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Emotional Maturity as a Predictor of Marital Adjustment among Individuals in Early Marriage in Bener Meriah Regency

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Emotional Maturity as a Predictor of Marital Adjustment among Individuals in Early Marriage in Bener Meriah Regency

Abstract: The early stage of marriage is an important developmental phase, as individuals are required to adjust to new roles, responsibilities, and relational dynamics. Emotional maturity is considered a psychological factor that plays a significant role in successful self-adjustment during this period. This study aims to examine the relationship between emotional maturity and self-adjustment in the early stage of marriage. The proposed hypothesis is that there is a positive relationship between emotional maturity and self-adjustment. This research employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The participants were individuals in the early stage of marriage, selected using sampling techniques based on predetermined research criteria. Data were collected using emotional maturity and self-adjustment scales and analyzed using statistical correlation techniques. The results indicate a significant positive relationship between emotional maturity and self-adjustment. These findings emphasize the important role of emotional maturity in supporting successful self-adjustment during the early stage of marriage.

Keywords: *emotional maturity, early marriage stage, marital psychology, self-adjustment,*

Kematangan Emosi sebagai Prediktor Penyesuaian Pernikahan pada Individu dalam Pernikahan Dini di Kabupaten Bener Meriah

Abstrak: Tahap awal pernikahan merupakan fase perkembangan yang penting, karena individu dituntut untuk menyesuaikan diri dengan peran, tanggung jawab, dan dinamika hubungan yang baru. Kematangan emosi dianggap sebagai salah satu faktor psikologis yang berperan signifikan dalam keberhasilan penyesuaian diri pada periode ini. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara kematangan emosi dan penyesuaian diri pada tahap awal pernikahan. Hipotesis yang diajukan adalah adanya hubungan positif antara kematangan emosi dan penyesuaian diri. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain korelasional. Partisipan adalah individu pada tahap awal pernikahan yang dipilih menggunakan teknik sampling berdasarkan kriteria penelitian yang telah ditentukan. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan skala kematangan emosi dan penyesuaian diri, kemudian dianalisis dengan teknik korelasi statistik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya hubungan positif yang signifikan antara kematangan emosi dan penyesuaian diri. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya peran kematangan emosi dalam mendukung keberhasilan penyesuaian diri pada tahap awal pernikahan.

Kata kunci: *kematangan emosi, tahap awal pernikahan, psikologi pernikahan, penyesuaian diri*

Introduction

Marriage represents a transitional stage from adolescence to family life and occupies a central position in human culture (Indriyanti et al., 2024). This institution not only regulates sexual behavior and intimate relationship but also encompasses various social and cultural functions (Rahman et al., 2024), including the allocation of rights and obligations between spouses, child protection, fulfillment of emotional and economic needs, and the preservation of family dignity and social reputation within the community (Koentjaraningrat, 2010). In Islam, marriage is not merely a union between two individuals but a comprehensive concept integrating religious, moral, and social values (Adharsyah et al., 2024). It is considered the only legitimate means to fulfill human instincts (Zaputra, 2023). Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage serves as the national legal framework governing marital issues in Indonesia. According to this law, marriage is defined as “a physical and spiritual bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife, with the purpose of forming a happy and everlasting family (household) based on the belief in the Almighty God” (Indrawati & Santoso, 2020).

Based on Article 7 paragraph (1) of Law Number 16 of 2019, the minimum legal age for marriage is set at 19 years for both men and women (Taufik & Karmila, 2023). This policy aims to align national regulations with international standards, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which seek to eliminate child marriage practices (Ministry of Health, 2022). Meanwhile, Fajrini and Syahril (2025) suggest that the ideal age for first marriage is 20 years for women and 25 years for men. These provisions aim to ensure adequate individual maturity before entering married life, both emotionally and socially.

Marriage constitutes a complex life transition phase, as individuals are required to adjust to new roles, responsibilities, and relational dynamics with their spouse. The early years of marriage are considered particularly vulnerable and may even be described as a crisis period due to limited shared experiences. This initial phase is often marked by unexpected challenges, conflicts, and visible changes in each partner's attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, newly married couples inevitably undergo a process of adjustment.

Marital adjustment is a process that requires conflict-resolution skills and balanced role distribution within the household; however, it can be hindered by economic instability, poor communication, and abusive behaviors (Hakim et al., 2024). Adjustment refers to the ability needed to adapt to one's spouse after marriage (Siahaan, 2021). In the marital context, adjustment involves the capacity to establish adaptive interaction patterns to achieve household harmony and long-term psychological support (Romadhoni & Sarajar, 2025). Early adulthood marriage requires physical, mental, financial, and emotional readiness to prevent long-term negative consequences (Hakim & Masfufah, 2023). Psychological readiness emerges as a primary factor in marital success, with emotional maturity being one of the most crucial aspects for couples entering marriage (Itryah & Ananda, 2023).

