



Millennials' Marriage Readiness: The Role of Marriage Perceptions and Social Support

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Abstract

Globalization has caused significant changes in the lifestyle patterns of young adults, including a decline in marriage rates, especially among the Millennial generation. In Indonesia, many Millennials are delaying or even not considering marriage. Therefore, it is important to understand the factors that influence marriage readiness. This study aims to analyze the influence of marriage perceptions and social support on marriage readiness among the Millennial generation. The method used in this study is quantitative, involving 775 unmarried individuals aged 28–43 years. The instruments used for collection were *The Marital Readiness Scale* to measure marriage readiness, *Marriage Perception Scale* to measure marriage perceptions, and *Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support* to measure social support. The results of the analysis using Pearson correlation showed a significant positive relationship between marriage perceptions and marriage readiness ($r = 0.480$), as well as between social support and marriage readiness ($r = 0.542$). In addition, linear regression analysis showed that marriage perceptions contributed 23% to marriage readiness, while social support contributed 29%. These findings suggest that positive views of marriage and adequate social support can improve marriage readiness among Millennials, leading to a more stable and harmonious marriage. Improved marriage readiness can contribute to happier and longer-lasting marriages. Therefore, interventions to improve perceptions and social support may be effective strategies in preparing Millennials for successful marriages.

Keywords: perception of marriage, social support, readiness for marriage, millennial generation, globalization

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1. Introduction

The phenomenon of declining marriages in this era of globalization is caused by young adults having a tendency to marry at a late age [1]. The results of a Pew Research Center survey in the United States showed a decline in marriage rates from 58% (in 1995) to 53% [2]. Meanwhile in Indonesia, based on BPS data, it was found that in 2023 there was a decrease in marriage rates of 128,000 (28.63%) marriages compared to 2022 [3]. *The Department of Population Dynamics Research* in Japan, in unmarried participants aged 18-34 years, found that 17.3% of men and 14.6% of women had no intention of marrying [4]. With this phenomenon, there is a delay or delay in marriage which can have an impact on various aspects of life [5 ; 6]. The shift in views on marriage held by the younger generation, especially Millennials born 1981 – 1996, which has exceeded the ideal age for marriage according to the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN),

which is 21 years for women and 25 for men [6 ; 7 ; 8]. The decline in marriage has paid more attention to individual readiness for marriage in various aspects [9]. Readiness for marriage is very important to prevent divorce in marriage, prevent violence and prepare for marital relationships [10 ; 11 ; 12 ; 13].

Marriage readiness refers to an individual's awareness of the expectations and roles associated with married life, the ability to fulfill marital responsibilities, and the ability to overcome problems that arise in married life and maintain a healthy relationship [14]. Having mature marriage readiness is expected to prevent problems in the household, such as divorce [15]. However, although marriage readiness has been widely discussed in the literature, there are still aspects that need to be explored more deeply, especially in the context of perceptions of marriage and the social support received by individuals.

To review further regarding readiness for marriage, there are several indicators that can be considered [14

]. The indicators that are the reference for this study include (a) *financial readiness*, individual readiness related to fulfilling needs after marriage, such as having a job, having savings for marriage and being able to meet family needs [5 ; 16 ; 17 ; 18 ; 19]; (b) *emotional readiness*, individual readiness to be able to build relationships in terms of feelings with a partner, such as having trust in a partner, being able to control anger and loving a partner [15 ; 20 ; 21]; (c) *interpersonal relationship readiness*, individuals realize that they have shortcomings in themselves and feel the need to improve and this can be supported by being able to appreciate cultural differences and practice good communication with their partners, for example by having good self-regulation [10]; (d) *family life and family role readiness*, individuals realize the importance of fulfilling responsibilities and roles when married, such as childcare, division of household chores and the role of being a partner [22]. (e) *sexual readiness*, includes the individual's ability to have regular biological (sexual) fulfillment with a partner, such as readiness to have children and have a healthy sexual relationship with a partner [23]; (f) *social responsibility readiness*, the individual has the readiness to fulfill social obligations such as raising children well, fulfilling military service and ability [23].

