The Phenomenon Marriage is Scary: Causal Factors and Efforts Faced by Muslim Communities in Indonesia

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Abstract

This research focuses on the phenomenon marriage is scary that has become a phenomenon in Indonesia. Indonesian statistics show that the marriage rate is decreasing, and the divorce rate is increasing every year. It was found that as many as 397 Muslims in Indonesia experienced marriage is scar. This may be one of the causes of the declining marriage rate every year. This study aims to determine and analyze the causes of marriage is scary and explore the efforts made in the internal and external environment. This study is a qualitative research, primary data comes from respondents who experience marriage is scary, parents, traditional leaders and religious leaders, totaling 20 people. The findings of this study indicate that first, the causes of marriage is scary in Indonesian Muslim communities are economic factors (31.99%), customs and culture (15.62%), social media (6.8%), domestic violence (15.60%), social media (6.85) and other reasons (11.44%); Second, the efforts made to minimize the occurrence of marriage is scary in Indonesia are approaches and open communication with families, providing religious strengthening and understanding of marriage and strengthening local wisdom.

Keywords: Marriage is Scary; Local Wisdom; Marriage Anxiety; Phenomenon.

Introduction

Islam itself has regulated the concept of marriage by emphasizing the balance of rights and obligations of husband and wife and guaranteeing blessings in the household.[1] However, in practice, the fear of marriage is also influenced by a lack of understanding of the values of togetherness and cooperation in the household, including the concept of mubadalah or mutuality. This fear is not only experienced by women but also men, who face certain social stigmas regarding their role in marriage.[2] Therefore, a deeper understanding of emotional readiness and commitment in marriage is needed so that the phenomenon marriage is scary does not become more widespread and affect social stability.

The phenomenon marriage is scary increasingly prevalent on social media such as X (Twitter), TikTok, and Instagram.[3] It reflects both men's and women's fear of marriage not living up to expectations.[4] These concerns cover a range of factors, from economic demands such as high dowries and complex marriage customs to cases of infidelity[5] and domestic violenc.[6] Rapid social change, coupled with exposure to negative experiences of marriage in digital media, reinforces the perception that marriage is scary and risky.[7]

The increasing fear of marriage is also reflected in data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), which shows a decline in the number of marriages from 1,742,049 in 2021 to 1,577,255 in 2023, while the divorce rate remains high, with a peak in 2022 reaching 516,344 cases.[8] This trend indicates that more and more

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[1] Siti Khoiratul Ula, *"Qiwama dalam Rumah Tangga Perspektif Teori Mubadalah dan Relevansinya di Indonesia*, 2021, 7.

[2] Nurrohman Syarif, "Bagaimana Teori Mubadalah Diterapkan Dalam Keluarga?" Video (Pascasarjana UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2020), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vugJo4EQc3A.

[3] Kompas Cyber Media, "Tren Marriage Is Scary Ramai di Medsos, Apa Itu?" KOMPAS.com, 14 Agustus 2024, https://lifestyle.kompas.com/read/2024/08/14/103739020/tren-marriage-is-scary-ramai-di-medsos-apa-itu.

[4] V.C. Onyencho, "Intimate Partner Violence as Predictor of Mental Well-Being among Married Individuals," *Psychological Thought* 17, no. 2 (2024): 412–30, https://doi.org/10.37708/psyct.v17i2.914.

[5] Fadil Fadil, Zidna Mazidah, and Zaenul Mahmudi, "Fulfillment of Women's Rights After Divorce: Dynamics and Transformation in the Legal Journey," *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syar'iah* 16, no. 1 (June 10, 2024): 1–20, https://doi.org/10.18860/j-fsh.v16i1.25713.

[6] Ahmad Lonthor and La Jamaa, "Moluccas Local Wisdom in the Role of Marriage Arbitrator for Preventing Domestic Violence," *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 15, no. 2 (December 29, 2020): 201–23, https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v15i2.3677.

[7] Khamdan Safiudin, "Gender Problems in Indonesia: The Phenomenon of Gamophobia in a Permissive Society," *An-Nisa Journal of Gender Studies* 17, no. 1 (July 19, 2024): 56–65, https://doi.org/10.35719/annisa.v17i1.245.

[8] Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, "Jumlah Angka Perkawinan Di Indonesia," 2023, https://www.bps.go.id/id/statistics-

individuals are reconsidering their readiness for marriage,[9] while also reflecting uncertainty about the sustainability of marital relationships. In addition, high social expectations, changing identities within marriage, and pressure to maintain idealized relationships are factors that reinforce anxiety about the institution of marriage.[10]

The study of fear of marriage has been discussed in several previous studies that can be categorized into four main aspects. First, Pebyamoriski[11] and Asman's[12] research on anxiety in choosing a life partner is influenced by individual uncertainty and high divorce rates,[13] although the level of anxiety varies based on demographic factors. Second, Inhorn,[14] Musahwi,[15] Estes,[16] and Yazawa's[17] research discusses the phenomenon of waithood among millennial women related to concerns about economic dependence, patriarchal culture, as well as factors such as access to information, economic pressure, the burden of the Sandwich generation, and rampant cases of gender violence. Third, research by Neal and

table/3/VkhwVUszTXJPVmQ2ZFRKamNIZG9RMVo2VEdsbVVUMDkjMw==/nikah-dan-cerai-menurut-provinsi--2020.html?year=2023.

