values)

Local Wisdom

In several regions, such as Lhoksukon, parenting practices involve traditional rituals and cultural values that are transmitted across generations. Examples include *peurateb aneuk* (putting children to sleep accompanied by prayers) and *peucicap* (introducing food flavors to infants), which function as early forms of religious and moral education.

The Role of Ethnicity

In rural Javanese families, parenting patterns are strongly influenced by traditional values that continue to survive despite technological modernization. Children are generally perceived as the successors of the family lineage and as bearers of noble cultural values.

Multi-Ethnic Ethnoparenting

Research involving Sundanese–Palembang couples indicates that religious values often become the primary foundation that bridges cultural differences between ethnic



groups in parenting practices. Religion serves as a unifying framework that guides family interactions and childcare decisions.

b. Psychosocial Aspects (Interaction and Impact)

Parenting Style

Many qualitative studies conducted in Indonesian rural communities reveal a dominant democratic or authoritative parenting style, characterized by a balance between parental supervision and children's autonomy.

Environmental Dynamics

Parenting processes are not limited to the nuclear family environment. Social interactions occurring within orphanages, daycare centers, schools, and community settings also contribute significantly to the development of adolescents' character, discipline, and independence.

2. Teenage Marriage (Anthropological and Psychosocial Aspects)

Qualitative research on teenage marriage in Indonesia demonstrates that early marriage is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by social structures, cultural values, and adolescents' psychological conditions.

a. Anthropological Aspects (Social Norms and Structure)

Transition Symbol

From an anthropological perspective, child marriage is often regarded as a *rite of passage*, symbolizing the transition from childhood to adulthood. In several indigenous communities, such as Batak and Sundanese societies, early marriage is also associated with efforts to maintain family honor and avoid social shame.

Legal and Customary Dynamics

The continued practice of marriage dispensation granted by official institutions reflects the strong interaction between state law, religious law, and customary norms, particularly within rural communities where traditional values remain dominant.

b. Psychosocial Aspects (Mental Well-Being and Social Roles)

Psychological Burden

Adolescents who marry at an early age frequently experience stress, anxiety, and emotional pressure because they generally lack the psychological maturity necessary to manage marital and parental responsibilities.

Psychological Well-Being Paradox

Several studies reveal a paradoxical situation among adolescent couples. On one hand, they experience emotional happiness because they are able to live with their partners; however, on the other hand, they often face restrictions in personal autonomy, interrupted education, and limited opportunities for self-development.

Social Isolation



Due to increased domestic responsibilities, adolescent couples commonly withdraw from peer-group interactions and social activities. This condition may reduce adolescents' participation in educational, recreational, and community development activities.

3.2 Discussion

1. Anthropological Aspects (Culture and Social Structure)

Collectivism versus Individualism

Parenting in Indonesia is strongly influenced by collectivist cultural values. Childcare responsibilities are not viewed solely as the obligation of biological parents but also as a collective responsibility of the extended family. In cases of teenage marriage, grandparents or other relatives frequently assume dominant caregiving roles because adolescent parents are considered socially and emotionally inexperienced.

Patriarchal Culture and Gender Roles

The division of gender roles within adolescent marriages often remains rigid and patriarchal. Young mothers are generally burdened with domestic responsibilities, childcare duties, and emotional labor, while young fathers experience pressure to provide financial support despite having limited economic resources and social capital.

Tradition and Social Stigma

In many local communities, early marriage is still perceived as a solution to preserving family honor, particularly in cases involving premarital pregnancy. Although this practice is culturally accepted in certain contexts, researchers emphasize that it may create long-term medical, psychological, and social consequences for adolescent couples and their children.

2. Psychosocial Aspects (Relationships and Mental Health)

Emotional Maturity

Discussions regarding adolescent parenting frequently highlight parenting stress and emotional instability. Teenage parents often have limited emotional regulation skills, resulting in parenting styles that tend to be authoritarian, inconsistent, or neglectful.

Social Support

Support from parents and extended family members plays a crucial role in shaping the resilience of adolescent couples. However, support that is overly controlling or dictatorial may reduce young parents' self-confidence and autonomy. Conversely, supportive and educative family involvement can strengthen adolescents' parenting capacity and psychological adaptation.

Impact on Child Development



From a psychosocial perspective, children raised by adolescent parents are vulnerable to developmental challenges due to limited parental knowledge concerning child stimulation, emotional nurturing, and developmental needs.

Example Statement from Journal Findings

“Anthropologically, parenting patterns in teenage families at the research location indicate a shift in authority. Teenage parents tend to function merely as ‘implementers,’ while parenting decisions are largely controlled by grandparents through a coparenting mechanism. Psychosocially, this condition creates role conflict that increases anxiety among young mothers and ultimately affects the quality of attachment between mother and child.”

Brief Synthesis

Teenage marriage in Indonesia is frequently perceived as a social protection mechanism within the cultural and anthropological context. However, psychosocially, early marriage simultaneously creates vulnerabilities related to mental health, parenting readiness, family stability, and child development among the next generation.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that parenting practices within teenage marriages in Indonesia represent a complex phenomenon shaped by strong socio-cultural norms and limited psychosocial readiness among young couples. Anthropologically, early marriage is often interpreted as an effort to preserve social morality and family honor. However, psychosocially, adolescent marriage frequently contributes to inconsistent parenting practices, emotional instability, and increased risks of developmental problems among children due to parents' limited ability to manage emotional and economic responsibilities within the family.

4.1. SUGGESTIONS

This study suggests the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration between Social Services, Health Services, educational institutions, and community organizations in providing interventions specifically designed for adolescent mothers and young families in rural areas.

Such interventions may include parenting education programs, psychosocial counseling, reproductive health education, and family resilience training that are adaptive to the demands of modernization while remaining grounded in local moral and cultural values.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Experience of Adolescent Fathers

Future studies may explore the emotional dynamics, role conflicts, and power relations experienced by adolescent fathers through phenomenological approaches.

2. Subjective Well-Being of Young Wives

Further research is recommended to examine how young women who marry early



define happiness, autonomy, and personal growth amid domestic responsibilities.

3. **Dynamics of Marriage Readiness**

Qualitative studies are needed to analyze the mental, emotional, social, and financial readiness of young adults aged 20–24 years before entering family life.

4. **Psychosocial Impact of Parenting Styles among Young Couples**

Future research should investigate how the psychological unpreparedness of adolescent couples influences children's behavioral, emotional, and cognitive development.

5. **Mental Health of Children in Remarried Single-Parent Families**

Additional studies may examine the psychological effects experienced by children when single mothers or fathers decide to remarry.

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