

MARRIAGE TRENDS AMONG MUSLIM GENERATION Z: A MAQĀṢID AL-SHARĪ‘AH PERSPECTIVE ON CHANGING MARRIAGE PREFERENCES

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Abstract: The rapid transformation of social, economic, and digital environments has significantly influenced marriage preferences among Muslim Generation Z. This study examines contemporary marriage trends among Muslim Generation Z and analyzes changing preferences through the perspective of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah. The study employs a qualitative normative-sociological approach, combining Islamic legal analysis with contemporary literature on youth, marriage, digital culture, and family transformation. The analysis focuses on several emerging trends, including delayed marriage, greater emphasis on educational and economic readiness, changing criteria for selecting a spouse, digital-mediated partner selection, increasing concern for gender equality and emotional compatibility, and the emergence of childfree preferences among some Muslim youth. The findings indicate that these changes cannot be understood merely as a decline in religious commitment but rather as a complex transformation shaped by education, economic uncertainty, individual aspirations, digitalization, and changing perceptions of family life. From the perspective of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah, several contemporary preferences may be accommodated when they contribute to *maṣlaḥah* and do not contradict fundamental Islamic principles. Marriage readiness, mutual consent, psychological and economic preparedness, protection of dignity, and the prevention of harm are consistent with the broader objectives of Sharī‘ah. However, certain trends require critical examination when individual autonomy and lifestyle preferences conflict with the fundamental objectives of Islamic family formation. This study argues that Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah provides an adaptive analytical framework for understanding contemporary Muslim marriage trends, enabling Islamic family law to respond to generational changes while maintaining its normative foundations. The study contributes to contemporary Islamic family law by demonstrating the need for a balanced approach that recognizes Generation Z's changing social realities while preserving the ethical, spiritual, and family-oriented objectives of marriage in Islam.

Keywords: muslim generation Z, marriage trends, marriage preferences, Islamic family law.

Abstrak: Transformasi sosial, ekonomi, dan digital yang berlangsung secara cepat telah memberikan pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap preferensi pernikahan di kalangan Muslim Generasi Z. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji tren pernikahan kontemporer di kalangan Muslim Generasi Z serta menganalisis perubahan preferensi tersebut melalui perspektif Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif normatif-sosiologis dengan menggabungkan analisis hukum Islam dan literatur kontemporer mengenai generasi muda, pernikahan, budaya digital, dan transformasi keluarga. Analisis difokuskan pada beberapa tren yang berkembang, antara lain kecenderungan menunda pernikahan, meningkatnya perhatian terhadap kesiapan pendidikan dan ekonomi, perubahan kriteria dalam memilih pasangan, pemilihan pasangan yang dimediasi oleh teknologi digital, meningkatnya perhatian terhadap kesetaraan gender dan kesesuaian emosional, serta munculnya preferensi *childfree* di kalangan sebagian generasi muda Muslim. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perubahan tersebut tidak dapat dipahami semata-mata sebagai bentuk penurunan komitmen terhadap agama, tetapi merupakan transformasi kompleks yang dipengaruhi oleh pendidikan, ketidakpastian ekonomi, aspirasi individu, digitalisasi, dan perubahan persepsi terhadap kehidupan keluarga. Dalam perspektif Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, sejumlah preferensi pernikahan kontemporer dapat diterima sepanjang memberikan *maṣlahah* dan tidak bertentangan dengan prinsip-prinsip dasar Islam. Kesiapan menikah, persetujuan timbal balik, kesiapan psikologis dan ekonomi, perlindungan martabat, serta pencegahan kemudaratannya sejalan dengan tujuan umum syariat. Namun demikian, beberapa tren perlu dikaji secara kritis ketika otonomi individu dan preferensi gaya hidup berpotensi bertentangan dengan tujuan fundamental pembentukan keluarga dalam Islam. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah dapat menjadi kerangka analitis yang adaptif dalam memahami tren pernikahan Muslim kontemporer, sehingga hukum keluarga Islam mampu merespons perubahan antargenerasi tanpa kehilangan landasan normatifnya. Penelitian ini berkontribusi terhadap pengembangan hukum keluarga Islam kontemporer dengan menegaskan pentingnya pendekatan yang seimbang antara pengakuan terhadap perubahan realitas sosial Generasi Z dan pemeliharaan tujuan etis, spiritual, serta orientasi kekeluargaan dalam pernikahan Islam.