[9] Hamda Sulfinadia, *Meningkatkan Kesadaran Hukum Masyarakat Studi Atas Pelanggaran Peraturan Perundang-Undangan Tentang Perkawinan* (Deepublish, 2020), https://scholar.google.com/scholar?cluster=5370992871838842336&hl=en&oi=scholarr.

[10] Ahmad Fauzi, "Metode Hipnoterapi Dalam Menangani Penderita Gangguan Fobia Di Lembaga Anhar Foundation Kota Makassar," *Skripsi Prodi Bimbingan Dan Penyuluhan Islam Universitas Negri Alauddin Makasar, Makasar 2018*, 2018, https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/287062165.pdf.

[11] N Pebyamoriski, M Minarni, and ..., "Perbedaan Kecemasan Memilih Pasangan Hidup Pada Dewasa Awal Berdasarkan Demografi," *Jurnal Psikologi*, no. Query date: 2024-10-26 12:21:59 (2022), https://ejournal.gunadarma.ac.id/index.php/psiko/article/view/6036.

[12] Asman, "Social Dynamics on the Increasing Divorce of Malay Communities during COVID-19 in Sambas West Kalimantan, Indonesia Perspective of Islamic Family Law," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 17, no. 2 (2023): 153–66, https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v17i2.8235.

[13] Ahmad Rusyaid Idris, Muhammad Khusaini, and Syaiful Anwar Al-Mansyuri, "Contemporary Islamic Law in Indonesia: The Fulfillment of Child Custody Rights in Divorce Cases Caused by Early Marriage," *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 3, no. 1 (April 4, 2024): 1–21, https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v3i1.8907.

[14] M.C. Inhorn, *Waithood: Gender, Education, and Global Delays in Marriage and Childbearing*, *Waithood: Gender, Education, and Global Delays in Marriage and Childbearing*, Query date: 2024-10-26 13:25:43, 2020, https://doi.org/10.3167/9781789208993.

[15] M Musahwi, MZ Anika, and P Pitriyani, "FENOMENA RESESI SEKS DI INDONESIA (Studi Gender Tren 'Waithood'Pada Perempuan Milenial)," *Equalita: Jurnal Studi Gender …*, no. Query date: 2024-10-26 12:21:59 (2022), https://www.syekhnurjati.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/equalita/article/view/12905.

[16] J. Estes, "A High Price to Pay: Weddings and Waithood in Cambodia," *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 24, no. 1 (2023): 1–17, https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2022.2132356.

[17] A. Yazawa, "Early Childhood Adversity and Late-Life Depressive Symptoms: Unpacking Mediation and Interaction by Adult Socioeconomic Status," *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 57, no. 6 (2022): 1147–56, https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-022-02241-x.

Zuhriah,[18] joshi,[19] and friedman[20] discusses the phenomenon of childfree[21] as a response to the high risk of postpartum, which also has an impact on the decline in birth rates and changes in family structure due to global social and economic factors. Fourth, Zueras[22] research addresses the health impacts of delaying marriage, where unmarried individuals tend to have a higher mortality risk than those who are partnered, with effects varying by age, gender and region.

The novelty of this research lies in its holistic approach in examining the phenomenon marriage is scary among Indonesian Muslims by considering various social, cultural, economic and religious factors that influence the fear of marriage. In contrast to previous studies that have highlighted specific aspects such as the anxiety of choosing a partner based on demographics, the influence of immaturity in divorce, the phenomenon of millennial women's waithood in the context of economic equality and patriarchal culture, and the issue of childfree related to the risk of childbirth and changes in family structure, this study integrates these various dimensions in one comprehensive study. In addition, with the scope of the research area covering four major islands in Indonesia such as; Sumatra, Java, Sulawesi (Makassar), and Kalimantan. This research presents a broader and more diverse perspective, so that it is able to describe the dynamics of fear of marriage in more depth than previous studies which tend to be limited to certain regions or aspects.

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[18] Z.P. Neal, "A Framework for Studying Adults Who Neither Have Nor Want Children," *Family Journal* 32, no. 1 (2024): 121–30, https://doi.org/10.1177/10664807231198869; I. Syafi'i, "Childfree in Islamic Law Perspective of Nahdlatul Ulama," *Al-Ahkam* 33, no. 1 (2023): 1–22, https://doi.org/10.21580/ahkam.2023.33.1.14576; E. Zuhriah, "Childfree, the Digital Era, and Islamic Law: Views of Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Gender Activists in Malang, Indonesia," *Samarah* 7, no. 3 (2023): 1606–26, https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v7i3.17753.

[19] M. Joshi, *Children Are Everywhere: Conspicuous Reproduction and Childlessness in Reunified Berlin*, *Children Are Everywhere: Conspicuous Reproduction and Childlessness in Reunified Berlin*, Query date: 2024-10-26 13:25:43, 2023, https://doi.org/10.3167/9781805391661.

[20] S.L. Friedman, "DIVERSIFYING CHINESE FAMILIES AND FAMILY DESIRES IN THE 21st CENTURY," *Anthropology of Ascendant China: Histories, Attainments, and Tribulations*, no. Query date: 2024-10-26 14:48:17 (2024): 229–47, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003358947-16.

