

Indonesian Educated Unmarried Career Women: Gender Inequality, Discrimination, and Prejudices

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Abstract

Indonesia is not a comfortable place for women for unmarried, educated career women. Most of such women often experience pressures, inequalities and discriminations. This study seeks to explore overt and covert discrimination, stereotypes, and prejudices in their work, family, and neighborhood life. Respondents consisted of 34 friends, and their acquaintances, living in Pekanbaru, Jakarta, Solo, Yogyakarta, Bali, and Columbus with the following characteristics: single, age 28 or older, having received at least a bachelor's degree, and employed. The participants were recruited with purposive sampling by inviting those who met the above criteria. To get detailed verbal prejudices and discrimination, the author conducted a survey by means of a questionnaire and various forms of communication with several target respondents. Detailed data were achieved by in-depth informal interviews with respondents to evoke their memories and; past conversations; with their parents; and families. The questionnaires and interviews showed that the participants, parents, and family were anxious about the unmarried status of educated women in Indonesia resulting in intolerance towards them. The participants' responses were based upon a five-point scale. The results showed that Indonesian society continues to discriminate against educated, unmarried career women unconsciously and consciously.

Key words

Educated unmarried career women, discrimination, inequality, stereotype, prejudice

Introduction

In 2000, 3.2% of Indonesian females aged 15 and above had completed tertiary education (CBS, 2001), and the number increased to

6.46% in 2010 (CBS, 2011). Completing tertiary education and finding a job does not mean that an Indonesian female can determine her own future. Finding a husband will be the next task expected and required of an educated career-minded Indonesian woman. The majority of educated women in Indonesia still face *hidden discrimination and stereotypes* due to their unmarried status. Many Indonesian men view educated career women as being assertive and more capable than they are. Indonesian society assumes that being married to an educated career woman will lead such a woman's husband to feel less capable economically and/or psychologically and to feel insecure about losing his authority. A woman who has completed tertiary education, has a good job or career, and is 27 year old or older will be considered too old and undesirable. Indonesian men's preference for young wives is connected to their preference for productive (childbearing), quiet, passive, and submissive wives whom they can control. The traditional ideal to raise daughters to become good wives and mothers as well shows inequality. Gender inequality and discrimination against women begins at birth. Several ethnic groups prefer to have a son, rather than a daughter, to maintain their clan status. Daughters tend to have more responsibility than their brothers, like helping with domestic chores, taking care of younger siblings, and doing other menial tasks. Despite the phenomenon of educated unmarried men in Indonesia, women choosing such a life face negative stereotypes men do not. Males are privileged to marry younger females, even those half their age, because of the reasoning that men can still be reproductive until 50 or even older. Women 35 years or older are considered a risk when it comes to childbearing, an essential aspect of marriage in Indonesia. This is the reason why many parents and families become concerned when their daughters, age 28 years or older, have completed a college degree and have found jobs, but have not yet married. Educated and career women tend to carry a social stigma before marriage. General perceptions about a "lady" in Indonesia not only stipulate that she be educated, married, and employed but also that she must also be good at cooking, cleaning, bearing children, acting feminine, and being submissive. The belief that getting married will make educated career women happy, satisfied, or perfect is still held by many societies. Educated unmarried career women are stereotyped as incompetent, demanding, or too ambitious, which results in pressures from

their social environments to find a soul mate or husband. Indonesian Women Coalition (Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia) and an Islamic organization, Fatayat NU challenge conservative Islamic doctrine and the ideology of *kodrat wanita*, the prevalent stereotype that has traditionally confined women to the domestic sphere and defined their role on the basis their biological (especially reproductive) capacities, expecting them to tend the hearth, care for the children, and to be chaste and submissive (Dzuhayatin, 2001). Exploring the overt and covert discrimination women faced in situations with parents, families, and friends; revealed the inequality, discrimination, and prejudices they face on a daily basis as a result of their life choices.

