

## Description of Interpersonal Communication of Early Married Couples from Subject Characteristics

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**Abstract.** Interpersonal communication is sending messages from one person and received by others with immediate effect and feedback (Devito, 2011). Aspects of interpersonal communication based on Devito's opinion (in Shalom 2013) are openness, empathy, supportive attitude, positive attitude, and equality. The purpose of this study was to describe the interpersonal communication of couples who marry early in terms of subject characteristics. The characteristics of the subjects referred to in this study were gender, age at marriage, and length of the marriage. This research was conducted in Karangploso District, Malang Regency, with 150 research subjects. The research method used is descriptive-analytic with a cross-sectional approach. The results of this study are that there is no relationship between gender and interpersonal communication (p-value = 0.113), there is no relationship between age at marriage and interpersonal communication (p-value = 0.427), and there is no relationship between the length of the marriage and interpersonal communication (p-value = 0.573).

**Keywords:** *Interpersonal Communication, Early Marriage, Subject Characteristics*

**Abstrak.** Komunikasi interpersonal adalah pengiriman pesan dari satu orang dan diterima oleh orang lain dengan efek dan umpan balik langsung (Devito, 2011). Aspek komunikasi interpersonal menurut pendapat Devito (dalam Shalom 2013) adalah keterbukaan, empati, sikap mendukung, sikap positif, dan kesetaraan. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan komunikasi interpersonal pasangan yang menikah dini ditinjau dari karakteristik subjek. Karakteristik subjek yang dimaksud dalam penelitian ini adalah jenis kelamin, usia menikah, dan lama menikah. Penelitian ini dilakukan di Kecamatan Karangploso Kabupaten Malang dengan subjek penelitian sebanyak 150 orang. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif-analitik dengan pendekatan cross sectional. Hasil penelitian ini adalah tidak ada hubungan antara jenis kelamin dengan komunikasi interpersonal (p-value = 0,113), tidak ada hubungan antara usia menikah dengan komunikasi interpersonal (p-value = 0,427), dan tidak ada hubungan antara lama menikah dengan komunikasi interpersonal (p-value = 0,573).

**Kata Kunci:** *Komunikasi Interpersonal, Pernikahan Dini, Karakteristik Subyek*

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### **Introduction**

The Center for Research and Development (Puslitbang) of the Ministry of Religion mentions that Indonesia is a country that is included in the ranks of countries with the highest divorce rate in the world. Data from 2009 to 2016 shows that the divorce rate has increased from 16% to 20%. It is mainly known that couples who marry and are under the age of 35 choose to divorce. According to data released by the BKKBN in 2013, as one of the countries with the highest divorce rates in the Asia Pacific, most divorce cases that appear in Indonesia occur within the first five years of marriage.

Marriage is an emotional and legal commitment between two people who share emotional and physical intimacy, tasks, and economic resources (Olson, DeFrain, Skogrand, 2014). Early marriage is carried out by underage couples who do not have maximum physical, mental, and material readiness (Dlori, 2005). The people who have early marriage are primarily in their teens; in which at this time. Individuals are still asking for their identity, developing a logical-abstract mindset, wanting to be free from parental control, and having their own opinion (Supraba, 2015). Marriage is inseparable from the possibility of conflict. Some of the impacts caused by early marriage include instability in marriage, reduced health, less ability to solve problems correctly, decreased school enrollment rates, and child welfare (Paul, Joseph, and Ijeoma, 2013). Lee (2015) in his research mentions the tendency of individuals who marry at an early age to have a higher risk of instability than individuals who marry at an early age. Lack of preparation when undergoing early marriage can lead to unpreparedness and dissatisfaction, which can end in divorce.

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dissatisfaction which can end in divorce. Marriage is inseparable from the possibility of conflict.

Data obtained from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2018 illustrates that at least 1 in 9 girls in Indonesia is married. The number of women aged 20-24 years who were married before they turned 18 in 2018 was allegedly around 1,220,900. This figure puts Indonesia in the 10th position with the highest absolute number of child marriages worldwide. Malang Regency has a reasonably large population in East Java Province and is, at the same time, the area with the highest divorce rate in East Java.

Vazhappilly, and Marc (2016) found that effective communication can make marital relationships more satisfying. In line with this opinion, the results of research by Dewi and Sudhana (2013) and Khairifa (2019) show that there is a positive relationship between interpersonal communication between husband and wife and household harmony.