[21] Siti Nurjanah and Iffatin Nur, "Childfree: Between the Sacredness of Religion, Law and the Reality of Society," *Al-'Adalah* 19, no. 1 (2022): 1–28; Ahmad Rezy Meidina and Mega Puspita, "Childfree Practices in Indonesia (Study on the Response of Islamic Community Organizations in Kebumen Distric)," *Hayula: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies* 7, no. 1 (2023): 17–32.

[22] P. Zueras, "Marital Status, Living Arrangements, and Mortality in Middle and Older Age in Europe," *International Journal of Public Health* 65, no. 5 (2020): 627–36, https://doi.org/10.1007/s00038-020-01371-w.

This research method uses a qualitative approach[23] with locations in four strategic regions in Indonesia, namely Sumatra Island, Java Island, Sulawesi Island (Makassar), and Kalimantan Island. The selection of locations was based on the cultural diversity and unique marriage traditions in each region, reflecting variations in norms, values and socio-economic conditions. Sumatra Island features traditions such as bajapuik in West Sumatra[24] and the high sinamot in Batak customs in North Sumatra,[25] which influence marriage decisions. Java is known for marriage rituals that emphasize symbolic values and kinship,[26] while in Sulawesi, especially Makassar, the tradition of panaik money is an important factor in marriage.[27] In Kalimantan, the Dayak tribe applies a negotiation-based dowry system with strong cultural elements.[28] Taking these variations into account, the study aims to explore the factors that influence fear of marriage in Indonesian Muslim communities and examine strategies to overcome them. Data were collected through a combination of in-depth interviews, observations, questionnaires, social media analysis and documentation. Primary data sources included interviews with individuals who experience marriage is scary, parents, and traditional leaders, as well as direct observation of cultural norms at weddings

[23] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Pendekatan Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, Mixed, (Penerjemah Achmad Fawaid, Judul Asli Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (California: Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, 2009).

[24] W. Nuroniyah, "Muslim Women Adhering to Minangkabau's Bajapuik Tradition in Cirebon, West Java: Compromizing a Gendered Culture in Islamic Law," *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan* 22, no. 2 (2022): 135–53, https://doi.org/10.18326/ijtihad.v22i2.135-153.

[25] S.D.N. Solin, "Batak Customary Marriage: A Study of the Prohibition of Same-Clan Marriage and Its Relevance in the Contemporary Era," *El-Usrah* 7, no. 1 (2024): 62–81, https://doi.org/10.22373/ujhk.v7i1.23309; A.M. Aji, "Weakening Tradition: The Shifting in Same-Clan Marriage Prohibition in Mandailing Batak," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 21, no. 2 (2021): 379–94, https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v21i2.23729.

[26] N. Wakhidah, "The Legal Culture of Samin Community of Family Law in Central Java," *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pranata Sosial* 19, no. 2 (2024): 126–50, https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v19i1.10341; K. Hidayah, "The Kembar Manten in Java Majapahit Wedding Traditions in Mojokerto: Perspectives on Natural Law and Anthropology of Islamic Law," *Samarah* 8, no. 2 (2024): 770–90, https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v8i2.19611; I.K. Ardhana, "Adat Law, Ethics, and Human Rights in Modern Indonesia," *Religions* 14, no. 4 (2023), https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14040443.

[27] Heny Almaida, "Tingginya Uang Panai Bugis Sidrap: Mengangkat Derajat Perempuan Atau Membebani Laki-Laki Untuk Menikah?" *AL-MANHAJ: Jurnal Hukum dan Pranata Sosial Islam* 5, no. 2 (2023): 1155–68.

[28] J. Tarantang, "Unification of Law in the Marriage and Divorce Processes of the Dayak Ngaju Muslim Communities in Central Kalimantan," *Mazahib Jurnal Pemikiran Hukum Islam* 23, no. 2 (2024): 529–54, https://doi.org/10.21093/mj.v23i2.6940; S. Sukti, "The Manyanggar Tradition and Harmony of the Bakumpai Dayak Community in Central Kalimantan," *El-Mashlahah* 12, no. 1 (2022): 1–13, https://doi.org/10.23971/elma.v12i1.3663; S. Sukti, "Pernikahan Adat Dayak Ngaju Perspektif Hukum Islam (Studi Di Kabupaten Gunung Mas Kalimantan Tengah)," *El-Mashlahah* 10, no. 2 (2020): 65–75, https://doi.org/10.23971/maslahah.v10i2.2284.

or community events. Secondary data included academic literature, official statistics from BPS and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as well as news articles and social media trends. Data validation was conducted through triangulation, increased diligence, use of additional references, and member checking. Data analysis was conducted using qualitative methods, involving data grouping based on specific categories, coding, and in-depth interpretation. This research uses theories of gender, social construction, and family psychology to understand the social pressures, societal norms, and family dynamics that influence the phenomenon marriage is scary. With this approach, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding and effective solutions to the challenges of marriage in Indonesian Muslim society.

The urgency of this research lies in the increasing fear of marriage among Indonesian Muslims, which may result in a decrease in marriage rates and an increase in divorce rates. By analyzing the factors causing this fear in different regions with different norms and cultures, this research can provide a deeper understanding and offer strategic recommendations for society and policy makers in improving marriage readiness and reducing excessive anxiety.

