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# Academia Open



*By Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo*

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## Table Of Contents

<b>Journal Cover</b> .....	1
<b>Author[s] Statement</b> .....	3
<b>Editorial Team</b> .....	4
<b>Article information</b> .....	5
Check this article update (crossmark) .....	5
Check this article impact .....	5
Cite this article.....	5
<b>Title page</b> .....	6
Article Title .....	6
Author information .....	6
Abstract .....	6
<b>Article content</b> .....	7

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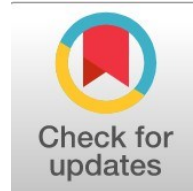
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## Generation Z Marriage Delay Drivers and Islamic Law Tensions

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### Abstract

**General Background** Marriage is a central institution in Islamic teaching and social order, yet contemporary youth increasingly reconsider its timing within changing socio-cultural contexts. **Specific Background** This study examines the phenomenon of delayed marriage among Generation Z through a socio-legal lens that integrates sociological analysis with Islamic family law perspectives. **Knowledge Gap** Prior discussions have not sufficiently bridged empirical social behavior of youth with normative Islamic legal frameworks, particularly in relation to evolving values shaped by modernization and digital culture. **Aims** The study aims to identify key social factors underlying marriage postponement among Generation Z and assess their relevance to Islamic family law principles. **Results** Findings reveal four dominant drivers: economic constraints, educational and career priorities, social media exposure, and environmental as well as lifestyle factors. Economic considerations and digital influences demonstrate notable tension with Islamic legal norms that prioritize timely marriage, while educational aspirations show partial alignment when balanced with religious obligations. **Novelty** The research introduces an interdisciplinary socio-legal approach combining empirical insights and normative analysis, offering a comprehensive understanding of youth decision-making within Islamic legal discourse. **Implications** The study suggests the need for adaptive interpretations of Islamic family law that remain responsive to social transformation while preserving core religious values, supporting policy and educational initiatives addressing generational shifts in marital perspectives.

#### Highlights:

- Financial readiness, academic pursuit, and digital exposure shape postponement decisions.
- Normative religious expectations intersect with shifting youth value orientations.
- Interdisciplinary socio-legal framing clarifies contemporary marital perceptions.

**Keywords:** Postponing, Marriage, Gen Z Perceptions, Sociological Analysis, Islamic Family Law

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## Introduction

Marriage according to Islamic religion is considered one of the strongest bonds (mitsaqan ghalidzan), with the purpose of fulfilling the command of Allah and also becoming an act of worship for those who practice it. On the other hand, marriage is not only interpreted as worship but marriage is also one of the Sunnahs of Allah and the Prophet. The Sunnah of Allah means an act of worship that is intended based on His destiny, while the Sunnah of the Prophet, marriage is understood as a tradition to follow all the actions that have been exemplified by the Prophet. [1]. Marriage is something that is highly recommended in Islam. As Allah SWT says in the Qur'an, Surah Az-Zariyat, Verse 49

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

Its meaning: We created everything in pairs so that you may remember (the greatness of Allah) [2].

The verse above clearly states that marriage carried out by two partners is a command that is already written in the Qur'an to humanity on earth, and by carrying out this command, humans will become aware of all the greatness that God has given, whether in terms of economy, offspring, and also as a complement in daily life.

Regulations regarding the legal age for marriage have been explained, for both men and women. These regulations are found in Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning the amendment of Law No. 1 of 1974 regarding the minimum age for marriage, which is 19 years. Meanwhile, according to the perspective of several schools of thought, marriage is permitted once a person reaches puberty. Opinions among different schools vary: the Shafi'i and Hanbali schools set the marriage age at puberty, which is 15 years. The Maliki school sets the legal age for marriage at 17 years, while the Hanafi school stipulates the marriage age as 18 years for men and 17 years for women. [3]. Meanwhile, the phenomenon that emerges is actually the opposite of the explanation given above; most teenagers born between 1999-2010, Generation Z (Gen Z), no longer view marriage as a priority that must be prioritized. Most of them are more concerned with career and education, with the notion that they must succeed in the economic world first without considering the existence of complements in life.

This phenomenon is relevant to the socio-cultural conditions of Indonesian society today, filled with various factors that refer to delaying marriage. Generation Z, who are now in the transition phase to adulthood, show different tendencies in determining the timing of marriage compared to previous generations. The decision to postpone marriage is often motivated by aspirations to achieve personal and professional success. This phenomenon not only contains social and economic dimensions but is also rich with religious and cultural values inherent in each individual.[4].

