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## Interpersonal Relationships in Married Life

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### **Abstract**

*Marriage is an emotional relationship involving two individuals, where healthy interpersonal relationships serve as the foundation for achieving harmony. Effective communication and mutual understanding are essential for maintaining commitment and trust between spouses. This study aims to analyze the efforts that can improve the quality of interpersonal relationships in marriage. The research method used is content analysis to explore the factors that affect the interpersonal relationships of married couples. The results of the study show that effective efforts to enhance relationship quality include improving interpersonal communication skills, fostering empathy, spending quality time together, attending marriage counseling, and maintaining trust and openness. This study suggests that couples should focus more on developing open and empathetic communication to maintain marital harmony. Future researchers are advised to explore external factors that also influence interpersonal relationships in marriage.*

**Keywords:** *Interpersonal Relationships; Marital Life; Effective Communication; Couple Harmony*

### **Abstrak**

*Pernikahan adalah hubungan emosional yang melibatkan dua individu, di mana hubungan interpersonal yang sehat menjadi fondasi utama untuk mencapai keharmonisan. Komunikasi efektif dan pemahaman timbal balik sangat diperlukan untuk menjaga komitmen dan kepercayaan antara suami dan istri. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis upaya-upaya yang dapat meningkatkan kualitas hubungan interpersonal dalam pernikahan. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah content analysis untuk mengeksplorasi faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi hubungan interpersonal pasangan suami istri. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa beberapa upaya yang efektif untuk meningkatkan kualitas hubungan adalah dengan meningkatkan keterampilan komunikasi interpersonal, menumbuhkan empati, melakukan quality time bersama, mengikuti konseling pernikahan, serta menjaga kepercayaan dan keterbukaan. Penelitian ini menyarankan agar pasangan lebih fokus pada pengembangan komunikasi yang terbuka dan empatik dalam menjaga keharmonisan pernikahan. Peneliti selanjutnya disarankan untuk mengeksplorasi faktor-faktor eksternal yang turut mempengaruhi hubungan interpersonal dalam pernikahan.*

**Kata kunci:** *Hubungan Interpersonal; Kehidupan Pernikahan; Komunikasi Efektif; Keharmonisan Pasangan*



## Introduction

Marriage is the only way for a man and a woman to legally be related as a couple. Marriage is regulated by Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 1974. It states that marriage is a physical and spiritual bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the aim of forming a happy and eternal family based on the belief in the One Almighty God (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 1974).

Wardhany continued by saying that marriage is a feeling of freedom that was not previously felt.(Suhadi -, 2012; Yusuf & Zainuddin, 2023)Marriage is a social and emotional bond between two individuals committed to living together for the long term. In the process of living married life, couples are not only faced with physical and economic aspects, but also psychological aspects and interpersonal communication. Interpersonal relationships are an important foundation in building harmony, because through open, empathetic, and mutually respectful interactions, couples can understand each other's needs and feelings. Several studies have discussed the review of harmony in a family. Among those explaining that the study obtained a correlation value (r) of 0.649 with a probability of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ), thus indicating a positive relationship between interpersonal communication between husband and wife and harmony in marriage. The large effective contribution made by interpersonal communication between husband and wife to marital harmony is 42.2%, and the remaining 57.8% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.(Dewi & Sudhana, 2013). In addition, in another study entitled "The Relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Relationship Satisfaction in Long-Distance Marriages of Early Adult Couples" provided research results that showed (1) there is a positive relationship between interpersonal communication and relationship satisfaction in couples who are in long-distance marriages because the p-value is below 0.05 (p-value  $< 0.001$ ). In fact, if we look at the opinion of Safitri & Anggarani (2020) couples who are legally married ideally

live in one house and live with their partners. However, it cannot be denied that there are couples who are in long-distance marriages, this is commonly known as Long Distance Marriage (LDM). Prameswara & Sakti (2016) revealed that long-distance marriages occur because the availability of limited employment opportunities and there are some jobs that are in places that are not the same as the whereabouts of their families.(Dewi & Sudhana, 2013)

Furthermore, a good and harmonious relationship between a man (husband) and a woman (wife) doesn't just happen. It requires significant effort from both parties. However, at the same time, we can't say that this hard work must be continuous and non-stop; there must be breaks for rest and relaxation.

