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Kajian tentang transisi fertilitas dan kesetaraan gender di Indonesia

An assessment of fertility transition and gender equity in Indonesia

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Abstract

Fertility transition is a notable demographic phenomenon that has been experienced by most countries in the world. Indonesia, like other countries, has undergone a significant decrease in fertility over the past four decades and is predicted to complete its transition by 2025. This study primarily aims to discover whether gender equity influences the course of fertility transition in Indonesia. The other objectives of this study are to reveal whether a gender-gap between men and women still exists and whether disparity in gender inequality among provinces still exists in Indonesia. This study conducts a secondary data analysis, primarily on the Indonesia Demographic Health Survey, and literature review on government reports, books, journal articles and online sources. Three key findings have emerged in this study. First, gender equity is associated with the course of fertility transition in the context of Indonesia. Second, a gender-gap in both individual-oriented and family-oriented institutions in Indonesia still exists. Third, a disparity in gender inequality among provinces in Indonesia still exists. The findings suggest that the government needs to put more attention to promoting more progressive gender roles in both individual-oriented and family-oriented institutions equally.

Keywords: Fertility transition; Gender equity; Gender gap; Individual-oriented institution; Family-oriented institution.

Abstrak

Transisi fertilitas adalah sebuah fenomena demografis mendasar yang telah dialami oleh sebagian besar negara di dunia. Indonesia, serupa dengan negara-negara tersebut, telah mengalami penurunan fertilitas yang signifikan selama empat dekade terakhir dan diprediksi, Indonesia akan menyelesaikan transisinya pada tahun 2025. Studi ini bertujuan utama untuk mengetahui apakah kesetaraan gender mempengaruhi proses transisi fertilitas di Indonesia. Tujuan-tujuan lain dari studi ini adalah untuk mengungkapkan apakah kesenjangan gender antara laki-laki dan perempuan masih eksis dan apakah kesenjangan ketimpangan gender antara provinsi masih eksis di Indonesia. Studi ini menggunakan analisis data sekunder pada Survei Kesehatan Demografi Indonesia, dan tinjauan literatur pada laporan pemerintah, buku, artikel jurnal, dan sumber daring. Terdapat tiga temuan utama dari studi ini. Pertama, kesetaraan gender memiliki korelasi dengan proses transisi fertilitas dalam konteks Indonesia. Kedua, kesenjangan gender dalam institusi berorientasi individu dan berorientasi keluarga di Indonesia masih eksis. Ketiga, kesenjangan ketimpangan gender antar provinsi di Indonesia masih eksis. Temuan-temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pemerintah perlu menaruh perhatian lebih dalam mempromosikan peran gender yang lebih progresif dalam institusi yang berorientasi individu dan keluarga secara setara.

Keywords: Transisi Fertilitas; Kesetaraan gender; Kesenjangan gender; Institusi berorientasi individu; Institusi berorientasi keluarga.

1. Introduction

This study focuses on the relationship between gender equity and fertility transition in the context of Indonesia. It is interesting to note that fertility

transition is a notable demographic phenomenon occurring in the last two centuries, in which fertility shifts from high to low. Indonesia, similar to most other countries in the world, has undergone a significant decrease in fertility over the past four

decades. It is predicted to complete its transition by 2025 (Seiff, 2014, p. 683).

Even though general fertility transition is expected to occur in every country and society, the patterns and progress differ over time, across cultures, and ethnic subpopulations. Similarly, fertility transition has various determinants and implications for contemporary society (Weeks, 2008, p.199). Therefore, it is arguable that more attention needs to be paid to this area due to its strong relationship with demographic, socio-economic and environmental outcomes (Birdsall and Sinding, 2001; Bongaarts, 2009; Casterline, 2010; Crist, Mora and Engelman, 2017).

