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Does Marriage Require Knowledge? Experiences of Women Participating in Pre-Marriage Education

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Abstract: Today the phenomenon of getting married at a young age is rising and shown through social media. According to Islamic religious rules, there are many pros and contras against this phenomenon, especially related to marriage. It has led to various pre-marriage educational programs as a means of understanding and preparing for marriage. This study aimed to explore the experiences of a single woman in emerging adulthood who participates in Pre-Marriage Talk Class. This study used a qualitative approach with the snowball sampling technique. A total of 5 respondents participated in this study, and data were collected through an online interview. We used the thematic analysis to analyze the data. The results showed that Pre-Marriage Talk Class provides additional knowledge, awareness, and mindset to participants, including 1) knowledge about the age of

marriage; 2) knowledge about the vision and mission of getting married; 3) awareness of knowing the self; 4) knowledge of managing the self and environment, and 5) changing mindset. From the results, we can conclude that Pre-Marriage Talk Class is a suitable program for emerging adults who want to gain knowledge and skills related to themselves, how to manage self and environment, as well as an overview of the dynamics of married life that can be anticipated

Keywords: *Education, Pre-marriage, Experience, Emerging Adulthood, Knowledge*

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is one of the most important events in a person's life journey ¹. Marriage unifies men and women who are considered legally and religiously mature in sacred bond ². Marriage is the starting point to develop a household life whose continuity depends on the physical and psychological readiness of the couple ³. Marriage, according to Law of the Republic Indonesia Number 1 of 1974 Chapter 1 Article 1, is a physical and mental bond between a man and woman as a spouse to form a happy and eternal family based on the One Godhead. Individuals who are bound in a marriage relationship

¹ Fitriani Syamal and Taufik, "Relationship of Family Social Support with Marital Readiness in Women in Early Adult Stage," *Jurnal Neo Konseling* 1, no. 3 (2019): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.24036/00133kons2019>.

² Satih Saidiyah and Very Julianto, "Problem Pernikahan Dan Strategi Penyelesaiannya: Studi Kasus Pada Pasangan Suami Istri Dengan Usia Perkawinan Di Bawah Sepuluh Tahun," *Jurnal Psikologi Undip* 15, no. 2 (2017): 124, <https://doi.org/10.14710/jpu.15.2.124-133>.

³ Frischa Meivilona Yendi, Zadrian Ardi, and Ifdil Ifdil, "Pelayanan Konseling Untuk Remaja Putri Usia Pernikahan," *Jurnal Konseling Dan Pendidikan* 1, no. 2 (2013): 109, <https://doi.org/10.29210/11800>.

committed to each other to develop a harmonious and happy family following religious belief.

Marriage is one of the most crucial topics in Islam. Islam sees marriage as a strong bond, full of commitment, and a challenging journey ⁴. Individuals committed to his couple to provide a peaceful, loving, and comfortable life and as lifetime worship to Allah Swt. Marriage in Islam means carrying out the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad Saw. based on sincerity, responsibility, and following the predetermined religious law ⁵.

Moreover, the sociocultural context of Indonesian society influences the philosophy of marriage, e.g., the choice of a partner, the perception of appropriate age for marriage, housing arrangement after marriage ⁶, and how an individual should develop the family life. Besides, marriage is also seen as a form of fulfillment of social interest, such as maintaining human life and concern about the safety in society from diseases that endanger life and also maintaining the peace of individual's mind ⁷.

The study about marriage from legal, religious, and sociocultural perspectives explains that marriage is a proper way to

⁴ Meraj Ahmad Ahmad, "The Importance of Marriage in Islam," *International Journal of Research -GRANTHAALAYAH* 6, no. 11 (2018): 1-6, <https://doi.org/10.29121/granthaalayah.v6.i11.2018.1082>.

⁵ Wahyu Wibisana, "Pernikahan Dalam Islam," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam - Ta'lim* 14, no. 2 (2016): 185-93, http://jurnal.upi.edu/file/05_PERNIKAHAN_DALAM_ISLAM_-Wahyu.pdf.

⁶ Alison M. Buttenheim and Jenna Nobles, "Ethnic Diversity, Traditional Norms, and Marriage Behaviour in Indonesia," *Population Studies* 63, no. 3 (2009): 277-94, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00324720903137224>.

⁷ Lutfiyah, "Relasi Budaya Dan Agama Dalam Pernikahan," *Jurnal Hukum Islam* 12 (2014): 1-8.

build a committed romantic relationship. This romantic relationship leads to an aim to fulfill religious law and social interest in society. Married individuals tied legally, religiously, and socioculturally to be committed to a predetermined law.