Discussion

Factors Causing Fear and Anxiety Related to Marriage (Marriage is Scary) among Muslim Communities in Indonesia

Marriage is scary comes from the English word meaning marriage is scary. The term Marriage is scary has emerged and gained widespread attention on social media in recent years.[29] Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and Twitter serve as a platform for people to share their experiences, stories, and thoughts on the fear of marriage.[30] Marriage is scary refers to the various fears and concerns that individuals or couples often experience when considering or undergoing marriage.[31] While marriage is often seen as a positive step, there are many factors that make it feel daunting. One of them is the change in identity, entering marriage often requires one to adapt to a new role, which can create a fear of losing

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[29] Fina Al Mafaz, Abbas Arfan, and Fakhruddin Fakhruddin, "Marriage Is Scary Trend in the Perspective of Islamic Law and Positive Law," *Studi Multidisipliner: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman* 11, no. 2 (2024): 329–44.

[30] Liputan6.com, "Viral Tren 'Marriage is Scary' di Media Sosial, Apa Artinya?," liputan6.com, August 14, 2024, https://www.liputan6.com/regional/read/5672842/viral-tren-marriage-is-scary-di-media-sosial-apa-artinya.

[31] Safiudin, "Gender Problems in Indonesia."

oneself.[32] In addition, high expectations built up from media and other people's experiences often don't match reality, which can lead to disappointment.[33]

This study used a google form that was distributed through social media in Indonesia. There were 466 people who filled out the google form, and it was found that 397 people experienced marriage is scary. The following is the distribution of the data:

Table 1. Marriage is Scary Cases by Research Location

No	Indonesia Region	Total
1.	Sumatera	105
2.	Jawa	112
3.	Kalimantan	98
4.	Sulawesi	82
	Total Quantity	397

Source: G-Form Questionnaire 2024

The causes of marriage is scary based on the research conducted can be classified into 7 groups below: *First*, the economy. Economy is the main factor that causes someone marriage is scary or reluctant to get married, which reached 31.99% or 127 people. An unestablished economy makes many people worried about getting married. Insecurity and fear continue to haunt them, which in turn makes them reluctant to get married. This right is expressed by Sg below:

"I am 36 years old, I don't have a steady income that can guarantee my life if I settle down later. Starting a household, in my opinion, must be done with proper economic preparation. Especially in an age where everything is expensive, we need adequate economic capital. Finding a job that suits our desires is also difficult. For the time being I haven't thought about getting married, the important thing is that I can support myself and no longer depend on my parents."[34]

The same thing was also uploaded by My that she experienced fear of getting married due to an unestablished economy. Although she is a woman, she has the principle that she must first be economically established before she is ready to get married.[35] The income earned can not only fulfill basic needs, but also buy branded goods in order to be accepted in a community. Furthermore, according to her, economic issues are very vulnerable in the family, which often

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[32] Andi Irma Ariani, "Dampak Perceraian Orang Tua Dalam Kehidupan Sosial Anak," *Phinisi Integration Review* 2, no. 2 (2019): 257–70.

[33] Najwa Fathiyati Shafa et al., "PENGARUH MEDIA SOSIAL TERHADAP PERSEPSI MARRIAGE IS SCARY DI KALANGAN GEN Z," *Liberosis: Jurnal Psikologi Dan Bimbingan Konseling* 10, no. 5 (2025): 1–10.

[34] Sg, Interview in Jawa Timur 23 December 2024.

[35] My, Interview in Jakarta 22 December 2024.

leads to divorce.[36] Moving on from the interview excerpt above, it can be understood that the economy is one of the most common factors that cause marriage is scary. Economic stability and fixed income are the choices for those who experience marriage is scary. This causes them not to think about marriage.

Secondly, customs and culture. Local customs and culture turn out to be one of the reasons many people experience marriage is scary. Data was found that 15.62% or 62 people were reluctant and afraid to get married due to customs and culture. For example, one nagari in West Sumatra requires holding walimah al-ursy (baralek). Walimah al-ursy cannot be in a simple way but must undergo traditional rituals. Because of the many traditional rituals that must be carried out and require a lot of money, causing girls to be reluctant and afraid to get married. As information obtained from Si below:

"I am 36 years old, I am still reluctant to get married. The customs in this area are very strict; you must have a baralek, provide money for the ninik mamak, sasuduik money and go through all the traditional rituals that cost tens of millions. My parents couldn't afford it. If we don't have a baralek, we are ignorant of custom, ostracized and the talk of the village. This causes the extended family to be embarrassed."[37]

Similarly, Yn said that she was afraid to get married because of the many traditional rituals that had to be done. According to her, the customs and culture that must be carried out, coupled with the customary money that must be paid very much makes Yn not ready to get married.[38]

Third, infidelity and the issue of infidelity. Infidelity and the issue of infidelity as a cause of marriage is scary reached 16.27% or 65 people. Infidelity and the issue of infidelity whether committed by a husband or wife cause many people to be afraid to get married. This is as conveyed by Ns that she is afraid of getting married because of the many couples who have affairs or the issues of infidelity that develop in various social media such as in-laws as death. So that his worries and even afraid to get married.[39] The same thing was also conveyed by Ak, that there are issues of infidelity committed by many people such as the experience of the separation of his father and mother, his father remarried his office friend. The incident caused mental injury and trauma, which made her afraid to get married. Infidelity is not only committed by celebrities, artists, officials and even ordinary people.[40]

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[36] Isnawati Rais, "Tingginya Angka Cerai Gugat (Khulu') Di Indonesia: Analisis Kritis Terhadap Penyebab Dan Alternatif Solusi Mengatasinya," *Al-'Adalah* 11, no. 1 (2017): 191–204.

