

The Effect of Emotional Maturity on Marriage Readiness in Generation Z

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ABSTRACT

The trend of declining marriage rates and rising divorce rates has become a concern for individuals who are considering marriage. This highlights the importance of being prepared before entering married life. One factor that influences readiness for marriage is emotional maturity. Emotional maturity is viewed as an individual's ability to manage, control, and express emotions appropriately. This study aims to determine the influence of emotional maturity on marriage readiness among Generation Z. The study involved 120 unmarried respondents aged 20–29 years in North Bekasi. A quantitative method using quota sampling was employed. Data collection was conducted online via Google Forms using instruments consisting of scales measuring emotional maturity and marriage readiness. The results show that emotional maturity has a positive and significant effect, contributing 22.6% to marriage readiness. The higher an individual's level of emotional maturity, the higher their level of marriage readiness. Therefore, emotional maturity should be a key consideration when preparing individuals for marriage.

Introduction

Generation Z consists of individuals born between 1997 and 2012, who are now between the ages of 14 and 29 (Dimock, 2019). Within this age range, they are in the developmental stage spanning adolescence to early adulthood. Individuals are considered to have entered early adulthood when they are between the ages of 18 and 40 (Hurlock, 1980). Members of Generation Z within this age range can be categorized as having reached adulthood and facing various developmental tasks, one of which is building a committed relationship leading to marriage. At this stage, individuals will choose a life partner, start a family, learn to live with a partner, raise children, and manage household activities (Havighurst in Hurlock, 1980). However, marriage is no longer viewed as the primary goal to be achieved upon entering adulthood (Firdaus & Rahmasari, 2025). In the 21st century, it is rare for individuals in their early 20s to get married for the first time and start a family (Arnett in Arini, 2021).

This is evident from the downward trend in marriage rates over the past few years, which has drawn significant attention in Indonesia. Data from the Central Statistics

Agency shows that marriage rates in Indonesia continued to decline significantly from 2018 to 2024. In 2018, there were approximately 2,016,171 marriages, which decreased to 1,478,302 in 2024 and saw a slight increase to 1,480,048 in 2025 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2026). Although there was a slight increase, this figure is still lower than the average over the past ten years, which was 1,837,185 in 2016 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017). This decline in marriage rates is believed to be due to the large number of young people delaying marriage (Adhani & Aripudin, 2024).

Riska & Khasanah (2023) show that Generation Z's decision to delay marriage is influenced by factors such as career readiness, education, and changing social and cultural values related to the age of marriage. Both men and women in this generation have many goals they wish to achieve, which prevents them from focusing solely on marriage (Ningtias, 2022). Additionally, concerns about the risk of divorce also play a role in influencing Generation Z's decision to delay marriage (Adhani & Aripudin, 2024). According to information released by CNBC Indonesia based on data from the Central Statistics Agency, the divorce rate in 2025 is projected to rise to 438,168 or 10% increase from the 399,921 cases recorded in 2024 with disputes and arguments being the primary causes of divorce. This indicates that relationship conflicts remain at the heart of divorce issues (Tirta, 2026). The rising divorce rate underscores the importance of being prepared for marriage in family life (Arcus in Ningrum & Kusumiati, 2025).

Marriage readiness refers to an individual's ability to prepare for marriage (Husain & Nadeem, 2022). According to Carroll et al., (2009) marriage readiness refers to a person's belief in their ability to perform specific tasks or engage in meaningful learning. Individuals perceive marriage readiness as a concept that enables them to fulfill various roles within marriage and to take these roles into account when selecting a partner (Holman & Li, 1997). Marriage readiness can be measured by an individual's level of achievement across various domains of life. Individuals with a high level of marriage readiness tend to have good communication skills, trust in their partner, and the ability to solve problems (Larson & Lamont in Ananda dkk., 2025). Conversely, individuals with low marriage readiness are characterized by a lack of understanding of the roles in marriage. One reason individuals find it difficult to fulfill new roles and responsibilities is a lack of personal readiness to do so (Sari & Sunarti, 2013).