The purpose of a marriage develops over time. In the 1800s, marriage was the main reason to fulfill social, political, and economic needs, while now marriage is a form of self-fulfillment and love ⁸. From a religious point of view, the purpose of marriage is not only about the generation but also to develop a harmonious, happy, and achieve prosperity as a family. Marriage is concerned about the couple and concerns the family and society ⁹. The two individuals involved in a marriage relationship can use their rights and obligations in the family, creating inner peace to foster love and happiness ¹⁰. In other words, this is called in term of *Sakinah Mawaddah Wa Rahmah* (calm, cherishing, and loving).¹¹

Achieving the purpose of marriage needs to go through a process of individual adjustment primarily associated with new roles and tasks. The adjustment process in newlyweds to new roles and

⁸ Jamiah Manap et al., "The Purpose of Marriage among Single Malaysian Youth," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 82 (2013): 112–16, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.06.233>.

⁹ Eni Widyawati and C. Adi Pierewan, "Determinan Pernikahan Usia Dini Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 14, no. 4 (2017): 55–70.

¹⁰ M. Nastangin, *Urgensi Bimbingan Pra Nikah Bagi Calon Pasangan Pengantin Demi Terwujudnya Kehidupan Keluarga*, ed. Irfan Helmy (Salatiga: Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat (LP2M) IAIN Salatiga, 2020).

¹¹ Erlina Harahap, "Keharmonisan Keluarga Dengan Motivasi Belajar Siswa Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Layanan Bimbingan Dan Konseling (Studi Deskriptif-Korelasional Di SMA N 4 Padangsidimpuan)," *Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling* 3, no. 1 (2017): 114–22, <http://jurnal.um-tapsel.ac.id/index.php/Ristekdik/article/view/132/121>.

tasks often raised problems ¹². One of the leading causes of difficulty in facing these roles and tasks is the lack of self-readiness ¹³. Marriage should be carried out by individuals who are physically, psychologically, socially, and financially ready to develop a family ¹⁴. A marriage without mental and material readiness will adversely affect family development ¹⁵.

Several newlyweds couples are shocked by the distress experienced in the household and do not find satisfaction in the marriage relationship. Couples who are distressed in marriage experience more negative conditions and interactions when solving the problem in the family ¹⁶. This is because individuals are less aware and less prepared for marriage and family tasks ¹⁷. In addition, individuals that anticipated marriage in their life has an unrealistic

¹² Faris Abdurrahman and Mudjiran, "Hubungan Persepsi Mahasiswa Tentang," *Jurnal Neo Konseling* 2, no. 2 (2020): 1-7, <https://doi.org/10.24036/00291kons2020>.

¹³ Fitri Sari and Euis Sunarti, "KESIAPAN MENIKAH PADA DEWASA MUDA DAN PENGARUHNYA TERHADAP USIA MENIKAH," *Jurnal Ilmu Keluarga & Konsumen* 6, no. 3 (2013): 143-53.

¹⁴ Eni Widyawati and C. Adi Pierewan, "Determinan Pernikahan Usia Dini Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 14, no. 4 (2017): 55-70

¹⁵ Eva Meizara Puspita Dewi, Novita Maulidya Jalal, and Widyastuti, "Relationship of Marriage Perception and Married Readiness in Women ' s Adolescents in Makassar City," *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 25, no. 1 (2020): 74-78, <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-2501027478>.

¹⁶ K. Daniel O'leary and David A. Smith, "Marital Interactions," *Annual Review of Psychology* 42, no. 1 (1991): 191-212, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.ps.42.020191.001203>.

¹⁷ Benjamin Silliman and Walter R. Schumm, "Adolescents' Perceptions of Marriage and Premarital Couples Education," *Family Relations* 53, no. 5 (2004): 513-20, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0197-6664.2004.00060.x>.

expectation ¹⁸ such as endless relationship to live, but the expectations are often failed to meet ¹⁹. Meanwhile, the decision to marry means being ready to accept all risks and challenges that occur after marriage ²⁰.

Problems that cause psychological distress in marriage could appear from the beginning before the marriage occurs. Interpersonal conflicts are caused by differences in the expression of interest, point of view, and opinion ²¹. These conflicts are caused by individuals who do not know each other, lack of consideration in managing family resources, differences in the character of the partners' culture, and differences of experience. The social learning & family stress theory ²² stated that lack of social support and skills to reduce the distress in family life might be triggered by individual experiences which cannot adapt to family, friends, and romantic relationship conflict.

Living a married life with commitments, challenges, and all its dynamics is not easy. Conflicts that fail to be anticipated and resolved adaptively will lead to dissatisfaction with marriage life and even potentially to a divorce. Indonesia's Central Statistics Agency (BPS)

¹⁸ Rita Chaudhary, "Effect of Readiness for Marriage and Age on The Marital Attitudes of Unmarried Students" (University of Baroda, 1975).

