



## A STUDY OF CORRELATION BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND HARDINESS IN YOUNG WIVES

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### **Abstract**

*In many parts of the world, early marriage is a persisting problem. The number of early marriage in Indonesia increases every year and, if the condition persists, will pose a serious risk for the young brides both physically and mentally. Psychologically, young brides experience burdens and pressures from internal and external sources hence they need tough personality (hardiness) along with the awareness of developing emotional intelligence to overcome this stressful situation. This study aims to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and hardiness in young brides, with the use of correlational quantitative method. The study involves 34 young brides as subjects, gathered through purposive sampling technique. The research makes use of two scales, namely emotional intelligence scale and hardiness scale. The test results show that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and hardiness. This indicates that well-formed emotional intelligence enables young brides to toughly and strongly cope with their marriage life.*

**Keywords:** *Emotional intelligence, hardiness, early marriage.*

### **Abstrak**

Pernikahan usia dini menjadi masalah yang tidak pernah usai di berbagai belahan dunia. Di Indonesia, kasus pernikahan di usia dini semakin meningkat tiap tahunnya, hal ini bila tidak teratasi akan menimbulkan resiko serius bagi perempuan yang menikah di usia dini baik secara fisik maupun mental. Resiko secara psikologis, perempuan yang menikah di usia dini memiliki beban dan tekanan yang didapatkan dari internal maupun eksternal. Untuk mampu mengatasi situasi tertekan tersebut, diperlukan kepribadian yang tangguh (*hardiness*) dengan kesadaran mengembangkan kecerdasan emosional itu sendiri. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara kecerdasan emosional dengan *hardiness* pada perempuan yang menikah di usia dini. Metode yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif korelasional. Partisipan yang terlibat sebanyak 34 perempuan yang menikah di usia dini menggunakan teknik *purposive sampling*. Skala penelitian terdiri dari skala kecerdasan emosional dan skala *hardiness*. Hasil pengujian, menunjukkan terdapat hubungan positif signifikan antara kecerdasan emosional dengan *hardiness*. Hal ini mengindikasikan bahwa perempuan yang menikah di usia dini dapat menjalankan kehidupan pernikahan dengan sungguh tangguh dan kuat karena didukung oleh kecerdasan emosional yang dibentuk dengan baik dalam dirinya.

**Kata Kunci:** Kecerdasan emosional, *hardiness*, pernikahan usia dini

## INTRODUCTION

Every living being grows and develops gradually. Human development is divided into several stages, namely the conception phase, the prenatal phase, the birth process, infancy, childhood (0-1 years), childhood (5-12 years), adolescence (12-18 years), early adulthood (18-25 years), adulthood (25-45 years), late adulthood (45-55 years), and death and dying stage (Soetjningsih, 2012). Among these stages, adolescence is unique.

Adolescence is a bridge from childhood to adulthood. This transitional stage involves biological, cognitive, and socioemotional changes. People commonly stereotype teenagers as lazy, unstable, easily offended, thinking merely about sex and other negative things (Diananda, 2019). This stereotyping results in warnings for parents on how to respond to these changes, suggesting that teenagers often make risky decisions, especially when they are among fellow teenagers (Santrock, 2016). In their development, teenagers are very susceptible to stress and depression caused by a lack of ability to handle the difficulties in their lives (Santrock, 2016). In addition, they often experience anxiety, insecurity and even loneliness (Fatima et al., 2021). This becomes a complex problem and if not handled properly will lead to misconducts, such as promiscuity and non-marital pregnancy.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2019), found that as many as 12 million adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 give birth every year. UNFPA estimated that 14 million adolescents aged 15 to 19 give birth every year globally and more than 90% of these births occur in developing countries (BKKBN, 2019). The findings of the Indonesian Demographic and Health Survey (IDHS) in 2017 also stated that 19% of teenage non-marital pregnancies were among the 15-24 years old (BKKBN, 2019). Such data show that adolescents are very vulnerable to promiscuity, and that sexual exploration among teenagers leads to non-marital pregnancy.

