

## The Effects of Emotional Maturity on Marriage: A Systematic Review

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### ABSTRACT

Early marriage in developing countries presents psychological challenges, particularly regarding emotional readiness. This study examines the role of emotional maturity in marital quality among young couples. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach based on PRISMA guidelines, a search was conducted via Publish or Perish on Google Scholar using relevant keywords. Out of 290 articles retrieved, 10 met the inclusion criteria for deep analysis. The findings consistently indicate a significant positive relationship between emotional maturity and marital quality. Mature individuals demonstrate higher adaptability in managing conflicts, role pressures, and household dynamics. Emotional maturity significantly enhances marital satisfaction, harmony, and stability, while lower maturity increases conflict risks. Furthermore, it works synergistically with social support and communication skills. Thus, emotional maturity serves as a crucial psychological prerequisite for a stable and harmonious marriage.

**Keywords:** *Emotional Maturity, Early Marriage, Relationships.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Early marriage remains a significant social problem in Indonesia with negative impacts on the health, education, and well-being of the younger generation (Yulga et al., 2026). UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) defines early marriage as marriage occurring before the age of 18. Early marriage is considered a violation of children's rights and can hinder optimal adolescent growth and development, both in health, education, and socio-economic aspects. Globally, it is estimated that more than 670 million girls are married before the age of 18. Currently, Indonesia is one of the countries with a relatively high rate of early marriage in the Southeast Asian region (Adzillah et al., 2026).

Early marriage, also known as early marriage, often has idealistic goals to achieve through marriage, but these often conflict with psychological readiness and social pressures (Istiqla et al., 2025). One of the main impacts of early marriage is the increasing divorce rate. Couples who marry at a young age are generally not mentally, emotionally, or financially prepared for married life. As a result, many marriages don't last long and end in

divorce. This impacts not only the individuals involved but also the children born from those marriages, as well as the social stability of the community (MZ et al., 2025).

The widespread phenomenon of early marriage is a multifaceted issue that requires serious attention from both researchers and policymakers, primarily because it can profoundly impact the long-term quality of life for both the individual spouses and their expanding families across generations. Entering into a marital commitment at a young age often forces developing individuals to confront an overwhelming array of immediate challenges, including acute psychological distress, social isolation from peer networks, and systemic economic pressures. Within this complex landscape, empirical evidence demonstrates that one of the most crucial psychological factors in determining long-term marital success, resilience, and survival is the level of emotional maturity possessed by the young couple (Fitriyani, 2021). From a developmental standpoint, emotional maturity refers specifically to an individual's capacity to effectively regulate internal affect, process interpersonal stress without resorting to impulsive behavior, make wise and far-sighted decisions under pressure, and flexibly adapt to various unpredictable situations in life assets that prove absolutely essential when navigating the highly demanding, daily interactions of a shared marital relationship (Endeh et al., 2023).

In the specific context of early marriage where individuals are frequently forced to transition abruptly from adolescence into adult responsibilities those who lack optimal emotional maturity tend to experience severe difficulties in fulfilling their newly acquired roles as husband and wife. Because their cognitive and emotional development is still ongoing, these young individuals often struggle with the sudden weight of domestic obligations, which routinely results in poor relationship quality, a pattern of unresolved conflict, and systemic marital instability. Conversely, individuals who enter an early marriage with a high level of emotional maturity possess a distinct psychological advantage; they tend to be significantly better able to adapt to sudden lifestyle changes, communicate their internal needs effectively without resorting to defensive behavior, and collaboratively build a harmonious, resilient relationship capable of withstanding external pressures (Maulana et al., 2022).

In addition to its foundational role in stabilization, emotional maturity also plays a critical role in actively increasing subjective marital satisfaction within the dynamic of a couple. Previous empirical research has firmly established a significant positive relationship between high levels of emotional maturity and overall marital satisfaction during the developmental stage of early adulthood, where individuals are often tasked with navigating major life transitions (Umayyah et al., 2025). This psychological link is strongly supported by other contemporary studies showing that individuals who possess both high emotional maturity and effective communication skills tend to achieve significantly higher levels of long-term marital satisfaction (Puspitasari et al., 2025). When these two assets are combined, emotional maturity allows individuals to process distress internally before projecting it onto the relationship, while healthy communication ensures those managed emotions are shared constructively. Ultimately, this interaction confirms that emotional maturity does not merely influence isolated, individual psychological aspects; rather, it

serves as a powerful catalyst that directly determines the quality of interpersonal relationships, collaborative problem-solving, and mutual fulfillment in a marriage.

