



# Digital Da'wah and the Social Construction of Marriage: A Netnographic Study of #MarriageIsScary and #MarriageIsNotScary Discourses Among Indonesian Muslim Netizens on Instagram

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examines how digital da'wah spaces on Instagram shape the social construction of marriage among Indonesian Muslim netizens. Drawing on Berger and Luckmann's theory of the social construction of reality, this study analyzes how the competing hashtags #MarriageIsScary and #MarriageIsNotScary function as informal Islamic communication (tabligh) channels that negotiate new meanings of marriage in the digital public sphere. Data were collected from 10 prominent influencer accounts and 1,000 netizen comments using a netnographic approach, then analyzed through Voyant Tools over the period of October 2025 to April 2026. The findings reveal two divergent discursive positions: the #MarriageIsScary discourse frames marriage as a high-risk institution that is no longer an obligatory life milestone, while the #MarriageIsNotScary discourse reframes marriage as a deliberate and selective life choice grounded in personal readiness and spiritual maturity. Despite their opposing stances, both discourses converge on shared values of self-governance, mental health, and individual happiness — reflecting a broader shift in how young Indonesian Muslims negotiate Islamic family ideals against contemporary social pressures. This study concludes that Instagram has emerged as a significant informal da'wah platform where Islamic values related to marriage and family are publicly contested, reinterpreted, and disseminated. The findings carry practical implications for Islamic counseling (irsyad) practitioners and da'wah communicators in addressing shifting marital attitudes among the younger Muslim generation.*

**Keywords:** Digital da'wah; Instagram; Indonesian Muslim netizens; netnography; social construction of marriage; tabligh.

## INTRODUCTION

Marriage is an official bond performed by both men and women. From Islam, marriage aims for family units, cultivating and developing relationships as acts of worship to Allah SWT (Zubaidah & Zahiri, 2016). In the perspective of Islamic law, marriage is seen as a step to allow or sign a legal relationship between a man and a woman who are bound in a marriage contract (Yaqinah et al., 2021). Marriage changes men and women from single status to spouses and parents, establishing new rights, obligations, and responsibilities within communities (Suryatni, 2021). In society, marriage is a core element of social life, described as a sacred bond that strengthens families and protects individuals (Malisi, 2022). Further, marriage's concrete goals include creating happiness, welfare, and peace—both in worldly and spiritual dimensions—while uniting two family networks (Hanafi, 2021).

Nowadays marriage definitions are changing, especially for the young generation. Marriage is 'no longer seen as a primary life goal but rather as one of the options for achieving personal happiness and success' (Vadila et al., 2025). That statement is in line with some research findings that said perceptions in marriage range from positive to negative depending on individual circumstances (Permana & Medynna, 2021). Another piece of research showed that marriage can increase mental health risk (Chen et al., 2022) and is positively associated with major depressive disorder for women in arranged marriage settings (Zhang & Axinn, 2021).

One of the reasons for changing the definition of marriage is because of social media. Social media has particularly become one of the rationales for changing perspective; for example, Instagram is not only a place for sharing information, communication and entertainment but also can be the place for making meaning together. Millennials create symbols via colour tones and casual language to form specific self-images (Maureen & Stellarosa, 2021) which are easily identified by others. Social media users employ various semiotic resources (e.g., text, images, and colours) to create and share meanings (Teng & Chan, 2022). In addition, social media discourse integrates multiple semiotic resources, allowing users to construct distinctive patterns of meaning-making. It means that this approach enriches the communicative practices and fosters a dynamic space for collective meaning construction (Simungala et al., 2024).

Social media users use hashtags to blow up a trend and discuss some

issues. In this research context, there is one hashtag which trended in 2024 related to marriage. The trend #MarriageIsScary began to be known in August 2024 and quickly gained widespread attention on TikTok, with many users uploading videos containing personal stories, reflections, and their critical views on marriage (Sundari & Febriana, 2025). Those hashtags also reflect the level of anxiety about the institution of marriage (Ghazali et al., 2025). After the trend gets a lot of enthusiasm from social media users, there is a counter to the hashtag that is #MarriageIsNotScary, which is about the positive experiences of marriage. In addition to TikTok, the trend is also growing and massive on Instagram, and still in 2026, those hashtags have also gained a lot of responses.