Non-marital pregnancy is ironic since teenagers are not ready to be parents and also because it has serious physical and psychological impacts. Physically, a teen mother faces severe risks for herself and her baby such as high mortality rate caused by hypertension during pregnancy, bacterial infections at birth, and malaria (WHO, 2019). In addition, it is common for expecting teenagers to experience premature labor, high blood pressure caused by stress, and miscarriages due to the unprepared reproduction system (Maudina, 2019). Psychologically, non-marital teenage pregnancy causes kinds of negative emotions. Wulandari et al. (2019), state that this condition leads to numerous psychological problems ranging from fear, anger, disappointment, worry, to stress and depression.

Non-marital teenage pregnancy puts the teenagers and their family under pressure. In some cases, families decide to cover up the disgrace by marrying the teenagers. On the other hand, poverty becomes a reason for parents to encourage their children to marry at an early age (Fadlyana & Larasaty, 2016). While early marriage is certainly not a solution to poverty, this even leads to new problem as the teenagers have to cope with marriage at young age.

Early marriage is a never ending problem in various parts of the world, mainly in developing countries both in urban and rural areas. In addition to non-marital pregnancy, early marriage is also caused by other factors such as poverty, low education or knowledge, and social environment (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020). The increasing number of early marriage in Indonesia has urged the government to change the regulations in Law No. 1 of 1974 regarding this subject thus now it goes as, "Marriage is only permitted if both the man and the woman have reached the age of 19 (nineteen) years (Lembaga Negara Republik Indonesia, 2019). However, the regulation is not functioning as expected and the rate of early marriage in Indonesia remains high.

Indonesia is ranked as the 37<sup>th</sup> country with the highest number of underage marriage in the world, and the second in Southeast Asia (Muntamah et al., 2019). This is supported by Central Statistics Agency (BPS)'s 2018 data stating that 1 in 9 girls aged 20-24 years are

married before the age of 18 with an estimated figure of 1,220,900. This number is increasing from year to year, as shown by BPS's 2020 data. In 2019, there were 23,700 Indonesian youths applied for early marriage dispensation and in 2020 the number increased to 34,000 applications (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020).

The data above and the knowledge of how difficult it is for teenagers to deal with early marriage raise the author's concern. Early marriage is not an easy matter for teenagers, especially the girls. According to Papalia et al. (2008), girls who marry at an early age tend to experience a greater impact than men who marry at the same age. The pressures faced by young girls are not only from within themselves, but also from the environment. This pressure affects their mental health thus it is assumed that young wives must have the ability to withstand the burdens.

The ability to withstand the stress of life is often associated with the notion of hardiness. A person's hardiness is important since it serves as an internal strength in facing the realities of life. Kobasa et al. (1982), states that hardiness is a personal characteristic that functions in dealing with stressful life events. This characteristic is needed to cope with undesirable situations, hence individuals with high hardiness have more tolerance for stressful conditions, do not give up easily, and have a sense of purpose in life. On the other hand, individuals with low hardiness tend to be pessimistic, see problems through negative perspective, and give up easily (Sahetapy et al., 2020; Putri & Kristiana, 2018). Not only internally, individuals with low hardiness tend to be negative and feel threatened during interaction with other people (Buheji & Jahrami, 2020).

Based on this understanding we see that individuals with hardiness personality possess three qualities. The first is control, the belief that they can influence or control events related to their experiences so they will be able to survive under life's pressure. The second is commitment, which is a person's ability to involve himself in whatever activity is being carried out or encountered. The third is challenge, an ability to see changes as a normal thing in life and to recognize changes not as threats but as opportunities to grow and transform for the better (Kobasa et al., 1982).

According to Madi (1999), individuals with high hardiness are characterized by their ability to manage and respond to stressful life with existential courage strategies and motivation to turn unfavorable situation into an opportunity to learn. Meanwhile, Abbasi et al. (2020), state that individuals with high hardiness are optimistic and avoid inappropriate coping strategies. The ability to withstand pressure, or hardiness, is not obtained for granted or naturally exists in a human being. According to Sufarita et al. (2019), emotional intelligence is one among the factors that play an important role in hardiness. This suggests that emotional intelligence has great potential in shaping one's actions and personality. Individuals with high emotional intelligence have the potential to cope and solve problems and pressures in their environment.