To determine readiness for marriage, it can be seen from how individuals perceive a marriage. A positive perception of marriage encourages individuals to prepare themselves more thoroughly [15]. Having a good perception can make individuals have thoughts to prepare for marriage better. Perception of marriage is an individual's perspective on marriage [24]. Conversely, a negative perception of marriage, often influenced by negative experiences or fear of marriage, can hinder an individual's readiness to undergo marriage with sufficient confidence and readiness. Perception of marriage is an understanding of an individual's thoughts, views, and feelings about marriage [25]. Previous research has shown a relationship between perception of marriage and readiness for marriage, but has not explained in detail how various factors including dimensions of readiness for marriage such as financial, emotional, and social readiness are closely related to perception of marriage and social support [26 ; 27]. Perceptions about marriage play a crucial role in shaping an individual's readiness for marriage. Poor perceptions of marriage are often influenced by negative life experiences, such as domestic violence, which can trigger anxiety and fear about marriage. Individuals who have had negative experiences with marriage, either directly or through observations of family or close friends, tend to have concerns about infidelity, violence, or lack of independence in marriage [19]. Research shows that negative life experiences, such as those involving marriage, show that 28% of young adults worry about infidelity, 25% about being treated harshly, and 19% about being abandoned by their partner [19]. Conversely, individuals who have positive knowledge

and views about marriage tend to have better readiness for marriage. A positive perception of marriage can be a strong foundation for building a harmonious family, as individuals with positive perceptions are more open to preparing for marriage with full readiness and confidence [28]. In addition, positive attitudes toward marriage can increase an individual's desire to marry and better prepare them to create a harmonious family [29 ; 30 ; 31].

The importance of marriage readiness lies not only in the individual's perception of marriage, but also in the social support received [32]. Social support, especially from family and peers, plays a significant role in increasing marriage readiness [33]. Good social support can provide a sense of security, comfort, and help individuals overcome various fears and concerns that arise regarding marriage. With the right support, individuals will feel more prepared to face the challenges of marriage and can build healthier and more harmonious relationships [29 ; 31]. Therefore, the quality of social support an individual has is an important factor in strengthening their marriage readiness.

Social support plays an important role in marriage readiness. from individuals [27]. Having good social support for individuals is related to marital satisfaction and can prevent postpartum depression [34]. In married life, *social support* can help individuals understand and explain their roles and functions in marriage [35]. This is in line with the dimensions of marital readiness, namely *family life and family role readiness*. Having good social support can improve an individual's perception of marriage. Individuals with good social support can create a positive perception of marriage and can change their perspectives to create a harmonious family [36].

The phenomenon of declining marriage rates in Indonesia has had a significant impact, not only on individuals, but also on social stability, the quality of family relationships, and the economic structure of society as a whole. Previous studies have shown a relationship between perceptions of marriage and readiness for marriage, with differences in indicators used, such as personality, economic, physical, psychological, and spiritual [26 ; 29]. Previous studies have also found a relationship between social support and readiness for marriage, however, due to differences in the measurement tools used to assess readiness for marriage [27 ; 33 ; 37]. Previous studies have not discussed indicators of readiness for marriage, including *interpersonal relationship readiness*, *family life and family role readiness*, and *social responsibility readiness*. Therefore, this study aims to further examine the role of perceptions of marriage and social support on readiness for marriage by exploring dimensions that have not been examined by previous studies.

2. Research methodology

2.1. Participants

The criteria for this participant were those born between 1981 and 1996 (aged 28 and 43) and single. In measuring demographic data, this study did not impose any limitations such as gender, education, position, marital status, or affiliation with a particular race or ethnicity. In data collection, the researcher used a *non-probability sampling technique* with *convenience sampling*. This technique was chosen to suit the needs of the research participants. Data collection used an online questionnaire with the Google Forms application. This research questionnaire was distributed through social media.

2.2. Measurement

Marital readiness variables were measured using *The Marital Readiness Scale* with 30 items in six dimensions: *financial readiness* ($\alpha = .90$), *emotional readiness* ($\alpha = 0.91$), *readiness for family life and roles* ($\alpha = 0.81$), *sexual life readiness* ($\alpha = 0.91$), *readiness for social responsibilities* ($\alpha = 0.92$), and *readiness for interpersonal relationships* ($\alpha = 0.79$). Example item: "I can trust my partner." A five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) was used to measure individual readiness for marriage. The reliability of the measuring instrument in this study was $\alpha = .88$.