Based on a sociological framework, the phenomenon of postponing marriage reflects a transformation in social structure and changes in the values that govern individual behavior in society. Modernization theory views that the increasing rationality, urbanization, and education have changed society's orientation toward traditional institutions, including marriage. As a result, marriage is no longer seen merely as a normative obligation, but as an existential choice that must balance personal needs and social demands. However, this change often causes tension between modern social values and Islamic legal norms, which continue to emphasize the importance of maintaining welfare through marriage. [5].

The selection of Jember Regency as the research location is based on several academic, sociological, and empirical considerations indicating that this area has unique and representative socio-religious characteristics for understanding the phenomenon of delaying marriage among Generation Z. First, Jember Regency has a complex social pattern, where strong religious traditions coexist with the increasing influence of modernity. As an area with a large pesantren-based community, Jember is known as one of the centers of Islamic education in East Java, yet at the same time, it is experiencing the development of a modern lifestyle among the younger generation, especially in urban areas such as Kaliwates and Summersari. This condition creates a divergence between traditional Islamic values and the modern values of the digital generation, making it an ideal context to study how Islamic family law is understood and practiced in contemporary social life. [6]. The selection of Jember is also strategically and academically relevant, as this area is undergoing social transformation due to the penetration of higher education and information technology. The University of Jember, UIN KHAS Jember, and various Islamic universities in this region play a significant role as agents of social change, especially in shaping the mindset and life values of Generation Z. This provides a great opportunity for researchers to explore how the interaction between education, religion, and modernity shapes perceptions of marriage and Islamic family law values.

Postponing marriage in this study presents several innovations. In contemporary Islamic law studies, there is a new paradigm that emphasizes the importance of social ijtihad and reinterpretation of the law to remain relevant to the needs of the times. However, this approach has not been widely applied in empirical studies related to the social behavior of young people, particularly regarding the postponement of marriage. This normative-empirical research gap needs to be bridged so that Islamic law is not only understood as a legal text but also as a value system that interacts dynamically with social reality. [7]. This research offers methodological novelty, namely by combining a qualitative sociological approach through the exploration of Generation Z's perceptions and experiences with a normative study of Islamic family law, there by producing an analysis that is comprehensive and relevant for the contemporary context.

In a study, it is necessary to conduct a review analysis to provide a distinctive study being carried out; in this paper, the articles that have been collected are:

First Ahmad Muflihul Wafa, (2025) [8] "The Decline of Marriage Rates Among Generation Z from the Ma'ālāt Al-Afāl Perspective." This study discusses the decreasing marriage rates in Indonesia. In terms of generational theory, Generation Z in this decade is considered the ideal generation for marriage. However, according to BPS data, Generation Z is actually

delaying marriage. The reasons for this are varied, including globalization and modernization, which impact the mindset and lifestyle of people worldwide and are also felt in Indonesian society; secondly, Covid-19, which has affected the economic situation in Indonesia, causing young people to think more carefully about marriage; thirdly, the shadow of divorce, as the prevalence of divorce experienced by couples of various age groups has instilled concerns among young people, especially those of marriageable age, regarding the concept of marriage itself. The worry that this could influence their own views has left a lasting traumatic impression. [8].

Both Diah Nuraini, (Thesis, 2025, State Islamic University of Salatiga "Understanding the Postponement of Marriage of Santri in Salatiga City from the Perspective of Islamic Law and Analytical Psychology" [9] This study discusses the phenomenon of students delaying marriage by examining two main perspectives, namely Islamic law and analytical psychology. This study seeks to understand the reasons, meanings, and psychological impacts behind students' decisions to postpone marriage, as well as how these decisions are understood in the context of Islamic teachings which encourage marriage as a complement to worship. From the perspective of Islamic law, this thesis examines the limits and rulings on delaying marriage based on the principles of benefit, readiness, and individual moral responsibility. Meanwhile, from the perspective of Carl Gustav Jung's analytical psychology, delaying marriage is understood as part of the process of self-discovery and personality maturation, where individuals strive to balance spiritual, social, and personal desires before forming a marital commitment. The research results show that the decision of students to postpone marriage is not merely due to economic or educational reasons, but also because of considerations of mental and spiritual readiness. Thus, this thesis asserts that postponing marriage among students is a conscious choice that has complex religious and psychological dimensions. [9].

