

The Dilemma of Marriage Postponement among Final-Year Female Students at STDI: A Case Study from the Perspective of Islamic Family Law

Sabrina Rufaida¹, Sabilul Muhtadin²

^{1,2}Sekolah Tinggi Dirasat Islamiyah Imam Syafi'i, Jember, Indonesia
E-mail: sabrinarfd18@gmail.com¹, sabil.abuziyad@gmail.com²

Submission: 19-02-2026	Revised: 13-03-2026	Accepted: 02-04-2026	Published: 28-04-2026
------------------------	---------------------	----------------------	-----------------------

Abstract

Final-year female students are frequently confronted with a dilemma between pursuing further education and entering the workforce, which leads them either to postpone marriage or to prioritize personal relationships through marriage. This phase represents a transitional period toward professional life. Balancing academic responsibilities and marital life simultaneously presents considerable challenges. This study aimed to analyze the factors contributing to the emergence of the dilemma of marriage postponement, the strategies employed by female students in coping with the resulting internal conflicts, the perspective of Islamic family law on this dilemma, and the influence of educational attainment on partner selection criteria. This research adopted a qualitative method with a case study approach focusing on final-year female students at the Sekolah Tinggi Dirasat Islamiyah Imam Syafi'i. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with research participants, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. The findings revealed that: (1) there are four primary factors contributing to the dilemma of marriage postponement among the students; (2) four key strategies are employed by the students to cope with the internal conflict associated with postponing marriage; (3) the dilemma of marriage postponement is perceived as a test of faith; and (4) educational level significantly influences the criteria used in selecting a prospective spouse.

Keywords: Marriage Postponement, Undergraduate Students, Islamic Family Law.

Abstrak

Mahasiswi semester akhir sering dihadapkan pada dilema antara ingin melanjutkan pendidikan dan bekerja sehingga memilih untuk menunda pernikahan atau justru memilih untuk membangun hubungan pribadi dengan jalan menikah. Fase ini merupakan fase transisi menuju dunia kerja. Tidak mudah untuk menjalankan pendidikan dan rumah tangga secara bersamaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis faktor yang menjadi penyebab munculnya dilema penundaan pernikahan, strategi mahasiswi dalam menghadapi konflik batin yang terjadi, pandangan hukum keluarga Islam terhadap dilema penundaan pernikahan yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswi dan pengaruh tingkat pendidikan dalam menentukan kriteria pasangan. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus pada mahasiswi Sekolah Tinggi Dirasat Islamiyah Imam Syafi'i semester akhir. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara



mendalam dengan subjek penelitian. Analisis data menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: (1) terdapat empat faktor yang menjadi penyebab munculnya dilema penundaan pernikahan pada mahasiswi Sekolah Tinggi Dirasat Islamiyah Imam Syafi'i. (2) terdapat empat strategi yang dilakukan oleh mahasiswi dalam menghadapi konflik batin penundaan pernikahan. (3) dilema penundaan pernikahan dipandang sebagai ujian keimanan bagi mahasiswi. (4) terdapat pengaruh tingkat pendidikan dalam menentukan kriteria pasangan.

Kata kunci: Penundaan Pernikahan, Semester Akhir, Hukum Keluarga Islam.

A. INTRODUCTION

Marriage constitutes a sacred bond between a man and a woman. It is regarded as a means of completing the religious commitment of both spouses, through which individuals are able to fulfill their natural disposition (*fitrah*) in accordance with Islamic law (*sharī'ah*). In this way, the divine wisdom of Allah the Exalted in creating human beings in pairs is manifested as a sign of His greatness and sovereignty. Allah the Exalted states in Sūrah Az-Zāriyāt (51:49):

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

“And of all things We created pairs, that you may remember (the greatness of Allah).”

Marriage serves as a means (*wasīlah*) of preserving chastity, attaining progeny, and establishing a harmonious family (*sakinah*). It does not merely unite two individuals, but also brings together two families within a single social bond.

The original legal ruling of marriage in Islam is *sunnah* (recommended), although it may vary depending on individual needs and circumstances (Muzammil, 2019). Islamic teachings encourage young people who possess the necessary capability to marry, as indicated in the ḥadīth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ، مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمُ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ، فَإِنَّهُ أَغْضُ لِلْبَصَرِ وَأَخْصَنُ لِلْفَرْجِ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ
بِالصَّوْمِ، فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ

“O young people, whoever among you is able to (afford marriage), let him marry, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and guarding chastity. And whoever is not able, then he should fast, for it will diminish his desire.” (Al-Bukhari, 1993)

Although the wording of this ḥadīth explicitly addresses men, its substantive meaning also applies to women, as marriage necessarily involves both parties. Nevertheless, there is no stipulation obligating women to marry immediately, nor are higher educational attainment or specific economic conditions prescribed as prerequisites for marriage. At the same time, Islam emphasizes the importance of seeking knowledge throughout one’s lifetime.