Social media like Instagram serves as a digital platform for collective deals, where users use existing content to align their perspectives with trending narratives and then believe it as a truth, although sometimes it is sourced from people they don't even know. Sharing content to affirm interpersonal connections is "one of the most ubiquitous practices on social media", showing how users circulate affect-laden content related to personal experiences (Shamayleh & Arsel, 2025). The hashtags #MarriageIsScary and #MarriageIsNotScary have become massive in social media since they are related to humans' life cycles. Those hashtags then encouraged social media users to share their opinions about marriage, both good and bad experiences about it.

The social construction of reality is one theory that describes how people co-create through social interactions, language and culture. Human reality is greatly influenced, understood and experienced through cultural and social norms (Santos, 2015). The foundational framework comes from Berger and Luckmann's (1966) theory, which identifies three key processes: habituation (repeated behaviours become routine), objectivation (routines appear objective), and internalisation (people accept them as taken-for-granted) (Karunanayaka, 2025). This theory is related to social media users and the changing issue in social media. Some studies picture that Facebook users actively construct multiple online identities (enhanced, authentic, or anonymous) based on their knowledge and understanding, demonstrating how individuals co-create reality through platform use (Maliki & Ali, 2020). There are three media myths shaping digital social reality: natural collectivity, the media centre and big data – each legitimising a particular version of sociality (Plotichkina, 2020).

Though research related to #MarriageIsScary and netnography

exists, there is still a significant gap in adding the counter of that hashtag, #MarriageIsNotScary, and comparing both of them. There is limited research observing a social media user's engagement, especially on Instagram, in redescribing the concept of marriage. Many existing studies tend to focus on one hashtag, such as the representation of fear of marriage on TikTok social media with #MarriageIsScary, which found that social media plays a significant role in reinforcing marriage views through algorithms that personalise content and provide a space for creative expression for younger generations (Sundari & Febriana, 2025). Another study depicts the level of anxiety about the institution of marriage, which found that the anxiety is not only through doctrinal affirmation but also through lived and contextual interpretation (Ghazali et al., 2025).

Several early studies have explored the impact of exposure from the hashtag #MarriageIsScary on the audience. That trend had an impact on Gen Z's anxiety, stress levels and confidence in marriage (Aini Hidayah & Ade Sessiani, 2025). Another study with the title 'Analysis of Impact of the Phenomenon 'Marriage is Scary' against the Interest in Marriage in Serang Baru District, Bekasi' found that the trend impacting the decrease in the interest in marriage is characterised by the tendency to delay marriage and selective attitudes in choosing a life partner (Satriyanto & Oktaviani, 2025).

Previous research has also just mentioned one hashtag without considering the hashtag #MarriageIsNotScary and almost did research on the TikTok platform, while in my research I used the hashtag counter #MarriageIsNotScary and used Instagram as a field subject. This research offers novelty by applying a netnography approach to explore redefining marriage from Instagram users' perspectives based on some content. This study aims to analyze how Indonesian Instagram users construct, negotiate and internalize new meanings of marriage through the comparative engagement with #MarriageIsScary and #MarriageIsNotScary hashtags using Berger and Luckmann's social construction of reality as the theoretical framework. Specifically, this study wants to answer the question: how Indonesian citizen construct a new meaning of marriage based on their comment in instagram?

## **METHOD**

This research using netnography by Kozinets. Netnography is essentially ethnography conducted in online spaces. It involves collecting and analysing data from digital interactions to understand cultural and social

behaviours (Kozinets, 2023). The subject of the research is content from 10 influencers' accounts and interactions in the comments section. Approximately 1000 comments were analysed using the Voyant Tools to examine how the meaning of marriage is repeated, objectified, and then internalised by Instagram users. Five hundred comments were searched using the hashtag #MarriageIsScary and another 500 comments using the hashtag #MarriageIsNotScary to compare the two opposing perspectives. This will explain how Instagram audiences' beliefs about marriage now are based on their experiences and perspectives on their lives.

