

Randomized Control Trial Design for A Friend To Share Project: A Solution to Reduce Child Marriage in West Sulawesi.

A. Mappatunru¹, Sriwiyata Ismail Zainuddin²,

^{1,2}Universitas Sulawesi Barat, Majene, Indonesia

¹andimappatunru@unsulbar.ac.id ²sriwiyataismail@unsulbar.ac.id,

ABSTRACT

Child marriage is becoming a more severe issue that affects both national and international societies, as it violates the human rights of girls and impedes important development goals. This paper aims to discuss two topics, first, the study of child marriage in terms of social and economic aspects. Second, research on the numerous initiatives that have been made by numerous parties worldwide to address the issue of child marriage. This paper uses library research methods and takes West Sulawesi Province as the locus of study. This paper shows that providing information, skills, and network support to women as catalyst to mobilize themselves and their environment is considered the most impactful compared to solutions in the form of financial incentives and other similar solutions. This study offers “A Friend to Share Project” treatment through a randomized control trial design mechanism for women's groups in West Sulawesi. “A Friend to Share Project” is a progressive approach to tackle the patriarchal system that subjected women to domestication in a social and economic context.

Keyword: child marriage, women empowerment, West Sulawesi, randomized control trial design.

ABSTRAK

Komunitas nasional dan internasional semakin meyakini, bahwa perkawinan anak adalah salah-satu masalah serius, baik sebagai pelanggaran hak asasi anak perempuan maupun sebagai penghambat proses pembangunan. Tulisan ini adalah studi tentang dua hal: pertama, studi tentang perkawinan anak yang ditinjau dari aspek sosial dan ekonomi. Kedua, studi mengenai beragam upaya mengatasi permasalahan perkawinan anak yang telah diimplementasikan oleh beragam aktor secara global. Paper ini menggunakan metode penelitian kepustakaan dan mengambil Provinsi Sulawesi Barat sebagai lokus kajian. Paper ini menunjukkan, bahwa pemberian informasi, keterampilan, dan dukungan jaringan kepada perempuan sebagai katalis untuk memobilisasi diri dan lingkungannya menjadi kategori yang dianggap paling berdampak dibandingkan solusi berupa insentif keuangan dan solusi serupa lainnya. Paper ini memberikan tawaran perlakuan melalui Proyek Teman Berbagi pada kelompok perempuan melalui mekanisme desain randomized control trial di Sulawesi Barat. ‘Teman Berbagi’ adalah sebuah pendekatan radikal untuk melawan tatanan patriarki yang menyebabkan perempuan mengalami domestifikasi dalam konteks sosial dan ekonomi.

Kata kunci: perkawinan anak, pemberdayaan perempuan, Sulawesi Barat, randomized control trial design.

BACKGROUND

Ubiquitously, there are 700 million women in the world are married as child brides. Girls not Brides reports that 14% of girls in Indonesia are married before they are turning 18th. From 34 provinces in Indonesia, West Sulawesi has the highest prevalence in child marriage 36.2% (UNICEF and BPS, 2017). Child marriage based on the global definition is any form of union or marriage involving a party or parties below the age of 18. The practice of letting underage children marry is considered against fundamental human rights for children due to the detrimental impact on their well-beingness. Considerable researches unearth kids who are raised by poor economic condition family and live in the rural area are more prone to child marriage practice (Lee-Rife, et al., 2012; UNICEF and BPS, 2017).

Moreover, sociocultural and religion are also contributed to the increasing number of child marriage (Lee-Rife, et al., 2012; Rumble, et al., 2018; Baker, 2015). The locus of this essay is to address child marriage problem in West Sulawesi. In order to be relevant to the topic, this essay will be divided into two main parts. The first part is a literature review and analytical in identifying and understanding the root causes of child marriage in Sulawesi Barat, and the second part is proposing potential solutions to prevent the higher number of child marriage, there will offer several solutions that was the preeminent solution compare to the other studies that have been conducted.

METHOD

This paper uses the method of library research, which is research that utilizes secondary data sources as the main source in studying the phenomenon of child marriage in Indonesia. Secondary data sources used in this study are a number of reports containing quantitative and qualitative data on child marriage in Indonesia (especially reports compiled by UNESCO as one of the representative international institutions) and scientific articles that specifically examine the phenomenon of child marriage. in Indonesia, especially in West Sulawesi Province.

Through these sources, this paper attempts to study in depth the phenomenon of child marriage in Indonesia, analyzes a number of factors that cause child marriage, and provides policy recommendations in the form of a "Friend to Share " program that can be implemented collaboratively between communities, local governments, and non-governmental organizations, as one of the formulas that can complement the various approaches that have been implemented so far to reduce the practice of child marriage in Indonesia, especially those caused by the patriarchal order which causes domestication of women in the social and economic context. The program proposed come in a form of randomized control triat design which expected can be run and evaluate further by the program executors.

