

## Marital Satisfaction in Adolescent Women with Premarital Pregnancy Seen from the First 5 Years of Marriage

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**Abstract.** This research examines marital satisfaction among young women with premarital pregnancy in Kupang City in the first five years of marriage. The method of research used is a qualitative study. Data collection was carried out with technique interview use guidelines interview and coding in the results interview. The subjects in this study were chosen based on specific criteria using purposive sampling. The respondents are four female adolescents aged 17-22 who have undergone a wedding for five years. Results from this study show that a woman who married at an adolescent age feels satisfaction in their marriage and is capable of adapting to build harmony in the family.

**Keywords:** *Marital satisfaction, young women, marriage age*

**Abstrak.** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat kepuasan pernikahan pada remaja putri yang hamil di luar nikah di Kota Kupang ditinjau dari 5 tahun awal pernikahan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan teknik wawancara menggunakan pedoman wawancara dan melakukan koding di hasil wawancara. Subjek dalam penelitian ini diambil berdasarkan kriteria tertentu dengan menggunakan teknik *purposive sampling*. Responden dalam penelitian ini adalah 4 remaja putri yang berusia 17-22 tahun dan telah menjalani pernikahan selama 5 tahun. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwa remaja putri yang menikah di usia remaja akhir ini merasakan kepuasan dalam pernikahannya dan mampu beradaptasi untuk membangun keharmonisan dalam keluarga.

**Kata kunci:** *Kepuasan pernikahan, remaja putri, usia pernikahan*

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### Introduction

Adolescence is a transition period from childhood to adulthood where adolescence experiences many physical and psychological changes in the individual

(Santrock, 2007). According to data from the World Health Organization, adolescents are children aged between 10-18 years. During this period, individuals experience various developments, starting to form romantic relationships or casual dating and dating in groups at 17-19 years old. Dating relationships among adolescents today are starting to undergo serious relationships similar to adult romantic relationships, which can progress to the stage of irresponsible sexual relations for each individual. The adolescents' environment usually forms this.

According to Akmal Latif & Zulherawan (2020), sexual relations among adolescents are a problem that causes unrest in society. Individuals have had premarital sex, which resulted in unwanted pregnancies because adolescents are curious and want to find their identity by carrying out actions that make individuals responsible for their choices. These developmental tasks in adolescents can be categorised as adolescence as a period that is quite vulnerable to live through because curiosity is not appropriately controlled and can encourage individuals to act without thinking about the impact on the individual themselves in the long term (Munandar, 2009).

According to Muhammad (2005), at the age of 3-4 years of marriage, adolescents are vulnerable to divorce because, at this age of marriage, adolescents feel that their marital satisfaction decreases, so many married couples divorce because they feel dissatisfied in their marriage. This can be viewed from the definition of marriage, a physical and spiritual bond between a man and a woman as a married couple to form a happy family (household) and achieve happiness (Ministry of State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). Therefore, adolescents who marry at the age of 3-4 years should need special guidance from both family and religion so that these adolescent couples can build their households better. Meanwhile, at the marriage age, adolescents between 5-10 years feel satisfaction which includes good interpersonal relationships which include mutual understanding of each other, mutually maintaining their relationship with trust and maintaining affection for each

other even though the individual already knows the weaknesses or shortcomings of their partner ( Saidiyah & Julianto, 2017).

Satisfaction in marriage is one of the most essential factors in running a household. According to Sudarto (2014), to obtain marital satisfaction in a household, at least a husband and wife can have intimacy, commitment, communication, finances and religious beliefs. Suppose one of the factors above is not fulfilled in a marriage. In that case, it will impact the relationship and trigger conflict in the household due to difficulties in carrying out one of these factors. Furthermore, Clayton (2006) explains that marital satisfaction is an overall evaluation of everything related to the condition of the marriage.

Previous research in Indonesia (Walgito (2004) shows the importance of married adolescents receiving protection, affection, a sense of security and respect so that individuals will feel calm, can protect and be protected and can also pour out all their hearts to their partners. However, there is a lack of evidence about how marital satisfaction is felt by young women who marry because of premarital pregnancy. This research also aims to explore perceptions of marital satisfaction among young women who become pregnant out of wedlock. The results of this research can inform stakeholders about the dynamics of early marriage and help develop better intervention and prevention programs in the community.