The three studies written by Azizah Fadhillah Andhani, Acep Aripudin (2024), "The Perspective of Generation Z on Platform X Regarding the Decline in Marriage Rates in Indonesia." This study discusses the issue of declining marriage rates among Generation Z in Indonesia. This is influenced by a focus on self-development and career, the need for financial stability, as well as concerns about divorce and domestic violence. Generation Z also values freedom and work-life balance more than traditional commitments. Generation Z sees marriage as a choice influenced by economic conditions, education, and personal freedom. Data was collected from posts and comments by Generation Z users on Platform X. The analysis was conducted thematically to identify thought patterns related to reasons for delaying or rejecting marriage, as well as perceptions of the cost of living, career, and personal freedom. Many respondents mentioned high living costs, career uncertainty, and the desire to prioritize life experiences as reasons for postponing or refusing marriage [10].

All four, Abdul Rozak, Ihda Shofiyatun Nisa, and Arif Sugitanata (2020), 'Postponement of Marriage in the Perspective of Fath Adz-Dzari'ah and Saddu Al-Dzariah: A Case Study in Leteh Village, Rembang District, Rembang Regency.' The following research discusses the postponement of marriage in Leteh Village, Rembang, through the concept of al-dhari'ah in Islamic law. This postponement is divided into two types: Saddu al-Dhari'ah, which is aimed at avoiding harm, such as trauma from previous relationships or personal life preferences, and Fath al-Dhari'ah, which is allowed for good purposes, such as economic reasons or seeking a more suitable partner. [11]

The fifth study was written by Nana Gustianda (2024), "Tracing the Understanding of Patriarchy in the Interpretation of Q.S. An-Nisa:34 and Its Implications on the Trend of Marriage Decline in Indonesia." This study discusses the understanding of patriarchy in the interpretation of Q.S. An-Nisa verse 34 and its impact on the trend of marriage in Indonesia. Two groups of women are identified: conservative women who accept the patriarchal interpretation, and educated women who reject subordination, emphasizing the importance of equality in marriage. Misunderstanding of this verse, especially related to violence, has caused fear of marriage among women. Social changes also affect gender perceptions, with Generation Z becoming increasingly critical of traditional norms. [12].

The intellectual contribution desired by this research lies in understanding Islamic values that are modified into social theory, as responded to and applied by young people from different backgrounds. Furthermore, this research helps in terms of synergy between worldly success aspirations and religious principles, thereby facilitating a more contextual and holistic approach and guidance for Generation Z. The results of this research are expected to build potential as a basis for policy recommendations for the government, religious educational institutions, and social organizations in designing programs that can align the values of Islamic Family Law with the socio-economic dynamics of Generation Z in a constructive and sustainable manner.

## Method

Research methods are a series of scientific activities carried out gradually and systematically. This process includes several steps, starting from determining the topic, collecting data, to analyzing the obtained data. Through these stages, it is expected to gain a deep understanding of the research topic. Research methods also play an important role in ensuring that each research step is carried out correctly and according to scientific standards, so that the results obtained can be trusted, valid, and relevant to the research objectives. [13]. This research uses an empirical juridical research type that originates from the socio-cultural dynamics among the younger generation, particularly Generation Z, in making strategic decisions regarding the timing of marriage. The phenomenon of delaying marriage has become an increasingly relevant discourse in the context of changing values and life orientations of the contemporary generation. In the context of Muslim society, such practices present a tension between traditional values that encourage marriage at a young age and modern rationality that prioritizes economic and career achievements as the main priorities.

This study uses an interdisciplinary approach combining sociological and normative juridical approaches. This approach is chosen to understand the social phenomenon of delayed marriage among Generation Z in Jember Regency from two perspectives: first, as a result of social construction formed through the interaction of values, culture, and modernity; and

second, as an issue of Islamic family law that demands relevance to the principles of sharia. The socio-legal approach serves as the main analytical framework in linking social and legal dimensions, thus depicting how Islamic law lives, is understood, and is responded to within the social dynamics of the modern generation. Through this combination of approaches, the research is expected to produce a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of delaying marriage as a form of interaction between modern social values and the principles of Islamic law. The results of this study are expected to enrich the body of studies on the sociology of Islamic family law, while also providing theoretical and practical contributions in understanding the behavioral changes of the younger generation towards the institution of marriage in Indonesia.

## Results and Discussion

### A. The Phenomenon of Delaying Marriage in the Perception of Generation Z: The Perspective of Islamic Family Law Sociology in Jember Regency

The following social factors occur among Gen Z in Jember Regency, leading them to choose to delay marriage at an age that is considered ideal:

#### 1. Economic Factors

One of the first factors experienced by Gen Z teenagers in the period leading up to marriage is the economic factor. Many teenagers complain and postpone marriage due to their parents' limited finances. Researchers obtained several reasons from informants that wedding events require a considerable amount of money, and they choose to wait until their economic stability is sufficient. The case study chosen by the researcher is Jember Regency, which is highly relevant to the study titled delaying marriage because Jember Regency is one of the major cities in East Java with various activities in terms of economy, social life, and education. [14] Modernization theory states that life in the current era brings many changes to human thinking patterns, one of which is the desire to achieve prosperity in economic stability [14]. As the era or period increasingly moves toward modernization, there is certainly an increase in the cost of living as well as economic needs, making this a consideration for Generation Z to postpone marriage for the time being. Modernization theory provides an explanation that is very relevant to this research, because in reality, teenagers in the current era prioritize rationality and material needs, which arises from faster and more complex economic development. [15].

