

Communication Infrastructure in Family Decision Making on Child Marriage Practices

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ABSTRACT : Child marriage is one of the social problems that still occur in many parts of the world including Indonesia. This study aims to analyze the receipt of information related to child marriage from the communication infrastructure owned by parents at the level of micro, meso, and macro communication. The research method uses the paradigm of constructivism with a case study design. The location of the research was conducted in Makassar city in urban, rural, and coastal areas. An analysis unit is a family divided into two different typologies. Data collection techniques are conducted by observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results of this study show that information related to child marriage obtained by parents on all typologies of micro-level communication infrastructure is diverse enough that it plays a big role in influencing their decision to marry or not marry their child. Meanwhile, meso-level communication infrastructure does not provide information related to child marriage in all family typologies. Furthermore, in macro-level communication infrastructure, the government is less than maximal in providing information related to child marriage to families. Most parents get information related to child marriage on macro-level communication infrastructure through mainstream media as well as digital media.

Keywords : Child marriage, communication infrastructure, decision-making, family

I. INTRODUCTION

Child marriage is one of the social problems that still occur in many parts of the world including Indonesia. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) defines child marriage as a marriage performed by a spouse or one of their spouses who is still categorized as a teenager and under 18 years of age [1]. Based on this definition, UNICEF in 2018 estimated that there are about 650 million girls in the world who hold marriages before their 18th birthday[2].

In Indonesia, efforts to minimize the practice of child marriage have been regulated in the laws and regulations. In-Law No. 35 of 2014 on child protection, it is stated that parents are obliged to prevent the practice of child marriage. The government's commitment to preventing child marriage is also stipulated in Law No.16 of 2019 on marriage which states that the minimum age of marriage is 19 years. However, statistics still show that the practice of child marriage is one of the big issues that must be resolved soon.

The Report of the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in 2020 stated that the prevalence rate of child marriage in Indonesia is quite high at 11.21 percent. An estimated 1,220,900 women aged 20-24 married before they turned 18 in 2018. While women aged 20-24 years who held the first marriage before the age of 15 years recorded as many as 61.3 thousand women[2]. This fact ranks Indonesia as the 8th highest country in the world with the absolute number of child marriages.

The high practice of child marriage as mentioned above is due to several factors behind it. Based on previous studies, factors behind child marriage include gender inequality[3,4], education and lack of knowledge[5], poverty[6], and culture and beliefs[7,8]. Some of these factors are believed to be the main causes behind the practice of child marriage.

In addition to the factors mentioned, the phenomenon of child marriage is also influenced by the receipt of information related to child marriage obtained by parents through their communication infrastructure. Communication infrastructure is a basic communication system available in a community and relied on by

individuals to get the information they need in their daily lives[9]. Information obtained by individuals through communication infrastructure is obtained through three levels of communication, namely micro, meso, and macro that are interconnected with each other. Referring to the theory of communication infrastructure, the three levels of communication are known as environmental storytelling networks[10,11].

At the micro-level, information is obtained by individuals through interpersonal communication. This can be obtained from family, friends, and neighbors. Meanwhile, at the meso level, the information needed by individuals is obtained through community groups such as religious groups, arisan groups, as well as government and private formation groups. At the meso level, the information can also be obtained through community-based media. Furthermore, at the macro level, the receipt of information obtained by individuals includes information coming from large-scale organizations (governments and professional organizations) as well as through mainstream media as well as digital media that have a wide reach.

In the context of child marriage, the acceptance of information at three levels of communication then influences parents and determines and shapes their attitude in deciding or not deciding whether or not to marry the child. This is as Baron stated (2008) that decision-making is a process through a combination of individuals or groups and integrating existing information to choose one of the various possible actions[12]. Related to this, Putri (2019) in her research on the use of contraceptives mentioned that the ability to process information by families has a real effect on decision making[13]. Along with the high practice of child marriage that occurs in a society where it not only impacts the child itself but also impacts the family and the community [14], it becomes an important thing to conduct a study on the receipt of information obtained by parents through their communication infrastructure, both at the micro, meso, and macro levels.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

In general, the research paradigm used in this study is the paradigm of constructivism with case study design. The research was conducted in Makassar City in three areas, namely Tamalate Subdistrict (urban area), Biringkanaya Subdistrict (rural area), and Ujung Tanah Subdistrict (coastal area). Makassar city was chosen as the research location because of the consideration that the city of Makassar is the area with the second-highest child marriage rate in South Sulawesi Province. The research time was conducted for four months, namely from July to November 2020.

