

Social Media and Culture in the Context of Early Marriage on Nias Island

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the influence of social media, in this case Instagram, and patriarchal culture towards the desire for early marriage among Nias adolescents. The method used in this research is quantitative research method with correlational approach and regression analysis. Primary data was collected through questionnaires and secondary data from previous literature studies. The results of the regression analysis showed a significant influence between the use of Instagram and patriarchal culture on the desire to marry early among adolescents in the Nias tribe. The use of Instagram provides easier access for adolescents to communicate and find partners, which in turn can influence their desire to marry early. Meanwhile, the strong patriarchal culture on Nias Island also plays an important role in determining marriage decisions, where the role of men in the family and arranged marriage customs influence the process. The implication of this research is the importance of paying attention to the role of social media and patriarchal culture in the context of early marriage decisions, as well as its relevance in the context of culture and development policy. This research is expected to contribute to the development of science, especially in the fields of communication, anthropology, and gender equality studies. The results of this research are expected to serve as a reference for the government and related agencies in designing programs and policies related to early marriage, so that they can have a positive impact on society, especially Nias adolescents, in dealing with the issue of early marriage.

Keywords: *New Media, Early marriage, Patriarchal culture, adolescence, and gender*

INTRODUCTION

Technological advancements have profoundly influenced the evolution of communication mediums, with one notable outcome being the emergence of new media. New media encompasses relatively recent information and communication technologies, such as the internet, social media platforms, mobile applications, and other digital platforms. The notable impact of new media in everyday life is the easy and rapid access to the latest information. Through the use of computers, smartphones, or other internet-enabled communication devices, individuals can effortlessly connect with numerous people and establish social networks.

However, it's crucial to recognize that while new media offers benefits, it also presents challenges and issues, such as the proliferation of fake news, online privacy concerns, social media addiction, and the presence of negative content on social platforms.

According to the We Are Social report, the global number of Instagram users reached 1.63 billion as of April 2023, reflecting a 12.2% increase compared to the previous year. Meanwhile, Indonesia's Instagram user base reached 106 million individuals during the same period, positioning Indonesia as the fourth-largest user base globally. Out of the 700 million monthly active users (MAU) gained by Instagram worldwide, 45 million originate from Indonesia. This 45 million MAU figure demonstrates a significant surge compared to January 2016 when Instagram's MAU in Indonesia stood at 22 million. Instagram users are not confined to urban areas but also extend to remote locations, including Nias Island, the focus of this study.

Nias Island is part of an archipelago situated west of Sumatra Island in Indonesia. Inhabited by the Nias tribe, the island boasts a rich cultural heritage. Nias Regency spans a total area of 1,004.06 km², lying parallel to Sumatra Island and bordered by the Indian Ocean. Research findings from "Perempuan Nias Merajut Mimpi" in 2018 revealed several factors contributing to child marriage in Nias, including adherence to local customs, societal perceptions of maturity, economic considerations, familial bonds, instances of early pregnancy resulting from extramarital relations, and falsification of age records sanctioned by local authorities at the village and sub-district levels.

According to the 2020 People's Welfare Statistics from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), 34.74% of women in Indonesia marry before the age of 19, with 18.97% of such marriages occurring in North Sumatra. Nias ranks highest among all districts/cities in North Sumatra for marriages involving women under 19, accounting for 34.56% of cases (BPS, 2020). Research conducted by the Nias Child Protection Study Center (PKPA) in 2008 found that young women and adolescents in various regions of the Nias Islands who married at a young age were 0.5%, 0.9%, 5.5%, 4.1%, and 17.5% more likely to have children compared to those who did not marry early (3.7%).

