



## **Gen Z's Response to Zakiah Daradjat's Views on Women's Roles in the Family**

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**Abstract:** The increasing attention to family dynamics amid rising divorce rates in Indonesia underscores the need to examine the roles of women within the household. Drawing on Zakiah Daradjat's influential work, *Islam dan Peranan Wanita* (1987), this study examines how Generation Z readers interpret her discourse on the roles of women as wives and mothers. This qualitative study used a reader-response approach with data from 44 purposively selected Gen Z respondents via Google Forms. Conducted in August-September 2024, responses were thematically analyzed using interpretive analysis grounded in hermeneutics, highlighting how personal experiences shaped interpretations of Zakiah Daradjat's views on women's family roles. The findings indicate that most participants affirmed Daradjat's views, particularly the centrality of women in fostering family well-being. However, some respondents, particularly unmarried and highly educated participants, expressed more egalitarian perspectives, emphasizing the need for shared responsibility between spouses. The emphasis on women's roles in the family is aligned with the focus of the study, without disregarding the roles of other parties in the dynamics of family life. This study offers insight into family issues that frequently result in disarray between its members, particularly between father and mother or husband and wife, from a range of viewpoints with a diversity of experiences. This study is expected to address the challenges of family life, particularly for women, who often face debates concerning their roles

**Keywords:** *Women's roles, Family, Wife, Mother*

**Abstrak:** Meningkatnya perhatian terhadap dinamika keluarga di tengah tingginya angka perceraian di Indonesia menegaskan pentingnya menelaah peran perempuan dalam lingkup rumah tangga. Berangkat dari karya berpengaruh Zakiah Daradjat Islam dan Peranan Wanita (1987), penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana pembaca Generasi Z menginterpretasikan wacana beliau tentang peran perempuan sebagai istri dan ibu. Penelitian kualitatif ini menggunakan pendekatan respons pembaca dengan data dari 44 responden Generasi Z yang dipilih secara purposif melalui Google Forms. Penelitian dilakukan pada Agustus–September 2024, dan tanggapan dianalisis secara tematik menggunakan analisis interpretatif yang berlandaskan pada hermeneutika, dengan menyoroti bagaimana pengalaman pribadi membentuk penafsiran terhadap pandangan Zakiah Daradjat mengenai peran perempuan dalam keluarga. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar partisipan mendukung pandangan Daradjat, khususnya mengenai sentralitas peran perempuan dalam menciptakan kesejahteraan keluarga. Namun, beberapa responden, terutama yang belum menikah dan memiliki latar belakang pendidikan tinggi, mengemukakan pandangan yang lebih egaliter, dengan menekankan pentingnya tanggung jawab bersama antara suami dan istri. Penekanan pada peran perempuan dalam keluarga disesuaikan dengan fokus penelitian, tanpa mengabaikan peran pihak lain dalam dinamika keluarga. Meskipun hanya sebuah respon dari segenap pembaca, Penelitian ini memberikan asupan untuk permasalahan keluarga yang seringkali mengalami distraksi hubungan antar anggotanya, terutama antara suami dan istri, maupun ayah dan ibu, dari ragam perspektif yang memiliki ragam pengalaman berbeda. Sehingga diharapkan mampu untuk menjawab tantangan dalam berkeluarga, khususnya wanita, yang seringkali mengalami perdebatan mengenai peranannya.

**Kata Kunci:** *Peran wanita, Keluarga, Istri, Ibu*

## INTRODUCTION

Currently, divorce cases have become a major public concern, particularly in Indonesia. Although the number of divorce cases declined in 2023 compared to the previous year, the number of marriages also decreased, reaching a significantly drastic level (Statistik 2024). In fact, individuals who are married tend to be healthier and more prosperous than those who are not

(Fatimah and Nuqul 2018). In contrast, in divorce cases, the family exerts a strong influence on each of its members, particularly children, in terms of their mental health (Nugraha, Rosyadi, and Sa'diyah 2023), which may lead to juvenile delinquency (Bobyanti 2023). Ideally, a family should serve as the safest place for children to express their various concerns while navigating the complexities of life (Priska Adristi 2023).

