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Constructing the "Marriage Is Scary" Stigma: Marriage Motivation among Generation Z in Pekanbaru from an Islamic Legal Sociology Perspective

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Abstract

The phenomenon of Marriage is Scary has emerged as a growing stigma among Generation Z, characterized by fear, anxiety, and doubts about marriage due to widespread exposure to cases of divorce, infidelity, domestic violence, and economic pressures through social media and the surrounding social environment. This study aims to examine the views of Generation Z in Pekanbaru City regarding the Marriage is Scary stigma, analyze its implications for marriage motivation, and explore the phenomenon from the perspective of the Sociology of Islamic Law. This study employed a qualitative-dominant mixed-method approach. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with 20 Generation Z informants in Pekanbaru City and supported by questionnaires distributed to 100 respondents. Secondary data were obtained from books, journals, official documents, and relevant statistical reports. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing using the Sociology of Islamic Law approach. The findings indicate that Generation Z perceives Marriage is Scary as a fear of various marital risks, particularly choosing the wrong partner, economic instability, marital failure, and infidelity. This stigma has led to decreased motivation to marry, a growing tendency to postpone marriage, greater prioritization of education and career development, and increased selectivity in choosing a life partner. From the perspective of the Sociology of Islamic Law, this phenomenon reflects changes in social construction and family legal awareness influenced by the development of digital culture, causing marriage to be viewed more as an individual choice than a social obligation. Nevertheless, Generation Z's cautious attitude toward marriage preparation can be understood as a form of readiness to achieve the Islamic objectives of marriage, namely the establishment of a family characterized by sakinah (tranquility), mawaddah (affection), and rahmah (compassion). The novelty of this study lies in its application of Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory within the framework of Islamic Legal Sociology to analyze how digital culture reshapes Generation Z's family legal awareness, offering a perspective that has not been systematically explored in prior studies on the Marriage Is Scary phenomenon in Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of changing values and orientations toward the institution of marriage is one of the important issues in contemporary social studies. Globally, a paradigm shift has occurred, moving from marriage as a social obligation toward a more flexible individual choice. This shift is influenced by modernization, globalization, and the development of digital technology, which shapes young people's perspectives on interpersonal relationships, commitment, and the future of the family.[1] In this context, marriage is no longer positioned as a primary need but rather as one option that can be postponed or even avoided.[2] Yet ideally, in Islam, marriage is understood as a sacred institution designed to create balance in human life, as it contains spiritual, social, and moral values. [3]

Marriage in Islam is a sacred institution that does not merely function as a biological bond between a man and a woman, but also as a means of building peaceful lives, preserving lineage, and establishing social stability in society. Islam places marriage as part of worship and the Sunnah of the Prophet (shallallaahu 'alaihi wasallam), which carries spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. In Islamic teaching, marriage holds an important position because it serves as a means of preserving lineage (hifz al-nasl), safeguarding honor, and is regarded as a mitsaqan ghalizhan (a strong covenant) to realize a family that embodies sakinah, mawaddah, and rahmah. Islam even encourages its followers to marry as part of the completion of one's religion and the fulfillment of human nature.[4]

However, in the development of modern society, particularly among Generation Z, a phenomenon has emerged indicating a different tendency, such that the meaning of marriage has undergone significant change. Social reality shows that some young people no longer view marriage as a primary need or a means of completing one's religion; instead, they perceive marriage as something frightening, full of risks, and potentially

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[1] Aminudin, Mustafa Kamal Rokal, dan Zulham Zulham, Pengaruh Terhadap Perubahan Nilai Perkawinan Keluarga Islam Di Indonesia, *Rechtsnormen Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Informasi Hukum* 3, no. 2 (2025): hal. 61–69. Diakses 21 Februari 2026 https://jurnal.ilmubersama.com/index.php/Rechtsnormen/article/view/807.

[2] Maylya Isnaeni, Tren Menunda Pernikahan Pada Perempuan Generasi Z : Analisis Bibliometrik, *Equalita: Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Anak* 7, no. 2 (2025): hal. 327. Diakses 20 Februari 2026, https://doi.org/10.24235/equalita.v7i2.21668.

[3] Amelia Wulandari, *Telaah Marriage Is Scary Di Media Sosial Perspektif Hukum Keluarga Islam* (Tesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, 2025), hal. 1, https://repository.uin-suska.ac.id/89665/1/Tesis Amelia Wulandari_compressed - amelia wulandari.pdf.

[4] Wahbah az-Zuhaili, *Al-Fiqh Al-Islami Wa Adillatuhu* (Damaskus: Dar al-Fikr, 1985), juz VII, hal. 29.

problematic. This condition reveals a gap between the normative Islamic values that encourage marriage and the social reality developing among young people.[5]

The majority of Indonesian youth are still unmarried. This indicates that young people tend to delay marriage as part of their rational life considerations.[6] This shift signals a change in values regarding family institutions.[7] Statistical data confirms a decline in the number of marriages in Indonesia in recent years, as shown in the following table:

Table 1.1: Indonesia Marriage Statistics

Year	Number of Marriages
2019	1,968,978
2020	1,780,346
2021	1,742,049
2022	1,705,348
2023	1,577,255
2024	1,478,302

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), 2019-2024

Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) indicates that the national number of marriages has consistently declined, from approximately 1.96 million in 2019 to approximately 1.48 million in 2024 the lowest figure in the past decade.[8] The declining marriage motivation among Generation Z is influenced by various factors such as personal experiences, economic conditions, and exposure to digital media. Various narratives about married life have spread widely, both positive and negative, significantly influencing young people's perceptions.[9]

This phenomenon is also clearly evident in Pekanbaru City as one of the urban centers experiencing rapid digital development in Riau Province. As a hub of economic growth and education, Pekanbaru serves as a meeting ground between traditional Muslim family values and modern digital culture spreading through social media. This condition not

[5] Farhan Lutfi, Krisis Kesiapan Nikah Gen Z Dalam Narasi Marriage Is Scary: Relevansi Hukum Keluarga Islam Di Era Digital, *Syakhshiyyah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 6, no. 2 (2025): hal. 115–18, https://doi.org/10.32332/j585j338.