Based on data from the 2022 Indonesian Family Data Collection in Nias Regency, here is the breakdown of couples of childbearing age (PUS) categorized by the age of first marriage, with women below 19 years and men below 25 years:

Table 1: Breakdown of couples of childbearing age (PUS) by age of first marriage

Sub-District	Couples of Childbearing Age	Woman				Man			
		< 19 Years Old		> 19 Years Old		<25 Years Old		> 25 Years Old	
		Counts	%	Counts	%	Counts	%	Counts	%
HILIDUHO	1095	202	18,45%	894	81,64%	453	41,37%	642	58,63%
GIDO	2627	593	22,57%	2034	77,43%	1461	55,61%	1166	44,39%
IDANOGAWO	2854	796	27,89%	2058	72,11%	1710	59,92%	1144	40,08%
BAWOLATO	2789	687	24,63%	2102	75,37%	1915	68,66%	874	31,34%
HILISERANGKAI	1403	307	21,88%	1096	78,12%	755	53,81%	648	46,19%
BOTOMUZOI	1003	156	15,55%	847	84,45%	495	49,35%	508	50,65%
ULUGAWO	1192	253	21,22%	939	78,78%	837	70,22%	355	29,78%
MA'U	1102	175	15,88%	927	84,12%	557	50,54%	545	49,46%
SOMOLO-MOLO	711	163	22,93%	548	77,07%	467	65,68%	244	34,32%
SEGAE'ADU	1412	288	20,40%	1124	79,60%	737	52,20%	675	47,80%
TOTAL	16188	3620	22,36%	12569	77,64%	9387	57,99%	6801	42,01%

According to Law of The Republic of Indonesia (UU No. 16 Tahun 2019), marriage is permissible only when both individuals have reached the age of 19. Early marriage refers to a formal or informal marriage before the age of 18. According to UNICEF (2020), an estimated 1,220,900 women aged 20-24 in Indonesia have been married before the age of 18, placing Indonesia among the countries with the highest number of early marriages. Despite being prohibited by law, marriages below the age of 19 still occur in Indonesia. This is concerning as early marriage is a significant factor contributing to the risk of stunting, which is currently a national priority. Women who marry early have a 13-14% higher risk of giving birth to low-weight babies compared to those who marry after the age of 18.

The 2020 population census data showed that there are 67 million adolescents (aged 10-24), accounting for 24% of Indonesia's total population, making adolescents a focal point in national development. Various factors contribute to early marriage, including exposure to media content, particularly on social media. Previous studies on the

influence of social media, particularly Instagram, on adolescent early marriage provide a strong foundation for this study, which focuses on patriarchal culture and Instagram usage in Nias Island. One of the previous studies that discussed the influence of social media, including Instagram, were conducted by Rambe & Tampubolon (2022) and Asnuddin & Mattraah (2020). Their research demonstrated that social media, including Instagram, significantly influences early marriage. In addition to technological advancements, societal culture also impacts decisions regarding early marriage.

Culture can be defined as the collective mindset, intellect, customs, and established norms that are difficult to change (Sudarmika, 2020). There is an influence of patriarchal culture and social constructs formed by society regarding early marriage, such as among the women of the Nias tribe who are engaged in farming or rough labor to earn a living because, according to tradition, they have been purchased by their husbands and given a large dowry during the proposal known as *Jujuran*. This essentially limits their freedom as wives, such as denying them the opportunity to pursue higher education or develop their talents and abilities, and restricts their reproductive rights in terms of contraceptive use. Their roles are primarily confined to tasks such as washing, cooking, sweeping, cleaning the house, and participating in farming. Women are perceived as an individual whom unable to earn money and are solely occupied with domestic household duties, which limits their ability to refuse early marriage decisions.

Research by Azzura et al. (2023) and Tanamal & Nahuway (2022) on local perspectives of early marriage explores how patriarchal culture in Nias Island influences adolescent marriage decisions, including societal norms and gender roles within marriage. Parental roles, as discussed by Asnuddin & Mattraah (2020), are also linked to the patriarchal context in Nias Island.