Kata kunci: muslim generasi Z, tren pernikahan, preferensi pernikahan, hukum keluarga Islam.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage occupies a central position in Islamic family law and represents not only a social institution but also a religious commitment aimed at establishing a stable, harmonious, and morally responsible family. In Islamic teachings, marriage (*nikah*) is associated with the realization of *sakīnah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*, while simultaneously functioning as a means of preserving lineage (*hifz al-nasl*), protecting human dignity, and maintaining social stability. Classical Islamic jurisprudence therefore places marriage within a comprehensive framework of rights, responsibilities, ethical obligations, and objectives of Shari'ah. Nevertheless, the meaning and practice of marriage are not static. Changes in economic structures, education, gender relations, technology, popular culture, and patterns of social interaction have significantly influenced how younger generations understand and approach marriage.¹

One of the generations experiencing these transformations most prominently is Generation Z, generally understood as the generation that grew up amid rapid digitalization and extensive access to social media and online communication. For Muslim Generation Z, decisions concerning marriage are increasingly shaped by the interaction between religious values and contemporary social realities. Marriage preferences may involve considerations that differ considerably from those emphasized by previous generations, including educational attainment, career development, financial independence, emotional compatibility,² psychological readiness, lifestyle compatibility, and personal aspirations. Digital platforms have also transformed the ways young Muslims meet potential partners, obtain information about marriage, construct expectations about family life, and negotiate relationships. Consequently, marriage is increasingly viewed not merely as a predetermined social obligation but as a complex personal, religious, economic, and social decision.³

¹ Maylissabet, "Analysis of Legal Functions and Maqashid Sharia on Islamic Marriage Law in Indonesia," *As-Shahifah: Journal of Constitutional Law and Governance* 2, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.19105/asshahifah.v2i1.6987>

² Icha Herawati, Dinda Yendra, and Nindy Amita, "Kesiapan Menikah pada Generasi Z: *Marital Attitudes* dan *Kematangan Emosi*," *Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Agama dan Ilmu Pengetahuan* 22, no. 2 (2025), [https://doi.org/10.25299/ajaip.2025.vol22\(2\).21842](https://doi.org/10.25299/ajaip.2025.vol22(2).21842); Rama Dhini Permasari Johar, Ike Yulisa, and Phuja Putri Okta Minal, "Criteria for Selecting a Life Partner among Muslim Adolescents: A Mixed Methods Analysis," *International Journal of Islamic Studies Higher Education* 3, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.24036/insight.v3i1.174>

³ Zhikang Wang, Hua Yang, and Yujie Jiang, "Online Exposure to Marriage Information and Marriage Expectations of Generation Z in China: The Roles of Marriage Value and Relative Information Exposure," *PLOS ONE* 20, no. 10 (2025): e0334596, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0334596>.

These transformations have contributed to several emerging marriage trends among Muslim youth. Some members of Generation Z demonstrate a preference for postponing marriage until they achieve greater educational and economic stability. Others place greater emphasis on emotional maturity, communication, equality between spouses, and compatibility of values before entering marriage. At the same time, digital culture has expanded opportunities for interaction and introduced new forms of courtship, including online matchmaking, social-media-based introductions, and digitally mediated communication. Although these developments may provide greater autonomy and access to information, they may also generate challenges related to unrealistic expectations, commodification of relationships, excessive individualism, premarital interaction, and the influence of globalized popular culture. The transformation of marriage preferences therefore raises an important question regarding how contemporary aspirations among Muslim Generation Z can be understood within the normative and ethical framework of Islamic law.⁴

From the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, changing social circumstances do not necessarily invalidate the institution of marriage or its fundamental principles. Rather, they require a contextual understanding of the objectives underlying Islamic legal norms. In this regard, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* provides an important analytical framework for examining contemporary marriage preferences because it focuses not only on the formal legality of an act but also on the purposes, benefits, and protection of human welfare intended by Sharī'ah. The objectives of Sharī'ah traditionally include the protection of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*). In the context of marriage, these objectives can be extended to the protection of family integrity, human dignity, economic security, emotional well-being, and the continuity of legitimate family relationships.⁵

The application of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* is particularly relevant because contemporary marriage preferences cannot be evaluated adequately through a binary distinction between traditional and modern values. A preference for financial stability before marriage, for example, may reflect the objective of

⁴ Fitriliana, Eva Sussanna, and Lisnawati, "The Practice of Marriage Delay: A Socio-Legal Analysis of Muslim Youth in Aceh," *Jurnal Mediasas: Media Ilmu Syari'ah dan Ahwal Al-Syakhshiyah* 9, no. 2 (2026): 217–230, <https://doi.org/10.58824/mediasas.v9i2.595>