[37] Si, Interview in Sumatera Barat on January 01, 2025.

[38] Yn, Interview in Mandailing Natal on December 26, 2024.

[39] Ns, Interview in Jakarta on January 05, 2025.

[40] Ak, Interview in Jakarta on January 05, 2025.

Fourth, domestic violence as a cause of marriage is scary reached 15.60% or 54 people. Domestic violence as a cause of marriage is scary is experienced by victims of domestic violence, including people who get information about domestic violence. As stated by RT below:

"I am 27 years old, and I am afraid to get married. My mom and dad divorced because of domestic violence. I watched my parents fight; I was scared and didn't want to get married. I can't imagine if I will also experience domestic violence like my mom did. I am comfortable living alone like this, comfortable with my solitude and activities."[41]

The same thing was also conveyed by Nd, who was divorced because domestic violence caused her to be afraid to remarry. Violence that hurts physically and verbal violence makes her worried and afraid to get married. Every time she is in a relationship with another person, the domestic violence incident appears and haunts her. Fear, discomfort and difficulty trusting other people, will do the same thing as her ex-husband, so she finds it difficult to establish relationships. The domestic violence she experienced traumatized her to get married.[42]

Fifth, social media. The cause of the phenomenon marriage is scary also caused by social media, both the existence of social media and the information it conveys, reaching 6.8% or 25 people. The role of social media that can be utilized for various purposes causes some people to be reluctant and even unwilling to get married, marriage is a burden, troublesome and adds to life's problems. This was conveyed by Hb below*:*

"Getting married for me was a scary thing, various information on various social media made me even more afraid to get married, so I concluded that there was no need to get married because it added to the burden of life. Moreover, having many children, even the husband has many desires, is troublesome. The existence of social media for me can find friends who can be used as life friends. He can be used as a confidant who is always there when I need him without having to bother being bound by marital ties. So, I don't need a life partner."[43]

Almost the same thing was also conveyed by Ik that the information or news conveyed on social media about cases of household failure made him afraid to get married. Every day there is news about celebrities or public figures getting divorced. There is a fear that the same case will also be experienced if he later

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[41] RT, Interview via telepon on January 4, 2025.
[42] ND Interview Via telepon on January 4, 2025.
[43] Hb, Interview via telepon on January 5, 2025.

marries. According to her, the information in the mass media influenced her to experience fear of marriage.[44]

Sixth, high dowry and gift money (4.28%) or 17 people. High dowry and gift money is one of the causes of marriage is scary, which reached 2.28% or 17 people. The high dowry and gift money are also influenced by the level of education of the prospective bride and groom and the social strata of the family. As the following information was conveyed by Mr:

"The dowry in my hometown is very high and is calculated in gold, especially if the bride-to-be has a university education or the family has a high social stratum as well. At the age of 40 I am not yet able to get married. I am worried that I will not be able to afford a dowry, let alone support my family later, which is why I am afraid to get married."[45]

The Bugis custom from Makasar has a unique culture, including panai money. Uang panai is a sum of money that must be handed over by the prospective bridegroom to the bride's family which will be used as a reception fee. Uang panai is different from dowry. Uang panai is a gift for a wedding reception given by the man who proposed to her, while the dowry is a gift from a man to a woman he marries. This is as stated by Dh that the amount of panai money is determined based on the agreement of the family members of the prospective bridegroom and the prospective bride. Uang panai is different from the dowry. Uang panai is money given for the wedding ceremony at the bride's house, while the dowry is a gift from a man to a bride who has legally become his wife. However, panai money is also influenced by the social status of the male and female parties, including education, social strata, wealth and fame.[46] A further interview with AZ stated that there is a sense of shame if a woman receives little panai money:

"For example, if there is little money, it is the woman and her family who are ashamed, that is what is happening now. (Suppose the pan money is small, it is the woman and her family who bear the shame)."[47]

The phenomenon of youth reluctance to marry is influenced by the amount of panai money that must be paid by the male party. If the panai money given is too small, the woman's family feels embarrassed, while if it is too large, the man feels burdened. This creates anxiety among the youth, which ultimately makes marriage seem scary and is the main reason they delay or even avoid marriage.