The perceptions held by educated, late age, and career-minded Indonesian women regarding marriage, finding a good husband, and the societal disapproval they faced are seldom researched due to the sensitivity of these issues. The author's own experience of marrying at age 40 facilitated access to target respondents. Because of this, the researcher was able to overcome the clumsiness, reluctance, and sensitivity of the still-unmarried respondents, and five respondents were even willing to share their feelings and bitter experiences overtly. The purpose of this study is to explore educated, unmarried career women's feelings and their opinions on their parents, families, and society's anxiety, judgment, hopes, and prejudices about their situations for better understanding and discrimination amelioration. The importance of understanding, tolerance, respect, and politeness motivated the author to study educated women past "marriageable age" whose careers are good but whose social environment gives rise to concern about their choice to follow a career, makes them unhappy, or opens them to accusations of going against what is proper or natural for an Indonesian woman.

Literature Review

Indonesia is the fourth most populous country in the world. Unfortunately, the trend of marrying young is commonplace. The population council, UNFPA (2009) showed that the median age at first marriage for women ages 15-49 was 19.5 years and 25.2 years for men; the median age among Indonesian women with secondary and higher education at first marriage was 23.5 years, six years older than the age

among women with no education, which is 17.1 years. This is why educated women older than 23.5 years who are not married are targeted for gossip and prejudices. Past research has shown that until three decades ago, the Malay population of Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Southern Thailand were typically married by the age of 18 (Jones, 2003). For ethnic Minangs, who are matrilineal, women are desirable as brides only between the ages 15-25, whereas a man may marry at any age (Krier, 2000). Being a single woman at a late age means an individual has never been married, that she is sexually inexperienced and childless, and these all serve as marks of shame for her. There are acronyms that describe this such as *andartu* (*anak dara tua*), meaning “old virgin” in Malay. When such an acronym is used, typical responses include “what a pity,” “she has not experience it (sex) yet,” “she is not sellable (*tak laku*)” (Ibrahim & Hasan, 2009, p. 401). Likewise in Indonesia, we have the acronym *pratu* (*prawan tua*) for old virgin women and other degrading and rude remarks. *Pratu* (*Prajurit satu*) or Private First Class for Indonesia Marine Corps and Air Force sometimes is also used as a euphemism for an old virgin (*prawan tua/pratu*).

The philosophy of gender inequalities goes back at least –as far as the works of Aristotle which portray women as morally, intellectually, and physically inferior to men and claim that women are the property of men, that women’s role in society is to reproduce and serve men in the household, and assert the naturalness and virtue of male domination of women (Bar On, 1994; Dubber, 2005; Fishbein, 2002). In relation to Indonesia, Indonesian gender ideology emphasizes men as community leaders, decision makers, and mediators with the outside world, while women are the backbone of the home and family values. This philosophy is still held by many males, while also not disputed by many females, as evidenced in the legendary Indonesian song, written by composer Ismail Marzuki: “Men are destined for power, women for being spoiled, women have been colonized by men since a long time ago, beautiful women are put in luxury lives (live in cages with honey).” Indonesian women are reluctant to identify themselves as feminists, due to the connotation that this is against nature *kodrat* (nature that is married status), they are men haters or wish to be superior to men (Qibtiyah, 2010). Both unmarried and married women in Javanese society bear an unfair psychological burden. Women who have not been

married by a certain age, women who have no children; and women who cannot cook; are all often perceived as incomplete, causing these women to be frequent targets of criticism, humiliation, and belittling comments (Yuarsi, Dzuhayatin, & Wattie, 2002, p. xiv). In several Indonesian cultures, women are passive in the finding of a spouse. For example, in traditional Javanese culture a female must wait for the male to express his love first or *lanang wenang milih, wedok wenang nampik*. In Malay culture, a woman should avoid actively pursuing a husband, lest she be labeled *Perigi mencari timba* a well looking for a bucket, meaning that she is a woman who is acting outside of the norm. After marriage, the woman's role is quite passive, as is reflected in the belief *Swargo nunut nroko katut* (*swargo* is heaven and *nroko* is hell), which in Javanese means that a woman's destiny for happiness (heaven) and suffering (hell) is determined by her husband. When a husband holds a good position his wife will have a good life, but when her husband is unsuccessful she will be suffering too. A German proverb exemplifies an ideal woman's roles as making herself up, childbearing, and cooking -*kunstrollen, kinder, und kochen*. This same proverb occurs in Javanese as *macak, manak, lan masak*. Pressures leading to discrimination and gender inequality are prevalent in marriages within Asian cultures. This is evidenced through the "three obediences" which women must follow: obey your father before marriage, your husband after marriage, and your son after your husband's death (Nosotro, 2000-2010). Though women's lives have improved greatly through educational and work opportunities in recent decades, their role and status are still centered around marriage and motherhood. Being married and having children are like two sides of the same coin. All women should be married and have children, and any woman having a child should be married (Amnesty International, 2010; Blackburn, 2004). A study by a doctoral fellow at the Asia Research Institute found that Indonesian unmarried women in their thirties in Yogyakarta and Medan are often pitied by married women, and the more highly educated and older a woman is, the less likely she is to marry (Situmorang, 2005).