### **Method**

This study used qualitative research methods and a phenomenological approach design. The sample was taken using purposive sampling. The sample used in this research included married young women under the age of 17-25 years who were housewives and were willing to become research participants. The number of samples used in this research were four adolescent girls who were pregnant out of wedlock and had been married for five years. The four participants live in Kupang City and have signed informed consent before starting the interview. The interview session was conducted from 8 August to 18 September 2023, with an interview duration of around 40 to 50 minutes.

Data collection in this research was carried out using in-depth interview techniques with previously prepared interview guidelines. Although there are interview guidelines, the questions will be flexible in this research according to the circumstances and the conversation flow. When conducting interviews, you will add several additional audio tools to record the interview process to make it easier to analyse the data. We used everyday language in Kupang City to increase rapport with research participants when conducting interviews.

The type of interview used in this research is an in-depth interview. The purpose of in-depth interviews is for researchers to explore the topic they want to explore, in this case, namely the marital satisfaction of young women themselves, using open-ended questions. The data analysis technique used in this research is through thematic data analysis. Member check This is done by confirming the accuracy of the research results with participants to ensure that the results are indeed accurate and true to the participants' perceptions.

### Result

The research participants were young women aged 18-25 who had been married for five years. Two participants were 17 years old, and two were 18 years old. The data results will be presented in partition demographics in table 2 below.

Table 2

*Participant Demographics*

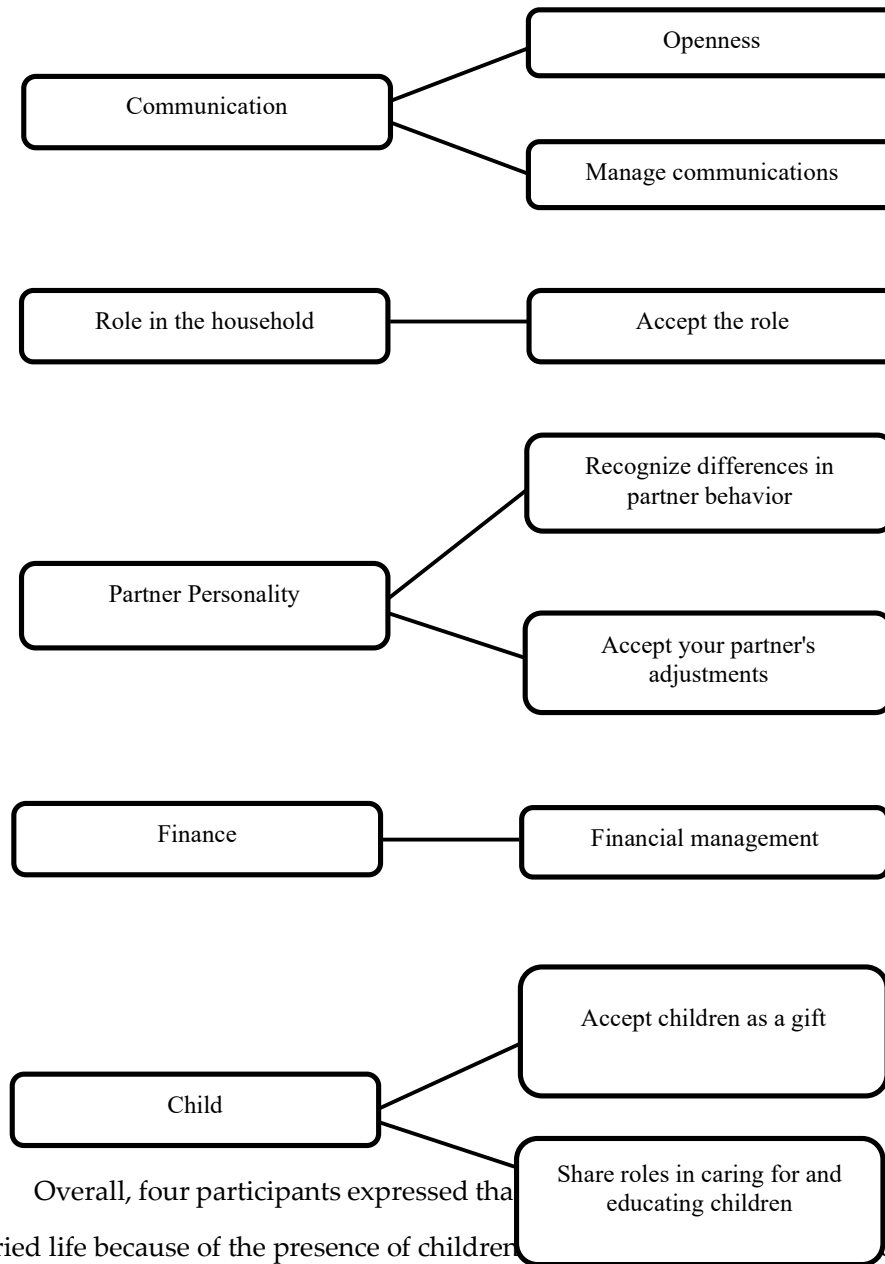
Pseudonym)	Age at Marriage	Wedding Background	Residence
Rose	18 years	She had premarital sex with her boyfriend, who is now her husband—married at the age of 18. Five years of marriage and has two children: one daughter and one son. Lives alone because doesn't want to depend on his parents.	South Oesapa District
Jasmine	17 years	She had premarital sex with her boyfriend, who is now her husband. Married at the age of 17. Married age 6 years and has 3 children, namely 1 boy and 2 twins, boy and girl. Lives alone because he doesn't want to depend on his parents	Kelapa Lima District