Seventh, Other reasons (Past or trauma, morals and background, and not being able to have offspring). The past that causes a person to be traumatized, the

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[44] Ik, Interview via telepon on Januari 5, 2025.
[45] TN, Interview di Aceh on Desember 14, 2024.
[46] Dh, Interview via telepon on Januari 13, 2025.
[47] Az, Interview via telepon on Januari 13, 2025.

bad character of the prospective partner and the verdict of not being able to have offspring become causes of marriage is scary, the data found is (11.84%) as many as 47 people. As the information conveyed by Ni below:

"I am 45 years old, I am afraid to get married because the doctor has told me that I cannot have children because I have cervical cancer which caused part of my uterus to be removed. I was afraid that if I got married, my partner would be disappointed that I couldn't give birth, and that it would lead to divorce. That fear has haunted me about getting married until now."[48]

Similar information was also conveyed by Ms. Nn that she was once disappointed with her candidate who turned out to belong to the LGBT group. This resulted in trauma and fear of marriage, even though Kr is 42 years old. Living alone became Ms. Nn's life choice.[49] Based on interviews with a number of respondents, the conclusion of the findings can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Classification of Causes of the Phenomenon Marriage is Scary

No	Causes	Percentage (%)	Number of People	Explanation
1	Economy	31,99%	127	Fears related to the unstable economy, concerns about the cost of living, and the risk of divorce due to financial pressures.
2	Customs and Culture	15,62%	62	Customary burdens such as the high cost of marriage rituals, the social stigma of not practicing customs, and family pressure.
3	Infidelity and Infidelity Issues	16,27%	65	Fear of potential infidelity based on personal experience, family experience, or information from social media.
4	Domestic Violence	15,60%	54	Direct or indirect experience of domestic violence that causes trauma and fear of entering a household.
5	Social Media	6,80%	25	Negative information about marriage on social media that influences perceptions of marriage as a burden or scary.

[48] Ni, Interview di Padang on 11 Januari 2025.
[49] Nn, Interview di Jakarta on 4 Januari 2025.

| 6 | High dowry and gift money | 4,28% | 17 | The high cost of dowry or traditional money such as uang panai is influenced by social status, education, and local traditions. |
| 7 | Other Reasons (Past, Trauma, Morals, etc.) | 11,84% | 47 | Other factors include past trauma, the morals of the partner, a verdict of not being able to have children, or a bad experience with a previous partner. |

Source: Results of Researcher Interviews in 2025

The table above shows that economic factors are the main cause of the phenomenon marriage is scary, with 31.99% of respondents citing an unstable economy as the main reason for their reluctance to get married. Other significant factors are infidelity and issues of infidelity (16.27%), and burdensome customs and culture (15.62%). Domestic violence (DV) also accounted for a significant number, at 15.60%, indicating trauma or fear of similar experiences. Social media as a source of negative information about marriage also influenced people's views at 6.80%, while the high dowry or gift money accounted for 4.28%. Other reasons, such as past trauma, the morals of potential partners, and the inability to have offspring, accounted for 11.84%. This data indicates that various psychological, social and cultural factors influence individuals' fear of marriage, with economic issues and personal trauma dominating.

Efforts to Minimize the Phenomenon Marriage is Scary among Indonesian Muslims

The marriage is scary phenomenon among Indonesian Muslims may be influenced by various psychological, social and cultural factors. To minimize this phenomenon, there are several efforts that can be made: First, approach and open communication with the family.[50] Approach and communication with the family, especially the parents, towards children who have entered the age of marriage is needed.[51] At the age of marriage, children will be faced with various problems, issues of future work or career, candidate selection, health problems and many other issues. This will be exacerbated by news and information from the mass

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[50] Hamda Sulfinadia and Jurna Petri Roszi, "Moderation of Madhhabs in West Sumatra Towards Hadhanah of Minors Whose Mothers Remarry," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 7, no. 2 (December 31, 2024): 789–815, https://doi.org/10.22373/ujhk.v7i2.23941.

[51] Redwan Yasin et al., "GUARDIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN MARRIAGE: A STUDY ACCORDING TO ISLAMIC LAW," *Malaysian Journal of Syariah and Law* 12, no. 3 (December 31, 2024): 778–89, https://doi.org/10.33102/mjsl.vol12no3.765.

media, providing information about cases of infidelity, divorce, the severity of household affairs, all of which will result in marriage is scary. It takes the touch and advice of parents so that both boys and girls are ready for marriage. This is in line with the following interview excerpt:

"Parents have a very important role for their children, both men and women will be ready to get married when they are of an established age. The phenomenon of fear of marriage is caused by the child losing a figure or role model that he can emulate. Parents need attention to provide advice, direction and various explanations that can make their children not afraid or reluctant to get married."[52]

Ad and Ek also stated that a parental or close family approach is needed when children experience fear or reluctance to get married. In addition, parents must be an example for children, that being married is fun, so that fear of marriage can be minimized, especially mothers. Mother for a child becomes a role model, for that mother must be able to give advice, provide direction and even be able to open communication that marriage is part of the teachings of Islamic law that must be carried out.[53]

Second, religious strengthening and understanding of marriage. In order to minimize the occurrence of marriage is scary, it is necessary to provide knowledge and understanding about marriage to children. This is not only done in formal educational institutions, but can be done through youth groups, tausyiah, lectures and sermons. This is in line with the information conveyed by Nurrudin (a religious figure) that marriage is not only to obtain offspring, but marriage builds a household with the division of their respective duties in realizing sakinah, mawahdah and rahmah.[54] This is important to give to young people who are old enough to get married, so that fear and reluctance to get married can be minimized. This can also be done for post-traumatic therapy and healing.[55]

The same thing was also conveyed by Abrian (academician) and Al that religious strengthening, including an understanding of marriage, is a very urgent thing to do in order to anticipate the occurrence of marriage is scary. The strengthening of religion means that children are equipped with faith. Children can sort and choose the actions they will take, by considering the mudharat and maslahah.[56] The above statement can be understood that strengthening religion and providing knowledge and understanding about marriage is one of the efforts that can be made to minimize the occurrence of marriage is scary.