However, in reality, many couples struggle to maintain effective communication. Differences in background, personality, and values often lead to misunderstandings that lead to conflict. When interpersonal relationships are not well-developed, couples tend to experience emotional distance, decreased trust, and increased stress in the household.

The role of interpersonal relationships in marriage is also closely linked to a couple's ability to empathize and communicate assertively. Couples who are able to express their feelings and listen to each other with empathy tend to have warmer and more harmonious relationships. Conversely, rigid or prejudiced communication can weaken the emotional bond between partners. Therefore, interpersonal skills are a crucial factor that every individual in a marriage must develop to create a healthy and sustainable relationship.

Given this importance, research on interpersonal relationships and marriage is necessary to understand the extent to which communication, empathy, and emotional intimacy influence marital harmony. Through this understanding, it is hoped that strategies can be found to improve the quality of marital relationships, so that marriages not only survive formally but also provide emotional well-being for both parties.

## Research methods

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The method used in this research is qualitative, with content analysis. Content analysis is a research technique for producing objective and systematic descriptions of the content contained in communication media.

## Results and Discussion

### ***Understanding Interpersonal Relationships in Marriage***

Interpersonal relationships are the interaction process that occurs between two or more people who mutually influence each other through communication, attitudes, and behavior. These relationships are formed due to the human need to interact socially, understand each other, and share feelings and experiences (Jalaluddin Rahmad, 2018). Interpersonal relationships are interpersonal relationships that involve conscious face-to-face communication and aim to understand each other and build emotional closeness. Therefore, interpersonal relationships play a vital role in shaping the quality of interactions between individuals in various life contexts, including marriage.(Hananiah & Sanjaya, nd)

In the context of marriage, interpersonal relationships are the primary foundation for building harmony between husband and wife. Marriage is not merely a formal bond between two individuals, but also an emotional connection that requires effective communication and mutual understanding. Through healthy interpersonal relationships, partners can express their feelings, build trust, and maintain shared commitments. The success of a marriage is greatly influenced by the couple's ability to maintain open and empathetic interpersonal relationships.(Inshani, 2025).

Furthermore, interpersonal relationships in marriage also involve psychological aspects such as empathy, honesty, and acceptance. Each partner needs to understand each other's differences in character and background to create balance in the relationship (D. Singgih, 2012). When interpersonal communication is effective, couples are able to wisely navigate differences and turn them into strengths in their marriage. Conversely, a lack of interpersonal

skills can lead to misunderstandings, conflict, and even disharmony in a marriage.

Thus, it can be concluded that interpersonal relationships and marriage are closely related. Interpersonal relationships provide a means for couples to get to know each other better, build emotional intimacy, and maintain long-term relationship stability. A healthy marriage depends not only on love but also on the ability to communicate and understand one's partner deeply. Therefore, developing interpersonal relationships is one of the main keys to creating a happy and harmonious marriage.

### ***The Role of Interpersonal Relationships in Married Life***

Interpersonal relationships play a vital role in establishing and maintaining marital harmony. Through positive relationships, couples can establish open communication, understand each other, and respect each other.(Hananiah & Sanjaya, 2024.)Marriage is not only a physical and legal bond, but also an emotional connection that must be nurtured through healthy interactions. Interpersonal relationships are communication processes that enable individuals to build and maintain mutually beneficial social relationships. In the context of marriage, this means that couples need to cultivate emotional closeness that continues to develop over time (Alex Sohur, 2018).

The primary role of interpersonal relationships in marriage lies in their ability to create effective communication. The roles of interpersonal relationships in married life include:(Wulansari et al., 2024): First, Improving Communication Quality. Good interpersonal relationships encourage couples to express their feelings, opinions, and hopes without fear of being misunderstood. Open communication helps couples avoid unnecessary conflict and strengthens mutual trust. With healthy communication, couples are also able to face differences more maturely and openly, thereby strengthening and stabilizing the marriage bond. Second, Fostering Empathy and Emotional Intimacy.

