



The Controversy of the Hadith Interpretation of Early Marriage among Muslim Communities

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Abstract: The Muslim community interprets the hadith differently, leading to the early or young age marriage controversy. This study aims to map the arguments of acceptance and rejection of young marriage among Muslims derived from the interpretation of hadith on young marriage. This qualitative research employed primary data sources from anti-dating millennial community social media and the interpretation of ulema on online media. The study results showed that the anti-dating movement campaigned for young marriage by partially quoting hadiths, which distorted religious texts, resulting in misreading, misinterpretation, and misquotation of the Prophet's hadiths. Based on the results of this understanding, millennial Muslims believe that young marriage avoids adultery to increase piety. In contrast, progressive Islamic scholars (ulema) reject young marriage by citing the hadiths on marriage comprehensively and by considering the negative impact of young marriage and the purpose of marriage in Islam. The young marriage controversy is based on different methods of understanding hadith, different sources of knowledge about hadith, different marital experiences of young marriage partners, and different environments that influence young marriage. The reinterpretation of the hadiths that legitimate young marriage, which is influenced by patriarchal ideology, is absolutely necessary to follow the principles and values of Islamic teachings that are humanist, inclusive, and egalitarian.

Keywords: *Early Marriage, Hadith Interpretation, Millennial Muslims, Progressive Ulema*

Introduction

Early marriages in the name of religion are a new phenomenon among educated urban youth following the rise of Indonesia's conservative hijrah movement. These phenomena are believed to be a form of individual piety in internalizing and implementing the ideology of hijrah (Nisa 2020) by campaigning for early marriages to avoid adultery. The hijrah community carried out massive campaigns on social media, such as Anti-Dating Indonesia, Singles Fisabilillah, Singles Until Halal, and Youth Hijrah. Early marriage propaganda is carried out with various hashtags on social media, such as #nikahmuda, #jomblo, #taaruf, #nikahyuk, #jomblofisabilillah, #taarufnikah, #indonesiatanpapacaran, #nikahtanpapacaran, and #halal. PPIM (Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat—Center for Study of Islam and Society of Islamic State University of Jakarta) research stated that the hijrah movement is dominated by Islamic conservative-fundamentalist narratives, in which religious texts are obtained and disseminated through social media (Halimatusadiyah 2020). However, the hadith mediatization shows a shallow religious understanding and experiences a desacralization of meaning (Qudsy, Abdullah, and Pabbajah 2021). Thus, there are misreading and misinterpretation of the traditions of early marriage, encouraging campaigns to marry at a young age.

Studies on early marriage are divided into three categories. First, the factors that influence the occurrence of early marriage. Several factors can influence early marriage, such as religion (Levitt and Ware 2006; Ahmad 2012; Bowden 2013), promiscuity, poverty (Stark 2018), lack of education, and unemployment (Carmichael 2011). Social norms also allow women to become wives at a young age (Bessell 2018). In the context of Indonesia, early marriage is also associated with ethnicity and societal customs (Bennett 2007; Buttenheim and Nobles 2009). Jin et. al. discovered that village women marry more quickly than city ones (Jin, Li, and Feldman 2005). Since 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak has increased the number of early marriage (Rahiem 2021). Second is the impact of early marriage on family and women's resiliency (Grace 2004; Waller and McLanahan 2005; Jones 2014). Third, the trend of early marriage among the hijrah community is equivalent to Indonesia without dating in terms of demonstrating Islamic identity (Rahman et al. 2021). The article mentioned previously does not explain the debate between conservative Muslims and progressive Muslims about early marriage, which is the focus of this study.

This article aims to map the debate on early marriage among millennial Muslims and ulema who are quite controversial among Muslims. The focus of this article is on their arguments that are based on differences in theorems (Islamic argumentation) and how to understand hadith. Therefore, this study aims to complement the previous studies by answering three questions: First, what hadith (interpretation) is utilized to approve or disapprove of early marriage? Second, what are the reasons for these differences? Third, how to reread the hadith of early marriage that uses hermeneutical perusal to realize humanist, inclusive, and egalitarian Islamic principles? These three questions guide the discussion in this article.

This article departs from three arguments. First, early marriage among educated millennial youth in urban areas in Indonesia is becoming a new trend and phenomenon to show piety in religion. This phenomenon is based on a partial, textual, and literal religious understanding, which is campaigned through social media. Second, there is a rejection by the ulema of the phenomenon of early marriage because the practice is not in accordance with Islamic values. The reluctance of young people to follow the ulema's instructions/*fatwa* shows the deauthorization of ulema among young people and at the same time shows the power of influencers to influence young people's life choices. Third, there is a need for reinterpretation of hadiths that support early marriage in order to understand the Islamic values in a comprehensive and holistic manner.

Literature Review

Hadith Interpretation

Hadiths are the words and actions of the Prophet Muhammad; after the Quran, they are the second source of Islamic beliefs. Hadith has become a guide for Muslims in their daily lives and a source of Islamic rules and values (legal standards) for Muslims (Barazangi 2016). In the current era of digital religion, social media has altered the method of producing and consuming

religious material, as well as the pattern of religious understanding propagated (Halimatusadiyah 2020). As a result, the hadith examined, comprehended, and shared on social media is the outcome of Muslim understanding based on religious knowledge. In modern discourse, hadith is reinterpreted in the context of modernity (K. Ali 2004), such as gender and women's issues, to reclaim identity and identify Islamic messages (Barazangi 2016).