If a happy family is defined as a harmonious relationship among its members, with each individual performing their roles optimally, then this understanding highlights several urgent areas of research, summarized in the following three points: (1) each family member, including women, has a significant impact on the overall well-being of the household; (2) this impact can be observed through the specific roles played within the family system; and (3) a happy and prosperous family is achieved through the collaborative and balanced fulfillment of roles by all members, including both husbands and wives. While this study focuses specifically on women's roles, this emphasis does not imply that women alone are responsible for maintaining family harmony. Rather, it seeks to explore how women's contributions are perceived and experienced within the broader dynamics of familial relationships that are inherently mutual and interdependent.

With regard to the role of women, this study centers on the intellectual contributions of Zakiah Daradjat. Notably, several previous works have examined various dimensions of her thought. For instance, studies by (Sihotang 2020) and (Chairunnisa 2020), focus predominantly on issues of moral development and adolescent mental health. Moreover, research by (Suriadi, S, and Defirono 2024) and (Nasikhin et al. 2022), concentrates on the broader themes within Islamic education. In addition, comparative studies by (Mahdany 2023) and (Muvid, Miftahuuddin, and Abdullah 2020), juxtapose Daradjat's perspectives with those of other notable figures.

A fourth group of works, such as those by (Ranam, Priyono, and Muslim 2023) and (Rahma 2019), predominantly explores methods of character education for early childhood. Meanwhile, research by (Karnila 2022), specifically addresses the subject matter of moral education for adolescents. Lastly, the study by (Rezka, Subandi, and Amiruddin 2024), focuses on the conceptual framework surrounding children's faith and belief education. Collectively, these studies illustrate the breadth of scholarly

engagement with Zakiah Daradjat's educational thought, although variations in thematic focus and methodological approaches remain evident.

A review of previous studies concerning Zakiah Daradjat reveals that the role of women within the family, as conceptualized through her perspective, has not yet been comprehensively examined—particularly about the responses of Generation Z readers to her works on this subject. Accordingly, this research endeavors to: (1) analyze readers' responses to Zakiah Daradjat's writings on the role of women as wives; (2) examine readers' responses to her writings on the role of women as mothers; and (3) interpret points of convergence and divergence in readers' views concerning Zakiah Daradjat's conceptualization of women's roles within the family.

This study is expected to contribute in several ways: (1) by identifying Generation Z readers' responses to Zakiah Daradjat's writings concerning the role of women within the family; (2) by enriching the understanding of family dynamics among Generation Z, offering perspectives from both unmarried and married individuals; and (3) by providing a foundational reference for future scholarly inquiries into the theme of women's roles in the family.

## METHOD

The focus of this study is to analyze Generation Z readers' responses to Zakiah Daradjat's (1929-2013) writings on the role of women within the family. The primary data for this research consists of respondents' reactions to Daradjat's writings on the role of women in the family, based on their individual experiences. The data sources for this study include a questionnaire designed to capture respondents' reactions to Daradjat's work on this theme, specifically her book "Islam dan Peranan Wanita" (1987). Data collection was carried out by distributing the questionnaire through digital channels (Creswell 2015), to a group of respondents selected through purposive sampling (Babbie 2008), aimed at eliciting responses to four key narratives from Zakiah Daradjat's writings. The study involved 44 respondents from Generation Z, including both males and females, with marital statuses ranging from married to unmarried, aged between 20 and 27 years, the majority of whom hold a bachelor's degree.

The analytical approach employed in this study is qualitative, with the primary objective of describing the responses of all respondents (Suryabrata 2013). The research is grounded in hermeneutic theory, which seeks to understand and interpret the authentic meaning of the information conveyed

