

Uncertainty Reduction Theory in Building Early Marriage Intimacy in Argasunya Village, Harjamukti District, Cirebon City

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Abstract : Interpersonal communication is important in life, including in marriage. Early marriage remains an issue in Indonesia, with various contributing factors. Islam views marriage as a positive thing to build a harmonious family. Effective communication plays an important role in building intimacy in early marriage couples. Uncertainty Reduction Theory is relevant to understanding how communication can reduce uncertainty and increase intimacy. This study aims to understand the process of Uncertainty Reduction Theory in Building Intimacy in Early Marriage in Argasunya Village, Harjamukti District, Cirebon City and to identify the strategies of Uncertainty Reduction Theory in Building Intimacy in Early Marriage in Argasunya Village, Harjamukti District, Cirebon City. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach aims to explore and capture the social situation comprehensively, broadly, and deeply. Qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behaviors. It focuses on social phenomena, feelings, and perceptions of participants. This approach was chosen to obtain complete information about building intimacy in early marriages in Argasunya Village. The data collection technique was carried out by three main methods, namely observation, interview, and documentation. The data analysis in this study uses a descriptive analytical method consisting of three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The findings of this study are that in Argasunya Village, Cirebon, early marriage is common. Couples use passive, active, and interactive communication strategies based on Uncertainty Reduction Theory to build intimacy. They adjust their strategies according to the stages of marriage, overcoming obstacles such as differences in background and uncertainty. It is hoped that these findings can add to the literature of the Islamic Communication and Broadcasting Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, Bunga Bangsa Islamic University of Cirebon in particular. The implications of the results of this study show how early marriage couples in Argasunya Village build intimacy through tailored communication strategies based on Uncertainty Reduction Theory, providing valuable insights for the development of interventions that can improve young couples' relationships in specific religious and socioeconomic contexts. The recommendation is that the local government of Cirebon City, especially in Argasunya Village, develop a mentoring program for early marriage couples that focuses on improving interpersonal communication skills with the Uncertainty Reduction Theory approach.

Keywords: Uncertainty Reduction Theory; Communications; Interpersonal Communication; Intimacy; Early Marriage.

INTRODUCTION

Human life is inseparable from communication activities, because communication is an important part of the system and order of human or community social life. Moreover, humans are social creatures who in every activity need other people. We can calculate that from time to time humans always communicate, either directly (verbal) or indirectly (nonverbal).

The communication process that occurs in everyday life includes various types of communication, such as between individuals and other individuals or what is also called interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is sending messages from someone that are received by others and get direct feedback (Marheni, 2019).

Interpersonal communication occurs in family life such as husband and wife, parents and children, siblings, communication is the key to building intimacy in the family, meaning that through communication we can express feelings and curiosity by interacting with each other, marriage is important because someone can achieve a balance in life both socially, biologically, psychologically, where this opinion is conveyed (Wandy, 2018) in a scientific paper regarding how interpersonal communication is in early marriage couples.

Early marriage is still a common issue in Indonesia. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2023, around 6.9% of women in Indonesia were married at the age of under 18. Based on data from the National Commission on Violence Against Women, throughout 2021, there were 59,709 cases of early marriage that were granted dispensation by the court (Harruma, 2020). This figure shows that early marriage still occurs in various regions in Indonesia, especially in rural areas and communities with low levels of education and economy.

Research by UNICEF in 2020 showed that Indonesia has a prevalence of early marriage under the age of 18 of 14%, and 1% under the age of 15. The marriage law in Indonesia sets the minimum age for marriage at 19 years. However, there are still many factors that cause early marriage, such as the influence of customs, community habits, religion, economic factors, low education, and adolescent relationships that lead to unwanted pregnancies (Maulana, 2023). The same thing was done by a study by the Center for Population and Policy Studies, Gadjah Mada University (2020) found that economic factors, low education, and culture were the main causes of early marriage in Indonesia. However, marriage is something that is considered good by Islam as stated in the Qur'an that Allah created life partners so that husband and wife can feel at ease and love each other. It is stated in the Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rum verse 21:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"And among the signs of His power is that He created for you wives of your own kind, so that you would be inclined and feel at ease towards them, and He created among you feelings of love and affection. Verily in this there are truly signs for a people who think"