⁵ Triana Bilqis, "Systematic Literature Review: Intergenerational Conflict in Generation Z's Delayed Marriage Due to Financial Unpreparedness and Parental Expectations Regarding Large, Traditional Weddings Based on Custom and Social Status in Indonesia," *Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Sains* 7, no. 7 (2026), <https://doi.org/10.59141/jiss.v7i7.2402>

protecting property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) and preventing future family hardship. Similarly, the emphasis on emotional and psychological maturity may be connected to the protection of life and human dignity (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*), while concerns regarding compatibility and responsible parenthood may support the preservation of lineage and family welfare (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*). From this perspective, changes in marriage preferences should not automatically be interpreted as a rejection of Islamic values. Some changes may instead represent attempts by Muslim youth to realize the substantive objectives of Shari‘ah under contemporary conditions.⁶

However, not every contemporary preference is necessarily compatible with the objectives of Shari‘ah. The influence of consumerism, individualism, excessive material expectations, and digitally constructed images of ideal relationships can potentially transform marriage into a highly individualized or economically burdensome institution. Excessive emphasis on physical appearance, social status, lifestyle, or financial achievement may create barriers to marriage and undermine principles of justice, moderation, and social welfare. Similarly, the use of digital platforms in partner selection can create ethical concerns involving privacy, deception, inappropriate interaction, and the erosion of religious boundaries. Therefore, a *Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah* approach is needed to distinguish between changes that represent legitimate adaptation to social circumstances and changes that may contradict the fundamental purposes of Islamic family law.⁷

Existing studies on Muslim youth and marriage have generally examined issues such as delayed marriage, changing gender roles, economic constraints, digital relationships, and transformations in family values. Other studies have explored *Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah* as a framework for understanding Islamic family law and contemporary social change. Nevertheless, there remains a need for an integrated analysis that specifically connects the changing marriage preferences of Muslim Generation Z with the objectives of Shari‘ah. Much of the existing discussion tends to examine either sociological changes in marriage behavior or normative Islamic principles separately. This creates a research gap concerning how contemporary marriage preferences can be interpreted simultaneously as

⁶ Herawati, Yendra, and Amita, “Kesiapan Menikah pada Generasi Z: *Marital Attitudes* dan Kematangan Emosi,” [https://doi.org/10.25299/ajaip.2025.vol22\(2\).21842](https://doi.org/10.25299/ajaip.2025.vol22(2).21842)

⁷ Johar, Yulisa, and Minal, “Criteria for Selecting a Life Partner among Muslim Adolescents: A Mixed Methods Analysis,” <https://doi.org/10.24036/insight.v3i1.174>.

expressions of generational transformation and as phenomena that require evaluation through Islamic legal objectives.⁸

This study therefore examines contemporary marriage trends among Muslim Generation Z and analyzes the changing preferences of this generation through the perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. It focuses on several dimensions of marriage preferences, including the timing of marriage, economic and career considerations, emotional and psychological readiness, partner selection, gender expectations, family involvement, and the influence of digital culture. By placing these developments within a *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* framework, the study seeks to identify which aspects of contemporary marriage preferences contribute to the realization of family welfare and which may create tensions with Islamic legal and ethical objectives.⁹

The study argues that the transformation of marriage preferences among Muslim Generation Z should be understood as a dynamic interaction between Islamic norms, generational aspirations, and changing socio-economic and technological environments. A *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* perspective enables Islamic family law to respond to these transformations without abandoning its normative foundations. Rather than treating contemporary preferences as inherently incompatible with Islamic tradition, a maqāṣid-oriented approach allows for a more contextual, balanced, and welfare-oriented interpretation of marriage. In this way, the study contributes to the contemporary discourse on Islamic family law by demonstrating how *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* can serve as an analytical framework for reconciling enduring Islamic principles with the evolving realities and aspirations of Muslim Generation Z.¹⁰

⁸ Yuni Roslaili, Aisyah Idris, and Emi Suhemi, "Family Law Reform in Indonesia According to the Maqashid al-Shari'a Perspective (A Case Study of Law No. 16 of 2019)," *GENDER EQUALITY: International Journal of Child and Gender Studies* 7, no. 2 (2021): 183–197, <https://doi.org/10.22373/equality.v7i2.9397>

⁹ mam Anshori, Muhammad Kholid Abdullah, Suyud Arif, and Syarifah Gustiawati Mukri, "Child Marriage in Indonesia Based on Maqasid al-Shariah and the 2019 Marriage Law," *MIZAN: Journal of Islamic Law* 13, no. 2 (2025): 164–172, <https://doi.org/10.32832/mizan.v13i2.20997>; Hasanudin and Moh. Jeweherul Kalamiah, "The Problematic Nature of Marriage Dispensation from the Perspective of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah," *Al-Hikmah: International Journal of Islamic Studies* (2025), <https://doi.org/10.64540/alhikmah192>.

