


<b>Vol. 15, No. 2 (2024), pp. 241-267</b>		 <b>Doi:</b> <a href="https://doi.org/10.32923/maw.v15i2.4374">https://doi.org/10.32923/maw.v15i2.4374</a>
<b>Publisher:</b> The Faculty of Da'wa and Islamic Communication at Syaikh Abdurrahman Siddik State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Bangka Belitung, Indonesia.		<b>How To Cite :</b> Pangestu, C., & Khuluq, A. (2024). AN ANALYSIS OF INDONESIAN STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE SEX RECESSION PHENOMENON IN EAST ASIA. <i>Mawa'izh : Jurnal Dakwah Dan Pengembangan Sosial Kemanusiaan</i> , 15(2), 241 - 267. <a href="https://doi.org/10.32923/maw.v15i2.4374">https://doi.org/10.32923/maw.v15i2.4374</a>
<b>Received:</b> 29-04-2024	<b>Accepted:</b> 20-12-2024	<b>Published:</b> 30-12-2024

## AN ANALYSIS OF INDONESIAN STUDENTS' VIEWS ON THE SEXUAL RECESSION IN EAST ASIA

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### Abstract

*Conceptually, sexual recession refers to an individual's reluctance to marry and have children. As a crucial problem in contemporary culture, the phenomenon of sexual recession has led to a significant shift in societal paradigms regarding marriage. In Indonesia, the marriage rate has declined since 2020, particularly among the youth. This study aims to investigate the phenomenon of sexual recession by analyzing the perspectives of Indonesian students on marital issues in East Asia and how these issues may influence their attitudes toward marriage. It also seeks to explore students' apprehensions about marriage. This research is categorized as descriptive qualitative research. Data was collected through interviews with 32 students, 16 women and 16 men, from various major cities on the island of Java, including Surabaya, Yogyakarta, and DKI Jakarta. The findings reveal that Indonesian students' perspectives on this matter are influenced by factors such as the socio-cultural aspects of East Asian society, religion, financial concerns, technology, and demographics. These factors significantly contribute to the tendency of Indonesian students to postpone marriage. Conversely, some students remain unaffected, maintaining a positive perception of marriage due to their religious values and adherence to Indonesian societal norms. Male students expressed concerns about marriage, including financial stability, family leadership skills, and uncertainty about the future. Female students highlighted issues such as their partner's demeanor, poor self-confidence, and challenges related to meeting their partner's family demands.*

**Keywords:** *Sexual Recession, East Asia, Students.*



## Abstrak

*Secara konseptual, resesi seks mengacu pada keengganan seseorang untuk menikah dan memiliki anak. Menjadi salah satu problem krusial pada masyarakat dalam budaya kontemporer, fenomena resesi seks mengakibatkan maraknya pergeseran paradigma masyarakat terkait pernikahan. Di Indonesia, angka pernikahan mulai mengalami kemerosotan sejak tahun 2020 terakhir, khususnya pada kalangan pemuda. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengkaji fenomena resesi seks melalui persepsi mahasiswa Indonesia guna melihat respons yang diberikan terkait problem pernikahan yang terjadi di Asia Timur serta implikasinya terhadap tendensi menikah para mahasiswa, juga menelusuri kekhawatiran-kekhawatiran terkait terhadap pernikahan. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Data bersumber dari wawancara dengan 32 mahasiswa (16 wanita dan 16 pria) dari beberapa kota besar pulau Jawa (Surabaya, Yogyakarta dan DKI Jakarta). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa persepsi mahasiswa Indonesia terkait masalah ini dilihat dari berbagai sudut pandang: sosial budaya masyarakat Asia Timur, keagamaan, finansial, teknologi globalisasi hingga demografi. Fenomena resesi seks cukup memengaruhi tendensi menikah sebagian mahasiswa Indonesia yang ditandai dengan maraknya preferensi menunda pernikahan. Sebaliknya, beberapa mahasiswa diketahui tidak terpengaruhi dikarenakan adanya interpretasi yang baik terhadap makna pernikahan, nilai keagamaan dan kultur masyarakat Indonesia. Beberapa kekhawatiran mahasiswa Indonesia terhadap pernikahan, yaitu: finansial, kapabilitas dalam memimpin keluarga dan ketidakpastian masa depan. Sedangkan bagi mahasiswi: kepribadian pasangan, rasa percaya diri rendah dan penerimaan keluarga pasangan dianggap mengkhawatirkan.*

**Kata kunci:** Resesi Seks, Asia Timur, Mahasiswa.

## A. Introduction

Sexual recession is a significant issue for individuals in modern civilization. Conceptually, sexual recession pertains to an individual's hesitance or refusal to enter marriage and have children. This phenomenon presents a multifaceted threat that impacts various aspects: demographic,<sup>1</sup> financial, socio-cultural, economic,<sup>2</sup> political and religious decline.<sup>3</sup> Kate Julian, a researcher from the United States, introduced the phrase “sexual recession” to highlight several contributing variables,

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<sup>1</sup> Pamela Aronson, Thomas Callahan, and Timothy Davis, “The transition from college to work during the great recession: employment, financial, and identity challenges”, *Journal of Youth Studies*, vol. 18, no. 9 (2015), pp. 1097–118.

<sup>2</sup> Lusiana Lusiana, Ema Fathimah, and Wasti Indah Haryani Daulay, “Sex Recession: Challenges and Threats for The Economy,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Mizani: Wacana Hukum, Ekonomi, Dan Keagamaan* 10, no. 2 (25 Des, 2023): 292, <https://doi.org/10.29300/mzn.v10i2.11810>.

<sup>3</sup> Imaro Sidqi and Mhd. Rasidin, “Sexual Recession in Urban Muslim Societies: A Review of Maqashid Sharia and Its Implications,” *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 28, no. 2 (30 Nov, 2023): 231, <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v28i2.7616>.



including social, cultural, and technological influences.<sup>4</sup> Another U.S. researcher, Caroline Kitchener, offers a slightly different perspective on the issue in the United States. She argues it mainly reflects a change in the younger generation's lifestyle and thinking toward romantic relationships and marriage. This generation believes they can achieve happiness through various means and is perceived as less inclined to commit to long-term relationships.<sup>5</sup>

In several wealthy East Asian countries, such as Japan and South Korea, there is a notable annual increase in the number of women and couples postponing marriage and childbirth. South Korea has recorded the lowest fertility and marriage rates in the past decade. In 2018, South Korea's total fertility rate (TFR) dropped to 0.98, marking the first time it fell below one.<sup>6</sup> By 2019, South Korea had the lowest TFR globally at 0.92, indicating that, on average, a woman would give birth to less than one child.<sup>7</sup> The UN predicts this figure will decline further to 0.86 in the coming year, with the country's population expected to shrink more dramatically after 2029.<sup>8</sup> In Japan, the term sexual recession is referred to as the *Shoshika* phenomenon. The strong work ethic of Japanese individuals has contributed to a decrease in their inclination toward marriage and parenthood.<sup>9</sup> Similar to South Korea, Japan's birth rate has dropped significantly, reaching its lowest point in modern history.<sup>10,11</sup>

As a nation that upholds the values of religiosity and familial bonds, this does not directly exempt Indonesia from the phenomenon of sexual recession. In Indonesia, a Muslim-majority country, some individuals choose to delay marriage

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<sup>4</sup> Imaro Sidqi and Mhd. Rasidin, 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Sameer Arora et al., "Twenty Year Trends and Sex Differences in Young Adults Hospitalized with Acute Myocardial Infarction: The ARIC Community Surveillance Study," *Circulation* 139, no. 8 (19 February, 2019): 1047–56, <https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.118.037137>.

