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FROM BANQUET TO GRATITUDE: REINTERPRETING WALIMAH IN GEN Z'S #NIKAHDIKUA DISCOURSE ON TIKTOK

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Abstract

This study examines how the choice of a simple marriage at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) changes the way Indonesian Generation Z understands walimah in the #NikahDiKUA discourse on TikTok. The study uses a qualitative approach with a netnographic method on seven viral posts from June 2025 to March 2026 containing 31,406 comments, of which the 19 top comments were thematically coded. The findings show that what is questioned is not the recommendation of walimah, but the large reception as a social obligation and a marker of status. The meaning of walimah shifts toward proportionate gratitude, with a scale negotiated against means, post-marriage needs, and family pressure. Economic reasons are more dominant than religious ones; hadith on ease in marriage function more as an available justification. Financial concerns do not prove financial behavior, and the influence of influencers cannot be established. Available indicators suggest that simple marriage will likely persist as a legitimate option rather than replace the conventional reception. The analysis of taysir, hifẓ al-māl, and tabdhir confirms the need to distinguish the venue of the marriage contract, the scale of the reception, and whether a walimah is held. This distinction is a contribution to the study of Islamic family law.

Keywords: Walimah; Marriage at the KUA; Generation Z; Netnography; Maqasid al-Shariah.

Abstract

This study examines how the choice of a simple marriage at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) changes the way Indonesian Generation Z understands the wedding feast (walimah) in the #NikahDiKUA discourse on TikTok. Using a qualitative netnographic approach, it analyzes seven viral posts from June 2025 to March 2026 containing 31,406 comments, of which 19 top comments were thematically coded. The findings show that what is questioned is not the recommendation of walimah, but the large reception as a social obligation and a marker of status. The meaning of walimah shifts toward proportionate gratitude, with its scale negotiated against means, post-marriage needs, and family pressure. Economic reasons are more prominent than religious ones; hadith on ease in marriage serve mainly as an available justification. Financial concerns do not prove financial behavior, and the influence of influencers cannot be established. Available indicators suggest that simple marriage will likely persist as a legitimate option rather than replace the conventional reception. Analysis of taysir, hifẓ al-māl, and tabdhir confirms the need to distinguish the venue of the contract, the scale of the reception, and whether a walimah is held.

Keywords: *Walimah; Marriage at the KUA; Generation Z; Netnography; Maqasid al-Shariah.*

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INTRODUCTION

Historically, marriage in Indonesian society has been understood as a communal event involving extended families and the surrounding community. *Walimah*, which is the religiously encouraged marriage banquet, often manifests in social practice as a large reception that simultaneously serves as a status marker and the fulfillment of family expectations. Indonesian Generation Z, who grew up with high digital exposure and a self-driven character (Hinduan et al., 2020), appears to treat the institution of marriage differently. Statistics Indonesia data records a nationwide decline in registered marriages of up to 28.63 percent over the past decade (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024), which was initially interpreted as an indication of an aversion to marriage. However, TikTok reveals a more complex picture: many young couples choose to marry simply at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) without a large reception and openly share it as an achievement using the hashtag #NikahDiKUA. The relevant question for the study of Islamic family law is not merely why couples choose the KUA, but what changes in the understanding of *walimah* when a large reception is no longer considered a necessity.

Several previous studies have highlighted the financial burdens of marriage traditions as a driver of changing preferences among Generation Z. Sudirman et al. (2025) found that most Bugis-Makassar Generation Z in Sorong view *panaik* money critically as an onerous financial burden, though some still accept it as a customary obligation. Similar findings were presented by Maani et al. (2024), showing that the high value of *panai* money in the Bugis society of Indragiri Hilir has the potential to trigger social problems, including delayed marriages. Hadi et al. (2023) in Surabaya also documented a paradigm shift toward wage-based dowries as a response to the economic reality of Muslim Generation Z. Regarding financial planning, Fitriani et al. (2026) showed that Islamic financial literacy plays an important role in shaping Generation Z's financial readiness before marriage, while Ubaidillah et al. (2026) specifically linked the phenomenon of doom spending—impulsive spending patterns caused by economic uncertainty among Generation Z—with the need to reconstruct the understanding of *Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah fī Ḥifẓ al-Māl* (preservation of wealth) to make it more relevant to contemporary family economic resilience challenges.