In the literature, fertility transition has been extensively investigated in an attempt to identify determinants of different fertility patterns across settings in the world (Davis and Blake, 1956; Easterlin, 1975; Freedman, 1975; Bongaarts and Potter, 1983). Some scholars in the feminist field posit that gender equity is an essential determinant for explaining fertility patterns and behaviour among societies (Mason, 1986, 1995; Heaton and Cornwall, 1989; Van de Walle and Van de Walle, 1993). Mason emphasises that a gender system is constructed by gender stratification and gender roles, and that these two factors influence the level of equity between men and women in a given institution, including in their fertility behaviour (1995, p. 159). Thus, the level of gender equity is an important variable in explaining the course of fertility transition in various settings in the world.

Later, McDonald argued that individual and family-oriented institutions play a significant role in explaining fertility transition (2000a, 2000b). In countries where gender equity is less promoted in both individual and family-oriented institutions, the pace of the transition might be slow and the fertility level in the countries might be still far above the replacement level. In contrast, in countries where gender equity is only promoted in macro-level, individual-oriented institutions, the fertility level might fall and continue to remain far below the replacement level.

A number of recent studies have also found that the gender system in individual-oriented and family-oriented institutions has influenced the course of fertility transition. It has been found that, in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Timor Leste, and most sub-Saharan African countries, where gender inequity is still high in both types of institutions, fertility levels are still high (Urdal and Che, 2013; Jayachandran, 2015; Phan, 2015). On the contrary, in countries such as Bhutan and Turkey, where gender equity is being promoted in both types of institutions, fertility might be seen to fall significantly (Abbasi-Shavazi, McDonald and Hosseini-Chavoshi, 2009; Jayachandran, 2015; Ji, 2015; Phan, 2015; Zhao and Hayes, 2018). It has also been found that fertility

might fall to the lowest level when gender equity is only established in individual-oriented institutions, as has been experienced in some Eastern Asian and European countries recently (McDonald and Moyle, 2010; Myrskylä, Kohler and Billari, 2011; Bongaarts and Sobotka, 2012; Anderson and Kohler, 2013; Kan and Hertog, 2017). In such settings, despite women having opportunities equal to men in the labour market, gender relations in family institutions are still unequal. Women still bear a heavier housework burden, making them have fewer incentives to bear many children.

While many studies have explored the role of gender equity in explaining fertility transition in many countries, there is a gap relating to explaining the case of Indonesia. Responding to the call of those studies, this study predominantly aims to discover whether gender equity influences the course of fertility transition in the context of Indonesia. The other objectives of this study are to reveal whether gender-gap between men and women still exists and whether a disparity in gender inequality among provinces still exists in Indonesia.

2. Theoretical Framework

Fertility transition is one of the demographic transitions that has occurred in the last two centuries. Weeks defines fertility transition as the decline of fertility - the number of children born to women - from high to low levels (2008, pp. 199–200). A number of studies have examined this transition. It has been carried out from various points of view, such as sociology (Freedman, 1975), history (Tilly, 1978), institutions (McNicoll, 1980; Hull, 1987), biology (Frisch, 1975), politics (Lush *et al.*, 2000), economics (Easterlin, 1975), environment (Crist, Mora and Engelman, 2017), and demography (Davis and Blake, 1956; Bongaarts and Potter, 1983; Hull, 1987; Coale, 1989).

Despite the success of these works, some scholars from the feminist field have proposed that gender equity is needed to be taken into consideration in discussion surrounding fertility transition (Heaton and Cornwall, 1989; Van de Walle and Van de Walle, 1993; Mason, 1995; McDonald, 2000a, 2000b). It is highlighted that aside from individual decision-making, fertility transition is governed by social construction, which produces the different attributes, roles and expectations given to men and women (Mason, 1995, p. 159). That is, the differences in pace and patterns of fertility transition among societies have also been shaped by the differences in gender stratification and roles that construct the relationship between men and women.

Later, McDonald analysed the process of fertility transition in western countries that have recently completed the transition (2000a, 2000b). It was found

that the transitions in these countries were influenced by the increasing trend of gender equity in both types of institutions: individual-oriented institutions (macro level/ society) and family-oriented institutions (micro level/ household). McDonald also emphasised that, in the process of transition in western countries, the development of gender equity at a household level took longer than that which happened at a macro level (2000a, p. 435) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Conceptual representation of changes in the level of gender equity over time in family-oriented and in individual-oriented institutions in the West and their interaction with the transition from high to very low fertility

This is due to the family being a conservative institution that is relatively resistant to change. Consequently, the process of more equal social construction between women and men within the family institution occurs very slowly. In the institutions outside the family, equity between men and women, for example in the labour market and education, started at the end of the nineteenth century and quickly increased over a short period of time.