Colonialism perpetuated male domination within Indonesian society. In the era of Dutch control, women were not permitted to be educated. Therefore, the majority of administrative and other strategic positions went to men. Among 400 ethnic groups in Indonesia, only the Minang's

kinship is matrilineal. However, this does not mean that males do not have good status even among them. A father takes a strong interest in helping find an appropriate husband for his daughter. Fathers or males are considered very important for determining the quality of their offspring not only for transmitting temperament (*sifat*), personality (*pribadi*), and moral (*budi*) traits, but also for passing along biogenetic substances (Krier, 2000). The majority of Indonesian ethnics such as Javanese, Bataks, Malay, and Chinese, to name a few, hold that marriage is important and a woman should never be the head of a family. Unfortunately, an educated single woman possessing a good job is pressured to marry, whether or not she actually loves the man that she is to marry. Most Indonesian women affirm that marriage is a lifelong commitment or marriage of choice, not a forced marriage. However, taking their cue from friends or family who were not successful in marriage, due to being cheated upon or treated badly by their husbands, many young Indonesian women are reluctant to marry. Being single is lonely sometimes but the suffering they might experience in marriage could be worse. Some cultures, particularly Bataks, allow a man to take another wife if his first one does not bear him any children. The Bataks has a concept of an ideal life that is realized by a person's achieving a "king" tribute, which is indicated by *hamoraon* (economic capital gain), *hagabeon* (has son and daughter), and *basangapon* (has 3 or even 4 successful generations of children who have married, got good jobs, and had children). In Toba Batak's culture a man or a woman cannot achieve a "kingly" status tribute without marriage, having children, and then successfully marrying off all of their children. Being an unmarried woman in the Toba Bataks culture means firstly that she hinders her ancestors in achieving their ideal and secondly that she will be excluded from inheriting her parent land, houses, and other unmovable property, even though Indonesia has established a legal policy of non-discrimination toward women (Ihromi, 1994). The inferiority, inequality, or discrimination of women is reflected in Indonesian culture through such practices as preferring to have a son rather than a daughter, as well as males' being able to inherit twice as much property as females within Javanese culture (*sepikul segendbongan*). The word "woman" in Javanese language is *wanita*, which is an abbreviation of *wani ditata*. The latter means "willing to be controlled" this assumes that a good Javanese woman is both pas-

sive and obedient. The passive and submissive role a female has in finding a husband is illustrated in the Indonesian novel *Siti Nurbaya*. The father within the story forces his daughter to pick an old, ugly and cruel man to be her husband because he is rich.

The importance of marriage is revealed in the saying that the ideal type of Indonesian woman “is one who is a wife and has children.” Marriage is the life event that is most desirable for an Indonesian adult to attain. Pressure from extended families, friends, and colleagues results from the belief that an educated unmarried woman is incomplete, unhappy and unsatisfied. An educated and career-minded single women is admired, while at the same time is an object of pity or ridicule (Cargan & Melko, 1982, p. 18; Anderson, Stewart, & Dimidjian, 1994, p. 14). Women who choose to be single are impaired not only as a result of material discrimination, but also from prejudice. Prejudice not only takes on interpersonal forms but also is implicit in cultural representation, in language, and in socialization (Shakespeare, 1994, p. 296). Sociologists state that prejudice has to do with the inflexible and irrational attitudes and opinions held by members of one group about another, while discrimination refers to behaviors directed against another group. Females are only good for cooking, cleaning, bearing children, acting feminine and being submissive. Intelligent, brainy, and successful women scare men (Guest writer, 2008). Education cannot really improve women’s position in the society. Men’s physical power and privilege seem to be still more dominant than women’s education (Yuarsi et al., 2002). Hook (1994) stated that sexist thinking makes men not really desire “smart” women. Brayboy’s study (2005) of an Indian-American female who achieved skills and credentials from a prestigious university in the United States noted that her education hampered her from finding a spouse similar to her in age and education. For an Indian woman have reach her age and not have a relationship (with a man) means that she is failure as a tribal member. Even, parents of young women whose daughters regard her as a role model do not want their daughters to talk with her. Educated unmarried career women in their late twenties and older are judged with stereotypes and prejudices such as they are too demanding, ambitious, unattractive, handicapped, and incompetent. Findings show that these assumptions are not accurate.

