

Perceptions Of Teenagers In Tebing Tinggi City Regarding The Trend Of Weddings Without Receptions

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Abstract

Weddings without receptions are a growing trend in society, particularly among the younger generation. This study aims to examine how adolescents in Tebing Tinggi City perceive the trend of weddings without receptions, in terms of their understanding, evaluation, and attitudes. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method, utilizing data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted based on perception theory, which encompasses the stages of selection, organization, and interpretation, as well as the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory. The research informants were adolescents in Tebing Tinggi City. The results indicate that adolescents understand weddings without receptions as weddings that only involve the marriage ceremony without a large celebration. They consider such marriages valid both religiously and legally, but they are still often viewed as less acceptable by society because the reception has become a tradition. Knowledge regarding this phenomenon is largely obtained from social media, family, and peers. Most adolescents support marriage without a reception because it is considered simpler and more realistic, and they even state they would choose it in the future. However, social prestige remains the main obstacle to societal acceptance.

Keywords: *Perception, Adolescents, Wedding Without a Reception, SOR Theory*



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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid social changes of recent years have had a significant impact on how society views life-stage planning. Tebing Tinggi, a developing city in North Sumatra, has also experienced social changes alongside the advancement of information technology. As active users of social media, adolescents are in a position highly susceptible to media influence. They are not merely consumers of information but also opinion-shapers capable of reinforcing or even challenging prevailing social norms. Modernization, urbanization, and advancements in information technology have transformed patterns of social interaction, cultural values, and perspectives. This has indirectly shaped new perceptions regarding the ideal marriage.

Marriage is one of the most important milestones in a person's life, especially within the context of Indonesian culture, which highly values family bonds and traditions. Traditionally, the wedding reception has been regarded as an integral part of the wedding ceremony itself. The wedding reception is often seen as a mandatory part of the wedding, as it is viewed as a symbol of happiness, an expression of gratitude, and a means to strengthen bonds between families and the wider community. Hosting a wedding reception has become a cultural norm in society, so it would likely raise eyebrows if a wedding were held without one.

A wedding reception serves to prevent gossip; thus, the purpose of the wedding ceremony is to inform the public and eliminate any opportunity for suspicion. The fuqaha (Islamic jurists) hold that holding a walimah (reception or feast) is obligatory. However, the fuqaha disagree regarding who is responsible for covering the costs—whether it falls on the groom or the bride's family. (Marpi, 2020).

Hosting a lavish wedding reception conveys to the public the impression that the couple comes from an upper-class economic background and appears to be a respectable family, even though this often does not reflect their actual economic circumstances. However, many people prioritize their prestige, wanting to appear as individuals from high-income families and respected households. Therefore, they go to great lengths to maintain their prestige, even borrowing large sums of money from various sources just to appear respectable and from a prominent family (Muttaqin, 2020).

This phenomenon can also be caused by demands from a prospective partner or their family. There is also the possibility of demands or expectations from the community and surrounding environment, for example, if one lives in a society that goes to great lengths in organizing wedding ceremonies, or if one works in a prestigious office that requires projecting an image of wealth.

However, in recent years, a new trend has emerged: getting married at the KUA or having a wedding without a reception. Under this concept, the couple simply holds a simple wedding ceremony—either at home or at the KUA—without hosting a celebration or party in the form of a reception. This phenomenon is also influenced by social media. Through various digital platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and X, many public figures, influencers, and young couples share their experiences of getting married without a reception. For example, a TikTok account named “Belinda” posted about the steps of her wedding at the KUA, which received 42,400 likes and 360 positive comments. There is also an account named “adhistysg” that disclosed the total cost she spent on her simple wedding, which received 40,900 likes and 1,606 positive comments supporting this trend. This trend has since become a topic of public discussion, amplified by continuous media coverage highlighting it, as the phenomenon has sparked significant debate.

This phenomenon is becoming increasingly common in various regions, both urban and rural, including in the city of Tebing Tinggi. Although it is still relatively uncommon within the context of Indonesia's tradition-rich culture, this trend appears to be gaining traction, particularly among the younger generation. There are several reasons behind the rise of weddings without receptions. One of the most significant factors is the economic aspect. Wedding receptions often require significant expenses, which can range from tens to hundreds of millions of rupiah. Amid unstable economic conditions, high unemployment rates, and the pressures of life faced by the younger generation, the choice to marry without a reception is seen as more realistic and cost-effective.