Relationships based on empathy make couples more sensitive to each other's feelings. When a husband or wife is able to understand their partner's emotions, a sense of security and respect is created in the relationship. This emotional intimacy forms the basis for warmth in the household, where both parties feel fully accepted without over-judgment. Furthermore, interpersonal relationships also play a major role in helping couples face the differences and conflicts that are inevitable in marriage. Third, Facilitating Healthy Conflict Resolution. In every marriage, there are challenges, whether from economic aspects, differences in character, or social pressures. Good interpersonal relationships help couples manage conflict constructively, namely by actively listening, seeking solutions together, and avoiding defensiveness (AWSuranto, 2011). When conflict is managed through positive communication, relationships become more mature and adult. Healthy communication (open, honest, and empathetic) allows for constructive problem-solving, preventing conflict from damaging the relationship. Therefore, healthy communication is essential in a married life. Fourth, Strengthening Marital Commitment and Satisfaction. Through healthy interpersonal relationships, partners feel valued, accepted, and genuinely loved. This fosters a sense of satisfaction with the relationship and strengthens the commitment to stay together through thick and thin. This strong commitment forms the foundation for a marriage's resilience in the face of life's changes and challenges.

Thus, interpersonal relationships play a comprehensive role in creating and maintaining a harmonious marriage. These relationships are not just about verbal communication, but also encompass emotional intimacy, empathy, and the ability to manage conflict healthily. Couples who can build effective interpersonal relationships will have a more stable, happy, and meaningful marriage.

In addition to the roles mentioned above, there are several supporting elements to ensure a well-established interpersonal relationship within a

marriage, including: First, openness and honesty. Building trust in a marriage is fundamental to openness and honesty. Husband and wife must be open and honest with each other to achieve the goals of the marriage. Second, empathy and friendly language. A common source of conflict between husbands and wives is the man's inability to understand his wife, her intentions, and her way of thinking. It's true that husbands often have a poor understanding of women and act in ways that leave their wives feeling strange and confused. This is often due to a lack of understanding stemming from their ignorance of the differences between the two sexes. Therefore, we should be able to understand the differences between men and women. Third, a supportive attitude. Listening carefully to what your partner has to say is one way we provide encouragement and emotional validation. Fourth, quality time and active listening. Use your free time to be with your partner, convey and listen to your partner's complaints so that your partner feels that venting all the complaints they have experienced throughout the day is a way to build emotional attachment between partners.

### ***Factors Influencing Interpersonal Relationships in Marriage***

Interpersonal relationships in marriage are not formed automatically, but are influenced by various factors originating from within the couple and from the external environment.(Husna et al., 2023),(Mukarramah et al., 2024). These factors play a significant role in determining the quality of communication, emotional closeness, and harmony in a marriage. When couples are able to understand and adapt to these factors, their marriage will be more stable and satisfying. Conversely, an imbalance in any one aspect can lead to emotional distance, conflict, and even decreased marital satisfaction.

Factors that influence interpersonal relationships in marriage include: First, communication. Communication is a key element influencing the quality of interpersonal relationships in marriage. Couples who communicate openly, honestly, and with mutual respect tend to have more harmonious relationships.

Communication is not just about conveying messages, but also listening with empathy and understanding their partner's perspective. With effective communication, differences of opinion can be resolved maturely without causing prolonged conflict. Lack of communication is often the main cause of misunderstandings and tension in marital relationships. Second, empathy and emotional intimacy. Empathy is key to maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships. Couples who can put themselves in their partner's shoes will more easily understand each other's feelings and needs. Emotional intimacy arises when both parties feel accepted, heard, and appreciated without negative judgment. With empathy, couples can avoid selfish behavior and build a loving relationship atmosphere. A lack of empathy can make one party feel neglected, which ultimately weakens the emotional bond between them. Third, social, economic, and environmental factors. Social and economic backgrounds are also external factors that influence interpersonal relationships. Differences in economic status, education level, and work pressure can give rise to differences in perception in living a household life.(Purwanto & Mansur, 2020) Economic pressures, for example, often cause stress that impacts communication and harmony. Social support from family and the surrounding environment also influences relationship stability. Couples who receive emotional support from their environment tend to be better able to endure marital challenges. Fourth, Commitment and Trust Factors. Commitment and trust are the foundations that strengthen the interpersonal relationship between husband and wife. Commitment demonstrates a willingness to maintain the relationship despite various difficulties. Meanwhile, trust is the basis for a sense of security and openness between partners. When trust is disturbed, interpersonal relationships can easily be fractured due to the emergence of suspicion, anxiety, and discomfort. Therefore, maintaining commitment and trust must be a top priority to maintain a stable and mutually supportive relationship. Family counseling can even be used to maintain quality and resolve problems experienced by married

couples. Because problem-solving-based family counseling can be used as an alternative in maintaining a marriage.(Handari et al., 2022)