<sup>6</sup> Seung Hyun Seo, "Low fertility trend in the Republic of Korea and the problems of its family and demographic policy implementation", *Population and Economics*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2019), pp. 29–35.

<sup>7</sup> Kyung Ae Cho, "Korea's Low Birth Rate Issue and Policy Directions," *Korean Journal of Women Health Nursing* 27, no. 1 (31 Mar, 2021) <https://doi.org/10.4069/kjwhn.2021.02.16>.

<sup>8</sup> Seo, "Low fertility trend in the Republic of Korea and the problems of its family and demographic policy implementation".

<sup>9</sup> Arif Daffi Zaini A'lauddin et al., "Dinamika Penduduk Asia Timur: Studi Kasus Resesi Seks Di Jepang," *JISIPOL: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik* 7, no. 3 (25 Nov, 2023), <https://www.ejournal.unibba.ac.id/index.php/jisipol/article/view/1243>.

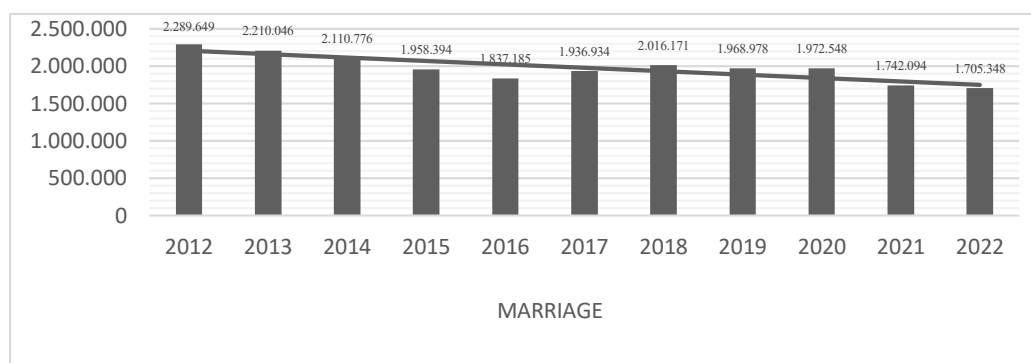
<sup>10</sup> Kumiko Nemoto, "Postponed Marriage: Exploring Women's Views of Matrimony and Work in Japan", *Gender & Society*, vol. 22, no. 2 (2008), pp. 219–37.

<sup>11</sup> Beby Fitri Xaviera Gunawan and Yusnida Eka Puteri, "Pilihan Rasional Masyarakat Jepang dan Dampaknya pada Fenomena Resesi Seks: Analisis Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Perilaku Seksual di Jepang", *Jurnal Bahasa Asing*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2023), pp. 44–55.



until they reach what they consider an appropriate age while not fully committing to a single lifestyle. Millennials, particularly women, have embraced a phenomenon known as *waithood*.<sup>12</sup>

Marriage rates in Indonesia have been declining since 2020. The most significant drop occurred in 2020, with an 8.96% reduction, according to statistical data. In 2022, Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) reported around 1.7 million registered marriages in Indonesia, a 2.11% decrease from 2021. Specific details are displayed in the diagram below:



Sources: Badan Pustaka Statistik (BPS)

Badan Pusat Statistik found that 68.29% of Indonesian teenagers were unmarried in March 2023. According to BPS data, the percentage of unmarried individuals in the younger demographic has risen in the past ten years. The evidence presented indicates that the trend of sexual recessions is escalating annually.<sup>13</sup> In current Muslim society grappling with the phenomenon of sexual recession, marriage-related concerns are highly pertinent. Marriage in Islam is a crucial institution that stresses the maintenance of future generations, personal purity, and social stability. The Qur'an and Sunnah provide many passages and hadiths that encourage marriage based on various virtues. Allah 'Azza wa Jalla said: "And marry those who are alone among you and worthy (to marry) of your male and female servants. If they are poor, Allah will make them capable with His grace."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Badan Pusat Statistik, "Statistik Gender Tematik 2018," Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik, (2018).

<sup>13</sup> Databoks, "Tren Pernikahan Anak Muda Semakin Turun 6 Tahun Terakhir | Databoks", Databoks, <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2024/01/03/tren-pernikahan-anak-muda-semakin-turun-6-tahun-terakhir>, accessed 18 Mar 2024.

<sup>14</sup> QS. An-Nur 24: 32



Rasulullah *shalallahu 'alaihi wassalam* also explicitly encouraged marriage in his hadith, particularly addressing young people: “O young men, whoever among you can marry, then marry. Because being married can hold your gaze better and take care of your genitals better. Moreover, whoever cannot afford it, let him fast: fasting can suppress his lust.”<sup>15</sup>

However, in an era where sexual recession is becoming increasingly pervasive, urban youth exhibit considerable reluctance and even apathy toward matrimony. The perception of marriage in modern society has changed substantially over time. In some non-Muslim countries, marriage is no longer viewed as suitable for contemporary living.<sup>16</sup> This research seeks to complement existing studies on sexual recession. While prior research has examined the legal aspects of sexual recession, as well as its implications from the perspectives of maqasid shariah, justice in Indonesia, and economics, little attention has been given to the sexual recession among the younger generation, particularly Indonesian students, with a focus on the East Asian region. This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of sexual recession by examining the perspectives of Indonesian students, particularly Generation Z, to understand their attitudes toward marriage issues in East Asia. It also aims to determine the impact of these issues on Indonesian students' views on marriage and to explore their marriage-related concerns.

## B. MethodS

This research employs a descriptive qualitative methodology. Qualitative research aims to comprehensively grasp the phenomena encountered by research participants, including behavior, perceptions, motivations, and actions, using verbal descriptions within a specific environment of nature and varied natural approaches.<sup>17</sup>

Data was collected through interviews with 32 informants, all of whom were students from four universities in major cities on the island of Java (Surabaya,

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<sup>15</sup> Abu Abdillah Muhammad Bin Ismail ibn Ibrahim Al-Bukhari, *Shahihul Bukhari*, 1st edition (Mesir: Dar Ibnul Jauzi, 1441).

