

Representation of fear of marriage in TikTok social media with #MarriageIsScary

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Introduction

- Background

The younger generation's perspective on marriage has changed dramatically, with many now viewing it with skepticism. While marriage was once considered a natural step in life, many now feel anxious and doubtful about such a long-term commitment. Social media, especially TikTok, has become an important platform for young people to express these critical views.

phenomenon

The phenomenon of fear of marriage among young people, particularly reflected in the hashtag #MarriageIsScary on TikTok, reflects a shift in attitudes toward marriage. In Indonesia, marriage is still considered a natural step in life, yet many young people, especially the younger generation, feel anxious about this institution. They feel pressured by social expectations, economic uncertainty, and imbalanced gender roles.

Rumusan Masalah dan Tujuan

- **formulation of the problem**
- How do TikTok users respond and interact with content that represents fear of marriage with #MarriageIsScary?
- **research purposes :**
- To understand how fear of marriage is shaped by the narrative, visuals, and other elements of TikTok videos featuring this theme.

Penelitian Terdahulu dan Gap Penelitian

- Research by Firamadhina & Krisnani (2021): "Social media, especially TikTok, provides a space for users to express their personal opinions and views on social issues, including marriage."
- Research by Yusar et al. (2020): "Social media influences the younger generation's views on marriage."
- Research by Rahman & Dahliah (2024): "Social media reinforces the younger generation's perspective on marriage as a choice, not a social obligation."
- **Gap : Previous research tends to discuss social media in the form of text or opinion, while TikTok uses a combination of narrative, visual, and audiovisual elements that form more complex meanings.**

Theory dan Research Methods

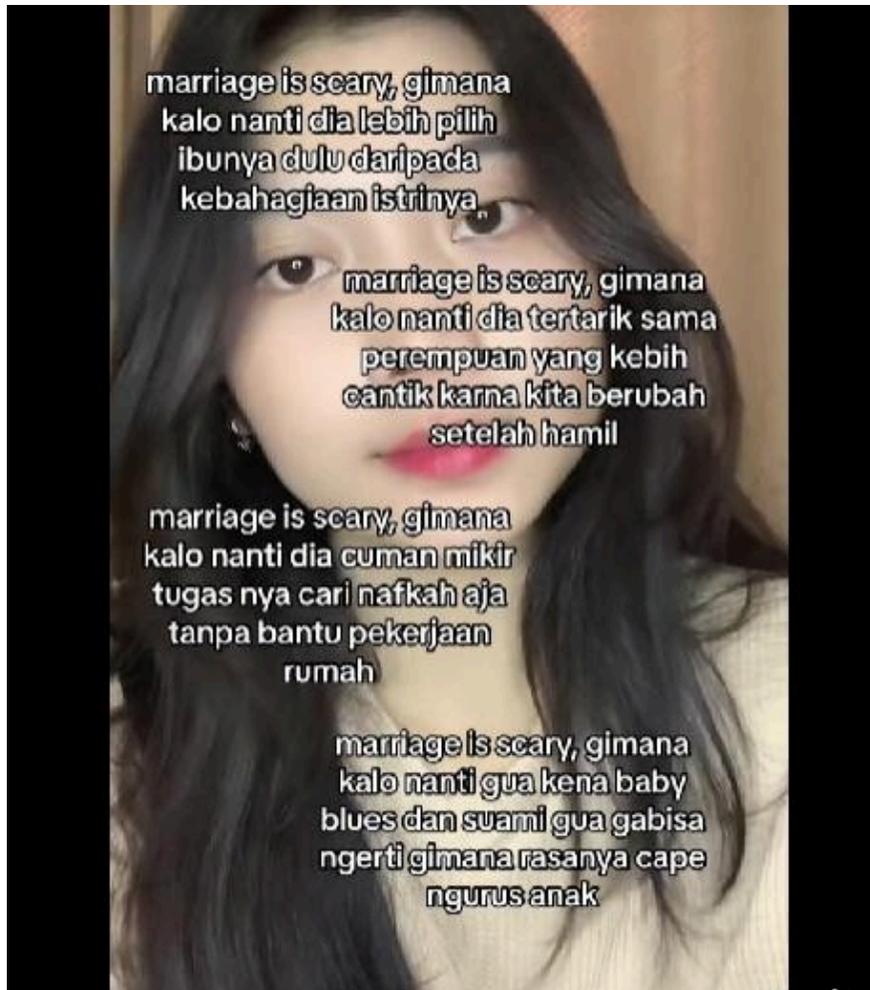
- **Main Theory:** The theory of media representation put forward by Stuart Hall in his book *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (1997), Representation is a process where social meaning is constructed through symbols and narratives in the media.
- **Research Methods**
 - Approach: Qualitative with content analysis
 - Data: 20 TikTok videos with the hashtag #Marriage is Scary (period August - December 2024), 5 videos with the highest number of viewers and likes were selected for analysis.
 - Analysis focus on audience response
- **Narration:** story structure and message.
- **Visual:** Creativity of images, colors, and graphic elements
- **Audio:** music, sound effects, and dialogue

Result

The theory of representation, proposed by Stuart Hall, explains that media not only reflects reality but also plays a role in shaping the audience's perspective on the world. This concept involves two main processes: encoding and decoding. Encoding is the process by which content creators embed meaning into the media they produce, while decoding occurs when audiences interpret the message based on their own experiences and perspectives.