On the religious aspect, Trisna et al. (2026) documented a shift in the meaning of *kafā'ah* (spousal compatibility) among Generation Z Family Law students at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, who now integrate values of gender equality and shared life goals into classical criteria. Aprilianto et al. (2025) found that Indonesian Generation Z possesses a high level of religious tolerance alongside an openness to contextual applications of Islamic law. Meanwhile, the role of digital media has been highlighted by Dalaylı (2023), who showed that Generation Z's interaction with influencers significantly influences their perception of religious and cultural values, and Firdaus (2026), who specifically examined how algorithmic exposure to "Marriage is Scary" content on TikTok shapes gamophobia or fear of marriage among Generation Z women in Bogor City. Institutionally, Muhajir et al. (2024) demonstrated that the KUA of Makassar City strives to prevent marriage violations through the principle of *mashlahah mursalah*, while Fathurrahman et al. (2023) examined the role of the *penghulu* in harmonizing

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marriage age limits through the perspective of Imam As-Syatibi's theory. At the level of values, Maloko et al. (2026) showed that honesty, equality, and tolerance serve as humanist values underlying partner selection among Generation Z.

The phenomenon of KUA marriages has itself begun to be researched. Dahlan (2024) in Bandar Lampung found that couples view KUA marriages as a simple, cost-free, and memorable choice, redirecting party funds to other needs, and that stigma toward KUA marriages has shifted; he linked its rise to cost-free services based on 2014 regulations. Kusumaaningrum et al. (2025), through an anthropological study, found that Generation Z marriages at the KUA tend to reduce traditional rituals and communal elements while shifting values from collectivism to individualism. Fajrin (2026), in a sociology undergraduate thesis at KUA Cibiru Bandung, found economic motives to be the most dominant and social media to act as an amplifier. From the perspective of *walimah* jurisprudence, Robiansyah et al. (2025) demonstrated the tension between simplicity and social prestige in receptions, whereas Yusra (2025) found public views divided between honor through large parties and financial burdens.

These studies provide a foundation regarding the financial burdens of tradition (Hadi et al., 2023; Maani et al., 2024; Sudirman et al., 2025), financial readiness (Fitriani et al., 2026; Ubaidillah et al., 2026), partner criteria and religious values (Aprilianto et al., 2025; Trisna et al., 2026), the role of digital media (Dalaylı, 2023; Firdaus, 2026), and motives and traditional changes in KUA marriages (Dahlan, 2024; Kusumaaningrum et al., 2025). However, the objects studied are cost burdens, financial readiness, fear of marriage, motives for choosing KUA, and ritual changes; none have made the meaning of *walimah* itself the primary object. In the author's search of Scopus databases and national journal portals, no studies have been found analyzing how Indonesian Generation Z reinterprets *walimah*, both as a religious recommendation and as a social obligation, using primary netnographic data from TikTok, and explicitly distinguishing three elements often conflated in discussions of this trend: the choice of the marriage venue at the KUA, the scale of the reception, and whether or not a *walimah* is held. The novelty of this research lies in shifting the object from motives for choosing the KUA to the meaning of wedding celebrations, in the transparency of data selection and netnographic coding, and in these analytical distinctions for the study of Islamic family law.

This study aims to explain how the choice of a simple marriage at the KUA discussed on TikTok changes how Generation Z understands *walimah* socially and religiously. This objective is broken down into three questions. First, how is *walimah* understood in creator narratives and netizen comments? Second, how do financial concerns, content visibility, and family resistance frame this understanding? Third, how do the principles of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, *taysir*, *hifẓ al-māl*, and the prohibition of *tabdhir* help interpret the findings, particularly in distinguishing the choice of the contract venue, the scale of the reception, and the presence or absence of a *walimah*?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Approach

This study employs a qualitative approach using a netnographic method, which is an adaptation of ethnography designed to understand interactions and meanings formed within

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online communities (Kozinets, 2020). This approach was chosen because discussions regarding KUA marriages take place almost entirely on TikTok. This study reads meanings expressed in content and comments, rather than the actual offline behavior of couples.

Figure 1 summarizes the research framework, moving from phenomena and problems, research questions, data collection and analysis, to interpretation and outputs. This flow demonstrates that Islamic legal concepts are applied during the interpretation stage after themes are formed from the data, and that findings are limited to meanings expressed in online discourse.

