

Gen Z's Perception of Marriage in the Digital Age: Analysis from the Perspective of Islamic Family Law

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Volume: 4 ISSN: 2963-5489 KEYWORD Marriage is Scary, Generation Z, social media, Islamic family law, marital reainess.	The phenomenon of "Marriage is Scary" that is prevalent among Generation Z shows a paradigm shift towards marriage, from what was originally seen as a sacred ritual to something that causes anxiety. The dominant factors influencing the emergence of this phenomenon include exposure to social media content, personal experiences, parental marital failures, and the influence of patriarchal culture. Generation Z tends to delay marriage and prioritize career, personal happiness, and financial stability. This study uses qualitative methods with literature review and a normative-sociological approach. Data were obtained from the Qur'an, the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI), and related academic literature. The results of the study show that although digital content contributes to the emergence of fear of marriage, the role of Islamic family law remains relevant in providing normative solutions. Articles 15–17 of the KHI emphasize the aspects of age, valid marriage requirements, and moral responsibilities based on <i>maqāṣid al-syarī'ah</i>. However, these regulations are considered limited and need to be strengthened to be more adaptive to the psychosocial challenges of Generation Z. Thus, the renewal of Islamic family law based on <i>maqāṣid</i> and the integration of premarital guidance programs are key to constructively addressing the "Marriage is Scary" phenomenon.

1. Introduction

Seeing how times are changing, it is inevitable that we will experience digital development. Social media is becoming increasingly prevalent among the public, especially among Generation Z, or Gen Z for short. There are several social media applications that are frequently used by almost all Gen Zers, such as TikTok, Instagram, X, and so on. Much of the content on social media influences Gen Z's mindset, including their views on marriage. This has given rise to the phenomenon of "Marriage is Scary." Why is this the case? It is because the content indicates that viewers are concerned about the concept of marriage, which has long been considered a social norm. The depiction of marriage in this content raises sensitive issues sensitive issues such as domestic violence, infidelity, and the burden of long-term commitment, which then shape this perception among Gen Z (Refi & Sumardjijati, 2025).

From a religious perspective, marriage in Indonesian society holds a very noble position because it is a sacred act recommended by Islamic teachings. In Islam, marriage is a *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad SAW with the noble aim of forming a family that is *sakinah mawaddah* and *warohmah*. However, current trends indicate a significant shift, particularly among Gen Z. The

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evolving reality shows a reluctance or even a delay in getting married. Gen Z prioritizes career development, self-improvement, and personal happiness above marriage (Azhar & Teguh, 2025). From an Islamic legal perspective, Islam provides flexibility in marriage law, depending on the individual's readiness to build a *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *warohmah* household. And here, there is a shift where social, economic, and cultural aspects play a more dominant role in Gen Z's decision to marry (Dwi & Krismono, 2025).

Reflecting on research conducted by Febriyanti et al (2024), the perspectives and attitudes of Gen Z today show a shift in values and priorities compared to previous generations, with Gen Z paying more attention to marriage preparation and readiness. Factors such as mental readiness and economic and financial stability are also seen as important requirements before deciding to get married.

Seeing this reality, the author feels the need for a more in-depth study of how the phenomenon of "Marriage is Scary" among Gen Z is understood and addressed from the perspective of Islamic family law. The main concern is the desire to delay marriage or even reject marriage itself, which can then lead to problems such as an increase in promiscuity, the loss of the family's function as a moral fortress, and the marginalization of religious values in life. Therefore, this article attempts to discuss Gen Z's perception of marriage in the digital age, the factors behind it, and how Islamic family law can provide appropriate and practical solutions. Thus, it is hoped that this study can provide an accurate understanding of the challenges faced by Gen Z and the solutions offered by Islamic law.