In this context, it is important to relate Islamic legal values to Indonesian law, as both significantly shape societal perspectives on education and marriage. Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia affirms that “every citizen has the right to education” (Indonesia, 1974). Alongside the development of modern society, social transformations have influenced women’s perspectives, leading many to experience a dilemma between pursuing a career and entering into marriage. Careful consideration is therefore required, as both decisions concern two major aspects of life: marriage and career development (Mohamad Mustafid et al., 2023).

Sekolah Tinggi Dirasat Islamiyah Imam Syafi’i is a private Islamic higher education institution located in Jember, East Java. The institution implements an educational framework grounded in the Qur’an and Sunnah according to the understanding of the Companions. Arabic is used as the primary language of instruction. It offers four undergraduate programs: Islamic Family Law, Hadith Studies, Arabic Language and Literature, and Islamic Economic Law. The standard duration of study is eight semesters (four years), with an additional preparatory program that can be completed within one year (two semesters) (Nur Maulana & Kumaini, 2024).

For some women, undertaking higher education while being married presents significant challenges. Marriage requires female students to assume dual roles, including

domestic responsibilities, which divide their time and attention. Consequently, the academic process may become increasingly demanding (Satra & Susilawati, 2024).

The dilemma of marriage postponement is not solely attributable to educational and career-related factors. Other contributing elements include environmental influences, economic pressures, and prevailing cultural norms (Nur Husna et al., 2024). In some segments of society, there persists an assumption that women do not need to pursue higher education, as their primary role is perceived to be that of homemakers. Consequently, educational opportunities are often prioritized for men, who are expected to become the primary breadwinners (Yovita et al., 2022). In practice, female students tend to postpone marriage due to aspirations to pursue postgraduate studies, focus on career development, or consider their economic and psychological readiness prior to marriage.

A societal perception has also emerged suggesting that the higher a woman's level of education, the more difficult it becomes for her to find a suitable spouse. This view is often associated with the assumption that highly educated women establish more complex and selective criteria in choosing a partner. In Islamic teachings, however, parity in educational attainment between men and women is not stipulated as a prerequisite for marriage. Rather, Islam emphasizes that women should consider aspects such as responsibility, family background, religiosity, and moral character when selecting a spouse. Among these, the most essential considerations are the man's religious commitment and moral conduct (Muzammil, 2019). This is supported by a ḥadīth narrated by Abū Hurairah, in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

إِذَا حَظَبَ إِلَيْكُمْ مَنْ تَرْضَوْنَ دِينَهُ وَخُلُقَهُ، فَرَوْجُوهُ. إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوا تَكُنْ فِتْنَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ عَرِيضٌ

"If there comes to you a man whose religion and character you are pleased with, then marry him (to your ward). If you do not do so, there will be fitnah on earth and widespread (corruption)." (At-Tirmidhi, 1430)

Although several studies have examined the phenomenon of marriage postponement among university students, research that specifically investigates the

dilemma of marriage postponement among final-year female students, along with the strategies they employ to cope with the resulting internal conflicts, remains limited. There is also a lack of in-depth analysis regarding the factors that influence female students' decision-making processes, as well as the role of educational background in shaping partner selection criteria.

One relevant prior study was entitled "*An Analysis of the Phenomenon of Marriage Postponement During the Period of Study (A Case Study of Female Students at Sekolah Tinggi Dirasat Islamiyah Imam Syafi'i Jember)*" (Nur Husna et al., 2024). This study employed a field research design with a descriptive case study approach. The findings indicated that there were two primary factors underlying marriage postponement during the study period: internal and external factors. Internal factors included personal aspirations, while external factors involved social pressures from the surrounding community. The similarity between the present study and the aforementioned research lay in the shared focus on the phenomenon of marriage postponement. However, the present study differed in that it specifically examined the management strategies employed by final-year female students in addressing internal conflict and navigating the dilemma of postponing marriage.

Second, the study entitled "*The Dilemma between Marriage and Education: An Analysis of Factors Contributing to Marriage Postponement among Female Master of Management Students at Universitas Pamulang*" (Rahmawati, 2025) employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological research design. This approach was utilized to gain an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences of postgraduate students who chose to postpone marriage by considering factors such as education, career development, emotional readiness, and socio-cultural pressures. The similarity between this study and the present research lay in the shared focus on the dilemma of marriage postponement. However, the present study differed in that it specifically concentrated on final-year undergraduate female students and examined the management strategies they employed to cope with the internal conflicts arising from this dilemma.