Studies on the interpretation of hadith fall into three categories. First, textual interpretation refers to the textual understanding of hadiths (Sirry 2014). This way of interpretation remains popular among conservative Muslims who underpin the subordination of women (V. Sandwijk and Katz 2016) and the phenomenon of honor killing among Muslims (Doğan 2011). Second, the contextual interpretation, which is regarded as the understanding of hadith by taking into account the past and contemporary sociocultural histories of the hadith, has been widely adopted by progressive ulema in understanding religious texts, both the Quran and hadith. Feminist Muslims adopt the method of hermeneutics to interpret the Quran and hadiths regarding gender (Duderija 2008) through an analytic and thematic approach (Namazi 2010) and consider the texts and contexts (Ramle and Huda 2022). Third, the controversy of interpreting sacred texts among the Muslims, including among progressive Muslims and conservative Muslims related to social issues (Naqiyah et al. 2022; Duderija 2008) the presence of multiple interpretations of hadith related to women (Masruhan 2019; Leo 2005) which impact on the position and role of women in everyday life (Hoel and Shaikh 2013; Ammar 2007; Smith 2014; Hassan 2017). In addition, the reduction of hadith texts on social media has resulted in narrow interpretation and desacralization of hadiths (Qudsy, Abdullah, and Pabbajah 2021).

Early Marriage in Indonesia

Early marriage is a marriage at a young age between a man and a woman. The age limit for youth varies greatly among institutions. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines youth as those aged 15–24 (WHO, n.d.). According to Law No. 16 of 2019, the minimum marriage age for men and women is 19 years. Those under the age of 18 are classified as children or minors. As a result, some young wedded people are classified as children, and this falls under the heading of child marriage.

According to the results of the survey, courting and puberty are recognized by Indonesians at the age of 12. About 92 percent of dating adolescents hold hands, 82 percent kiss, and 63 percent dry-hump partners of the opposing sex. These actions then inspire adolescents to engage in sexual activity (Ekasari and Rosidawati 2019). This courtship is not only harmful to them but also contradicts Islamic principles. Therefore, the hijrah community provides a way for young couples to avoid dating, which is prohibited by their religion (Ayeshaputri, Munabari, and Jemadu 2022).

Studies on early marriage have been divided into three categories. First, public perceptions of early marriages: early marriage is a necessary tradition supported by society and familial norms and a personal decision (Vu 2018) to achieve spirituality and marital

pleasure. Second, cultural, social, and religious variables all have an impact on the factors that lead to early marriage (Homzah and Sulaeman 2007); furthermore, poverty, low education, family self-esteem, and sexual practices (Bennett 2007), religious piety (Nisa 2020), the willingness to have children, and to gain freedom, which is promoted by social media influencers who construct marriage as a form of freedom, romance, and happiness in marriage (Damayanti, Meliala, and Silmi 2021). Third, the consequences of early marriage on family resilience: family finance, emotions, reproductive health, and female subordination (Rahman and Yuandari 2020; Davids 2007).

Millennial Muslims and Hijrah Community

Millennial Muslims have recently subscribed to the hijrah community, known to campaign anti-dating and to justify early marriage. Muslims interpret hijrah (migration) as quite diverse. Hijrah is associated with exodus and lifestyle changes. In the context of Islamic history, the hijrah is Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina, which ushered in fundamentalist changes among Muslims (Alam 2007). In the modern context, the meaning of hijrah has evolved to include not only an exodus from one place to another but also a shift in attitude, behavior, and appearance. Hijrah is defined as a journey from anywhere to Islam (Kibble 2016). Hijrah is a religious behavior of Muslims, which is contrasted with a secular dimension in the context of the Muslim diaspora (A. Ali 2010). Hijrah, according to the Islamic State, means attracting foreign fighters (Uberman and Shay 2016). Hijrah is essentially a process for a Muslim to become better as a person's transformation from less religious to more religious. Sunesti defines hijrah as a way of life, as evidenced by their appearance, which includes shar'i clothing, robes, beards, headscarves, and some wearing niqabs (Sunesti, Hasan, and Azca 2018).

Hijrah is part of the Indonesian Muslim youth movement and has been investigated in three categories. First, consider the hijrah community's religiosity on social media. The use of social media to increase religious knowledge among the hijrah community must be expanded (Hidayat, Sholihin, and Wanto 2021). Members of the hijrah community include musicians and notable figures (Fitri and Jayanti 2020). Second, hijrah is a behavioral shift as part of a new urban Muslim identity construction (Rahman et al. 2021). According to PPIM (2020), hijrah is characterized by a new perspective on religion, such as a change in outfit and lifestyle away from what is prohibited, which manifests itself in daily life (PPIM 2020). Hijrah, on the other hand, has opposing faces, such as misogynist and patriarchal, intolerant, and blasphemous takfiri. Third, hijrah is linked to pop culture, the modern capitalist system, and religion's commodification (Amna 2019; Lyansari 2019).

Method

Based on three arguments, this research is critical. To begin with, young marriage is a controversial topic in Indonesia. The majority of Indonesian Muslim communities accept

early marriages, though some do not. Second, the contentious reasons for early marriage are based on the selection of hadith texts and religious text interpretations. Third, there is a shift in young people's motivations for young marriage, from economic and social concerns to the millennial Muslim piety identity trend (Nisa 2020).