RESULT AND DISCUSS

Child Marriage: an Overview

Child marriage is a global concern as its listed as one of the Sustainable Development Goals because of its potential risks. Research conducted by UNICEF reveals that despite the child marriage referring to both boys and girls, the girls are affected relatively larger in this issue (UNICEF - A, 2018). Thus, it can be said that child marriage is associated with gender discrimination. International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) reports that early age marriage harms children, families, and society as a whole. Aside from risking girl's health – in



childbearing and maternal mortality risk – child marriage robs kids' ordinary life including to pursue their education (Malhotra et al., 2011; Mensch et al., 2005). Mensch et al., (2005) in their finding reveals that low education attainment has a strong correlation to population early age marriage. Lower level education, in consequence, limited the skill, mobility and network of the brides and resulted in poverty for her selves, her children, and her families (Malhotra et al., 2011). It can be seen that both short-term and long-term impact of child marriage is retarding the global development; therefore, need to be addressed comprehensively.

The reason behind the child marriage is varying as the researchers discovered the dominant driver factor is poverty (Lee-Rife et al., 2012) The pre-eminent reason is also applied in Indonesia based on Annual National Socioeconomic Survey 2012, reveals three main factors that make girls more vulnerable to child marriage; girls live in the family with lower expenditure has twice as likely to married underage, spatial reason points out child marriage in the rural area 1.5 times higher than urban area, poor housing condition increase the child marriage rate (UNICEF and BPS, 2017). However, it is noteworthy that economics is not a single driving force to this issue, ethic and culture are also take part (Rumble et al., 2018; Baker, 2015; Lee-Rife et al., 2012)

In the sociocultural context, patriarchal society and women domestication in Indonesia precipitate to women's vulnerability to stand and fight for their voice. The writer believes that both voluntarily and forced underage marriage is a manifestation of patriarchal culture. Nussbaum (2000) states that women on many occasions are treated as 'instruments of the ends of others – reproducers, caregivers, sexual outlets, agents of a family's general prosperity' instead of treating them 'as ends in their own right, persons with a dignity that deserves respect from laws and institutions' (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 220). In her conclusion, she said that women in patriarchy culture have 'lack essential support for leading lives that are fully human...they are second-class citizens in reality.' As shown in West Sulawesi, two families agreement to unite their kids is under father legitimation. Considering ethical and moral obligation girls have to obey the objectification of her father decision. Girls are not subject to their marriage. Lastly, the dispensation of marriage law by religion court allows kids to marry underage.

Studies on risks and reasons for child marriage have proposed various strategies to tackle the issue. International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) has such an effort to evaluate hundreds of intervention related to child marriage around the world in order to identify essential elements on addressing this problem. A report in 2011 titled Solution to End Child Marriage; What Evidence Shows identifies five project strategy categories to reduce child marriage that implemented across the world (Malhotra et al., 2011);

1. Empowering girls with information, skills, and support network
2. Educating and mobilizing parents and communities' members
3. Enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling for girls
4. Offering economic support and incentives for girls
5. Fostering an enabling legal and policy framework

Overall studies conducted by ICRW point out intervention initiatives to reduce child marriage have been poorly evaluated (Malhotra et al., 2011; Jain & Kurz, 2007). It reveals only 10% of the project had been evaluated properly while the rest has no adequate method to evaluate their program result and process. Therefore, rigorous evaluate method is needed to find the progressive method, especially in addressing root causes.

Potential Solution

Five strategies mention earlier has the potential to a decrease in the number of child marriage in West Sulawesi. To address the poor issue and patriarchal culture as triggers in West Sulawesi the favourable options to be discussed is strategy 1, 4, and 5. A strategy to foster a legal and policy framework is less favourable as a solution. Indonesia Marriage Law allows women and men to marry at 21, but with parental permission girls at age 16 and boys at 19 can get dispensable to unite.

Moreover, religious court and a local official have the authority to grant parents request to marry their daughter even earlier with no minimum age (Girls not Brides, 2019). Attempt to renew and strengthen the law has been initiated yet challenging to implement in the secular countries (Malhotra, et al., 2011). Their evaluation finds out legal reform Indonesia's 1974 National Marriage Act program result delineates no significant deviation in the number of child marriage reform 1960 to 1985.

Meanwhile, strategy four might have stronger influential as it offers tangible incentives. Malhotra et al. (2011) study reveal the unconditional cash transfer have a significant impact on decreasing the likelihood of being married in Zomba Cash Transfer program compare to other conditional transfer programs within two years. Nevertheless, this program points out the cash transfer receivers are likely to drop out of school as they have additional earning which questionable its ability to postpone marriage (Malhotra et al., 2011).

Therefore, the propitious option is strategy one as studies uncover the implementation of this strategy is always simultaneously with educating and mobilizing parents and community members in strategy 2. The primary goal of this intervention is increasing awareness of girls toward themselves, their world, and their options as a fundamental approach to against patriarchal cultural that isolate women in the social and economic (Lee-Rife, et al., 2012; Malhotra et al., 2011). This intervention is more radical to enable girls to act and advocate their rights, including when and to whom they married. By this intervention, the omission silent stolen childhood expected to reduce.