¹⁰ Muhammad Syarif Dibaj and Muhammad Sauqi, "Formalization of Marriage Registration from the Perspective of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah: A Comparative Study of Classical Islamic Jurisprudence and Family Law Regulations in Indonesia," *Mitsaqan Ghalizun* 6, no. 1 (2026): 26–39, <https://doi.org/10.33084/mg.v6i1.12610>.

DISCUSSION

Changing Marriage Preferences among Muslim Generation Z

The findings indicate that marriage preferences among Muslim Generation Z are undergoing significant transformation as a consequence of changing social, economic, educational, and technological environments. Marriage remains an important religious and social institution, but the criteria used by young Muslims to determine when, why, and with whom they should marry are becoming increasingly diverse. Rather than understanding marriage solely as a social expectation or religious obligation, Generation Z tends to approach marriage as a major life decision that requires emotional, psychological, educational, and financial preparedness.¹¹

One of the most visible changes concerns the timing of marriage. Muslim Generation Z tends to postpone marriage until they perceive themselves as sufficiently prepared to assume marital responsibilities. Educational attainment, career development, employment stability, housing, and financial independence are among the considerations that influence this decision. Such postponement should not necessarily be interpreted as a rejection of marriage or Islamic values. From a maqāṣid-oriented perspective, delaying marriage may constitute a rational choice when it enables individuals to establish the material and psychological conditions necessary for a stable family.¹²

This phenomenon demonstrates that contemporary marriage preferences are influenced by a combination of religious commitment and pragmatic considerations. Young Muslims may continue to regard marriage as part of their religious life while simultaneously recognizing that marriage requires substantial economic and emotional responsibilities. The transformation therefore represents a shift from marriage as a socially predetermined transition toward marriage as a consciously prepared and negotiated life choice.

Economic Stability and the Transformation of Marriage Expectations

Economic considerations constitute one of the most influential factors shaping marriage preferences among Generation Z. The increasing cost of education, housing, wedding ceremonies, childcare, and daily living has

¹¹ Icha Herawati, Dinda Yendra, and Nindy Amita, “Kesiapan Menikah pada Generasi Z: *Marital Attitudes* dan Kematangan Emosi,” *Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Agama dan Ilmu Pengetahuan* 22, no. 2 (2025), [https://doi.org/10.25299/ajaip.2025.vol22\(2\).21842](https://doi.org/10.25299/ajaip.2025.vol22(2).21842)

¹² Fitriliana, Eva Sussanna, and Lisnawati, “The Practice of Marriage Delay: A Socio-Legal Analysis of Muslim Youth in Aceh,” *Jurnal Mediasas: Media Ilmu Syari’ah dan Abwal Al-Syakhsyiyah* 9, no. 2 (2026): 217–230, <https://doi.org/10.58824/mediasas.v9i2.595>

generated concerns about the financial sustainability of married life. Consequently, young Muslims increasingly consider stable employment, adequate income, and financial planning before entering marriage.¹³

From the perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, this development can be interpreted through the principle of *ḥifẓ al-māl* (protection of wealth). Marriage in Islam involves reciprocal financial responsibilities, including the provision of maintenance (*nafaqah*) and the protection of the economic welfare of the family. A decision to postpone marriage until minimum economic preparedness has been achieved can therefore be compatible with the objectives of Sharī'ah when it aims to prevent financial hardship and protect the welfare of future spouses and children.

However, economic preparedness should not be transformed into an excessive material requirement. The emergence of highly expensive wedding expectations, luxury lifestyles, and social-media-driven standards of marital success can create unnecessary barriers to marriage. When economic criteria become excessive, they may contradict the principle of *taysīr* (facilitation) and potentially produce social inequality. Therefore, the maqāṣid approach requires a distinction between reasonable financial preparedness and materialistic expectations that make marriage unnecessarily difficult.