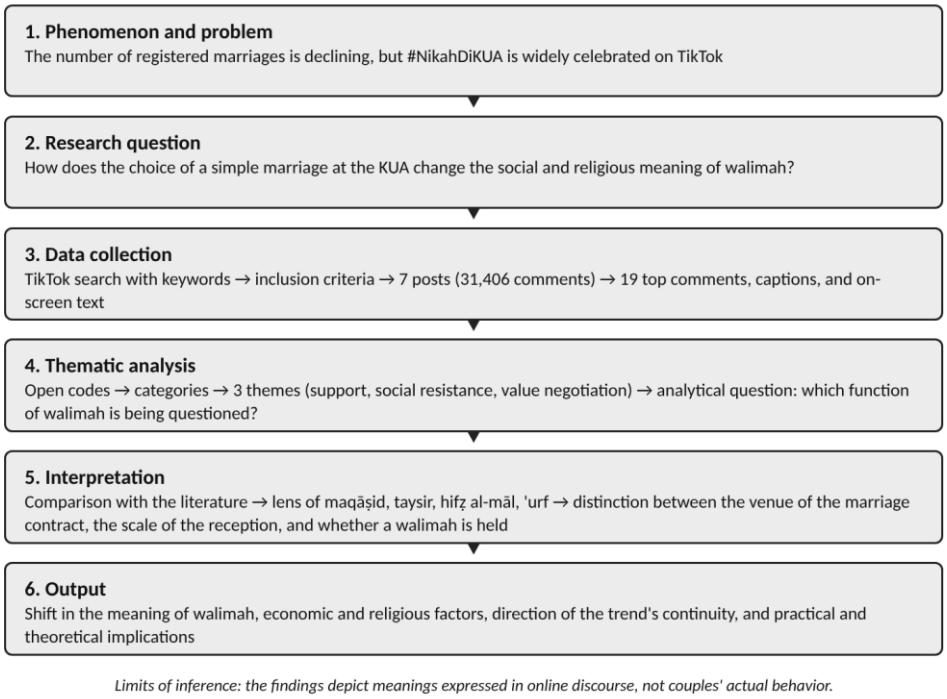


Figure 1. Research Framework and Stages

Source: author's own elaboration.

Post Selection and Data Collection

Data were collected via TikTok's search feature using keywords related to simple marriages at the KUA, including "intimate wedding", "simple gen z wedding", "minimalist and intimate wedding style", "kua wedding honeymoon", "kua wedding concept", and "kua wedding inspiration". A post was included as a unit of analysis if it met four criteria: public and in Indonesian language; featured the marriage contract at the KUA as the core content; was uploaded between June 2025 and March 2026; and had high engagement, with a reach ranging from 28,700 to 1,100,000 likes. From the qualifying posts, seven were chosen to represent narrative variations: time efficiency, cost savings, fund reallocation to experiences, and contrast with social pressure, including one paid partnership post. This selection was purposive rather than random and is thus not intended to represent all similar content.

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The seven posts contained 31,406 comments. The analyzed comments consisted of top-level comments appearing in TikTok's default order when the comment panel was opened and scrolled to a limited extent totaling 19 comments (one to four per post) along with their like counts and dates. Comment replies were not analyzed. All data were recorded as screenshots during a single observation period, meaning like and comment counts reflect figures at the time of observation. Additionally, captions and on-screen text for each post were recorded as part of the data.

Coding and Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was conducted in three stages. First, captions, on-screen text, and comments were read repeatedly, and each meaning unit was assigned an open code close to the data language, such as "money for post-marriage needs", "extended family refuses", or "still want to sit on the wedding dais". Second, similar codes were grouped into categories based on what their authors defended or questioned, forming three comment themes: support (comments supporting or justifying simple marriages, generally citing costs, post-marriage priorities, or practicality); social resistance (comments liking the idea but citing family, parents, or environment as barriers); and value negotiation (comments accepting simplicity while retaining certain celebration elements). Each comment was assigned to a single theme based on its primary argument, and comments fitting no theme were recorded separately.

Third, each theme was read with an analytical question: what is considered lost, maintained, or replaced when a large reception is not held, and what function of *walimah* is being questioned (e.g., status marker, banquet of gratitude, prayers and blessings, or fulfilling family expectations). The answers were then compared with literature and interpreted using the concept of *maqāṣid al-syarīʿah* only at the final stage. Through this sequence, Islamic legal concepts served as an interpretive lens for the findings rather than a starting point determining them. Table 2 presents codes, comment examples, and their meanings so readers can evaluate the interpretive fit.

Validity, Ethics, and Data Limitations

Data validity was maintained through triangulation by comparing captions, on-screen text, and comments for each post, and subsequently comparing findings with indexed literature. All data were public, and no private accounts were observed, in line with internet research ethics guidelines (franzke et al., 2020). Comments were quoted without usernames to protect the identity of non-public figures, while creator accounts were cited because their content was published openly to a wide audience. Several limitations should be noted: the 19 analyzed comments were selected based on visibility and thus do not reflect the distribution of all comments; comment replies were not analyzed; coding was performed manually without inter-coder reliability testing; and social media data are dynamic and do not statistically represent Indonesia's Generation Z population. Consequently, the findings are exploratory and contextual.