Third, strengthening local wisdom. Local wisdom is a wealth of local culture that contains life policies; a view of life that accommodates life policies and wisdom. In Indonesia, local wisdom does not only apply locally to certain

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[52] St, Interview via Phone on Januari 04, 2024.

[53] Ad dan Ek, Interview di Padang on Januari 11, 2025.

[54] Ahmad Fauzan and Hadi Amroni, "The Concept of Sakinah Family in The Contemporary Muslim Generation," *Al-'Adalah* 17, no. 1 (2020): 51–70.

[55] Mp, Interview in Padang on Januari 11, 2025.

[56] Abrian dan Al, Interview via phone on Januari 11, 2025.

cultures or ethnicities but can also be cross-cultural or cross-ethnic so that it can form national cultural values. For example, in almost every local culture in the archipelago, there is local wisdom that teaches cooperation, tolerance, work ethic, and so on. In general, the ethics and moral values contained in local wisdom are taught from generation to generation, passed down from generation to generation through oral literature. This is also the case with local wisdom that does not allow its girls to become old maids and live alone without a companion. As stated by M. Marajo (traditional leader) below:

"*In the wak ko area there is a customary rule that does not allow gadih gadang to not be balaki, if there is no high cost of harato pusako, it can even be mortgaged. It is up to the children to find a suitable partner who can be supported by their parents. If they can't find one, they look to their elders or parents.*"[57]

This area has customary rules that do not allow girls to be unmarried, if there is no money for marriage the high heirloom property can be mortgaged. All that remains is for the girl to find a man who is suitable for her and her family. If she cannot find a partner, then her parents will find a match for her. Local wisdom can be seen as the identity of the nation, especially in the context of Indonesia which allows local wisdom to transform cross-culturally which ultimately gives birth to national cultural values. Local wisdom in Indonesia is a philosophy and outlook on life that manifests in various fields of life, including social and economic values, architecture, health, environmental planning, and so on.[58]

Based on the description above, the phenomenon marriage is scary among Indonesian Muslims can be influenced by various psychological, social and cultural factors, but there are several efforts to minimize it. First, an open approach and communication between parents and children who have entered the age of marriage is needed. Parents play an important role in providing advice, direction, and being a good example of marriage in accordance with Islamic teachings. Second, strengthening religious beliefs and understanding about marriage can help reduce the fear of marriage, through formal education, wirid, lectures and tausyiah. Third, strengthening local wisdom that teaches values such as gotong royong and the importance of marriage in community life can help create an understanding that marriage is part of a positive tradition. With this holistic approach, the fear of marriage can be minimized, and the younger generation can be better prepared for family life.

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[57] M. Marajo (tokoh adat), Interview di Padang on January 11, 2025.

[58] Mega Puspita and Khairul Umami, "Interlegality of Marriage Law: Tracing the Dynamics of Sumbong Marriages Practices in Jambi," *YUDISIA: Jurnal Pemikiran Hukum Dan Hukum Islam* 15, no. 1 (2024): 90–110.

The Role of Family and Social Interaction in Building Perceptions and Overcoming the Phenomenon Marriage is Scary

Families play an important role in mental development and growth. Interaction in the family reflects the dominant culture as a reference in a relationship. The reflection of cultural tendencies occurs through intergenerational cultural inheritance including the transmigration of values, attitudes, roles and others, especially parents and children.[59] Family interaction is conceptualized as a network in which there is a family communication model that seeks communication and frequency between fellow family members, not only parents and children but also includes those in it such as close relatives.[60] Interaction based on openness in communication in the role of parental authority in interaction is considered to play an important role in maintaining family harmony,[61] especially in marriage is scary in children.

The need for equality between spouses and personalities is one of the important things in achieving satisfaction and success of a marriage. Gender,[62] which is always echoed, in Islamic studies is explained in the Qur'an letter al-Hujurat verse 13 that humans are born equal and as social beings, men and women have the same rights. It's just that what distinguishes the role is according to the nature that each has.[63] The Qur'an illustrates the permissibility of women differing opinions in discussions with men including their husbands or fathers. This is immortalized in the Qur'an, namely the event of a woman's discussion with the Prophet Muhammad, at which time the Prophet seemed to still want to impose customs that reduced women's rights.[64] But in that verse Allah justified the opinion of women. In addition, history has also recorded how a woman's intelligence so that she refuted the views of Umar bin Khattab regarding the right

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[59] Sri Lestari, *Psikologi Keluarga: Penanaman Nilai Dan Penanaman Konflik Dalam Keluarga* (Prenada Media, 2016), 206.

[60] Zezen Zainul Ali and Mega Puspita, *Pembaharuan Hukum Keluarga Di Asia Tenggara: Dari Negara Mayoritas Sampai Minoritas Muslim*, Cetakan pertama (Banguntapan, Bantul, Yogyakarta: Jejak Pustaka, 2023), 100.

[61] Hamda Sulfinadia, Deri Yanti, and Jurna Petri Roszi, "Keutuhan Rumah Tangga Suami di penjara (Studi Kasus di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Kelas II A Bukittinggi)," *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 6, no. 2 November (November 11, 2021): 271–94, https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v6i2.3372.