In addition to economic factors, there are also ideological and lifestyle considerations. Some couples choose not to hold a wedding reception because they want to lead a simple married life and avoid getting caught up in a culture of consumerism. They place greater emphasis on the essence of marriage itself—building a family and a sacred relationship—rather than the festivities of a reception that lasts only one day. The influence of social media and public figures who have popularized a minimalist lifestyle has also contributed to the normalization of this simple wedding trend.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research design employed in this study is a qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of a complex phenomenon. The data collection techniques used to gather data include interviews, observations, and documentation, all of which will be conducted directly at the research site.

Qualitative research is a research method applied to explore natural conditions, in which the researcher acts as the primary instrument; data collection is conducted using triangulation (combination) techniques; data analysis is inductive; and the focus of qualitative research results is more on meaning than on generalization (Safrudin et al., 2023)

According to Moleong in (Alaslan et al., 2023), qualitative research is research aimed at comprehensively understanding phenomena related to the research subjects' experiences such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, and other actions by describing them within the context of specific cases using naturalistic methods.

3. RESULT (11pt)

Observation Results

The observations in this study were conducted to directly observe how social media plays a role in shaping perceptions of the trend of getting married without a reception among adolescents in the city of Tebing Tinggi. The observation process aimed to examine the extent to which exposure to content influences adolescents' views on the concept of getting married without a reception, how they interact with such content, and how it affects their decisions.

1. Observations on Teenagers' Use of Social Media

Regarding the frequency of social media use, the majority of teenagers access social media regularly, both for entertainment and to seek information. Some teenagers also use social media as their primary source for understanding emerging social trends. Some teenagers are also actively engaging with content related to marriage without a reception through comments or by liking specific videos. They also discuss this content with their partners or peers.

2. The Impact of Social Media Trends on Adolescents' Decisions

Based on observations, it appears that social media plays a role in introducing the trend of getting married without a reception, but does not directly determine adolescents' decisions. Some adolescents view this trend positively because it can reduce wedding expenses. However, there are also adolescents who believe that a wedding must include a reception because it is a once-in-a-lifetime event. The results of the observations indicate that social media trends are effective in disseminating information and shaping adolescents' perceptions. However, the final decision still depends on internal factors, personal values, and the influence of their social environment.

Source's Identity

Number	Name	Age	Gender	Occupation
1	Haikal	21 tahun	Laki-laki	Barista
2	Tirta	20 tahun	Laki-laki	Pramusaji
3	Sadan	20 tahun	Laki-Laki	Karyawan Swasta
4	Widy	21 tahun	Perempuan	Mahasiswa
5	Ziah	21 tahun	Perempuan	Mahasiswa

Interview Findings

Based on interviews conducted with five teenagers in Tebing Tinggi, it appears that their understanding of a wedding without a reception is generally quite consistent. Most of the informants understood that a wedding without a reception means a marriage that only involves the marriage ceremony without a party or large celebration. Haikal, for example, stated: "As far as I know, a wedding without a reception is just the marriage ceremony; there's no party or big celebration. Usually people get married at the KUA or at home, and there's no big reception." This was also emphasized by Tirta, who said that the choice to marry without a reception is often based on cost-saving reasons: "A wedding without a reception, in my opinion, is just the marriage ceremony itself no big party. Usually the reason is that it's more cost-effective."

Although there are slight variations in the emphasis of the responses such as Sadan's view that a wedding without a reception is seen as a simpler, more intimate form of marriage, and Ziah's association of it with ceremonies held at the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) young people generally share the same understanding. They view a wedding without a reception as legally and religiously valid, even though it is often seen as "incomplete" by society. Widy, for example, emphasized: "Legally, it's valid, but most people here are used to having a reception, so if there isn't one..."

Although considered valid both religiously and legally, some informants believe that, in society, a wedding without a reception is still often viewed as less than proper. The reception is seen as a deeply rooted tradition and a symbol of a complete marriage. This highlights a gap between teenagers' understanding of the validity of marriage and the demands of prevailing social norms.