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RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data Profile and the Three Motifs Framed by Creators

Table 1 presents the profile of the seven analyzed posts and their main narrative themes.

Table 1. Profile of Primary TikTok Post Data

Account	Likes	Comments	Main Narrative Theme
@jundeeey	1,100,000	10,258	Normal routine after the marriage contract
@ahnaf23	489,600	4,175	The KUA and a honeymoon as the "best choice"
@kssalya	460,600	6,082	Cost savings amid economic conditions
@Ruriamma	176,400	3,340	Preference for a simple and quick process
@SF	119,900	6,366	Time efficiency after the marriage contract
@Pasutri	93,200	965	Funds redirected into future savings
@Meilita Elaine	28,700	220	Contrast between a simple process and social pressure

Source: researcher's observation, 2025–2026. Like and comment counts are figures at the time of observation.

Total comments across the seven posts reached 31,406. Creator narratives exhibit three motifs. Efficiency motifs appear in @SF, @jundeeey, and @Ruriamma, showcasing that marriage need not interrupt daily routines and can be executed simply and swiftly. Economic motifs appear in @kssalya and @Pasutri, framing decisions around savings and fund reallocation for post-marriage needs. Autonomy motifs appear in @ahnaf23, who diverted the budget toward a honeymoon, and @Meilita Elaine, who frames wedding burdens around gossip rather than the contract itself. These three motifs should be read as methods creators use to present choices to audiences rather than proof of actual motivations, aligning with the self-driven character of Generation Z (Hinduan et al., 2020). One important note: across the analyzed content and comments, the word *walimah* does not appear; instead, terms used are reception, party, and celebration. This study reads receptions as the most recognized social manifestation of *walimah*, while acknowledging they are not identical.

The Shift in the Meaning of *Walimah*: From Social Obligation to Proportionate Gratitude

The primary question of this study is answered most clearly in how receptions are positioned within the narratives. The post by @Ruriamma quotes a question frequently posed by society, "How can you get married with just a contract at the KUA?" and answers it with, "We just want something simple and fast (*sat set*), right?" The post by @Meilita Elaine states that getting married at the KUA is light, whereas the heavy part is what people say. In both posts, what is questioned is not the contract or religious recommendations, but social expectations that weddings must be accompanied by parties deemed proper by others. Comments reinforce this, such as "marriage is cheap, prestige is expensive" and "feeding parents' egos and just one day of prestige". In other words, receptions are questioned

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primarily regarding their function as status markers and the fulfillment of family and environmental evaluations.

A second shift concerns who is feasted and for what purpose. One comment questions large receptions that "feed the mouths of people who might not even pray for us sincerely" and opts for "just family". This comment is intriguing because it measures receptions against one of the religious functions of *walimah* which guest prayers and blessings and judges that this function is not automatically fulfilled by a large number of guests. The post by @Pasutri shows an alternative form: a wedding "without a reception and full of immediate family events at home" according to its caption. If accurate, what changes is not the absence of a banquet, but its scale and circle. The measure of appropriateness shifts from environmental standards to personal means: @Meilita Elaine's caption notes that whether choosing the KUA or a party, what matters is the couple's capability, a formulation close to the logic of *walimah* even with a single sheep (Al-Bukhari, 2002; Muslim, 2006).

This shift does not signify a rejection of celebration. A comment with 77,100 likes acknowledges that KUA marriages are more economical, yet expresses regret if there is no celebration because "you only get married once in a lifetime," stating that a non-grand and non-luxurious party is fine. Another comment states a desire for such a marriage while still wanting to sit on the dais together or wear complete traditional attire (*siger*). Consequently, some commentators separate the scale of the party from the presence of a celebration, maintaining ceremonial elements meaningful to them. Overall, the meaning of *walimah* in this discourse moves from a social obligation assessing the worthiness of couples and families toward proportionate gratitude, with scales negotiated against means, post-marriage needs, and family pressure. It must be emphasized that this is a shift in how *walimah* is discussed on TikTok. Data does not indicate whether couples marrying at the KUA actually hold *walimah* in other forms.

Three Comment Patterns: Support, Social Resistance, and Value Negotiation

Of the 19 coded comments, 10 fall under the support theme, 5 under social resistance, 3 under value negotiation, and 1 is a question about budget that fits none of the themes. Table 2 presents example comments for each theme along with their codes and meanings for *walimah*. This composition describes the analyzed comments, not prevalence across all comments.