by participants (Raco, M.E. 2010). In this regard, the study adopts Louise M. Rosenblatt's reader response theory, positioning the reader at the center of analysis. This approach recognizes that readers bring their own experiences, values, and knowledge to the reading process, which in turn shapes their understanding and interpretation of the text (Rosenblatt 1982). Data analysis is conducted iteratively during data collection, facilitating data reduction through reciprocal interaction, which ultimately allows for the formulation of meaningful conclusions (Ahmad 2019).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Zakiah Daradjat emphasizes the significant role of women within the family, particularly as wives and mothers. Daradjat asserts that the happiness and hardship experienced in family life are largely determined by the wife, as a pious and morally upright woman is believed to be capable of safeguarding the family's honor and providing her husband with a sense of peace in his work, endeavors, and thoughts (Daradjat 1978). Furthermore, Daradjat identifies the mother as the child's first educator and the primary shaper of character, given that during the early years of development, children tend to interact more frequently with their mothers than their fathers (Daradjat 1978). In the context of emotional and psychological development, Daradjat highlights that turbulent and unstable emotions can pose a serious threat to a child's mental growth if not wisely managed by the parents. Therefore, the mother's role is considered crucial in guiding the child toward a healthy life that is pleasing to God (Daradjat 1978).

Building on these insights, Daradjat's discourse may be thematically categorized into four key areas: the first two concern the wife's role in fostering family well-being and upholding moral integrity, while the latter two address the mother's function as both the primary educator and a guide in emotional development.

The respondents' reflections on Zakiah Daradjat's principal ideas concerning the role of women within the family, both as wives and mothers, are presented as follows.

### ***The Wife as the Epicenter of Family Happiness and Suffering***

The respondents' reactions regarding the wife as the epicenter of family happiness and suffering, as presented in Zakiah Daradjat's work, are illustrated in Table 1.

**Table SEQ**  
**The Wife as the Epicenter of Family Happiness and Suffering**

<b>"Kebahagiaan atau kesengsaraan yang terjadi dalam kehidupan keluarga, banyak ditentukan oleh istri"</b>	either agree or disagree	marry	0	0%
		unmarried	16	36%
	agree	marry	6	14%
		unmarried	18	41%
	disagree	marry	1	2%
		unmarried	3	7%
	Total		44	100%

Table 1 illustrates the respondents' reactions. The majority of married respondents agreed with this statement, accounting for 14%, or 6 respondents. Likewise, a majority of unmarried respondents also agreed, representing 41%, or 18 respondents. However, a notable portion of unmarried respondents disagreed with the statement, constituting 36%, or 16 respondents, while the remaining participants did not agree.

When exploring perceptions of the wife's emotional influence on the overall family atmosphere, several respondents agreed that the emotional well-being of the wife significantly affects household dynamics. Both married individuals with secondary education and unmarried participants with university-level education noted that the emotional state of the wife often sets the tone for the entire family. They emphasized that a content and emotionally stable wife tends to foster a harmonious environment that positively influences both the husband and children. Conversely, emotional distress experienced by the wife was perceived as potentially disruptive to family interactions, including the husband's focus and the household's overall sense of balance.

In contrast, other respondents rejected the notion that the wife alone determines the emotional climate of the family. Participants from both marital categories, particularly those with higher education backgrounds, argued that emotional outcomes in family life should be seen as the result of collective efforts and shared responsibilities. They emphasized that happiness and well-being are co-constructed within the family unit and should not be viewed as the sole responsibility of one individual. These perspectives suggest a more egalitarian view of emotional labor within domestic settings, reflecting an

awareness of the importance of mutual engagement in sustaining a healthy family life.

***A Husband's Tranquility Is Rooted in a Pious and Morally Upright Wife***

The respondents' reactions regarding a husband's tranquility is rooted in a pious and morally upright wife, as presented in Zakiah Daradjat's work, are illustrated in Table 2.

Table SEQ Table				
A Husband's Tranquility Is Rooted in a Pious and Morally Upright Wife				
"Istri yang Saleh dan berakhlak baik dapat menjaga kehormatan keluarga, dapat memberi ketenangan kepada suami dalam bekerja, berusaha dan berpikir"	agree	marry	8	18%
		unmarried	36	82%
	Total		44	100%

Table 2 illustrates the respondents' reactions to Zakiah Daradjat's statement.

In this case, all 44 respondents (100%) agreed with Zakiah Daradjat's viewpoint.

Married respondents, particularly those in their mid-20s with a high school education, tended to emphasize the importance of a pious and well-mannered wife in maintaining household harmony and ensuring family well-being. They noted that such a wife plays a key role by providing moral support, fostering positive relationships with other family members, and creating an environment filled with affection and mutual understanding. This harmonious atmosphere, they believed, allows husbands to feel more at ease and better able to concentrate on their daily responsibilities, such as working, striving, and thinking, knowing that the family's honor is well protected.

