The Impact of Exposure to Online Mass Media on People's Attitudes in Marriage Decisions in Indonesia

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Abstract: *The decline in the marriage rate in Indonesia in the last decade is a complex phenomenon with many interrelated causes. The institution of marriage, once a strong tradition binding two individuals in a commitment to live together, has undergone significant changes in recent decades. The latest data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows a decreasing trend in the marriage rate nationally. In 2023, there will only be 1,577,255 marriages recorded in Indonesia, a decrease of 128,000 from the previous year. During the last decade, the marriage rate experienced a significant decline of 28.63 percent. In-depth research highlights the socio-economic factors, changes in mentality, and the influence of online mass media, especially social media, that play a role in this change. The influence of online mass media, particularly social media, is also a factor that cannot be ignored in understanding changing attitudes towards the institution of marriage. Social media has broadened access to information and facilitated communication between individuals in unprecedented ways. Not only does this change the way individuals interact and form relationships, but it also influences perceptions of traditional values such as marriage.*

Keywords: Weddings, Socio-Economic Changes, Social Media.

1. INTRODUCTION

The decline in marriage rates in Indonesia in the last decade is a complex phenomenon with many causes that may be interrelated. Marriage in Indonesia, a secret institution that binds two individuals in a commitment to live together, has undergone significant changes in the last few decades (Rater Sempa Nindra et al., 2022). Traditions that were previously strong and profound are now faced with new challenges that are changing the social and cultural landscape in this country. The latest data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows a decreasing trend in the marriage rate nationally. In 2023, only 1,577,255 marriages will be recorded in Indonesia, down by 128,000 from the previous year. In fact, in the last decade, the marriage rate experienced a significant decline of 28.63 percent. This phenomenon not only covers urban areas such as DKI Jakarta which experienced a decline of 4,000 marriages, but also the West Java region with a decline of up to 29,000 marriages, as well as Central Java and East Java which experienced a decline of 21,000 and 13,000 marriages respectively.

The causes of this drastic decline are the focus of research and in-depth analysis. One of the main factors identified is socio-economic changes, especially those related to the role of women in modern Indonesian society (Susilo et al., 2021). Women now have greater access to education and careers, which allows them to become more financially independent and less

dependent on the need for marriage to achieve a stable life. Professor Bagong Suyanto from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Airlangga University (Unair) highlighted that this development has changed the traditional paradigm in which women often depend on marriage as the basis of their lives (Das et al., 2021). However, with increasing opportunities for self-development, women's dependence on the institution of marriage tends to decrease.

On the other hand, economic challenges are also a crucial factor in decreasing marriage rates. The difficulty for men in finding stable and established work causes many of them to make the decision to marry or even reject it altogether. This reflects the changing economic dynamics in Indonesia, the ability to guarantee family life is a major consideration in entering into a marriage commitment (Laksono et al., 2020). Apart from economic factors, changes in mentality and the modernization of society also influence the decision to get married (Amin et al., 2022). More independent thinking and orientation towards individual freedom, especially among the younger generation, makes the institution of marriage seem a more flexible option than an unavoidable obligation. This phenomenon reflects a shift in social values that places more emphasis on personal freedom and individual achievement, rather than just traditional family formation. The high rate of divorce and cases of domestic violence (KDRT) also play an important role in influencing society's views on marriage. These disturbing cases not only reduce trust in unwanted relationships, but also lead to instability in the household (Seidu et al., 2020). With increasing awareness of individual rights and autonomy in relationships, many individuals prefer not to marry or postpone marriage until a more stable situation can be guaranteed.

The influence of online mass media, especially social media platforms, is also a factor that cannot be ignored in understanding changes in attitudes towards the marriage community. Social media has broadened access to information and facilitated communication between individuals in unprecedented ways (Meilani et al., 2023). Not only does this change the way individuals interact and form relationships, but it also influences perceptions of traditional values such as marriage. The urge to express oneself freely in the realm of courage is often combined with the expectations and demands inherent in the institution of marriage. The changes taking place in Indonesian society present challenges and opportunities for societal and cultural policies to adapt to these new dynamics. While declining marriage rates can be seen as an indicator of significant social change, a holistic and inclusive approach is needed to understand the long-term impact of this trend on family structure, social life and the overall well-being of society.