A study conducted by Kurniawati & Ardiansyah (2021) on prospective brides and grooms aged 20–24 showed that more than half of the respondents 52% stated they were not ready to marry, while 47.5% stated they were ready to marry. This study aligns with research by Herawati et al., (2025), which showed that among Generation Z respondents aged 18–29, 48% stated they were not ready to marry, while 37% of respondents considered psychological and mental well-being to be important factors that must be prepared before entering married life. Readiness for marriage is influenced by several factors, both internal and external, such as emotional maturity, personality, family support, and socioeconomic conditions (Hafizhah et al., 2025). Other factors that can also influence readiness for marriage include approval or support from the partner's close relatives, educational level, personality, and behavior (Holman & Li, 1997). Additionally,

according to Walgito (2017), physiological factors such as health, heredity, and the ability to engage in sexual relations as well as psychological factors, including emotional maturity, also influence an individual's readiness for marriage.

Emotional maturity is one of the crucial factors in readiness for marriage (Salsabila, 2019). This refers to an individual's ability to assess situations and circumstances comprehensively and to think things through before acting (Walgito, 2017). In the context of marriage, emotional maturity plays a vital role in maintaining relationship stability, thereby minimizing conflicts and the risk of divorce (Kiranasari & Indirani, 2024). However, individuals today particularly among Generation Z tend to experience delays in achieving emotional maturity. This is attributed to overprotective parenting styles, dependence on parents, and the dominance of online interactions that hinder the development of social skills; as a result, most of them face challenges in forming stable and healthy relationships (Twenge in Ainiyah & Rosiana, 2025). This becomes even more relevant when considered in relation to the phase of emerging adulthood—the transitional period between adolescence and adulthood that spans from age 18 to around 29 (Arnett et al., 2014). During this time, individuals are searching for their identity, experiencing instability in their social roles, focusing on themselves, and making major life decisions, including marriage (Christie-Mizell et al., 2023).

Research conducted by Davita (2021) shows that emotional maturity has a positive correlation with readiness for marriage, and this relationship is very strong. This indicates that the higher the emotional maturity, the higher the readiness for marriage among young adults aged 21–40 in the Greater Jakarta area. This study aligns with research by Hikmah & Rahayu (2025) which revealed that emotional maturity has a positive and significant influence on marriage readiness among young adults aged 20–35, with an effective contribution of 51%. This means that the higher an individual's emotional maturity, the more ready they are to marry. Emotional maturity plays a crucial role in marriage readiness because it helps individuals face various marital challenges with good emotional stability. However, another study conducted by Ulfa dkk (2025), titled "Level of Emotional Maturity as a Predictor of Marriage Readiness Among Early-Adult Women in Makassar," indicates a significant negative effect, where emotional maturity contributes 5.7% to marriage readiness among early-adult women aged 18–25. The higher an individual's emotional maturity, the lower their readiness for marriage tends to be. This is because individuals with high emotional maturity are more rational and cautious when making major decisions such as marriage. Differences in research findings regarding the influence of emotional maturity on readiness for marriage indicate inconsistencies in the research results. Therefore, the researchers wish to further investigate the influence of emotional maturity on readiness for marriage, particularly among Generation Z in Bekasi City.

The city of Bekasi is one of the strategic cities in West Java Province. Of all the subdistricts in the city of Bekasi, North Bekasi Subdistrict has the highest divorce rate (Department of Communication, Information, 2025). The divorce rate in North Bekasi Subdistrict has continued to rise from 2020 to 2025. In 2020, the divorce rate stood at

2,512 and rose to 4,899 in 2025 (Department of Population and Civil Registration, 2026b). This divorce rate has become a social phenomenon that warrants attention (Department of Communication, Information, 2025). Additionally, North Bekasi Subdistrict is recorded as the subdistrict with the highest number of unmarried residents in Bekasi City, reaching 166,540 people in 2025 (Department of Population and Civil Registration, 2026b).

Research on marriage readiness is crucial, as marriage readiness essentially serves as the foundation for individuals in making decisions regarding whom they will marry, when the right time to marry is, their reasons for marrying, and how to navigate married life in the future (Larson & Lamont in Anindita et al., 2024). Marriage readiness serves as the initial foundation for individuals as they embark on married life. The earlier an individual prepares for marriage, the better prepared they will be to face married life (Carroll et al., in Mawaddah dkk., 2019).