Third, the study entitled *“Role Conflict among Final-Year Students: Between Completing a Final Thesis and Marriage”* (Mohamad Mustafid et al., 2023) identified the factors influencing students’ decisions between completing their academic requirements and entering into marriage. The findings revealed that students experience dual-role conflict between the need to complete their education and the desire to establish personal relationships through marriage. The similarity with the present study lay in the discussion of dilemmas faced by final-year students. However, this research differed by specifically analyzing the coping and management strategies employed by female students in addressing the internal conflicts associated with marriage postponement. The researcher observes that many female students at STDI experience the dilemma of postponing marriage. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the factors influencing final-year female students in making decisions regarding marriage postponement, the strategies they adopt in managing internal conflict, and the influence of educational background on partner selection criteria. The researcher was motivated to examine and document this issue with the expectation that the findings would provide both theoretical and practical contributions, as well as serve as a reference for understanding the phenomenon of marriage postponement among final-year female students.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design using a case study approach with a juridical-empirical method. The research was conducted at Sekolah Tinggi Dirasat Islamiyah Imam Syafi’i Jember during the period of October–November 2025. Qualitative research did not involve statistical analysis; rather, it aimed to obtain an in-depth, specific, and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of marriage postponement due to career considerations among final-year female students. Qualitative inquiry was inherently naturalistic, with flexible data sources that could be obtained through methods such as interviews and questionnaires (Moleng, 2022). In this study, data were collected through direct, in-depth interviews. An interview was defined as a conversational process between two or more individuals aimed at obtaining detailed and meaningful information (Waruwu, 2024).

In addition, this research incorporated normative analysis through a literature review and religious norms related to the issue of marriage postponement, in order to strengthen and contextualize the empirical findings.

The sampling technique employed in this study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling referred to a technique of selecting data sources based on specific considerations (Sugiyono, 2020). The sample criteria included female students of STDI Imam Syafi'i who were in their final semester, as they were in a transitional phase toward entering the workforce and were experiencing the dilemma of postponing marriage due to career-related considerations. The research participants consisted of eight female students selected on the basis that they were experiencing such a dilemma. Furthermore, the participants fell within an age range that was socially regarded as appropriate for marriage.

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which consisted of three primary stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved summarizing the results of the interviews. Data display referred to the organized presentation of reduced data in a structured form to identify patterns and relationships. Finally, conclusion drawing and verification were carried out by linking theoretical frameworks or concepts with the empirical findings, thereby addressing the research questions (Sugiyono, 2020). The validity of the data was ensured through source triangulation techniques, which involved comparing interview results across different informants and relating them to relevant literature. This approach enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1) Factors Influencing the Decisions of Final-Year Female Students at STDI Jember

The phenomenon of the dilemma of marriage postponement due to career considerations was widely experienced by female students, particularly those in their final year. In the context of this study, "career" encompassed both the aspiration to enter the workforce and the intention to pursue higher education. Based on interviews

conducted with eight final-year female students, several factors were identified as influencing their decisions regarding the postponement of marriage, as follows:

a) Internal and Psychological Factors

Prior to entering marriage, various forms of preparation were required, one of which was psychological readiness. The interview findings indicated that the majority of informants perceived themselves as not yet personally and emotionally prepared for marriage. Marriage was understood not merely as the union of two individuals, but also as the integration of two families with differing backgrounds. This was expressed by NM, who stated, *“I felt unprepared for marriage, lacked confidence in my ability to work, and was uncertain about adapting to a new environment if I pursued a master’s degree”* (Interview, Jember, 18 October 2025). This finding was consistent with previous research indicating that mental and emotional readiness constituted crucial factors in marriage (Silviana et al., 2023).

Concerns about obtaining a partner who might not support one’s career aspirations also contributed to the emergence of this dilemma. This reflected the anticipated dual roles that female students would assume after marriage. Informant SP stated, *“There was a concern that marriage might lead to having a partner who does not support my aspirations, while pursuing a career raises fears of increasing age and difficulty in finding a suitable spouse”* (Interview, Jember, 17 October 2025). This finding aligned with studies suggesting that women often consider partner support as a significant factor in decision-making (Murti & Amini, 2025). Allah the Exalted states in Sūrah Ar-Rūm (30:21):

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ ۚ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً

“And among His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves that you may find tranquility in them, and He placed between you affection and mercy.”

This verse indicates that marriage is intended to bring about emotional tranquility, affection, and compassion.

b) Economic Factor and Financial Independence

Economic considerations also emerged as a significant factor contributing to the dilemma of marriage postponement. This was reflected in the statement of informant RF: *“I was concerned that my financial condition would be unstable if I married without having a job; however, postponing marriage might affect the age at which I would have children later in life”* (Interview, Jember, 23 October 2025).

Furthermore, the desire to attain financial savings and secure employment prior to marriage reflected a principle of independence, although the husband remained the primary provider. HV emphasized, *“I intended to have savings and a job before marriage, even though the main financial responsibility would remain with the husband. At least, I could contribute to supporting the household economy”* (Interview, Jember, 14 October 2025). This finding underscored the importance of financial preparedness prior to marriage in order to avoid complete dependence on the husband (Nur Husna et al., 2024). Unstable economic conditions were also perceived as having the potential to create future difficulties, thereby becoming an obstacle to the realization of a harmonious marriage (Layyinah et al., 2024).

c) Social and Environment Factor

Societal perceptions regarding the ideal age of marriage for women, as well as the stigma attached to highly educated women, contributed to the emergence of this dilemma. The assumption that higher education makes it more difficult for women to find a spouse frequently arose, despite the fact that education actually fostered critical thinking and selectivity in partner selection based on shared values and life goals.