More gender equity in family institutions creates a decent foundation for fertility transition. Women might have greater independence in determining the number of children they want, as well as the time and spacing of births. As a consequence, when men and women are provided more equal opportunity in the public sphere, more women are able to benefit from it. In turn, these wider opportunities also provide disincentives to women with childbearing and childrearing responsibilities. For instance, they might forgo the income they get from work outside the home if they are still bearing many children. This has led to the significant decline in the fertility rate in western countries during the transition period.

Based on the works of McDonald (2000a, 2000b), a framework has been developed in this study to assess the relationship between the gender system in both institutions and over the course of fertility transition in the Indonesian setting. As shown in Figure 2, fertility level is influenced by gender equity. Nonetheless, the level of gender equity in a setting is constructed by two types of institutions: individual-oriented and family-oriented institutions. The level of gender equity in individual-oriented institutions is measured through women's

opportunity in health and education, and their labour force participation. Meanwhile, in family-oriented institutions, time use between men and women is used.

Figure 2. Theoretical framework of fertility transition and gender equity

3. Methodology

This study conducts a secondary data analysis, which is supported by a literature review. Secondary data analysis utilises data that was collected by someone else for the purposes of other studies (Johnston, 2017, p. 619). The data utilised in this study has primarily been sourced from the primary dataset from the Indonesia Demographic Health Survey (DHS). To attain the purpose of this study, the dataset was collected, analysed and interpreted. To support the main methodology, a literature review was carried out in this study. This method *enables the researcher both to map, and to assess, the existing intellectual territory, and to specify a research question to develop the existing body of knowledge further* (Tranfield, Denyer and Smart, 2003, p. 208). In this study, empirical findings in selected literature, such as government reports, books, journal articles, and online sources are reviewed and integrated to attain this study's aims.

4. Findings

4.1. Fertility Transition and Gender Equity

The empirical result in this study suggests that gender equity is associated with the course of fertility transition in the context of Indonesia. Table 1 shows the proximate indicators of gender equity in Indonesia between 1961 and 2017 (BPS *et al.*, 1998, 2013; BPS and ORC Macro, 2003; BPS and Macro International, 2008; BKKBN *et al.*, 2018; World Bank, 2019a).

Table 1. Proximate indicators of gender equity in Indonesia, 1961-2017

Year	Median years of schooling	Labour force participation	Life expectancy	TFR
1961	N/A	35.03	47.27	5.66
1970	N/A	44.9	52.55	5.47
1976	N/A	59.03	55.92	4.7
1987	N/A	61.83	61.1	3.3

1991	N/A	61.61	62.72	3.02
1994	4.8	60	63.91	2.85
1997	5.6	59.89	64.95	2.78
2002/	5.3	57.06	66.63	2.6
2003				
2007	5.8	60.18	68.1	2.6
2012	8.5	61.68	69.86	2.6
2017	8.9	63.74	71.28	2.4

It can be seen that the increasing trend of women's opportunities in individual-oriented institutions – education, labour market, and health – has led to the decreasing trend of TFR. Before the transition occurred, in 1961, labour force participation and life expectancy were very low, 35.03 percent and 47.27 years respectively. Once these two indicators showed an increase, however, the TFR decreased. The proximate indicators in education also showed a similar trend; its increase accompanied the decreasing trend of Indonesia's TFR.

Meanwhile, Graph 1 shows the trends in type of work performed by female employees in Indonesia between 1990 and 2011 (Schaner and Das, 2016). It can be seen that the share of women working as unpaid workers was also decreasing. In 1990, it was above 40 percent, while in 2011, it decreased to less than 40 percent. Contrarily, the share of female paid workers increased over the period. These trends, indicate that more equal relations between women and men within the household (family-oriented institutions) has a correlation with the decreasing trend of TFR.