Method

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative method using a non-probability sampling technique, specifically quota sampling.

Population and Sample

The population for this study consists of Generation Z individuals aged 20 to 29 who reside in North Bekasi. Based on data obtained from the City of Bekasi's Open Data portal, the number of Generation Z individuals aged 20 to 29 in North Bekasi is projected to reach 56,653 by 2025 (Department of Population and Civil Registration, 2026a). The reason the researcher set the age range of the population to Generation Z residing in North Bekasi is that, fundamentally, the ideal age for marriage is at least 20 years old (Arnett in Annisa & Safitri, 2020). Therefore, Generation Z is a relevant group to study in the context of marriage readiness. A total of 120 respondents were successfully included in the sample.

Instruments

This study used a questionnaire in the form of Google Forms or a QR code that was distributed online. The research instrument employed a Likert scale model for the marriage readiness scale and the emotional maturity scale. Measurements were conducted using a self-report method, in which respondents were given four response options: Strongly Disagree (STS), Disagree (TS), Agree (S), and Strongly Agree (SS).

The marriage readiness scale used was the Marriage Readiness Questionnaire (MRQ), based on the theory by Carroll et al., (2009) and adapted by Anindita et al., (2024). This scale consists of 35 items covering six aspects: interpersonal skills, family capacity, role transition, intrapersonal skills, compliance with norms, and sexual experience. The validity and reliability of this scale have been tested by Anindita et al., (2024). The researchers modified the wording of the items to suit the context of the study. Meanwhile, the emotional maturity scale was developed based on the aspects of emotional maturity identified by Walgito (2017) which include the ability to accept oneself and others, being non-impulsive, the ability to control emotions effectively, being responsible, and thinking objectively. This scale contains 41 items, comprising 22 favorable items and 19 unfavorable items.

Results and Discussion

Result

Based on the results of the validity testing for the marriage readiness scale, which consists of 35 items, 4 items were deemed invalid; and for the emotional maturity scale, which consists of 41 items, 10 items were deemed invalid. Each of these two scales has 31 valid items that meet the criteria for instruments capable of measuring their respective constructs. The reliability coefficients for the emotional maturity scale were 0.906 and for the marriage readiness scale, 0.936. These coefficients indicate that both scales exhibit a high level of consistency, as both values exceed 0.7 the threshold for considering an instrument acceptable (Soesana et al., 2023).

In regression models, the normality test is not performed on each variable individually, but rather on the residuals (Vikaliana et al., 2022). Therefore, the normality test in this study used unstandardized residuals and yielded a significance value of $0.200 > 0.05$, indicating that the data are normally distributed. Furthermore, the results of the linearity test yielded a significance value of $0.154 > 0.05$, indicating that there is a linear relationship between emotional maturity and readiness for marriage. This study involved 120 Generation Z respondents aged 20–29, both men and women, residing in North Bekasi. There were 61 male respondents and 59 female respondents, 88 respondents were aged 20–24, and 32 were aged 25–29.

Table 1. Categorization of Emotional Maturity Scores

Value	Category	N	Percentage (%)
$X < 81,64$	Low	16	13,3 %
$81,64 \leq X < 104,52$	Average	83	69,2 %
$104,52 \leq X$	High	21	17,5 %

It was found that 83 respondents (69.2%) had a moderate level of emotional maturity, 21 respondents (17.5%) had a high level, and 16 respondents (13.3%) had a low level. These results indicate that unmarried members of Generation Z aged 20–29 have a moderate level of emotional maturity.