Beyond its impact on individual well-being, emotional maturity is fundamentally intertwined with the broader dimensions of household harmony and long-term domestic stability. When facing the unique developmental hurdles of early marriage, internal psychological strength does not operate in isolation; rather, emotional maturity and external social support work synergistically, contributing significantly to creating and maintaining family harmony among individuals who choose to marry at a young age (Maulana et al., 2025). On the other hand, the absence of this psychological trait poses a severe threat to the relationship. Empirical evidence suggests that a lack of emotional maturity can be a significant predictor of marital instability, wherein individuals with low emotional maturity tend to exhibit poor impulse control and defensive communication, leading to a much higher risk of experiencing destructive conflict and structural relationship instability (Sheykhvisi et al., 2025). Ultimately, this persistent inability to regulate emotions and empathize with a partner ensures that low emotional maturity is directly correlated with increased marital conflict and chronic marital dissatisfaction, creating a toxic cycle of resentment that carries a substantially higher risk of premature divorce.

On one hand, emotionally immature individuals inherently struggle with emotional regulation, meaning they tend to express their internal affect impulsively, defensively, or through destructive aggression during times of marital tension. This maladaptive behavior creates severe interpersonal barriers, directly hindering the dyadic marital adjustment process and increasing vulnerability to chronic relationship distress (Permatasari et al., 2021). Conversely, couples who possess a high level of emotional maturity exhibit robust psychological resources, leaving them significantly better equipped to cope adaptively with inevitable role pressures, deep-seated value differences, and everyday domestic stress. Based on this theoretical description, it can be confidently concluded that emotional maturity serves as an indispensable key factor in securing both the long-term sustainability and the subjective quality of a marriage (Frye et al., 2020). Therefore, conducting a systematic study on the exact role of emotional maturity in marriage becomes highly critical; it not only fulfills vital academic purposes by expanding the current literature in family psychology but also provides an empirical basis for developing target-oriented interventions, preventative counseling programs, and marriage education frameworks aimed at helping young couples build a harmonious, stable, and resilient married life.

## **METHOD**

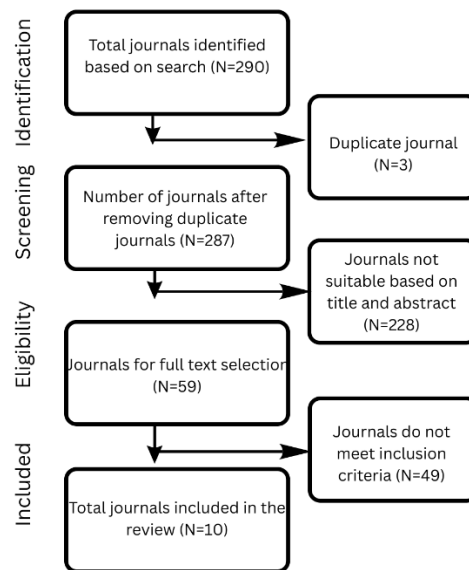
There are several processes in the systematic review process, namely planning the review (identifying the benefits and importance of being developed), conducting the review (journal search, primary journal selection, assessing journal quality, data extraction and synthesis), and reporting (Iswinarti & Surahman, 2022). The author's review planning began by developing research questions using the SPIDER (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research Type) systematic review question formulation. The research

question in this review is the importance of emotional maturity in early marriage relationships.

Next, the author defined search terms and designed a search protocol. From these questions, the researcher identified keywords that could be used to obtain appropriate answers: emotional maturity, early marriage, in relationships, relationships, emotional maturity, early marriage, in relationships. These search terms were used to locate articles in national and international journals using the Publish or Parish software.