In the word of Allah SWT, Surah Ar-Rum verse 21, there is a great hikilometerah regarding the creation of life partners for humans. It is proof of His power and wisdom that He has created wives from his own human kind. This is intended to create a sense of calm, calm and comfort between husband and wife. Allah also created mawaddah (love) and rahmah (affection) in the marriage relationship. Indeed, in this decree there are signs of His greatness for a people who think about it and learn from it.

Scholars such as Ibn Kathir and Al Qurthubi explained that the purpose of the law of marriage is to create a peaceful family, filled with love and mercy. The length of marriage is a great gift from Allah that should be appreciated as a form of devotion to Him. In the household, it contains how to maintain offspring, increase family solidarity, and strengthen the bonds of Islamic brotherhood. Therefore, this verse invites humans to always think, reflect on the power of Allah, and learn from the creation of life partners in order to form a harmonious, happy, and blessed family. In addition to the information contained in the Qur'an, the Hadith of the Prophet contains several statements regarding marriage and good communication.

Hadith narrated by Muslim:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "خَيْرُ النِّسَاءِ امْرَأَةٌ إِذَا نَظَرْتَ إِلَيْهَا سَرَّتْكَ، وَإِذَا أَمَرْتَهَا أَطَاعَتْكَ، وَإِذَا غَبَّتَ عَنْهَا حَفِظَتْكَ فِي نَفْسِهَا وَمَالِكَ"

"From Abu Hurairah radhiyallahu 'anhu, Rasulullah shallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam said, "The best woman is one who, if you look at her, will make you happy, if you command her she will obey you, and if you are not there (leave) she will look after herself and your property." (HR. Muslim).

This hadith recommends choosing a pious wife who can provide happiness in the household. This is related to the importance of good communication between husband and wife to create happiness and harmony.

Hadith narrated by Ahmad:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُدَاعِبُنِي وَأُدَاعِبُهُ

"From Aisyah radhiyallahu 'anha, she said, "The Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam joked with me and I joked with him." (HR. Ahmad)

This hadith shows that the Prophet Muhammad SAW and his wife Aisha communicated well with each other and joked together. This illustrates the atmosphere of warmth and closeness in the Prophet's household. The two verses above emphasize the importance of building a good and harmonious relationship in marriage, including early marriage. Effective interpersonal communication can help achieve this goal by reducing uncertainty and building intimacy between husband and wife.

Although early marriage has its own challenges, there are many couples who have succeeded in building harmony and intimacy in their marriage relationships through interpersonal communication. In the context of early marriage, interpersonal communication plays an important role in building intimacy and harmony in a couple's relationship. As conveyed by experts, Joseph A. DeVito emphasizes the importance of open, honest, and supportive communication in building close and warm relationships, Julia T. Wood highlights the importance of self-disclosure in building intimacy in relationships. John Gottman emphasizes the importance of positive communication and appreciation in building harmonious relationships.

In the context of early marriage, couples often face high levels of uncertainty due to lack of knowledge and experience in establishing intimate relationships. Through effective interpersonal communication, such as sharing personal information, expressing feelings and needs, and active listening, couples can reduce uncertainty and build a deeper understanding of each other.

Uncertainty Reduction Theory developed by Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese is also relevant in understanding the role of interpersonal communication in building intimacy in early marriage couples. This theory states that individuals are motivated to reduce uncertainty about others through the process of information gathering and interpersonal communication. This is in line with the Intimacy theory presented by Erikson who describes intimacy as the ability to be close to others, such as lovers, friends or community members (Boeree, 2005).