The marriage perception variable was measured using *the Marriage Perception Scale (MPS)*, which consists of 47 unidimensional statements. An example item is: "Marriage provides psychological security for individuals." A five-point Likert scale was used, with a reliability of $\alpha = 0.89$ in this study.

Social support variables were measured using *the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)*, which has been translated into Indonesian. This instrument has 12 items across three dimensions: *family* (4 items), *friends* (4 items), and *significant others* (4 items). An example item is: "I get the help and emotional support I need from my family." A five-point Likert scale was used, with a reliability of $\alpha = 0.70$ in this study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 . Research Subject Overview

A total of 829 participants were recruited for this study. However, 775 participants met the criteria for data collection. Fifty-four participants were unusable due to age inconsistencies and marital status. Participants were categorized based on various demographic characteristics, including age, gender, relationship status, residence, educational background, occupation, and income. The collected data illustrated variations in these demographic aspects, with a focus on the categories with the highest frequency.

The participants in this study were mostly in the age range of 28 to 30 years (64.65%) of the total participants and the average (*mean*) of participants in this study was 30 years old ($SD=2.30$).

Table 1. Demographic Data of Participants Age Categorization

Categorization	Data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	28	181	23.35
	29	163	21.03
	30	157	20.26
	31	127	16.39
	32	51	6.58
	33	27	3.48
	34	23	2.97
	35	17	2.19
	36	8	1.03
	37	7	0.90
	38	5	0.65
	39	4	0.52
	40	2	0.26
	41	2	0.26
	42	1	0.13

Based on gender, the majority of participants in this study were female, at 53.29%. This indicates that women dominated the sample, although a significant number of males were also recorded.

Table 2. Demographic Data of Participants by Gender Categorization

Categorization	Data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Woman	362	46.71
	Man	413	53.29

Regarding relationship status, more than half of the participants in this study were single, at 50.97%. This indicates that the majority of participants were not in a formal relationship or marriage. This provides important insight into the participants' social status, which may influence their attitudes, behaviors, or responses in this study.

Table 3. Demographic Data of Participants by Gender Categorization

Categorization	Data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Single	395	50.97
	In relationship ^a	147	18.97
	Fiancé	233	30.06

Based on their most recent educational level, the majority of participants in this study had a bachelor's degree (S1) or diploma 4 (D4) degree, representing 57.03% of the total. This indicates that the majority of respondents had a higher educational background, which likely reflects a more structured level of knowledge, skills, and mindset in addressing the issues or topics raised in this study.

Table 4. Demographic Data of Participants by Last Education Categorization

Categorization	Data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Last education	JUNIOR SCHOOL	10	1.29
	SENIOR SCHOOL	153	19.74
	Diploma (D1/ D2/ D3)	153	14.84
	Bachelor/Diploma 4	442	57.03
	Masters (S2)	55	7.10

Based on occupation, the majority of participants in this study worked as private sector employees, at 66.45%. This indicates that the majority of respondents came from the private sector, which may reflect broader characteristics or economic conditions in the community.

Table 5. Demographic Data of Participants by Occupational Categorization

Categorization	Data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Work	Student	5	0.65
	Private sector employee	515	66.45
	Government employees	133	17.16
	Self-employed	122	15.74

Based on monthly income data, the majority of participants in this study earned between Rp7,000,000.00 and Rp9,000,000.00 per month, representing 33.29%. This indicates that most respondents fall within the middle income range, which may reflect a specific socioeconomic group within the study population.

Table 6. Demographic Data of Participants Income Categorization

Categorization	Data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Income (in one month)	<Rp1,000,000.00	12	1.55
	IDR 1,000,000.00 – IDR 3,000,000.00	105	13.55
	IDR 4,000,000.00 – IDR 6,000,000.00	243	31.35
	IDR 7,000,000.00 – IDR 9,000,000.00	258	33.29
	>Rp10,000,000.00	167	20.26

3.2 . Variable Overview

The three variables in this study, namely perception of marriage, social support, and readiness for marriage, used a scale of one to five, so that all variables had a hypothetical *mean value* of 3.00. If the empirical *mean* of a variable is higher than the hypothetical *mean*, the variable or dimension is categorized as high, and if it is below the hypothetical *mean*, it is categorized as low.