The analysis unit in this study was families whose family members had held child marriages (married under the age of 18) as well as families who had teenage children (ages 15 - 18) but did not decide to marry their children. The families who became the analysis unit in this study were divided into two different typologies, namely:

- a) Typology I = Families with low economic status (income less than 3 million/month), low education (elementary school - junior high school), as well as the number of children more than 3 people, both married children and unmarried children.
- b) Typology II = Families with high economic status (income above 3 million/month), higher education (high school - undergraduate), as well as the number of children less than 3 people, both married children and unmarried children.

Each family that became an informant in this study was selected by purposive sampling based on the criteria that have been determined in each typology. The key informants in this study amounted to 12 families consisting of 6 families who married children and 6 families who did not marry children. While supporting informants in this study include from the Office of Population Control and Family Planning Makassar City, Extension of Family Planning (PKB) Makassar City, as well as Community Leaders and Religious Figures.

In this study, the authors applied data collection techniques by means of observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations are made by observing family activities that become research informants, in-depth interviews are conducted by giving various questions to informants related to the theme of research, while documentation is done by studying public documents related to child marriage in the form of books, journals, and others.

Data analysis techniques used are data analysis techniques through three water models presented by Miles and Huberman[15]. In this researcher, the authors conducted three data analysis activities simultaneously, namely: (1) data reduction; (2) display data; and (3) conclusion/verification withdrawal. Data analysis was conducted using the help of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDS) which is Nvivo 12 software for the process of coding and categorizing data for interview transcripts and field records that have been collected.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Information Acceptance Through Communication Infrastructure

The communication infrastructure mentioned above is a basic communication system available in a community and relied on by individuals to get the information they need in their daily lives[9]. In the context of

child marriage, the receipt of information obtained by parents through their communication infrastructure at the micro, meso, and macro levels will be outlined below.

Micro-Level Communication Infrastructure

A micro-level communication infrastructure is an interpersonal communication network that parents have in their daily lives. This level of communication infrastructure consists of family, friends, and neighbors. The results showed that in families with low economic status (Typology I) who decide to marry children, the information they (parents) get related to child marriage is a risk that they will bear if they marry a child at a young age. The risk is in the form of difficulty in taking care of the marriage certificate for their children because they are minors. Informants also get information in the form of a heavier dependent burden that they will get because their children and son-in-law do not have a job and income to meet the needs of their household. RM (45 years old) for example, reveals that:

"Her husband has not been able to work because he is a minor. So he said to the family, 'you're the one who's going to be your kid'. So I told you what else to do then."

(Interview with RM, 04 November 2020)

Other information obtained by informants from families and neighbors is that they will be arrested by the authorities if they marry a minor. The information does not speak at all about the risks or impacts that their child will have if they marry at the age of children. The results of this study showed that the lack of correct information obtained by parents related to child marriage is very influential in their decision-making to marry children at the age of children. This is in line with Dwinanda's research (2015) which states that there is a relationship between the level of knowledge and education of parents and the incidence of child marriage. Parents with low knowledge and education tend to decide to marry their child at the age of the child[5].

Different findings were found in families with the same economic status but who did not marry children. Based on the findings in the field, it is known that they do not get any information related to child marriage from family or neighbors. The informants revealed that they only get advice from the family to send their children to school rather than choose to marry them at a very young age. The phrase NR (52 years old) indicates this by stating that:

"Once he (Brother) said that the other one (Kia) did not get married too soon. Let's work first. That's also his cousin saying go to college first, don't get married just yet. Just go to tourism school, I'll take care of it".

(Interview with NR, November 17, 2020)

Although support for not marrying children is obtained from the family, it is not uncommon for neighbors to encourage and encourage them to marry children immediately. Most of their neighbors hope that girls will soon get a match and pray that their child will soon be proposed. However, encouragement and advice by neighbors did not affect their decision to marry children. This is because the informants have certain considerations that make them choose not to marry children. The three families who are informants in this typology (low economic status who decide not to marry children), state that marrying under the age of 18 has the potential to create a less harmonious family. They think that children under the age of 18 can not think in adulthood and do not yet understand how to live a home life. These findings are essentially in line with John's (2019) research in Nigeria and Ethiopia which states that child marriage often does not go happily because the child is considered to lack the physical and emotional maturity needed to handle responsibilities in marriage[16].