The influencers account that chosen by some criterias, first the content from influencers personal account, not from agregator. Second, the content must have huge engagement, it is showed from a lot of comment, like, repost and share. Last, the content is found by hashtag #MarriageIsScary and #MarriageIsNotScary. Selected content from ten influencers' posts about their experiences in marriage, namely (1) experiences when women were pregnant and their husbands' negative responses, (2) a statement about women who might prefer to be single in 2030, (3) a husband who complains about his wife, (4) feelings of disappointment between men and women about a relationship, (5) people talking about happy wedding videos, (6) stories about experiences of marriage that are not scary, (7) threads of opinions about marriage not actually being scary, (8) experiences of childhood wounds that become household lessons, (9) women who reveal the many stakes women face in marriage, including risking their lives, and (10) childhood experiences that are carried into adulthood and lessons learned when building a household. The research objects were collected over a period of five months (October 2025 to March 2026) with content selection from 2024 to 2026.

After found the content, researcher using 'export comment' aplication for collect comments from the content account. The comment exported into excel format and it is uploaded to voyant tools. In the Voyant Tools, researcher used 'cirrus' for conduct the wordcloud and used 'terms' also 'links' to analyse the comment to see the words that related to new definition of marriage with the Social Construction of Reality theories by Berger and Luckman.

By using netnography, researcher become an observer and for this study, netnography used by researcher to observed the comment from citizen by social media, without doing direct interview or personal chat. Netnography by Kozinets also concern about ethics in privacy and

anonymity. Privacy means researcher must carefully consider whether online posts are public or private and ensure anonymity for participants (Barbosa & Milan, 2019). This article used all comments in public space, it means, all users were chosen is not privat account. Data taken from public comments which can be accessed without logging in: no interaction with the user. The identities of influencer and commenter accounts are not disclosed in the analysis to maintain privacy. The second ethict in netnography was ethical guidelines which emphasize the importance of anonymizing data to protect participants, particularly in sensitive or stigmatized contexts (Herfurth & Bott, 2024). In this study, all comment whose display in article was disguised and the profile photos were closed. The core ethical positioning of netnography is that “the knowledge we gain from machine understanding of human experience is often sorely limited, and the ethics of the investigatory situation fraught, no matter how large the data set, how cleverly programmed the machine learning algorithms or how extensive the public surveillance.” This reflects netnography’s commitment to embodied, culturally-situated human analysis (Kozinets et al., 2018).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **Habitualisation: Narrative Repetition and the Formation of New Perspective**

Habitualisation is repetitive behaviour that becomes routine. In the early stages of social construction of theory, it is called 'externalisation'. Habitualisation occurs when an action is repeated so often that it becomes a predictable pattern. In this study, habituation was identified by analysing the most frequently occurring words in the comments of the research subjects. Of the 500 comments and interactions using the hashtag #MarriageIsScary, the three main words that appeared most frequently are "men" (122 times), "husband" (88 times), and "wife" (58 times). This is reflected in the resulting word cloud.

The most frequently occurring words signify similar fears about marriage, and this has eventually become standardised as a new routine of thinking in the digital world. Further analysis of the comment data reveals that the word "men" appears to be accompanied by sentences that convey emotion and structural content. Comments that convey emotion include, for example, the following:

'What kind of man is that?'



"How could a husband be so cruel?"

"Suddenly, her husband cheated."

"Her husband was caught cheating."

"Meanwhile, her husband was happily hanging out."

"If her husband can't do housework, then he'll provide a maid."

However, regarding husbands, some comments were positive. For example, in some comments:

"My husband always obeys whatever the pregnant woman wants."

"My husband isn't harsh; he obeys."

"My husband treats me well."

"I have a good husband."

"My husband always tries his best for us."