<sup>16</sup> Ibnu Elmi Acmad Slamet Pelu et al., “Sex Recession Phenomenon from the Perspective Maqashid Sharia Based on Objectives Marriage Law in Indonesia”, *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2022), p. 39.

<sup>17</sup> Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Jakarta: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2017).



Yogyakarta, and DKI Jakarta). The researcher has restricted the research location to Java based on several relevant considerations, including limited access to areas outside Java and recognizing Java as a prominent educational center with many distinguished universities. This restriction aims to ensure focus and depth of analysis while considering factors such as data availability, representativeness of the region, and accessibility of necessary resources. The criteria for informants were explicitly determined based on birth years, focusing on Generation Z (1995–2012). Additionally, equity in the number of informants by gender was also considered to maintain accuracy and objectivity in data collection. The interviews were conducted over one to two hours using open-ended questions. Interviews were conducted through multiple options, including filling out a Google Form, sending voice messages via WhatsApp, and conducting voice telephone calls.

The researchers conducted a deductive data analysis, which was performed in three stages.<sup>18</sup> The first stage involved data reduction, where the collected data was categorized according to the research themes. The second stage was data presentation, during which the information was organized into a coherent narrative highlighting the relationships between key elements. The final stage was conclusion drawing, where the researchers synthesized the narrative data into new findings that addressed the research questions.<sup>19</sup>

## C. Results and Discussion

### C.1. An Analysis of Indonesian Students' Perceptions of the Sexual Recession Phenomenon in East Asia

Generation Z, also known as the Zilenial Generation, follows the Millennial Generation and precedes the Alpha Generation regarding demographics. Many researchers and popular media describe that the birth of Generation Z was in the mid to late 1990s, and the early 2010s were the last year of birth for this generation. This generation will subsequently carry on the nation's legacy. Scientific literature generally suggests that Generation Z will experience improved living conditions, successful

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<sup>18</sup> Yulianah, *Metodologi Penelitian Sosial* (2022: CV Rey Media Grafika).

<sup>19</sup> Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*.





marriages, and stability in basic needs due to anticipated societal advancements.<sup>20</sup> The influence of youth, particularly Generation Z, in the country's progress in education, economics, and technology is undeniable.<sup>21</sup>

The sexual recession is a phenomenon that occurred at the beginning of the 21st century. Studies on this topic are still not widely discussed by many young people, mainly Generation Z. Analyzing the findings of interviews conducted with 32 Indonesian students, particularly those selected from various significant cities on Java Island (Surabaya, Yogyakarta, and Jakarta), 10% of students are unaware of the phenomenon, 30% have recently learned about it, 25% are unfamiliar with the term but know about the phenomenon, and 35% have been familiar with the term "sexual recession" for a long time and are knowledgeable about the phenomenon. This research examines how Indonesian students' perceptions, particularly those of the Zilenial Generation, have influenced their ideology. It aims to explore how Indonesian students perceive this phenomenon. In the upcoming discussion, the researcher will elaborate on further research findings about Indonesian students' perceptions of the sexual recession issue in East Asia.

### **1. Cultural Perspectives on Sexual Recession**

A country's cultural transformation significantly impacts its people's behaviors and ways of life. In industrialized East Asian countries like Japan and South Korea, individuals in urban areas are accustomed to working diligently to meet their requirements. This lifestyle transformation paradoxically influences people's tendency to get married and have children by changing their viewpoints. SN, a student in the Islamic Religious Education program at Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta, suggested that the strong work ethic of Japanese individuals and the misconception that marriage can hinder career focus and goal achievement may be contributing to this issue. Many individuals from East Asian countries, like Japan and South Korea, choose a solitary existence because they are satisfied with this choice.<sup>22</sup> KNR, a student in the Pharmacy

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<sup>20</sup> Tinder Newsroom, "Welcome to A Renaissance In Dating, Driven By Authenticity", *Tinder Newsroom*, <https://www.tinderpressroom.com/2023-05-22-welcome-to-a-renaissance-in-dating-driven-by-authenticity>, Accessed 18 Mar 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Raju Adha, Ahmad Fuadi Tanjung, and Sugianto, "Persepsi dan Keputusan Investasi Masa Depan pada Generasi Milenial dan Gen Z", *Al-Mutharahah: Jurnal Penelitian dan Kajian Sosial Keagamaan*, vol. 20, no. 2 (2023), pp. 257–66.

<sup>22</sup> SD, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (4 February 2023).



program at Gadjah Mada University, expressed a similar opinion, she said, "Spending too much time at work can prevent you from being passionate about other things. The government should be able to provide solutions to increase its residents' standard of life without overworking them, allowing them to have enough free time for activities outside of work."<sup>23</sup>

When individuals are preoccupied with work, the inclination to seek a romantic partner diminishes. The increasing prevalence of hedonism and individualism is influencing people's tendency to marry and have children in the future due to changes in their wealth-related motivations. WKH, a student in the Special Education program at the State University of Jakarta, suggests a correlation between society's movement towards individualism and the sexual recession problem; she said, "According to the papers I read, sexual recessions can occur in any individual. Furthermore, the rise of information malls has shifted the definition of high independence. In East Asia, there is much encouragement for overly busy people, and the word 'cool' is implanted in someone too independent. It progressively supports someone to assume 'it's preferable to live alone and be happy.'<sup>24</sup>

IL, a student in the Special Education department at Jakarta State University, shared the same opinion, arguing that parental supervision, self-discipline, and hard work lead to a shift in society's perspective towards individualism."<sup>25</sup> During her interview, AF, a student in the Islamic Education program at Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta, highlighted that a hedonistic society could contribute to sexual recession. She said: "Isn't it hedonism? So, they believe it doesn't matter if they don't marry."<sup>26</sup> PA, a student of the International Relations study program at Airlangga University in Surabaya, has a similar perspective on the phenomenon of the sexual recession: "In poor communities, children are like economic assets that contribute to their parent's income. Meanwhile, much more affluent families see children as an emotional and psychological benefit."<sup>27</sup>

## 2. Religious and Demographic Dimensions

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<sup>23</sup> KNR, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (4 February 2024).

<sup>24</sup> WKH, *Interview*, Jakarta, (17 January 2024).

<sup>25</sup> IL, *Interview*, Jakarta, (17 January 2024).

<sup>26</sup> AF, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (5 February 2024).

<sup>27</sup> PA, *Interview*, Surabaya, (26 February 2024).





Marriage involves more than just sexual and reproductive aspects; it is closely correlated with spiritual ideals. Law Number 1 of 1974 defines marriage as “a sacred union between a man and a woman, forming a lasting and joyful family unit under the guidance of Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta’ala*.”