¹⁹ Norval D. Glenn, "The Course of Marital Success and Failure in Five American 10-Year Marriage Cohorts," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 60, no. 3 (1998): 569, <https://doi.org/10.2307/353529>.

²⁰ T. R. Yogo Ningrum, "Motivasi Menikah Dini Pada Wanita Muda: Studi Fenomenologi Pada Wanita Muda Di Desa Karanganyar," *Fakultas Keguruan Dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Sanata Dharma* (Universitas Sanata Dharma, 2018).

²¹ Faith Troupe, "Marital Conflict: A Longitudinal Study," *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences* (2008).

²² Hamilton I. McCubbin and Joan M. Patterson, "The Family Stress Process," *Marriage & Family Review* 6, no. 1-2 (1983): 7-37, https://doi.org/10.1300/j002v06n01_02.

recorded 231.873 divorce cases in 2019 due to the constant disputes and arguments. Still, in the same year, BPS also recorded 60.505 divorce cases due to leaving one party ²³. Other divorce cases in Indonesia are also caused by factors of bad behavior after marriage from one party, such as drinking behavior, gambling, domestic violence, and economic conditions. There is also a study by Whitton²⁴ stated that couples with negative communication patterns before marriage divorced more than couples with positive communication patterns. These negative factors causing divorce are against the purpose of marriage, both legally, religious, and socioculturally. Thus, those factors indicate the need for good understanding from individuals regarding the importance of commitment to marriage, managing behavior and habits, and adaptive problem-solving strategies to rely on the marriage relationship.

Based on the divorce cases in Indonesia, we can conclude that happiness, balance, satisfaction, and integrity of household life depend on the couple, specifically, how an individual can adjust to new roles and tasks with their partner. Success in marriage starts from the point where it occurs when the individual refers to the agreed to develop a legitimate relationship ²⁵. Therefore, it is essential for men and women to learn and prepare themselves before marriage.

²³ BPS, "Jumlah Perceraian Menurut Provinsi Dan Faktor 2019," 2020, https://www.bps.go.id/indikator/indikator/view_data_pub/0000/api_pub/110/da_04/1.

²⁴ Sarah W Whitton, "The Premarital Communication Roots of Marital Distress and Divorce," *Journal of Family Psychology* 24, no. 3 (2010): 289–98, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019481>.

²⁵ Manap et al., "The Purpose of Marriage among Single Malaysian Youth." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 82 (2013): 112–16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.06.233>

Marriage preparation could help an individual to manage more realistic expectations about married life ²⁶. The marriage preparation can be done through pre-marriage education.

With the majority of the Islamic community, Indonesia has a pre-marriage educational program that is officially regulated by the government, known as Kursus Pranikah (premarital course). This program provides knowledge, understanding, skills, and awareness about household and family life ²⁷. This program had officially regulated in General Director of Islamic Community Guidance Law Number: Dj.II/542 of 2013 by the General Director of Islamic Community Guidance ²⁸. In this regulation, the pre-marriage program's provider is the Marriage Advisory, Development, and Preservation Agency (BP4) or other Islamic religious institutions receiving accreditation from the Ministry of Religion. In this case, Kantor Urusan Agama (Office of Religious Affairs) at the sub-district level act as an institution to conduct the program. The course activities are carried out face-to-face through a syllabus, modules, and other teaching material prepared by the Ministry of Religion. The material presented to the participants were: knowledge about

²⁶ Rita Chaudhary, "Effect of Readiness for Marriage and Age on The Marital Attitudes of Unmarried Students" (University of Baroda, 1975)

²⁷ Ditjen Bimas Islam, "Peraturan Direktur Jenderal Bimbingan Masyarakat Islam Nomor: DJ.II/542 Tahun 2013 Tentang Pedoman Penyelenggaraan Kursus Pra Nikah," 2013, 1-22, <https://jatim.kemenag.go.id/file/file/peraturantentangPNS/esdz1425873744.pdf>.

²⁸ M. Nastangin, *Urgensi Bimbingan Pra Nikah Bagi Calon Pasangan Pengantin Demi Terwujudnya Kehidupan Keluarga*, ed. Irfan Helmy (Salatiga: Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat (LP2M) IAIN Salatiga, 2020)

marriage law, domestic violence, child protection, and the functions of the family. The material was delivered using lecturing, discussion, question and answer, case studies, and assignments according to the needs of participants. The lecturer participated in the course are family consultants, religious leaders, psychologist, and professionals in their field. The purpose of the course is to make individuals in the age of marriage and particularly for couples²⁹ able to develop themselves and their life to be in line with the rules and instructions of Allah SWT; hence, the marriage undertaken can achieve happiness in the world and hereafter ³⁰.