[6] Liza Marini, Rahma Yurliani, dan Indri Kemala Nasution, Ekspektasi Peran Pernikahan Pada Generasi Z Ditinjau Dari Jenis Kelamin, Usia, Agama Dan Suku, *Analika:Jurnal Magister Psikologi UMA* 14, no. 1 (2022): hal. 89–98, https://ojs.uma.ac.id/index.php/analitika/article/view/5145?.

[7] Azizah Fadhilah Adhani dan Acep Aripudin, Perspektif Generasi Z Di Platform X Terhadap Penurunan Angka Pernikahan Di Indonesia, *J-Kls: Jurnal Komunikasi Islam* 5, no. 1 (2024): hal. 185-198, https://doi.org/10.53429/j-kis.v5i1.1001.

[8] Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), *Data jumlah pernikahan Indonesia tahun 2019–2024*, diakses 14 Maret 2026

[9] Mela Safitri, Pengaruh Penggunaan Media Sosial Terhadap Persepsi Minat Pernikahan Di Kalangan Gen Z Kota Bandung, Vol 5, (2025): hal. 11.

only affects the communication patterns of young people, but also shapes their perspectives, values, and perceptions of various aspects of life, including interpersonal relationships, commitment, and family institutions. Thus, social media has become an agent shaping new social realities for Generation Z.[10]

Social reality in Pekanbaru also shows a declining trend in the number of marriages in recent years. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics of Riau Province indicates that the number of marriages in Pekanbaru City has gradually decreased, from 6,857 in 2020 to 5,587 in 2024. This decline reflects a shift in public orientation toward marriage, particularly among young people.[11]

Table 1.2: Marriage Figures in Pekanbaru City, 2020-2024

Year	Number of Marriages
2020	6,857
2021	6,512
2022	6,163
2023	5,914
2024	5,587

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics of Riau Province (2020-2024)

This phenomenon cannot be separated from the emergence of the Marriage Is Scary stigma, which has spread widely on social media and reflects negative perceptions of married life.[12] This stigma did not appear without reason; rather, it was constructed through individual experiences, viral content, and representations of marital conflict disseminated on a massive scale.[13] This phenomenon reflects fear, anxiety, and doubts of young people toward married life due to the proliferation of narratives about rising

[10] Irmawati Pangaribuan, Immaito Sinaga, Tiominar Panjaitan, Yunano Waruwu, dan Roida Lumbantobing, Penggunaan Media Sosial Oleh Generasi Z: Implikasi Terhadap Perubahan Budaya Dan Norma Sosial, *Kultura: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum, Sosial, Dan Humaniora* 2, no. 5 (2024): hal. 289–293, https://doi.org/10.572349/kultura.v2i5.1484 .

[11] Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Riau, Nikah Dan Cerai Menurut Kabupaten/Kota Di Provinsi Riau, 2020-2024, diakses 21 Desember 2025, https://riau.bps.go.id/id/statistics-table/3/VkhwVUszTXJPVmQ2ZFRKamNIZG9RMVo2VEdsbVVUMDkjMw%3D%3D/nikah-dan-cerai-menurut-kabupaten-kota-di-provinsi-riau--2019.html?year=2024.

[12] Fadhlizha Izzati Rinanda Firamadhina dan Hetty Krisnani, Perilaku Generasi Z Terhadap Penggunaan Media Sosial Tiktok: TikTok Sebagai Media Edukasi Dan Aktivisme, *Share: Social Work Journal* 10, no. 2 (2020): hal. 199–208.

[13] Refi Nur Mariska dan Sumardjijati, Pengaruh Terpaan Konten 'Marriage Is Scary' Terhadap Sikap Generasi Z Mengenai Pernikahan, *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan (JIIP)* 8, no. 8 (2025): hal. 9650, https://jiip.stkipyapisdompu.ac.id/jiip/index.php/JIIP/article/view/8961?utm.

divorce rates, domestic violence, infidelity, toxic relationships, economic pressure, and long-term relationship failures.[14]

The Marriage Is Scary phenomenon is not merely a digital trend but has developed into a social stigma among young people. This stigma has the potential to influence how individuals think, their attitudes, and their motivation regarding marriage.[15] Social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and X have become the main spaces for spreading such narratives. Various viral content about household conflict gradually shapes the collective perception that marriage is synonymous with suffering, mental pressure, and the loss of individual freedom. As a result, marriage has begun to be perceived as something full of risk and uncertainty.[16]

This condition has implications for how Generation Z views and responds to marriage. For them, marriage is no longer merely seen as a sacred bond but also as a life stage laden with complex financial, emotional, and social responsibilities.[17] Many choose to postpone marriage or feel hesitant about making commitments. This indicates a change in Generation Z's motivation toward marriage, influenced by the stigma developing in their social environment.[18]

The main issue is how the Marriage Is Scary stigma affects the marriage motivation of Generation Z. The challenges include the complexity of factors causing the stigma, the influence of social media, and the gap between normative values and empirical reality. Studies on this phenomenon show that social media exposure has a major influence on changing young people's perceptions of marriage.[19] A phenomenological study by KD Tirta and Siti Nur Arifin found that Generation Z has begun to experience doubts about the institution of marriage due to the dominance of negative narratives on social media,

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[14] Nidia Karmila, "Fenomena Ketakutan Terhadap Pernikahan Di Kalangan Generasi Z Dalam Kajian Sosiologis," *Jurnal Inovasi Pembangunan* 14, no. 1 (2026): hal. 239-352. Diakses 1 Juni 2026

[15] Refi Nur Mariska, Pengaruh Terpaan Konten 'Marriage Is Scary' Terhadap Sikap Generasi Z Mengenai Pernikahan, *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 8 no 8, (2025): hal. 9648–9652. https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v8i8.8961

[16] Lili Andriani Nasri dan Mawarni Octavia, "Marriage Is Scary Dan Kesiapan Nikah Generasi Z: Urgensi Konseling Pra Nikah," *Teraputik: Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling* 9, no. 1 (2025): hal. 26–37, https://journal.unindra.ac.id/index.php/teraputik/article/view/3895/0?.

[17] Dina Rahmawati, "Konstruksi Makna Pernikahan Pada Kalangan Muslim Gen Z Di Media Sosial: Studi Kasus Penonton Konten 'Marriage Is Scary' Di TikTok," *MUKADIMAH: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sejarah, Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 1, no. 9 (2025): hal. 83, https://jurnal.uisu.ac.id/index.php/mkd/article/view/10405/7464.