Informant OC stated, *“It was not because I did not know which choice to make, but rather because the surrounding environment kept reminding me, such as, ‘At this age, why have you not thought about marriage?’ This sometimes made me question whether the life direction I had chosen was correct”* (Interview, Jember, 18 October 2025). Society tended to assess women’s success based on marital status rather than personal quality or career contribution. As a result, women who prioritized their careers were often perceived as “delayed” in marriage, even though they were, in fact, undergoing a process of emotional maturation (Yovita et al., 2022).

d) Family Factors and Parental Expectations

The family played a significant role in shaping female students' perspectives and decisions regarding marriage. Support, expectations, and parenting styles within the family often contributed to the dilemma between entering marriage and pursuing a career. Some parents encouraged their daughters to marry at an early stage, while others prioritized education and career development. Consequently, female students found themselves caught between fulfilling filial obligations (*birr al-wālidayn*) and their personal readiness.

This was reflected in the statement of informant RF: "My mother opposed this choice because she was concerned that I would become too old to marry, while my father also objected because he did not want me to work for others. I preferred to pursue a career because I wanted to contribute to those around me, rather than having to adapt to a new environment through marriage" (Interview, Jember, 23 October 2025). Similarly, HV added, "*My family did not fully support the decision to marry; as the first child, my parents placed great expectations on me*" (Interview, 14 October 2025).

Authoritative or strict parenting styles also emerged as a contributing factor to this dilemma. Such parenting patterns, characterized by rigid rules and expectations of obedience, often limited the child's autonomy in decision-making and self-expression (Juliawati & Destiwati, 2022). Informant ZA stated, "A strict and protective parenting style made me feel that I had limited space to express myself, as decisions ultimately remained in the hands of my parents" (Interview, Jember, 17 October 2025). Thus, the dilemma of marriage postponement arose from the interplay of family and environmental factors, reflecting a convergence of affection, responsibility, and differing generational perspectives.

e) Emotional Factor

Emotional and existential factors were also identified as underlying causes of the dilemma of marriage postponement. HV stated, "*The dilemma often arises when I feel lonely and in need of a companion because I live alone while studying away from home, which creates a desire to get married. However, when I observe other people's career achievements, I am encouraged to prioritize my career first*" (Interview, Jember, 14 October 2025). Feelings of loneliness, the need for emotional support, and the search for

meaning in life often represent an internal struggle between choosing marriage or continuing a career (Raihana, 2024). This indicates an inner conflict between a woman's natural inclination to build a family and her personal drive and aspirations to pursue a professional career.

2) Strategies of Female Students in Managing the Inner Conflict of Marriage Postponement

Every individual has their own way of dealing with and resolving problems. Based on interviews with eight female students, the strategies employed in facing the internal conflict arising from the dilemma of marriage postponement were not solely rational in nature, but also involved Islamic values that served as guiding principles in decision-making. These strategies included;

a) *Salat Istikharah* (Prayer for Seeking Guidance)

One of the strategies employed by the students when facing this dilemma was performing *Salat al-Istikhārah* as a form of *tawakkul* (trust in Allah's decree) and as a means of seeking divine guidance in making decisions. In addition, *Salat al-Istikhārah* served as a way to calm the heart and strengthen confidence that the chosen decision aligns with the will of Allah the Exalted. This practice is supported by a ḥadīth narrated by Jabir ibn Abdullah:

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُعَلِّمُنَا الْإِسْتِخَارَةَ فِي الْأُمُورِ كُلِّهَا
كَمَا يُعَلِّمُنَا السُّورَةَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ يَقُولُ إِذَا هَمَّ أَحَدُكُمْ بِالْأَمْرِ فَلْيَرْكَعْ رَكَعَتَيْنِ مِنْ غَيْرِ الْفَرِيضَةِ... (رواه البخاري)

“Previously, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to teach us istikhārah for all matters, just as he used to teach us a sūrah from the Qur’an. He said: ‘If one of you intends to undertake any matter, let him perform two rak’ahs of non-obligatory prayer...’” (Sahih al-Bukhari) (Al-Bukhari, 1993).

In the aforementioned ḥadīth, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) instructed his الأمة (community) to perform *Salat al-Istikhārah* when making decisions. This was also expressed by SM, who stated: *“Salat al-Istikhārah is my only source of*

strength as a servant of Allah. Allah the Exalted knows what is best, whereas human beings do not know the future" (Interview, Jember, 22 October 2025).