Table 2. Codes and Example Comments by Theme (19 Comments)

Theme (n)	Example comment	Likes	Code and meaning for walimah
Support (10)	"note this, guys, it's better to marry at the KUA but go home to your own house than to marry lavishly but go home to your in-laws' house"	155,900	Own home vs. in-laws' home: a lavish reception is contrasted with the independence of the household
	"70 million is better spent like this than satisfying parents' egos and one-day prestige"	39,200	Cost vs. prestige: the reception is read as fulfilling ego and prestige

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	"Why throw a big reception to feed the mouths of people who might not even pray for us sincerely, just family is fine"	6,362	Guests, prayers, immediate family: the functions of the banquet and prayers are questioned, a family banquet is accepted
	"gen z doesn't want hassle, doesn't want to meet lots of people, basically just doesn't like crowds"	26,300	Practicality: crowds are considered unnecessary
Social resistance (5)	"Love the concept but my extended family doesn't"	142,900	Extended family as a barrier: family judgment determines the form of celebration
	"I want an intimate wedding too but my neighbors' mouths are so sharp"	52,800	Neighbors as judges: environmental pressure on party standards
	"my boyfriend asked me to do this, sis, but I don't think I can stand hearing what people say, especially living in a village"	9	Village community: a desired choice is blocked by community talk
Value negotiation (3)	"you only get married once in a lifetime, so it'd be such a pity not to have any celebration, it's okay if the party isn't big and luxurious as long as there is one"	77,100	Celebration is retained at a smaller scale
	"I want something like this but I also want to sit on the dais together"	6,974	Wedding dais: a certain ceremonial symbol is still desired
	"I want this, but on the other hand I want to wear the full siger and everything else"	2,184	Traditional attributes are still desired

Source: comments on the observed posts, 2025–2026 (spelling edited; usernames omitted). One comment about budget fits none of the themes.

Support generally rests on post-marriage life priorities, cost-versus-prestige contrasts, and practicality. Social resistance is striking because authors generally like the concept; barriers are posed by extended families, parents, and neighbors. The comment with the highest likes stems from the support theme (155,900), followed by the resistance comment (142,900), showing both resonate widely. This aligns with descriptions of Generation Z as self-driven yet living within family and community ecosystems (Hinduan et al., 2020). A user's comment invited by her boyfriend to marry at the KUA but feeling unable to face village gossip indicates that environmental pressure can thwart genuinely preferred choices. Consequently, what is contested is not only costs, but who holds the right to determine appropriate celebrations—the couple or their environment.

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Financial Concerns in Online Discourse

The economic aspect appears in two forms. First, creators' claims: @kssalya says she managed to "save hundreds of millions", @Pasutri says the leftover money can become savings, and @ahnaf23 calls the KUA and a honeymoon in New Zealand the "best deal". Second, comments that compare reception costs with post-marriage needs, for example the figure of 70 million, comparisons between one's own home and the in-laws' home, and the question "how much was the budget for this, sis?". These findings show that cost is the main frame of the discourse and that economic reasons are more dominant than other reasons. They do not show that these couples plan their finances better or have higher financial literacy, because the figures are unverified and there is no data on actual spending. Therefore, the concepts of *doom spending* and financial readiness (Fitriani et al., 2026; Ubaidillah et al., 2026) are used as context for reading the discourse, not as a proven explanation. In line with studies on panaik money and dowry (Hadi et al., 2023; Maani et al., 2024; Sudirman et al., 2025), cost concerns appear to be the easiest reason to voice, but netnographic data cannot confirm that this is the real reason, especially since thrift narratives in public content may be chosen because they attract attention.

Religious Factors: An Available Justification, Not the Main Driver

A natural question is whether religious belief underlies this trend. The data show that the most frequently voiced reasons are cost, post-marriage priorities, and practicality, as discussed above. Among the 19 analyzed comments and the legible captions and on-screen text, no explicit reference to religious texts or jurisprudential terms such as sunnah, wastefulness (mubazir), or blessing (berkah) was found. Religious vocabulary appears only in guests' prayers and in the KUA as the venue of the marriage contract. This finding is consistent with other studies that position economic motives as dominant (Dahlan, 2024; Fajrin, 2026) and place religiosity as part of a blend of local and global values that shape choices (Kusumaaningrum et al., 2025).

Although not a stated driver, religion appears to play a role in three ways. First, as assurance of validity: a marriage contract at the KUA is officially recorded, so choosing it does not create the religious burden that might be feared. Second, as vocabulary attached to the functions of *walimah*, namely prayers and blessings, which commentators use to assess large receptions. Third, as an available source of justification that discourse participants have not yet used, namely the Islamic tradition's encouragement of ease in marriage.