In addition to analyzing hadith texts that legitimize the motivation for early marriage, this qualitative study examined the arguments of ulema who oppose young marriages. The data were collected in the form of memes, flyers, videos, and images from online anti-dating communities, the Young Marriage Movement, Youth Hijrah, and Indonesia Without Dating on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Responses and interpretations of ulema regarding young marriage are also obtained from online media, while the experiences of young married couples are collected from websites. The focus of the study determines the selection of online content. The interpretation and comprehension of hadith texts by Muslims affect the practice of young marriage among Indonesian Muslims.

As informants, ulema were chosen depending on the category of their religious understanding. Moderate and progressive ulema are the best option because they discourage young marriages and do not take religious texts literally, instead taking into account the context and spirit of Islamic teachings. The author also used the experiences of young married couples selected based on their religious perspective in order to support the aforementioned findings. Data from online media are collected, grouped according to particular themes, and then evaluated using content analysis.

A Debate between the Millennial Muslim Community and Progressive Ulema on Young Marriage

This study reveals that young marriage is perceived differently by the millennial young Muslim community and progressive ulema, which implies acceptance and rejection of young marriage. The anti-dating community campaigns for young marriage based on hadith textual narratives that illustrate the benefits of young marriage for sexual life, economy, and increased spirituality. In contrast, progressive Muslims reject young marriage based on Islamic arguments by considering the requirements of marriage, the negative impact of young marriage, and the spirit of Islam on marriage. The different views of the two groups are presented in the following text.

Young Marriage Hadith Narratives

The Anti-Dating Community's Young Marriage Campaign is based on misreading, misinterpretation, and misquotation of hadith verses. Hadiths on young marriages that are popular among the hijra community are split into four reasons: (1) avoid adultery, (2) guarantee of welfare from Allah, (3) the fantasy of getting a religious (good) partner, and (4) increase piety.

Avoiding Adultery

The main reason for the anti-dating community to promote young marriages is to avoid adultery. Adultery is defined as sexual contact outside of marriage, which Islam forbids. Adultery is sometimes practiced by young people who are dating, even when they are aware that the behavior is illegal (should not be done). Courtship leads to adultery, which is an immoral and illegal act that brings sin. Furthermore, courtship is thought to be the gateway to adultery and hell, as stated in the following quote: “Your boyfriend could be your hell. Dating is the door to adultery; opening it with both of you is easier” (Indonesia Tanpa Pacaran 2022). Dating must not be based on the following verses from the Koran and hadith: “And do not approach adultery, for adultery is an abomination and a bad way” (QS. Al-Isra: 32).

On the other hand, the young marriage community cites the opinion of Islamic scholars to legitimate its views as follows:

The solution to avoiding the adultery sin is to facilitate marriage. Marriage is part of religion, which protects people from adultery. If marriage is made difficult, then adultery will easily be committed. Human biological needs are fitrah, and Islam regulates them to ensure that they are channelled properly. Marriage is better dating and adultery. (Indonesia Tanpa Pacaran 2022)

The Indonesia Without Dating community also campaigns for young marriage through memes with captions or statement of hadith texts with various colors and symbols to help readers understand the Prophet’s hadith (Qudsy, Abdullah, and Pabbajah 2021), such as the following meme:



Figure 1: Dating Leads to Hell
Source: Indonesia Tanpa Pacaran [Indonesia Without Dating] 2022



Figure 2: Dating People Will Be Tempted by Satan
Source: Indonesia Tanpa Pacaran [Indonesia Without Dating] 2022

Figure 1 illustrates that dating is a door for adultery that can bring the perpetrator to hell which is depicted by a burning fire. The hadith narration regarding the punishment of adulterers in hell is as follows:

According to Samurah bin Jundab RA, who narrated the Prophet's dream, the Prophet SAW stated, "So we saw in it naked men and women. A blazing fire erupted from beneath them. They screamed as the fire engulfed them." He stated, "I told both of them (two angels)." "Who exactly are they?" "As for the naked men and women in the furnace, they are adulterers," they both said. (HR. Bukhari, no. 6525)

Furthermore, Figure 2 illustrates the presence of Satan or evil temptation against teenage dating. The slogan "be careful, there are devils between you and those having fun dating" is followed by images of women and men dating. This phrase is based on the Prophet's hadith: "A man should not be alone with a woman, unless Satan is also present" (H. R. Al-Hakim, no. 387). In Islam, Satan represents evil, who enjoys tempting humans. Satan plays a crucial role in the story of Adam and Eve's descent to earth from heaven by tempting them to disobey God's commands. Therefore, Satan is believed to always seduce humans to commit acts prohibited by religion. Dating is one form of action that encourages humans to commit adultery, which violates religion and is caused by the temptation of Satan.

The understanding of marrying young to avoid adultery can mislead readers because it contradicts the reality. To avoid adultery, one does not always have to get married. Young people who cannot restrain their sexual desires can engage in positive activities, such as sports, writing, gardening, and other activities. On the other hand, the belief in getting married to avoid adultery is not always true. It is not uncommon for married people to commit adultery by cheating on their spouses with other people, which causes quarrels and conflicts between husband and wife and ends in divorce. In 2022, divorce rate due to infidelity increased in Bekasi City (Admin 2023). Likewise, in the Bojonegoro Religious Court in East Java, 48 percent of divorces occurred due to online infidelity (Admin 2022). Although cheating does not always lead to adultery, the cheating partner may do this on a consensual basis. Thus, people getting married to avoid adultery are not making the right choice.