In Indonesian society, which is predominantly Muslim, marriage, family-building, and having kids are considered crucial components of life. In East Asia, the majority of individuals are atheists, which contradicts the societal norms in Indonesia.<sup>28</sup> One aspect contributing to the problem of sexual recession is the decline in people's belief in religious and divine values. A solid religious dedication in individuals leads to conformity and acceptance of the laws in the Sharia, especially those regarding marriage. AF, a student of Islamic Religious Education at Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta, stated that the prevalence of atheism in East Asia has decreased the desirability and attractiveness of marriage.”<sup>29</sup> GY, a Physics student at Airlangga University, shared a similar perspective, he said, “Indonesia rarely has sexual recessions. The problem is that the majority of Indonesians emphasize religion, including marital rituals. It differs from Korea and Japan, where most of the population is not religious (atheists), making marriage and having children unnecessary.”<sup>30</sup>

### **3. Economic and Financial Factors**

The high cost of living in Japan and South Korea is a current issue. In Japan and South Korea, an increasing mindset of financial uncertainty has led people to consider family life and marriage more deeply. SAD, a student in the agriculture study program at Gadjah Mada University, expressed the following in his interview: “The high expense of living is the most logical of the numerous explanations. It's expensive enough to live alone, let alone with a partner and kids. Because of this, the locals would rather live alone.”<sup>31</sup>

SNS, an Islamic Religious Education department student at the Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta, holds a similar perspective. She thinks that a decrease in sexual

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<sup>28</sup> Rindi Salsabilla, “20 Negara yang Paling Tidak Percaya Tuhan Menurut Studi”, *CNBC Indonesia*, <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/lifestyle/20230818135503-33-464097/20-negara-yang-paling-tidak-percaya-tuhan-menurut-studi>, accessed 18 Mar 2024.

<sup>29</sup> AF, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (5 February 2024).

<sup>30</sup> GY, *Interview*, Surabaya, (26 February 2024).

<sup>31</sup> SAD, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (5 February 2024).



activity is closely connected to economic factors, such as the increasing cost of living in the nation. Education costs are a substantial and challenging barrier for anyone considering starting a family. The government's active participation is expected to reduce the impact of the sexual recession effectively.<sup>32</sup> . The child's survival is a crucial aspect when viewed from their perspective. It is intimately connected to the financial capacity of parents to sustain their children's livelihood. A paradigm proposes that having fewer children increases the likelihood of the child's survival, but having more children does not ensure their survival. PA said: "The child's ability to survive may cause a sexual recession. They believe having fewer children is more likely to ensure a child's survival than having more, but do not ensure that child's survival. Hence, this can be directly linked to life expectancy."<sup>33</sup>

Interviews with 32 Indonesian student participants from various educational backgrounds revealed that the perception of high living costs in a country could be a significant factor contributing to a sexual recession. It begs why marriage remains a contentious problem in several developed countries with a significantly good economic status. In the interim, developing nations with a middle economic status emerge as the most populous countries globally. One student at Airlangga University, PA, provided an answer to this question: "Industrialization and economic growth tend to change women's roles in society overall, which might impact their social position. An important component of slowing down population growth is improving the status of women."<sup>34</sup>

Previous literature studies reinforce the discussion on women's increasing role and status in modern society. This is seen through the growing population of educated women and the emergence of career-oriented women, dramatically increasing the proportion of single women annually.<sup>35</sup><sup>36</sup><sup>37</sup> Many contemporary women in East Asia, including Japan and South Korea, aspire to live independently by pursuing their careers

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<sup>32</sup> SNS, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (31 January 2024).

<sup>33</sup> PA, *Interview*, Surabaya, (26 February 2024).

<sup>34</sup> PA, *Interview*, Surabaya, (26 February 2024).

<sup>35</sup> Albert Esteve et al., "Demographic change and increasing late singlehood in East Asia, 2010–2050", *Demographic Research*, vol. 43 (2020), pp. 1367–98.

<sup>36</sup> Setsuya Fukuda, "The Changing Role of Women's Earnings in Marriage Formation in Japan", *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 646, no. 1 (2013), pp. 107–28.

<sup>37</sup> Gavin Jones, "Changing Marriage Patterns in Asia", *SSRN Electronic Journal* (2010), <http://www.ssrn.com/abstract=1716533>, accessed 27 Feb 2024.



and realizing their aspirations without intertwining family or marriage with employment.<sup>38</sup>

#### **4. Technological and globalization perspective**

The change in individual paradigms on marriage is one of the negative impacts of technological advances and globalization. Technology, in this case, social media, makes it easy for someone to explore various information from various parts of the world easily and quickly. As a result, not a few people's mindsets and lifestyles tend to be more Westernized. As stated by FNZ, a Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Engineering student at Airlangga University: "In my opinion, this sexual recession in East Asia is happening because of globalization, the exchange of information is getting easier. We all have gadgets that are easily accessible as a medium of information, ultimately making it easier for us to explore thoughts far from our eastern culture."<sup>39</sup> This is supported by a similar statement by ATJ: "As far as I know, this sexual recession is happening along with the development of social media. Someone will easily access content on social media, from those that are useful to those that are not."<sup>40</sup>

Digitalization provides a transparent framework for individuals to explore global societal activities through social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. The prevalent waithood movement illustrates the clash between individual freedoms and cultural conflicts rooted in patriarchal systems, as seen in most East Asian countries. Consequently, stigmas surrounding male superiority post-marriage emerge, which can serve as a justification for concerns regarding the potential for gender-based violence.<sup>41</sup>

#### **5. Demographic perspective**

The demographic transition theory posits that high population growth rates result from social, economic, and scientific advancements, leading to longer life expectancy and

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<sup>38</sup> Seo, "Low fertility trend in the Republic of Korea and the problems of its family and demographic policy implementation".

<sup>39</sup> FNZ, *Interview*, Surabaya, (3 Mar 2024).

<sup>40</sup> ATJ, *Interview*, Jakarta, (16 Jan 2024).