[18] Dwi Oktaviani dan Krismono, Analysis Of The Marriage Is Scary Phenomenon Among Generation Z: A Perspective Of Islamic Law Sociology, *Sahaja: Journal Shariah And Humanitie* 4, no. 1 (2025): hal. 422-439.

[19] Lili Andriani Nasri dan Mawarni Octavia, Marriage Is Scary Dan Kesiapan Nikah Generasi Z: Urgensi Konseling Pra Nikah, *Teraputik: Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling* 9, no. 1 (2025): hal. 26–37, https://journal.unindra.ac.id/index.php/teraputik/article/view/3895/0?utm_source=.

and found a tendency toward declining interest in marriage and an increasing culture of delaying marriage among young people.[20]

A similar phenomenon was found by Yulia Nur Rahmah, who explains that fear of marriage arises from fear of failing in the household, losing freedom, family trauma, economic instability, and high divorce rates.[21] This shows that the stigma affects not only perception but also the actions and decisions of Generation Z. Research by Nasri and Octavia found that the Marriage Is Scary phenomenon correlates with increased fear of marriage, particularly regarding divorce, domestic violence, and economic instability.[22] Research by Amelia Wulandari confirms that viral cases of divorce and household conflict on social media reinforce Generation Z's negative perception of marriage, ultimately shaping social fear of marital commitment.[23]

Research by Refi Nur Mariska shows that exposure to Marriage Is Scary content has a negative effect on Generation Z's attitudes toward marriage.[24] Mutiasari and Sahrani reveal that the quality of romantic relationships has a significant relationship with marriage anxiety.[25] Indriyanti shows ambivalence in interpreting marriage, where Generation Z still considers it important yet is filled with concerns.[26] The Indonesia Gen Z Report 2024 also shows that 62% of Generation Z respondents consider marriage to be something distant and not yet a primary focus.[27] These facts indicate a change in young people's social orientation toward family institutions.

Sociologically, this phenomenon reflects a transformation of values in modern society. Marriage has begun to be understood as an individual decision requiring rational and emotional consideration. As a result, a tendency has emerged to delay marriage, avoid

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[20] KD Tirta dan Siti Nur Arifin, Studi Fenomenologi: Marriage Is Scary Pada Generasi Z, *Teraputik: Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling* 8, no. 3 (2025): hal. 12–20.
[21] Yulia Nur Rahmah dan Tuti Atika, Faktor-Faktor Penyebab Fenomena Marriage Is Scary Pada Kalangan Perempuan Generasi Z, *Triwikrama: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial* 11, no. 7 (2025): hal. 131–140.
[22] Lili Andriani Nasri dan Mawarni Octavia, Marriage Is Scary Dan Kesiapan Nikah Generasi Z: Urgensi Konseling Pra Nikah, *Teraputik: Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling* 9, no. 1 (2025): hal. 26-37. https://journal.unindra.ac.id/index.php/teraputik/article/view/3895/0?.
[23] Amelia Wulandari, *Telaah Marriage Is Scary di Media Sosial Perspektif Hukum Keluarga Islam* (Tesis, UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, 2025), hal. 34.
[24] Refi Nur Mariska, Pengaruh Terpaan Konten "Marriage Is Scary" terhadap Sikap Generasi Z Mengenai Pernikahan. *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan 8*, no 8 (2025): hal. 9648–9652. https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v8i8.8961.
[25] Argea Intania Mutiasari dan Riana Sahrani, Hubungan Kualitas Berpacaran Dan Kecemasan Menikah Pada Generasi Z, *Jurnal Muara Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora, Dan Seni* 8, no. 3 (2024): hal. 420–430.
[26] Indriyanti, Sofi, Dyah A. Wulandari, Ugung DA Wibowo, dan Nia A. Noveni. "Makna Pernikahan Berdasarkan Sudut Pandang Generasi Z Di Kabupaten Cilacap," *Jurnal Empati* 13, no. 4 (2025): hal. 369–374. Diakses: 23 April 2026 https://doi.org/10.14710/empati.2024.46520
[27] *Indonesia Gen Z Report 2024,* IDN Research Institute.

commitment, or choose to live alone to maintain mental health and personal freedom.[28] From a sociological perspective, stigma is a social construction that shapes an individual's subjective reality through the internalization of values in society, influencing attitudes and behaviors including decision-making related to marriage.

From the perspective of the Sociology of Islamic Law, this condition reveals a gap between das sollen and das sein. Normatively, Islam places marriage as a means of building peace and preserving lineage. However, in modern social reality, marriage is perceived as a source of anxiety and psychological pressure. This phenomenon reveals a shift in the meaning of marriage from worship to psychosocial burden, from a sacred institution to a relationship filled with fear, and from a moral obligation to a highly rational individual choice. Digital culture is gradually changing how Generation Z understands interpersonal relationships. Social media not only shapes public opinion but also magnifies the fear of marital failure.

Nevertheless, most existing research is still limited to quantitative approaches on digital communication psychology and general social phenomena. Research specifically examining the Marriage Is Scary phenomenon from the perspective of the Sociology of Islamic Law remains very limited, particularly in the local context of Pekanbaru City. Yet this approach is important for understanding how Islamic legal norms, digital culture, and the social reality of Generation Z interact in shaping changes in Muslim society's family legal awareness. The following table presents a state of the art review that maps prior research, identifies their gaps, and situates the contribution of the present study.

Researcher	Focus	Findings	Gap / Limitation
Mariska & Sumardjijati (2025)	Effect of Marriage Is Scary content exposure on Generation Z's attitudes toward marriage	Negative content exposure significantly reduces positive attitudes toward marriage	No Islamic Law perspective; limited to quantitative media effects
Nasri & Octavia (2025)	Marriage Is Scary and marriage readiness in Generation Z;	The phenomenon correlates with increased fear of divorce, domestic violence, and	Does not analyze social construction process or Islamic Legal Sociology framework

[28] Nidia Karmila, Fenomena Ketakutan Terhadap Pernikahan Di Kalangan Generasi Z Dalam Kajian Sosiologis, *Jurnal Inovasi Pembangunan* 14, no. 1 (2026), hal. 1-7. https://jurnal.balitbangda.lampungprov.go.id/index.php/jip/article/view/1577?.