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Frangipani	18 years	She had premarital sex with her boyfriend, who is now her husband. Married at the age of 18 to a 20 year old husband. Currently married, he is 6 years old and has 1 daughter. Live in your own house but next door to your biological parents' house.	Kelapa Lima District
Tulips	17 years	She had premarital sex with her boyfriend, who is now her husband. Married at the age of 17. Married age 5 years and has 1 daughter. Living with biological parents	Kelapa Lima District

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From the results of interviews with participants, researchers found five main themes, namely communication, the role of parents, personality, finances and children, which consist of eight sub-themes; communication has two sub-themes, the role of parents has one sub-theme, personality has two sub-themes, finance has one sub-theme and children have two sub-themes. Further results will be presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1 .** Theme and sub-theme trees

their partners, which made the participants feel comfortable when opening up to each other. However, one of them feels satisfied because the presence of children in his marriage can help him feel this satisfaction. This participant is often ignored by his partner, which makes him often make his own decisions. They should be able to support each other in finding a solution whenever a problem comes into the house on the stairs. The following will discuss each theme found in this research.

### **Communication**

Adolescents who get married because they become pregnant out of wedlock can change the participants' lives and activities. They must learn to be open with each other and create comfortable communication so that a sense of mutual understanding develops in their marriage and the marriage will be in line with each other's wishes even though there are many differences of opinion in marriage, by building openness in communication it will make their partner feel appreciated, understood and become satisfied in carrying out their roles as husband and wife. The four participants admitted that by communicating, they would find a way out of every household problem.

*"I do have open communication. For example, when I argue with my husband, I often tell him that it is better to fight, not let the children see and hear their pity, and not set a bad example for them (Mawar; 253-257)."*

One in four participants revealed that they had difficulty communicating openly and building comfortable communication with their husbands because every time they opened up about problems in their domestic life, their husbands would avoid conversation and choose not to discuss them.

*"I only communicated at least, but he never responded (Cambodia; 183)."*

*"My husband has started to avoid what I want to communicate with him (Cambodia; 218)."*

*"I always make my own decisions because there is never any communication (Cambodia; 252)."*

### **Role in the household**

Getting married at a young age should enable every adolescent to fulfil the role of being married. The four participants expressed that they accepted and carried out their roles as wives, homemakers, and mothers for their children. Carrying out this role means they carry out many tasks, and they are often exhausted by the duties

of a housewife. Therefore, they should carry out these tasks together and help each other so that in marriage, they will get satisfaction from the attention they get from helping each other. This was expressed by three of the four participants.

*"Hmm ... in my household, I play the role of a wife who does all the work in the household (Melati; 195-196)."*

One in four participants in this study often carried out their roles alone without help from their partners to work together at home. She has also accepted her role as a mother and wife who always works at home. Kemboja also said that he and his partner were living their own lives.

*"Yes, he and I live my life, and I do not live. He never helps with small things, even sweeping, never at all when at home (Cambodia; 365-368)."*

### **Personality**

One of the determinants of marital satisfaction in adolescents arises from personality. This personality often triggers conflict, for example, incompatibility with the behaviour of each partner. The four participants revealed that they knew their partner's good and bad behaviour and accepted this behaviour in their marriage to create mutual satisfaction in their married life. The four participants also explained that before and after marriage, there were many changes in their partner's good and bad behaviour and that they accepted each other's changed behaviour to lead them to a better married life from year to year.