[62] Deri Rizal et al., "Reinterpreting Religious Texts on Gender Equality: The Perspective of Ahmad Syafii Maarif," *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 23, no. 2 (November 20, 2024): 327–36, https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v23i2.10233.

[63] Baharuddin Lopa, *Al-Qur'an Dan Hak-Hak Asasi Manusia* (Yogyakarta: Dana Bhakti Prima Yasa, 1996), 66.

[64] M. Quraish Shihab, *Ensiklopedia Al-Qur'an A-J* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2007), 7.

to obtain a masawin without restrictions that were previously going to be determined by the head of state and the second caliph.[65]

In the constructivist paradigm, social reality is a social construction created by individuals. Individuals are humans who are free to carry out social relations between one another. Individuals become determinants in the social world that is constructed according to their will.[66] Berger and Luckman say that social reality consists of objective, symbolic and subjective realities.[67] Through their social theory, Berger and Luckman focus on the study of the relationship between human thought and the social context in which the theory emerges.[68] Through observation of social construction, it can be found the cause of the phenomenon marriage is scary that appears in the midst of people's lives. And through observation of social reality, it is hoped that it can create a stigma that can oppose the view of marriage is scary. This theory finds a correlation between the influence of family interactions on psychological development and child development. Family interaction is one of the most significant to mental development, especially in minimizing the occurrence of marriage is scary in children. The existence of past trauma, habits instilled from childhood develop on the psychic until the children grow up. One of the consequences of poor family interaction triggers the stigma of fear in having a partner.

The role of family and social interaction in the constructivist paradigm,[69] is very influential in shaping individual perceptions of the phenomenon marriage is scary. The family, as the first social unit that individuals encounter, serves as the initial space for producing and transmitting social constructions related to marriage. The values, norms and expectations instilled in the family contribute greatly to shaping attitudes towards marriage. If the family views marriage as obligatory or sacred, then individuals will form similar views. Conversely, families that exhibit uncertainty or tension in the marriage relationship may reinforce negative perceptions of marriage, resulting in fear or doubt. The family not only acts as a shaping agent, but also as a mediator that connects individuals to larger social constructs, such as societal norms.

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[65] Mahmudha Nurkhovivah and Khaidarulloh, "Perspektif Qira'Ah Mubadalah Terhadap Sikap Posesif Istri Kepada Suami," *Al-Syakhsiyyah: Journal of Law & Family Studies* 6, no. 1 (July 3, 2024), https://doi.org/10.21154/syakhsiyyah.v6i1.9022.

[66] Ani Yuningsih, "Implementasi Teori Konstruksi Sosial dalam Penelitian Public Relations," *Mediator: Jurnal Komunikasi* 7, no. 1 (June 19, 2006): 59–70, https://doi.org/10.29313/mediator.v7i1.1215.

[67] Peter L Berger and Thomasa Luckman, *Tafsir Sosial Atas Kenyataan, Terj. Hasan Basari Dari Sosial Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowlede* (Jakarta: LP3S, 1990).

[68] Berger and Thomasa Luckman.

[69] Ari Neuman and Oz Guterman, "The Clash of Two World Views – a Constructivist Analysis of Home Educating Families' Perceptions of Education," *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* 24, no. 3 (July 2, 2016): 359–69, https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2016.1178664.

Social interactions that occur outside the family also serve to shape individuals' perceptions of marriage through symbolic communication.[70] For example, individuals who are in a society that perceives marriage as a challenge or even a risk, may internalize this view through social interactions with friends, co-workers, or social media. Berger and Luckman mentioned that social reality is a construction that can be controlled and changed by individuals through their interactions in a social context.[71] Social interactions that create certain meanings about marriage will shape an individual's subjective reality. This process involves the internalization of social symbols that shape perceptions, where marriage can be seen as a frightening or burdensome institution, depending on the experiences and social context that surrounds the individual. Thus, through the social construction that occurs within families and social interactions, perceptions of marriage as frightening can be reinforced or diminished.

Conclusion

The phenomenon marriage is scary among Indonesian Muslims is caused by various psychological, social and cultural factors that shape individuals' perceptions of marriage. These factors include economic uncertainty, less harmonious family experiences, and exposure to negative information about marriage from social media. The family, as the first pillar in the formation of individual values and perceptions, has an important role in instilling a positive understanding of marriage through open communication and being a role model in domestic life. In addition, strengthening religious values also plays a role in shaping an understanding of the purpose and essence of marriage in Islam, so that individuals can assess the benefits and challenges of marriage more wisely. In addition, local wisdom in Indonesian culture contributes to shaping people's mindsets about the importance of marriage, both through customs that encourage marriage and the values of togetherness in married life. With a holistic approach that includes the role of the family, religious education, and strengthening cultural values, the phenomenon of fear of marriage can be minimized, enabling the younger generation to be better prepared to build a harmonious household in accordance with Islamic values and local culture.

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[70] Yanuar Ilham et al., "Intrapersonal Communication about the Meaning of Early Marriage in Bandung City," *Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi* 11, no. 1 (2023): 31–48.

[71] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, "The Social Construction of Reality," in *Social Theory Re-Wired* (Routledge, 2023), 92–101, https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003320609-11/social-construction-reality-peter-berger-thomas-luckmann.

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