Through *Uncertainty Reduction Theory* (uncertainty reduction) states that a person has a need to reduce uncertainty in their relationship. Uncertainty can arise from various things, such as lack of information about the partner, differences in values and beliefs, and uncertainty about the future can help explain how interpersonal communication can help build intimacy in early marriage. In addition, according to Erikson, a person's ability to communicate also plays an important role in establishing and increasing intimacy in a romantic relationship. This is supported by the statement of Strong and Devault (1989) who stated that intimacy and communication are interrelated and couples who have difficulty in communication are said to have no intimacy in their relationship.

By overcoming obstacles and using the right strategies, young couples can reduce uncertainty and build strong intimacy through effective interpersonal communication. This will help strengthen the foundation of their relationship and prepare them for future marital challenges.

This study presents a new perspective in exploring the application of Uncertainty Reduction Theory in the context of early marriage in Argasunya Village, Harjamukti District, Cirebon City, which has not been studied in previous studies that focus more on long-distance relationships and the use of digital media. In contrast to the research of Habibah & Sukmawati (2021) which examined the reduction of uncertainty in long-distance relationships through social media, the research of Candra (2024) which emphasized uncertainty reduction strategies in LDR couples, and the study of Dinanti (n.d.) which analyzed the intimate aspect of long-distance marriage in early adulthood, this study uniquely investigated how early marriage couples—who have a degree of immaturity Psychological and limited experience in interpersonal relationships—using

the communication process to reduce uncertainty and build intimacy in specific socio-cultural contexts, taking into account the strong Islamic religious factors as the foundation of marriage values, as well as the socio-economic challenges faced by Argasunya's urban communities, thus providing a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of interpersonal communication in building the foundation of a healthy marriage at an early age. young.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that emphasizes data collection in the form of written or spoken words from the people being observed. This approach was chosen because it is relevant to the research objectives which seek to understand social phenomena in depth. According to Bogdan and Taylor (cited by Moleong, 2007), qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena by paying special attention to the perceptions and emotions of the research subjects. In the context of this study, a qualitative approach is considered the most appropriate to describe the social situation and dynamics of intimacy in early marriage in Argasunya Village (Moleong, 2007; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

The data collected in this study came from primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through direct interviews with individuals who underwent early marriage, while secondary data were in the form of documents relevant to the research topic.

Data collection techniques were carried out using three main methods, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were carried out directly in the field to observe the phenomena that occurred, while interviews involved direct interaction with informants to obtain more in-depth information. In addition, documents were used as additional sources to complement and strengthen the research results (Moleong, 2007; Mohammad, 1984).

To ensure the validity and legitimacy of the data, this study uses triangulation techniques. Williams (1995) explains that triangulation is a method that compares various data sources, such as interview results, observations, and documents, in order to increase the validity of the study. Thus, triangulation allows researchers to verify and filter the data that has been obtained so that the research results are more accurate and accountable (Moleong, 2007).

Data analysis in this study used a descriptive analytical method consisting of three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Miles and Huberman (1994) explained that data reduction is done by simplifying and selecting information that is relevant to the study. Furthermore, the selected data is presented in narrative form to make it easier to understand and analyze in depth. In the final stage, conclusions are drawn based on the truth and relevance of the data that has been collected in the field (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Moleong, 2007). This approach allows researchers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how couples who marry early build intimacy and overcome challenges in their relationships.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interpersonal Communication Process in Building Intimacy in Early Marriage

Interpersonal communication process in building intimacy in early marriage, In writing the description of the results of this study, Based on the results of interviews with six informants, namely couples M and M, G and SN, W and B, K and AG, NH and AR, M and Z, several findings were found regarding *the uncertainty reduction theory* in building intimacy in early marriage in the Argasunya sub-district, Harjamukti district, Cirebon city, namely in the form of facts, the couple comes from different backgrounds. The techniques used by researchers in finding and obtaining data obtained in their research are interview techniques, observation techniques and documentation. Researchers conducted their research at home and at the informant's place of business by directly visiting their homes and places of business. Based on the results of interviews with six informants consisting of couples who married at an early age in Argasunya Sub-district, we can see how the interpersonal communication process occurs in their household life. *The Uncertainty Reduction Theory* (Teori Potongan Uncertainty) proposed by Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese in 1975 can help us understand the strategies used by these couples in managing their communication.