<sup>41</sup> Sri Asmita and Ema Fathimah, "RESESI SEKS: ANTARA KEBEBASAN INDIVIDU DAN HUKUM ISLAM", *FiTUA: Jurnal Studi Islam*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2024), pp. 19–37.



decreased infant mortality. On the other hand, a country's decreasing birth rate leads to a population graph that shows less exponential growth.<sup>42</sup>

Sexual recession brings problems that are more than just worries. If this situation persists, it would not only lead to economic issues but might also result in serious consequences such as a demographic crisis and human extinction.<sup>43</sup> From an economic perspective, a population decline leads to labor scarcity and a drop in production, including skills, expertise, and personnel essential for a nation's economic growth.<sup>44</sup> Regarding demographic structure, a decrease in human birth rates will impact a country's delayed regeneration and productive age.<sup>45</sup>

The researcher observed that issues related to this demographic garnered much participant interest. During interviews, many participants expressed concern about the phenomena of sexual recession, especially in industrialized nations with a pressing demand for human resources. AC, a student in the Islamic Broadcasting program at Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta, said that this occurrence represents the current and future human crisis. The future impact is expected to be significant as humans will lose part of their descendants.<sup>46</sup>

ARB, a student in the Arabic Literature program at Gadjah Mada University, expressed the same thoughts: "I am deeply concerned. The developed nations most hit by the sexual recession are in East Asia. People are worried that it would affect the country's development and make them question who will lead their nation?"<sup>47</sup>

RA, a student in the Islamic Religious Education department at Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta, had a similar concept: "Education, the economy, and development are just a few areas that will feel the effects of this sexual recession. Robots

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<sup>42</sup> Max Roser, "Demographic transition: Why is rapid population growth a temporary phenomenon?", *Our World in Data* (2023), <https://ourworldindata.org/demographic-transition>, accessed 18 Mar 2024.

<sup>43</sup> Simon Maybin, "Why I never want babies" (15 Aug 2018), <https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-45201725>, accessed 18 Mar 2024.

<sup>44</sup> Esra Jukijaya Sinurat, "Analisis Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Penurunan Populasi Babi Di Kecamatan Simanindo Kabupaten Samosir," Skripsi, 2019.

<sup>45</sup> Dwi Sapto Bagaskoro, Fiqih Aditya Alamsyah, and Surya Ramadhan, "Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Demografi: Fertilitas, Mortalitas dan Migrasi (Literature Review Perilaku Konsumen)," *Jurnal Ilmu Hukum, Humaniora Dan Politik* 2, no. 3 (16 June, 2022): 303–12, <https://doi.org/10.38035/jihhp.v2i3.1042>.

<sup>46</sup> AC, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (5 February 2024).

<sup>47</sup> ARB, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (30 January 2024).



are taking over more and more human jobs as the human population declines. The educational transfer is now merely a formality because of this.”<sup>48</sup>

The researcher logically explains Indonesian students' perceptions of the sexual recession phenomenon in East Asia, focusing on social, cultural, religious, economic, and demographic perspectives. Cultural and societal changes in Japan and South Korea have altered views on marriage and parenthood. The decline in religiosity in these societies has also impacted the institution of marriage. Economic uncertainty influences decisions about marriage and children. A slow population growth could lead to a crisis affecting a country's stability and development.

### **C.2. Implications of the Sexual Recession Phenomenon on Indonesian Students' Married Decisions**

Advancements in society, industrialization, and modernization might impact human thought processes and behaviors based on the life experiences of that era.<sup>49</sup><sup>50</sup><sup>51</sup> Several ideologies have diverged from religious routes and principles. Studying the concept of sexual recession among Generation Z is a pertinent topic that involves exploring various intriguing facts about this generation; one is typical of Generation Z, who excessively worry about numerous things.<sup>52</sup>

The researcher delves into the implications of the sexual recession on Indonesian students' future marriage decisions after studying the perspectives of Indonesian students, particularly from Generation Z. The impact of the sexual recession phenomena on the marriage tendencies and decisions of 20 Indonesian students from various regions in Java (Surabaya, Yogyakarta, and Jakarta) will be discussed below:

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<sup>48</sup> RA, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (4 February 2024).

<sup>49</sup> Sidiq Nur Zaman, “Survey Deloitte: Kekhawatiran Gen Z dalam Hidup”, *AKADEMIK: Jurnal Mahasiswa Humanis*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2024), pp. 54–62.

<sup>50</sup> Raju Adha, Ahmad Fuadi Tanjung, and Sugianto, “Persepsi dan Keputusan Investasi Masa Depan pada Generasi Milenial dan Gen Z”, *Al-Mutharahah: Jurnal Penelitian dan Kajian Sosial Keagamaan*, vol. 20, no. 2 (2023), pp. 257–66.

<sup>51</sup> Sirajul Fuad Zis, Nursyirwan Effendi, and Elva Ronaning Roem, “Perubahan Perilaku Komunikasi Generasi Milenial dan Generasi Z di Era Digital”, *Satwika: Kajian Ilmu Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2021), pp. 69–87.

<sup>52</sup> Suharyanti Suharyanti and Suharyanti Suharyanti, “Kampanye Generasi Berencana (GENRE), Sikap Generasi Z di Jakarta, Dan Penetrasi Media Sosial Selama Pandemi COVID-19,” *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi Dan Media* 25, no. 2 (28 Desember, 2021): 111, <https://doi.org/10.31445/jskm.2021.3762>.



### **1. Sexual recession affects Indonesian students' decisions on marriage.**

Based on the literature on sexual recession indicates that the decision to delay marriage and opt for a single lifestyle is intimately linked to this phenomenon. In Indonesia, intrapersonal factors, including financial and mental preparedness, knowledge about marriage, and a desire to pursue further education, are supported by interpersonal factors such as the absence of a suitable marriage partner highly influential. Further elaboration will follow below:

#### 1) Marriage requires severe planning.

In Islam, marriage is considered an essential act of worship that needs individuals enough provisions in psychological, mental, economic, and religious aspects. In marriage, the husband and wife want permanence. For every couple aspiring to attain this, much effort will be required. Conflict within the family involves not only the husband and wife but also the child, and it is common for the relatives of both partners to be involved.

The sexual recession phenomenon significantly impacts the thinking of Indonesian students regarding marriage, particularly in terms of their inclination to delay marriage until they achieve an ideal status. It is believed that getting married and starting a family necessitates a lengthy preparatory time, involving both the perspectives of the bride and groom and that of both partners' families.<sup>53</sup>

ASA, a student in the Special Education program at Jakarta State University, also conveyed the same idea: "The prevalence of sexual recession in East Asia prompts a deeper consideration of the decision to have children, as the level of preparedness required is substantial, particularly concerning the costs associated with living and education for the child. This reflection leads to a heightened contemplation of the implications of parenthood."<sup>54</sup>

SA, Special Education Studies program student at Jakarta State University, reinforced the argument: "Marriage can only work successfully if the financial situation supports it, so the wedding should be postponed. Many marriages are stressful, and divorce is due to financial difficulties."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> AF et.al, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (5 February 2024).

<sup>54</sup> ASA, *Interview*, Jakarta, (17 January 2024).

<sup>55</sup> S, *Interview*, Jakarta, (17 January 2024).