*"In terms of his adjustments to sharing roles in the house, when he first got married, he was quiet and indifferent, but as time passed, he got older and started talking to each other when he had time. "From there, he can help with work that is lacking and help Beta if there is hard work like that (Tulip; 602-608)."*

### **Finance**

Regarding finances, adolescents who marry at a young age experience many difficulties, including controlling expenses to meet their household needs. The four



participants revealed that their husbands trusted them to manage the finances given by their husbands so that they were able to meet their household needs. Apart from that, two participants said they also opened a small business at home to help their husbands make a living. In contrast, one of the participants was a state civil servant, and another was a housewife, which made them often save more on expenses for home needs and meet their children's needs.

*"He also forbids you from starting a small business, at least to buy vegetables and milk for your children, and you have to be careful when managing things carelessly (Tulip; 637-639)."*

### **Child**

The presence of children in the participants' households makes them feel satisfied and grateful for God's gift to them. Children themselves are a determinant of satisfaction in marriage itself. The four participants also expressed that they accepted children as God's gift by always giving thanks and feeling that their home life was more colourful because of the presence of children in their midst. Three out of four participants also said that having children could increase harmony with their partner because they would help each other raise their children together.

*"There is a feeling of happiness. Yes, I feel happy to have had a baby like that. I am also grateful because there are many people out there, meaning pregnant at a young age, many have had miscarriages, and I am very grateful that God has enabled me to be able to give birth, care for and look after my children until now (Melati; 370-376)."*

The presence of children also brings additional duties as parents in the marriage. One participant revealed that he had difficulty sharing the task of taking care of the children with his partner because his partner was busy and was always ignored when he asked his partner for help. This made him complete the task alone even though he had asked his partner for help.

*"Never, yes, never. I always take care of the children myself and play with the children (Cambodia; 565)"*

### **Discussion**

Getting married at the age of 17-25 years due to premarital pregnancy has caused many changes in the lives of young women. Many new roles and tasks require young couples to be able to adapt since marriage. Couples who marry young, of course, come from different backgrounds. In this case, it will make it difficult for each other to understand and respect each other at the beginning of marriage if they do not apply a sense of comfort in communicating with each other. The ability to adapt starts from being open to each other and solving problems in their domestic life. Openness arises from effective and good communication between partners. According to Dwima (2019), communication aims to help people understand each other in domestic life. Effective communication with partners allows us to form a satisfactory basis and understand each other between partners. Marriage itself requires sincere, honest communication, sharing what the partner feels and responding to what the partner gives. This is influenced by various developments passed by the participants and couples, which show a change towards a more harmonious relationship so that individuals can control their emotions, thinking, and decision-making. This development process is influenced by the participants' own developmental factors, including environmental factors in the form of reciprocity in a relationship, emotional and psychological maturity, and joint activities for mutual development (Sapara, 2020).

According to Olson & Fowers (2010), communication is the most critical focus in achieving marital satisfaction. Communication can be a way to solve problems, gain harmony, and feel happy because you can receive and respond to the information provided. From this established communication, each household partner can carry out their roles, understand each other, be open about finances, and help each other educate their children. This research found that young women who got married. After all, they had premarital pregnancies and more often applied openness with their partners. They created comfortable communication in their domestic life because they realised that what young women want to feel in the household must start from within themselves so that they do not feel uncomfortable communicating

because the key to carrying out their roles in domestic life starts with effective mutual communication.

Carrying out a role in domestic life must be based on accepting that role within oneself. A sense of responsibility for your duties as husband, wife, and parent certainly requires cooperation in household life. Based on this, it can be said that an individual's adjustment to marriage must be based on premarital readiness. According to the theory of Duvall & Miller (1985), the state of being ready or willing to have a relationship with a partner means having a sense of being ready to accept responsibility as a husband or wife, being emotionally ready, psychologically ready, ready to be involved in sexual relations, ready to manage the family, ready to manage finances and ready to arrange child care patterns. Someone ready to enter a household wants a harmonious relationship between husband and wife and children (Sari, 2013). Therefore, individuals will seek information to educate each other about their married life and create a feeling of respect for each other.

According to Olson & Fowers (2010), satisfaction will arise if each partner can personally help with work at home and each partner plays the role of parent in the marriage. This role can include supporting each other to work together in the household. Usually, the role in the household is to make partners feel loved and appreciated. In this research, it was also found that every young couple with a marriage age range of 3-5 years creates a sense of mutual responsibility by helping each other with household work, meaning that the role in the household itself is not only the task of a young married woman but also the task of both parties who are married to support each other.