A Guarantee of Prosperity from Allah

The young marriage community believes that Allah will give those who marry fortune, which is why they marry at a young age. Therefore, even though they do not have a job yet to fulfill the needs of the household, they believe that God guarantees their lives, as in the following quote: Simply do it first. We shall pray to Allah for wealth. Profession is not an excuse for not perfecting half of religion because Allah ensures the sustenance of two married people (Indonesia Tanpa Pacaran 2022). This belief is based on a literal understanding of Quranic verses: And marry the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. If they should be poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty, and Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing (QS. An Nur: 32)

The verse is reinforced by the Prophet's hadith that married people are one of the three groups that get help from Allah as in the following hadith:

There are three people who will receive Allah's help: (1) the one who strives in the cause of Allah, (2) the one who marries to preserve his purity, (3) the mukatab slave who wants to free himself. (HR. An-Nasa'i, no. 3218; Tirmidzi, no. 1655; Ibnu Majah, no. 2518)

The narrative that marriage brings sustenance can distort religious texts without a full and comprehensive understanding of the texts of the Quran and hadith. This hadith contradicts another hadith that requires financial capability for the prospective couple. On the other hand, this narrative also contradicts the reality that marriage does not automatically bring fortune to someone. On the contrary, fortune only exists for people who are willing to try and work. Fortune in the financial context determines the level of household welfare and family resilience. Many husbands and wives conflict over financial issues, which leads to divorce. Divorce data in Indonesia in 2022 amounted to 516,344 cases. The main factor of divorce is disputes and quarrels as much as 63.41 percent followed by economic factors as much as 24.75 percent (Annur 2023). In other words, economic unpreparedness in households impacts household resilience.

Marriage as an Act of Worship

Religion is another reason to marry at a young age. Research conducted by Nisa (2020) shows that the trend of marrying at a young age in Indonesia has shifted from being influenced by economic factors, poverty, patriarchal norms, family honor, and low access to education. Young urban students currently marry young for religious reasons to show individual piety in the public sphere. Young marriages are considered a form of individual piety because they have carried out the Sunnah of the Prophet and avoided adultery which religion forbids. Getting married is part of fulfilling the religious commandment, as in the following hadith: If someone is married, he has practiced half of the religion. So let him fear Allah for the remaining half of his life (HR. Baihaqi, no. 625).

The Fantasy of a Pious Partner

The fantasy of finding a pious (good) partner is one of the reasons young people get married. The hijrah community members believe that good people will find suitable partners. Hijrah husbands are thought to be capable of respecting their wives, being responsible to their families, romantic, understanding, patient, compassionate, loyal, and gentle. In the meantime, hijrah women are gentle, calm, patient, motherly, good cooks, and obedient to their husbands (Lestari 2022). They also believe that men and women who avoid courtship will become faithful partners who will not cheat or commit adultery in marriage as depicted in the meme in Figure 3.



Figure 3: People Who Don't Date, They Will Not Cheat

Source: *Indonesia Tanpa Pacaran [Indonesia Without Dating] 2022*

The image of two-veiled, single (not dating), red-and-white-clad women is accompanied by the phrase, “If you’ve been single and you’ve been able to avoid courtship, then you are undoubtedly faithful to your spouse.” This catchphrase ensures that individuals who are not currently dating will be loyal to their future partners.

The narrative of good men and women, in terms of religion and appearance, being faithful to their spouses, does not always match the daily reality. Religious people do not always make good husbands, as the following experience shows:

I married at the age of 20 and my husband at the age of 27. I chose him as my husband because he is more knowledgeable about religion and has more work experience. As a result, I felt at ease. That is why I chose him in the first place. Long story short, after we married, it became clear that we held opposing views and principles, and that he is, in fact, short-tempered, which surprised me (Interview with Risty on 5 January 2023).

As someone who has only been married for four years, I believe that married life is not always beautiful. Sometimes, it hurts when reality does not meet expectations, and an unpredictable way of life is a lovely story that I can tell my children someday to teach them that there is no such thing as a perfect life. (Interview with TS on 7 January 2023)

Someone who is good religiously should also be a good partner in marriage. The indicators of a good marriage according to the Quran are a strong bond between husband and wife (QS. Annisa: 21), treating your spouse well (QS. Annisa: 19), complementing and protecting each other (QS.al-Baqarah: 87), and deliberation (QS. Al-Baqarah: 233).

The campaign for young marriage as a solution to religiously forbidden courtship certainly raises concerns about the family’s long-term viability. The dream of a beautiful, harmonious, and romantic wedding creates shock and incompatible expectations, leaving the

couple frustrated in the face of young people's economic, physical, and mental insecurity. Young marriages are detrimental to the physical, psychological, social, economic, and health well-being of young couples.

Progressive Ulema Opposing Early Marriage

Ulema, as religious authorities in Indonesia, play an important role in interpreting religious texts and issuing fatwas to their followers. Islamic scholars from various Islamic organizations, such as Nahdatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and the Indonesian Ulema Council, oppose young marriages because of the negative impact of young marriage on women and children and contrary to the purpose of marriage in Islam.