Based on the descriptions that have been presented previously, this study aims to: 1) Identify interpersonal communication in early married couples; 2) Analyze the relationship of interpersonal communication between couples who marry early in terms of gender, age at marriage, and length of the marriage.

### **Method**

This research is descriptive-analytic research using a cross-sectional approach. The location of this study was chosen purposively in Karangploso District, Malang Regency. The data collection was spread over nine villages, namely Tegalgondo Village, Kepuharjo Village, Ngenep Village, Ngijo Village, Ampeldento Village, Girimoyo Village, Bocek Village, Donowarih Village, and Tawangargo Village. The consideration for choosing the location was because there were cases of early marriage in Malang Regency. The stages of this research are as follows: 1) the preparation stage; 2) the data collection stage; 3) the data processing stage; 4) the data analysis stage; 5) and writing research reports. The number of respondents in this study was 150 individuals, and the sampling technique used purposive random

sampling with several criteria. The criteria used in this study were men with the status of husband/women with the status of wife and married when they were under 21.

The method of data collection applied in this study used the scale method. The scale is a data collection procedure that focuses on measuring the affective aspect. The affective aspect here is a psychological construct or concept that can describe an aspect of an individual's personality. In this study, the Likert model scaling technique was used, whereas the attitude statement scaling model used the response distribution as the basis for determining attitudes (Azwar, 2010). The scale used in this study is an adaptation of the Measurement of Marital Communication (MCI) developed by Schumm et al. (2013). This scale consists of 19 items. The independent variables adopted in this study were gender, age at marriage, and length of the marriage. The dependent variable raised in this study is interpersonal communication. Data analysis of this study used the Chi-Square test to determine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable in this study.

## **Result**

This study raises the theme of the description of interpersonal communication of couples who marry early in terms of the characteristics of subjects. The results obtained from this research can be described as follows:

### 1. Univariate analysis

#### a. Gender

Table 1.

*Frequency Distribution Based on Gender*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	10	6,7 %
Female	140	93,3 %
Total	150	100 %

It is known from the table above that the characteristics of respondents based on gender are that the total number of male respondents is ten people or 6.7%, while respondents with female sex are 140 people or 93.3%.

b. Age at Marriage

Table 2.

*Frequency Distribution Based on Age at Marriage*

<b>Age at Marriage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Under 16 Years Old	9	6 %
16 Years Old	19	12,7 %
17 Years Old	22	14,7 %
18 Years Old	12	8 %
19 Years Old	28	18,7 %
20 Years Old	60	40 %
Total	150	100 %

Based on the data shown above, the characteristics of respondents based on age at marriage are mainly at the age of 20 years, namely as many as 60 respondents or 40%. While the least number of respondents in this study were those who married at the age of 21 years, namely nine respondents or 6%.

c. Length of the Marriage

Table 3.

*Frequency Distribution Based on Length of the Marriage*

<b>Length of the Marriage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Less than 1 Year	5	3,3 %
1 Year	4	2,7 %
2 Year	2	1,3 %
3 Year	5	3,3 %
4 Year	7	4,7 %
5 Year	11	7,3 %
More than 5 Year	116	77,3 %
Total	150	100 %

In the table above, it is known that if the characteristics of the respondents are seen based on the length of the marriage, most are over five years, namely 116 respondents or 77.3%. Meanwhile, those who have been married for at least two years are 1.3 respondents or 1.3%.

d. Interpersonal Communication

Table 4.

*Interpersonal Communication*

<b>Interpersonal Communication</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
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Very Low	58	38,70 %
Low	75	50%
Moderate	14	9,30%
High	3	2 %
Very High	0	0%

In the picture above, it can be seen that the majority of respondents perceive interpersonal communication as low, namely as many as 75 respondents or 50%. Meanwhile, the least respondents are in a low category, namely 3 or 2%.

## 2. Bivariate Analysis

### a. Cross-tabulation Between Gender and Interpersonal Communication

Table 4.

*Results of Gender Cross-tabulation With Interpersonal Communication.*

		Interpersonal Communication					P-Value	
		Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Total		
Gender	Female	N	55	70	14	2	141	0,113
		% of	39,0%	49,6	9,9%	1,4%	100,0%	
		Total		%				
Male	N	2	6	0	1	9		
	% of	22,2%	66,7	0,0%	11,1%	100,0%		
	Total		%					
Total	N	57	76	14	3	150		
	% of	38,0%	50,7	9,3%	2,0%	100,0%		
	Total		%					

Based on the table, it is known that most of the female respondents' interpersonal communication is in a low category. Women who are categorized as having low interpersonal communication are 70 respondents, or 49.6%. Meanwhile, the least is in the high category of 2 respondents or 1.4%. It is known that the categorization is low for male respondents, namely six respondents or 66.7%. Meanwhile, there are only a few respondents in the deficient category.