"I have a husband, Masya Allah, who is incredibly responsible."

Media social has become a primary platform shaping Gen Z's marriage perceptions, with 62% viewing marriage as distant and uncertain (Tirta & Arifin, 2025). This shows a significant difference in the way comments are made. The word "men", which is repeated 112 times, carries a negative connotation, while the word "husband", which is repeated 88 times, tends to carry a positive connotation.

In Berger & Luckmann's theory, habituation results in typification (classification). The repetition of the word "man", which is predominantly negatively charged, indicates a process of mental habituation in which netizens no longer see "men" as unique individuals, but rather as dangerous "types" (patriarchal, stingy, evil). The repetition of the phrase "What kind of man?" indicates that a standardisation of expectations has occurred. When reality does not match ideal standards, netizens routinely resort to negative labelling. The trend creates standards for male partners but frames this as a protective response of women rather than habitual distrust (Asy'ari & Amelia, 2024); it makes a new habit by social media users. This is a form of habituation in which "distrust of men" becomes an automatic response that is predicted to appear whenever there is content about failed marriages. Meanwhile, from a social construction perspective, the word "husband" is an institution. A person becomes a husband through legal and social processes. The positive content of the word "husband" indicates that society still values the institution of marriage itself. A study presents that people still marry despite cohabitation alternatives, suggesting some valuation persists (Billari & Liefbroer, 2016).

In contrast, the words "man" or "men" refer more to raw gender



"I'm afraid to ask my husband for money."

"I'm afraid of being seen as a burden because I can only ask for money."

"Now I don't even dare ask my husband for money."

"I feel guilty asking for more pocket money."

"I don't dare ask my husband for anything."

"I really don't dare ask; I just feel embarrassed."

"I feel uncomfortable asking for pocket money."

"I don't dare ask my husband for money."

"He never asks for souvenirs when he's on duty."

Meanwhile, the second word, husband, appeared 48 times. Unlike the hashtag #MarriageIsScary, which showed both positive and negative trends, in the hashtag #MarriageIsNotScary, the word "husband" was more of an object and an adverb. For example:

"I'm told I pity my husband because I haven't tried Magnum."

"I want an understanding husband."

"When I'm not feeling well, my husband always buys me a Magnum."

"Now my husband makes it happen."

"My husband's extended family blames me."

"I'm accused of living off my husband."

"I feel guilty for using my husband's money."

"I'm given a husband who never controls me."

"Even though my husband never objects."

In Berger and Luckmann's theory, habituation is a behaviour that is repeated over and over until it becomes something that is considered normal or routine. In the hashtag data #MarriageIsNotScary, this is very clearly seen in the use of the word "ask" (59 times). The many comments, such as "Don't dare to ask for money" or "disinclined to ask my husband", indicate a habitual way of thinking that has become ingrained in the minds of wives. They feel that not asking or not being a burden is a "routine" to keep the marriage running smoothly. This proves that even though the hashtag used is positive, wives still automatically internalise (absorb) the unwritten rule that they should feel "uncomfortable" if they have to ask their husbands for more income. The habitual way of thinking ingrained in wives' minds in marriage centres on acceptance of patriarchal ideology, traditional gender roles and submissiveness to their husbands' authority. Women's submissiveness becomes ingrained through patriarchal cultural systems that reproduce male dominance across generation (Kouchaki et al.,

2020). The embedded societal paradigm that positions husbands as household heads and wives as housewives, limiting women's roles to domestic spheres (Hermanto, 2022). In India, young women are 'brought up with teachings of how to be a good housewife', ingraining respect for husbands and in-laws as a core identity (Khanna & Khatri, 2021).