Several previous studies have indicated that social media can be utilized as a tool to campaign against the dangers and risks of early marriage among adolescents exposed to social media. These campaigns typically involve posting about reproductive health risks, the mental health of married couples, missed opportunities for youth development, and more. Similarly, patriarchal culture significantly contributes to the prevalence of early marriage. Women are often seen as an individual whom unable to earn money and are

solely occupied with domestic household duties, which limits their ability to refuse early marriage decisions. From these two variables, this research aims to examine their influence on current early marriage decisions

This research is significant to contribute to the advancement of knowledge, especially in the fields of communication, anthropology, and gender equality studies. This writing can serve as a reference data for the government or specific institutions for the development of programs, articles, or research related to early marriage.

LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORY

This research employs a positivist paradigm as the research framework. This research aims to investigate societal phenomena related to the impact of Instagram social media and patriarchal culture on marriages involving Nias tribe adolescents under the age of 19. This exploration utilizes established theories and concepts, followed by statistical analysis. The utilization of the positivist paradigm is considered well-suited for this investigation, as it delves into how Instagram social media usage and patriarchal culture influence the occurrence of marriages among Nias tribe adolescents under 19 years old.

This research employs several theoretical theories and concepts to analyze the research problem more thoroughly. Some of these theories and concepts include descriptions of new media, social media, intercultural communication, patriarchal culture, and marriage decisions. According to Flew (as cited in Hidayati, 2023), new media are new media that offer new breakthroughs such as digitization, convergence, interactivity, and the development of networks related to information management and delivery. The theoretical description of New Media in this study can provide an understanding that new media serves as a powerful tool in delivering information, facilitating social interaction, and providing a more engaging experience for users, while also enabling innovation in more creative and effective forms of communication.

One manifestation of new media itself is social media. Social media, as one type of online media, is also prevalent in society. Social media is predominantly used as a means of interaction and information dissemination. Social media holds a prominent position in society as it is frequently used for communication and is utilized by all segments to shape behavior and opinions (Nur, 2021). Social media can form support or mass movements

due to the opinions, public behaviors, and attitudes that develop within society. The theoretical description of social media in this study can provide an understanding that the presence of social media has its own influence on its users. Through social media, individuals can access any desired information, including information about early marriages. Early marriage, which is generally a new phenomenon, serves as a basis for the important role played by Instagram. As a communication medium, Instagram social media requires effective communication to ensure that the conveyed messages are accurately understood by the recipients.

In the context of Nias culture, the patriarchal tradition that mandates early marriages for children can be connected to the theory of intercultural communication. According to Guo-Ming Chen & William J. Starosta, intercultural communication involves the exchange of symbolic systems that guide human behavior and restrict them in performing their functions as a group. Intercultural communication encompasses interpersonal communication, same-gender or cross-gender communication, intergroup communication, communication within an organization, or mass communication involving different cultural audiences or cross-cultural differences (Milyane, et al., 2023). When intercultural communication occurs, differences in frames of reference arise, making communication more complicated and complex, thus making it difficult to conduct. These barriers primarily arise because the individuals involved may not be aware of the different cultural aspects.

The theoretical description of intercultural communication in this research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the interpersonal relationships between Nias tribe adolescents and their parents and surroundings, with each individual involved in these relationships having different backgrounds. These differences may be based on ethnicity, religion, race, social status, age, gender, or a combination of all existing differences. In addition to interpersonal relationships, the concept of intercultural communication can explain interactions that occur between individuals and their social environments.

One of the factors which contributes to early marriages in the Nias tribe is cultural factors, the Nias tribe is a community that still strongly adheres to patriarchal beliefs.