Research Methodology

To explore the experience, feelings and hopes of educated unmarried women in the critical age (28 or older) from the prejudices and discrimination of their parents, colleagues, friends, and neighbors, the author talked, shared, and discussed the marriage issue with female friends who met the following criteria: they were unmarried at the age of 28 or older, regardless of ethnicity; they had graduated from university; they had good careers and had an interest in such sensitive issues. Upon receiving a good response initially, I then distributed the questionnaire by email via gmail.doc. Most of the respondents had been known before as colleagues, friends, former roommates, and former students. Since educated unmarried women are often stigmatized with negative stereotypes such as sexual disorientation, self-centeredness, being too demanding, and many other wrong judgments, it was not easy to obtain responses from participants, especially those who were still unmarried at the time of the study. Several of my friends, hesitant to participate, did not respond to questionnaires, despite email reminders. One of my close friends showed her resentment through her non-verbal and verbal responses when I shared my research topic and asked her sister to be one of my target respondents. My own background of serving as a university lecturer; who did not marry until the age of forty, was advantageous in communicating with the respondents. This made interviews more interesting and meaningful, and it even allowed for exciting discussions and jokes. The interviews, chats, and telephone conversations were recorded and transcribed. Respondents' resided in such cities as Jakarta, Pekanbaru, Solo, Yogyakarta, Karangasem in Bali, and Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A. Their ethnicities were Batak, Javanese, Malay, Minang, and others (Chinese and Palembang). The majority of respondents are lecturers in universities, teachers and Indonesian public servants. The results of the study only point to the participants. The study is not meant to be a generalization of all Indonesian educated, unmarried women. The findings are not applicable to other Islamic nations due to the differences in cultural values and norms. Even though Indonesia is the largest Islamic country in the world, it is considered to be moderate as compared to countries; such as Saudi Arabia or Afghanistan. Discrimination, inequality, and prejudices toward unmarried women in Indonesia are more affected by eth-

nic values and cultural backgrounds.

The questionnaire was distributed through gmail. docs to 61 email addresses. However, several respondents in Pekanbaru had difficulty in accessing the questionnaire due to poor Internet connections; therefore the researcher resent emails to different addresses for these respondents. Likewise other participants who did not initially respond to the questionnaire were resent the email or reminded by Facebook or telephone in order to motivate them to participate in my research. Thirty-four (34) of 46 respondents with correct email address and successful access participated with positive responses. They were not asked to write their name, only to choose the appropriate data available on multiple choice statements. In the age category, there choices were: 28-32, 33-38, 39-42, 43-47, and > 48. Options for ethnic background were arranged alphabetically by Bataks, Javanese, Malay, Minangs, or others. The choices for educational background included S1 (bachelor), S2 (master), and S3 (doctoral) degree as shown in table 1.

Table 1
Respondents' age, educational background and ethnicity

Educational background	S1 (Bachelor degree)					S2 (Master degree)					S3 (Doctoral degree)					Σ
	28-32	33-37	38-42	43-47	>48	28-32	33-37	38-42	43-47	>48	28-32	33-37	38-42	43-47	>48	
Age group																
Ethnicity																
Bataks	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	8
Javanese	1	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	8
Malay	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	5
Minangs	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	8
Others	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Sum	6	1	3	3	2	3	1	1	2	4	0	0	4	2	2	34

Respondents were asked to choose either strongly agree (scored 1), agree (scored 2), neutral/fair (scored 3), disagree (scored 4) or strongly disagree (scored 5) on 17 statements related to parental and family opinions on their unmarried status, marriage as a symbol of social normality, the role of a man as a guardian in the household, efforts on finding a suitable partner; and the possibility of human rights violations.