2. Literature Review

A number of previous studies have highlighted the phenomenon of "Marriage is Scary" among Gen Z from various perspectives. As in the study conducted by Farhan (2025), which emphasizes that this phenomenon reflects a shift in the paradigm of marriage, where the symbol of adulthood becomes a source of emotional anxiety and economic burden, contributing to the integration of digital culture and Islamic legal norms, although this study is still limited because it does not involve field data. Research by Refi Nur Mariska and Sumardijati (2025) shows that exposure to "Marriage is Scary" content on TikTok has a negative influence on marriage, although its contribution is small because the data obtained shows that the majority of respondents actually showed a neutral response. Meanwhile, research by Dwi Oktaviani and Krismono (2025) identified five main factors underlying the fear of marriage through analysis of TikTok comments, namely fear of partners, uncertainty about the future, domestic conflicts, financial fears, and the influence of social media, and emphasized the need for more inclusive premarital education.

From these studies, it can be seen that previous research has focused more on analyzing the factors causing fear of marriage and the influence of social media on Gen Z's perceptions. However, there is still a gap in research on how Islamic family law (KHI) can provide normative and practical solutions in response to this phenomenon. This article attempts to fill this gap by examining the relevance of articles 15-17 of the KHI in addressing Gen Z's fears and trying to offer a more adaptive interpretation of the dynamics of digital culture and the psychosocial challenges of the younger generation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Types and Approaches

This research is qualitative research in the form of library research. The approaches used are normative (examining marriage laws in the Qur'an and Islamic Law Compilation) and sociological (analyzing Gen Z social phenomena related to perceptions of marriage in the digital age).

3.2 Data Source

- Primary Data: The Qur'an and the compilation of Islamic law
- Secondary Data: Journals and scientific articles discussing marriage, Gen Z, and Islamic family law.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data was collected through literature searches on national journal portals such as Google Scholar. Articles were selected based on their relevance to the theme of "Marriage is Scary" and Islamic family law.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis was conducted using a descriptive-comparative method: describing Gen Z phenomena related to marriage, then comparing them with Islamic family law norms to produce solutions and conclusions.

4. Results and Discussion

Reflecting on research by Refi Nur Mariska and Sumardijati (2025), it appears that Gen Z's perceptions are somewhat influenced by social media content, such as TikTok. However, it turns out that the response shown by Gen Z is mostly normal. For example, many Gen Zers living in the Surabaya area are actually influenced by external factors in their thinking about marriage. Therefore, it is not solely social media that is responsible for their fear of marriage. These external factors can include their personal experiences, such as the failure of their parents' marriage or what they have seen in the environment in which they grew up.

But again, given the rapid pace of digital development in today's era, it is not surprising that most Gen Zers are influenced by the content on social media. There is a lot of content that is easily found on social media that depicts failed marriages, although there is a small amount that depicts happy married life. However, due to the abundance of negative narratives such as divorce, domestic violence, men cheating on their wives, not providing for their families, economic instability, and some content showing changes in values and life orientation where many people prioritize building a career over starting a family, as well as content that normalizes extramarital relationships (Azhar & Teguh, 2025) All of these factors influence Gen Z's perspective on what marriage is like. It is no surprise that most Gen Z feel reluctant and delay marriage, as the conclusion drawn from the widespread content available today is that marriage is something frightening, something prone to failure.

Not only that, Gen Z's view of the fear of marriage is also influenced by movies on television or those shown in theaters. Gen Z is very dependent on social validation influenced by social media. Many of them seek approval from their online friends. They tend to follow the crowd, so if their online friends have a fear of marriage, others will too. Most of them also compare the lives of others on social media with their own personal lives, so they set the standard for marital happiness based on others, leading them to believe that marriage should always be happy and problem-free. This is also why Gen Z tends to postpone marriage.

The emergence of the "Marriage is Scary" trend that is widely circulating on social media does not seem to be triggered by social media alone. According to Gubernskaya (2010) (in Randyani et al., 2025), several other factors contribute to this trend, such as personal experiences observed from their parents, their surroundings, or failed personal romantic experiences, commonly known as hopeless romanticism. Additionally, there is a difference between traditional ideologies that emphasize the importance of marriage and modern views that are more skeptical of marriage. What we have known all this time in traditional ideologies that contain patriarchy is that women are expected to fulfill the roles of wife and mother, which causes Gen Z to think that marriage is an institution that limits women.