Graph 1. Trends in Type of Work Performed by Female Workers over Time

This was confirmed by Utomo in her work "Women's Lives: Fifty years of change and continuity" (2005). She argued that women's struggle to promote a more equal gender role was pioneered by Kartini in the beginning of the twentieth century. However, this change was very slow. In the fifties, women fought for their "own independence" from men but remained powerless. For instance, a woman's marriage was arranged by her parents. Once having entered marriage, the woman needed to devote more time to caring for children and doing household chores, compared to participating outside

of family institutions. In the seventies, the beginning of President Suharto's regime, women's opportunities outside of family institutions, including primary health care, education, and formal employment, were substantially changed. Suharto, with his famous family planning program, also provided information and services for women, allowing them more control over births. In turn, women held a more equal position within households. By having access to higher education and an independent income, women could decide their own fate, even in relation to reproduction.

Thus, it could be argued that, in the case of Indonesia, the increasing level of gender equity at the household level also took longer than that at the macro level. It created a decent foundation, however, for the Indonesian women to head toward better opportunities outside family institution. The increasing trend of gender equity in both types of institution also accompanies the decreasing fertility level of Indonesia over the past four decades.

4.2. Gender Gap

Despite the fact that gender equity has played a significant role in influencing the decreasing trend of fertility in Indonesia, another empirical result that emerges in this study shows that the gender gap in both types of institutions still exists. Table 2 depicts some recent data relating to the prominent gender-gap among Indonesians in individual-oriented and family-oriented institutions (Utomo *et al.*, 2015; BKKBN *et al.*, 2018; World Bank, 2019b). In general, the achievements of women are still far behind those of men.

Table 2. Gender-gap among Indonesian in individual-oriented and family-oriented institutions

Institutions	Indicators	Men	Women
Individual-oriented institutions	Life expectancy	69.15	71.28
	Median years of school completed	7.4 years	6 years
	Labour force participation	98 %	53 %
Family-oriented institutions	Time use	Around 30 minutes for domestic works	2 hours for domestic works

In terms of health, it can be seen that women had a higher life expectancy than men, which was 71.28 years old compared to 69.15. The 2017 Indonesia DHS also reported that 58.2 percent of women were covered by health insurance, compared to only 56.6 percent of men (BKKBN *et al.*, 2018, pp. 48–49). Although the access to health services for women was higher than men, the patriarchal system also places a barrier for them to access health facilities. 5.7 percent of women in Indonesia still needed to get permission from men to go for treatment (BKKBN *et al.*, 2018, p. 157). Moreover, in terms of health outcomes, the survey also reported that women were

still marginalised. For instance, 19 percent of women still experienced pregnancy disorders or complications (BKKBN *et al.*, 2018, p. 133). Absor (2019) also found that women had a much higher prevalence of chronic diseases, such as high blood pressure, liver/kidney disease, and arthritis, compared to elderly men.

In education, gender inequality also takes place. Table 2 shows that the median years of school completed by women was only 6; meanwhile, men completed 7.4. Another result reported by the 2017 Indonesia DHS was the higher the level of education, the greater the gender gap (BKKBN *et al.*, 2018, pp. 22–23). For instance, while 6.9 percent of women had no education, only 3.6 percent of men were uneducated. Conversely, 21 percent of men completed secondary school, while only 16.7 percent of women completed it. This becomes complicated as policymakers and related stakeholders confirmed the imbalanced gender relation in the public sphere. When conducting content analysis in primary and secondary textbooks in Indonesia, Utomo *et al.* (2010) found that the textbooks depicted a heavy gender bias. Males were seen as significantly more dominant than females in the public sphere.