Must Be Mentally, Physically, Psychologically, and Financially Ready for Marriage

All ulema from various organizations agreed that marriage should not be based solely on the desire to legalize sex but should also be financially, physically, psychologically, and mentally prepared. According to NU (Nahdatul Ulama) scholars, for example: "Implicitly, Shari'a requires that those about to marry be mentally, physically, and psychologically prepared, mature, and understand the meaning of marriage as a form of worship" (Amiruddin Thamrin 2008). This view follows the hadith of the Prophet: O young people! Whoever among you can marry, should marry, because it helps him lower his gaze and guard his modesty and whoever is not able to marry, should fast, as fasting diminishes his sexual power (HR Bukhari, no. 5066).

Three things were revealed by the aforementioned hadith. First, if possible, get married. The main requirement for marriage is ability, which includes physical, psychological, mental, and economic abilities. The Prophet Muhammad gave the example of marrying at the age of 25 when he was financially capable and ready to start a family. Another hadith stated that the criteria for selecting a husband or wife are wealth, lineage or descent, beauty, and religion: A woman is married for four things, that is, her wealth, her family status, her beauty, and her religion, so you should marry the religious woman (otherwise) you will be a loser (HR Bukhari, no. 4700). Marriage for people who are financially, physically, and psychologically incapable contradicts the aforementioned hadith and the Prophet's practice of marrying at a particular age.

In addition, marriage can protect against adultery. Marriage, according to the previously mentioned hadith, can "lower the gaze and maintain the private parts," which is interpreted as a form of abstaining from adultery. Adultery or sexual intercourse between a man and a woman outside of marriage is forbidden in Islam. Marriage is the only institution that legalizes sexual relations. According to the Quran, "And stay away from adultery. Adultery is an abomination in every way" (QS. al-Isra: 32). Although Islam forbids adultery, this does not mean that people who are unable to legalize sexual relations through marriage should marry right away. Marriage is more than just a sexual relationship. As previously stated, getting married requires planning and capabilities.

Finally, fasting is claimed as a barrier against adultery. Fasting is a form of worship in which one abstains from eating and drinking as well as from sexual desire. Even husband and wife fasting are forbidden from having sexual encounters during the day. People who are unable to control their sexual desire are encouraged to fast, and those who are unable to do so are advised not to marry unless they meet religious requirements. Thus, there are three essential points in Muslim marriage: Personal capacity is the main requirement for marriage, sexual relations can only be legalized through the institution of marriage, and fasting can prevent a Muslim from committing adultery, which is forbidden in Islamic teachings.

The Negative Impact of Marrying at a Young Age

Several progressive Islamic scholars reject young marriage because of its negative impact on women, children, and family resilience. Young marriage can have a harmful influence on women's sexual health and reproductive health due to physical and psychological unpreparedness. Marrying at a young age can lead to physical and sexual violence; isolation; mental depression; increased risk of sexually transmitted diseases; cervical cancer; obstetric fistula; premature birth; HIV risk; and risk of neonatal, infant, and early childhood mortality (Santhya 2011; Rosmiati, Mustofa, and Rahfiludin 2022; Kabir, Ghosh, and Shawly 2019).

Young marriages are also prone to divorce. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics show an increase in the number of divorces every year. In 2022, the divorce rate in Indonesia reached 516,334 cases; it remained an increase of 15.31 percent compared to 2021, which reached 447,743 cases. This figure has increased by 53.5 percent compared to 2020, which only reached 291,677 cases (Rizaty 2023). Research conducted by Badruzaman at the Bandung Religious Court shows that young age affects the divorce rate. The younger the age of marriage, the easier it is to divorce (Badruzaman 2021). Divorce occurs due to various factors. The leading causes of divorce are disputes and quarrels, followed by economic factors, infidelity, domestic violence, drunkenness, gambling, polygamy, and adultery (Annur 2023).

The Purpose of Marriage in Islam

Ulema rejects young marriage because it is not in accordance with the purpose of marriage in Islam. Marriage in Islam aims to create a *Sakinah mawaddah wa rahmah* family (QS al-Rum:21). *Sakinah* is an expression of mutuality and collaboration among all family members. Meanwhile, *mawaddah* and *rahmah* are affection for partners. In order to achieve *Sakinah*, families must be founded on two key principles: human rights and interdependence. Human rights in marriage are based on five principles: protecting the soul (*hifdz al-nafs*), protecting religion (*hifdz al-din*), protecting the mind (*hifdz al-aql*), protecting offspring (*hifdz al-nasl*), and protecting property (*hifdz al-mal*). Mutuality is demonstrated through mutual giving and receiving, sharing feelings, and advising husband and wife. In the Koran, husband and wife are compared to clothing for one another (the wife is clothes for the husband, and the

husband is clothes for the wife). The marriage bond between husband and wife is a strong agreement based on love and affection.

Factors Contributing to Differences in Understanding of Early Marriage among the Anti-Dating Community and the Ulema

The controversy of young marriage among the Muslim community is based on the different Islamic arguments used to accept or reject young marriage, showing that the Muslim community has a variety of views and approaches in understanding hadith. There are four factors contributing to the understanding of hadith on young marriage, namely the method of understanding hadith, differences in references, differences in experience, and differences in environment.