Over time, various communities have emerged offering pre-marriage education programs outside official government accreditation. Those programs spread faster through social media. These communities stand behind Instagram, YouTube, Telegram, or websites that provide information about individual pre-marriage preparation. One of the pre-marriage education communities is *Pre-Marriage Talk* (PMT) Indonesia. The Instagram account of @premarriagetalk was established in 2019. It has more than 66 thousand followers. This community provides a pre-marriage education program known as *Pre-Marriage Talk Class* (PMTc) which about 450 people had attended. The *Pre-Marriage Talk* (PMT) focuses

²⁹ Habib Wakidatul Ihtiar, "MEMBACA MAQASHID SYARI'AH DALAM PROGRAM BIMBINGAN PERKAWINAN," *AHKAM: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 8, no. 2 (2020): 233-58, <http://ejournal.iain-tulungagung.ac.id/index.php/ahkam/article/view/3498>.

³⁰ M. Nastangin, *Urgensi Bimbingan Pra Nikah Bagi Calon Pasangan Pengantin Demi Terwujudnya Kehidupan Keluarga*, ed. Irfan Helmy (Salatiga: Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat (LP2M) IAIN Salatiga, 2020)

on providing basic knowledge of personal preparation before marriage, such as knowing and self-management according to the Islamic rules. The material was delivered by the PMTC's facilitator with a psychology educational background. The activities are carried out online using a platform Zoom every Wednesday and Thursday night for seven weeks. This program provides material about preparing the marriage, knowing the self, communication, financial management, and Islamic marriage etiquette. The material was delivered using lectures, discussion, case studies, and assignments associated with the purpose of marriage, determining the criteria of a partner, knowing the self, and communicating the desire of marriage to parents. These assignments were followed by feedback from the facilitators. As stated in the bio of their Instagram account, PMT aims to be an *Islamic Pre-Marriage Sharing Partner* that provides pre-marriage education with the peer-learning concept. The PMTC's program is attended by single Islamic women of emerging adulthood phase.

Based on Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, the individual whose age ranged from 20-24 was categorized as emerging adults. There are two crises that individuals must face in this stage of development: *intimacy vs. isolation*. At this stage, developing an intimate relationship with other people is one of the important developmental tasks. The individual can connect to a romantic interpersonal relationship with others once they have found their self-identity and ready to share with others. Ideally, when two individuals are successful in developing their self-identity, they will be able to develop a new identity when having romantic interpersonal

relationships with other people ³¹. The individual that successful in this stage will have a safe and committed romantic relationship ³² and get positive feedback from their partners. Conversely, if one unsuccessfully develops an intimate relationship with other people, it will lead to a feeling of emotional isolation, loneliness, and depression.

The purpose of PMTC is to help individuals gain knowledge, skills, and awareness of family development. The fascinating thing is that compared to the government's pre-marriage course, PMTC's education program does not yet have a steady learning curriculum but attracts many people, particularly those who are unmarried. In addition, the PMTC's program specifically discusses psychological preparation for Muslim women before marriage. Meanwhile, the pre-marriage course from the government is providing broad knowledge both for men and women about law and individual function in the family system.

According to the literature review, this research aimed to explore the experiences of emerging adult single Muslim women who have attended pre-marriage education in *Pre-Marriage Talk* Indonesia. This research explored the impacts of pre-marriage education related to the development of (1) knowledge, (2) awareness, (3) mindset about marriage. This research is expected to

³¹ Ellen B. Braaten, "Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development," *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Intellectual and Developmental Disorders*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483392271.n178>.

³² Engelberta Pardamean and Sp Kj, "Erik Erikson ' s Theory of Psychosocial Development Important Point of Erikson ' s Theory" 22, no. 4 (2019): 314-19.

provide new arguments and perspectives for millennial Muslim individuals about personal self-development for the sake of psychological readiness for marriage.

METHODS

This research used a qualitative method to explore the experiences of emerging adult Muslim women who attended pre-marriage education in *Pre-Marriage Talk* Indonesia. There are five participants: emerging adult single Muslim women (23-24-year-olds), alumni of the PMTC education program. Participants were obtained through the snowball sampling technique based on recommendations from the previous participants. The data collected using a semi-structured interview with questions compiled by the first author, comprising three main open questions: (1) how did the respondent view the current marriage? (2) what experience did the participants have during the PMTC program?; (3) what impact did the participants have regarding their knowledge, awareness, and mindset related to marriage after joining PMTC?. These questions were elaborated on based on the participants' answers to explore more information.