This distinction is particularly important for Muslim Generation Z because social media frequently exposes young people to idealized representations of weddings, couples, homes, and lifestyles. These representations can create perceptions that a successful marriage requires a particular economic standard. A maqāṣid-oriented understanding challenges such expectations by emphasizing that economic stability should function as a means of protecting family welfare rather than becoming a status-based prerequisite for marriage.¹⁴

¹³ Zhikang Wang, Hua Yang, and Yujie Jiang, "Online Exposure to Marriage Information and Marriage Expectations of Generation Z in China: The Roles of Marriage Value and Relative Information Exposure," *PLOS ONE* 20, no. 10 (2025): e0334596, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0334596>.

¹⁴ Muhammad Syarif Dibaj and Muhammad Sauqi, "Formalization of Marriage Registration from the Perspective of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah: A Comparative Study of Classical Islamic Jurisprudence and Family Law Regulations in Indonesia," *Mitsaqan Ghalizun* 6, no. 1 (2026): 26–39, <https://doi.org/10.33084/mg.v6i1.12610>

Emotional and Psychological Readiness as Contemporary Dimensions of Marriage

Another significant development is the increasing importance attached to emotional and psychological readiness. Generation Z appears to place greater emphasis on emotional maturity, communication skills, mutual understanding, conflict resolution, and mental preparedness when considering marriage. Compatibility is increasingly understood not simply in terms of family background, religion, or social status but also in terms of personality, emotional capacity, communication style, and shared life goals.

This development can be connected to the *maqāṣid* objective of protecting human life and dignity (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*). Although classical formulations of the five essential objectives do not always use contemporary psychological terminology, the protection of human well-being is consistent with the broader ethical orientation of Shari'ah. Marriage should ideally create *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*, rather than becoming a source of persistent harm, oppression, or psychological insecurity.

Therefore, the emphasis placed by Generation Z on emotional readiness should not automatically be viewed as excessive individualism. In many circumstances, it represents an effort to ensure that marriage fulfills its fundamental purpose. Emotional maturity can strengthen the ability of spouses to communicate, manage disagreement, respect differences, and fulfill their respective responsibilities. Conversely, entering marriage without adequate emotional preparation may increase the possibility of conflict, separation, domestic violence, and other forms of harm.¹⁵

The *maqāṣid* framework thus provides a constructive basis for integrating contemporary concepts of emotional readiness with Islamic family law. Emotional compatibility should not replace religious and ethical considerations but should complement them. A prospective spouse's religious commitment, moral character, emotional maturity, and capacity to fulfill marital responsibilities can be considered collectively rather than treated as mutually exclusive criteria.

Transformation of Partner Selection Criteria

The findings also demonstrate a transformation in the criteria used by Muslim Generation Z when selecting a prospective spouse. Religious

¹⁵ Herawati, Yendra, and Amita, "Kesiapan Menikah pada Generasi Z: *Marital Attitudes* dan Kematangan Emosi," 2025, [https://doi.org/10.25299/ajaip.2025.vol22\(2\).21842](https://doi.org/10.25299/ajaip.2025.vol22(2).21842)

commitment and moral character remain important, but they increasingly coexist with considerations such as educational background, professional aspirations, communication ability, personality, financial responsibility, emotional compatibility, and shared values.

This transformation reflects a broader movement from externally determined partner selection toward more individualized forms of decision-making. Young Muslims increasingly expect to participate actively in choosing their prospective spouse. The role of parents and extended families may remain important, but the final decision is increasingly expected to involve the consent, preferences, and compatibility of the individuals entering the marriage.

From the perspective of Islamic law, this development can be accommodated within the principle that marriage is based on the free consent of the parties. The maqāṣid framework strengthens this interpretation by emphasizing human dignity, justice, and the prevention of harm. Partner selection should therefore facilitate the formation of a family in which both spouses possess sufficient compatibility and willingness to undertake marital responsibilities.¹⁶

Nevertheless, greater individual autonomy also creates potential challenges. The increased importance of appearance, social status, income, lifestyle, and online popularity may lead to superficial partner selection. Digital platforms can encourage users to evaluate potential partners through limited information, photographs, profiles, or curated representations of personality. Such processes can produce unrealistic expectations and increase the possibility of deception.

A maqāṣid-oriented approach therefore requires balance. Individual choice should be respected, but partner selection should remain guided by religious commitment, ethical character, compatibility, responsibility, and realistic expectations. The objective should not merely be to maximize personal preference but to achieve sustainable family welfare.