Next, all journals were checked for duplication by the author using Mendeley. The author screened all journals that had passed duplication based on the title and abstract. Journals that had passed the title and abstract screening were then analyzed based on their full versions. After selecting 290 journals, 10 journals were found that discussed the importance of emotional maturity in early marriage relationships. The selection graph can be seen in Figure 1. The author determined the review limitations, namely (1) Journals discussing emotional maturity, 2) Journals showing the effects of emotional maturity on early marriage relationships, 3) National and international journals, 4) Research conducted in 2025. Journals not included in the criteria are 1) journals that discuss early marriage but not related to emotional maturity, 2) Journals that discuss early marriage but in the form of books, systematic reviews, theses, dissertations, and scoping reviews.

**Figure 1. PRISMA graph for journal selection flow**



**Table 1. The Effect of Emotional Maturity on Marriage**

<b>No</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>The Effects of Emotional Maturity</b>
1	(Rahmawati et al., 2025)	16-19 years old, late teens heading towards adulthood, couples who married at an early age	Individuals with good emotional maturity tend to be able to control their emotions, resolve conflicts maturely, and adapt more easily to new roles as husband and wife. This contributes to a more stable and harmonious marriage.
2	(Maki & Kusumiati, 2025)	22-40 years old, young adults who are married	Emotional maturity plays a role in improving the quality of marital relationships, particularly in communication, conflict management, and understanding one's partner. The greater an individual's emotional maturity, the higher their marital satisfaction.
3	(Kamila et al., 2025)	18-25 years old early adulthood	The better the individual's emotional maturity, the higher the individual's readiness to live married life.
4	(Maulana et al., 2025)	19-24 year old young adults who married young	Emotional maturity and social support have a significant and positive relationship. The higher the emotional maturity of individuals who marry young, the greater the couple's ability to build a harmonious family.
5	(Puspitasari et al., 2025b)	Young women who marry early	High emotional maturity and effective communication tend to lead to significantly higher marital satisfaction. Effective communication and emotional maturity are important factors in maintaining the quality of marital relationships in young couples.
6	(Raeisi & Samani, 2025)	Married students	Emotional maturity and attachment needs significantly predict marital instability. Low emotional maturity can increase the risk of marital instability. Emotionally immature individuals are more likely to experience marital difficulties.
7	(Gayathri, 2025)	25 individuals who have married	Communication skills and emotional intelligence have been found to be key

			factors contributing to marital satisfaction. Couples with greater emotional maturity are more likely to maintain a harmonious and stable relationship.
8	(Romadhoni & Sarajar, 2025)	Early adult women who marry early	The higher the level of emotional maturity, the better the marital adjustment. This finding underscores the importance of emotional readiness for marriage, especially for women who marry young.
9	(Ramadhani & Sunarjo, 2025)	Couples who marry early	The higher the emotional maturity of an individual, the better the couple's ability to adapt to the demands and dynamics of early marriage.
10	(Gusdur et al., 2025)	Early adulthood undergoing marriage	Emotionally mature individuals tend to be able to control their emotions, think more rationally when facing problems, and are able to carry out their rights and obligations in the household.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### RESEARCH RESULT

Based on the synthesis of the ten studies reviewed, emotional maturity has been shown to be a psychological effect that plays a significant role in various aspects of married life, such as self-adjustment, marriage readiness, marital satisfaction, and family harmony. Of the 10 journals reviewed above, all findings indicate a positive and significant relationship between emotional maturity and marital quality. A closer look at early marriage reveals that five journals used women who were or were currently married as subjects, while the other five journals referred to women who married at an early age.

Emotional maturity in women who have been or are currently married and in those who have had early marriages shows that emotional maturity plays a role in marriage, namely that emotional maturity supports the creation of a more stable and harmonious marital relationship (Rahmawati et al., 2025). This description is also supported by other research showing that emotional maturity is closely related to marital satisfaction, adjustment, and stability. Individuals with good emotional maturity tend to be able to manage conflict, adapt to changing roles, and maintain more harmonious and stable marital relationships, especially among couples who marry young (Nindyasari & Herawati, 2018).

Furthermore, emotional maturity also plays a role in creating marital satisfaction. This occurs because individuals with emotional maturity tend to be more effective in decision-making, problem-solving, and effective communication. This creates a comfortable relationship, which ultimately leads to marital satisfaction (Maki & Kusumiati, 2025). In this

way, it can also be interpreted that the more mature an individual is emotionally, the more it will refer to the individual's readiness to face married life (Kamila et al., 2025).