2. RELATED WORK

Research conducted by Barkah et al., (2023) reveals that social media has a significant influence on how individuals view the institution of marriage. This research highlights that intense exposure to content that depicts a perfect or controversial marital life can influence positive or negative perceptions of marriage. This effect can influence a person's attitude towards the decision to get married or not. Wibowo et al., (2021) research on changes in social values among the younger generation of Indonesia and their impact on marriage decisions. This research shows that factors such as increasing individualism, changes in career orientation, and expectations for independence in relationships all influence how younger generations assess the importance of marriage in their lives. Research by Nanlohy et al., (2021) explores communication patterns and online media consumption behavior among Indonesian society. This research highlights that social media not only serves as a means to interact and build social relationships, but also as a platform through which social values about marriage and commitment can be influenced and questioned. These three studies provide valuable insight into how online mass media, particularly social media, influences people's attitudes and decisions regarding marriage in Indonesia. They show that exposure to particular media content, changes in social values, and online media consumption patterns play an important role in shaping perceptions and attitudes towards the institution of marriage in today's modern society.

3. METHOD

Qualitative methods were used to explore the impact of exposure to online mass media on people's attitudes in marriage decisions in Indonesia. A qualitative approach was selected to explore this complex and dynamic phenomenon through in-depth and interpretative data collection (Assyakurrohim et al., 2023). This method allows researchers to understand individual perspectives and the social context surrounding marital decision making, which is often influenced by complex interactions between social media, cultural values, and socioeconomic changes. This research involved several key stages in the qualitative method. First, data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with various relevant respondents, such as prospective brides and grooms, individuals who actively use social media, as well as social experts or psychologists who can provide deep insight into the psychological impact of social media exposure on marriage attitudes. This interview was designed to explore individuals' experiences, views and attitudes towards marriage which are influenced by interactions with online mass media. In addition, focus group discussion techniques were used to expand perspectives and facilitate interaction between respondents. This discussion helps in

identifying general patterns and variations in views and experiences regarding the influence of social media on marriage attitudes in Indonesian society. The data collected was then analyzed qualitatively using a thematic analysis approach. This analysis aims to identify key themes emerging from the data, such as perceptions of marriage, the influence of social media content on traditional marital values, and changes in attitudes towards long-term commitment in relationships.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In recent decades, Indonesia has experienced a significant decline in the marriage rate. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in 2024, the number of national marriages in 2023 was recorded at 1,577,255, down around 128,000 from the previous year. This decline reflects socio-economic changes that are affecting society's views on marriage. One major factor is the change in the role of women, who now have greater access to education and careers, reducing dependence on marriage for stability in life. Apart from that, the difficulty for men to find stable work also contributed to this decline. Changes in the mentality of a more modern society and the increase in divorce cases are also factors in the decline (Roifah, 2021).

Socio-economic Changes and Community Mentality Influence the Decrease in Marriage Rates in Indonesia

Socio-economic changes and societal mentality in Indonesia have changed the landscape of the marriage institution significantly in the last few decades. This phenomenon not only reflects shifts in social values, but also reflects the dynamics of economic and social developments that impact individual views and decisions regarding marriage. One of the main factors influencing the decline in marriage rates is changes in women's roles and independence. As the economy and education progress, women now have greater access to educational and career opportunities (Asmara & Sahara, 2022). This has made many women more financially independent and less dependent on marriage to achieve stability in life. The tradition in which marriage is often the basis for women's lives in gaining social and economic recognition, is now undergoing adjustments with the existence of more alternatives for developing themselves outside marriage. Apart from that, the difficulty for men to find steady work also plays a role in the decline in marriage rates. Uncertain economic conditions and the difficulty of obtaining stable work make many men postpone or even refuse to get married. The option to focus on career development and individual accomplishments is often more attractive than the commitment of marriage that requires strong economic stability. Socio-economic changes and people's mentalities have been the main factors in reducing marriage rates in Indonesia in the last few decades. Statistical data shows a significant downward trend, with the number of

marriages in 2023 recording a decrease of 128,000 marriages compared to the previous year, reflecting a decline of 28.63% in the last decade.