Uncertainty Reduction Theory states that when individuals meet someone they do not know, they experience uncertainty and try to reduce that uncertainty by seeking information about that person. Berger and Calabrese identified three strategies that can be used to reduce uncertainty in interpersonal relationships, namely passive strategies, active strategies, and interactive strategies. The description of the findings of this study is grouped into three dimensions of interpersonal communication according to Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese 1975, the first passive strategy according to Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese, passive strategies involve observing a partner without being directly involved in the interaction. The informant's communication process is characterized by communication Passive strategies involve observing the nonverbal behavior and environment of others without being directly involved in interaction with (husband and wife take turns as communicators), For example, someone can observe the behavior, communication style, and habits of a partner to obtain information. In informant IV, namely K and AG, In general, the individual who takes the initiative to start a conversation in the communication process of the informants is the husband or wife and sometimes both together.

In the process of communication, informants found objectives, including: discussing good things about the family, making agreements and compactness in decision making; entertaining themselves; spending free time; avoiding quarrels; understanding each other; respecting each other; exchanging information; solving household problems; controlling emotions/egos; and to achieve harmony in the family. Basically, each informant has the goal of improving the relationship to be better and in the process of communication, informants have efforts to maintain the relationship which are characterized by a commitment to maintaining the relationship, understanding differences in their partners, limiting conversations to certain topics, and the ability to express something that is not liked by the partner. This can be done by informants who are in a long-distance relationship, informant IV, whose husband is AG who is currently

living in the city of Jakarta. So that the communication process carried out with his wife, K, is passive, more precisely with reactive observation or detached observation.

According to Michael Roloff, trust is the key to building intimacy in a relationship. Couples can build trust through honesty, openness, and keeping commitments to promises that have been made.

Both active strategies These strategies involve seeking information directly through interactive exchanges with a partner. Berger and Calabrese list several active strategies, such as: Interrogative Questions: Asking a partner direct questions to obtain information. Self-disclosure: Sharing personal information to encourage the partner to do the same. Structured environments: Creating situations in which partners can interact and share information naturally.

The active communication process occurs in informants with efforts to exchange information, have or set commitments that must be adhered to together, try to understand differences in partners, limit topics discussed for the sake of relationship stability, and reveal things that are not liked by partners for the sake of improving behavior. Active strategies involve actively seeking information through direct questions to others.

In the interview with Informant 3 (Mrs. B and Mr. W), we can see that they use active strategies in their communication. Mrs. B actively asks about her husband's work and expresses her concerns when her husband comes home late at night. So here good communication is needed to achieve the same goal, namely building intimacy.

Erikson elaborated, expanded and refined Freud's stage theory. He stated that growth proceeds based on the epigenetic principle. The epigenetic principle states that our personality develops through eight stages which are later known as Erikson *Life Stages Development* (Boeree, 2005). To enter a stage is determined by the success or failure of the previous stage. Each stage has its own developmental tasks which are essentially psychosocial in nature. These stages have special terms and are described through certain optimal age or time stages. If a stage is successfully passed, the individual will gain some advantages or psychosocial resilience that will help us through the next stages in life. Conversely, if the individual fails or is unable to pass a stage well, then the individual will grow with *maladaptation* (wrong adaptation) and *malignation* (always suspicious). Maladaptation is not too dangerous, because it contains many positive aspects, while malignation contains many negative aspects and few positive aspects.

The three interactive strategies This strategy involves collaboration and negotiation with a partner to build a shared understanding. For example, couples can discuss shared expectations, values, and goals in a relationship. Interactive strategies involve direct interaction with others, where both parties are involved in a reciprocal exchange of information. This strategy can be found in interviews with Informants The 3rd communication process that occurred in informants I, II, V, and VI interactive communication, where both partners are very open to discussing various topics, with this type of communication will make early marriage couples always intimate because they can express things they want to convey, both when joking or serious they open different initial topics of conversation but have the same beginning. Like small talk about daily activities and work.