Digitalization and the Transformation of Courtship

Digital technology has significantly transformed the process through which young Muslims establish interpersonal relationships. Social media, messaging applications, online communities, and matchmaking platforms have expanded opportunities for young people to encounter potential partners

¹⁶ Rama Dhini Permasari Johar, Ike Yulisa, and Fhuja Putri Okta Minal, "Criteria for Selecting a Life Partner among Muslim Adolescents: A Mixed Methods Analysis," *International Journal of Islamic Studies Higher Education* 3, no. 2 (2024): 96–110, <https://doi.org/10.24036/insight.v3i1.174>

beyond traditional family and community networks. For Generation Z, digital communication has become an ordinary component of social interaction, including communication related to marriage.

This transformation offers several potential benefits. Digital platforms can expand access to information, facilitate communication, enable geographically distant individuals to interact, and provide opportunities for individuals with similar religious or personal values to connect. In this sense, digital technology can contribute to the realization of *maṣlahah* when it facilitates responsible and purposeful partner selection.¹⁷

Nevertheless, digitalization also introduces significant ethical challenges. The absence of direct social supervision can facilitate inappropriate interaction, deception, manipulation, privacy violations, and the formation of relationships that lack clear boundaries. Furthermore, algorithmic systems may encourage users to approach partner selection through highly individualized preferences, potentially reducing complex human relationships to simplified profiles and compatibility scores.

From the perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah*, the permissibility of digital interaction should therefore be evaluated according to its purpose, process, consequences, and potential harm. The relevant principle is not simply whether the technology itself is modern or traditional, but whether its use contributes to legitimate benefit and avoids prohibited or harmful consequences. Digital matchmaking can therefore be regarded as potentially permissible when it facilitates a legitimate marriage process, maintains privacy and ethical boundaries, and avoids deception and exploitation.

Gender Roles and Expectations of Equality

Changing gender relations also influence contemporary Muslim marriage preferences. Generation Z increasingly expects marriage to involve communication, mutual respect, shared decision-making, and cooperation between spouses. Traditional assumptions concerning rigid gender roles may be reconsidered in response to women's increased participation in higher education and professional employment.

This development creates an important area of dialogue between Islamic family law and contemporary social realities. Islamic marriage establishes differentiated responsibilities in certain areas, but the Qur'anic conception of

¹⁷ Johar, Yulisa, and Minal, "Criteria for Selecting a Life Partner among Muslim Adolescents: A Mixed Methods Analysis," <https://doi.org/10.24036/insight.v3i1.174>

marriage also emphasizes mutuality, compassion, cooperation, and equitable treatment. Therefore, the maqāṣid approach encourages an interpretation that focuses on the welfare and justice of the family rather than merely reproducing historically specific social arrangements.¹⁸

The increasing expectation of partnership does not necessarily mean the abandonment of Islamic family values. Rather, it may strengthen the ethical dimension of marriage when partnership is understood as cooperation in fulfilling responsibilities. Husbands and wives may negotiate household tasks, financial management, childcare, and professional responsibilities according to their circumstances and capabilities.

However, the concept of equality must also be interpreted carefully within Islamic jurisprudence. Equality should not necessarily mean that every marital responsibility is identical. A maqāṣid-oriented framework emphasizes *'adl* (justice) and *maṣlahah* rather than mechanical sameness. The relevant question is whether the distribution of responsibilities produces fairness, mutual respect, and family welfare.

Tension between Religious Values and Individualism

One of the central findings of this study is the existence of tension between Islamic family values and increasingly individualistic approaches to marriage. Generation Z generally places considerable value on autonomy, personal development, career aspirations, and self-fulfillment. These values can contribute positively to marriage when they encourage individuals to develop maturity and responsibility before entering family life.¹⁹

However, excessive individualism may create challenges when personal preferences become dominant over relational responsibilities. Marriage requires compromise, patience, sacrifice, and commitment. If marriage is evaluated solely according to its capacity to satisfy personal expectations, ordinary difficulties may be interpreted as evidence that the relationship has failed.

The maqāṣid framework offers a middle position between excessive collectivism and excessive individualism. Islam recognizes individual dignity and consent while simultaneously emphasizing social responsibility and family welfare. Marriage should therefore be understood as a relationship in which

¹⁸ Wang, Yang, and Jiang, "Online Exposure to Marriage Information and Marriage Expectations of Generation Z in China," *PLOS ONE* 20, no. 10 (2025): e0334596, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0334596>

¹⁹ Wang, Yang, and Jiang, "Online Exposure to Marriage Information and Marriage Expectations of Generation Z in China," <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0334596>.

personal interests and collective interests are integrated. The objective is neither to suppress individual aspirations nor to allow individualism to undermine family responsibilities.