Result

Fear of role equality in the household



In several videos, TikTok creators expressed the fear that after marriage, one partner (often the woman) would be burdened with household chores, while the other partner (often the man) would focus solely on earning a living.

Result

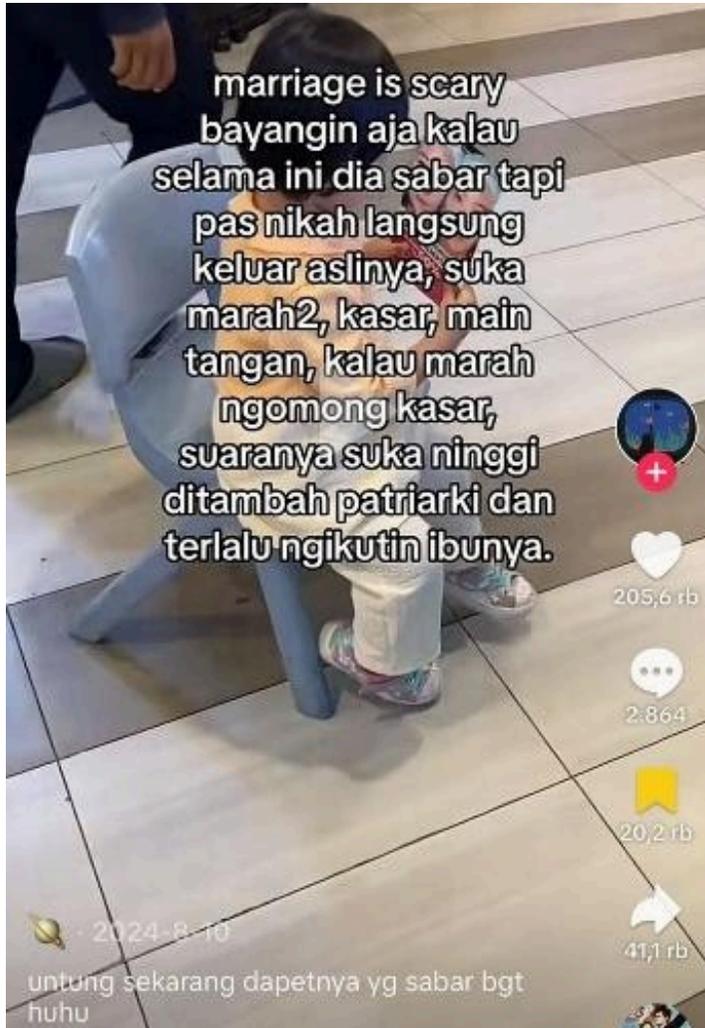
Injustice in Household Distribution



Many women worry that marriage will force them into traditional roles, with their husbands solely being the breadwinners. This creates a fear that marriage will compromise the balance between work, personal time, and the couple's relationship.

Result

Fear of changes in partner's attitude



Initially, a partner may appear patient, understanding, and loving, but after marriage, their more violent and uncontrollable true nature begins to emerge. This fear reflects a change in the partner's previously kind attitude, which can develop into manipulative, emotional, or even domestic violence behavior.

Result

Fear of changes in partner's attitude



While she acknowledged that there was nothing inherently wrong with the proposal to marry, she revealed that her fear stemmed from negative experiences she witnessed within her immediate family. The marriages she witnessed within her family had unfavorable dynamics, leading to fear and hesitation about marriage.

Discussion

Research into the #MarriageIsScary trend on TikTok shows that content creators encode marriage as a subject fraught with fear, including gender inequality, cultural pressure, and traumatic experiences, through narrative, visuals, music, and humor. Audiences, on the other hand, respond with varying responses: some fully accept the narrative (preferred reading), others combine it with more moderate personal views (negotiated reading), and still others reject it (oppositional reading). These differing interpretations confirm that audiences actively construct meaning based on their individual backgrounds and experiences. Furthermore, concerns about gender inequality, social pressure, and the perceived failure of marriage indicate that the representation of marriage on TikTok is closely linked to social realities in Indonesia, where patriarchal norms and the demand for early marriage remain dominant. This fact aligns with data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) (2024), which shows that divorce is often triggered by economic problems and domestic conflict. This discourse feels relevant to many users.

conclusion

The conclusion of this study is that the phenomenon of fear of marriage, raised in TikTok content using the hashtag #MarriageIsScary, reflects a significant shift in the younger generation's views on the institution of marriage in Indonesia. Through qualitative analysis and Stuart Hall's Media Representation Theory, it was found that TikTok creators, mostly Generation Z and millennials, expressed various concerns regarding marriage, such as unequal gender roles in the household, sociocultural pressures, the burden of expectations, fear of marital failure, changes in their partner's personality, and negative past experiences that create insecurity in committed relationships. Social media, particularly TikTok, plays a significant role in shaping and reinforcing these views by providing a space for the younger generation to express their fears and personal experiences openly and creatively.