The data resulting from private questions and comments by the re-

spondents show that often these single women are serious about finding a partner and marrying. An interview is a conversation where good rapport is crucial, resulting in a respondent desiring to share his/her experiences, and even genuine feelings or emotions (Bloommaert & Jie, 2010, p. 44). Chatting on the Internet, telephone calls and face to face meetings provided dissonant statements between respondents and their parents, families, colleagues, and friends. Gaps that existed between people's answers on the survey and what actually took place in their real lives could be overcome. Mothers', fathers' and close family members' feedback about the respondents single status was valuable. Parents in Indonesia tend to avoid conflicts with their unmarried daughters regarding marriage. They tend to share their hopes and anxiety with trusted persons, like families of their daughters' close friends. This qualitative study gives us a better understanding of discrimination, stereotypes, and prejudice regarding educated, unmarried career women at the alarming age to respect and tolerate their existence.

Data Analysis and Results

The data from the questionnaire on a five-point scale was tabulated with descriptive statistic from 34 respondents (Table. 2) on their answers of strongly agree (scale 1), agree (scale 2), fair (scale 3), disagree (scale 4), or strongly disagree (scale 5). The findings showed that their families felt annoyed or anxious about their status as single women (2.82), even though they enjoyed their status with good career in a comfort zone (2.85), and meeting with male colleagues could create jealousy among friends' wives because the unmarried women could divert men's attention from their wives (2.91). These responses meant that their perceptions were close to neutral/fair (scale 3). The accusation of being picky or demanding on finding a husband was denied by the respondents (3.09 or fair to disagree). Their unmarried status made their parents distressed or unhappy (2.65) is contrary to their daughters' comfort zone feeling. This finding is validated by several respondents' sharing of their bitter experiences when they got pressure from parents, relatives, or friends to get married soon. It was consistent with the response that pressure to marry after age of 40 will be lessened (3.12 or neutral to disagree). The value of marriage was not only upheld by parents, ex-

tended family members and friends, but also by the respondent herself as noted by the response (1.68) between agree (scale 2) and strongly agree (scale 1). It was consistent with the answer that their parents wanted their daughters to have husbands to replace their guardian roles (1.97). This finding showed that men are considered the protectors of women. The hidden discrimination gives men's physical power, authority, and privilege. They preferred to be active (2.62) instead of being passive (3.76) in finding husbands. Societal values within Malay and Javanese cultures that discourage women from being active in finding a spouse result in gender inequality. Though marriage is important to them, the majority of respondents did not want to be forced to get married (4.24) to avoid the negative stereotype of being single. A high disagreement (4.03) with the idea that a family meeting should be held for an arranged marriage was reported. The respondents were strongly in agreement with (1.68) an extended family's marriage norms "Marry one, marry all." It was surprising that respondents did not think the pressure to get married, stereotypes and prejudices violated their human rights (3/fair). However, observation and chatting with several of the respondents showed how upset, annoyed, and frustrated they were.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of respondents' responses on a five-point scale

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Her family was annoyed	34	1	5	2.82	.999
Enjoyed status in comfort zone	34	1	5	2.85	1.048
Picky or demanding in choosing spouse	34	1	5	3.09	1.083
Suspicion from a colleague's spouse may arise when an unmarried woman is assigned to an out-of-town business travel.	34	1	5	2.91	1.190
Married is important event in life	34	1	3	1.68	.684
Unmarried make parents unhappy	34	1	5	2.65	1.152
Married to avoid negative stereotype	34	1	5	2.71	1.169
Married to extended families (Marry one, marry all)	34	1	4	1.68	.727
Be passive in finding spouse	34	2	5	3.76	.654
Be active in finding spouse	34	1	4	2.62	.954
Forced married than to be single	34	1	5	4.24	.987