The important role of intimacy for early adulthood in establishing a relationship, especially in a romantic relationship, will be shown by several positive impacts that can be felt by each individual (Montgomery, 2005). Among the positive impacts are having positive self-esteem, self-confidence, reducing one's anxiety, avoiding stress, avoiding feelings of loneliness, helping someone to learn commitment and helping someone build a foundation of trust in a relationship. The negative impacts that can be felt by someone if they are unable to establish intimacy in a romantic relationship are feeling lonely, afraid to trust others, feeling prolonged stress, low self-confidence, having poor mental health, being indifferent to their surroundings, tending to have negative thoughts about others and not being able to socialize well.

Communicating to maintain a relationship with small talk or small talk to start a conversation, this is done so that the communication that is built becomes more fluid and there is openness to activities between husband and wife. Exchanging stories with your partner is one way to maintain a harmonious relationship by involving one another to build interpersonal communication, this makes the quality of communication between husband and wife have a good and happy interpersonal relationship. This understanding shows that intimacy refers to feelings of warmth, closeness, and attachment, both physically and emotionally expressed verbally or non-verbally, and obtained from loved ones. When establishing intimacy, couples share their deepest feelings, give and receive selflessly, feel they can understand and be understood, maintain relationships with each other and can rely on their partners when in trouble. However, intimacy also still provides an opportunity for each individual to develop, and acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual.

When expressing a message to someone else, each individual usually makes a good impression first before delivering the message they are going to convey. The impressions are intended to have a reaction that is in accordance with the expectations they expect from the person they are talking to. Being open and discussing well every important thing can build intimacy, closeness and warmth between husband and wife.

Seeking external support in the context of early marriage, young couples may need external support from family, friends, or marriage counselors to help overcome communication barriers and build deeper intimacy. As Pierce (in Kail and Cavanaugh, 2000) defines social support as a source of emotional, informational or assistance provided by people around individuals to deal with every problem and crisis that occurs daily in life. Diamttee (1991) defines social support as support or assistance that comes from other people such as friends, neighbors, coworkers and other people.

Barriers to Interpersonal Communication in Building Intimacy in Early Marriage

Interpersonal communication barriers in building intimacy in early marriage, in the communication process are generally accompanied by obstacles/disruptions. The communication barriers of the informants in this study are as follows:

Process barriers. In general, all informants did not experience barriers in the communication process because they understood all the topics/things discussed by their partners. Physical barriers. In addition to informant III, the informants' communication was disrupted due to physical factors such as driving, low battery, being at a party or worship event, the phone being turned off, weak signal, running out of credit, noisy

environment, unable to remember messages, and the phone not being held. Semantic barriers. In certain cases, only informants I and IV experienced communication disruptions due to words or language that were difficult for their partners to understand. Psychological barriers. Emotional atmospheres in the form of anger or irritation and being offended are disruptions to informant communication. Informants I and IV were disturbed by differences in experience or educational background, work, socializing, and/or family. Informants I, III, IV, V, and VI had their communication disrupted due to factors of bad information/issues, content that was not in accordance with their hearts, useless, not related to family, harsh content, unnecessary/important, negative, and deviant. Conflict barriers. Researchers categorize conflict into barriers because it can disrupt informant communication even on a small scale. Informants said that conflict caused: difficulty communicating; reduced frequency of conversation; and silence (not communicating) for short periods.

According to *the Uncertainty Reduction Theory* proposed by Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese in 1975, there are several barriers to interpersonal communication that can affect the process of building intimacy in early marriage: High levels of uncertainty. In early marriage, couples tend to have higher levels of uncertainty due to lack of knowledge and experience of each other. This uncertainty can hinder the process of self-disclosure and building the trust needed to achieve intimacy.