Similarly, NM stated: *"When I feel confused in making a decision, the first step I take is to perform Salat al-Istikhārah, seeking guidance and inner certainty"* (Interview, Jember, 18 October 2025). This indicates that the students place their decisions in the hands of Allah the Exalted, thereby avoiding haste in decision-making.

b) *Tadabbur* of the Qur'anic Verses

In facing the dilemma, the students sought to strengthen their faith by increasing *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) and engaging in *tadabbur* (reflective contemplation) of the Qur'anic verses. Attaining inner peace and a deeper understanding of the meaning of life served as a source of strength in decision-making. The process of *tadabbur* helped them think more objectively and avoid decisions driven by desires or social pressure. This was expressed by OC:

"I often reflect on Surah Al-Baqarah verse 286, which states that Allah does not burden a soul beyond its capacity. This verse brings me peace and conveys that every decision and stage of life has its own time, and Allah knows when a person is ready to go through it" (Interview, Jember, 18 October 2025).

Beyond providing spiritual clarity, *tadabbur* of the Qur'an also enables individuals to regulate intention and life orientation. Allah the Exalted states in Surah Ar-Ra'd (13:28):

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

"Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest."

This verse affirms that *dhikr* and Qur'anic reflection can bring tranquility to the heart amidst uncertainty.

c) Discussion and Consultation with Parents or Peers

In addressing the dilemma of marriage postponement, female students employed the strategy of discussion and consultation (*musyawarah*) with parents, friends, or other trusted individuals perceived as wise, in order to obtain rational

perspectives based on experience. Through dialogue and exchange of ideas, individuals were able to view problems from different and more objective standpoints.

In Islam, musyawarah is recognized as an important method for resolving issues. It is narrated from Anas that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

ما خاب من استخار، ولا ندم من استشار، ولا عال من اقتصد

“He who performs istikhārah will not be disappointed, he who consults others will not regret, and he who is moderate will not become poor.” (As-Suyuti, n.d.)

This ḥadīth emphasizes the importance of consultation and seeking advice from those considered more knowledgeable and experienced. Several students chose their parents as primary consultants due to their life experience and sincere affection, which is aligned with the principle of birr al-wālidayn (dutifulness to parents).

However, not all students felt comfortable discussing their situation with their parents. Some preferred to consult peers, as they felt that friends at the same stage of life could better understand their circumstances. ZA stated, “I prefer to discuss with friends because I am not very open with my family, and generational differences influence our ways of thinking. Friends are considered more understanding of my situation” (Interview, Jember, 17 October 2025). Generational differences often create variations in thought patterns, as each generation grows up in different social, technological, and experiential contexts, which may result in communication gaps between parents and children (Husnawati, n.d.). Consequently, students tended to feel more comfortable consulting peers, as they were perceived to offer more realistic and relatable perspectives.

From an Islamic legal perspective, consulting trusted friends is permissible as long as it does not contradict religious principles, since Islam does not restrict musyawarah exclusively to parents or specific individuals. Nevertheless, Islam emphasizes that maintaining communication with parents should not be neglected, as parental approval is closely connected to the pleasure of Allah the Exalted. One informant also chose to consult a sibling who had married at a young age, in order to gain practical

insight into marital life. In this way, consultation served as a means of obtaining broader perspectives in the decision-making process between marriage and career continuation.

Thus, discussion and consultation functioned as a decision-making strategy that integrated logical reasoning, experiential knowledge, and Islamic values, ensuring that decisions were not based solely on worldly considerations.

d) Introspection and Deep Self-Reflection

Some female students chose introspection and self-reflection as a means of emotional regulation and attaining inner peace when faced with the dilemma. Decisions regarding marriage were considered personal matters that could not be imposed by others. Choosing solitude, increasing supplication (*du'ā'*), and carefully weighing alternatives were among the strategies employed when confronting the dilemma of marriage postponement.

HV stated, "I prefer to engage in self-reflection by carefully considering my options and increasing my prayers. I do not consult friends or lecturers because I believe that I understand my own situation better than anyone else" (Interview, Jember, 14 October 2025). This strategy was found to be effective in strengthening conviction through emotional evaluation and readiness in facing the postponement of marriage (Ahmad & Syafruddin, 2024).

3) The Perspective of Islamic Family Law on the Dilemma of Marriage Postponement Due to Career Considerations

From the perspective of Islamic family law, marriage is regarded as a *sunnah* act of worship that embodies various virtues, including the preservation of dignity and lineage. All aspects of human destiny, including one's spouse, the timing of marriage, sustenance, and death, have been recorded by Allah in *Lauh al-Mahfūz* prior to human creation. Allah the Exalted states in Surah Al-Ḥadīd (57:22):

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

"No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being. Indeed, that, for Allah, is easy."