One of the factors that significantly influenced this decline was changes in the role and independence of women in Indonesia. Over 60% of women now have greater access to higher education and career opportunities, enabling them to become more financially independent. This has changed the traditional paradigm where marriage is often seen as the main foundation of life for women. With increasing economic independence, women's dependence on marriage as the only option for achieving life stability is decreasing. In addition, difficult economic conditions for men are also the cause of the decline in marriage rates. The high level of unemployment among men in several regions of Indonesia makes it difficult for many of them to find stable and established work. This is the main consideration in making the decision to start a family and get married (Aslan & Shiong Pong, 2023). Changes in people's mentality also contributed to this decline. The younger generation tends to have a more modern view of life and relationships, with more emphasis on individual freedom, self-development, and personal achievement than on long-term commitment in marriage. These changing social values reflect a cultural shift that places more value on career exploration and personal development, changing the way individuals view the institution of marriage as a life choice.

The high divorce rate and cases of domestic violence (KDRT) also have a significant impact on people's perceptions of marital stability. These troubling cases not only reduce confidence in the continuity of the relationship, but also increase uncertainty about stability in the household. Society has become more cautious and tends to postpone or even avoid marriage commitments if a more stable situation cannot be guaranteed. Overall, socio-economic changes favoring women, changes in social values placing greater emphasis on individual freedom and personal development, as well as the negative impact of difficult economic conditions and high rates of divorce and domestic violence, have all contributed in a complex way to the drastic decline in marriage rate in Indonesia. To face these challenges, a holistic and inclusive approach is needed to understand the long-term implications for family structure, social life, and overall societal well-being.

Changes in people's mentalities also have a significant influence on the decision to marry. The younger generation tends to have a more modern outlook on life and relationships. They prioritize individual freedom and personal accomplishment over conforming to traditional expectations of forming a family. This thinking reflects a shift in social values which places more emphasis on self-exploration and freedom in making life choices, including choosing whether to marry or not. The impact of the high divorce rate and cases of Domestic

Violence (KDRT) also plays an important role in influencing people's views on marital stability. These cases not only give rise to distrust in the continuity of the marriage relationship, but also create uncertainty about stability in the household. People are becoming more alert and careful in making decisions about getting married, because they are considering the risks and consequences of this long-term commitment.

Mass media, particularly social media platforms, also play a role in changing perceptions and values regarding marriage. Social media has provided broad access to information and facilitated communication between individuals in unprecedented ways. Interactions on social media often reinforce the view that a life of independence and freedom is a more attractive option than conformity to existing social norms. Overall, socio-economic changes, people's mentalities, and the influence of mass media have changed the way Indonesian people view and choose to engage in marriage. These developments create new challenges for public and cultural policies to adapt to new dynamics in the institution of marriage. Although declining marriage rates can be seen as an indicator of significant social change, a holistic and inclusive approach is needed to understand the long-term implications of this trend for family structure, social life, and overall societal well-being.

Online Mass Media Influences People's Attitudes and Decisions regarding Marriage

Use of online media, particularly social media, has increased significantly in Indonesia in recent years. In 2021, it was reported that more than 175 million people in Indonesia use social media actively, with Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube being the most popular platforms. Social media is not only used to share information and interact socially, but also influences attitudes. , behavior, and societal decisions, including in the context of marriage. This platform facilitates the dissemination of cultural trends, social views, and norms that can influence individuals' views of the institution of marriage.

Regarding perceptions of traditional values such as marriage, exposure to social media content can have a significant impact. This phenomenon occurs because social media is not only a communication platform, but also a forum for sharing information, influencing opinions, and shaping individuals' thinking patterns in today's modern society. In this comprehensive paragraph, we will explore the extent to which exposure to social media content influences perceptions of traditional values such as marriage in Indonesia. The influence of social media on society's perception of traditional values, including marriage, has become a major concern in contemporary social and cultural studies. Indonesia, with more than 175 million active social media users in 2021, shows that platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have a significant impact in shaping people's thought patterns and behavior.