Lack of communication skills in young couples who marry early often do not have mature communication skills. This can lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and difficulties in expressing feelings and needs effectively, which can hinder the development of intimacy. Barriers to sharing information, In the early stages of a relationship, couples tend to be more careful in sharing personal information. Lack of openness and self-disclosure can slow down the process of building intimacy and trust. Differences in background and expectations, Couples in early marriages often come from different backgrounds and have different expectations of marriage. These differences can cause conflict and obstacles in building the shared understanding needed to achieve intimacy. Influence of external factors, External factors such as social pressure, financial problems, or family interference can add stress and interfere with the healthy communication process in building intimacy.

To overcome these barriers, Berger and Calabrese suggest strategies such as active information seeking (e.g., asking questions and self-disclosure), passive observation, and creating a structured environment to facilitate interaction and information exchange. In addition, couples in early marriages can also seek support from family, friends, or marriage counselors to help overcome communication barriers and build deeper intimacy.

Interpersonal Communication Strategies in Building Intimacy in Early Marriage

Interpersonal communication strategies in building intimacy in early marriage through strategies to overcome interpersonal conflict called *avoidance active fighting strategies*, such as avoiding conflict by leaving the conflict area, going to sleep, or making loud noises so as not to hear anything were carried out by informants I, II (husband), and V (husband) in this study. While *strategies force and talk strategies*, one of the techniques of which is actively and openly listening to one's partner, for example,

were carried out by informant IV (husband). Furthermore, the outbreak of conflict raises the belief that conflict is neither good nor bad, but the response to conflict is the most important thing (Deutsch, 1973 in Berger, et al., 2014), according to researchers the same as the general view of informant II about conflict, namely that conflict resolution depends on a person's response. The style or way of conflict avoidance from Berger (Berger, et al., 2014) and *avoidance active fighting strategies* by DeVito. men who seek sympathy/listen or are open and women who tend to negotiate/ask and men who prefer openness and introspection with women who give in, praise and are active.

Early marriage with early marriage is related to the theory of interpersonal communication of reducing uncertainty in building intimacy in early marriage couples according to Berger and Calabrese, this can be implemented as follows:

Reducing the level of initial uncertainty in early marriage, couples may experience high levels of uncertainty because they do not have enough experience in interacting and communicating. Berger and Calabrese showed that when strangers meet, they tend to reduce uncertainty by gathering information about the other person. In early marriage, couples can do the same by sharing information about themselves, habits, and expectations, so that they can understand each other better and reduce initial uncertainty.

Using communication to reduce uncertainty Berger and Calabrese also show that communication is an effective tool for reducing uncertainty. In early marriages, couples can use active communication, openness, and empathy to reduce uncertainty and build trust. They can share experiences, hopes, and concerns, and listen and understand each other.

Reducing uncertainty by gathering information Berger and Calabrese also suggest that gathering information about others can help reduce uncertainty. In early marriages, couples can gather information about themselves, their habits, and their expectations, and share information about others. This can help them understand each other better and reduce uncertainty.

Reducing Uncertainty by Increasing Predictability Berger and Calabrese also suggest that increasing predictability can help reduce uncertainty. In early marriages, couples can increase predictability by sharing experiences, communicating openly, and understanding each other better. This can help them predict how the other partner will react and reduce uncertainty.

Reducing uncertainty by overcoming barriers Berger and Calabrese also suggest that overcoming barriers can help reduce uncertainty. In early marriages, couples can overcome barriers by communicating openly, sharing experiences, and understanding each other better. This can help them reduce uncertainty and build trust.

By applying Berger and Calabrese's *Uncertainty Reduction Theory*, couples in early marriages can reduce the level of initial uncertainty, use communication to reduce uncertainty, gather information, increase predictability, and overcome obstacles. This can help them build trust, understand each other better, and build a stronger relationship.

The importance of interpersonal communication in building intimacy in early marriage couples using *Uncertainty Reduction Theory* where couples communicate with each other, therefore during the communication both need to reduce uncertainty. Interpersonal communication has an important role in building intimacy in early

marriage in Argasunya Village, Harjamukti District, Cirebon City. Here are the stages of interpersonal communication:

Stage , at this stage, young couples try to reduce uncertainty by gathering information about each other. They do this by communicating passively, such as through social media, email, or chat. The main goal is to understand each other and reduce uncertainty that arises from differences in background, culture, and personality.