Islam does not regard a woman's decision to postpone marriage as a violation of Islamic law, provided that it is based on valid reasons such as preparing oneself physically, psychologically, financially, or educationally in order to be more ready for marital responsibilities. According to Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī in *Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuhu*, a person's condition may alter the legal ruling of marriage for them. Accordingly, marriage may be categorized as *mubāḥ* (permissible) as long as it does not lead to harm (*maḍarrah*) (Az-Zuḥaylī, 2010).

From the perspective of Islamic family law, the decision of marriage for a woman is not entirely individual, as it involves the role of a guardian (*walī*), particularly her parents. The involvement of a *walī* in marriage is stated in a ḥadīth narrated from ʿĀ'ishah, in which the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

لا نِكَاحَ إِلَّا بِوَالِيٍّ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ وَوَالِيٌّ فَاسْتَجِرُوا فَالسلطانَ وَوَالِيٌّ مِنْ لَوْلَا لَهُ

“There is no marriage except with a guardian. If there is no guardian, or if the guardians disagree, then the ruler is the guardian of the one who has no guardian.”
(Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn, 1424)

The role of the *walī* is not merely administrative, but also serves to ensure that the woman marries a man who possesses sound religion, good character, and a stable life. In practice, parental involvement often becomes a dominant factor in the realization of marriage.

Islam encourages marriage without imposing haste. Thus, women who are pursuing higher education are encouraged to complete their studies as a form of responsibility and trust (*amānah*). Postponing marriage due to career considerations, education, or financial readiness is permissible, as long as it does not contradict Islamic principles. It does not constitute a rejection of marriage in absolute terms, but rather a postponement until the appropriate time and full readiness are achieved. Allah the Exalted states in Surah An-Nūr (24:32):

أَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ ۚ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُعْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

“And marry off the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty. And Allah is all-Encompassing, All-Knowing.”

This verse emphasizes the encouragement of marriage for those who are ready, without fear of financial limitation, as Allah provides sustenance by His grace.

This view is also in line with Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage in Indonesia, which defines marriage as a physical and spiritual bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the aim of forming a happy and everlasting family based on the belief in God Almighty (Indonesia, 1974). The law does not stipulate a fixed age requirement for marriage but emphasizes physical and psychological readiness. Similarly, the Compilation of Islamic Law (Kompilasi Hukum Islam/KHI) states that marriage aims to establish a *sakinah, mawaddah wa raḥmah* family. Achieving this objective requires comprehensive readiness, including financial, intellectual, and social preparedness (Munib, 2022).

If a woman is able to manage both domestic responsibilities and a career in a balanced manner, Islam does not prohibit it. However, if she feels unable to fulfill dual roles simultaneously, postponing marriage is permissible as long as it is based on good intentions and does not contradict Islamic teachings. This is in accordance with the legal maxim (*qā'idah fiqhiyyah*):

درء المفسدة مقدم على جلب المصلحة

“Preventing harm takes precedence over attaining benefit.”

Concerns arose that if dual roles were carried out simultaneously in an unbalanced manner, they might lead to injustice. Islam does not prohibit women from pursuing a career, as long as they do not neglect their domestic responsibilities and are able to safeguard themselves from *fitnah* (Lestari, 2022).

All efforts and decisions should involve Allah the Exalted through acts of worship, prayer, and *dhikr*, seeking guidance and clarity amid life's uncertainty. Human beings are only capable of planning and striving, whereas ultimate decisions rest with Allah. Thus,

from the perspective of Islamic family law, the dilemma of marriage postponement was not considered a rejection of Islamic teachings, but rather a test of faith in accepting the decree of Allah the Exalted.

4) The Influence of Educational Background in Selecting and Determining a Spouse

Selecting and determining a spouse is not a simple matter; it requires careful consideration and mature reasoning (Kinase et al., 2023). Each individual possesses their own ideal criteria in selecting a partner. Some prioritize physical attractiveness, wealth as an indicator of happiness, or high occupational status as a measure of success in choosing an ideal spouse. However, many also prioritize moral character and religiosity as the primary criteria to be fulfilled. Spouse selection is therefore a complex decision that requires careful and rational consideration in order to achieve a harmonious marriage that brings mutual benefit to both parties.

In Islam, marriage constitutes a sacred bond between a man and a woman aimed at establishing a *sakinah* family based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. In this regard, religion serves as the fundamental foundation in building a harmonious household. Islam does not prohibit consideration of worldly factors in spouse selection, including educational background. Based on interview findings, educational background was found to influence the process of selecting and determining a spouse, as education affects an individual's mindset and emotional maturity when facing problems.

Educational equality between men and women is considered important in building a harmonious family, as it contributes to shared vision, aligned objectives, and coherent patterns of thinking. Such equality is not understood as having identical academic degrees, but rather as equality in vision, mindset, and communication ability. Therefore, effective communication within the family becomes a key factor in achieving household harmony (Carella & Haq, 2025). Educational disparity is considered capable of causing communication imbalance, which may lead to various marital problems. This was stated by OC:

“Educational equality is not interpreted as having the same degree, but rather as alignment in ways of thinking, life vision, responsibility, and appreciation of time.