	urgency of pre-marital counseling	economic instability	
Oktaviani & Krismono (2025)	Marriage Is Scary among Generation Z from the Islamic Law Sociology perspective (general)	The phenomenon reflects tension between Islamic norms and modern social realities	Not grounded in social construction theory; no specific local urban context
Wulandari (2025)	Marriage Is Scary on social media from the Islamic Family Law perspective (thesis)	Viral divorce and conflict content reinforces negative perceptions of marriage among Generation Z	No field data from Pekanbaru; does not apply social construction theory operationally
Present Study (2026)	Social construction of Marriage Is Scary stigma and its implications for marriage motivation among Generation Z in Pekanbaru City	(See findings in this article)	Addresses the gap: applies Berger & Luckmann's social construction theory within Islamic Legal Sociology in a specific local urban Muslim context

From a theoretical standpoint, this study is grounded in Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann's social construction of reality theory, which holds that social reality is constructed through three dialectical processes: externalization (the projection of human activity into the social world), objectivation (the process by which subjective meanings become objective realities), and internalization (the re-appropriation of objectivated meanings into individual consciousness). In the context of the Marriage Is Scary phenomenon, the stigma originates as externalized individual fears and negative experiences, becomes objectivated through viral social media content and collective discourse, and is finally internalized by Generation Z as a taken-for-granted negative perception of marriage. This framework is operationalized within the Sociology of Islamic Law, drawing on concepts of legal awareness (kesadaran hukum), living law, and legal culture as developed by scholars such as Soerjono Soekanto and Lawrence M.

Friedman, to assess how digital social constructions are reshaping young Muslim communities' understanding of and motivation toward the institution of marriage.

Thus, there is a clear research gap: no study has yet comprehensively analyzed the social construction of the Marriage Is Scary stigma among Generation Z in Pekanbaru City, its implications for marriage motivation, or its relationship with changes in family legal awareness from the Islamic Legal Sociology perspective. This study aims to analyze how the Marriage Is Scary stigma has implications for Generation Z's motivation in viewing and experiencing marriage in Pekanbaru City, from the perspective of the Sociology of Islamic Law.

This research is important because the Marriage Is Scary phenomenon does not only affect individual perceptions of marriage but also has the potential to influence Muslim family resilience, social structures, and the sustainability of the family institution in the future. If this phenomenon continues to develop without education and strengthening of Islamic family values, young people may increasingly distance themselves from marriage and view the family as a source of psychological threat rather than a space of tranquility. Therefore, this research offers a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and a Sociology of Islamic Law analysis of the changing meaning of marriage in the contemporary digital era.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative-dominant mixed-method approach with an interpretive phenomenological design, employing a sociological approach to Islamic law. The qualitative component constitutes the primary strand of inquiry: in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 Generation Z informants in Pekanbaru City aged 20–29 years, selected through snowball sampling a non-probability technique in which initial informants recommend subsequent participants whose characteristics are relevant to the research focus. The phenomenological design was applied to capture the lived experiences and subjective meanings that informants attribute to the Marriage Is Scary stigma. The quantitative component serves a supplementary and corroborative function: a structured questionnaire was distributed to 100 Generation Z respondents to triangulate qualitative findings and provide descriptive frequency data on the distribution of fears and attitudes. This mixed triangulation approach strengthens the credibility of the findings by combining depth of understanding (qualitative) with breadth of distribution (quantitative). Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic coding involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The research was conducted in Pekanbaru City, Riau Province, over a period of six months.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Generation Z's Views in Pekanbaru City on the Marriage Is Scary Stigma

Based on interviews with 20 Generation Z informants in Pekanbaru City aged 20-29 years, it was found that the majority recognized and were aware of the marriage is scary stigma as a real phenomenon developing in their social environment and digital media. This stigma consistently influences how Generation Z understands marriage shifting from a perception of a sacred and secure bond to a relationship fraught with risk, conflict, and uncertainty.

As stated by one informant:

"*At first, I thought marriage was important for maintaining honor and completing what we lack. But after the marriage is scary stigma went viral on social media, it changed my perspective — marriage is no longer a sacred bond filled with security, but has shifted to become a bond full of conflict and anxiety.*"

Another informant expressed:

"*Nowadays, getting married is not just about forming a household with a husband, wife, and children — there are many risks to consider, especially when I see so many cases of failed marriages around me. And with the marriage is scary stigma on social media validating a marriage life full of conflict, it also affects my view of marriage. I feel marriage is only about getting married and then getting divorced, and most cases are because of infidelity.*"

Another informant shared:

"*Marriage is indeed scary. Getting married is not something easy or trivial, because life after marriage must be thoroughly prepared.*"

Yet another informant stated:

"*Before this stigma existed, I already had a negative view of marriage. With this stigma, I am even more doubtful about getting married. I have experienced how difficult life without parents is. Up until now, I am not thinking about getting married.*"

Based on these statements, the Marriage is Scary stigma has influenced how Generation Z views the meaning and purpose of marriage. Marriage, previously understood as a sacred and secure relationship, is now increasingly perceived as full of risk, conflict, and anxiety arising from household problems witnessed both directly and through social media.

Although most informants regard this stigma as creating fear about marriage, the study also found differing views. Some informants actually use negative family experiences as motivation to build a better household in the future. Growing up in a

disharmonious family does not always lead Generation Z to reject marriage; in some cases, it forms a desire to create a family full of love and happiness.

One informant expressed:

"*I come from a broken home family. Rather than avoiding marriage, it actually makes me want to build my dream household, full of happiness.*"

This shows that negative experiences in the family do not always result in a negative view of marriage. Some Generation Z individuals view these experiences as lessons and reflections to build a healthier marital relationship in the future. This demonstrates that the Marriage is Scary stigma does not always imply rejection of marriage, but can also form awareness to be more emotionally and mentally prepared before getting married.

Most informants expressed that fear of marriage did not arise suddenly but was formed from experiences they saw and felt in the family environment, social circles, or social media. Additionally, increasing household problems such as infidelity, toxic relationships, domestic violence, and economic instability also influence how Generation Z perceives marriage.

a. Fear of Choosing the Wrong Partner

The majority of informants stated that the most dominant factor creating apprehension about marital commitment is the fear of choosing the wrong life partner. Generation Z believes the wrong partner can cause suffering in married life. Most informants place this fear as the primary consideration in deciding whether to marry.