Furthermore, the word "husband" (48 times) in this #MarriageIsNotScary hashtag frequently appears as the party "giving" or "making" the wife's wishes come true. Examples include phrases like "made it happen by my husband" or "my husband always buys it". Sociologically, this suggests that in many people's minds, marriage is considered "less scary" only if they have a good and understanding husband. Women who view marriage as 'a ritual where women sacrifice half their lives for children and husband', becoming domestic workers. That shows this perception stems from gender inequality constructed by society rather than marriage itself being inherently problematic (Novanza & Afrizal, 2025). The husband is seen as the primary determinant of happiness. The habit of praising a husband's kindness with heart-shaped or tearful emoticons is also a way for netizens to show support for this idealised image of marriage. However, behind this, there are still feelings of guilt that repeatedly arise when a wife uses her husband's money. This suggests that the old perspective of the husband's role as the owner of the money and the wife as the party "living off" remains a persistent thought process that is difficult to break, even in marriages considered happy.

### **Objectivation: The Use of the Word "Indeed" as Validation of the State of Marriage**

The objectification stage occurs when patterns that were initially merely habits (habituations) begin to be perceived as real, definite, and applicable to everyone. In short, objectification is the result achieved, both mentally and physically, from humans (Ngangi, 2011). In this study, objectification is clearly visible through the repeated use of the word "indeed" in both hashtags. This word serves as a tool to legitimise that what they are discussing is no longer just a personal opinion but rather an undeniable fact or "law of nature".

In the hashtag #MarriageIsScary, objectification appears in the form of the labelling of male characteristics and the division of domestic roles. This is evident in comments such as the following:

“Men have always lived in an ecosystem like this (patriarchal, stingy,

evil)."

"Honestly, there are a lot of savage men out there."



Sebagai laki-laki, jujur memang banyak lelaki biadab di luar sana. Bahkan ditempat kerja aduh, dimana<sup>2</sup> banyak yg suka ngomong jorok ttg cewe. Muak juga ama dunia ini. Kalau mau tahu gimana laki<sup>2</sup> baik maka liat pertemanannya, gimana reaksinya kalau dia marah, apakah dia baik, lalu paling penting hubungan sama Tuhan



28w 3 likes Reply

Source: screenshot form instagram account

Figure 3. One comment shows 'man' as an object (jujur, memang banyak lelaki biadab di luar sana: honestly, there are a lot of savage men out there)

These statements indicate that netizens have long considered negative male traits to be objective realities. In fact, fellow men also judge that men are like that (patriarchal, stingy, evil, savage). Furthermore, attempts to construct a new truth about the wife's role appear in comments such as the following:

"In fact, housework is not the wife's job."

"All of that is not the wife's job."

"Both (husband and wife) must honour each other."

"Because that is not the wife's job (to take care of household chores)."



Maaf ya, saya cowo cuman mengingatkan sebenarnya cuci piring, masak itu pekerjaan cowo. Tugas istri itu melahirkan, menyusui, dan mengurus anak. Selebihnya dari itu termasuk taat pada suami.



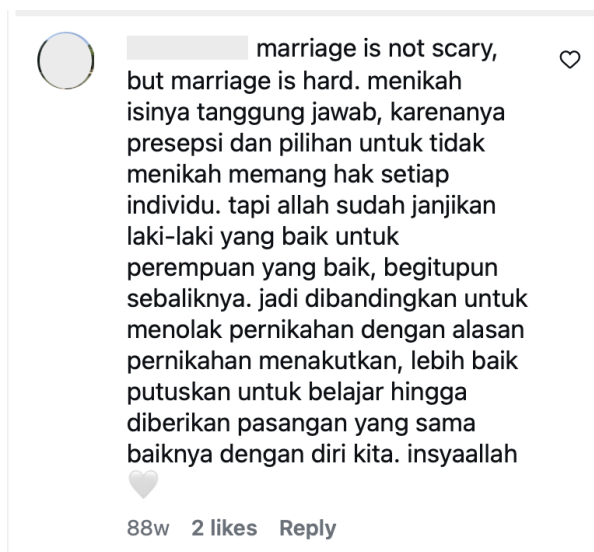
13w Reply

Source: screenshot from instagram account

Figure 4. One comment picture take care of household chores is man's job (Sebenarnya cuci piring, masak itu kerjaan cowo: in fact, dishes and cook is man's job)

Here, the view that wives are not obligated to manage their own household is no longer just a personal complaint but has been elevated to an "objective rule" agreed upon by the digital community.

