

## PIK-R Persuasive Communication in Preventing Early Marriage: Case Study in Sikunang Village

Yudha Pradhana <sup>(1)\*</sup>, Ariandi Putra <sup>(1)</sup>

Communication Science Study Program, National University <sup>(1)</sup>  
Jl. Sawo Manila, Pejaten Ps. Minggu Jakarta 12520.

Email: yudha.pradhana@civitas.unas.ac.id\*

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### **ABSTRACT:**

#### **Keywords:**

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*Early marriage, a phenomenon of marriage that occurs before the age of majority or before free and legal consent, is a social problem that has a wide impact in many countries, including Indonesia. This reality is further exacerbated by data obtained from UNICEF that as of the end of 2022, Indonesia is currently ranked 8th in the world and 2nd in ASEAN as a country with the number of early marriages or marriages of underage children, with a total of nearly 1.5 million cases. In an effort to overcome early marriage, persuasive communication through various media and platforms has been considered an effective tool for increasing awareness and changing people's attitudes and behavior. The PIK-R (Youth Information and Counseling Center) program has become a significant initiative in providing information and support to teenagers in facing social issues, including early marriage. This research will examine and analyze the persuasive communication carried out by PIK-R in preventing early marriage in Sikunang Village, Wonosobo, Central Java. The aim of this research is to understand and analyze the persuasive communication strategies carried out by PIK-R. Data was taken from observation transcripts as well as conducting direct interviews with members and people in charge of PIK-R Sikunang Village. The research approach used by researchers is a descriptive qualitative approach which aims to analyze how persuasive communication is carried out by PIK-R in preventing early marriage in Sikunang Village, Wonosobo, Central Java. The results of this research found that the persuasive communication carried out by PIK-R Sikunang Village in prevention was considered not yet optimal and needed to be improved further in its implementation Central Java.*

## Introduction

Early marriage, a phenomenon of marriage that occurs before the age of majority or before free and legal consent, is a social problem that has a broad impact in many countries, including Indonesia. This practice severely impacts human rights, sustainable development, and social welfare.

The age limit for marriage, as stated in Article 7 of Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, is that men and women are equalized at 19 years. In contrast, previously, for women, the age limit for marriage was 16 years (Saifudin et al., 2023). A person who is declared by law to be a minor must obtain a decision from the court as regulated in Article 7 paragraph (2) of the 2019 Marriage Law, which states, "In the event of a deviation from the age provisions as intended in paragraph ( 1), the man's parents and the woman's parents can request dispensation from the Court for very urgent reasons accompanied by sufficient supporting evidence" (Ilhami, 2020). In other words, early marriage is carried out by a couple who has yet to be declared sufficient by the law.

It shows that early marriage is a marriage under age, so the preparation has yet to be considered optimal in terms of physical, mental, and material preparation (Anggraini et al., 2023). This relatively young age is the age of puberty between 10-19 years (Desiyanti, 2015). This marriage is something that violates children's rights to education, pleasure, health, and freedom of speech and constitutes discrimination (Sisterikoyasa & Aji, 2021). The marriage process is greatly influenced by many factors and habits followed by community members. The variety of different factors and habits adopted by members of society ultimately becomes one of the triggers for the diversity of marriage patterns that can be found in society (Sumbulah & Jannah, 2012).

The existence of regulations or laws that have changed in an effort to prevent early marriage does not have a significant effect because, in reality, early marriage is still a phenomenon that often occurs in Indonesia. It is also a particular concern for the government because it is considered very worrying. From data from religious courts regarding applications for child marriage dispensation, in 2021, there were 65 thousand cases recorded, and in 2022, there were 55 thousand applications. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection surprisingly explains that applications for marriage at a child's age are primarily due to the factor that the female applicant is already pregnant and the factor of encouragement from parents who want their child to get married immediately because they already have close friends or are dating (Shabrina, 2023).

This reality is further exacerbated by data obtained from UNICEF that as of the end of 2022, Indonesia is currently ranked 8th in the world and 2nd in ASEAN as a country with the number of early marriages or marriages of underage children, with a total of almost 1.5 million cases (BASRA, 2023).