Table 2. Categorization of Marriage Readiness Scores

Value	Category	N	Percentage (%)
$X < 104,08$	Low	46	38,3 %
$104,08 \leq X < 108,44$	Average	15	12,5 %
$108,44 \leq X$	High	59	49,2 %

It was found that 59 respondents (49.2%) had a high level of readiness for marriage, 46 respondents (38.3%) had a low level, and 15 respondents (12.5%) had a moderate level. These results indicate that unmarried members of Generation Z aged 20–29 have a high level of readiness for marriage. A hypothesis test was conducted using simple linear regression analysis to determine the effect of emotional maturity on readiness for marriage. The results of the test are presented in the table below:

Table 3. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
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1	0,476 ^a	0,226	0,220	10,673
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Based on the table above, the R-squared value is 0.226, which means that emotional maturity contributes 22.6% to readiness for marriage, while the remaining 77.4% is influenced by other factors. These factors may include economic conditions, education, family support, parents' marital experiences, personality, experiences in relationships with others, and other factors that also influence readiness for marriage.

Tabel 4. Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sign.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	59,484	8,022		7,415	<0,001
	Emotional_Maturity_X	0,502	0,086	0,476	5,874	<0,001

The significance value for emotional maturity is $0.001 < 0.05$, which means that emotional maturity has a significant effect on readiness for marriage. The constant value obtained is 59.484, which means that if the emotional maturity variable is 0 (the constant), then the readiness for marriage variable is 59.484. The regression coefficient for emotional maturity is positive at 0.502. This means that every 1% increase in emotional maturity results in a 0.502 increase in readiness for marriage. It can be concluded that emotional maturity has a positive and significant effect on readiness for marriage. Thus, the hypothesis of this study is accepted.

Discussion

A study of 120 Generation Z respondents in North Bekasi showed that emotional maturity influences readiness for marriage. This finding is consistent with research by Siswandari & Astrella (2023), which revealed a positive influence of emotional maturity on readiness for marriage among young adults in Sebandung Village, Sukorejo District. Herawati et al., (2025) also demonstrated that emotional maturity is one of the predictors of readiness for marriage among Generation Z aged 18–29 in Pekanbaru City.

Emotional maturity is an individual's ability to understand, control, and express emotions appropriately so that they can act wisely and not impulsively in certain situations (Walgito, 2017). In the context of marriage, this ability is crucial because marriage is a long-term relationship filled with dynamics and role demands (Davita, 2021). Emotional maturity is necessary for couples to view problems objectively (Walgito, 2017). Couples who frequently experience conflicts and have low emotional maturity tend to struggle with resolving issues (Fitrianni & Handayani, 2019). This can lead to the marriage ending in divorce (Kamila et al., 2025). In contrast, individuals with a high level of emotional maturity are better equipped to handle various domestic situations, adapt effectively, and prevent future conflicts or disagreements (Salsabila, 2019). Putri & Pertiwi

(2024) noted that a person's level of emotional maturity influences their readiness to marry. The higher an individual's level of emotional maturity, the higher their level of readiness for marriage. This indicates that emotional maturity contributes to readiness for marriage.

Based on the regression analysis, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was found to be 0.226, meaning that emotional maturity contributes 22.6% to readiness for marriage, while the remaining 77.4% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. According to Ningrum et al., (2021) factors influencing readiness for marriage include age maturity, emotional maturity, understanding of family life, and participation in marriage preparation programs. Other factors that can influence readiness for marriage include personality, family support, and socioeconomic conditions (Hafizhah et al., 2025).

Individuals with moderate emotional maturity demonstrate that they can control their emotions in certain situations and conditions but are not yet fully stable when facing emotional stress (Ulfa et al., 2025). Putri & Andayani (as cited in Kamila et al., 2025) emphasize that moderate emotional maturity indicates that an individual can manage emotions but still tends to act impulsively when facing relationship pressures (Kamila et al., 2025). This condition can be influenced by factors such as age, parenting styles, and the social environment including life experiences and demands which can shape how individuals manage their emotions (Febbiyani & Adelya, 2017). The predominance of the "moderate" category in the emotional maturity variable can be explained by the developmental stage of the respondents, who are in the 20–29 age range and are in the phase of emerging adulthood (Arnett et al., 2014). At this stage, individuals are in the process of forming their identities, both emotionally and socially; therefore, it is reasonable that most respondents exhibit a moderate level of emotional maturity (Ainiyah & Rosiana, 2025).