While in families with high economic status (Typology II), who decide to marry children, information related to child marriage obtained from their micro-level communication infrastructure is quite diverse. Such information is in the form of risks of marrying children at the age of children such as the tendency of quarrels in the family that lead to divorce, the economy of the child's household that is potentially problematic, as well as health risks to children, especially concerning reproductive health. However, the information is not strong enough to prevent them from marrying children. This is because their daughter has already proposed. For informants (both low and high economic status), rejecting an application is not good for their child's future. They believe that rejecting the proposal will hinder or even alienate their daughter's soul mate. The strong belief in the proposal caused them to choose to marry the child even though they were young. This is as HS (43 years old) stated:

"Back when Husnaeni high school had input family said 'just school your son is fine, just go to college, so he can get a good job later. If he's already working, you can enjoy your son's income too.' But I told you what else to do. It means that if they do not come to propose, it is also impossible for me to love this marriage children".

(Interview with HS, 10 November 2020)

Different findings were found in families with the same economic status but who did not marry children. Based on the results of the study, it is known that the information they get in the form of child marriage events in their community environment, where the practice is experiencing a lot of problems. Another

information they also get is the risk if the child is married at a very young age. The risk is in the form of a tendency to have quarrels in the family because child psychology is considered to be unstable and reproductive health in children who have potential disorders. Informants also get advice from families and neighbors not to marry their children at the age of children. GF (51 years old) for example, revealed that He got a lot of information from his family about the events of child marriage that often had an altercation that led to divorce. The information is not only heard but instead seen directly by the GF. Based on information and events seen, so that it becomes one of the reasons behind him not to marry children at the age of children. Herawati (2021) reveals the same thing that child marriage accompanied by a lack of physical, mental, emotional, and economic readiness will lead to tasks in the family lifeless well run to have a greater risk of divorce [17].

Meso-Level Communication Infrastructure

In Meso-level communication infrastructure, community groups and local media are a source of parental information in their daily lives. Of the six families who became informants in typology I (families with low economic status whether married children or not), the results revealed that they had no information on child marriage from local media and community groups in their area of residence. The information they get is only about their daily lives such as work, the household economy, and information related to religious affairs. This is as stated by NR (52 years old) stating that:

"I don't think so. Most religious issues. Emphasize to us how to focus on religious issues. That's all it used to be described. Rarely discussed such issues (child marriage). If I remember it, it never seems to be."

(Interview with NR, November 17, 2020)

The lack of information obtained by this typology family indicates the failure of community-based communication resources as well as local media. Meso-level communication infrastructure is expected to serve as a bridge in connecting macro and micro-level information. Where information relating to child marriage that is not obtained by parents from the macro-level (government, mainstream media, and digital media) should be done by local media or community groups. This is as Ball-Rokeach et al. (2001) states that meso-level storytelling agents have a key role as liaisons to stories at the micro and macro levels[10].

While in typology family II (families with high economic status whether married children or not), the results showed that they did not get information related to child marriage from local media. This is because they rarely or never even access local media (community radio) because it is considered outdated. However, from the community groups they follow, they get information in the form of child marriage events that occur in their community environment as well as recommendations or even prohibited from marrying children at the age of children because of consideration of the risks that will be obtained by the child if they marry at a relatively young age. This is as the AG (50 years) states that:

"So if the problem (child marriage), rarely discussed because before it happened, all the leaders get along well to appeal to members. What is clear is that there used to be no urged not to. The chairman of the association conveys to the board, and then the manager delivers to the members."

(Interview with AG, November 11, 2020)

The results of this study show that, in addition to connecting stories at the micro and macro level, community groups (Meso level communication infrastructure) also have an important role to influence their members in deciding not to marry children at the age of children. The findings of this study are basically in line with Sendjaja's expression (2005) which states that one of the functions of a community group is to try to make it difficult for members of the group to do or not do something according to what is desired[18].

Macro-Level Communication Infrastructure

Macro-level communication infrastructure in parents consists of government, mainstream media, and digital media. Families with low economic status (Typology I) who married children in this study revealed that they did not get information from digital media at all because of the limited resources they had. Most of them do not have smartphones and do not understand the use of internet media. This makes their access to digital media difficult. They also do not get information related to child marriage from the government (BKKBN, KPPPA, Makassar Municipality). One of their reasons is because they are rarely invited to meetings or socializations conducted by the government in their area of residence. This is as the expression AT (38 years old) states that:

"Rarely do I come with such a thing. Because usually of the meeting or socialization here, I was never called. Only my neighbors are called to join meetings or socialization"

(Interview with AT, November 20, 2020).

Despite not being informed through digital or government media, informants revealed that they sometimes hear information about child marriage events through the news that is questioned on television. This finding is basically in line with Schramm (1995) which states that alone or with other institutions, the mass media (television) can perform functions that focus on aspects of development, where such functions are

informants, as educators, expanding public insights, improving aspirations, and providing personal communication channels[19].