Adolescents' knowledge of this phenomenon is largely derived from social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. Content featuring young couples sharing

their experiences of marrying without a reception frequently becomes a topic of discussion among them. Haikal explained, “I learned about it from social media, like TikTok and Instagram. There are many young couples there sharing their experiences of getting married without a party, especially on TikTok.”

The views of the family, especially the parents, remain a significant influencing factor. Most informants believe that their parents would likely object to a marriage without a reception, citing the need to preserve the extended family’s reputation. Informant Widy said, “I think my parents would object, because the extended family wants a reception and usually holds one anyway.” Meanwhile, informant Sadan said, “My older brother also wanted to get married without a reception recently, but my late father’s family wouldn’t allow it because he’s the eldest son, they said. But my mom and my brother’s wife’s family at the time let their child decide whether to have a party or not.” Some parents or family members view a wedding without a reception as a cost-effective and realistic choice, while others feel it’s incomplete because there’s no shared celebration during the event.

Social media is seen as having a major influence on shaping teenagers’ perceptions of this trend. Almost all informants agreed that social media often highlights the positive aspects of simple weddings, such as cost-effectiveness and practicality. One informant, Ziah, said, “The influence is huge. Because when you look on social media, many people give positive examples, like cost-saving and simpler.” Besides social media, public figures and religious scholars also play a role. “I once saw a religious scholar say not to force a reception if you can’t afford it. That makes sense to me,” said Tirta.

When asked whether they supported or opposed weddings without a reception, most informants said they were in favor. However, they also felt that a simple reception was still preferable so that there would still be a moment for the family to gather. Informant Widy said, “I don’t oppose it, but I’d rather have a simple reception so there’s still a family gathering.” Meanwhile, informant Sadan said, “I definitely support it, because the money can be used for other, more important things.”

During the interviews, the informants also shared their views on the pros and cons of weddings without a reception. The advantages include being more cost-effective, less complicated, and not creating a financial burden. However, the disadvantages include the lack of a festive atmosphere and the possibility of receiving negative comments from the community. Informant Haikal said, “The advantages are that it’s cost-effective, hassle-free, and the money can be used to buy other things. The disadvantages are that people might call you stingy, and in rural areas it might become the subject of gossip—I don’t know about in the capital.”

If given a choice in the future, most informants actually stated that they would be more inclined to choose a wedding without a reception. They believe that a reception is not a mandatory part of a wedding, because what matters most is the valid performance of the marriage ceremony.

According to them, opting for a wedding without a reception is more realistic because the funds allocated for the wedding can be redirected to other needs, while also sparing the couple from excessive financial burdens.

All respondents also agreed that social prestige is one of the main reasons people still cling to the tradition of holding a reception. In their view, prestige often becomes a burden for families who cannot afford it. Respondent Widy stated, "In my opinion, prestige just causes people stress. Many people force themselves to throw lavish parties even though they can't afford it."

Overall, the interview results show that teenagers in Tebing Tinggi understand the trend of weddings without receptions, consider it acceptable, and mostly support it. However, they also still consider factors such as family, peers, and societal views closely tied to social prestige.

4. DISCUSSION

Based on the interview results, it is evident that teenagers in Tebing Tinggi City understand the trend of weddings without receptions as weddings that involve only the marriage ceremony, typically held at the KUA or at home, without a large celebration. This perspective emerged consistently among all informants, although there were variations in the reasons they cited. Some cited cost-saving as a reason, some emphasized simplicity, and others viewed it as a practical choice. This indicates that teenagers are able to grasp the essence of this phenomenon, even though their interpretations vary.

Regarding the legal status of a marriage without a reception, all informants agreed that it is valid both religiously and legally. However, the majority noted that in the eyes of society, a marriage without a reception is still often considered less appropriate or even odd. The reception is seen as a deeply ingrained tradition and a symbol of the completeness of the marriage. This view highlights a gap between adolescents' rational understanding and the prevailing social norms in society. In other words, although they personally acknowledge its validity, social pressure remains a consideration that cannot be ignored.