Informed consent was given before the data collection, describing the researcher's identity, the purpose of the study, benefits, and guarantees of data confidentiality. After agreeing to participate, the researcher made an appointment for online interviews with participants with a duration of 60-70 minutes for each participant. The research data is in the form of audio recordings converted into verbatim data. The data contains subjective experiences of each respondent regarding their participation in the

PMTC education program. The data were thematically analyzed by the first author from the abstraction of the participants' answers to suit the Marital Horizon theoretical framework³³. The result shows five main themes, i.e., 1) knowledge about the age of marriage; 2) knowledge about the vision and mission of marriage; 3) knowledge about self and environmental management; 4) awareness to know oneself, and 5) change in mindset.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Participants of this research are five emerging adult single Muslim women who were alumni of PMTC's program with age range 23-24 years old, located in Batam, Jakarta, Semarang, Bogor, and Balikpapan. The result shows five main themes. The question of participants' view of current marriage raised one theme: knowledge about the age of marriage. Question about the participants' experience during the PMTC's program raises three themes: knowledge about vision & mission of marriage, knowledge about self and environment management, and awareness to know one's self. Question about the impact of PMTC's program raises one theme: changing mindset. The research results are explained using the marital horizon theoretical framework³⁴, referring to one's outlook or approach to marriage in relation to his or her current situation. There

³³ Jason S. Carroll et al., "So Close, yet so Far Away: The Impact of Varying Marital Horizons on Emerging Adulthood," *Journal of Adolescent Research* 22, no. 3 (2007): 219-47, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558407299697>.

³⁴ Jason S. Carroll et al., "So Close, yet so Far Away: The Impact of Varying Marital Horizons on Emerging Adulthood," *Journal of Adolescent Research* 22, no. 3 (2007): 219-247, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558407299697>

are three main points in the marital horizon, namely (a) the relative importance of marriage in one's current life plans, (b) the desired timing of marriage, and (c) the criteria for marriage readiness or the types of preparation one perceives are needed before marriage.

1. Knowledge About the Age of Marriage

The participants stated that marriage at a relatively young age is not a problem as long as the individual is ready to face the challenges in married life. This view is supported by PMTC's program, which provides insights that the age of marriage is subjective depending on the individual's readiness. Age is often considered not a benchmark of getting married because the most important thing is physical and psychological readiness (emotional maturity, problem-solving, ability to make an independent decision).

*"...I think age is not a benchmark, but mindset, knowledge. after attended PMTC, I realize that age is not a benchmark to get married, but self and mental readiness, also knowledge.."
(Subject 5)*

There is a positive response from a participant about marriage according to Islamic rules. However, there are also concerns about household challenges that cause couples easier to divorce. These concerns make the participants more interested to learn about pre-marriage preparation to avoid extreme conflicts. They stated that regardless of the age of marriage, the household and family development indeed many challenges and need to be well prepared.

".. on one hand I'm happy that taarof can be accepted, but it's a pity also when a person married at a young age then they divorce or cheating once there is a conflict.. PMTC makes me realize that I have to learn more about marriage.." (Subject 3)

Marriage is considered a crucial moment in a person's life span, mainly because of the sociocultural standard in Indonesia, which defines marriage as a social achievement to be proud of³⁵. In addition, the sociocultural value of marriage consequences that even though a woman has completed higher education, has a job, more than 23.5 years old, and is not married yet, it raises a lot of negative prejudice from society ³⁶. However, pre-marriage education provides knowledge that age would not be the benchmark for determining when individuals should marry. Based on the participants' answers, there is new knowledge related to the age of marriage, and that psychological readiness is more important to consider than to pursue "the ideal age of marriage." The perspective of marriage preparation by identifying important and specific indicators is commonly practiced by emerging adults ³⁷. It is also mentioned that women tend to prepare themselves earlier than men ³⁸.

³⁵ Karel Karsten Himawan, Matthew Bambling, and Sisira Edirippulige, "What Does It Mean to Be Single in Indonesia? Religiosity, Social Stigma, and Marital Status Among Never-Married Indonesian Adults," *SAGE Open* 8, no. 3 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018803132>.

³⁶ Umi Oktyari Retnaningsih, "Indonesian Educated Unmarried Career Women: Gender Inequality, Discrimination, and Prejudices," *Asian Women* 29, no. 1 (2013): 5–25.

³⁷ Jason S. Carroll et al., "So Close, yet so Far Away: The Impact of Varying Marital Horizons on Emerging Adulthood," *Journal of Adolescent*

2. Knowledge about Vision & Mission of Marriage

Having a stable marriage life is considered important to adults³⁹, and in achieving that, participants who attended pre-marriage education learned about the importance of clear marriage goals. They stated that the vision and mission of marriage is an important thing to be known when an individual is making an introduction to a potential partner. It can be started from values, principles, and individual's point of view then reflected on the goals and practical steps that will be taken to develop family life in the future in accordance with Islamic teachings.