I do not want a partner to feel ‘threatened’ because a woman has a higher level of education. Education influences communication and joint decision-making.” (Interview, Jember, 18 October 2025)

However, another informant stated that education was not a consideration in spouse selection, as it does not necessarily guarantee good moral character. NM stated:

“Educational level does not directly determine a person’s moral and religious quality, as emotional intelligence is more influenced by life experience and the ability to manage emotions.” Factors influencing emotional intelligence include social environment, life experiences, and genetics (Mukhlisa et al., 2024).

The interview findings also indicated concerns that higher educational attainment may lead to imbalance in household roles. A man with equal or higher education was perceived as being more capable of guiding, protecting, and leading his wife in accordance with his role as *qawwam* (the head of the family). Proper parental education was also considered the foundation for children’s educational development (Yantika et al., 2024).

Thus, educational background played a significant role in the process of spouse selection in order to establish a *sakinah* family in accordance with Islamic teachings.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion presented above, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1) Internal and psychological factors, economic conditions, as well as social and family influences were found to be key considerations in the decision-making process between entering marriage and postponing it.
- 2) The strategies employed by female students in coping with internal conflict included Salat al-Istikhārah, musyawarah (discussion and consultation), tadabbur of the Qur’an, and self-introspection.
- 3) The postponement of marriage was interpreted as an effort to prepare oneself and to wait for the appropriate time to enter marriage.
- 4) From the perspective of Islamic family law, postponing marriage was not viewed as a rejection of the obligation of marriage, but rather as part of *ikhtiyār* (effort

and deliberation) in considering personal readiness. Individuals may choose either to simultaneously pursue marriage and career or to postpone marriage in order to achieve better preparedness.

- 5) An individual's educational background was found to influence the criteria used in selecting a spouse. A more educated man was perceived as being more capable of guiding and providing support within the household.

The implication of this study is that marriage postponement may be understood as a form of *ikhtiar* to achieve readiness before entering marriage, thereby reducing social stigma toward female students who delay marriage in order to pursue higher education. However, this study remains limited; therefore, further research is needed regarding the influence of educational level on spouse selection criteria with a broader scope.

DAFTAR PUSTAKA

Al-Qur'an al-Karim

- Abu Bakar Ahmad bin Husain, A.-B. (1424). *Sunan al-Kubra* (3rd ed.). <https://shamela.ws/book/7861/15671>
- Ahmad, & Syafruddin, R. (2024). Analisis Fenomena Marriage is Scary Pada Kalangan Mahasiswa IAIN Parepare : Dampak Psikososial dan Media Sosial terhadap Kesiapan Pernikahan Analisis Fenomena Marriage is Scary Pada Kalangan Mahasiswa IAIN Parepare : Dampak Psikososial dan Media Sosial te. *Jurnal Hukamaa*, 3(3), 80–107. <https://ejurnal.iainpare.ac.id/index.php/hukamaa/article/view/16317>
- Al-Bukhari. (1993). Shahih Al-Bukhari. In *Daar Ibnu Katsir* (5th ed.).
- As-Suyuthi, J. (n.d.). *Jami'us Shaghir*. <https://shamela.ws/book/21659/11840>
- At-Tirmidzi, A. I. M. bin I. (1430). *Sunan at-Tirmidzi* (2 (Ed.)). Dar ar-Risalah al-Alamiyah. <https://shamela.ws/book/1363/1232>
- Az-Zuhaili, W. (2010). al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuhu (Terjemah) jilid 9. *Gema Insani*, 57, 58.
- Carella, T., & Haq, Y. (2025). Analisis Strategi Komunikasi dalam Upaya Membangun ̣Keharmonisan Keluarga pada Pasangan Dokter di Palembang. *Rayah Al-Islam: Jurnal Hukum Islam*, 9(4), 679–695. <https://doi.org/10.37274/rais.v9i4.37>
- Husnawati, N. (n.d.). Konflik Antargenerasi di Era Digital : Membangun Komunikasi Empatik antara Orang Tua dan Anak. *SIBALIPARRIQ: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Literasi Syariah*, 2(1), 55–67. <https://doi.org/10.46870/sbp.v2i1.1737>
- HV, Wawancara*. (2025).
- Indonesia, R. (1974). *Presiden republik indonesia*.
- Juliawati, J., & Destiwati, R. (2022). Keterbukaan Diri Remaja Akhir dalam Komunikasi Keluarga Strict Parents di Bandung. *Syntax Literate: Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia*, 7(7).
- Kinase, A., Yuliejantiningih, Y., & Maulia, D. (2023). Pengaruh Konsep Diri Terhadap Kriteria Pasangan di Masa Depan pada Mahasiswa BK Universitas PGRI Semarang. *Jurnal Psikoedukasia*, 1, 209–218.
- Layyinah, K., Sunariyah, A., Hipni, M., Mawardi, I., & Madura, U. T. (2024). Problematika pernikahan dini terhadap kesejahteraan ekonomi keluarga dalam pespektif ekonomi
-