Active Stage (*Personal Stage*), at this stage, young couples begin to actively interact by communicating directly, such as talking, playing, or doing activities together. The main goal is to understand each other more and reduce uncertainty arising from differences in perception and self-concept.

Exit Stage , at this stage, young couples have understood each other better and begin to interact more deeply. They do this by sharing personal information, sharing experiences, or sharing common goals. The main goal is to increase awareness and trust between partners and reduce uncertainty arising from differences in goals and expectations.

Thus, these stages help young couples reduce the uncertainty that arises in interpersonal interactions and increase awareness and trust between partners. This is very important in building intimacy in early marriage, because effective communication can help understand and reduce uncertainty, and increase awareness and trust between partners.

In the context of couples who marry at an early age, the use of these strategies helps them manage uncertainty in the relationship and build closeness and intimacy in their interpersonal communication. Passive strategies allow them to observe and learn about each other, active strategies facilitate direct information exchange, and interactive strategies create space for open and reciprocal communication.

However, it is undeniable that there are challenges and obstacles in interpersonal communication of couples who marry at an early age. Several informants admitted that there were difficulties in starting communication, awkwardness, or misunderstandings that occurred. Therefore, strategies such as openness, empathy, supportive attitudes, and commitment to solving problems are very important in maintaining the harmony of their relationship.

In dealing with conflict issues as marriage ages, couples can use the following approaches:

Early Stage (Marriage Age 1-10 Years), At this stage, the couple is still relatively new in building a life together. Conflicts that may arise are lifestyle adjustments, division of household tasks, financial problems, and may also be related to the presence of children. Steps that can be taken can be: Building open and honest communication from the start to understand each other's expectations, Being willing to participate and find solutions to every conflict, Prioritizing time together to build intimacy and cherish precious moments. This happened to couple 3 W & B who had been married for only 3 years and informant 4, namely K & AG, who had been married for 1 year.

Middle Stage (Marriage Age 10-20 Years) At this stage, couples may have grown children, face career challenges, or health problems. Conflicts that may arise are lack of time together, work stress, financial problems, or conflicts with teenage children. Steps that can be taken include: Making special time for your partner, such as regular dates or

vacations together, Prioritizing communication and solving problems together, especially related to childcare or financial problems. Seeking support from family or marriage counseling if needed. This stage occurred in informant 2 who had been married for 20 years, namely G & SN, and informant 5, namely NH & AR who had been married for 12 years.

Advanced Stage (Marriage Age 30 Years and Above) At this stage, couples may have entered a period that is no longer young, more serious with what they do, facing health problems, or losing loved ones. Conflicts that may arise are changes in roles, loneliness, financial problems, or differences in expectations in old age. Steps that can be taken include: Building deeper emotional intimacy by sharing stories, dreams, and hopes in old age, Strengthening bonds with family and friends to prevent social isolation, Planning a future together, such as shared activities or a comfortable place to live. Regardless of the stage of marriage age, effective communication, empathy, and commitment to continue working together in facing challenges are the keys to overcoming conflict and maintaining a healthy and satisfying relationship, at this stage it occurred in informant 1, namely Mrs. M and Mrs. M, both of whom have been married for 32 years.

It can be concluded that in early marriage, conflict resolution strategies such as *avoidance*, *active fighting*, and *force and talk* are used in different styles between men and women. Interpersonal communication strategies, both passive, active, and interactive, play an important role in building intimacy, with openness, empathy, and commitment as the keys to harmony. The approach to conflict also adapts according to the age of the marriage: the early stage (1-10 years) focuses on adjustment and open communication; the middle stage (10-20 years) faces challenges related to children and careers by prioritizing time together; while the later stage (30+ years) emphasizes emotional intimacy and future planning. Regardless of the stage, effective communication, empathy, and commitment to work together remain the foundation for resolving conflict and maintaining a healthy relationship. This is in line with the theory of Intimacy when someone and their partner have succeeded in unraveling the uncertainty in marriage, a close relationship can be built with the achievement of a harmonious and romantic family.