A survey conducted by Goleman (2005), shows that most teenagers experience emotional difficulties. This is supported by Khalifah (2019), by stating that adolescents experiencing emotional difficulties tend to channel these emotions into negative things. Therefore, it is imperative for adolescents to have awareness of the importance of emotional intelligence. Mayer and Salovey (1989), explain emotional intelligence as part of social intelligence which involves the ability to manage emotions in oneself and others and to be able to control one's feelings. Mayer and Salovey (1989), studied the ability to develop emotional intelligence and divided it into three aspects namely: the assessment and expression of emotions, the regulation of emotions, and the use of emotions. Emotional intelligence can help individuals adapt and tolerate various pressures so they will be able to make the right decisions in any situation. Nasrudin (2013), found that teenagers with high emotional intelligence are able to use their emotions to make their own decisions. On the other hand,

individuals with low emotional intelligence tend to show emotional reactions, have low tolerance for frustration, have less capability to solve problems, and are unable to accept criticism (Goleman, 2005).

People with developed emotional intelligence are able to recognize good opportunities. In addition, individuals with high hardiness can manage situations well thus they don't find difficulties in facing life problems. A research conducted by Ahmad (2015), shows that there is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and hardiness in single parents with a correlation coefficient ( $r_{xy}$ ) of 0.539. In addition, a research conducted by Al-Husna (2010), found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and hardiness in mothers with children with disabilities, with an  $r_{xy}$  value of 0.467. A research conducted by Abdollahi et al. (2016), found that adolescents with high emotional intelligence can develop their hardiness to protect themselves from promiscuity. Likewise, a research conducted by Hajihassani and Sim (2019), shows that strong emotional intelligence has a significant effect in the way early marriage couples deal with problems to get satisfaction in their marriage.

From the research sources above, it can be seen that emotional intelligence has a positive relationship with hardiness. However, the phenomenon of early marriage caused by non-marital pregnancy has its own problems. The situation that occurs is caused by the teenagers' own actions and it forces them to take the roles of mothers at early age. On the other hand, considering that teenagers are vulnerable to emotions and to channel negative things, the writer is interested to find out whether they (teenagers) are able to face the pressures of early marriage. This study aims to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and hardiness in young wives, proposing the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and hardiness in them.

## **METHOD**

### **Type of research**

This study is a quantitative research with a correlational design to determine the relationship between the independent variable (emotional intelligence) and the dependent variable (hardiness).

### **Research Participants**

The participants in this study are 34 girls gathered through a purposive sampling technique with inclusion criteria as follows: the girls are married at the age of between 15 to 18 years old due to early pregnancy, and the marriage has not been more than 5 years.

### **Data Collecting Method**

The data collection method used is a questionnaire of psychological scale consisting of an emotional intelligence scale and a hardiness scale. Emotional intelligence is measured using the Schutte Self-report Emotional Intelligence (SSEI), which was developed by Schutte et al. (1998), from Mayer and Salovey (1989), theory of emotional intelligence which consists of 33 items with three aspects of measurement in it, namely, the assessment and expression of emotions, the regulation of emotions, and the use of emotions. On this scale the statements are divided into two groups, namely the favorable and the unfavorable. The method used as the basic pattern for measuring this scale is the Likert model which has four answer options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The value of item selection on this scale ranges from 0.369-0.771, with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.902 (very reliable).

Hardiness is measured using the hardiness scale developed by Sihotang (2011), which consists of 27 items based on the hardiness aspects proposed by Kobasa et al. (1982), namely

commitment, control, and challenge. This scale is composed of two types of statements, namely favorable and unfavorable using a Likert model which has four types of answer options, namely Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The value of item selection on this scale ranges from 0.324-0.838, with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.953 (very reliable).

### Data Analysis

In this study, the data is analyzed with the *product moment* correlation test from Karl Pearson with the use of SPSS 21.0 series for Windows.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Statistical Descriptive Test

**Table 1.** Categorization of Emotional Intelligence Scale

No	Interval	Category	F	Percentage
1	$63 \leq x \leq 74$	High	8	23.53%
2	$52 \leq x \leq 63$	Medium	23	67.65%
3	$41 \leq x \leq 52$	Low	3	8.82%
Total			34	100%
Min = 41; Max = 74; Maen = 60.15; SD = 6.679				

The emotional intelligence scale in Table 1 shows the lowest score of 41 and the highest score of 74, with 60.15 as the average score and a standard deviation of 6679. Thus, the emotional intelligence possessed by girls who married at an early age was in the medium category with a percentage of 67.65%.