#### 2. Education and Career Factors

Career and education factors are the next reasons Generation Z delays marriage. Generation Z has the primary choice to complete their education first before entering the next stage, which is marriage. [10]. Many informants stated that getting married while still pursuing education can disrupt focus on studying and pursuing dreams. Education is also the key to making it easier for someone to achieve the desired goals. Generation Z realizes that education is prioritized because by doing so they can plan their careers in the future and earn a higher income. From numerous cases, they take the initiative to continue their education to higher levels, such as undergraduate, master's, and doctoral studies, so that it can provide them with confidence and competence to enter the workforce.

#### 3. Social Media Factors

The next factor that influences Gen Z's behavior in delaying marriage is social media. Based on the results of research entitled 'Delaying Marriage: Gen Z Perceptions from the Perspective of Islamic Family Law Sociology in Jember Regency,' this factor is the most dominant reason given by Gen Z informants for delaying marriage. Why is that the case? Because social media plays a very important role in shaping a person's perception of the values and attitudes adhered to by Gen Z. Various platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, which are sources of information, ideas, and diverse lifestyles, provide new insights regarding independent and flexible living, which is, of course, different from customs and traditions before the modern era.

#### 4. Environmental Factors and Lifestyle

The first environmental factor comes from the family environment. One of the informants had a different opinion from their parents. The parents wanted to marry off their child first, but the child, who is a Gen Z, was reluctant to follow their parents' wishes because they still wanted to pursue a career and education. This is understandable from a Gen Z perspective, given that Jember Regency itself is a large city with rapidly developing economic and educational activities.

### B. The Relevance of the Phenomenon of Delaying Marriage: Generation Z's Perception in Jember Regency Regarding the Principles of Islamic Family Law Sociology

#### 1. Economic Factor

Economic factors play a very important role in their decision to delay marriage, especially for Generation Z in Jember Regency. In a social context, this is analyzed using a theory called rational choice, which states that each individual has their own choices and goals depending on a cost-benefit calculation. [16]. Generation Z itself prioritizes economic stability before choosing to get married, and this is also relevant to modernization theory which states that during the transition to a globalized or modern era, all needs or living costs are bound to increase. [17]. Thus, this becomes the main reason for Gen Z to postpone marriage, with the hope that they will get married when economic stability and financial independence are achieved.

On the other hand, from the perspective of Islamic Family Law, economic factors should not be a major obstacle for Gen Z to postpone marriage. Islamic law itself encourages its followers to marry at the ideal age and when they are ready physically and mentally, without having to wait for economic stability. Islam also recommends that marriage is an act of worship and contains many ease, as stated in the verse of the Holy Quran Surah An-Nur (24:32), which means [18]: "Marry off those among you who are single and also those from among your male and female slaves who are worthy (of marriage). If they are poor, Allah will provide for them by His grace. Allah is All-Encompassing (in His provision) and All-Knowing." However, if they feel not yet ready economically and are worried that they might not be able to fulfill the responsibilities of marriage, then it is not wrong to delay marriage until they feel more prepared, as long as they always strive and place their trust in Allah in every decision, including matters of marriage. Thus, postponing marriage due to economic considerations is something that can be understood, with the belief that Allah will provide sustenance to those who strive and have good intentions.

The conclusion from the overall explanation above is that although economic factors are the reason for Gen Z, it shows a tension between social changes in Jember Regency and the demands of Islamic teachings. Although these reasons can be understood in the context of social conditions in society, the principles of Islamic Family Law still prioritize marriage for those who are ready in order to avoid acts prohibited by religion. Postponing marriage for economic reasons, including worldly matters such as financial stability, can lead to the delay of religious obligations that should be carried out. However, if they truly postpone marriage out of fear and concern that they may not be able to fulfill marital responsibilities, then there is nothing wrong with delaying marriage until they feel more prepared, along with fasting, because fasting can reduce sexual desire and always striving and placing trust in Allah in every situation. [19].