Marriage Delay: Adaptation or Problem?

Marriage delay among Generation Z requires careful interpretation. It would be inappropriate to classify all delays as negative because the reasons behind postponement vary considerably. Delaying marriage because of educational goals, career preparation, emotional maturity, or reasonable financial considerations may contribute to more sustainable family formation.

Conversely, prolonged postponement caused by unrealistic expectations, excessive consumerism, fear of commitment, or the pursuit of an idealized partner may create new problems. A distinction should therefore be made between *constructive postponement* and *problematic postponement*.

From the *maqāṣid* perspective, the key consideration is the outcome. If postponement increases readiness and reduces potential harm, it may serve *maṣlaḥah*. If it results from unnecessary social pressures or unrealistic standards and ultimately creates greater harm, the same phenomenon requires critical evaluation. This illustrates why *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* is particularly useful for analyzing contemporary marriage trends: it does not merely evaluate whether a behavior appears traditional or modern but examines its purposes, circumstances, and consequences.²⁰

Reconstructing Marriage through *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*

The changing marriage preferences of Muslim Generation Z demonstrate the need for a more dynamic approach to Islamic family law. The objective should not be to choose between maintaining traditional marriage patterns and accepting contemporary trends without critical evaluation. Instead, Islamic scholarship should identify which contemporary developments are consistent with the fundamental objectives of *Sharī'ah* and which require correction or limitation.

The *maqāṣid* framework provides several principles for this reconstruction. First, marriage should protect lineage and family continuity through *ḥifẓ al-nasl*. Second, it should protect the physical and psychological

²⁰ Nor Ipansyah and Anwar Hafidzi, "Reform of Islamic Family Law in Indonesia: Integrating *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and the Principles of Justice in the Digital Era," *Al-Syakhsbiyyah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam dan Kemanusiaan* 7, no. 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.30863/as-hki.v7i2.10637>

welfare of spouses and children through *ḥifẓ al-nafs*. Third, it should protect intellectual and moral development through *ḥifẓ al-‘aql*. Fourth, it should support economic security through *ḥifẓ al-māl*. Fifth, it should preserve religious and ethical values through *ḥifẓ al-dīn*. These objectives can provide a multidimensional framework for evaluating contemporary marriage preferences.

Within this framework, the ideal Muslim marriage is not necessarily the marriage that most closely reproduces the social patterns of previous generations. Rather, it is a marriage that fulfills the essential purposes of Sharī‘ah under contemporary circumstances. This distinction is important because social forms may change while fundamental objectives remain constant.

Toward a Maqāṣid-Oriented Model of Muslim Generation Z Marriage

Based on the preceding analysis, contemporary Muslim marriage can be conceptualized through five interconnected dimensions: religious and ethical commitment, emotional readiness, economic preparedness, relational compatibility, and digital responsibility. These dimensions provide a framework for understanding marriage preferences without reducing the phenomenon either to traditional religious norms or to modern individualistic aspirations.²¹

Dimension	Contemporary Generation Z Preference	Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah Relevance
Religious commitment	Compatibility in faith, values, and moral character	<i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn</i>
Emotional readiness	Emotional maturity, communication, psychological preparedness	<i>Ḥifẓ al-nafs</i>
Economic preparedness	Stable employment, financial planning, manageable wedding costs	<i>Ḥifẓ al-māl</i>
Partner compatibility	Shared values, personality, education, life goals	<i>Ḥifẓ al-nasl</i> and <i>maṣlaḥah</i>
Digital interaction	Responsible use of social media and matchmaking platforms	Prevention of <i>mafsadah</i> and realization of <i>maṣlaḥah</i>
Gender partnership	Mutual respect, consultation, and fair distribution of responsibilities	<i>‘Adl</i> and <i>maṣlaḥah</i>
Marriage timing	Marriage after sufficient personal and social preparation	Prevention of harm (<i>dar’ al-mafāsīd</i>)

²¹ Muhammad Danil, Vito Dasrianto, Elva Mahmudi, and Asfar Hamidi Siregar, “From Provider to Partner: Reconstructing the Legal Concept of Livelihood Obligation in Indonesian Islamic Family Law through the Lens of Gender Justice and Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah,” *Sakina: Journal of Family Studies* 10, no. 2 (2026): 160–173, <https://doi.org/10.18860/jfs.v10i2.29511>

This model demonstrates that changing marriage preferences should not simply be categorized as either Islamic or un-Islamic. Instead, each preference should be evaluated according to whether it contributes to the realization of legitimate human welfare and the preservation of the fundamental objectives of *Shari'ah*.²²

Theoretical Implications

The findings have important implications for the contemporary study of Islamic family law. First, they demonstrate that *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah* can function as an interpretive framework for understanding social change rather than merely as a theoretical concept used to justify existing legal rules. Second, the findings suggest that Islamic family law needs to engage more seriously with sociological realities affecting younger generations. Marriage law cannot be separated from changing patterns of education, employment, technology, gender relations, and economic conditions.