Different findings were found in families with the same economic status but who did not marry children. The results revealed that the informants get information from the government in the form of the ideal age of a marriage performed. Where the age is 22 years for women and 25 years for men. They also get information related to contraceptives from PKB who are in charge of their area of residence. From the confession of the informant, PKB who served in their area of residence informs that the families keep the pregnancy distance between the first and second child. This is as the expression NR (52 years) states that:

"Most KB problem. Others don't. The KB problem we used to hear about the program. If the child marries so that they keep their distance if they give birth"

(Interview with NR, November 17, 2020)

From the mainstream media, informants acknowledge that in addition to getting information related to child marriage events, they also get information about the impact of child marriage. Some of the impacts of child marriage that they know are disharmonious households, potentially problematic family economies, and health impacts on children, especially in terms of pregnancy and childbirth. As for digital media, informants reveal that they rarely access the media because of the kinship they have, where they do not have a smartphone and do not really understand the use of internet media.

In families with high economic status (Typology II) who marry children, the results of this study revealed that they do not get information through digital media or from the government regarding child marriage. From digital media, the absence of information obtained is because they rarely or never even access the information. The lack of access to their information to digital media is due to them feeling uninterested in seeking information related to child marriage through the media. Smartphones that can be used to find information related to child marriage are only used as a medium of communication through instant messages such as WhatsApp (WA). As for the government, they revealed that they had no information about child marriage at all. The busyness of work that causes them to rarely be at home on weekdays causes them to never be touched by the counseling or socialization carried out by the government in campaigning on matters concerning child marriage. HS (43 years old) for example, said this and stated that:

"Never before, because I never came at all. It's normal to have counseling but I never came along. That's the usual counseling in Posyandu. This is because I am busy working outside the house".

(Interview with HS, 10 November 2020)

Even if they get information from the government, they only hear about the Family of Hope (PKH) program from the village. As for the mainstream media (television and newspapers), informants reveal that they rarely access the media. However, the informant admitted that they occasionally get information in the form of child marriage events from a news broadcast by television. Where it was accidentally seen when watching soap operas after dinner.

In families with high economic status who decide not to marry children, the information they get from the government is in the form of advice not to marry children at the age of children. According to the informant, it is regulated in the legislation. Where if they marry a child at the age of children, it will make it difficult to manage the marriage certificate for their child. Meanwhile, from the mainstream media, informants revealed that they were informed about the incident of child marriage from the news that aired on television. But regarding the impact of child marriage, they did not get information about it from television. Information related to the impact of child marriage is only obtained from stories with friends and family (micro-level communication infrastructure). This is as the AG (50 years) states that:

"If the incident of child marriage from television ever. Only when it comes to the impacts, I don't think so. When it comes to that (the impact) ordinary friends tell stories about people he knows. Ordinary young pregnant children eventually have an impact on their health. Most just like that."

(Interview with AG, November 11, 2020)

From digital media, information related to child marriage is obtained by informants through social media in the form of child marriage events that occur in the province of South Sulawesi. The information was obtained through makassar_info's Instagram account. They are also informed about the impact of child marriage. Where the impact is in the form of quarrels in the family and KDRT that led to divorce. These findings show that social media has an important role to play in providing useful information to parents.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The receipt of information from the three communication levels obtained by parents shows that micro-level communication infrastructure in all family typologies provides more information related to child marriage than meso and macro-level communication infrastructure. While the meso-level communication infrastructure

of parents on all typologies is very lacking in providing information related to child marriage. The information that parents get at that level is only about matters about their daily lives in the form of information related to work, economics, and religious information. Therefore, this level of communication infrastructure is considered to fail to be a bridge between stories related to child marriage at the macro and micro levels. Furthermore, in macro-level communication infrastructure, the government is less than maximal in providing information related to child marriage to parents. This is due to various constraints both sourced to the parents and from the government itself.

Based on the findings of this study, the recommendations submitted by the authors related to the receipt of information through family communication infrastructure that influences parental decision-making on the practice of child marriage in Makassar city are: interpersonal communication approaches through family/relatives and neighbors need to be sharpened both through cadres, community leaders/religions, and extension workers. This is because the level of interpersonal communication (micro-level communication infrastructure) in parents is very dominant in influencing their decision-making in deciding or not deciding to marry their child. Furthermore, it is necessary to form and empower community groups as well as local media/community media in informing matters related to child marriage to parents so that it can be a bridge of information between the level of macro and micro communication. Also, the government is expected to be maximal in campaigning programs to minimize child marriage through interpersonal communication approaches at the village level, conduct community-based communication approaches, and communication approaches through mainstream media and digital media.

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