Couples who marry at a young age come from various backgrounds, and many behaviours that have never been seen are only discovered when they get married. Many young couples are shocked by behaviour different from what they are used to. This means that young couples must be able to adapt and accept the behaviour that arises from their partner. This is in line with research from Risma & Afifah (2023); life after marriage is different when a couple is only in a dating

relationship. Therefore, husband and wife must be able to accept and understand this condition and adjust to each other because, after marriage, some activities carried out by a wife must involve her husband in these activities.

Individuals who can adapt to the conditions of their environment will have more harmony in their household both in terms of not demanding and understanding the existing conditions in each condition of themselves and their partners. This study found that they did not expect their partner to have different behaviour from the courtship period, where before marriage and after marriage, they only saw good behaviour from their partner. Still, there was behaviour that caused disappointment in the young married woman; however, as time went by, good communication allowed each partner to adapt and accept each other to achieve harmony in marriage.

Marrying young and not having a stable job makes it difficult for each couple to overcome their financial problems and becomes a source of marital strife. In marriage, a wife must be able to manage finances to meet the household's needs. A husband and wife must first agree on a joint financial decision so that the couple will become a cooperative team in arranging and building the family's financial economy. Openness will also form a responsive attitude between partners. This situation will build intimacy and trust in husband and wife couples and improve marriage quality (Cordova, 2009).

In this research, the husband and wife mutually agreed that the wife should control finances, and the couple also agreed that the wife could work by opening a business at home to support each other in meeting the needs of the house and children. According to Kisiyanto & Setiawan (2019), building financial relationships in the household will be well-formed if the husband and wife build a mutual agreement in making decisions about using money, managing finances, saving, and financial arrangements so that meeting household needs becomes an encouragement to fulfilment of marital satisfaction.

The presence of children is a complement to married life. Apart from that, the presence of children in marriage is also seen as a goal of marriage. Having children

in your marriage can relieve loneliness when your husband leaves you for work, have friends to play with, and relieve your parents' stress. The increase in family members in the household adds to the duties and roles of helping each other care for and educate children. Carrying out an extra role requires building good communication to create a feeling of comfort in understanding each other so you can help take care of your children together. This is in line with Suharto (2015), who states that with the presence of a child in the family, communication within the family becomes closer and more critical. Its intensity must increase, meaning that in the family, there needs to be good communication as often as possible between husband and wife for the child's good because Children are an image and reflection of each couple's domestic life. In this research, it was found that the role of a mother will be an extra higher role compared to a father, where a man himself will be less able to communicate about child development, thus making the wife extra to build bridges through educating themselves and learning from each other to become parents to help each other raise children together.

In this research, it was also found that even though every adolescent who married at an early age, namely 17-22 years and felt satisfied with their marriage, there were many problems such as differences of opinion, misunderstandings in responding to the attitudes and behaviour of their partners and also financial problems faced and made individuals feel stressed and need help and support from closest relatives, whether family, neighbours or friends. This problem arises because many adolescents and couples are not ready to face the conflicts that are often faced in marriage. After all, starting from such a young age, we still prioritise our ego and individual feelings, making individuals experience difficulties in overcoming these problems, which results in stress (Widaningsih, 2023).

From the emergence of this stress, young women try to find a way out by avoiding conflict, such as venting their complaints to relatives, friends, and parents. Some try to go out with their partners to be open with each other about every conflict, such as trying to get out of conflict to prevent stress so that these young women find

a way out, such as understanding each other, responding calmly if their partner is in an unhealthy condition and trying to understand the good intentions of every conversation with their partner. This is in line with research from the coping stress behaviour theory that in solving a problem, an individual will manage the problem that puts him under stress by avoiding and staying away from the leading cause of the problem and asking for social help from outside, be it family, neighbours or friends ( Maryam, 2017).

### **Conclusion**

Based on research conducted by researchers, it can be concluded that communication in marriage plays a significant role in increasing marital satisfaction, where participants stated that communication is the primary key to all existing aspects, including roles in the household, personality, finances and the presence of children where communication and openness to each other can solve problems so that they can find a way out of every household problem. In marriage itself, of course, every couple wants to feel valued and respected; therefore, being open to each other and creating comfortable communication can increase harmony in the marriage.

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