In the process of forming perceptions, the information received by adolescents is heavily influenced by social media. Nearly all informants stated that they became aware of this trend through platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, or YouTube, where content about simple weddings frequently appears and becomes a topic of discussion. Social media serves

as the primary stimulus during the selection stage, in which adolescents choose information they deem relevant and interesting. In addition to social media, there are also stimuli from family experiences, such as stories from relatives who have gotten married without a reception. These stimuli are then processed during the organization stage, where adolescents categorize the information within their mental framework: some associate it with the values of simplicity and efficiency, while others still emphasize the importance of a reception as a family tradition.

The interpretation stage then emerges when teenagers assess that a wedding without a reception is a realistic option. They interpret it as a form of marriage that is simple, cost-effective, and reduces financial burden. Nevertheless, this interpretation is not entirely detached from the social context. Adolescents remain aware that the broader community still views a reception as a symbol of a complete marriage, so couples who do not hold a reception are often seen as “incomplete” or even become the subject of gossip.

Internal and external factors also shape adolescents’ perceptions. Internal factors include personal experiences, religious values, and the views of the immediate family. For example, one informant cited the experience of a sibling who wanted to marry without a reception but was rejected by the extended family. External factors include social media, the influence of public figures or religious leaders who provide legitimacy, and the role of peers. Social media, in this context, portrays simple weddings as the norm, while religious figures reinforce this legitimacy by emphasizing that a reception is not mandatory if it becomes a financial burden. Peers also serve as an important reference group, although their opinions are not always uniform.

One interesting finding is that teenagers are more likely to choose a wedding without a reception if they were to marry in the future. This indicates a shift in values among the younger generation. They believe that marital happiness is not measured by the scale of the celebration, but by the couple’s readiness to build a family. By choosing not to have a reception, they feel they can allocate funds for other more important needs, such as household expenses or education, while also avoiding the financial burden caused by social prestige.

However, despite their tendency toward simplistic thinking, adolescents cannot completely free themselves from societal views that still strongly uphold the tradition of wedding receptions. All informants agreed that social prestige is one of the biggest factors preventing people from abandoning wedding receptions. Prestige is seen as merely adding to the burden of families who cannot actually afford it, yet still feel compelled to host a grand celebration so as not to be looked down upon. This phenomenon places adolescents in a position of cultural transition: they wish to move away from traditions steeped in social

prestige, yet remain acutely aware of the intense social pressure from the surrounding community.

Thus, this discussion reveals that the perceptions of adolescents in Tebing Tinggi regarding weddings without receptions are shaped through a complex interplay of internal and external factors, with social media serving as the dominant influence. They view weddings without receptions as a legitimate, reasonable, and even ideal choice for the future, even though they still face challenges in the form of traditions and social prestige that remain deeply rooted in society. These findings also indicate a shift in values among the younger generation, where simplicity is beginning to be valued more than luxury, although its acceptance in society is still a gradual process.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a study on the perceptions of adolescents in Tebing Tinggi regarding the trend of weddings without receptions, it can be concluded that adolescents generally understand a wedding without a reception as a marriage in which only the marriage ceremony is performed, without a subsequent party or large celebration. They obtain this knowledge primarily from social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, as well as from family experiences or stories from relatives who have held simple weddings.

Adolescents believe that weddings without receptions remain valid both religiously and legally, as the most important aspect is the completion of the marriage contract. However, they also recognize that in society, weddings without receptions are often viewed as less appropriate because the tradition of hosting a reception has become deeply rooted as a symbol of a complete wedding. This highlights a gap between adolescents' more rational understanding and the still-strong demands of social norms.

When it comes to attitudes, most teenagers say they support weddings without a reception, and would even tend to choose that option if given the chance in the future. They believe this choice is more realistic because it does not impose an excessive financial burden, while also allowing young couples to allocate funds to other, more important needs.

Nevertheless, they still take into account the views of extended family and society, as the reception is still seen as a means of socializing and a marker of social status.

Prestige emerges as the dominant reason why people are reluctant to abandon the tradition of wedding receptions. According to the informants, prestige often places a burden on families who cannot actually afford it, yet still feel obligated to hold a party to maintain their reputation in the community. These findings indicate that teenagers' perceptions are in a phase of cultural transition, where the value of simplicity is increasingly appreciated, although full acceptance by society will still take time.

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