Differences in Hadith Understanding Methods

The use of methods in understanding hadith results in differences in accepting or rejecting young marriage. In general, there are two methods of understanding hadith: textual understanding and contextual understanding. Textual understanding is defined as an explicit, literal understanding of what the hadith text says (Zakiyah, Safri, and Luqmanul Hakim 2019). Young hijrah has a normative conservative religious understanding, which interprets religious texts textually literally. According to the PPIM UIN Jakarta study, the youth marriage movement is closely linked to the public strengthening of the conservative religious movement that is amplified on social media. Conservative religious domination on social media was 67.2 percent, compared to 22.2 percent for moderate groups, 6.1 percent for liberals, and 4.5 percent for Islamists (PPIM 2020). The dominance of conservative religious narratives in the hijrah community has resulted in misreading, misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and misquoting of young marriages, all of which have an impact on perceptions, knowledge, and practices. Textual understanding also encourages gender-biased understanding, which legitimates the subordination of women and violence against women and children (Hasan et al. 2022).

A literal textual understanding of Islamic teachings related to social issues can lead to fatalism. In Jabariyah theology, people believe that everything has been determined by Allah and that humans only follow these provisions. People who believe in the text without paying attention to the context can be categorized as textualists (Naqiyah et al. 2022). Religious fatalism in the context of the hadith on young marriage describes the advantages of marrying at a young age for Muslims in addition to protecting themselves from adultery, also because of the belief that they will get a pious partner, a guarantee of welfare from Allah, and to increase individual piety, thus encouraging young people to marry at a young age without taking into account financial, physical, and mental abilities, as mentioned in other hadiths and the Prophet's marriage practice.

In contrast, progressive Islamic scholars use young marriage hadiths with thematic-contextual understanding. Contextual understanding does not only apply linguistic aspects but also considers the sociohistorical context of the hadith and the context in which the hadith is understood today. In responding to young marriage, scholars reject young marriage on the grounds that it is not in accordance with the spirit of marriage in Islam. Based on the text and understanding of the hadith, marriage is carried out by fulfilling certain requirements, such as the ability and age of the couple to be married, to overcome the negative impact of marriage on women and children.

Differences in Experience

Different experiences affect the acceptance and rejection of young marriage. One of the following young marriage supporters shared their experience with young marriage:

I fall into that category (marriage is worship, avoiding adultery). I could have married when I was younger (approaching 24 years of age). It is a man's obligation to provide for his family. I still need to complete the community service program (which means I need to finish college), and my future wife (my background is religious). Our parents provided "all-out" support from the time we graduated from college (it didn't change conditions like previous students, but they had a different status). So, each is still supported by their parents (clever, isn't it?). Until both of us graduated! So, if you're ready, there's no reason to put off marriage. Allah will assist you in dealing with your concerns. Begin with Bismillah...May Allah make it easy for you. (Interview with Wahyu on 5 February 2023)

Conversely, many young marriages that are not based on physical, psychological, and economic capacity are prone to conflict and domestic violence and end in divorce. One resource person expressed her experience as follows:

I got married at the age of 22 and my husband is also the same age as me. We were both still in our last semester of college. I married my husband because I was in love. However, various problems of married life hit us. My husband did not work, but he asked to be served his sexual needs and to provide food for him. Of course, this request was burdensome for me because I was pregnant. For daily needs, I was supported by my in-laws and sister-in-law. They brought rice, oil and other kitchen necessities. My mother-in-law even took me to the doctor for a pregnancy check-up. This caused arguments between the two of us. I wanted my husband to work because he already had a wife and would soon become a father to his child. However, my husband took offense and often said "I am divorcing you." In our tradition, when a husband says divorce, it happens right then and there, even without going through the religious court. Currently, we are divorced. We were only married for two

months but I want my husband to be responsible for his child. (Interview with Melati on 25 February 2023)

The two different experiences described earlier reveal the process of getting married at a young age and living a married life. Both have the same status as college students, do not yet have a job, and household needs are fully supported by parents. Both have a religious background. However, the process of living their home life is different. In the first case, her household life was lasting, although she did not share in detail the relationship between husband and wife in her marriage. In contrast, in the second young marriage case, their marriage was filled with conflict, domestic violence occurred, the husband dominated, and the wife was subordinated. The solid patriarchal norms in the household of the second young couple, coupled with physical, mental, and financial unpreparedness, led to their household ending in divorce.

Reference Source: Social Media versus the Sacred Texts

Hadith references are crucial to the different views on young marriage. Young people use the internet and other online media not only to learn about religion but also to share knowledge, understanding, and religious experiences that they enjoy (Chaider S. Bamualim, Hilman Latief 2018). The source of one's hadith knowledge determines one's understanding of religious texts. Mediatization of hadith on social media is in the form of memes, slogans, and symbols as a source of religious knowledge for young people and a medium for sharing religious knowledge and understanding. Nonetheless, hadith mediatization does not only provide extensive and deep knowledge (Qudsy, Abdullah, and Pabbajah 2021) but is also related to the identity politics of the millennial generation (Imron 2019), such as the hadith of the Dajjal, which is influenced by the interests of certain groups (Putra 2020). It is, on the contrary, extremely shallow. Misinterpretation, mistranslation, and misquotation result from the mediatization of hadith, which is based on a superficial understanding of religion (Ramle and Huda 2022) Misinterpretation occurs when young marriage is used as a dating solution. However, Islam discourages young marriage and forbids dating. Misunderstandings in recognizing the meaning of hadiths result from errors in quoting hadith messages.