Emotional maturity is viewed as a key psychological factor contributing to successful adaptation, as emotionally mature individuals are able to regulate their affective reactions in a stable and rational manner when facing interpersonal conflicts and marital demands (Maki & Kusumiati, 2025). Emotional maturity refers to a relatively stable affective condition toward objects or problems, enabling individuals to make decisions and behave based on careful consideration rather

than fluctuating moods (Hurlock, 2004). Similarly, Walgito (2002) explains that individuals who have achieved emotional maturity possess the ability to control their emotions, allowing them to think maturely, rationally, and objectively in various situations. With adequate emotional maturity, individuals are expected to manage stress more effectively, maintain balance in marital relationships, and resolve conflicts constructively (Putri et al. 2024). Therefore, emotional maturity becomes a key factor in determining marital success and happiness, particularly during the first five years of marriage.

Adjustment is defined as a mental and behavioral process through which individuals fulfill their needs, cope with pressure, frustration, and conflict, and harmonize personal needs with environmental norms and demands (Alnadi & Sari, 2021). Both marital adjustment and emotional maturity are essential for adapting to one's spouse. Successful interpersonal interaction requires individuals to understand and empathize with others. Consequently, individuals are often required to modify and adjust themselves to gain acceptance within their social environment. Emotional maturity in both husbands and wives during the early years of marriage facilitates their ability to adapt to married life.

Most existing literature focuses primarily on marital satisfaction or marriage readiness, while theoretical and empirical studies directly examining the relationship between emotional maturity and adjustment during early marriage remain relatively limited. Several studies within early marriage contexts have identified a positive correlation between emotional maturity and self-adjustment or marital adjustment; however, differences in contextual settings and sample characteristics indicate the need for research adapted to specific local contexts (Rahmawati et al. 2025; Mayangsari et al. 2025).

This gap highlights the necessity for more in-depth empirical investigation into the role of emotional maturity in supporting adjustment during early marriage, particularly within rural communities characterized by distinctive socio-cultural features. Such understanding is important for enriching the literature in marital psychology and providing an empirical foundation for psychological interventions, such as premarital counseling and emotional strengthening programs for young married couples. Accordingly, this study is designed to examine the relationship between emotional maturity and adjustment during early marriage in Wih Porak Village, Bener Meriah Regency, with the hypothesis that a positive relationship exists between the two variables.

Methods

This study employed quantitative research design using a cross-sectional approach with both descriptive and analytical components. The research aimed to examine the relationship between the independent variable (risk factor, X) and the dependent variable (effect, Y), with the analysis intended to determine whether a statistically significant relationship exists between the variables. Accordingly, a research hypothesis was formulated. The independent variable in this study was emotional maturity (X), while the dependent variable was self-adjustment (Y).

The self-adjustment scale was developed based on the aspects proposed by Schneiders, who identified six dimensions of adjustment: control of excessive emotions, minimal use of defense mechanisms, minimal personal frustration, rational consideration and self-direction ability, the capacity to learn from and utilize past experiences, and a realistic and objective attitude. The

emotional maturity scale was constructed based on five dimensions: emotional stability, identification and expression of emotions, emotional regulation, social aspects, and interpersonal aspects.

The population of this study consisted of 300 respondents, equivalent to 150 married couples who were legally married both religiously and under state law. The sampling method used was non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling. The sampling technique was based on predetermined criteria established by the researcher: (a) being married both religiously and legally, and (b) being in the early stage of marriage, defined as a maximum duration of five years. Based on these criteria, the final sample comprised 46 respondents, equivalent to 23 couples, who met the inclusion criteria with a marital duration of no more than five years.

Data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires to participants, designed in accordance with the variables being measured—emotional maturity and self-adjustment—using a Likert scaling model. The validity of the instruments was tested using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation technique. The collected data was processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The data analysis method employed in this study was Karl Pearson’s Product-Moment correlation to examine the relationship between emotional maturity and self-adjustment.

Result

The data analysis technique employed in this study was the Product-Moment Correlation analysis. This technique was selected in accordance with the research hypothesis and the identification of the study variables, as the objective was to examine the relationship between one independent variable, emotional maturity (X), and one dependent variable, self-adjustment (Y).

Table 1. Summary of Product-Moment Correlation (r) Analysis

		Penyesuaian Diri	Kematangan Emosi
Penyesuaian Diri	Pearson Correlation	1	.491**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	46	46
Kematangan Emosi	Pearson Correlation	.491**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	46	46

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the results of the data analysis using the Product-Moment correlation method, it was found that there is a positive relationship between emotional maturity and self-adjustment among respondents ($r = 0.491$, $p = 0.001$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that higher levels of emotional maturity are associated with higher levels of self-adjustment. Conversely, lower levels of emotional maturity are associated with lower levels of self-adjustment. Therefore, the research hypothesis proposing a positive relationship between emotional maturity and self-adjustment is accepted.