The vision & mission of marriage aims to find a match in the relationship, for example, related to the type of partner that can be tolerated at the time of making the introduction. According to Prasetiawati⁴⁰, the couple has to agree on that goal to create stable and harmonious family life or, in Islamic terms, called *Sakinah, Mawaddah, Wa Rahmah* (calm, cherishing, and loving). Things related to roles, interaction with parents and parents-in-law, and views on parenting. It also helps individuals understand

Research 22, no. 3 (2007): 219–247, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558407299697>

³⁸ Sari Mawaddah et al., "PERBEDAAN KESIAPAN MENIKAH PADA DEWASA AWAL DITINJAU DARI JENIS KELAMIN DI BANDA ACEH," *Jurnal Empati* 8, no. 1 (2019): 320–28.

³⁹ Sarah Badger and Jason S Carroll, "Ready or Not? Perceptions of Marriage Readiness among Emerging Adults" (Brigham Young University, 2005), <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/675>.

⁴⁰ Eka Prasetiawati, "Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Keluarga Sakinah, Mawaddah Wa Rahmah Dalam Tafsir Al-Hisbah Dan Ibnu Katsir," *NIZHAM Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 05, no. 2 (2017): 1–29.

that marriage is not to follow the trends or fulfill the demands, but the main target should be achieved through a lifetime of worship.

"...I just realize (when attended PMTC) that marriage needs goals like vision and mission, we were encouraged to write down about the type of partner that match with us and can be tolerated and we need the clear goals about our future marriage life.." (Subject 4)

Other participants stated that the vision and mission could be a guide for living a married life. Participants are aware that the married life they will live will not always be easy. There might be negative emotions during marriage, such as sadness, anger, disappointment, and jealousy⁴¹. They also aware that conflicts will inevitably arise either with themselves, partners, or family. Therefore, these agreements can be used as a guide for handling conflicts and keeping the marriage relationship and family life in the desired corridor.

"...This program made me determine the goals of my marriage, it is like a guidance if one day there is a problem and went out of the direction, so we can get back to the track." (Subject 3).

Educational factors related to marriage play a big role in an individual's marital competence to develop and maintain family life in the future ⁴². Marital competence is formed through reflection on values, principles, and perspectives related to

⁴¹ Sitti Muthia Maghfirah Massinai and Fitri Ariyanti Abidin, "The Meaning of Marriage : A Phenomenological Study of Women Married at Early Age Martabat : Jurnal Perempuan Dan Anak," *Martabat: Jurnal Perempuan Dan Anak* 4, no. 2 (2020): 267-82, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21274/martabat.2020.4.2.267-282> The.

⁴² Chaudhary, "Effect of Readiness for Marriage and Age on The Marital Attitudes of Unmarried Students." (Baroda University, 1975).

marriage preparation. The participants' answers indicated that PMTC's program provides understanding related to the importance of determining the purpose of desired marriage life in the future. It also related to the ideal age they would like to get married, the type of person they would like to marry, principles, point of view, and their sense of personal readiness for marriage⁴³. Moreover, the vision and mission of marriage are made between partners to frame the similar future of the family. Conversely, partners who perceive their goals differently may never have formed an identity as a couple or may have begun to separate from each other⁴⁴.

3. Knowledge about Self and Environment Management

The participants stated that managing self and environmental resource become an important thing to be prepared to develop family life. For instance, how individuals maintain physical and mental health as a form of gratitude to Allah Swt. PMTC's program provides a chance to discuss marriage based on the facilitator's experiences, things related to the dynamics of marriage and family life, the conflict that a young couple may face, and roles in

⁴³ Jason S. Carroll et al., "So Close, yet so Far Away: The Impact of Varying Marital Horizons on Emerging Adulthood," *Journal of Adolescent Research* 22, no. 3 (2007): 219-247, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558407299697>

⁴⁴ Peter Berger and Hansfried Kellner, "Marriage and the Construction of Reality," *Diogenes* 12, no. 46 (1964): 1-24, <https://doi.org/10.1177/039219216401204601>; Maureen R. Waller and Sara S. McLanahan, "His' and 'Her' Marriage Expectations: Determinants and Consequences," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67, no. 1 (2005): 53-67, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-2445.2005.00005.x>.

the new life phase. In line with Carroll et al.⁴⁵ statement, pre-marriage education is a sharing place of experiences, interests, knowledge, understanding, and an overview of marriage life that can be anticipated based on the current condition of the individual. Participants said that PMTC's program helps them to understand the importance of behavioral and emotional regulation in an unpleasant situation, decision making, communication with family and friends, attitude in the social environment, how to express thoughts adaptively, dealing with conflict in the family, and financial management for one's self.