This encouragement of ease appears in several hadith. A recent takhrij study assesses the hadith that the best dowry is the lightest as sahih (Permata et al., 2025), and assesses the hadith on the blessing of a woman who is easy in her betrothal and dowry, narrated by Ahmad no. 24478, as hasan lidzatihi rising to sahih lighairihi (Sampe & Hidayatulloh, 2026). Together with the hadith of a *walimah* even with a single sheep (Al-Bukhari, 2002; Muslim, 2006), these narrations form a consistent message: ease and simplicity are part of the goodness of marriage, whereas luxury is not a requirement. Robiansyah et al. (2025), in a literature review, also conclude that Islamic teachings encourage simple marriages with dowries and receptions adjusted to means.

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However, drawing these hadith into this discourse requires caution. The hadith on ease above speak directly about dowry and betrothal, not receptions; extending them to the scale of receptions is reasoning based on the principles of taysir and *maqāṣid*, not the wording of the texts. Moreover, hadith on simplicity do not negate *walimah*. Scholars differ on its ruling, some regarding it as sunnah muakkadah and others as obligatory, with the majority view of the Hanafi, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools being that *walimah* is not obligatory, as reported by Yusra (2025; see also Ridwan & Ainah, 2024), while its functions include announcing the marriage and expressing gratitude. Therefore, hadith on simplicity support simplicity of scale, not the absence of *walimah*.

Thus, the religious factor in this trend is better read as an available justification than as the main driver. For the meaning of *walimah*, this matters: the shift that has occurred is driven mainly by economic and social considerations, while the Islamic tradition provides a normative resource that can both reinforce the shift and limit it, by reminding that *walimah* remains recommended.

Visibility, Influencers, and Algorithms: The Limits of Conclusions

The data contain visibility metrics, for example 1.1 million likes for @jundeeey, one post with paid partnership status, and TikTok search suggestions in the screenshots. This study has no access to how the recommendation algorithm works, audience profiles, or changes in users' attitudes and behavior, so the claim that influencers or algorithms normalize KUA marriages cannot be tested. What can be said is that narratives of simple marriage receive great resonance and that the comment section becomes a space where similar views reinforce one another, which is conceptually in line with Dalaylı (2023) on the influence of interaction with influencers on the perception of values. The post by @Meilita Elaine needs to be read carefully because the message "getting married at the KUA is light" is placed in a commercial context; this post also has the lowest interaction (28,700 likes and 220 comments), with mixed comments, namely agreement, a question about the budget, and hesitation because of what people would say. Unlike Firdaus (2026), who studied algorithmic exposure to fear-of-marriage content, this study does not measure exposure, so it can only state that content celebrating simple marriage also circulates widely on the same platform.

Islamic Legal Principles as Tools for Interpreting the Findings

First, taysir (ease) helps read the claim that marrying at the KUA is light, by distinguishing ease of the marriage contract from ease of the *walimah*'s scale. As discussed in the section on religious factors, a discourse that reduces the scale of the reception is in line with the flexibility of *walimah* size in the hadith of the sheep (Al-Bukhari, 2002; Muslim, 2006), but it does not automatically answer the recommendation to hold a *walimah* itself.

Second, hifẓ al-māl and the prohibition of tabdhir (QS. Al-Isra' [17]: 26-27; Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019) help assess comments that describe the reception as one-day prestige. Ubaidillah et al. (2026) link *walimah* to hifẓ al-māl, and the relevant measure is appropriateness and the proportion of spending relative to means and benefit, not merely the size of the event. Consequently, a large reception by a well-off family is not automatically tabdhir, and conversely, saving money does not automatically accord

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with *maqāṣid*. The post by @ahnaf23, which diverted the budget to a honeymoon abroad, illustrates this: without data on the amount and purpose of spending, it cannot be said that the diversion is more in line with hifẓ al-māl.

Third, the framework of 'urf helps separate norm from custom. The recommendation of *walimah* is a norm rooted in hadith, whereas a large reception with a wedding dais, many guests, and certain standards is a social custom that can change. What is negotiated in these data appears to be custom, not the norm. Commentators who lament the loss of celebration and commentators who reject prestige can both be read as debating the appropriate form of custom.

From here, it becomes apparent that three questions often mixed together in discussions of this trend need to be distinguished. The first question is where the marriage contract is held; the venue is not a pillar of the contract, so the choice of the KUA basically concerns administrative ease and symbolic meaning. The second question is how large the reception is, which lies in the domain of custom and means. The third question is whether a *walimah* is held in any form, which concerns the recommendation. The data of this study are strong enough for the first and second questions, but weak for the third: only one post mentions an immediate-family event, and comments about celebration take the form of wishes. Therefore, the assessment that marriage at the KUA is in line with *maqāṣid* can only apply to the dimensions of ease and proportion, while the question of whether a *walimah* is held requires additional data, such as interviews. This study is not intended to issue a jurisprudential ruling, but to use these principles as reading tools.