The study by Abu Bakar showed that someone's knowledge and understanding is significantly influenced by the information gained from digital technologies, especially related to religion. The type of information that young people read on a daily basis, including information about young marriage, influences their religious understanding and experience (Chaider S. Bamualim, Hilman Latief 2018). Subsequently, the family environment, education, and friendships all contribute to the construction of youth identity narratives in which values and knowledge are exchanged. Someone will feel at ease in an environment perceived to be suitable or under the values in which they believe (Chaider S. Bamualim, Hilman Latief 2018). The following excerpt portrays the experience of early marriage, its

effect on social media, friendship, and the influencers who influence millennial Muslims to marry at young ages.

Using the internet and social media to promote young marriages demonstrates that young people are very familiar with information technology as part of being modern humans. In the age of digital technology, such as computers, tablets, and smartphones, millennial Muslims live in an age of information flow. Their ideas are spread through pop culture memes in attractive captions, slogans, symbols, and images that reflect the tastes of young people (Qudsy, Abdullah, and Pabbajah 2021). The hijrah community uses digital and social media to advocate for young marriage. Facebook and Instagram are two popular social media platforms in Indonesia. The number of Instagram Indonesia Without Dating's followers has reached 884 thousand. With the slogan "dating after marriage is fun," the Young Marriage Movement has 413 thousand members. Young marriage opponent has 146 thousand supporters. Hijrah Youth Shift has up to one hundred thousand subscribers.

In contrast, Islamic scholars with deep religious knowledge understand religion by referring directly to the book of hadith as the main source of hadith and understand religious teachings comprehensively and holistically. In the context of young marriage, the scholars use thematic and contextual methods and the reality of everyday life where young marriages cause more *mudharat* (bad) than benefits (good), so they reject the practice of young marriage.

Social Environment

The social environment also influences the debate on young marriage. Young adults between the ages of 19 and 25 can no longer be controlled by their parents, but they are influenced by their peer group, which adheres to certain ideologies and lifestyles, such as early marriage. The circle of friends contains numerous youth hijrah groups, including the youth hijrah shift, Yuk Ngaji (Felix Siaw), Terang Jakarta, Musawah and the Strangers Al-Ghuraba, Hanan Attaki. They hold regular recitations and halaqah in order to indoctrinate their members through the dissemination of ideology through conservative narratives (Windy Triana, Ida Rosyidah 2021), including for young marriages. In addition, they are using social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to promote young marriages. This group is typically extremely militant, blindly following its leader's orders.

Young marriages among hijrah members indicate a shift in religious authority from traditional religious leaders to online media influencers. Young people disregard religious scholars who criticize and oppose young marriages. Instead, they follow the views of young celebrities and influencers who share their outlook on life and identity despite their lack of religious knowledge and understanding. Influencers who married at a young age, including religious figures and celebrities, such as Salmafina Khairunnisa and Taqy Malik, Alvin Faiz and Larissa Chou, Dinda Haw and Rey Mbayang, Natta Reza and Wardah Maulina, were role models for members of the hijrah community. They are considered inspirational because of their story of hijrah and starting a family at a young age although the first two couples' marriages ended in divorce.

Reinterpreting Religious Scripture on Muslim Marriage

Early marriage is a negotiation between religiosity, modernity, and millennial Muslim identity (Sunesti, Hasan, and Azca 2018). The influence of religion and modernity among millennial Muslims is creating a hybridization of identity (Chaider S. Bamualim, Hilman Latief 2018). Identity hybridization is a form of mixing cultures, traditions, values, and principles that become role models for young people, in part as a result of a person's intense interaction with their surrounding context and traditions. Youngsters make Islam a way of life while retaining their identity as modern youth. Young marriage is viewed as a form of pie in order to prevent dating misdeeds that harm them, particularly women. The narrative of young marriage is a form of resistance to the lifestyle of young people who frequently change partners, fear commitment, and lack of responsibility. Believing that young marriage is a trend and excellent for young people is not only a misinterpretation of religious texts on social media, but it also contradicts the views of Indonesian Islamic scholars, as previously stated.

This study shows that there is controversy over the interpretation of hadith on young marriage among millennial Muslims and progressive Islamic scholars based on differences in hadith texts, text sources, methods of understanding, and friendship environments that have an impact on the acceptance or rejection of young marriage. Millennial Muslims influenced by conservative religious thought campaign for young marriage through social media to show the hybridization of identity and individual piety in the public sphere. Meanwhile, progressive scholars counter the views of young people by revealing the negative impact of young marriage on women and children, which is not in accordance with the spirit and purpose of marriage in Islam to build family harmony (QS. Ar-Rum:21).

The debate between conservative Muslims and progressive Muslims in marriage related to gender and women's issues is strongly influenced by ideologies that greatly affect the reading and interpretation of scripture (Naqiyah et al. 2022; Hasan et al. 2022). Aziz et al.'s research shows that gender inequality in Muslim communities is influenced by the selection of Quranic verses and hadith that reproduce social inequality and gender-biased interpretation processes shaped by patriarchal structures (Aziz, Abdullah, and Prasojo 2020) as a result of distortions of religious texts (Hasan et al. 2022). The results of the KUPI (Indonesian Women's Ulema Congress) decision explain that actions that cause social injustice are included in the *haram* category (Nurmila 2020). Thus, young marriage as a result of patriarchal interpretation is contrary to the purpose of marriage in Islam.