*"...now I know about financial management, so I started to save money, managing emergency funds, education funds, and marriage preparation. I started practicing on cash flow, managing personal spent, not shopping unnecessary things."
(Subject 3)*

Participants also said that PMTC's program helps them to feel calmer and less affected by the environment. PMTC encourages them to use the time to improve & develop themselves, try to learn a better lifestyle, become more productive, and emotionally mature. They stated that there is no need to rush about marriage because there still a lot of preparations related to self-management. Participants are convinced with realistic thinking that a life partner will come once they are ready with themselves and the knowledge they have.

⁴⁵ Jason S. Carroll et al., "So Close, yet so Far Away: The Impact of Varying Marital Horizons on Emerging Adulthood," *Journal of Adolescent Research* 22, no. 3 (2007): 219-247, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558407299697>

"...Why I have not met my partner yet, maybe Allah still give me chances to improving myself, gaining more knowledge, to be more productive..." (Subject 5)

"...I still enjoy my time because I have understood that my partner will come at the right time, PMTC helps me to regulate myself related to the desire of married because I still feel lack of knowledge..." (Subject 3)

The knowledge is also in line with Gunnels'⁴⁶ research that the most considerate thing of marriage preparation is the ability to manage oneself, and it is related to the ability to express feeling such as to listen, share feelings and emotions either verbally or nonverbally⁴⁷, adaptive conflict resolution, responsibility to one's behavior, and the ability of independent decision making. Carroll and colleagues⁴⁸ also said that the important criteria that an individual should have to be ready for married are interpersonal ability (respect differences and willingness to discuss problem) and the ability to deal with role transition (financially independent from parents and another family member). Gained knowledge through PMTC's education program develops awareness of self-management and decreasing risky behavior of an individual ⁴⁹,

⁴⁶ Molly J Gunnels, "The Impact of Self-Esteem and Religiosity on the Marital Readiness Criteria of College Students" (2013), http://aquila.usm.edu/honors_theses.

⁴⁷ Chaudhary, "Effect of Readiness for Marriage and Age on The Marital Attitudes of Unmarried Students." (Baroda University, 1975)

⁴⁸ Jason S. Carroll et al., "Ready or Not?: Criteria for Marriage Readiness among Emerging Adults," *Journal of Adolescent Research* 24, no. 3 (2009): 349-75, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558409334253>.

⁴⁹ Carroll et al., "So Close, yet so Far Away: The Impact of Varying Marital Horizons on Emerging Adulthood." *Journal of Adolescent Research* 22, no. 3 (2007): 219-247

particularly related to emotional stability, indicating better marriage readiness⁵⁰

4. Awareness of Knowing the Self

Another part of marriage preparation is to know the characteristics of oneself, such as thoughts, emotions, and behavioral dynamics. Recognizing one's personality is one of the main topics of pre-marriage education because it is considered supporting values, principles, and perspectives to develop future marriage life. Carroll et al.⁵¹ stated that to deal with marriage, individuals need to prepare themselves to be more mature in making relationships both interpersonal and intrapersonal. Participants said that the most insightful session of PMTC's program is related to awareness of their self-characteristics. Participants explored much about their thoughts, emotion, attitudes, habits, and behavior. It is also related to how individuals express and communicate their thoughts and emotions to other people, including parents, partners, and friends.

"...I'm aware that knowing the self is important, that I am this kind of person, have my own interest, and I'm more aware of my emotional dynamics so I also learn how to communicate it..."
(Subject 1)

The participants said that they are more reflective about themselves after attended the pre-marriage education. The study

⁵⁰ Thomas Holman B and Bing Dao Li, "Premarital Factors Influencing Perceived Readiness for Marriage," *Journal of Family Issues* 18, no. 2 (1997): 124-44.

⁵¹ Carroll et al., "So Close, yet so Far Away: The Impact of Varying Marital Horizons on Emerging Adulthood." *Journal of Adolescent Research* 22, no. 3 (2007): 219-247

results reveal a stronger desire to recognize their self-concept, determining what kind of “self” they want to choose as a future partner or parents in the family. The participants learn to recognize how they see themselves as individuals, find the strengths and weaknesses, values, and how to manage themselves in daily life. The PMTC’s program encourages them to know, respect, and love the self in accordance with Islamic teachings. The participants are asked to reflect on their experiences then develop a good Muslim self-concept as a woman. Environment and networks that include religiosity may also provide feedback about one’s values and choices, confirming one’s self-image and choices and helping an individual to develop an appropriate life plan ⁵².

In addition, knowing the self in pre-marriage education is not limited to personal characteristics but also to the influenced factors, such as the family parenting style that shaped the individual today. The PMTC’s program also provides a brief explanation of how to deal with the external factors that affect an individual’s point of view related to marriage and family life, such as the unpleasant experiences in the past.