"*If you don't get married, at least you can still make yourself happy, but if you choose the wrong partner you could die. My experience of being close to men also ended with infidelity, which makes me even more certain I won't get married.*"

"*Better late than wrong, because we would be half-dead if we chose the wrong man.*"

"*In my opinion, it is far more painful to marry the wrong person than not to marry at all.*"

"*My reason for fearing marriage is dominated by things that are still uncertain such as fear of choosing the wrong partner and fear of being hurt. Based on my experience, men who have a religious personal branding cannot guarantee they are good men, because many men's actions and words are not balanced.*"

"*For now, I am still hesitant about marriage because around me there are already many cases of failed marriages due to economic problems, toxic relationships, and ending in divorce — this makes me think marriage is scary.*"

These statements show that fear of choosing the wrong partner is the most dominant factor in shaping the Marriage is Scary stigma among Generation Z in Pekanbaru City.

Fear of a toxic, unfaithful, manipulative, or emotionally irresponsible partner causes Generation Z to be more cautious about marriage.

b. Family Trauma and Social Experience

Some informants revealed that their fear of marriage arose from experiences observed in their immediate environment, particularly parental household conflicts. Exposure to social media displaying divorce, infidelity, and disharmonious relationships further reinforces negative perceptions of marriage.

> *"The main reason I don't want to get married is fear of repeating the same past fear of being cheated on, especially after already having children, and ultimately marriage is only for divorce."*
>
> *"Around me there are already many cases of failed marriages. I see many factors that led them to separate, and this makes me even more doubtful about marriage."*
>
> *"One reason I am afraid to get married is seeing my father's behavior toward my mother when I was little, my mother was cheated on by my father. (E, private employee, 20 years old)"*

This phenomenon can be understood through the concept of stigma, which explains that negative views of a social phenomenon are formed through social experiences and interactions in society. In this study, the Marriage is Scary stigma is formed from many negative experiences regarding household relationships, both experienced directly and witnessed through the social environment. These experiences then shape fear and doubt about marital commitment.

c. The Influence of Social Media

These findings show that social media has a considerable influence in shaping Generation Z's perceptions of married life. Various narratives about divorce, infidelity, domestic violence, and household failure continuously appearing in digital media cause the emergence of fear and doubt about marital commitment. In this condition, the Marriage is Scary stigma shapes the way Generation Z understands the reality of married life.

> *"This stigma arises because of the many issues of divorce and violence shared on social media platforms."*
>
> *"News circulating on social media makes marriage is scary feel real."*
>
> *"Because of the very rapid development of social media, various household issues are widely visible and easily accessible, making it a factor in the fear of getting married."*
>
> *"My reason for fearing marriage is fear of domestic violence and fear of a third party or a cheating husband. In my view, both of these cases are a bad disease of men that can endanger the economy, children, and mental health."*

The research results show that social media does not only function as a means of information and entertainment, but has also become a space for the formation of opinions and social constructions about marriage. The repetitive appearance of narratives about household failure in digital media causes some Generation Z individuals to view marriage as a relationship full of risk, giving rise to fear, anxiety, and doubt about marital commitment.

d. Economic Factors

Generation Z considers that life after marriage requires mature economic readiness, as it is related to living needs, family responsibilities, and the future of children. This causes some informants to worry about their ability to adequately meet household needs.

"*I am most afraid of economic and mental factors.*"

"*The factor that scares me most is domestic violence first, and then the economy because we live together for a lifetime and if he turns out to be physically violent, what is there to maintain? The economic factor too, because everything needs money if it's just husband and wife we can still hold on, but what about when we have children? I couldn't bear to see my child wanting something without money, wanting to go to school without money. (SM, student, 22 years old)*"

These statements show that economic factors are considered one of the important determinants of household sustainability. Generation Z not only thinks about personal needs after getting married, but also about long-term responsibilities toward a partner and children. Fear of an unstable economic condition causes some informants to feel not yet ready to enter married life.

e. Patriarchal Culture

The research results also show that patriarchal culture is one of the factors influencing Generation Z's fear of marriage, particularly among women. Informants revealed that women often carry a large domestic burden but do not receive equal appreciation in the household.

"*I think another factor that is a reason to fear marriage is patriarchy where women must work at home but are often invisible and not valued. Honestly, that feels frightening.*"

Based on the research findings, the majority of informants acknowledge the existence of the Marriage is Scary stigma in today's social life. This stigma is understood as a view depicting marriage as something frightening, full of risk, and potentially causing suffering, particularly for women. The high rates of divorce, infidelity, domestic violence, and economic conflict within families become factors that reinforce this stigma among Generation Z.

The interview findings are reinforced by questionnaire data distributed to 100 Generation Z respondents in Pekanbaru City. The most dominant factor is concern about getting the wrong partner, chosen by 82% of respondents. Additionally, 58% stated that unstable economic conditions create fear of marriage, and 46% stated that fear of marital failure and infidelity also influences their views on marriage.

These questionnaire data are consistent with the interview results, showing that Generation Z's fear of marriage generally centers on three main aspects: partner quality, economic readiness, and the sustainability of the household after marriage. Thus, the Marriage is Scary stigma does not arise without reason but is shaped by various social experiences, digital media information, and the reality of household life they observe. This ultimately results in decreased marriage motivation, an increased tendency to delay marriage, and greater caution in viewing the institution of marriage.

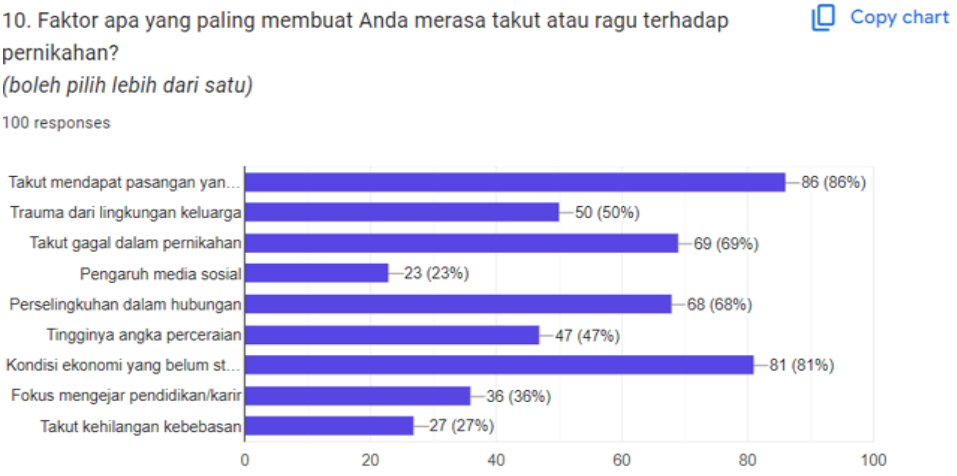


Diagram 4.1: Factors Influencing Generation Z's Fear of Marriage
(Source: Research Questionnaire Data 2026)

Based on Diagram 4.1, fear of getting the wrong partner is the most dominant factor. This shows that for Generation Z, partner quality is seen as a greater source of concern than economic aspects or the risk of household failure. The Marriage is Scary stigma is thus related not only to life after marriage but also to the partner selection process, which is considered to determine the future of the household.