Development of Intimacy in Romantic Relationships Several aspects that can help the development of intimacy in establishing a romantic relationship, for example (in Gamble & Gamble, 2005) First, self-acceptance, Erikson (in Boeree, 2005) believes that positive self-acceptance is a requirement for a satisfying relationship. With positive feelings, individuals who can accept themselves can be the foundation for establishing intimacy in a relationship. Second, Interacting with each other, If there is interaction between two individuals then it can be a good foundation in a positive relationship. Third, Giving responses, Certain types of responses or responses, for example by listening to each other, understanding and comprehending the views or opinions of the partner, then the sustainability of the relationship will be maintained. Fourth, Attention, Attention poured out by individuals can motivate partners and maintain the welfare of the relationship. Fifth, Trust, With a sense of trust that the partner will act consistently, trying to foster growth and maintain the stability of the relationship, then the integrity of the relationship will always be maintained. Sixth, Affection, Expressing affection to

a partner can improve the bond of intimacy between partners. Seventh, The ability to be happy with a partner, Individuals can express their joy and pleasure by spending time together having fun together. Eighth, Having sex, Sometimes couples do this to express their feelings. However, if the couple does this without going through the previous stages, there will be a decrease in feelings of emotional closeness between the two.

Based on the research article, the **implications** of this study contribute significantly to understanding how Uncertainty Reduction Theory applies specifically to early marriage contexts in Argasunya Village, Cirebon City. Unlike previous research that focused primarily on long-distance relationships and digital media, this study uniquely examines how psychologically immature couples with limited interpersonal relationship experience use communication processes to reduce uncertainty and build intimacy within specific socio-cultural contexts. The findings reveal that early marriage couples successfully build intimacy by employing passive, active, and interactive communication strategies tailored to different marriage stages, while considering strong Islamic religious foundations and socioeconomic challenges. This research provides valuable insights for marriage counselors, community leaders, and policymakers in developing targeted interventions and educational programs that can help young couples navigate the challenges of early marriage, improve their communication skills, and build healthier relationships, ultimately contributing to lower divorce rates and better family outcomes in similar communities.

CONCLUSION

Argasunya Village in Harjamukti District, Cirebon City is a self-sufficient agrarian village with a strong culture and customs, where early marriage generally occurs through marriage dispensation, age identity change, or religious marriage first. In building intimacy, early marriage couples use interpersonal communication based on the Uncertainty Reduction Theory by Berger and Calabrese which includes three strategies: passive (observing the couple without direct interaction, as in couples K and AG who communicate remotely via telephone), active (seeking information directly from the couple through questions and self-disclosure, as in couples W and B where B actively asks about her husband's work), and interactive (collaborating and negotiating to build mutual understanding, as M&M, G&Sn, NH&Ar, and M&Z couples who are open to communicating do). Despite facing various obstacles such as high uncertainty, difficulties in sharing information, differences in background and expectations, and the influence of external factors, early marriage couples use all three strategies to manage uncertainty and build intimacy, with communication strategies tailored to different stages of marriage: the early stage focuses on adjustment and openness, the middle stage prioritizes time together and family issues, While the next stage increases emotional intimacy and plans for a shared future, with effective communication, empathy, and commitment as the key to resolving conflicts and maintaining healthy and harmonious relationships.

The recommendation from the results of this study is that the local government of Cirebon City, especially in Argasunya Village, develop a mentoring program for early marriage couples that focuses on improving interpersonal communication skills with the Uncertainty Reduction Theory approach. The program can be effective communication

training that includes passive, active, and interactive strategies tailored to the stages of marriage, taking into account Islamic religious values and the socioeconomic conditions of the local community. Additionally, it is important to engage religious leaders, community leaders, and marriage counselors in providing ongoing guidance, as well as developing accessible educational materials for young couples to help them overcome uncertainty and build intimacy in marriage. These efforts need to be supported by further research to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and refine interpersonal communication approaches that are appropriate to the local context.

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