Meanwhile, in the labour market, women are still restricted by norms that situate them more in the domestic sphere than in the public sphere. As a result, the gender gap in the labour market is still wide in Indonesia. As shown in Table 2, in 2017, the share of the male labour force was 98 percent, compared to only 53 percent of women. When women have decided to enter the workforce, it is commonly found that they are confronted with policies that are not gender-responsive (Utomo *et al.*, 2010; Lahiri-Dutt, 2013; Absor, 2019). For instance, Lahiri-Dutt found that in Tanjung Bara mining camp in eastern Kalimantan, the gendered class stratification of labour and space put women in a subordinate status to men (2013, p. 7). Discrimination in the process of recruiting employees and the differences in labour costs between men and women are also still noticeable (Adioetomo and Pardede, 2018, p. 361). Moreover, harassment and trafficking that lead to exploitation and prostitution are still common problems that marginalise women in the Indonesian labour market (*ibid*).

The opportunity of women in the individual-oriented institutions is restricted by the persistent traditional norms within family-oriented institutions in Indonesia: “Women were taught to submit, to be silent, and to devote their life to the well-being of the family” (Utomo, 2005, p. 71). It was reported in the 2017 Indonesia DHS that 32 percent of women agreed that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife for specific reasons, such as burning the food and arguing with him (BKKBN *et al.*, 2018, p. 239). With regard to time spent in domestic tasks, such as fetching water and preparing dinner, which

tend not to produce money, power or influence, there is still an imbalance. Domestic roles are more likely to be borne by women. Men, by contrast, dominate the role of breadwinner within families. Utomo *et al.* (2015) found that in Greater Jakarta, women devoted more than two hours daily to completing domestic tasks, compared to only around half an hour for men (see Table 2). Conversely, as also found in Utomo *et al.*’s study, men spent more than eight hours a day working outside the family institution, compared to only less than six hours for women (*ibid*). Similar results were also shown among the elderly in rural Indonesia (Utomo *et al.*, 2019, p. 27).

Therefore, it is evident that the gender-gap, as a product of gender-role construction, is a matter of concern for Indonesia. Women still have less opportunity, compared to men, and access to public goods and services. This also occurs in the domestic sphere. The prevailing traditional family norms among families in Indonesia put a greater burden on women to fulfil domestic roles. Consequently, they might be unable or unwilling to pursue potential opportunities outside family institutions.

With all these points in mind, it can be argued that the progress of the fertility transition in Indonesia might be slow in the following years. As women have fewer opportunities outside of family institutions, they will not be incentivised to have fewer children. Moreover, receiving more opportunities outside the family institution, they might prefer to have only one or no child/ren, meaning that the fertility level of Indonesia might fall to the lowest level after reaching the replacement level fertility (2.1 births per woman). This reflects a considerable challenge for Indonesia’s future development.

4.3. The disparity of gender inequity

The last finding of this study reveals that the disparity of gender equity among provinces in Indonesia still exists. This gap exists, in particular, between western and eastern Indonesia. Table 3 depicts some recent indicators of gender-gap between provinces in Indonesia (BKKBN *et al.*, 2018; BPS, 2019).

Table 3. Gender-gap between provinces in Indonesia, 2017

Province	TFR	Median years of schooling	Lab-our force participation	Life expectancy	Decision Making power within family
East Java	2.1	8.9	55.4	68.82	69.8
Bali	2.1	11.1	78.4	69.58	58.5
Jakarta	2.2	11.2	54.3	70.78	76.1
Yogyakarta	2.2	11.4	67.9	72.95	70.5
North Sulawesi	2.2	11.1	42	69.11	74.1
Jambi	2.3	9	53.2	68.75	54
Bengkulu	2.3	9.2	60.1	66.64	65.8