Overall, interpersonal relationships in marriage are greatly influenced by a combination of communication, empathy, socioeconomic factors, commitment, and trust. All of these aspects are interconnected and form the foundation for a harmonious and sustainable marriage. Couples who understand these factors well will be better prepared to navigate the dynamics of married life, maintain emotional balance, and build a relationship filled with love, understanding, and trust.

### ***Efforts to Improve the Quality of Interpersonal Relationships in Marriage***

The quality of interpersonal relationships in marriage depends not only on love, but also on the awareness and active effort of both partners to build healthy interactions. Good relationships need to be nurtured through open communication, trust, empathy, and ongoing emotional support. Efforts to improve the quality of these relationships are crucial for maintaining household harmony and preventing protracted conflict. Here are some steps you can take to improve the quality of interpersonal relationships in marriage: First, improve interpersonal communication skills. Open and empathetic communication is the main foundation for improving relationships. Couples need to get used to listening to each other without judgment, expressing their feelings honestly, and avoiding hurtful language. Through effective communication, every problem can be resolved in a more mature and wise manner, thus fostering mutual respect. Second, cultivate empathy and emotional sensitivity. Empathy allows couples to understand each other's emotional states more deeply. By empathizing, couples not only listen but also try to feel what their partner is feeling. This creates a sense of security, comfort, and a strong emotional connection. Empathy also helps couples avoid selfish behavior, which often causes tension in the household. Third, Engage in Activities Together (Quality Time). Spending

quality time together is one effective way to strengthen emotional bonds. Simple activities like casual conversation, exercising together, or having dinner together can increase feelings of closeness and togetherness. Quality time helps couples understand each other's changes and renew their existing emotional commitment.(Inshani, 2025),(Hananiah & Sanjaya, 2025)Fourth, Seek Marriage Counseling or Guidance. When conflicts are difficult to resolve independently, couples can seek help from a counselor or family psychologist. Through counseling sessions, couples can learn more effective communication strategies, how to manage emotions, and find solutions to recurring problems. This professional approach can serve as a means of reflection and learning to improve relationship dynamics. Fifth, Maintain Trust and Openness. Trust is the main foundation of healthy interpersonal relationships. Without mutual trust, relationships can easily be filled with prejudice and tension. Couples need to build honesty, respect each other's privacy, and be open about various things, both pleasant and unpleasant. This openness helps couples understand each other and maintain emotional stability in a long-term relationship.

Overall, improving the quality of interpersonal relationships in a marriage requires the active involvement of both partners. Healthy relationships are not the result of chance, but rather the fruit of communication, empathy, trust, and invested time together. By implementing these five efforts, couples can strengthen their emotional bonds, build a harmonious marriage, and achieve greater marital satisfaction.

## Conclusion

Interpersonal relationships are a crucial aspect that determines the quality and harmony of a marriage. Through good communication, trust, and mutual understanding, couples can build a strong emotional bond. Marriage not only unites two individuals legally but also requires the ability to understand, accept, and adapt to existing differences. Therefore, interpersonal relationships form the

foundation that connects love, responsibility, and commitment between husband and wife. In marriage, the role of interpersonal relationships is evident in how partners interact, resolve conflicts, and provide support to one another. Factors such as empathy, openness, honesty, and assertive communication significantly influence the creation of a harmonious household atmosphere.

Maintaining the quality of a relationship requires a collaborative effort from both parties. Couples can strengthen their interpersonal relationships by improving communication skills, emotional sensitivity, and a willingness to respect and forgive each other. Marriage counseling and joint activities that foster emotional closeness can also be helpful in improving relationships.

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