The description of the variables for marriage readiness (KM) consists of variables and dimensions including *family readiness* (FR), *emotional readiness* (ER),

readiness for family life and roles (RFLR), *sexual life readiness* (SLR), and *readiness for social responsibility* (RSR). For the marriage readiness variable, the empirical *mean value* = 4.19 is greater than the hypothetical *mean value* = 3.00, with *SD* = 0.49, minimum = 1.00, and maximum = 5.00. This indicates that the participants in this study have a high perception of marriage. Of the six dimensions of marriage readiness, the highest dimension is *sexual readiness* ($M = 4.45$). While the lowest is *the readiness for interpersonal relationships dimension* ($M = 4.02$). A more complete description of the marriage readiness variables is in Table 7.

Table 7. Data Overview of Marriage Readiness Variable

Variables /Dimensions	Min.	Max.	Elementary School	Mean	
				Empirical	Hypothetical
KM	1.00	5.00	0.49	4.19	5.00
FR	1.00	5.00	0.55	4.32	5.00
ER	1.00	5.00	0.55	4.32	5.00
RFLR	1.00	5.00	0.57	4.41	5.00
SLR	1.00	5.00	0.56	4.45	5.00
RSR	2.00	5.00	0.54	4.31	5.00

The description of the marriage perception variable has an empirical *mean value* of 3.81, which is greater than the hypothetical *mean value* of 3.00, with an *SD* value of 0.56, a minimum of 1.00, and a maximum of 5.00. This means that the participants in this study have a high perception of marriage.

For the description of the social support variable, the empirical *mean value* is 4.06, which is greater than the hypothetical *mean value* of 3.00, with *SD* = 0.55, minimum = 1.00, and maximum = 5.00. This indicates that the participants in this study have a description of social support in the high category. Of the three dimensions of social support, the highest dimension is *significant others* ($M = 4.23$), while the lowest is the friends dimension ($M = 4.04$). For more complete data, see Table 8.

Table 8. Data Overview of Social Support Variables

Variables/Dimensions	Min.	Max.	Elementary School	Mean	
				Empirical	Hypothetical
Social Support	1.00	5.00	0.59	4.06	3.00
Family	1.00	5.00	0.67	4.08	3.00
Friend	1.00	5.00	0.72	4.04	3.00
Significant Others	1.00	5.00	0.65	4.23	3.00

3.3 . Correlation Test

The correlation test in this study was conducted using *Pearson correlation* to examine the relationship between perception of marriage and readiness for marriage ($r = 0.480$, $p < 0.05$) and social support and

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readiness for marriage ($r = 0.542, p < 0.05$). Both correlation tests revealed a significant and positive relationship between the variables studied. This means that an increase in the score on the perception of marriage variable tends to be followed by an increase in the score on the readiness for marriage variable; in addition, an increase in the score on the social support variable tends to be followed by an increase in the score on the readiness for marriage variable.

3.3 . Regression Test

A linear regression test was conducted to examine the effect of marriage perception on marriage readiness. The results showed an F value of 230.820, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.230$. This indicates that marriage perception can influence marriage readiness by 23%, while the remaining 77% is influenced by other factors. Furthermore, a linear regression test was conducted to examine the effect of social support on marriage readiness. The analysis results showed an F value of 321.123, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.293$. This result means that social support influences marriage readiness by 29.3%, while the remaining 70.7% is influenced by other factors. For more details, see Figure 1.

Figure 1. Results of the Regression Test of Marriage Perceptions on Marriage Readiness Dimensions

This study further evaluates the perception of marriage towards the dimensions of readiness for marriage and social support towards the dimensions of readiness for marriage. The dimensions of readiness for marriage studied are *financial readiness*, *emotional readiness*, *readiness for family life and roles*, *sexual life readiness*, *readiness for social responsibilities*, and *readiness for interpersonal relationships*. The results of the regression test of perception of marriage towards the dimensions of readiness for marriage are shown in Figure 2, stating that all dimensions have a significant role with a p value < 0.05 . Based on the results of the linear regression test, the perception of marriage has the most significant influence on the dimension of readiness for marriage, *readiness for interpersonal relationships*, by 46.2% ($R^2 = 0.462$, $F(1) = 663.830$). Then, the perception of marriage has less influence on the dimension of readiness for marriage, namely *sexual life readiness* (SLR) with a value of 9.7% ($R^2 = 0.097$, $F(1) = 14.920$).