Position of the Findings Relative to Previous Studies

Table 3 summarizes the position of the findings relative to previous studies, namely where the findings support, extend, or differ from them.

Table 3. Position of the Findings Relative to Previous Studies

Study	Main findings of the study	Relation to the findings of this study
Sudirman et al. (2025); Maani et al. (2024)	Panaik money is criticized as a burden but is still accepted as a customary obligation and can delay marriage	Supports: comments agree with the concept but are blocked by family. Extends: the object is the cost of celebration, not payments between families
Hadi et al. (2023)	Dowry shifts to a means-based (wage-based) footing	Supports: the measure "what matters is being able to afford it" in post captions. Extends: from dowry to walimah
Fitriani et al. (2026); Ubaidillah et al. (2026)	Islamic financial literacy and doom spending are related to financial readiness	Limited: the data contain only cost concerns and cannot confirm readiness or literacy. Extends: hifẓ al-māl is linked to the form of walimah

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Firdaus (2026)	Algorithmic exposure to "Marriage is Scary" content is related to gamophobia	Different in direction, not contradictory: the content here celebrates simple marriage and exposure is not measured
Dalaylı (2023)	Interaction with influencers affects the perception of values	Conceptually aligned: high resonance, but influence is not measured
Hinduan et al. (2020); Trisna et al. (2026)	Generation Z is self-driven; kafā'ah criteria shift	Supports: personal choices confront family judgment. Extends: to the standards of appropriate celebration
Dahlan (2024); Kusumaaningrum et al. (2025); Fajrin (2026)	Marriage at the KUA: economic and practical motives dominate, communal rituals decrease, stigma shifts	Supports: economic motives and the shifting stigma appear in the content and comments. Extends: focus on the meaning of walimah with netnographic data and the distinction of three questions
Robiansyah et al. (2025); Yusra (2025)	Tension between simplicity and prestige in receptions; society divided between honor and the burden of cost	Supports: comments contrast prestige and means. Extends: to Generation Z's online discourse

Source: researcher's analysis.

The main contribution is one of extension. Studies on panaik money and dowry discuss payments that move between families, whereas this study discusses the cost of celebration and the meaning of *walimah*. These findings are consistent with field studies on Generation Z marriages at the KUA (Dahlan, 2024; Fajrin, 2026; Kusumaaningrum et al., 2025) regarding economic motives and the shifting stigma, with the addition that this study reads the meaning of *walimah* through netnographic data. There is also one note of difference. Sudirman et al. (2025) found criticism of the burden of tradition that nonetheless ends in compliance with custom. A similar pattern appears in the comment section, namely agreeing with the concept but being blocked by family, while openly departing from tradition appears only among creators. The digital space seems to provide a stage for simple choices, but does not by itself change social pressure offline. Finally, these findings cannot corroborate claims of financial readiness and financial literacy (Fitriani et al., 2026) or *doom spending* (Ubaidillah et al., 2026); the alignment is limited to the level of cost concerns.

A Passing Trend or a Lasting One?

Netnographic data from June 2025 to March 2026 are not sufficient to predict the future of this trend. Therefore, this section reads indicators from the research data and secondary sources rather than making predictions.

There are indicators that support continuity. First, the structural drivers have not disappeared: the number of Muslim marriages is recorded as falling from around 2 million in 2018 to 1.4 million in 2024 (Uli, 2026), and the cost of celebration remains the main frame of the discourse. Second, the cost barrier is already lower institutionally: Dahlan (2024) links the rise of KUA marriages to cost-free services under a 2014 regulation, so this choice is not

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merely a social media trend. Third, there is institutional support: the Ministry of Religious Affairs has run the GAS Nikah program since July 2025, and several KUAs use TikTok content to attract young couples (Uli, 2026). Fourth, earlier studies show that the stigma toward KUA marriages has shifted toward greater acceptance (Dahlan, 2024; Fajrin, 2026).

However, there are also indicators that hold it back. First, visibility is not prevalence: a 2025 Jakpat survey of 798 respondents planning to marry shows that only 8 percent of Generation Z and 17 percent of millennials chose to marry at the KUA, while 41 percent of Generation Z chose a simple wedding concept (Wafa, 2025). Second, Ministry of Religious Affairs data show that the number of marriage events at the KUA fell from 503,220 in 2020 to 370,121 in 2023 (Sakinah, 2024), so virality in 2023 does not yet appear as an increase in absolute numbers. The number of marriages overall has also declined, and data for 2024 to 2026 have not been analyzed here, so these figures cannot be read as evidence that the trend is weakening. Third, the data in this study show family resistance and a desire to retain celebration, so adoption at the behavioral level appears to be constrained by social norms.