Getting married at an early age or still not old enough is not a good thing to do. The unpreparedness of children at an age that is not yet ready for marriage can cause various things, for example, dropping out of education, disrupting reproductive health, divorce at a young age, domestic violence, and so on. Apart from that, early marriage also has negative impacts mentally and physically (Sekarayu & Nurwati, 2021). Apart from the various negative impacts that exist, the rise in cases of early marriage is difficult to eliminate. It is caused by several factors, including economic needs, low education, a culture of early marriage, arranged marriages, and free sex among teenagers which causes pregnancy before marriage. (Fadilah, 2021)

To overcome early marriage, persuasive communication through various media and platforms has been considered an effective tool for increasing awareness and changing people's attitudes and behavior. Persuasive communication is the most effective component because it contains speaking style, intonation, word choice, and gestures, and is a tool or means of communication by influencing other people or making other people's behavior change according to our wishes by using persuasive communication (Sisterikoyasa & Aji, 2021 ). The main goal of persuasive communication is to influence other people by trying to change the beliefs, attitudes, and behavior of the recipient of the message. (Saleh & Kamaruzzaman, 2022)

One of the media or platforms for approaching persuasive communication with teenagers is PIK-R (Susyanti & Halim, 2020). The PIK-R Program (Youth Information and Counseling Center) is a program managed by and for teenagers to provide information and counseling services regarding Marriage Age Maturation (PUP), eight family functions, TRIAD KRR including sexuality, HIV and AIDS as well as drugs, life skills, gender and advocacy skills and IEC (G. C. Putri & Sama'i, 2022). PIK-R has become a significant initiative in providing information and support to teenagers facing social issues, including early marriage. So, the existence of PIK-R is indeed an effort by the government to prevent early marriage. However, there is still a need for a deeper understanding of the persuasive communication strategies used by PIK-R and their impact on changes in teenagers' attitudes and actions regarding early marriage.

Therefore, this research aims to analyze the persuasive communication strategies used by PIK-R to prevent early marriage. Focusing on a case study in Sikunang Village, this research wants to explain and analyze how teenage audiences design, deliver, and receive persuasive messages.

This research wants to explain and analyze the persuasive communication strategy used by PIK-R Sikunang Village to prevent the rise of early marriage in the village. Apart from a lack of understanding about early marriage, most young people there are deliberately married off. One of the biggest reasons is economic factors. Based on the background that the researcher has explained, the researcher plans to conduct research entitled "PIK-R Persuasive Communication in Preventing Early Marriage: Case Study in Sikunang Village."

## **Method**

To get a complete and comprehensive picture, the research approach used by researchers is a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to analyze how persuasive PIK-R communicates to prevent early marriage in Sikunang Village.

The qualitative approach is carried out in natural conditions directly to the data source, and the researcher is positioned as the vital instrument (Abubakar, 2020) and is used descriptively by the researcher to connect the subject with the research object so that it can be studied empirically, non-empirically, and also theoretically. The descriptive qualitative method explains and depicts the data categories used (Pradhana, 2022). The descriptive qualitative research approach also aims to describe and illustrate existing natural and human-engineered phenomena, which pays more attention to characteristics, quality, and interrelationships between activities (Utami et al., 2021). In other words, qualitative research aims to make facts/phenomena easy to understand (understandable) and make it possible, according to the model, to produce new hypotheses. (Fadli, 2021).

According to Noeng Muhadjir, data analysis is an effort to systematically search for and organize notes from observations, interviews, and others. To increase researchers' understanding of the cases studied and present them as findings for others. Meanwhile, to increase understanding, analysis must be continued by trying to find meaning (Rijali, 2019). After the data the researcher needs is collected, the researcher then analyzes the data using the theories and concepts that the researcher has explained in this research. The problems stated in this research can finally be answered by analyzing the data.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Early Marriage in Sikunang Village**

The phenomenon of early marriage in Sikunang Village is a phenomenon that is a problem for most villages in Indonesia, marrying children or teenagers who are materially and psychologically inadequate.

The incidence of early marriage should be minimized, considering the increasingly modern era (Gusnita, 2022). However, in reality, in this village, many of those who have just graduated from elementary school or are currently attending junior high school have already been married off.

Several factors cause early marriage, including pregnancy out of wedlock, environmental factors, parental factors, educational factors, economic factors, individual factors, social media factors (Yanti et al., 2018), and early marriage is also inseparable from culture, which is still maintained and preserved (Bawono et al., 2022). This understanding is in line with what happened in Sikunang Village. The problem of costs and the lack of parental education regarding the dangers of early marriage and the difficulty of finding employment made many parents choose to marry off their children who were still not mature enough, even the thoughts of teenagers there were already towards marriage, adding The only job there was farming like his parents until eventually it became a normalized culture in the village.

### **Persuasive Communication PIK-R Sikunang Village**

The Youth Information and Counseling Center, known as PIK-R Sikunang Village, carries out outreach to members of PIK-R first to provide insight and comprehension to each member and can be disseminated back to friends and family of PIK-R Village members. Sikunang. The socialization was verbal and non-verbal, namely in presenting the risks and consequences of early marriage using sentences of invitation and persuasion aimed at changing the opinions and understanding of the PIK-R members of Sikunang Village.

PIK-R Sikunang Village also collaborates with the local sub-district and strives to update and add new activities or work programs that are appropriate to the conditions and situations in Sikunang Village so that the socialization and communication efforts carried out are more understandable and accepted by village residents.