2. Implications of the Marriage Is Scary Stigma for Marriage Motivation Among Generation Z in Pekanbaru City

The Marriage is Scary stigma developing among Generation Z in Pekanbaru City shows changes in perspective toward the institution of marriage that have real

implications for marriage motivation reflected not only psychologically but also in statistical data showing a decline in the number of marriages.

Based on BPS Riau Province data, the number of marriages in Pekanbaru City declined from 6,163 in 2022 to 5,914 in 2023 and further to 5,587 in 2024 a decline of 576 marriage events over two years. This demonstrates a change in social tendencies, particularly among the young productive age group falling within the Generation Z age range.

The implications of the Marriage is Scary stigma for the marriage motivation of Generation Z in Pekanbaru City are manifested in several forms:

a. Declining Marriage Motivation

Based on interview results, the Marriage is Scary stigma affects Generation Z's motivation in viewing marriage. Some informants revealed that various household problems they observe have caused fear and hesitation about getting married. Fear of household failure, relational trauma, and economic conditions make some Generation Z individuals feel not yet ready to undertake the commitment of marriage.

> "*It reduces my motivation as a Gen Z to get married, because this stigma creates fear of failure, relational trauma, and economic anxiety.*"
>
> "*This stigma validates the fear, to the point of influencing interest in taking a relationship to a more serious level.*"
>
> "*In my opinion, this stigma affects my motivation to get married, because of the many negative stories about marriage. I become more cautious and even feel uninterested in getting married.*"

These statements show that the Marriage is Scary stigma not only affects how Generation Z views marriage, but also reduces their desire to marry. Marriage is seen as a relationship with significant emotional risk and life pressure if not undertaken with mature readiness. The characteristic of Generation Z being more aware of mental health and relationship quality also makes them more cautious in deciding to marry.

b. Tendency to Delay Marriage

Research results show that the Marriage is Scary stigma influences some Generation Z individuals to delay marriage. Informants revealed they choose to postpone marriage because they feel not yet emotionally or mentally ready, nor ready to determine the right life partner. Fear of household failure also makes Generation Z more cautious before entering married life.

> "*In my opinion, this has an effect on the postponement of the marriage process.*"

"*The marriage is scary stigma circulating on social media greatly affects my motivation toward marriage I am postponing it for now because my emotions are not yet under control and I feel I am not yet mature.*"

"*I am postponing marriage for now until I find the right person and improve myself.*"

These statements show that delaying marriage is seen as a form of self-preparation before undertaking the commitment of a household. Generation Z tends not to want to rush into marriage without emotional readiness and a healthy relationship.

c. Focus on Education and Career

Most informants stated that the Marriage is Scary stigma influences how they view marital commitment. Some informants prefer to focus on education and career first before deciding to get married, in order to have better mental and economic readiness.

"*With the marriage is scary stigma, it makes me not too focused on romance and instead more focused on improving myself and arranging my future.*"

"*I prefer a good career over getting married.*"

"*I prioritize education and career more, because it is free and without thinking about the fear of marriage.*"

These statements show that the Marriage is Scary stigma encourages some Generation Z individuals to prioritize personal achievement over marital relationships. A focus on education and career is seen as self-preparation and an effort to achieve stability before getting married. Some informants feel that life without marriage provides a freer space to grow and determine their future.

d. Increased Selectivity in Choosing a Partner

Research results show that the Marriage is Scary stigma makes some Generation Z individuals more selective and cautious in choosing a life partner. Fear of toxic relationships, infidelity, and household failure causes informants to consider their partner's character, attitude, and responsibility more carefully before deciding to get married.

"*This has made me personally raise my standards in looking for a life partner.*"

"*This stigma makes me more selective or careful in choosing a partner.*"

These statements show that the Marriage is Scary stigma does not always lead Generation Z to reject marriage, but actually encourages them to be more careful in determining a life partner. Generation Z tends to pay more attention to relationship quality, their partner's emotional readiness, and the ability to build healthy communication.

f. Fear of Marital Commitment

Research results show that the Marriage is Scary stigma causes some Generation Z individuals to experience fear of marital commitment. This fear arises from worry about experiencing conflict, betrayal, or household failure as witnessed in their surrounding environment and social media, causing some informants to feel doubtful and even lose interest in getting married.

"*I even feel uninterested in getting married because I am worried about facing the same risks.*"

"*Before this stigma existed, I already had a negative view of marriage. With this stigma, I am even more doubtful. I have experienced how difficult life without parents is. Up until now, I am not thinking about getting married.*"

These statements show that the Marriage is Scary stigma can affect Generation Z's interest in marital relationships. Marriage is seen as having many emotional risks, giving rise to fear of long-term commitment.

g. Self-Love and Self-Protection in Relationships

Research results show that the Marriage is Scary stigma also influences how Generation Z views their relationship with themselves. Some informants prefer to maintain their own peace and happiness rather than entering into marriage with the wrong partner as a form of self-protection from toxic relationships, betrayal, or emotional suffering in the household.

"*In my opinion, it greatly affects me, because as a Gen Z I would rather love myself than get married and get the wrong partner.*"

This shows that Generation Z tends to prioritize mental health and emotional comfort in interpersonal relationships. Marriage is no longer seen as a social obligation that must be fulfilled, but as a choice that must provide security and happiness for oneself.

These interview findings are reinforced by questionnaire results distributed to 73 Generation Z individuals in Pekanbaru City: 56.2% stated they prefer to delay marriage, and 65.8% acknowledged that the implications of the marriage is scary stigma make them more selective in choosing a partner and want to prioritize other goals over getting married.