Meanwhile, in the hashtag #MarriageIsNotScary, objectification is used to validate individual rights through the phrase 'Marriage is not scary'.



Source: screenshot from instagram account

Figure 5. One comment illustrates marriage is not scary but hard, marriage is a choice (Menikah isinya tanggung jawab, karenanya persepsi dan pilihan untuk tidak menikah memang hak setiap individu: marriage is full of responsibility, therefore the perception and choice not to be marry is indeed the right of every individual)

The comment 'The choice not to marry is indeed every individual's right' demonstrates that the decision not to marry has become a socially legitimate, objective reality. Similarly, views regarding parents are "It won't change" and "It's hard to tell parents." These comments demonstrate that netizens have shaped a reality where family obstacles are no longer

surprising but rather a "fact" to be accepted. Through the use of the word "indeed" in the quotes above, these two hashtags successfully transform subjective experiences into common knowledge that governs how society redefines the meaning of marriage.

In society, objectification includes several elements, such as institutions, roles and identities (Ngangi, 2011). Family is an example of an institution that is real and objectively "there" and can impose certain patterns on individuals living within its environment. In some comments from data by the netizen, there are some reasons that marriage is scary and marriage is not scary based on their experiences in their family before; most of those are based on their parents, '...it's because old parenting men can express their feelings...' and '...today's marriage cannot be like our parents before; that's a simple thing, if there is no food, we buy...'. Both comments compare nowadays marriages to before based on the experience of family; those describe more about how husbands now are different from before in the form of characteristics and nature for their families.

The roles provide capital for individual behaviour. The role dictates what must be done according to its objective description (Ngangi, 2011). The comment is like, 'It means both honour each other,' which explains a husband and wife must honour each other. Indonesian people trust families to prioritise affection, effective affection, effective communication and life balance, integrating Islamic and psychological frameworks (Halimatussyariah et al., 2024), so if the family does not become like that, it will be wrong from a lot of people's perspectives.

The third element of objectification is identities. Society provides an identity for individuals (Ngangi, 2011). Therefore, a person is not only expected to play the role of a wife, for example, but also must truly become a wife as society demands. '... a wife must obey her husband...' and '... Women's position is weak. Women are expected to be patient and remain devoted, because a wife's paradise lies with her husband. A wife who can endure such a household (with an abusive, patriarchal, and inattentive husband) will receive a reward in paradise ...'. From those comments, it is said that a wife must follow her husband whatever happens. However, a wife is obligated to be obedient and compliant to her husband as long as it does not contradict Islamic teachings (Malik & Khairul Ummah, 2021). The modern scholarship describes the relationship between husband and wife in marriage as a partnership of equals, not a relationship of subordination, and that wives possess substantial rights regarding housing, sustenance and

security (Nurani, 2021).

### **Internalisation: The Absorption of Digital Reality in Personal Identity and Decisions**

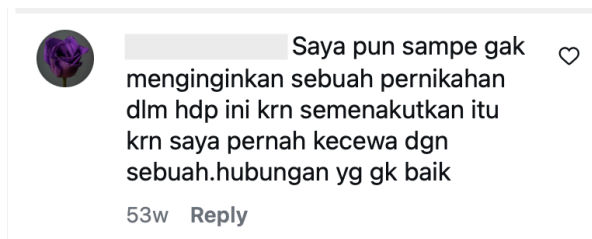
The final stage in the social construction of reality is internalisation. In this study, internalisation is the process by which individuals absorb the objective reality they see in digital spaces into their self-awareness. Internalisation is the immediate apprehension or interpretation of an objective event as expressing meaning, that is, as a manifestation of another's subjective processes which thereby becomes subjectively meaningful to themselves (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Internalisation of the hashtag #MarriageIsScary is evident through the use of the words "better" and "me", indicating that the fear narrative has influenced individuals' life decisions and personal principles.