The results of the regression test of social support on the dimensions of marriage readiness are shown in Figure 2, stating that all dimensions have a significant role with a p value < 0.05 . Based on the results of the linear regression test, the perception of marriage has the most significant influence on the dimension of marriage readiness for social responsibilities by 21.5% ($R^2 = 0.215$, $F(1) = 211.089$). Then, lack of social support has the lowest influence on the dimension of marriage readiness, namely *sexual life readiness* (SLR) by 14.2% ($R^2 = 0.142$, $F(1) = 128.032$).

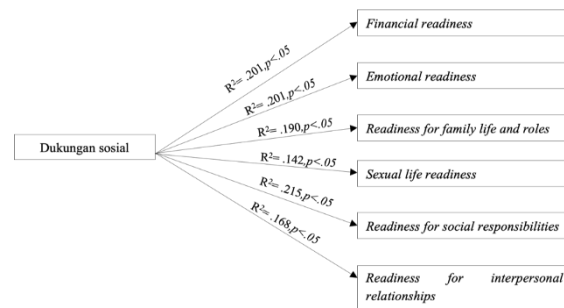


Figure 2. Results of the Regression Test of Social Support on the Dimensions of Readiness to Marry

3. 4. Discussion

This study aims to analyze the role of perceptions of marriage and social support on marriage readiness among the Millennial generation. Several findings in this study are: (a) perceptions of marriage have a significant relationship with marriage readiness; (b) perceptions of marriage can predict marriage readiness; (c) social support has a significant relationship with marriage readiness; (d) social support can predict marriage readiness.

The first finding indicates a significant positive relationship between perceptions of marriage and marital readiness. This means that Millennials with a high perception of marriage will have a high degree of marital readiness. This finding aligns with previous research that also examined perceptions of marriage and marital readiness [26].

The second finding shows that perception of marriage has a significant influence on readiness for marriage by 23%, while the remaining 77% is influenced by other factors. Perception of marriage is most influenced by the dimension of readiness for marriage, namely *readiness for interpersonal relationships*, at 46.2%. The results of this study are supported by previous research which found that many things influence readiness for marriage, such as emotional, financial, and social factors [36]. This research shows that interpersonal aspects, such as the ability to communicate and interact with a partner, are very important in shaping perceptions of marriage and readiness for marriage [21]. The study found that people with positive perceptions of parental involvement in parenting were more prepared for

marriage. This suggests that social factors and family support play a role in marriage readiness.

The third finding shows that social support has a significant positive relationship with marriage readiness. This positive relationship means that individuals with high social support can have high marriage readiness. These findings are in line with previous research that found that the stronger the social support received, the higher the individual's readiness for marriage [33]. This social support includes emotional, instrumental, and informational support that helps individuals develop the skills and confidence necessary for marriage, such as communication, conflict resolution, and mutual understanding [36].

The fourth finding shows that social support can influence marriage readiness by 29.3%, while the remaining 70.7% is influenced by other factors. Social support is most strongly influenced by the marriage readiness dimension, namely *readiness for social responsibilities*, at 21.5%. This is in line with previous research that found the influence of social support on marriage readiness [36]. An individual's readiness to fulfill social responsibilities can be influenced by the social support around them. This is in line with previous research that states that having social support can help individuals feel more confident and ready to take on larger social roles and obligations in married life, such as fostering relationships with their partner's family, adapting to social change, and maintaining long-term social stability [33].

4. Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that perceptions of marriage and social support play a significant role in influencing readiness for marriage. Perceptions of marriage contribute 23% to overall readiness for marriage, with the largest influence of 46.2% on *the readiness for interpersonal relationships dimension*. Social support contributes 29.3% to overall readiness for marriage, with the largest influence on the *readiness for social responsibilities dimension* at 21.5%. These findings emphasize the importance of positive perceptions of marriage and strong social support in preparing young people to face the challenges of marriage. This study also found significant differences in readiness for marriage based on age, education, employment, and relationship status, indicating that demographic factors also influence individual perceptions and readiness for marriage.

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