Patriarchal culture is a structure that places men in positions of power and central authority. The existence of patriarchal culture leads to inequalities and injustices that affect various aspects of life. In patriarchal culture, men are positioned as superior, while women are placed in subordinate or inferior positions. Men have roles of control, while women are controlled. This is why women have limited agency in contributing economically, socially, and even in marriage decisions. Such social restrictions lead to discriminatory treatment of women. Patriarchal culture places men as rulers and women as submissive. This patriarchal paradigm often influences human thought patterns, spreading the assumption that despite achieving high levels of education, the best and most ideal position for women is as the head of the kitchen (Sulistiyowati, 2021). Patriarchal culture still persists today, although the position of women is not as severe as in the past. Many women have attained higher education and have equal opportunities as men, although not in all sectors and not among all social strata. Women still remain inferior, especially in domestic household duties.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is a quantitative research approach with a regression analysis method that aimed to determine the effect of a variable on another variable. In this study, the variables that influence or commonly called independent variables are social Instagram and patriarchal culture. While the variable that is influenced or commonly called the dependent variable is the desire to marry early.

The population of this study were adolescents (aged 15-19 years) in Idanogawo sub-district, Nias Regency. This sub-district was chosen because it has the highest number of adolescents whose first marriage age is below 19 years, which is 2,854 adolescents. Based on the 2022 family data collection (BKKBN, 2022), the population of adolescents in Idanogawo Sub-district aged 15-19 years is 2,951 adolescents. Using the Slovin formula, a sample size of 97 people from the total population was determined. The research data was collected using a questionnaire given to respondents in the form of an e-form through the google form application. From the number of samples determined, a total of 101 data were collected and used as research data

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research data regarding the use of Instagram, patriarchal culture and the desire to marry early were processed with multiple linear regression analysis techniques using the JASP for windows program. The results of data processing can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: F Test Results

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
H ₁	Regression	251.028	2	125.514	16.892	< .001
	Residual	728.180	98	7.430		
	Total	979.208	100			

Based on table 2, it can be concluded that the p value = <.001. This means that the use of Instagram (X1) and patriarchal culture (X2) simultaneously affects the desire to marry early (Y). Thus, the research hypothesis (H3), which states that there is an effect of using Instagram and patriarchal culture on the desire to marry early, is accepted.

Table 3: t Test Results

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p	Collinearity Statistics	
						Tolerance	VIF
H ₀	(Intercept)	21.782	0.311	69.956	< .001		

H ₁	(Intercept)	4.856	2.929	1.658	0.101		
	X1	0.246	0.089	0.257	2.777	0.007	0.888 1.127
	X2	0.563	0.145	0.359	3.880	< .001	0.888 1.127

Table 3 shows that the variable use of Instagram (X1) obtained a significance value of p of 0.007. It can be concluded that H1 is accepted, which means that, independently, the use of Instagram (X1) has a significant effect on the desire to marry early (Y). In addition, it can also be seen that the patriarchal culture variable (X2) obtained a significance value of p of <0.001. So it can be concluded that H2 is accepted, which means that patriarchal culture (X2) also has a significant effect on the desire to marry early (Y). Table 3 also shows that the regression coefficient value of the use of Instagram variable (X1) of 0.246 is positive and the regression coefficient value of the patriarchal culture variable (X2) of 0.563 is positive. Thus, it can be said that the use of Instagram (X1) and patriarchal culture (X2) has a positive effect on the desire to marry early (Y).

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive	Variance	Counts	% of Total	
Age		19	31	30.7 %
		18	8	7.9 %
		17	16	15.8 %
		16	16	15.8 %
		15	30	29.7 %
Duration of using Instagram per day	1 - 2 hours	65	64.4 %	
	2 - 3 hours	17	16.8 %	
	More than 3 hours	19	18.8 %	
Are men more powerful in your family?	Yes	81	80.2 %	

	No	20	19.8 %
Are woman more powerful in your family?	Yes	38	37.6 %
	No	63	62.4 %

This study was conducted on 101 adolescents in Nias. The purpose of this study was to analyze the influence of Instagram use and patriarchal culture on the desire for early marriage in Nias adolescents. Table 4 shows the descriptive data of the research subjects. Based on the description of the research subjects, it was found that the majority of research subjects were 19 and 15 years old. This is in line with the research of Shalvena, et al (2023) which explained that 19-year-old adolescents agree on arranged marriages made by their parents or family because they are not yet able to make their own decisions. Shalvena, et al (2023) also stated that the role of male parents is more powerful in the family so as to provide decisions to make arranged marriages to their children. This is also supported by research data seen in table 3 which shows that 80.2% of respondents stated that men have a more powerful role in their family.