From these two groups of indicators, the most defensible conjecture is that what persists is not the hashtag or its visual style, but the legitimacy of simple marriage as one valid option. In the language of diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 2003), the phenomenon appears to be at a stage where the new option is widely known and accepted by some early adopters but has not yet become the majority norm. The most likely scenario is coexistence: simple marriage at the KUA strengthens as an option, while the conventional reception remains dominant in many settings. This reading is hypothetical and needs to be tested with longitudinal data, for example Ministry of Religious Affairs data on marriage events by location for 2024 to 2026, repeated netnography at different times, and surveys of couples' preferences.

Practical and Theoretical Implications

Table 4 links each practical implication to the finding that underlies it.

Table 4. Relationship Between Findings and Practical Implications

Finding	Practical implication	Parties
Resistance from extended family, parents, and neighbors (5 of 19 comments; posts by @SF, @jundeeey, @Ruriamma, @Meilita Elaine)	Intergenerational dialogue sessions in premarital guidance that discuss the functions of walimah (gratitude, prayers, family togetherness) separately from standards of prestige, involving parents	Religious counselors, KUA, families
Cost is framed as in conflict with post-marriage needs and budget questions arise (for example the figure of 70 million and "budget brp")	Premarital materials on proportionate budgeting, covering walimah and other expenses, emphasizing that saving on one item does not automatically mean good management of wealth	Premarital guidance providers, Islamic financial education institutions

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Desire to retain celebration (3 negotiation comments) and the immediate-family event at @Pasutri	Communicating that a family-scale walimah remains in the spirit of the recommendation, along with simple format options (family banquet, thanksgiving gathering) so couples do not feel they must choose between a big party and no celebration	KUA, religious counselors
Paid-partnership content and high visibility	Creator transparency about paid partnerships and media literacy for audiences to read thrift narratives critically; further research to test the influence of content through surveys or interviews	Content creators, researchers
Religious factors not yet used by discourse participants as textual evidence (no reference to religious texts in the 19 comments)	Explanation of the hadith on ease in marriage and their limits (they speak about dowry and betrothal, and walimah remains recommended) in premarital materials, so that simplicity is not understood as the absence of walimah	Religious counselors, KUA

Source: researcher's analysis based on the research findings.

Theoretically, there are three implications. First, the distinction between the venue of the marriage contract, the scale of the reception, and whether a *walimah* is held can serve as an analytical framework for studies of the simple marriage trend, so that criticism of receptions is not automatically read as a rejection of the recommendation of *walimah*. Second, what Generation Z negotiates in this discourse appears to be the *'urf* of celebration, not the norm of the *walimah* recommendation. Third, netnography reveals publicly stated meanings and needs to be combined with interviews or surveys to address actual behavior.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that in the #NikahDiKUA discourse on TikTok, the meaning of *walimah* shifts from a social obligation that judges the worthiness of couples and families toward proportionate, negotiated gratitude. This shift is marked by three things: receptions are questioned as markers of status and as meeting the judgment of the surrounding community; the banquet and prayers are retained by some in a smaller family circle; and some commentators still retain certain elements of celebration. Economic reasons are more dominant than religious ones, which function as an available justification through the hadith on ease in marriage, with the limit that these hadith do not negate *walimah*. Financial concerns are the main frame of the discourse, but the data do not prove changes in behavior or financial literacy, and the role of influencers and algorithms cannot be established from these data. Based on the available indicators, simple marriage will likely persist as a legitimate option rather than replace the conventional reception.

For understanding changes in marriage practice, this study contributes the distinction between the choice of the venue of the marriage contract, the scale of the reception, and whether a *walimah* is held, as well as the finding that what is negotiated appears to be the

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custom of celebration, not the recommendation of *walimah*. For contemporary Islamic family law, the principles of taysir, hifẓ al-māl, and the prohibition of tabdhir are better used as tools for assessing proportion and appropriateness, not as automatic justification for either simple marriages or large parties.

This study is limited to the 19 top comments out of 31,406 comments on seven posts, without comment replies and without inter-coder reliability testing, and depends on the order in which TikTok displays comments, so its results are exploratory and cannot be generalized. Future research can expand the comment corpus with documented sampling, interview couples, parents, and religious counselors to test whether *walimah* is held in other forms, and use longitudinal data and surveys to test the continuity of the trend, claims of financial readiness, and the influence of content. The practical recommendations in Table 4 are directly linked to the research findings.

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