**Table 2.** Hardiness Scale Categorization

No	Interval	Category	F	Percentage
1	$118 \leq x \leq 140$	High	11	32.35%
2	$96 \leq x \leq 118$	Medium	16	47.06%
3	$74 \leq x \leq 96$	Low	7	20.59%
Total			34	100%
Min = 74; Max = 140; Maen = 109.29; SD = 15.268				

The hardiness scale in Table 2 shows the lowest score of 74 and the highest score of 140, with 109.29 as the average score and with a standard deviation of 15.268. Hardiness scores obtained by women who married at an early age were in the medium category with a percentage of 47.06%.

### Classic assumption test

#### Normality test

**Table 3.** One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Emotional Intelligence	Hardiness
N		34	34
Normal Parameters <sup>a</sup>	Mean	.60.15	109.29
	Std. Deviation	6.679	15.268
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.142	.061
	Positive	.099	.048
	Negative	-.142	-.061

Test Statistic	.142	.061
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.079 <sup>c</sup>	.200 <sup>e,d</sup>

The normality test presented in Table 3 shows that the emotional intelligence value is 0.142 with sig. = 0.079 ( $p > 0.05$ ). The results of the normality test on the hardiness variable obtained a value of 0.061 with sig. = 0.200 ( $p > 0.05$ ), which indicates that the two variables in this study are normally distributed.

*Linearity Test*

**Table 4.** Test of Linearity ANOVA

			Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Hardiness *Emotional Intelligence	Between Groups	(Combined)	6186.225	18	343.679	3.421	.010
		Linearity	2271.005	1	2271.005	22.607	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	3915.221	17	230.307	2.293	.057
Within Groups			1506.833	15	100.456		
Total			7693.059	33			

From the results of the linearity test between emotional intelligence (X) and hardiness (Y) in women who marry at an early age in Table 4, the results of the linearity test Fcount are 22,607 with sig. = 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) which shows that the relationship between emotional intelligence and hardiness of married women at an early age is linear.

**Research Hypothesis Test**

**Table 5.** Pearson Correlation

		Emotional Intelligence	Hardiness
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	1	.543**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	34	34
Hardiness	Pearson Correlation	.543**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	34	34

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

The Karl Pearson product moment correlation test between emotional intelligence (X) and hardiness (Y) of young wives is presented in Table 5, showing the Pearson correlation value of 0.543 with sig. = 0.000 ( $p < 0.01$ ) hence exhibits a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and hardiness in young wives. The test results also show the contribution given by the independent variable (emotional intelligence) to the dependent variable (hardiness) in young wives of 29.5%.

**Discussion**

The results of the research prove that the hypothesis is true. This means that there is indeed a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and hardiness. The results categorize young wives' hardiness in the moderate level, which indicates that high emotional intelligence helps the subjects to develop strong personality in dealing with their problems and pressures caused by early marriage and external factors.

Hardiness is a way for each individual to cope with problems without mental breakdown, behavioral disorders, and physical disorders (Madi, 1999). It is proven by the research of Ng and Lee (2020), low hardiness is the basis for the onset of depressive symptoms. On the other hand, individuals with high hardiness have strong defense against anxiousness to survive negative emotions (Kowalski & Schermer, 2019). The ability of adolescent girls to deal with the pressures in their marriage and their surroundings is developed by their being dominant in dealing with unfavorable situations. Even though the subjects feel guilty and remorse because of their early pregnancy (that force them to marry at early age), they are coping and going on their life with a new purpose. This statement was obtained in 2021, when the researcher was collecting data at the Salatiga City Regional General Hospital.

Hardiness is not obtained for granted; the individuals must have self-control and confidence that each of their response has a major effect on their surroundings. Despite of getting married at such early age, the subjects are able to control themselves so they do not give up easily to pressures. In addition, the development of hardiness can be recognized by individual's ability in making commitment. A research conducted by Fyhn et al. (2016), shows that the commitment is a very important resilience factor in hardiness. This is because individuals with high commitment show a sense of dedication to themselves so they can be responsible for their future life goals (Ndlovu & Ferreira, 2019), hence it can be assumed that young wives are more likely to withstand the depressing condition in early marriage caused by pregnancy when they have understanding and ability to commit to the priorities and goals of life.