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Demand to married will lessen in the age >40 years	34	2	5	3.12	.880
Their human rights violated	34	2	5	3.00	.985
The higher education the tougher in finding a spouse	34	1	5	3.21	1.274
Husband for a new guardian	34	1	4	1.97	.797
Family meeting for marriage arrangement	34	1	5	4.03	1.087
Match maker by friends and families	34	1	5	2.53	.825
Valid N	34				

Questions and statements raised by parents, families, colleagues and friends such as when will you marry, I want you to have children, I want to have a son-in-law, do not be demanding in trying to find a husband, do not be engrossed in study and career, why did you not marry a your former boyfriend, the older and more career-minded you are makes men not feel confident to approach or propose to you (the older the more undesirable), do you have plans to get married, if you cannot find a good spouse I will find one for you were shown on table. 3.

Table 3

Participants were asked to recall if parents, extended family members, colleagues or friends had asked different questions or statements of them, or they could choose that they had never been asked such a question.

No.	Questions or statements were raised by and about	Parent (P)	Relative (EF)	Colleague (C)	Friend (FD)	Never (N)
1.	Why don't you have a boyfriend or a husband?	1(3%)	8(24%)	5(15%)	17(50%)	3(9%)
2.	Why are you still single?	1(3%)	6(18%)	9(26%)	13(38%)	5(15%)
3.	When do you plan to get married?	6(18%)	10(29%)	10(29%)	7(21%)	1(3%)
4.	Your dad and mom wish to have grandkid soon (you get married and have kids)	5(15%)	8(24%)	3(9%)	3(9%)	15(44%)
5.	Your dad and mom wish to have a son in law	6(18%)	8(24%)	2(6%)	0(0%)	18(53%)
6.	Where is your boyfriend or husband?	1(3%)	5(15%)	5(15%)	18(53%)	5(15%)
7.	Don't be too demanding in finding a husband	3(9%)	9(26%)	6(18%)	10(29%)	6(18%)
8.	When will you invite me to your wedding party?	0(0%)	11(32%)	11(32%)	9(26%)	3(9%)

No.	Questions or statements were raised by and about	Parent (P)	Relative (EF)	Colleague (C)	Friend (FD)	Never (N)
9.	Think not only about your study and career but also try to find a husband	3(9%)	11(32%)	7(21%)	8(24%)	5(15%)
10.	Why didn't you marry a former boyfriend	0(0%)	6(18%)	14(41%)	5(15%)	9(26%)
11.	The older and more career-minded you are the tougher it will be to get a spouse	4(12%)	7(21%)	6(18%)	12(35%)	5(15%)
12.	Do you really want to get married?	3(9%)	4(12%)	4(12%)	4(12%)	19(56%)
13.	If you are not able to find a husband I can do it for you as a matchmaker	3(9%)	6(18%)	5(15%)	5(15%)	15(44%)
14.	How many junior or kid do you have? In Indonesia having a kid means one has already got married.	0(0%)	1(3%)	8(24%)	21(62%)	4(12%)

Questionnaires, communication, and the past interaction with respondents' parents and families showed several contradictions among respondents' responses. Their answers showed that only a small number of parents were concerned about their daughters' unmarried status at a late age. Eighteen (18) of respondents answered that they had never received statements from either their parents, families, colleagues, or friends on daddies and moms' wishing to have sons-in-law or asking whether they really wanted to get married (56%). These findings did not indicate that they were not the targets of gossip. In in-depth interviews by chatting, many of the respondents shared their experiences of getting frivolous questions about their intention or plan to get married. In fact, the majority of educated and career males used to be eager to know or find information about all their female colleagues' marriage status from others. From the parents' questions or statements about the women's marital status, the study findings showed that the women received fewer frivolous comments from their parents as compared to those from their relatives, friends, and colleagues. However, this does not indicate whether their parents felt this to be burdensome or embarrassing. Parents generally have no intention to hurt their daughter's feelings and emotion by making frank comments regarding their unmarried status. They complained or conveyed their concerns about their educated, unmarried daughters to their relatives, friends, their daughters' close friends or trusted persons. The data showed that friends and families were concerned about their status by asking and making statements on personal matters such as "Why are you still single?" "Don't be too de-