Collective fear on social media has transformed into concrete and highly personal life choices. This is evident in the comments of netizens who are beginning to withdraw from the conventional concept of marriage:

"I don't even want marriage in this life because it's that scary."

"I'd rather not get married than live with a patriarchal, stingy man who belittles women... I'd rather work and earn more money."

"I'd rather be single without any children."



Source: screenshot from Instagram account

Figure 6. One comment portrays those who chose not to be married (saya pun sampe gak menginginkan sebuah pernikahan: I don't even want to be married)

These quotes prove that the "scary" reality they see online has finally taken hold, creating a new identity as individuals who choose to live independently (single). Some recent studies found women choose to be independent; for instance, several highly educated women aged 25-40 in Surabaya actively reject marriage to pursue careers (Wulan, 2025). There is

a 'waithood' trend among 10 women (ages 30-34) who deliberately delay marriage to focus on careers and independence (Wulandari, 2023), 62% of Gen Z view marriage as distant, with only 73.7% willing to consider it – reflecting a 'marriage is scary' phenomenon amplified by social media (Syahputra & Eliza, 2023). However, these studies involve a small sample size of participants; note this trend may be a temporary viral phenomenon rather than a permanent social shift (Nallanie & Nathanto, 2024).

Netizens are no longer mere spectators but are consciously taking a self-protective stance through assertive statements such as the following:

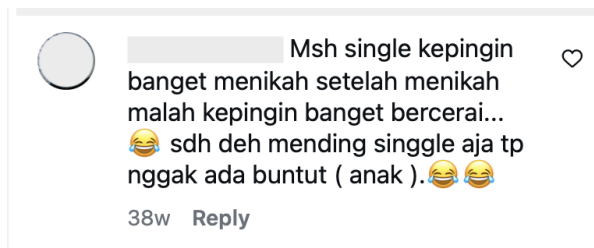
"Better to be husband-free than child-free,"

"Better to be single, sis."

"Better to be divorced and happy single."

"Better to be alone until you meet the right person."

"Don't get married; it makes you richer."



Source: screenshot from Instagram account

Figure 7. One comment portrays those who chose not to be married

Furthermore, internalisation is also evident in how individuals validate their fears through the narratives of others, such as in the comment: 'So scared... No wonder marriage rates are dropping.' Through this process, the hashtag #MarriageIsScary is no longer just a communication trend but has become a filter through which individuals view their future. Marriage is now internalised not as an achievement, but rather as a risk better avoided if it means sacrificing their peace of mind and financial independence. Marriage has become 'increasingly marginalised because of priority on education and career', with individuals now evaluated as 'consumptive objects' based on external standards like economic status and education rather than as whole persons (Harianja, 2024).

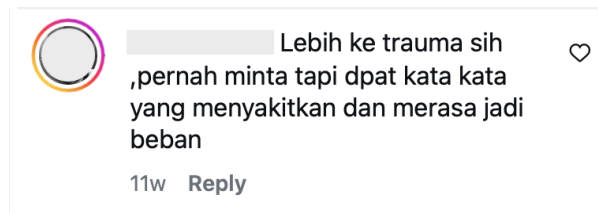
In the hashtag #MarriageIsNotScary, the internalisation stage demonstrates a deeper process of how individuals process their own feelings amidst the narrative of marriage. Data shows that internalisation

isn't always positive but also involves the absorption of guilt and deeply personal life lessons.

First, internalisation is seen in the emergence of an internal mental burden within a wife. Although the objective reality (her husband) may not have a problem with financial support, the individual has already absorbed the value that "being a dependent" is wrong. This is evident in the comments:

"My husband never considered me a burden, but I felt like one myself."

"It was more of a trauma. I asked for help but received hurtful words and felt like a burden."