To overcome the distortion of religious texts that occurs due to partial understanding of Islamic teachings, resulting in misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and misquoting of hadith, there is a need for reinterpretation, rereading, and reapplication of the Quran and hadith. There are several other reasons why reinterpretation is important. First, the Quran (and hadith) needs to be reinterpreted by each generation to be relevant to Muslim life (Hammer 2008). Second, in contemporary times, hadith is important to be criticized and reunderstood in order to reclaim Muslim identity (K. Ali 2002). Third, rethinking the

Prophet's hadith is important because Muslim identity is largely shaped by the hadith, not only by the Quran as the main source of Islamic teachings (Barazangi 2021a,2021b). Fourth, an understanding of gender justice and equality is needed to fight patriarchal ideology, while promoting gender equality in various fields of life (Nurmila 2015). Masoud et.al revealed that patriarchal values in Muslim societies can be corrected by progressively reinterpreting our sacred texts (Masoud, Jamal, and Nugent 2016). Fifth, introducing readings of the Quran (and hadith) from a female perspective, trying to overcome male-cantered readings of the sacred text (Hammer 2008)

Progressive Muslim groups, represented by Muslim feminists, reinterpret religious texts that base their ideas on humanist, inclusive, and egalitarian Islamic teachings (Mulia 2022). The study is carried out with a comprehensive and holistic understanding of Islamic teachings by using hermeneutic and contextual approaches in the gender equality perspective (Ramle and Huda 2022). Contextualization of hadith takes into account both the sociohistorical context and the context of hadith as it is understood today (Saeed 2005). With a contextual, thematic-holistic, and ethical values or objectives-based approach to interpretation of the Quran and Sunna, progressive Muslims do not limit women's space in the public sphere but instead portray women as independent, equal to men, and their human value is determined by their level of devotion (awareness of God and right behavior) (Duderija 2014).

Reinterpretation of religious texts through a hermeneutic approach is done by considering how to read the Quran, who reads it, and the context in which they read (Badran 2001). The hermeneutic approach can be applied in understanding young marriage as follows. First, reading the text by considering the context and inter- and intratextuality. Hadith texts legitimizing and rejecting young marriage are thematically classified and confirmed by the Quranic text as the main source of Islamic teachings. The Quran states that the purpose of marriage is to create a happy and peaceful family based on the benefit of husband and wife, so that the hadith texts that are not in line with the spirit of the Quran can be reinterpreted according to the context. Second, the marriage of the Prophet Muhammad as a role model. In the hadith, it is mentioned that the Prophet married at the age of 25, which is considered the ideal age for men to get married. The age of marriage determines the readiness of the couple to marry. Third, contradictory marriage traditions must refer to the Quran and the authoritative book of hadith. In Islam, the traditions narrated by the Imams Bukhari and Muslims have higher authority than the traditions narrated by other narrators. Meanwhile, the traditions that legitimize young marriage are not all narrated by the Imams who are highly authoritative in Islam. By using the hermeneutic method, the marriage traditions can be reinterpreted in accordance with the spirit of Islam, which favors human values, tolerance, and values equality.

Hermeneutic and contextual reading methods contribute to enhancing women's rights in Islam and counter textualist-literalist influences subordinate women in patriarchal ideology. Indonesian Muslim feminists offer qiraah mubadalah or reciprocal interpretation to uncover the relationship between men and women on the principle of equality in Islam

(Kodir 2016). By using the perspective of gender equality and the principle of justice in understanding the text, the Prophet's mission for equality and justice can be achieved and making it easier for both partners to achieve the goal of marriage, which is to build a *Sakinah* (peaceful), *mawaddah* (love), and *rahmah* (compassion) among husband, wife, and children.

Conclusion

Early marriages are a new trend among educated urban youth in Indonesia, in line with the growing Hijrah movement based on conservative religious understanding. Young marriage is thought to be an Islamic identity and individual piety of modern and religious young people legitimized by a partial understanding of hadith, which leads to misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and misquoting the hadith. On the other hand, while mediatized hadith makes it easier for Muslims to study hadith and share knowledge with readers, it also has an impact on the shallowness of religious understanding and the disempowerment of traditional ulema. On the other hand, progressive scholars who reject young marriage understand Islamic teachings comprehensively and holistically.

This study corroborates previous research that young marriage among urban educated young Muslims is based on an understanding of religion to show Islamic identity and piety. Partial religious understanding encourages religious distortions that are not in accordance with the purpose of marriage. Different ways of reading hadith texts greatly influence the acceptance and rejection of young marriage. Gender-biased religious understanding influenced by patriarchal ideology is important to be reviewed in accordance with the principles of Islam, which are humanist, inclusive, and egalitarian. In addition to the importance of rereading the traditions of young marriage, the involvement of progressive ulema in spreading humanist, inclusive, and egalitarian Islamic values through social media needs to be increased as an effort to offset the strengthening influence of conservative religious understanding in the digital era. The limitations of this study stem from social media and one hijrah community group. More sources are needed for future studies, which will be supported by interviews with young married couples among the hijrah community members.

Informed Consent

The author declares that she has obtained consent from all participants in this article.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

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