manding in finding a husband,” “Think not only about your study and career but also try to find a husband,” and many other rude comments. Parents’ concerns or statements were not only communicated by those of a low or average educational level, but also by several professors in universities; who graduated with a doctorate from an English-speaking university. The concerns I heard from them were: “I still have a daughter in the late age, but I will let her to determine her future” (even though his face and voice showed disappointment and worry), “Please pray for my daughter to get a spouse if you are a pilgrim to Mecca,” “I try not to ask her plan or wish to get married.” A mom who wishes to see her educated daughter get married before she is too old and passes away said: “Ask X (desired male) whether he wants to get married with my daughter,” even promising to provide much money or valuable property for the marriage settlement so her beloved son-in-law would not need work hard. One respondent shared how she was annoyed with pressure from her family and parents’ friends who commented, “Don’t you see that your dad and mom want to have grandchildren?” She could not disapprove overtly by saying “I want to get married more than anybody else. It’s not like buying peanuts that you can get anywhere and anytime easily.” My close friend shared how desperate she was when her mom forced her to get married in her fifties when she almost had completed her doctoral study. Her mom told her “I want you to get married before I die.” She responded desperately and angrily by saying “Ok mommy, I will get married by sacrificing my feelings, my happiness and hope, if that is the only way that I can satisfy you and make you happy in the rest of your life.” It meant that her mother did not care whether her late aged daughter would be happy or not after marriage. The one thing that she thought she deserved was to see her daughter married. Parents do not take lessons from other situations where women become hurt because a husband, whom she loved and had dedicated her life to, ran away to find a younger and more beautiful woman or because a husband might abuse his wife verbally with such statements as, “I am bored with you; you are not sexually attractive anymore,” “You are a barren woman; I will find a woman that can give me kids.”

One of the respondents, who is a teacher, shared negative statements she received from her colleagues and friends who stated: “Why are you

still unmarried? You will be a spinster. What a pity, you are a pretty woman with a gentleman to betroth you. Will you only think about your career, without thinking of getting married until you die?" My respondent also shared about her parents' anxiety when she was questioned on marriage, meaning that she must not be a normal woman because she has many male friends, but did not intend to pick one of them as her future husband. She also endured family pressure from her uncle and aunt, with whom she lived, because they wished for her to get married since she was the oldest single female in her extended family and her unmarried state was an embarrassment to them. The worst discrimination that an unmarried woman faces happens when her presence at a marriage proposal is considered a jinx due to the superstition that the unmarried give off a bad aura that will spread to others, especially to the bride to be. There used to be a party attended by families and close friend at marriage proposal for many cultures in Indonesia. Before the author was married, she was certified to teach Pancasila (Indonesian national philosophy), but she was never recruited to teach married women because she would not be authoritative to the audience. Unmarried women were not acceptable to teach married women about national ideologies and values. Male university students at the beginning of a class often raise questions regarding the marital status of a teacher, either overtly or outside the class clandestinely. Students often discriminate against unmarried teachers or lecturers, sometimes using their status as a scapegoat when they fail the class or receive a bad grade. To avoid negative comments or silly questions, several educated, unmarried women have tried to conceal their status by lying about their age, not mentioning their age at all, choosing to not remember their age, or even telling people that they have already gotten married. There is a long-standing joke among master's and doctoral women students that it is easier "to be" a master or doctor than "to get" a master or a doctor (meaning to find a husband whose educational level is similar). Many parents discourage their daughters from continuing their doctoral studies before they get married.