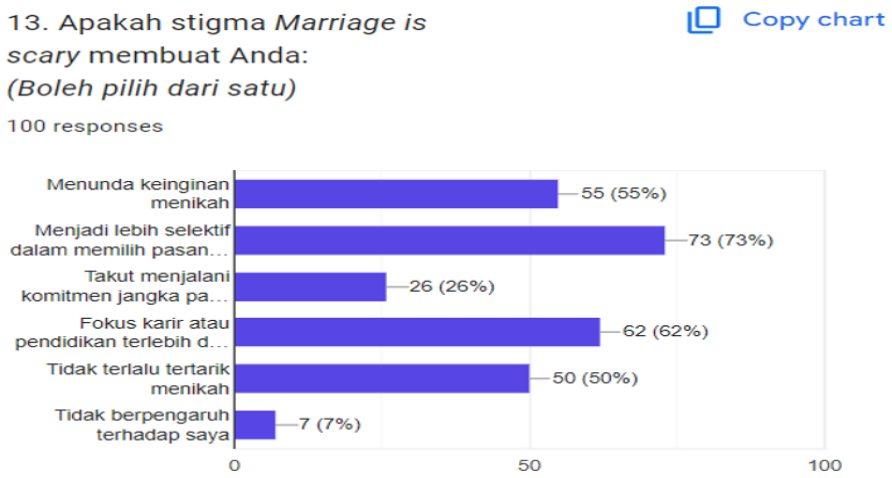


Diagram 4.2: Implications of the Marriage Is Scary Stigma for Marriage Motivation Among Generation Z

(Source: Research Questionnaire Data 2026)

Thus, interview results, questionnaire data, and statistical data all indicate a relationship between the development of the Marriage is Scary stigma and changes in marriage motivation among Generation Z in Pekanbaru City reflected in increased tendencies to delay marriage, fear of household commitment, and changing orientation toward the institution of marriage.

Based on field data analysis, the attitudes of Generation Z in Pekanbaru City toward the Marriage is Scary phenomenon can be classified into three categories:

1) The aware and cautious group: individuals who are aware of the risks in marriage but still desire to marry with thorough preparation, tending to use the phenomenon as material for reflection.
2) The fearful and avoidant group: individuals showing a high level of fear of marriage and tending to delay or avoid marriage, generally influenced by negative experiences from social media or their surrounding environment.
3) The normative-religious group: individuals who continue to view marriage as part of religious teachings that must be practiced, prioritizing religious values in decision-making despite awareness of risks.

3. Islamic Legal Sociology Analysis of the Implications of the Marriage Is Scary Stigma for Marriage Motivation Among Generation Z in Pekanbaru City

Based on the research results, the Marriage is Scary stigma shows changes in how Generation Z views marriage. Various household problems in the social environment and digital media have given rise to fear, doubt, and caution about marital commitment. This not only affects Generation Z's motivation to marry but also influences their mindset and orientation toward married life.

From the perspective of the Sociology of Islamic Law, this phenomenon can be understood as part of social change occurring in modern society. The development of social media, changes in relationship patterns, increasing awareness of mental health, and numerous household conflict cases shape a new social construction regarding marriage among Generation Z. As a result, marriage is no longer viewed solely as a social and religious obligation, but also as a relationship that must consider emotional, mental, and economic readiness.

Nevertheless, Islam fundamentally views marriage as a bond aimed at creating a family that embodies sakinah, mawaddah, and rahmah. Therefore, the Marriage is Scary stigma needs to be understood in a more balanced way so as not to create excessive fear of the institution of marriage. The Sociology of Islamic Law approach is necessary to see how social changes influence Generation Z's perspective on marriage while understanding the position of marriage within Islamic values.

a. Marriage as a Social Institution in Islam

Marriage in Islam is not merely a biological relationship but a social institution that functions to form a harmonious family, preserve lineage, and build social peace. However, some Generation Z individuals in Pekanbaru City have begun to view marriage as a risk-laden relationship due to the prevalence of divorce, infidelity, and domestic violence. Even so, their cautious attitude does not entirely contradict Islam, as long as it does not develop into excessive fear that obscures the positive value of marriage itself.

b. The Marriage Is Scary Stigma as a Social Construction

The Marriage is Scary stigma did not form suddenly but through the accumulation of experience, social interaction, and exposure to negative information about household life spread widely on social media. From the perspective of the Sociology of Islamic Law, this social construction arises from modern society's openness in discussing household problems in the digital public sphere, shifting Generation Z's perception of marriage from a sacred bond to a relationship full of risk and uncertainty.

c. The Influence of Social Media on Generation Z's Worldview

Social media is the dominant factor shaping Generation Z's perceptions of marriage through repeated exposure to content about divorce, infidelity, and toxic relationships, making household conflict appear commonplace. However, on the other hand, social media can also have a positive impact, as some Generation Z individuals actually become more selective in choosing partners, more aware of the importance of mental health, and better prepared emotionally before getting married.

d. Generation Z's Caution in Choosing a Partner from an Islamic Perspective

The Marriage is Scary stigma encourages Generation Z to be more selective in choosing a partner by considering character, communication patterns, and emotional readiness which aligns with Islamic teachings on the importance of choosing a partner of good character in order to realize a family that is sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah. However, an overly cautious attitude also risks generating unrealistic standards and a tendency to delay marriage, so a balance is needed between caution and a proportionate perspective toward married life.

e. The Shift in Generation Z's Marriage Motivation from a Sociology of Islamic Law Perspective

Marriage, which was once considered a life stage to be undertaken promptly, has now shifted to become a choice highly dependent on mental, emotional, and financial readiness, so that some Generation Z individuals prefer to focus on education and self-development first. From the perspective of the Sociology of Islamic Law, this shift reflects a gap between norms (das sollen) and social reality (das sein), where the ideal value of marriage in Islam is gradually displaced by the negative social construction shaped by social change and the development of digital media.