## 2) Career and academic preferences

Issues associated with delaying marriage are widespread among contemporary women, particularly those who live in urban regions. In East Asia, like Japan and South Korea, numerous women postpone marriage because of work commitments or the aspiration to pursue further education.<sup>56</sup> Indonesia is no exception; most women with successful occupations or advanced educations tend to delay getting married.<sup>57</sup>

Focusing on career and education is a valid argument, particularly for independent women. Many women choose to delay marriage primarily due to prioritizing their happiness and fulfilling financial obligations to their parents and relatives. ASA said: "I want to prioritize schooling first, followed by a good occupation. Because if I don't pursue my work and get married immediately, I'll lie to my family, who have always backed me and want me to succeed, and then get married, possibly 30 years later. I want to make my parents happy financially and in my single life."<sup>58</sup>

The results correspond with a study by Langgersari Elsari Novianti with 558 unmarried individuals aged 15 to 30 in the Bandung Municipal region. Research findings indicated that 55.4% of participants chose to delay marriage since they considered it a lower priority. Opting for further education and job development was more favorable than deciding to marry.<sup>59</sup> The facts mentioned above intersect with individual freedom, which serves as a foundation in various spheres of life: political, socio-cultural, and religious. Generally, women who advocate for the waithood movement believe that every individual is entitled to the freedom to cultivate familial relationships, including the right to marry, establish a household, raise children, pursue personal development, seek justice, attain personal freedoms, and experience security, as well as the rights associated with being a woman.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Wei-Jun Jean Yeung and Gavin W. Jones, "Emerging Dimensions of Marriage in Asia", *Journal of Family Issues* (2023), p. 0192513X2311574.

<sup>57</sup> Langgersari Elsari Novianti et al., "Pernikahan dalam Perspektif Masyarakat Bandung", *Journal Psikogenesis*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2018), pp. 79–90.

<sup>58</sup> ASA, *Interview*, Jakarta, (17 January 2024).

<sup>59</sup> Novianti et al., "Pernikahan dalam Perspektif Masyarakat Bandung".

<sup>60</sup> Ahmad Fajar, "Perlindungan Hak Individu Terhadap Kebebasan Menyampaikan Pendapat Melalui Informasi Elektronik dalam Perspektif HAM", *Al-Ahkam*, vol. 15, no. 2 (2019), p. 1.



3) More confident

Many unmarried young individuals perceive married life as strange and sometimes intimidating.<sup>61</sup> After marriage, the realities of life will inevitably be different than before. This factor motivates young individuals to delay marriage, aligning with the prevalent trend of deferring marriage or embracing waithood in contemporary society.<sup>62</sup> Indonesian society's stigma against this behavior might cause discomfort among those involved as it is seen as abnormal. Many of them experience emotional and mental depression. The sexual recession phenomena in East Asia surprisingly boosted the confidence of young unmarried Indonesians in their status. The increase in this phenomenon is seen as a form of support, particularly for unmarried individuals in Indonesia. S explained this throughout her interview: "I feel more at ease answering inquiries from those closest to me about "when will you get married?" once you meet the "old" criterion for marriage that most Indonesians adhere to. Additionally, the emergence of this phenomenon will undoubtedly help other Indonesian singles."<sup>63</sup>

ASA also echoed the opinion, he stated: "The number of people who choose not to have children will inevitably decrease the likelihood of marriage. This issue has also had a significant impact on Indonesia's single community, whether it be for individuals who choose to live alone or because of external conditions—the feeling of acceptance and encouragement for choosing to remain single or postpone marriage. Like... "Is not the only thing I have decided. Others around us also did it."<sup>64</sup>

## ***2. Fenomena Sexual recession does not impact Indonesian students' marriage decisions.***

1) Most Indonesian students hold individual views and perceptions about marriage.

The issues associated with the common trend of postponing marriage and choosing to remain single, particularly in East Asian countries like Japan and South Korea,

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<sup>61</sup> "Maraknya Pengakuan Generasi Sekarang Yang Enggan Menikah, Apa Penyebabnya?" accessed 10 Maret, 2024, <https://www.froyonion.com/news/esensi/maraknya-pengakuan-generasi-sekarang-yang-enggan-menikah-apa-penyebabnya>.

<sup>62</sup> Andika Andika et al., "Fenomena Waithood di Indonesia: Sebuah Studi Integrasi Antara Nilai-Nilai Keislaman Dan Sosial Kemanusiaan," *Jurnal Riset Agama* 1, no. 3 (Desember 15, 2021): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v1i3.15090>.

<sup>63</sup> S, *Interview*, Jakarta, (17 January 2024).

<sup>64</sup> ASA, *Interview*, Jakarta, (17 January 2024).



mainly stem from each person's viewpoint. The interpretation of marriage by society or individuals is crucial. This pertains to how young people in Indonesia perceive and respond to this phenomenon. PA, a student in the International Relations study program at Airlangga University, mentioned this in his interview: “Each partner will view things differently and respond to them in different ways. This goes back to how we think about marriage, including how much we value marriage, either as a goal or as a way to reach more than that. Creating a family and getting married are my responsibilities as a good citizen. We have social tasks and responsibilities because we are the smallest group in society—the family. Having a family can help promote social responsibility. Establishing a family is equivalent to founding a nation.”<sup>65</sup>

Several additional Indonesian students' statements also corroborate a similar viewpoint.<sup>66</sup> They expressed that the sexual recession phenomenon does not impact their marriage decisions as they believe each person has a different view and perception of how to deal with the problem <sup>67</sup>. SAD provided a more thorough explanation, stating that issues about marriage, such as financial worries, might have been effectively dealt with beforehand. This is one of the initiatives and tactics implemented by SAD to address a component contributing to the East Asian sexual recession issue. She stated: “You can begin saving money immediately, look for a suitable job, or start a business if you need a significant amount. Another essential consideration is looking for a spouse who is supportive of each other. Both of us are committed to achieving our goals; we work, study, and manage our home life together in preparation for the future.”<sup>68</sup>

2) Indonesian society's religious and cultural aspects strongly encourage marriage and childbearing.

In Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim, it is believed that romantic relationships between men and women should be connected to marriage to form a family. Ideally, this union should be supported by a valid religious contract and

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<sup>65</sup> PA, *Interview*, Surabaya, (26 February 2024).

<sup>66</sup> AC et.al, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (5 February 2024).

<sup>67</sup> AC, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (5 February 2024).

<sup>68</sup> SAD, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (5 February 2024).



positive law and should also involve the presence of children in the family.<sup>6970</sup> Society's views on marriage are derived from religious beliefs and become ingrained in a country's culture. This can have an indirect impact on human behavior and decision-making.

The replies from most Indonesian students suggest that a person's religiosity positively impacts their thinking. This study demonstrates this by examining how an individual's character and personality influence their response to and resolution of a situation. People with solid religiosity believe that sexual recession goes against the Islamic principle like Allah 'Azza wa Jalla is taught and his messenger conveyed.