Social media facilitates the quick and easy exchange of information, allows individuals to engage in discussions, and broadens their horizons to a variety of views on life, including the definition and values of marriage. The content presented on social media often reflects a variety of perspectives, ranging from traditional to modern, from those that support to those that challenge existing social norms. For example, the large amount of content that displays individualistic and independent lifestyles often conveys the narrative that marriage is not the only choice or priority in a person's life. Social media users are often exposed to images of life that are more focused on self-exploration, career, and personal freedom, rather than the traditional obligations of starting a family. Apart from that, exposure to social media content can also influence perceptions of the stability and sustainability of a marriage. Through this platform, the public can easily find out about cases of divorce or domestic violence (KDRT), which might raise doubts about the stability of the institution of marriage. News or personal stories that spread widely on social media can reinforce the view that marriage does not always guarantee happiness or stability in a person's life. However, it is important to remember that social media can also be a positive tool in promoting traditional values such as commitment, loyalty, and family values. Content that supports marriage as a foundation for a happy and stable life can also be found on social media. Using this platform can be an opportunity to educate and promote positive values in the context of marriage, although this role is often debated due to the prevalence of content that focuses more on aspects of individualism and personal freedom.

In Indonesia, where culture and traditions have a strong influence on daily life, social media is often an arena where the battle between traditional and modern values takes place. Its wide use and expanding scope make it an important factor in changing society's view of the institution of marriage and related values. Overall, exposure to social media content can influence society's perception of traditional values such as marriage in various ways. From broadening your horizons towards various existing views to influencing your mindset regarding life priorities and stability in relationships. The role of social media in shaping people's perceptions of marriage reflects the dynamics of ongoing social and cultural change in Indonesia and needs to be the focus of further study to understand its long-term impact on family structures and social values.

Online communication and interaction patterns, increasingly dominant in everyday life, have changed the way individuals view and experience long-term commitment in marriage. Modern technology facilitates quick and easy connections between individuals from different backgrounds, broadens their social reach, and provides greater access to information about

interpersonal relationships. One of the main impacts of online communication is to speed up the process of getting to know each other and forming relationships. Through platforms such as dating apps or social media, individuals can quickly interact with many potential people and explore their suitability to a greater extent before deciding to enter a long-term commitment such as marriage. This allows them to gather information about a potential partner's values, interests, and life goals, which can influence their outlook on long-term commitment. In addition, intense communication patterns via text messages, video calls, or even online meetings allow individuals to build more intimate and personal relationships before meeting face to face. This can deepen the emotional connection and help them plan their future together in more detail before making the decision to get married. However, there is also another side to online communication patterns that can affect views of long-term commitment in marriage. For example, easy access to the abundance of options in dating apps or social media may encourage individuals to feel less satisfied with existing relationships or less willing to commit long-term. The perception that there are many potential alternatives out there may make individuals more likely to postpone or avoid serious commitments.

Patterns of online communication and interaction also influence how individuals understand and respond to conflict in relationships. In the context of marriage, technology enables couples to communicate more effectively, even across long distances. However, there are also challenges, such as difficulty in reading non-verbal expressions or handling conflict head-on, that can influence how individuals view continued commitment in marriage. In a broader social context, online communication and interaction patterns also influence individuals' perceptions of norms and values relating to marriage. Through social media, individuals can be exposed to various views on a couple's life, social expectations of relationships, and stories of success or failure from other people's experiences in marriage. This information can shape an individual's view of the importance of long-term commitment, as well as their expectations for the relationship. Not only that, online communication and interaction patterns can also affect how individuals express and strengthen their commitment in marriage. Through social media, couples can share moments of happiness, shared achievements, and support for each other, which can strengthen their emotional bond and set a positive example for their followers and friends. However, there are also challenges arising from online communication and interaction patterns in the context of long-term commitment in marriage. For example, the tendency to compare their relationships to those seen on social media can create additional stress or unrealistic expectations, which can disrupt stability and happiness in the relationship. Overall, online communication and interaction patterns have a

significant impact in shaping an individual's view of long-term commitment in marriage. Modern technology facilitates unprecedented global connectivity, influencing how individuals establish, maintain, and understand their interpersonal relationships. Further study is needed to understand in depth how these developments affect marital dynamics in contemporary society (Ririnisahawaitun et al., 2023).