In this study, it is known that the p-value = 0.113 ( $p > 0.005$ ), so it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between gender and interpersonal communication. This is suspected to be caused by the difference between the number of male respondents and female respondents in this study being very much different.

b. Cross-tabulation of Age at Marriage with Interpersonal Communication

Table 5.

*Results of Age at Marriage Cross-tabulation With Interpersonal Communication.*

		Interpersonal Communication					Total	P-Value
		Very Low	Low	Moderate	High			
Age at Marriage	Under 16 Years Old	N	3	5	1	0	9	0,427
		% of Total	33,3%	55,6%	11,1%	0%	100,0%	
	16-17 Years Old	N	11	6	2	0	19	
		% of Total	57,9%	31,6%	10,5%	0,0%	100,0%	
	17-18 Years Old	N	11	10	1	0	22	
		% of Total	50,0%	45,5%	4,5%	0,0%	100%	
	18-19 Years Old	N	6	4	2	0	12	
		% of Total	50,0%	33,3%	16,7%	0,0%	100,0%	
	19-20 Years Old	N	9	15	4	0	28	
		% of Total	32,1%	53,6%	14,3%	0,0%	100,0%	
Total		N	57	76	14	3	150	
		% of Total	38,0%	50,7%	9,3%	2,0%	100,0%	

In Table 5 above, one respondent who married when he was under 16 years old (11.1%) was categorized as having moderate interpersonal communication. In contrast, the rest fall into the deficient categories, respectively, with three respondents (33.3%) and five (55.6%). In the group

of respondents who married at the age of 16 years, it is known that two respondents (10.5%) are categorized as having moderate interpersonal communication. In addition, six respondents (31.6%) were in a low category, and the remaining 11 (57.9%) were in the shallow category. For the group of respondents who married at the age of 17 years, it is known that ten respondents (4.5%) are in a low category and 11 respondents (50%) are in the deficient category. In the group of respondents who married at the age of 18 years, four respondents (33.3%) were in a low category. The remaining six respondents (50%) are in the deficient category, and two (16.7%) are in the medium category.

In respondents who married at the age of 19 years, it is known that the level of interpersonal communication is mainly in the low category, namely 15 respondents (53.6 %). The rest have a level of interpersonal communication in the deficient category, with as many as nine respondents (32.1%) and in the medium category, four (14.3%). The last group was married at the age of 20 years, and it was known that the level of interpersonal communication was mainly in the low category, namely 38 respondents (60%). A total of 17 respondents who married at the age of 20 had a deficient interpersonal communication category (28.3%). The remaining 4 (6.7%) respondents were in the moderate category, and three (5.0%) were in the high category.

In this study, it was found that the p-value = 0.427 ( $p > 0.005$ ). So there is no significant relationship between age at marriage and interpersonal communication. This indicates that other factors can have a reciprocal relationship and influence age at marriage on the level of interpersonal communication. This can be investigated further as a step in developing the results of this study.

- c. Cross-tabulation Length of the Marriage With Interpersonal Communication

Table 6.



*Results of Cross-tabulation Length of the Marriage With Interpersonal Communication.*

		Interpersonal Communication					Total	P-Value
		Very Low	Low	Moderate	High			
Length of the Marriage	Less than 1 Year	N	1	1	0	0	2	0,573
		% of Total	50,0%	50,0%	0,0%	0,0%	100%	
	1 Year	N	1	2	1	0	4	
		% of Total	25,0%	50,0%	25,0%	0,0%	100,0%	
	2 Year	N	1	0	1	0	2	
		% of Total	50,0%	0,0%	50,0%	0,0%	100,0%	
	3 Year	N	3	1	1	0	5	
		% of Total	60,0%	20,0%	20,0%	0,0%	100,0%	
	4 Year	N	3	4	0	0	7	
		% of Total	42,9%	57,1%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%	
5 Year	N	7	2	2	0	11		
	% of Total	63,6%	18,2%	18,2%	0,0%	100,0%		
More than 5 Year	N	41	66	9	3	119		
	% of Total	34,5%	55,5%	7,6%	2,5%	100,0%		
Total	N	57	76	14	3	150		
	% of Total	38,0%	50,7%	9,3%	2,0%	100,0%		