In addition, the ability to make commitment is inseparable from the individual's ability to face life's challenges. Maximizing the development of hardiness in a person, the challenge aspect shows that young wives optimistically and positively see opportunities to survive even in their circumstances. This demonstrates that hardiness enables the subjects to identify new experiences as opportunities for learning and personal growth, to plan their future in effective way (control), and to provide a sense of commitment to achieving goals that allow the subjects to learn from experiences and unfavorable circumstances. All these result in the ability to be more adaptive to challenges (Cropley et al., 2020).

In addition to the ability to survive, young wives also need an ability to monitor the feelings and emotions of themselves and of others. This defines emotional intelligence, which has immeasurable value in facing life difficulties. This is in line with Srivastava and Dey (2020), who state that to be resilient individuals must develop emotional intelligence, since the indirect effect of depressing situations through hardiness depends on their emotional intelligence. This study finds that emotional intelligence developed by young wives has a positive relationship with hardiness. The study also finds that the subjects' emotional intelligence is in the medium level. In other words, the subjects' emotional intelligence level is associated with their hardiness level.

In improving emotional intelligence, young wives need to be able to assess and express themselves. Assessing and expressing oneself is closely related to hardiness because individuals understand and respond to emotions more quickly and are able to express emotions appropriately (Stein & Levine, 2021). By having the ability to evaluate and express themselves emotionally, young wives tend to cope with problems and turmoil in their marriage and surroundings more easily. This ability is the initial foundation for surviving mentally and physically under stressful conditions.

In order to express emotions appropriately, individuals need a supporting ability that is the regulation of emotions. Makmuroch (2014), reveals that individuals with the ability to control emotions can comprehend situations and think positively when they are facing unfavorable conditions, resulting in positive emotional reactions. The control of emotion itself

has a close connection with hardiness. The study states that individuals with high hardiness are able to manage stress against the problems they experience (Kristiyanti & Rusmawati, 2019). This is in line with a research conducted by Akrami (2020), that finds a person's ability to manage emotions is influenced by hardiness since hardiness acts as a differentiator for individual attitudes in dealing with problems and pressures.

Young wives in this study have the ability to control their emotions, hence they can minimize existing problems. This is related to how they are able to use emotions as a way to focus attention and to think more rationally. The ability to use emotions is related to improving mood in order to be optimistic and to motivate one's self and others. This is related to the aspect of the challenge on hardiness. With this connection, individuals who can use their emotions appropriately are able to increase their hardiness in order to deal with changes.

Although the results of this study provide a positive understanding, it should be noted that psychological state of young wives forced to marry by early pregnancy is a subject less noticed. In some cases, teenage girls feel insecure, ashamed, guilt, and get depressed all the time. These are the initial triggers for young wives to have high anxiety, stress, and depression (Sezgin & Punamäki, 2020). It is important to understand that teen age is not the phase of life to be a wife and a mother. Without proper handling, this condition will cause anxiety and even endanger the mental health of any young wife.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the data, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and hardiness in young wives. With this result, the research hypothesis is proven to be true. Nevertheless, this study has some limitations. First, the lack of sampling of young wives forced to marry by early pregnancy. Second, the researcher only focuses on adolescent girls, while the psychological dynamics of teenager husbands also need to be studied. Third, online responses to research items have the possibility of being biased. Fourth, future research needs to consider internal factors related to hardiness and emotional intelligence through family factors, because family is the determining factor on whether a child is going to be a better person or not.

The results of the study encourage the researcher to share some suggestions, especially for parents and for young wives. The researcher suggests parents to give full attention and responsibility in educating their children and also when their children are facing difficulties in the adolescent stage. In addition, the current development of knowledge requires parents to be open to the importance of sexual education from an early age. Sexual education provides an understanding for children to understand what to do or not to do according to the norms that apply both under the state law and religion. Through proper sexual education, teenagers will know how to respond to the emotional and biological upheavals they experience in good ways.

The researcher suggests that further research in this subject should pay attention to the sample quantity so that the characteristics of the sample can be used in future researches. In addition, they can add other variables (apart from emotional intelligence) that have connection with hardiness.

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