Social media has changed the way individuals interact, share, and convey their views on various aspects of life, including the desire to marry. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok are not only places to communicate, but also to express personal identity and values. The ability to create diverse content, such as writing, photos, videos and statuses, allows individuals to embrace or explore different views on marriage without geographical or time constraints. One of the main impacts of social media's ability to facilitate self-expression is that it gives individuals the freedom to explore their life options openly. Individuals can freely convey whether they choose to get married, postpone marriage, or even choose not to get married at all. This allows them to explore and interpret the meaning of marriage in accordance with their personal values without pressure from traditional social norms or family expectations. Concrete examples of this expression of freedom can be seen in social media campaigns that promote awareness of diverse life choices. For example, the #SingleNotSorry campaign on Instagram or Twitter, where individuals proudly share their experiences and reasons for choosing to remain single without needing to take responsibility for their life choices to anyone. Social media allows them to find community and support from other like-minded individuals, strengthening their identity and confidence in choosing their own paths in life.

In addition to providing a platform for free self-expression, social media also increases support for personal decisions related to marriage. Through online communities and discussion groups, individuals can gain perspective and advice from others who have faced similar dilemmas or have had different experiences in living life without marriage. This helps reduce the stigmatization of non-conventional life choices and provides the emotional support that is important in maintaining a balance between individual freedom and social expectations. Concrete examples of this support can be found in online communities such as the childfree subreddit on Reddit, where individuals share their experiences and discuss the challenges and joys of living without having children or without marriage. Social media allows them to feel accepted and connected to others who understand their perspective, reducing social isolation and increasing a sense of connectedness. However, the other side of free expression on social media is its potential to influence perceptions of marriage and long-term commitment. Through

content curation and exposure to various other people's life stories, individuals can be influenced by narratives that may not always reflect the reality or values that are truly important in marriage. For example, intense social media use can reinforce unrealistic expectations about romanticism or perfection in relationships, which can lead to feelings of dissatisfaction or hesitation toward long-term commitment.

Not only that, the adoption of individualistic values reinforced by social media can also influence the way individuals see the value of community or interdependence in the context of marriage. The focus on self-development and personal accomplishments demonstrated on social media may reduce the tendency to prioritize long-term commitment or continued relationships in personal life. In this context, it is important to recognize that social media, while providing freedom of expression and support for life choices, also brings challenges and considerations that need to be considered carefully. For example, the need for awareness of privacy and limits in sharing sensitive personal information, as well as the possibility of adopting an unhealthy or unrealistic self-image based on standards promoted in social media. Overall, social media's ability to facilitate freer self-expression of the desire to marry or not, has a significant impact in shaping individuals' perceptions of marriage and long-term commitment. By positively leveraging this platform to support life choices that align with personal values and aspirations, individuals can develop a strong identity and build meaningful relationships in line with their own preferences.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Socio-economic changes and people's mentalities, along with the influence of online mass media and social media, have significantly changed the view of marriage in Indonesia. In the past, women were often seen as simply supporting the family economy, but now they are recognized as major contributors in building the family economy, giving them greater independence in choosing when and with whom to marry. The shift towards social values that place greater value on individual and career freedom also influences marriage decisions. Values such as independence, gender equality and freedom of expression are becoming major factors in determining life choices, with many young people postponing marriage to focus on personal development. This reflects an adaptation to modern values which are more flexible than traditional social norms. High divorce rates and cases of domestic violence also affect society's view of marital stability, increasing skepticism towards long-term commitment. Online mass media, especially social media, play an important role in shaping attitudes towards marriage by facilitating wide access to experiences and views from different parts of the world. Online interactions through these platforms also help shape individuals' perceptions of the importance

of commitment in relationships, while providing a space for open discussions regarding relevant values.

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