Gen Z's fear of marriage is not solely an individual choice, but also the result of social constructs influenced by collective experiences, social media dynamics, and shifting gender roles in modern society. In the study of Islamic legal sociology, marriage is part of muamalah worship, which aims to bring about peace, love, and mercy, as explained in Surah Ar-Rum verse 21 (Dwi & Krismono, 2025).

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

"Among His signs is that He created mates for you from among yourselves, so that you may find tranquility in them. He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who reflect." (Ar-Rum/30:21)

However, it has been found that in practice, marriage is still influenced by patriarchal cultural expectations and social media content that causes concern for many individuals, especially Gen Z. Therefore, in Islamic Law (HKI), readiness for marriage is not only viewed in terms of age but also in terms of all physical and spiritual requirements that reflect maturity for marriage. Article 15 of the KHI states that "in order to get married, a prospective husband must be at least 19 years old and a prospective wife must be at least 16 years old." However, this limit only emphasizes the biological age factor for marriage and does not touch on the psychological readiness factor. However, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs has published Marriage Guidance Guidelines that explicitly include psychological, emotional, and social readiness as an integral part of readiness for

marriage, thereby strengthening the argument that marriage requires more than just formal legal readiness, but also consideration of the mental health and emotional maturity of the couple (Farhan, 2025).

In addition to Article 15, Articles 16 and 17 of the KHI provide restrictions regarding the pillars and requirements for a valid marriage, including the presence of a guardian, witnesses, and a valid *ijab kabul* (marriage vow) according to Islamic law. These articles implicitly contain the principles of responsibility and moral maturity. Responsibility stems from *maqasid al-shariah*, which places the family as a means of preserving religion (*hifz al din*), lineage (*hifz al nasl*), and honor (*hifz al irdh*). Thus, we can see that the KHI has provided a solution to address the phenomenon of fear of marriage among Gen Z. In these articles, the KHI, which is a product of Islamic law, seeks to establish a harmonious and civilized social structure.

However, to achieve an ideal Islamic legal system, it is necessary to expand from legal positivism to a multidisciplinary approach. This is important in order to revise and enrich Islamic legal norms so that they are more responsive to the complexities of the times, including the marriage crisis among Gen Z. Adjustments to regulations based on *maqasid sharia* are needed to accommodate the need for more comprehensive legal protection for the younger generation. The Marriage Guidance Program (Binwin) run by the Ministry of Religious Affairs has not been integrated into the KHI, so its role is only complementary. The provisions on marriage readiness in the KHI are still limited and do not adequately address the challenges of the times. In fact, with a contextual approach, the KHI can become an adaptive and humanistic regulation. Therefore, an evaluation of articles 15-17 is important to strengthen Islamic family law and shape a young generation that is mentally, spiritually, and socially ready for marriage.

5. Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that Gen Z's fear of marriage is a multidimensional phenomenon that is not only influenced by social media, but also by external factors such as family experiences, social environment, and shifts in cultural and gender values. The dominance of negative content on social media, coupled with the "Marriage is Scary" trend and the influence of popular culture, reinforces the social construct that marriage is synonymous with risk and failure. From an Islamic legal perspective, marriage is positioned as a form of worship that aims to bring peace, love, and mercy, as explained in QS. Ar-Rum verse 21. The Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) through Articles 15-17 has provided a basic framework regarding the requirements and pillars of marriage, but it still focuses on formal and biological aspects. Meanwhile, the psychological, emotional, and social readiness of the younger generation has not been fully accommodated. Therefore, the integration of the Marriage Guidance (Binwin) program into the KHI regulations is an urgency that needs to be realized. Evaluating and adjusting Articles 15–17 with a contextual approach based on *maqasid syariah* will enrich Islamic family law norms so that they are more adaptive, flexible, and humanistic. Thus, KHI can play a strategic role in preparing the younger generation to be ready for marriage holistically, mentally, spiritually, and socially.

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