In principle, emotional maturity makes individuals maintain the quality of marital relationships in young couples (Puspitasari et al., 2025). With emotional maturity, individuals have a better ability to control their emotions, resolve conflicts adaptively, and understand their partner's needs. Emotional maturity also helps couples cope with economic pressures, changing roles, and domestic stress more steadily, resulting in a more harmonious and long-lasting marriage (Mosavi & Iravani, 2012). Also supported by the results of previous research, the higher the emotional maturity of an individual, the higher the ability of a couple to build a harmonious family (Maulana et al., 2022).

Low emotional maturity can increase the risk of instability in marital relationships (Raeisi & Samani, 2025). As an effort to minimize or prevent conflict that can destabilize relationships, communication skills are built upon. Previous findings indicate that communication skills and emotional intelligence are key factors contributing to marital satisfaction (Gayathri, 2025). Good communication skills help couples build more open relationships, foster mutual understanding, and resolve conflicts constructively. Furthermore, emotional intelligence enables individuals to manage emotions, understand their partner's feelings, and maintain emotional closeness, thereby improving marital quality and satisfaction (Frye et al., 2020).

## **DISCUSSION**

It was further studied that emotional maturity makes individuals better at adjusting to the household (Romadhoni & Sarajar, 2025). Basically, emotional maturity makes individuals into couples who are able to adapt to the demands and dynamics of early marriage (Ramadhani & Sunarjo, 2025). Because emotional maturity makes individuals tend to be able to control their emotions, think more rationally when facing problems, and are able to carry out their rights and obligations in the household (Gusdur et al., 2025).

The research findings indicate a relationship between emotional maturity and marital dynamics. Higher levels of emotional maturity indicate a greater tendency to adapt well to marital roles and household dynamics, leading to harmonious relationships. This suggests that emotional maturity is a significant psychological predictor (Gottman & Silver, 2015).

The previous description aligns with previous findings, namely that emotional maturity has a significant positive relationship with marital satisfaction. Individuals with good emotional maturity demonstrate a more effective ability to manage problems or conflicts and maintain the quality of their relationship with their partner (Mosavi & Iravani, 2012). Emotional maturity works synergistically with other interpersonal factors, such as social support, to shape the quality of marital relationships. Emotionally mature individuals are better able to utilize social support adaptively, thereby increasing marital resilience in the face of conflict and life's stresses (Tarigan, 2025; Michael & Ben-Zur, 2024).

Healthy communication patterns are associated with significantly higher levels of marital satisfaction. This aligns with the theory of emotional intelligence, which states that

the ability to recognize, manage, and appropriately express emotions directly contributes to the quality of communication and conflict resolution in intimate relationships (Agu & Mmamel, 2025). Overall, the findings from these 10 journals demonstrate that emotional maturity is a crucial factor in marriage, both directly and indirectly. The variety of research findings suggests that emotional maturity does not exist in isolation but interacts with other factors such as age at marriage, social support, communication, and sociocultural context. Thus, emotional maturity can be understood as a crucial psychological prerequisite that enables individuals to build adjustment, satisfaction, and harmony in their married lives.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a literature review of 10 research journals, it can be concluded that emotional maturity plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of married life. Emotional maturity has been shown to be positively related to marital satisfaction, marital adjustment, family harmony, and household relationship stability. Individuals with good emotional maturity tend to be able to manage their emotions, resolve conflicts adaptively, build healthy communication, and face household pressures and dynamics with more rationality and stability.

Emotional maturity is a crucial psychological factor because couples who marry early often face various challenges in fulfilling their marital roles. Low emotional maturity can increase the risk of conflict, relationship instability, and even divorce. Conversely, good emotional maturity can support a more harmonious, stable, and long-term marital relationship. Furthermore, emotional maturity works synergistically with other factors such as social support, communication skills, and emotional intelligence to improve the quality of marital relationships.

It is recommended that individuals entering marriage, especially young couples, prepare for emotional maturity to adaptively navigate the dynamics and demands of married life. Furthermore, families and social environments are expected to provide support through education, mentoring, and strengthening communication and emotional management skills to help couples build a healthy and harmonious marriage. Educational institutions and the government also need to develop premarital education programs that focus not only on administrative aspects and reproductive health, but also on psychological preparedness.

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