SYN, a student in the Islamic Religious Education program at Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta, firmly stated that despite the widespread discussion of sexual recession, it has not affected her desire to get married in the future as she believes she has a role to be followed. The role model is Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).<sup>71</sup>

AC, a student in the Islamic Broadcasting program at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang, also expressed a similar viewpoint: "Why do you not wish to enter into matrimony? I feel that the majority of issues arise from nonbelievers who are unaware of the premise of marriage."<sup>72</sup> The robust cultural norms in Indonesian society endorsed this perspective on marriage, as articulated by AF during his interview.: " Since I reside in Indonesia, I don't believe it has an impact. If the proper soul partner has arrived, I wish to marry young per religious and moral teachings from our Prophet Muhammad Muhammad sallallahu 'alaihi wassalam. Why should we put it off?"<sup>73</sup>

Based on the description provided, various conclusions can be made. First, the sexual recession has significantly impacted the marriage intentions of Indonesian students, leading to a growing trend of delaying marriage. Supportive aspects are necessary, including thorough marriage preparation and the aspiration to pursue further education and establish a career. This phenomenon can offer emotional and mental

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<sup>69</sup> PEMKAB - *Mengenal dan Memahami Hakekat Perkawinan*, <https://kulonprogokab.go.id/v31/detil/3021/mengenal-dan-memahami-hakekat-perkawinan>, accessed 10 Mar 2024.

<sup>70</sup> Lindha Pradhipti Oktarina, Mahendra Wijaya, and Argyo Demartoto, "PEMAKNAAN PERKAWINAN (STUDI KASUS PADA PEREMPUAN LAJANG YANG BEKERJADI KECAMATAN BULUKERTO KABUPATEN WONOGIRI)", *Jurnal Analisa Sosiologi*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2018), <https://jurnal.uns.ac.id/jas/article/view/17412>, accessed 10 Mar 2024.

<sup>71</sup> SYN, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (30 January 2023).

<sup>72</sup> AC, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (5 February 2024).

<sup>73</sup> AF, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (5 February 2024).



support to unmarried individuals, boosting their confidence by making them feel they have companions who have collectively chosen to delay marriage. Second, this phenomenon does not influence Indonesian students' marriage decisions due to their positive understanding of marriage. The religious and cultural values of Indonesian society also played an essential role.

### **C.3 Concerns of Indonesian Students Regarding Marriage**

One characteristic inherent to Generation Z is anxiety and worry about various aspects of life. Multiple factors, such as rapid social and economic changes, can cause this issue. Generation Z has witnessed significant global events, like the global financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and others, which have generated specific concerns and anxieties for this generation. This situation impacts various areas, including marriage.<sup>74</sup>

The anxiety stemming from uncertainty is a crucial reason why the majority of Generation Z delays their marriages, as previously discussed. Such conflicts are expected for individuals who lack knowledge or experience regarding events they have not encountered. In marriage, the desire to build an ideal family can create anxieties arising from internal conflicts—such as those within the individuals contemplating marriage—and external factors, including financial capability, the personality of potential partners, and their families.

Based on data obtained through interviews with 32 Indonesian students, particularly those located across Java, the researcher categorized the findings into two groups specified by gender, observing significant differences in responses between male and female students. This categorization allows for a deeper understanding of Indonesian students' various concerns regarding marriage, which will be elaborated upon in the following points.

#### **1. Concerns of Indonesian Male Students Regarding Marriage**

##### **1) Financial concerns**

The ability to earn an income and provide for a family is generally a significant concern for men, as they will ultimately assume the head of the family, bearing

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<sup>74</sup> Pipit Fitriyani, "Pendidikan karakter bagi generasi Z", *Prosiding Konferensi Nasional Ke-7 Asosiasi Program Pascasarjana Perguruan Tinggi Muhammadiyah Aisyiyah (APPPTMA)*. Jakarta (2018), pp. 23–5.



responsibilities towards their wives and children physically and emotionally. Financial anxiety is regarded as a primary factor, particularly for men before marriage. The desire to fulfill obligations to parents while being a responsible husband and head of the household compels men to work harder. PA stated: "At my current age and as I plan to marry soon, financial issues are certainly at the forefront of my thoughts, especially as a man who will be the head of the family. This relates to my ability to provide for my wife and children while honoring my parents and in-laws, so there are many considerations to consider. I believe this is quite normal, as it is the first time we face a situation and circumstances we have never encountered before."<sup>75</sup>

Other interviewees, RA and SZ, voiced similar concerns, expressing that the responsibility of providing for a family often brings about fears of inadequacy in meeting the needs of their future wives and children. The unstable economic conditions in Indonesia exacerbate feelings of fear and anxiety regarding the inability to provide for one's wife and children in the future. The increasing difficulty in securing employment and the necessity of meeting essential human needs for clothing, food, and shelter create indirect pressure on men as prospective heads of households.<sup>76</sup>

## 2) Self-leadership capability in the family

The preparation for building a household is not solely related to financial capability. More critically, the intellectual readiness of the husband is also essential, including knowledge of religious teachings, marriage rights and obligations, and parenting styles. A lack of knowledge in these areas can lead to specific anxieties. Concerns about potentially failing as a family leader and being unable to support the family emotionally are also present. AC reflected: "My worry is about becoming a failing head of the family, unable to make them happy because I lack sufficient knowledge to educate my wife and children. But, In shaa Allah, I believe these worries will be easily overcome. As men, we will continue to learn."<sup>77</sup>

Another interviewee echoed a similar sentiment, noting that financial concerns are common among men due to their provider responsibilities. However, the burden of

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<sup>75</sup> PA, *Interview, Surabaya*, (26 February 2024).

<sup>76</sup> RA and RZ, *Interview, Yogyakarta*, (5 Februari 2024).

<sup>77</sup> PA, *Interview, Yogyakarta*, (5 February 2024).





leadership remains the most challenging responsibility for men. Fears of inadequacy in guiding their wives and children toward the right path are the most significant anxieties for many.<sup>78</sup>

### 3) Uncertainty about the future

The abstract nature of future marriages is a common concern experienced by individuals, whether they are about to marry or are already married. Initial hopes for a harmonious family life can sometimes clash with reality. The conflicts and dynamics within relationships are unpredictable and difficult to envision. One interviewee elaborated: "What will happen in the future? How will my marriage turn out? Will it align with my expectations? Or will unexpected issues arise that we have not even considered? The uncertainty about the future certainly brings a unique anxiety for me."<sup>79</sup> Similar worries were expressed by other respondents, who noted that the abstract nature of the future inevitably brings anxiety, particularly regarding aspects of marriage that they have yet to experience.<sup>80</sup>

## 2. *Concerns of Indonesian Female Students Regarding Marriage*

### 1) Fear of choosing the wrong partner

Concerns regarding a partner's character are among Indonesian female students' most common issues. This concern arises because a wife will spend the most time interacting with her husband. The hope for a partner with similar visions and missions is also considered. Consequently, anxiety about potentially finding a partner who is the complete opposite of what is desired is prevalent.