“...PMTC focuses on the personal self, such as Muslim self-concept as a woman, values, and self-management based on the

⁵² Marie Cornwall, “The Determinants of Religious Behavior: A Theoretical Model and Empirical Test,” *Social Forces* 68, no. 2 (1989): 572–92, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/68.2.572>; Christopher G. Ellison, Amy M. Burdette, and Norval D. Glenn, “Praying for Mr. Right? Religion, Family Background, and Marital Expectations among College Women,” *Journal of Family Issues* 32, no. 7 (2011): 906–31, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X10393143>.

resource that we have... I feel that I still have an unfinished business of unpleasant memories from childhood..." (Subject 2)

Interaction with family members during childhood plays an important role in shaping one's ideas about the intimate relationship⁵³, expectation, and attitude towards family life⁵⁴. Thus, early family experiences and family values help form a 'schema' in one's life in the way people interpret their experiences⁵⁵. It also shapes individual maturity in thoughts, emotion, and attitudes to support marriage readiness. Individual willingness to know themselves more deeply represents a rational maturity to prepare themselves for married and family life in the future⁵⁶.

5. Changing Mindset

The PMTC's program has an impact on changing mindset as a result of gaining knowledge of marriage age, vision and mission of marriage, self and environment management, and the awareness of self. This knowledge provides new perspectives related to marriage, family development, and anticipated family conflicts. Participants learned from the smallest unit, which was then elaborated on its influence on future family life.

⁵³ Sheldon Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version* (Menlo Park, California: Benjamin/Cummings Pub. Co., 1980).

⁵⁴ Chaudhary, "Effect of Readiness for Marriage and Age on The Marital Attitudes of Unmarried Students."

⁵⁵ Scott S. Hall, "Marital Meaning: Exploring Young Adults' Belief Systems about Marriage," *Journal of Family Issues* 27, no. 10 (2006): 1437-58, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X06290036>.

⁵⁶ Sarah Badger, Larry J. Nelson, and Carolyn Mc Namara Barry, "Perceptions of the Transition to Adulthood among Chinese and American Emerging Adults," *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 30, no. 1 (2006): 84-93, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025406062128>.

The participants realized that marriage might change their whole life, not only to their status as an individual but also to all aspects of the family from both parties. This awareness encourages individuals to think more about plans for the desired future family with comprehensive knowledge and preparation.

"...I realize that both status of mine and my parents will change, so, I think marriage is not only about my future but also about the well-prepared self to living in it..." (subject 1)

The dynamics of conflicts in family, roles, and how to live in the social environment encourage participants to think that pre-marriage knowledge is important to be learned, particularly preparing the self to deal with a potential problem in marriage life. Sharing the interests, point of views, and discussing marriage life in PMTC's program helps individuals to think more realistic and reflective related to the actual steps that need to be prepared before marriage.

"...PMTC makes me realize that marriage is a struggling journey and indeed we need knowledge... this is a lifetime journey and worship, the rest of our life... I reflected my own self about the preparation and the steps that need to be taken..." (subject 3).

Various studies revealed that the readiness for marriage, along with feelings and attitudes towards marriage, is a key variable in decision making and a significant predictor of marital satisfaction ⁵⁷. Pre-marriage education provides a broader

⁵⁷ Carroll et al., "Ready or Not?: Criteria for Marriage Readiness among Emerging Adults"; Thomas B. Holman, Jeffrey H. Larson, and Stacy L. Harmer, "The Development and Predictive Validity of a New Premarital Assessment Instrument: The Preparation for Marriage Questionnaire," *Family Relations* 43, no. 1 (1994): 46, <https://doi.org/10.2307/585141>; Waller and

overview related to the dynamics of marriage and family life. This program develops more realistic expectations and encourages individuals to prepare the way they will manage their future family life. An individual's mindset after the pre-marriage education program is associated with the desire to have a partner and focus on physical and psychological readiness. Thus, the focused question is not "Am I ready to get married?" but also "what am I believe that makes me ready for marriage?"; "what life experiences and preparation need to be had?"; "what interpersonal aspects that necessary to develop to fulfill adult roles?"⁵⁸. These questions emphasize the importance of pre-marriage education that can be attended by emerging adults who have a desire to get married to prepare the knowledge.

CONCLUSION

Pre-Marriage Talk Class program attended by single emerging adult Muslim women provides experiences including knowledge about the age of marriage, the importance of vision and mission, self and environment management, awareness of one's self, and also changing mindset towards marriage life. Basic topics about marriage preparation according to Islamic teachings facilitate an individual to learn, recognize, and anticipate the dynamics of married life to achieve the goals of a harmonious family in the future.

McLanahan, "'His' and 'Her' Marriage Expectations: Determinants and Consequences."

⁵⁸ Carroll et al., "Ready or Not?: Criteria for Marriage Readiness among Emerging Adults."

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