Province	TFR	Median years of schooling	Labour force participation	Life expectancy	Decision Making power within family
Lampung	2.3	8.7	49.7	68.04	58.5
Bangka	2.3	8.9	54.6	68.08	73.8
Belitung	2.3	11.2	55.3	67.6	66
Riau Islands	2.3	8.6	54	72.16	70.4
Central Java	2.3	8.7	50	67.57	68.8
Banten	2.4	8.7	45.5	70.58	63.1
West Java	2.4	8.6	59.5	65.98	70
South Kalimantan	2.4	9.3	52.7	67.96	82.6
Sulawesi	2.4	8.9	53.3	69.16	68.2
National	2.4	8.9	53.3	69.16	68.2
West	2.5	11.1	57.3	66.94	73.4
Sumatera	2.5	8.8	52	63.57	73.4
West Nusa Tenggara	2.5	8.8	52	63.57	73.4
Central	2.5	8.6	61.2	67.69	81.3
Kalimantan	2.5	8.6	55.2	65.22	60.1
Gorontalo	2.5	8.6	55.2	65.22	60.1
South	2.6	8.7	62.1	67.29	67.9
Sumatera	2.7	11.1	48.5	67.67	64
Aceh	2.7	8.2	52.3	68	66.3
West	2.7	10.1	52.5	71.87	65.5
Kalimantan	2.7	8.9	55.2	65.4	75.4
Central	2.7	8.7	49.3	62.52	80.7
Sulawesi	2.7	8.7	49.3	62.52	80.7
West	2.8	9.5	58.8	70.5	69.3
Sulawesi	2.8	10.1	56.1	68.57	79.4
North	2.9	11.1	60	66.69	69.4
Sumatera	2.9	8.9	49.4	69.12	69.3
Riau	2.9	9.7	51.5	65.56	67.7
North	3.2	10	53.1	63.34	72.8
Maluku	3.3	11.2	46.4	63.49	76.3
Maluku	3.3	8.2	59.7	63.45	47.8
Papua	3.3	8.2	59.7	63.45	47.8
East Nusa Tenggara	3.4	8.2	54.6	64.2	78.1

It is revealed that women in the majority of provinces in western Indonesia, in particular Bali and the provinces on Java island, performed better in the two types of institutions. Meanwhile, those in the eastern provinces underperformed in the institutions.

In terms of education, the median years of schooling for women in Bali and most provinces in Java was around 11 years, while in most eastern Indonesian provinces it was below 10 years. Similarly, the life expectancy of women in Bali and most provinces in Java was above 69 years, while in the eastern provinces it was less than 66 years. Utomo *et al.* (2019) also found that, among the elderly in rural Indonesia, women living outside of Java island had a poorer health status, compared to those living on Java island.

The inequality of gender relations between regions was less reflected in labour force

participation and decision-making power within the family. It is important to bear in mind, however, that these figures do not always translate to a more equal opportunity for women in these two aspects. For instance, despite the fact that the share of women's participation in the labour market in East Nusa Tenggara was almost equal to that of East Java in 2017, 54.6 and 55.4 respectively, the majority of women in East Nusa Tenggara worked as agricultural workers, while those in East Java worked in sales (BKKBN *et al.*, 2018, p. 269). Women in East Nusa Tenggara are smallholder farmers, who use traditional farming methods, so they need to devote more time and energy to earn income equal to those in East Java (Jones and Nagib, 1999). The combination of these elements shapes the fertility behaviour of women in the two parts of Indonesia. As can be seen in Table 3, the TFR of provinces in eastern Indonesia was far higher than that of provinces in western Indonesia, in particular Java and Bali. By having fewer opportunities in both macro and micro institutions, women in eastern Indonesia (compared to those in western Indonesia) will be less able to have fewer children as they have less capacity to access birth control information and will experience more negative outcomes of having many children. In turn, they will have less opportunity due to childbearing and childrearing, instead of engaging in education and the labour market.

5. Conclusion

Gender equity has been suggested as one of the essential determinants of fertility transition occurring in the last two centuries. The case of Indonesia confirms that the increasing level of gender equity in both types of institutions – individual-oriented and family-oriented – has led to a decreasing level of fertility. It has also been found that, despite gender equity being promoted during the past four decades, a gender gap still exists. Other than that, among the different provinces in Indonesia, the disparity in gender inequality has been significant.

It is, therefore, essential for the government to put more attention in promoting more progressive gender roles. Otherwise, the level of fertility in Indonesia might fall to the lowest level, as it has in some countries in Eastern Asia, and this will be difficult to reverse. Another negative outcome is that the progress of development between provinces might vary as a consequence of the differences in the level of gender equity. More studies are needed in the future to focus more on whether various policies designed to address the gap work. This would mean that gender equity could be established in both types of institutions in Indonesia, and women could experience many benefits of gender equity.

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