An individual can be said to have achieved good emotional maturity if they are able to solve problems objectively, think critically before acting, and express emotions in an appropriate manner (Hurlock, 1980). Individuals with good emotional maturity are better able to adapt and demonstrate resilience when facing the dynamics of marriage. Therefore, emotional maturity is one of the key psychological factors in preparing for marriage (Kiranasari & Indirani, 2024).

According to Carroll et al., (2009) readiness for marriage is an individual's subjective perception of their own readiness, which encompasses aspects such as role transition, interpersonal skills, family capacity, intrapersonal skills, compliance with social norms, and sexual experience. Based on the categorization of marriage readiness, the results show that most respondents 59 people (49.2%) fell into the high category, 46 respondents (38.3%) into the low category, and 15 respondents (12.5%) into the moderate category. The high level of marriage readiness among respondents indicates that most of them have well-developed perspectives and preparations regarding married life. Individuals with high marriage readiness are better able to communicate effectively, have a high level of trust in their partners, and can resolve problems (Ananda et al., 2025). This is because individuals in the high marriage readiness category generally possess good emotional

maturity, whether at a moderate or high level (Ainiyah & Rosiana, 2025).

Meanwhile, individuals in the low marriage readiness category tend to be less prepared to take on the roles and responsibilities of marriage. According to Hurlock (as cited in Mawaddah et al., 2019) marriage readiness is also related to an individual's ability to adapt to new roles, environments, and responsibilities. Even if an individual meets the legal age requirements for marriage, a lack of sufficient readiness can lead to conflicts and even marital breakdown (Dewi et al., 2024). This study aligns with research by Davita (2021), which revealed that if an individual is not prepared for marriage, there is concern that they will be unable to fulfill the new responsibilities and duties associated with marriage. This can lead to unresolved conflicts and ultimately result in divorce. Low readiness for marriage can be influenced by various factors, such as uncertainty about the future or an inability to manage emotions (Kamila et al., 2025). This condition can be linked to the phase of emerging adulthood, during which individuals aged 20–29 is in a period of identity exploration and instability in making choices, particularly regarding the decision to marry (Arini, 2021).

The findings of this study are supported by data from the Bekasi City Open Data website, which shows that North Bekasi Subdistrict will have the largest number of married and unmarried residents in Bekasi City by 2025. The number of married residents is 162,786, and the number of unmarried residents is 166,540 (Department of Population and Civil Registration, 2026b). This illustrates that an individual's decision to marry or remain unmarried is based on various important and interrelated considerations. These findings suggest that individuals who feel they are sufficiently prepared will be more confident in their decision to marry, whereas those who consider themselves unprepared will tend to postpone marriage until these various aspects of readiness are met (Septiasari & Dewi, 2025).

This study has several limitations that may affect the research results. These limitations include the fact that this study examined only one independent variable emotional maturity in explaining readiness for marriage. The sample size was limited, so the research results cannot yet be generalized to the entire Generation Z population in North Bekasi. Data collection was conducted online, so the researcher could not assess the respondents' ability to understand the statements or determine whether they answered them sincerely. Additionally, time constraints during the data collection process limited the number of respondents successfully reached, preventing the researcher from obtaining a larger sample. Consequently, the researcher welcomes constructive criticism and suggestions to improve future research.

Conclusion

This study shows that emotional maturity has a positive influence on marriage readiness among Generation Z, particularly in North Bekasi. The categorization results for the emotional maturity variable show that most respondents fall into the moderate category. This means that most respondents have good emotional control but are not yet fully stable when facing emotional stress. Meanwhile, the categorization results for the

readiness for marriage variable show that most respondents fall into the high category. This means that most respondents have a mature perspective and are well-prepared for married life.

This study has several limitations that may affect the research results. Among the limitations of this study is that it examined only one independent variable emotional maturity in explaining readiness for marriage. The sample size was limited, so the findings cannot yet be generalized to the entire Generation Z population in North Bekasi. Future research should involve a larger number of respondents so that the findings can be generalized to the entire population. In addition, future researchers are encouraged to include or consider other variables that influence readiness for marriage. This is because there are still 77.4% of other factors influencing readiness for marriage that were not further investigated in this study, researchers should also consider using different methods, such as qualitative or mixed methods approaches, to obtain a broader perspective and more in-depth findings.

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