Source: screenshot from Instagram account

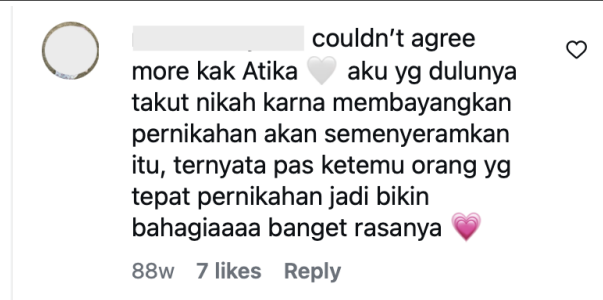
Figure 8. One comment portrays women as a wife feel as a burden for her husband

This quote demonstrates that past negative experiences or social standards regarding independence have become ingrained (internalised) within them, leading to feelings of guilt arising from their own thoughts without the need for external pressure. In fact, some internalisations are deeply cynical about human existence, such as "It's not just women; it's men too; essentially, humans are a burden on this world."

Second, internalisation also emerges as a form of enlightenment and mental readiness. Individuals no longer view other people's marriages as mere spectacles, but rather as a compass for determining their own futures. This is reflected in the comment:

"The many experiences around me have made me never afraid to get married. In fact, other people's experiences have taught me what kind of person and family I need."

"I used to be afraid of marriage... but when I met the right person, marriage made me so happy."



Source: screenshot from instagram account

Figure 9. One comment illustrates experiences become lessons

Through these comments, it's clear that positive narratives on social media successfully transform a person's internal fears into new hopes. The individual absorbs positive stories as a personal standard for choosing a partner. The process of internalisation is more of a reabsorption of the objective world into consciousness, such that the individual's subjective perception is influenced by the structure of the social world (Ngangi, 2011). It means that some individuals make others' experiences become lessons, either digital or direct experiences. Through observation, much information and displays of complex expertise can be learned (Ikawati, 2022). Behaviour is an accumulation of past experiences in the form of success or failure, social persuasion from the social environment, emotional states, and experiences of seeing models (Nurul Mubin et al., 2021). Furthermore, social learning theory specifically states that the process of social learning focuses on how an individual learns by making others the subject of their learning (Handayani, 2024).

Finally, this internalisation also creates personal assertiveness to avoid risks, as in the sentence: "It's better to leave a rich person like that." Overall, in this hashtag, internalisation functions as a maturation process in which individuals learn to filter which experiences should be considered traumatic and which should be used as standards for their own happiness.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study show striking differences between the two groups of netizens. In the hashtag #MarriageIsScary, marriage is perceived as highly risky, leading many to decide that marriage is no longer a necessity and to prefer to live independently. Conversely, in the hashtag

#MarriageIsNotScary, netizens view marriage more as a choice that must be approached with great caution. Here, the negative experiences of others don't scare them but rather make them more mature and selective in choosing partners to avoid making mistakes.

This phenomenon demonstrates that social media has become a space for digital communities to redefine their own standards of happiness. The fears that arise are not simply unwarranted panic but rather the result of in-depth examination of relationship patterns deemed unhealthy in the past. Ultimately, both avoidance and caution stem from an individual's desire for complete control over the quality of their life. This indicates that today, a person's success in life is no longer measured solely by their marital status, but rather by their courage to define their own standards of happiness and mental health.

Despite their differing perspectives, these two hashtags share a common mission: prioritising self-control over the future. Both demonstrate that individuals today have much higher standards and are more selective in choosing life partners. Both those who choose to avoid marriage and those who remain optimistic agree that personal happiness should not be sacrificed solely for societal demands. For Islamic preachers, these findings serve as a crucial reminder to develop a more reflective and emphatic communication strategy. Preaching materials need to shift from simply emphasizing the urgency of marriage to providing a space for solution-oriented dialogue regarding mental health and the meaning of healthy relationships within marriage, so that religious messages remain relevant and able to address the existential anxieties of today's digital generation.

Future studies should explore other platforms to compare different digital communities and discuss marriage trends. Researchers could also conduct interviews to understand how these online conversations directly influence real-life marital decisions. Mental health counsellors can use these findings to better understand and address the specific anxieties young people have about marriage. Additionally, social media organisations can use this data to create and promote more balanced relationship narratives online.

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