In Table 5 above, one respondent who married when he was under 16 years old (11.1%) was categorized as having moderate interpersonal communication. In contrast, the rest fall into the deficient categories, respectively, with three respondents (33.3%) and five (55.6%). In the group of respondents who married at the age of 16 years, it is known that two respondents (10.5%) are categorized as having moderate interpersonal communication. In addition, six respondents (31.6%) were in a low category, and the remaining 11 (57.9%) were in the shallow category. For

the group of respondents who married at the age of 17 years, it is known that ten respondents (4.5%) are in a low category and 11 respondents (50%) are in the deficient category. In the group of respondents who married at the age of 18 years, four respondents (33.3%) were in a low category. The remaining six respondents (50%) are in the deficient category, and two (16.7%) are in the medium category.

In respondents who married at the age of 19 years, it is known that the level of interpersonal communication is mainly in the low category, namely 15 respondents (53.6 %). The rest have a level of interpersonal communication in the deficient category, with as many as nine respondents (32.1%) and in the medium category, four (14.3%). The last group was married at the age of 20 years, and it was known that the level of interpersonal communication was mainly in the low category, namely 38 respondents (60%). A total of 17 respondents who married at the age of 20 had a deficient interpersonal communication category (28.3%). The remaining 4 (6.7%) respondents were in the moderate category, and three (5.0%) were in the high category.

In this study, it was found that the p-value = 0.427 ( $p > 0.005$ ). So there is no significant relationship between age at marriage and interpersonal communication. This indicates that other factors can have a reciprocal relationship and influence age at marriage on the level of interpersonal communication. This can be investigated further as a step in developing the results of this study.

### **Discussion**

The results of this study indicate that most respondents perceive interpersonal communication with the low category, as many as 75 respondents or 50%. Meanwhile, the least respondents are in a low category, 3 or 2%. The results of this study are not in line with the results of several previous studies, such as the research of Wardhani (2016), regarding the quality of interpersonal communication

in couples who married at an early age. The results showed that the quality of interpersonal communication was in a suitable category.

There is no significant relationship between the variables of gender, age at marriage, and length of marriage with interpersonal communication. This is suspected to be caused by the difference between the number of male and female respondents in this study being very much different. The results of this study differ from the results of this study Dewi&Sudhana (2013), who found early marriage (0-5 years) was not an obstacle to creating effective interpersonal communication between couples. In this study, the category of interpersonal communication in the age of marriage 0-5 years is dominated by the shallow and low categories. Another study that is not in line with the results of this study is the research conducted by Krisna&Marheni (2019); the results of this study found that the longer the age of marriage (more than five years), the better the quality of interpersonal communication. In this study, respondents who were married for more than five years found that the interpersonal communication category was dominated by very low and low (89,9% of 119 subjects who were married over five years). A thick patriarchal culture makes a wife in Karangploso District, Malang Regency, tend to harbor and save herself every problem in her life and have a fear of expressing her wishes. It is worth noting that interpersonal communication is an essential aspect of almost all aspects of married life (Wicaksono and Indrijati, 2020)..

### **Conclusion**

The conclusions from the research results regarding the description of interpersonal communication of couples who marry early in terms of subject characteristics can be described as follows:

1. An overview of the characteristics of the respondents in terms of gender, there are 140 female and ten male respondents.
2. The description of respondents' characteristics in terms of age at marriage is mostly respondents who married at the age of 20 years, as many as 60.

3. The description of the characteristics of the respondents in terms of length of the marriage, most of the respondents have been married for more than five years, as many as 116 respondents.

4. The description of the characteristics of respondents in terms of the level of interpersonal communication is mainly at a low level, namely 75 respondents (50%).

5. There is no significant relationship between gender, age at marriage, and length of marriage with interpersonal communication.

### *Suggestion*

As for suggestions that can be given regarding the research results regarding the description of interpersonal communication of couples who marry early in terms of the subject's characteristics, it can be explained that couples who marry early have low interpersonal communication. Therefore, future researchers can examine the self-disclosure of early married couples to maximize interpersonal communication. In addition, future researchers could also redevelop interpersonal communication instruments and review their relationship with other factors that are not discussed in this study, such as motivation to marry, economic conditions, social support, and others.

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