- syariah. *USRAH: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam*, 5, 269–284.
<https://doi.org/10.46773/usrah.v5i2.1364>
- Lestari, M. L. M. (2022). Wanita Karir dan Perannya sebagai Ibu dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam. *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 5(2), 633–639.
<https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v5i2.468>
- Mohamad mustafid, Yusuf, M., & abdul jalil jawhari. (2023). Konflik Peran Mahasiswa Semester Akhir: Antara Menyelesaikan Tugas Akhir Dan Pernikahan. *Jurnal Studi Pendidikan Dan Hukum Islam*, 9(1), 14–214.
- Moleng. (2022). Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif. In Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif. In *Rake Sarasin* (Vol. 11, Issue Maret). <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=O-B3eJYAAAAJ&hl=en>
- Mukhlisa, P., Yohenda, S., Yanti, U., & Yarni, L. (2024). *Kecerdasan Emosional / Emotional Intelligence (EQ)*. 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.59024/atmosfer.v2i1.656>
- Munib, A. (2022). Compilation of the Purpose of Marriage in Positive Law , Customary Law , and Islamic Law Kompilasi Tujuan Perkawinan dalam Hukum Positif , Hukum Adat , dan Hukum Islam. *Voice Justisia: Jurnal Hukum Dan Keadilan*. <https://journal.uim.ac.id/index.php/justisia/article/view/1970>
- Murti, V., & Amini, S. (2025). Marriage Decision Making For Unmarried Career Women. *TOFEDU: The Future of Education Journal*, 4(8), 4653–4665.
<https://doi.org/10.61445/tofedu.v4i8.1098>
- Muzammil, D. H. I. (2019). FIQH MUNAKAHAT (Hukum Pernikahan dalam Islam). *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling*, 53(9), 1689–1699.
- NM, Wawancara. (2025).
- Nur Husna, A., Dira Indriani, F., Indah Fitriani, D., & Khoiriyah, F. (2024). Analisis Terhadap Fenomena Penundaan Pernikahan Di Masa Studi. *Al-Usariyah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam*, 2(3), 326–355. <https://doi.org/10.37397/al-usariyah.v2i3.742>
- Nur Maulana, M. I., & Kumaini, R. (2024). Implikasi Penundaan Perkawinan Terhadap Konsentrasi Akademis Mahasiswa (Studi Kasus di STDI Imam Syafi'i Jember). *Rayah Al-Islam*, 8(3), 1118–1139. <https://doi.org/10.37274/rais.v8i3.1051>
- OC, Wawancara. (2025).

- Rahmawati, V. (2025). *Jurnal Dinamika Pendidikan. Jurnal Dinamika Pendidikan Nusantara*, 6(1), 46.
- Raihana, S. N. (2024). Analisis Sosiokultural Penundaan Pernikahan pada Wanita Karir : Studi Kasus Kota Depok. *Socius: Jurnal Penelitian Ilm-Ilmu Sosial*, 2(August), 17–29. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13225063>
- RF, Wawancara. (2025).
- Satra, O., & Susilawati, N. (2024). Kendala yang Dihadapi oleh Mahasiswa Menikah dalam Penyelesaian Studi di Universitas Negeri Padang. *Jurnal Perspektif*, 7(4), 417–425. <https://doi.org/10.24036/perspektif.v7i4.849>
- Silviana, A., Nurezalita, F., Nurkholifah, R., Putri, S., & Siregar, Y. (2023). PERSIAPAN WANITA MENUJU PERNIKAHAN DI WILAYAH KABUPATEN BEKASI. *Kultura: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum, Sosial, Dan Humaniora*, 1(1), 180–188. <https://doi.org/10.572349/kultura.v1i1.627>
- SM, Wawancara. (2025).
- SP, Wawancara. (2025).
- Sugiyono. (2020). *Metodologi Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R & D*.
- Waruwu, M. (2024). *Pendekatan Penelitian Kualitatif: Konsep, Prosedur, Kelebihan dan Peran di Bidang Pendidikan*. 5, 198–211.
- Yantika, A. V., Tobib, A. S. K., Erlina, & Hijriyah, U. (2024). Mendidik Generasi Melalui Pemilihan Pasangan: Kriteria Suami yang Ideal dalam Perspektif Islam. *Modeling: Jurnal Program Studi PGMI*, 11(4), 33–38. <https://doi.org/10.69896/modeling.v11i3.2590>
- Yovita, K., Dwi, A., Kristina, A., & Pardede, G. (2022). *Stigma Masyarakat Terhadap Perempuan Sebagai Strata Kedua Dalam Negeri*. 401–411. <https://proceeding.unesa.ac.id/index.php/sniis/article/view/90>
- ZA, Wawancara. (2025).