After conducting in-depth observations, researchers also discovered the fact that the average age of children who enter early marriage is around 13-19 years. It makes residents anxious about the young age of children entering early marriage. Therefore, local residents are trying to prevent the increase in early marriages in Sikunang Village by sending their sons and daughters to Islamic boarding schools to gain knowledge and hope that positive changes in the social environment can influence and impact their sons and daughters.

Sikunang Village PIK-R regularly holds meetings to ensure that the activities carried out continue to have a strong influence and run consistently. In this case, PIK-R Sikunang Village tries to approach members and teenagers by frequently holding informal and relaxed gatherings to strengthen relationships between fellow members, most of whom are considered to be children and teenagers. By strengthening relationships between members, information regarding the consequences and impacts of early marriage can be spread optimally and provide a much better chance for the younger generation in Sikunang Village.

**Figure 1. Photo of the PKM team with the person in charge of PIK-R Sikunang Village, Mas Zainun.**



The methods and strategies used by PIK-R in preventing early marriage in Sikunang Village are in line with the persuasive communication strategies of Melvin L. Defleur and Sandra J. Ball-Roceah, with three approaches including a psychodynamic approach, which focuses on emotional factors, then a sociocultural approach. These assumptions are influenced by external factors such as the environment and the meaning construction approach, namely knowledge that can influence a person's thinking. (S. Putri & Amelia, 2022)

The psychodynamic approach is unique because, in psychology, this approach pays excellent attention to the counselor's ability to use what happens in the relationship between client

and counselor, which is immediate and open, to explore the types of feelings and relationship dilemmas that cause difficulties for clients in their daily lives. The goal is to help clients understand the reasons behind their problems and then translate this awareness into mature abilities in dealing with various problems in the future. (Aulia et al., 2022).

The psychodynamic approach focuses on emotional or cognitive factors and does not change biological factors (Sakhinah & Arbi, 2019). In other words, this approach is practical because it can change individual psychological functions in various ways so that they will respond as the persuader wants in the form of behavior (Firdaus et al., 2023). PIK-R Sikunang Village takes a psychodynamic approach by providing counseling and approaching teenagers and their parents to remind them and explain the dangers of early marriage, as well as conducting dialogue between residents with the help of the village head to both parents and teenagers.

The sociocultural approach explains that human behavior is influenced by forces outside the individual (Dian, 2019). The essence of the sociocultural approach is that the message must be determined in a state of mutual consensus (Karomah, 2016). PIK-R Sikunang Village also carries out this approach by transmitting excellent and positive things to village teenagers by holding various kinds of positive activities such as independence competitions, learning together, reciting the Koran, and all kinds of positive activities that can be carried out in Sikunang Village.

The final approach is meaning construction, which is an approach by manipulating meaning (Hajar & Anshori, 2021). The essence of this approach is to readjust the meaning to make it easier for the persuadee to understand, either by adjusting language style, simplification, or other adjustments. PIK-R Sikunang Village also takes this approach by explaining to parents that marrying off children early is not good. Another way to do this is to provide an understanding that education is suitable for children because, in Sikunang Village, schools are limited to elementary schools. PIK-R and the Head of Sikunang Village advised village residents, especially parents, to send their children to school outside the village, such as a secondary school in another village, or send their children to Islamic boarding schools outside the village or Wonosobo.

## **Conclusion**

The research aimed to determine what form of persuasive communication PIK-R used to prevent early marriage in Sikunang Village. It can be concluded that PIK-R carried out three persuasive communication strategies to prevent early marriage in Sikunang Village by making



socialization containing information and knowledge related to the consequences and impacts of early marriage as well as updating work programs and activities created by PIK-R which were created to adapt the social and cultural environment that exists in Sikunang Village. PIK-R, in collaboration with residents, is also trying to provide and create a positive environment to help change the attitudes and thoughts of children in Sikunang Village regarding early marriage. However, the implementation of these three strategies still needs to be improved.

It is caused by several factors, including the shallow level of education in Sikunang Village, so community literacy and understanding still need to be improved. The poverty factor is also a reason for parents to immediately marry off their children rather than give them a proper education. Moreover, there are still limited activities that teenagers or young people can do there apart from working as farmers as done by parents or most people in Sikunang Village.

PIK-R Sikunang Village is planning more consistent and structured persuasive communication to reduce cases of early marriage in Sikunang Village. In this case, PIK-R Sikunang Village is also trying to expand the influence of the activities that will be carried out in the future. The deepening and consistency of the three approaches must also be optimized again. In addition, there must also be cooperation with village officials to at least reduce the factors that cause early marriage in Sikunang Village, such as providing employment opportunities, easy access to education, and various kinds of efforts deemed necessary to prevent early marriage.

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