The results showed that the use of Instagram (X1) has a positive effect ($p = 0.007$, $\beta = 0.246$) on the desire to marry early (Y). This means that the more often a Nias tribe teenager uses Instagram for a long time, the higher the desire to marry early. This is in line with the results of research by Asnuddin & Mattraah (2020) which explained that there is a significant relationship between active use of social media and early marriage. This can happen because the rapid development of technology has made it easier for people, especially teenagers, to communicate with their peers and the ease of making new friends through social media. This has an impact on everyday life which encourages early marriage because they have known someone who is considered ideal, where the person was first recognized through social media applications. These results are in line with the description of the research subjects which shows that the majority of respondents, as many as 64.4%, use Instagram for at least 1 - 2 hours every day.

The results also show that the patriarchal culture variable (X2) has a positive effect ($p < .001$, $\beta = 0.563$) on the desire to marry early (Y). That is, the greater the role of men in being the center of power in a family, the higher the desire of their children to marry

early. This happens because with the role of a male family head who is dominant in making decisions, especially in matchmaking and the decision to marry off his teenage children, these adolescents tend to follow their parents' words in making decisions in their lives (Rambe & Tampubolon, 2020). The strong patriarchal cultural doctrine in the Nias tribe also supports this. This can be seen from the data in table 4 which shows that the majority of research subjects, namely 80.2%, stated that men have a more powerful role than women in their families.

Culture can be defined as mind, intellect, customs, something about culture that has developed, something that has become a habit that is difficult to change. According to Postinus Gulo (in Zaluchu, 2020), in the "Nias customary marriage system", adolescents already have provisions with whom they will marry, this engagement has even started since childhood. Nias tribal society considers that marriage is a life that must continue on this earth because it must be carried out with customary law or Fondrako. Nias marriage custom begins with the engagement period. This period is marked by the delivery of gold at the Mamebola ceremony from the man's family to the woman's family. In return, the woman gives a bag of boiled pork which they call Simbi. In traditional Nias marriages the amount of dowry is very important which will determine the social status in Nias society and also as a form of recognition of respect and appreciation for the dignity of women. In addition, the dowry has the value of establishing kinship, as a symbol of appreciation and respect in Nias customs and preventing divorce.

With the existence of the Nias customary marriage culture, the Nias Tribe Youth adheres to the customary marriage system in making early marriage decisions. Through cultural values, a person will judge and perceive something as wrong or right according to the culture he believes in. If it is associated with cultural traditions and values, adolescents will follow the patriarchal culture that distinguishes the customary culture of Nias from other cultures.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to look at the influence between social media and culture on early marriage. The results showed that there is a significant influence between the use of social media, especially Instagram, and patriarchal culture on the desire for early marriage

among adolescents of the Nias tribe. The use of social media makes it easier for teenagers to communicate and find partners, which in turn can affect their desire to marry early. In addition, the patriarchal culture that is still strong on Nias Island also plays an important role in determining marriage decisions, where the role of men in the family and arranged marriage customs influence the process. Factors such as religion, environment, customs, culture and parental wishes also play a role in shaping the desire for early marriage among Nias adolescents. Gender inequality also remains a relevant issue, where women are often marginalized in terms of domestic household work. With a deeper understanding of the factors influencing early marriage decisions on Nias Island, it is hoped that programs can be designed that support the holistic development of adolescents and address gender inequalities and reinforce positive cultural values.

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