The coefficient of determination (r^2) for the relationship between emotional maturity and self-adjustment was 0.241. This finding indicates that emotional maturity contributes 24.1% to the

variance in self-adjustment. The remaining 75.9% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study, such as physical condition, educational background, environmental factors, religious influences, cultural context, and other variables beyond the scope of this research.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that, in general, respondents demonstrated high levels of emotional maturity, and overall self-adjustment was also categorized as high. This is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2.

Results of Hypothetical Mean and Empirical Mean Calculations

Variabel	SB / SD	Nilai Rata-Rata		Keterangan
		Hipotetik	Empirik	
Kematangan Emosi	4,755	67,5	73,43	Tinggi
Penyesuaian Diri	3,187	62,5	67,02	Tinggi

This classification is based on the comparison between the empirical mean and the hypothetical mean. The empirical mean score of emotional maturity (73.43) was higher than the hypothetical mean (67.50); however, the difference did not exceed one standard deviation. Similarly, self-adjustment was categorized as high, as the empirical mean score (67.02) was higher than the hypothetical mean (62.50), although the difference also did not exceed one standard deviation.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between emotional maturity and self-adjustment during early marriage in Wih Porak Village, Bener Meriah Regency. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.491$) with a significance level of $p = 0.001$ suggests that individuals with higher levels of emotional maturity tend to demonstrate better self-adjustment in navigating the dynamics of early marital life. These findings underscore emotional maturity as a crucial psychological factor in the process of adapting to new roles and demands within marriage.

These findings are consistent with previous empirical studies demonstrating that emotional maturity is positively associated with various indicators of marital functioning. Research conducted by Mayangsari et al. (2021) found that emotional maturity significantly contributes to marital adjustment among young married couples. Similarl et al. (2022) reported that individuals with higher emotional maturity exhibit greater marital satisfaction during early adulthood. The convergence of these findings strengthens the argument that emotional maturity constitutes an essential psychological foundation for fostering adaptive processes and enhancing marital relationship quality.

However, this study offers an additional contribution by specifically emphasizing self-adjustment during early marriage, a phase widely recognized as the most critical and vulnerable to conflict. Unlike prior research that predominantly focused on marital satisfaction or marriage readiness, this study positions self-adjustment as the primary psychological outcome. This distinction is important because self-adjustment encompasses broader dimensions, including frustration management, rational decision-making, and realistic attitudes in responding to life changes after marriage, as conceptualized by Schneiders in contemporary contexts. Therefore, this study expands the understanding of emotional maturity not only in relation to affective outcomes such as satisfaction but also in relation to more fundamental adaptive processes.

The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.241$) indicates that emotional maturity accounts for 24.1% of the variance in self-adjustment. Although this contribution may be considered moderate, it suggests that self-adjustment during early marriage is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by various factors beyond emotional maturity. Previous studies have identified socio-economic conditions, social support, religiosity, spousal communication, and cultural norms as important determinants of successful marital adjustment (Puspitasari et al. 2023). Thus, emotional maturity should be understood as a significant internal factor that operates alongside other contextual and interpersonal influences in shaping marital adaptation.

The descriptive findings further reveal that respondents generally demonstrated high levels of both emotional maturity and self-adjustment. This may indicate that most participants possess relatively adequate emotional capacities to cope with the demands of early marriage. Such conditions may be influenced by contextual factors, including cultural values, social norms, and the strong role of religion in shaping emotional regulation and adaptive attitudes within family life. Nevertheless, individual differences remain evident, as reflected in the variability of emotional maturity and self-adjustment scores, thereby maintaining the statistical significance of the relationship between the variables.

From a critical perspective, these findings highlight the importance of preventive approaches in the context of marriage, particularly through the development of emotional maturity prior to and during the early years of marriage. Premarital counseling and support programs for young couples, which often emphasize administrative procedures and knowledge of marital roles, should be complemented with training in emotional regulation, assertive communication, and conflict management. Accordingly, this study not only contributes to the theoretical development of marital psychology but also offers practical implications for policymakers and family psychology practitioners.

As a scholarly contribution, this research enriches the literature on marital psychology within the Indonesian local context, particularly in rural communities, where empirical studies remain relatively limited. The findings provide a foundation for future research to examine additional variables, such as extended family support, religiosity, and spousal communication quality, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of adjustment dynamics across the marital life cycle.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the relationship between emotional maturity and self-adjustment during early marriage. Based on the synthesis of empirical findings and theoretical review, it can be concluded that emotional maturity is a significant psychological factor supporting individuals' successful adjustment to the demands and dynamics of early marital life. The ability to regulate emotions adaptively contributes to more constructive responses in fulfilling marital roles and managing relational challenges.

These findings contribute to the development of marital psychology by affirming the role of internal individual factors—particularly emotional maturity—as a foundational element for healthy and sustainable marital adaptation.

Suggestion

This study recommends that the enhancement of emotional maturity be prioritized in premarital counseling programs and early marital support initiatives. Psychology practitioners are encouraged to develop preventive interventions focused on emotional regulation and relational adjustment. Future research is advised to examine additional psychological and contextual variables and to employ longitudinal designs in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of self-adjustment throughout the course of marriage.

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