Recently, incidents of domestic violence and infidelity in Indonesia have become increasingly frequent.<sup>81,82</sup> This situation contributes to a growing anxiety among women about entering severe relationships, including marriage. Women, being physically and biologically more vulnerable than men, require a partner who can provide protection. AF

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<sup>78</sup> SZ, *Interview*, Surabaya, (27 February 2024).

<sup>79</sup> AF, *Interview*, Surabaya, (27 February 2024).

<sup>80</sup> WDS and FA, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (5 February 2024).

<sup>81</sup> Sonya Hellen Sinombor, "19 Tahun Punya UU, KDRT Tetap Saja Marak," *kompas.id*, September 20, 2023, <https://www.kompas.id/baca/humaniora/2023/09/20/kdrt-tetap-saja-marak-walau-sudah-19-tahun-punya-uu>.

<sup>82</sup> Rosseno Aji Nugroho, "Perselingkuhan PNS Makin Marak, 172 Kasus dalam 3 Tahun", *CNBC Indonesia*, <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20230830104501-4-467420/perselingkuhan-pns-makin-marak-172-kasus-dalam-3-tahun>, accessed 17 Mar 2024.



expressed: "Essentially, men should not be abusive. They should not engage in any form of violence, whether verbal or physical. This fear makes me anxious about marriage because in addition to not knowing who my destined partner is—which is already daunting—these issues are even more frightening. The impact is not only psychological but also deeply affects mental health."<sup>83</sup>

Traumatic experiences from the past, such as witnessing or experiencing domestic violence in one's family, can also significantly influence this anxiety. Such trauma and trust issues further diminish an individual's confidence in men, leading to a stronger desire to postpone marriage. In addition to fears of encountering abusive behavior from a partner, concerns about infidelity are frequently raised. Infidelity not only violates moral and religious values but can also severely impact family integrity and the mental health of a wife and children under parental care.<sup>84</sup>

In line with these concerns, emotional maturity in a partner is greatly valued. Key attributes include effective emotional regulation, conflict resolution skills, and fulfilling post-marital roles. Many female students express anxiety over the potential lack of willingness in their future partners to grow and develop, which could impede the quality of the marriage and the realization of their shared aspirations.<sup>85</sup>

## 2) Internal conflicts

Internal conflicts are everyday experiences for both women and men. While male students express anxiety about potentially failing as heads of the family, many female students share similar concerns regarding the possibility of failing as mothers and not being able to raise their children properly. Furthermore, irrational fears often plague their thoughts, such as worries about whether their partners will accept their shortcomings, changes in their partners' behavior in the future, and diminishing affection<sup>86</sup>. These concerns are interconnected with fears regarding infidelity and domestic violence, compounded by low self-esteem and insufficient readiness, leading to various anxieties about marriage that have yet to be experienced.

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<sup>83</sup> AF, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (5 February 2024).

<sup>84</sup> WKH, *Interview*, Jakarta, (17 Januari 2024).

<sup>85</sup> IL et.al, *Interview*, Jakarta, (17 Januari 2024).

<sup>86</sup> AF et.al, *Interview*, Yogyakarta, (5 Februari 2024).



### 3) Acceptance by the partner's family

Marriage unites two families, transforming distant relationships into close ones meaningfully. Upon marriage, women undergo several life transitions, including a change in status from single to having a spouse and entering a new family. Interactions between a wife and her husband's family will increase, requiring the prospective wife to adapt to previously unfamiliar customs and traditions. Consequently, some anxieties arise for the prospective spouse. IL expressed: "What concerns me is the acceptance by my partner's family. When I marry, I will enter a foreign family where I must learn their customs and habits. If I struggle to adapt, I may face rejection from my partner's family."<sup>87</sup>

Another female student, ATJ, voiced a similar concern and noted that worries about the prospective in-laws began after hearing stories from friends and social media about frequent conflicts between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law, leading to familial discord and the destabilization of marriages. She said: "I worry that I won't be able to get along with my in-laws or my husband's family. Families inevitably have different customs, so I fear I may struggle to adapt. Given the stories I've heard from friends and on social media about conflicts between wives and their husbands' families, I am increasingly anxious about my ability to handle such situations and the potential impact on my mental health."<sup>88</sup>

From the elaboration above, the researcher concludes that financial worries are the most common concern among male students before marriage, as they anticipate becoming family heads. Anxiety over failing in this role accompanies broader concerns about future uncertainties. Female students, on the other hand, express significant worries about choosing the wrong partner, grappling with internal conflicts like low self-esteem, and adapting to their partner's family dynamics.

## D. Conclusion

Indonesian students' perceptions of the phenomenon of sexual recession in East Asia are shaped by various factors, including social and cultural aspects, religious values, financial economics, technology, globalization, and demographic trends in the region. This phenomenon has significantly influenced some students' tendency to delay

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<sup>87</sup> IL, *Interview*, Jakarta, (18 Januari 2024).

<sup>88</sup> ATJ, *Interview*, Jakarta, (18 Januari 2024).



marriage, often due to a focus on preparing for marital life, pursuing education, and advancing their careers. For these individuals, delaying marriage offers emotional and mental stability as they prioritize personal development. However, the phenomenon has had little effect on other students, primarily because of their positive views on marriage, strong religious values, and adherence to Indonesian cultural norms.

Financial concerns are the most prevalent anxiety among male students before marriage, accompanied by fears of failing in their roles as family heads and uncertainties about the future. In contrast, female students experience anxiety over the possibility of choosing the wrong partner, internal conflicts stemming from low self-esteem, insufficient knowledge, and concerns regarding the acceptance of their partner's family. To address these concerns, it is recommended that individuals prepare themselves for marriage through education, financial planning, and mental readiness. This preparation can include attending pre-marriage classes, starting to save early, and resolving personal and familial conflicts. Seeking guidance from professionals, such as counselors or financial advisors, can further support individuals in navigating these challenges effectively.

Moreover, the government's role as an institution in community empowerment holds significant potential for mitigating the phenomenon of sexual recession in Indonesia. Within educational institutions, it is essential to incorporate comprehensive materials related to interpersonal relationships and family dynamics into the curriculum. Regarding financial issues, the government is anticipated to provide solutions by facilitating global employment opportunities and offering financial assistance to underprivileged families. Furthermore, further research on this topic could be conducted by examining various regions outside of Java, focusing on the older generations to observe potential differences in outcomes from this approach. It is hoped that such research will yield analytical strategies capable of exploratively addressing issues associated with sexual recessions in Indonesia.

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