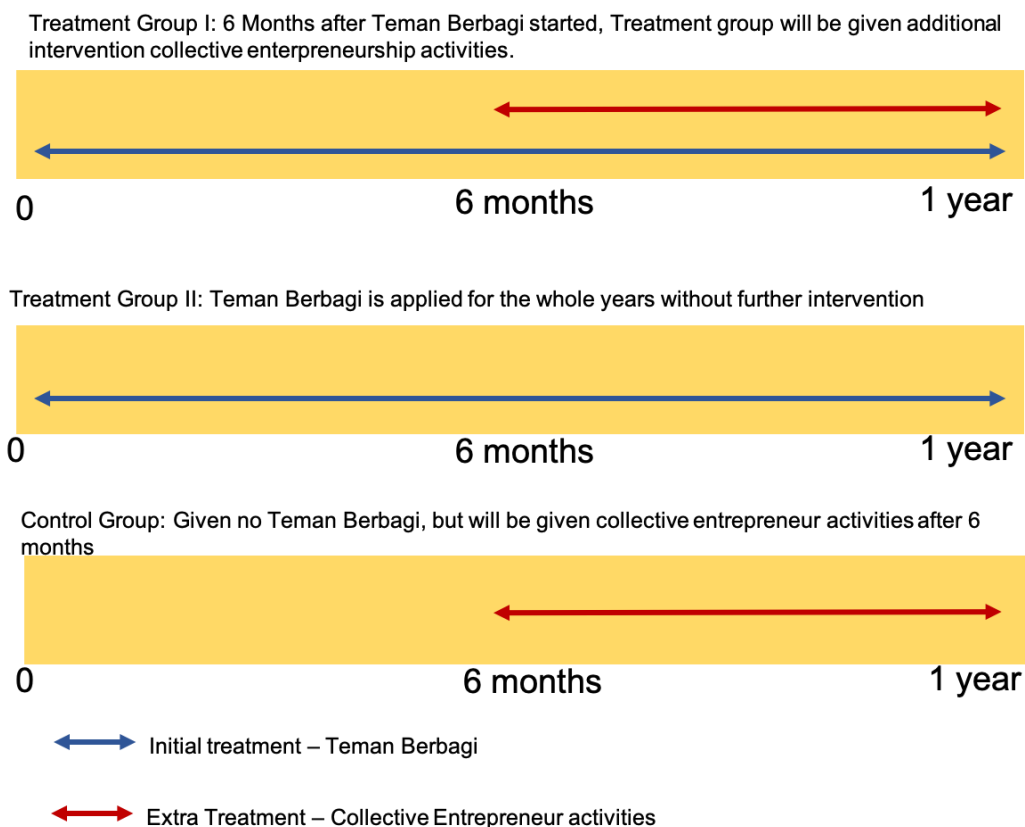
Empowering girls with information, skills, and support network in this solution will be executed by providing counselling services to society. This project will be named 'Teman Berbagi' or 'A friend to share.' 'Share' has to function to distribute information related the dangerous of child marriage to kids and the family including giving sex education; skill by providing them entrepreneurship and financial management training; support unmarried kids, married kids, parents related to elevate

What is modified in Teman Berbagi is the program's commitment to giving a mental and psychological counselling as an attempt to raise the self-awareness in the daily practice including in making a decision related to their selves. As Government UK in Public Health (2018) stated 'being in good mental health brings resilience to cope with difficulties, have good relationships with others and an ability to think clearly, participate in decision making, and have optimism, sense of control and self-efficacy.'

To evaluate the strategy proposal will be tested using Randomised Control Trial to see the effectiveness of Teman Berbagi in empowering girls' self-reliability in the daily activity including economic activities. The experiment locates in Mamuju, West Sulawesi. The treatment group I will be given extra treatment which is group entrepreneur activities.

Another treatment group will be given no extra intervention. Moreover, the control group will be given no initial treatment. The treatment design is illustrated in figure 1.

Table 1: RCT Treatment Design



Ethical concern on this experiment is accountability of ‘Teman Berbagi’ to keep the privacy of the clients. This experiment will hire professional counsellor with certification in order to build trust in society. The counsellor only helps the client to understand the possible options without imposed any coercive approach in order to empower the ability of clients in identifying their issues.

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CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, many studies have shown that patriarchal culture and economic reason are the important triggers that need to be addressed to reduce the number of child marriage. This proposal suggests ‘Teman Berbagi’ as a radical approach to against patriarchy and women domestication in a social and economic context. Various intervention is given to the treatment group to evaluate the initiation. ‘Teman Berbagi’ expects girls to have a sense of control and



self-efficacy in daily practice, entrepreneurship activities will be given to see whether empowering girl's self-awareness can help them to involve in economic activities or not. However, the study is limited in proposing the design of randomized control trial and suggesting the executor to further run this experiment for a better policy input.

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