4. Changes in Family Legal Awareness among Generation Z

From the Islamic Legal Sociology perspective, the Marriage Is Scary phenomenon signals a significant transformation in family legal awareness (kesadaran hukum keluarga) among Generation Z. Soerjono Soekanto identifies legal awareness as comprising four elements: knowledge of the law, comprehension of the law, legal attitudes, and legal behavior. In the context of this study, Generation Z in Pekanbaru City demonstrates an evolving legal attitude toward marriage one increasingly shaped not by normative Islamic family law (fiqh munakahat) but by socially constructed fears circulating in digital media. While many informants retain knowledge that marriage is a religious obligation, their legal attitudes and behavioral intentions have been disrupted by the internalization of negative social constructions. This represents a widening gap between das sollen (the normative ideal of Islamic marriage) and das sein (the empirical reality of declining marriage motivation). Lawrence M. Friedman's concept of legal culture is also relevant here: the shift in Generation Z's family legal awareness reflects how external factors particularly digital media shape the legal culture of a community, altering their values, expectations, and dispositions toward a legal institution such as marriage.

5. Transformation of Muslim Family Authority in the Digital Age

The Marriage Is Scary phenomenon also reflects a transformation in the sources of authority that guide Muslim family decision-making. Traditionally, in Indonesian Muslim society, decisions regarding marriage are strongly influenced by family elders, religious scholars (ulama), and community institutions. However, the research findings indicate that Generation Z in Pekanbaru City increasingly constructs their understanding of marriage through social media content displacing the traditional authority of family and religious guidance with the diffuse authority of viral digital narratives. This represents a shift from institutional religious authority toward what may be called digital social authority. In the framework of Islamic Legal Sociology, this is significant: the living law of marriage that is, how marriage norms are actually practiced and perceived in society is being reshaped by algorithmically curated content that amplifies conflict, failure, and fear over the Islamic ideals of sakinah, mawaddah, and rahmah. The implications extend to the weakening of pre-marital religious guidance structures such as those provided by the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) and Islamic boarding schools, whose normative authority is increasingly contested by the informal yet pervasive authority of social media influencers and viral content creators.

6. Digitalization of Norm Formation and Its Implications for Islamic Family Law

Applying Berger and Luckmann's triad of externalization, objectivation, and internalization to this phenomenon reveals how digital platforms function as a powerful engine of norm formation. Fear of marriage initially an individual, subjective experience is externalized through personal storytelling and disclosure on social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and X. These narratives accumulate and undergo objectivation: they are transformed into apparently objective social facts about the nature of marriage ("marriage always ends in betrayal," "men are all the same"), reinforced by engagement metrics, algorithmic amplification, and collective validation. Finally, these objectivated constructions are internalized by Generation Z as taken-for-granted truths that shape their motivations, attitudes, and decisions regarding marriage. From the perspective of Islamic Legal Sociology, this process of digital norm formation represents a challenge to the normative legal culture of Islamic family law. The Compilation of Islamic Law (Kompilasi Hukum Islam/KHI) and classical fiqh traditions articulate marriage as a sacred, positive, and socially obligatory institution; however, the living law experienced by Generation Z in the digital public sphere tells a different story one of risk, suffering, and individual loss. Addressing this gap requires not only revitalization of Islamic family values but also proactive digital literacy education within Muslim

communities, so that Generation Z can critically engage with digital narratives rather than passively internalizing them as social facts about marriage.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results regarding the Social Construction of the Marriage is Scary Stigma on Marriage Motivation of Generation Z in Pekanbaru City: An Islamic Legal Sociology Perspective, the following conclusions can be drawn:

First, Generation Z in Pekanbaru City views the Marriage Is Scary stigma as a representation of fear of married life, considered full of risk, conflict, and uncertainty. This view was formed through the influence of social media, family experiences, social trauma, and digital narratives about divorce, infidelity, domestic violence, and economic instability. As a result, marriage is no longer understood solely as a sacred institution but also as a relationship vulnerable to psychological and social pressure. This finding is reinforced by questionnaire data showing that 86% of respondents fear getting the wrong partner, 81% are concerned about unstable economic conditions, and 69% fear experiencing household failure or infidelity.

Second, the Marriage Is Scary stigma has significant implications for the marriage motivation of Generation Z in Pekanbaru City causing declining motivation to marry, a tendency to delay marriage, greater prioritization of education and career, and increased selectivity in choosing a life partner. A tendency has also emerged to prioritize self-love, independence, and mental and economic readiness before entering into marriage. This is reinforced by BPS Riau Province data showing a decline in marriages in Pekanbaru City from 6,163 in 2022 to 5,914 in 2023 and 5,587 in 2024. Although not all informants view this stigma negatively, some use the household problems they witness as lessons to prepare themselves and build a better household in the future.

Third, from the perspective of the Sociology of Islamic Law, the Marriage Is Scary phenomenon shows changes in social construction influencing how Generation Z views marriage revealing a gap between das sollen and das sein, between the ideal of marriage according to Islamic legal norms and the social reality perceived by Generation Z. Normatively, Islam views marriage as a means of realizing a family that is sakinah, mawaddah, and rahmah, as well as preserving lineage and life's welfare. However, in social reality, some Generation Z individuals view marriage as an institution full of risk and uncertainty. This study finds that the Marriage Is Scary stigma is a form of modern social construction born from the dominance of negative narratives in digital media, so strengthening pre-marital education, digital literacy, and the revitalization of Islamic

family values are needed so that young people have a more balanced understanding of the meaning of marriage.

In terms of theoretical contribution, this study extends Berger and Luckmann's social construction of reality theory into the domain of Islamic family legal awareness in digital Muslim societies. By operationalizing the processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization within the framework of Islamic Legal Sociology, this study offers a novel analytical lens for understanding how digital culture reshapes Muslim communities' motivations toward normative religious institutions such as marriage. This contribution bridges the theoretical gap between constructivist sociology and Islamic legal studies in the Indonesian context.

In terms of practical contribution, the findings of this study have direct implications for several stakeholders. First, the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) and pre-marital guidance programs (bimbingan perkawinan) should integrate digital literacy modules into their curricula, equipping prospective couples to critically evaluate digital narratives about marriage rather than passively internalizing them. Second, Islamic family counselors and religious educators should develop context-sensitive approaches that acknowledge the real fears and concerns of Generation Z while reaffirming the Islamic values of sakinah, mawaddah, and rahmah in an accessible and relatable manner. Third, digital literacy programs within Islamic educational institutions and Muslim community organizations should be strengthened to counter the dominance of negative marriage narratives in the digital public sphere. These practical measures collectively contribute to the sustainability of the Muslim family institution in the face of accelerating digital social change.

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