In addition to the perspectives shared by married participants, unmarried respondents, particularly those in their early twenties with a university education, also acknowledged the significance of a wife's moral integrity. They emphasized that a pious and well-mannered wife fosters a strong sense of trust and reassurance in her husband. This trust, they suggested, enables the husband to carry out his professional duties without undue concern, knowing

that his wife is upholding the family's dignity and responsibilities in his absence.

*The Mother as the Primary School for the Child*

The respondents' reactions regarding the mother as the primary school for the child, as presented in Zakiah Daradjat's work, are illustrated in Table 3.

Table SEQ Table \\* ARABIC 3  
The Mother as the Primary School for the Child

<b>"Pendidik pertama atau pembina utama bagi kepribadian anak adalah ibu, karena pada tahun-tahun pertama dari pertumbuhannya, anak lebih banyak berhubungan dengan ibunya daripada bapaknya"</b>	disagree	marry	1	2%
		unmarried	7	16%
	agree	marry	7	16%
		unmarried	29	66%
	Total		44	100%

Table 3 illustrates that the majority of respondents, both married and unmarried, tended to agree with the statement, with 7 out of 8 married respondents and 29 out of 36 unmarried respondents agreeing.

In response to the idea that the mother serves as the child's first and primary educator, several participants expressed support while also offering nuanced perspectives. Respondents with postgraduate education, both married and unmarried, acknowledged the pivotal role of the mother in early childhood development. They highlighted that the child's initial exposure to the world typically occurs through the mother, who becomes the primary figure in early learning and emotional recognition. At the same time, these participants emphasized that while the mother often initiates early education, the father's involvement, particularly in shaping personality and mental resilience, is equally critical and should not be overlooked.

Conversely, other respondents voiced disagreement with the idea of assigning a dominant educational role to the mother alone. Both married and unmarried participants, particularly those with higher education, advocated for a more balanced approach to parenting. They stressed that effective early childhood education requires the active and collaborative involvement of both



parents. According to them, a child's development is best supported through a joint parenting model, where mothers and fathers share responsibilities according to the evolving needs of the child's age and developmental stage.

*The Mother as a Guide for Mental Well-Being*

The respondents' reactions regarding the mother as a guide for mental well-being, as presented in Zakiah Daradjat's work, are illustrated in Table 4.

**Table SEQ**  
**The Mother as a Guide for Mental Well-Being**

"Gejolak dan gelombang jiwa yang goncang dapat merusak dan mengancam pertumbuhan jiwa anak, apabila dihadapi oleh orang tua yang tidak bijaksana, maka disini peranan ibu pun sangat menentukan dalam membimbingnya ke arah kehidupan yang sehat dan diridhai Allah SWT"	disagree	marry	0	0%
		unmarried	4	9%
	agree	marry	8	18%
		unmarried	32	73%
	Total			44

Among unmarried respondents, 73% also supported this perspective. Drawing from personal experiences, several participants noted that a mother's character and behavior strongly influence the formation of the child's own character. They viewed the mother not only as a caregiver but also as a role model whose values, attitudes, and emotional responses are likely to be internalized by the child over time.

However, a minority of respondents expressed disagreement, emphasizing the importance of the father's role in character development. They argued that emotional and psychological guidance should not be seen as the mother's sole responsibility. Instead, they advocated for a more equitable model of parental involvement, in which both parents share responsibility for nurturing the child's emotional well-being, regardless of traditional gendered expectations around caregiving and breadwinning.

**CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that Zakiah Daradjat's views on women's roles in the family remain relevant among Generation Z readers. Married respondents largely reinforced traditional notions of the wife and mother as

the central source of happiness, tranquility, education, and emotional well-being within the household. In contrast, some unmarried respondents offered more egalitarian perspectives, emphasizing shared responsibility and mutual emotional labor between spouses. Thus, the findings reveal an ongoing dialectic between the reproduction of traditional values and the emergence of egalitarian discourse, affirming that Daradjat's ideas continue to resonate while also being contested within contemporary Muslim youth.

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