Discussion

In a male chauvinist culture like Indonesia, being married is necessary

to show that a woman can do her “natural” main roles for cooking/housekeeping, dressing up and making up, and childbearing or care giving. People who live in Indonesia, even those who live in big cities like Jakarta, Solo, Yogyakarta, or Pekanbaru, think it is a sin or deviant to be single educated women when one is 25 years old or older (Patung, 2011). No matter how emancipated women have become, they still feel it is imperative to be wedded off as soon as possible; hopefully, no later than the age of 26. As soon as women hit 30, sirens start to blare in their ears, forbidding them to enter places like a party for a marriage proposal, or to visit relatives’ and close friend homes because of these people’s insistence in arranging dates for them or asking about their private lives (Free Malaysia Today, 2012). The 1989 State Guideline encourages women to try to be the ideal type, described as a loyal supporter to her husband, a producer and educator of the future generation, and caretaker of the household. Women’s achievements have never been viewed as consistent with the ideal type unless balanced by the good career of the husband and the education of the children (Dzuhayatin, 2001). This assumption or demand has discriminated against educated women because their responses on the finding showed that they enjoyed their lives in “comfort zone (had good careers and self-esteem),” and wished to find appropriate partners to marry once forever. However, their relatives, friends, and colleagues bothered them with too-personal questions and labeled them with insulting terms such as “anti-men person, too choosy person, selfish woman, spinster,” and many other prejudicial remark that implied that they were not normal. Many women tried to escape from their relatives, friends, or college to avoid questions and statements that made them feel oppressed. The majority response on the question whether prejudices or negative stereotyping on unmarried educated career women violated their human rights was fair (scale 3) showed how women’s lives are constructed by male discourse. Marriage is considered to be one of the most desirable states that women can attain, as testified to by the respondents’ agreement that marriage is an important and desirable event in life. A woman being married will make her father satisfied because he has found a gentleman that can take over his role as a guardian (1.97). These responses meant education and career are not guarantees for satisfaction, success, and happiness, particularly for a daughter who is a member of an ex-

tended family. Utomo (2004) showed that in the current middle-class Indonesia, university educated women are at a crossroads where traditional expectations of being good wives and mothers often override modern aspirations associated with developing a career. These positions were covertly tolerated by educated career women on the assumption that a husband can take over her parents' role as guardians upon marriage (1.97 or agree).

Mothers and fathers' subtle and overt pressures on their unmarried and career daughters to marry were indicated when the respondents shared their anxiety to their extended family and close friends. In several Indonesian local cultures, if someone shares his/her problems with somebody, this can be interpreted that the problem-sharer wants help and the listener has the authority to solve the problem or ask someone else to solve it. Family members and friends sometimes gave the respondents more pressure to find a husband than the respondents' parents. Marriage is structured to preserve male domination. One indicator of this is that anxiety on old age marriage correlates with child matters or a woman's reproduction. Marriage and having kids are socially conflated, which makes educated single women older than 35 experience more pressure on finding appropriate soul mates. It is socially expected for men to prioritize their personal achievements, namely career, while putting career ahead of family for women is seen as a selfish act and a sign of "ambitiousness" an undesirable feminine trait for Indonesian women (Santoso, 2004).

Conclusion and Recommendations for further study

The findings in many respects confirmed that Indonesian educated career women suffer discrimination, prejudices, and gender in most of their social environments. Education was not seen to make a woman a good wife. Both unmarried women and parents perceived that women's happiness lies in marriage. Indonesian society gives very high priority to marrying and having children, and an unmarried woman is seen as "incomplete." They will be questioned even be forced to marry even at the "critical age" that is older than 40 years. The respondents' disagreement on the statement that demand to married will lessen in the age > 40 years (3.12) has proved it. Overt and covert discrimination

through negative statements, silly questions, and forced marriage should be eliminated so that all women can take their place as human beings with rights equal to those of men.

This study explored educated unmarried career women' perception of pressures exerted on them by the majority of people living around them: parents, extended family members, colleagues, and friends. To avoid placing unnecessary social burdens on educated career women, the concerned parties should be made aware of these findings. Women' dignity should be place in the decent position. Education cannot really improve a women's position in the society (Yuarsi et al., 2002) as long as these attitudes persist, and as long as a woman first and foremost is valued as a wife to her husband, and a mother to her children. In Indonesia, a woman who deviates from her prescribed role as wife and mother, possibly by not marrying at all, or not having children, is viewed as less than a whole person, and as a less than a "whole woman" (Ingham, 2005). Most studies on Indonesian women concentrate on married women and family life. Some studies focus on sex workers, women at work, child labor, early marriage, and women living in poverty. Since millennium development goals or other development efforts for improving women's lives are both nationally in Indonesia and also internationally, this study can help pro-women decision makers to implement these goals. Further studies to generalize inequality, discrimination, and prejudices for Indonesian educated unmarried career women by reaching more respondents and cities should also be conducted.

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