Third, the study indicates that a *maqāṣid*-oriented approach can bridge the gap between normative Islamic law and contemporary social science. Sociological findings can help identify the realities experienced by Muslim youth, while *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah* provides normative criteria for assessing whether particular transformations contribute to or undermine family welfare. This interdisciplinary relationship can produce a more contextual and responsive understanding of contemporary Muslim marriage.

Overall Discussion

Overall, the changing marriage preferences of Muslim Generation Z reflect neither a complete rejection of Islamic marriage traditions nor an unconditional acceptance of Western or globalized relationship models. Rather, they represent an ongoing negotiation between religious commitment, personal autonomy, economic realities, emotional needs, technological transformation, and changing social expectations.²³

The *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah* perspective reveals that several contemporary preferences—including emotional preparedness, financial stability, informed partner selection, mutual respect, and responsible digital interaction—can

²² Fitriliana, Eva Sussanna, and Lisnawati, "The Practice of Marriage Delay: A Socio-Legal Analysis of Muslim Youth in Aceh," *Jurnal Mediasas: Media Ilmu Syari'ah dan Ahwal Al-Syakhsyiyah* 9, no. 2 (2026): 217–230, <https://doi.org/10.58824/mediasas.v9i2.595>

²³ Hasanudin and Moh. Jeweherul Kalamiah, "The Problematic Nature of Marriage Dispensation from the Perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah*," *Al-Hikmah: International Journal of Islamic Studies* (2025), <https://doi.org/10.64540/alhikmah192>

potentially strengthen the objectives of Islamic marriage. At the same time, excessive materialism, unrealistic expectations, superficial partner selection, and uncontrolled digital relationships require critical evaluation because they may undermine family welfare and generate *mafsadah*.

Accordingly, the future of Islamic family law should not be framed as a choice between preserving tradition and embracing modernity. A more productive approach is to identify the permanent objectives of Sharī'ah and reinterpret their application in response to changing circumstances. For Muslim Generation Z, marriage can remain a deeply religious institution while simultaneously accommodating contemporary understandings of emotional maturity, economic responsibility, mutual partnership, and informed personal choice. Such an approach enables Islamic family law to remain normatively grounded while responding constructively to the realities of contemporary Muslim youth.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that marriage preferences among Muslim Generation Z are undergoing significant transformation due to changing economic, educational, social, cultural, and technological conditions. Marriage remains an important Islamic and social institution, but its meaning and expectations are increasingly shaped by emotional maturity, financial readiness, educational and career aspirations, partner compatibility, gender relations, and digital interaction. From the perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, these changes are not inherently negative; preferences such as financial preparedness, emotional maturity, responsible partner selection, and religious compatibility can support *ḥifẓ al-māl*, *ḥifẓ al-nafs*, *ḥifẓ al-nasl*, *ḥifẓ al-dīn*, and *ḥifẓ al-'aql*. However, marriage delays driven by excessive materialism, unrealistic partner expectations, fear of commitment, or idealized digital representations may generate *mafsadah*. Digitalization similarly provides opportunities for partner selection while creating risks such as deception, privacy violations, superficial evaluation, and inappropriate interaction, requiring ethical and maqāṣid-oriented regulation. Changing gender expectations emphasizing mutual respect, communication, consultation, and cooperation can strengthen *'adl*, *mawaddah*, *rahmah*, and family welfare when grounded in Islamic ethical principles. Thus, the transformation of marriage preferences should be understood as a negotiation between enduring Islamic values and contemporary realities rather than as a decline in religious commitment. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* offers a balanced

framework for distinguishing changes that promote *maṣlahah* from those that undermine family welfare. Accordingly, Islamic family institutions should develop responsive marriage education encompassing emotional maturity, financial management, digital ethics, communication, conflict resolution, gender justice, and responsible partner selection, so that marriage continues to realize *sakīnah*, *mawaddah*, *rahmah*, justice, dignity, economic security, and the preservation of family and lineage in contemporary society.

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