## 2. Education and Career Factors

The rational choice theory, which serves as a reference in this study and is related to the sociology of law, emphasizes individual choices with the aim of weighing long-term gains or losses. The main actors that the researcher refers to in determining the choice to marry or postpone it, while considering long-term benefits and losses, are Gen Z adolescents. Some of them delay marriage for reasons such as pursuing a career and education, believing that a successful career will provide significant benefits in the future. [20].

However, from the perspective of Islamic family law sociology, marriage is a means of drawing closer to happiness and well-being in both the worldly life and the hereafter. Islam emphasizes to its followers that a marriage built with a sense of harmony and tranquility (*sakinah*) is a form of achievement greater than material achievements. [21]. The relevance of the phenomenon of delaying marriage according to the principles of Islamic family law lies in the responsibility carried by a person in getting married. Islamic law also states that marriage is a means of developing a sense of mutual need through the existence of a harmonious family as the foundation for forming the next generation, and with the phenomenon of delaying marriage, the potential for forming a harmonious family and educating the next generation can be hindered. [22].

It is important to remember that Islam does not forbid its followers from pursuing a career and education; in fact, Islam encourages its followers to seek knowledge more extensively. [23]. However, in principle, the balance between two achievements, namely spiritual and worldly, must remain balanced. Postponing marriage for several reasons such as wanting to pursue a career and education should not make someone trapped in a perception that marriage and career cannot go hand in hand. [24]. Islam teaches that getting married does not have to delay the achievement of career and education, because in marriage it can improve the quality of life, both worldly and spiritual. In a hadith, the Prophet Muhammad SAW stated that marriage is a way to avoid temptations that can interfere with the pursuit of knowledge and also the blessings of life. [19]. The results of the discussion above allow us to draw a conclusion regarding postponing marriage due to career and educational factors. This is relevant to the principles of Islamic family law. Although in Islam it is considered an obligation, this phenomenon reflects a shift in societal norms that must be addressed wisely. Therefore, it is important to understand that both aspects can go hand in hand.

## 3. Social media factors

The next discussion on the social media factor, from the perspective of Islamic family law sociology, views this as a phenomenon that must be watched out for, because in Islam marriage is something sacred with the aim of maintaining honor, avoiding major sins, managing offspring, and improving social life. [25]. So delaying marriage solely influenced by content, whether images or video broadcasts on social media, can be considered as a neglect of the goals and principles of marriage. It is very important to remember that, although social media displays various kinds of content across all platforms for individuals to explore and express complaints or opinions, this greatly affects the decline of strong social values, which ultimately worsens societal values and imbalance. In the context of Islamic family law, it teaches the importance of maintaining balance between individual life and community life. [26].

Further discussion regarding Islamic family law on postponing marriage is a form of individual misunderstanding of the important role of marriage in maintaining morality and social conditions, while on the other hand, the role of social media is very influential on a person's tendency to prioritize personal freedom. Islam itself prioritizes marriage as part of the social order and to prevent a person from committing sins. Therefore, we can understand in this context that Islam emphasizes to its followers the matters of suitability, preparedness, and mutual acceptance of a partner, not focused on a video shown on social media. Therefore, if Generation Z chooses to delay marriage for an unreal reason, such as comparing with family couples on social media, then that is not a valid reason according to the principles of Islamic Law. [27]. If we look at the difference between generations before Gen Z, they might still view marriage as one of the sacred things in religion because at their time social media was still minimal, whereas Gen Z is heavily exposed to social media and digital culture, and may understand it as something that can be postponed. The consequence is a tension between traditional values that underpin

community life in Jember Regency, especially Gen Z, who are more exposed to a modern lifestyle through social media. [28].

#### 4. Environmental Factors and Lifestyle

Environmental factors and lifestyle will surely shape Generation Z's mindset in making their choices, various environmental factors from family, friends, community, and culture seem to permeate every daily activity. Likewise, the lifestyle of Generation Z chooses to establish a career, education, financial independence, and also individual freedom. [29]. In the context of Islamic family law, marriage is considered a social and religious obligation that must be carried out as soon as possible without unclear reasons. However, on the other hand, in this modern era there are several changes in society both from environmental factors and lifestyle, resulting in a tension between traditional Islamic values and the perceptions of Generation Z teenagers. Marriage in Islam is an act of worship that brings benefits and sustenance, but the perception of Generation Z is different, prioritizing a free and independent life, which is of course influenced by the surrounding environment and lifestyle in society. [30].

The principles of Islamic family law sociology regulate marriage as a religious and social obligation, but in reality, the dominant perception of Gen Z is to postpone it first due to being influenced by several environmental factors, both from family and friends, as well as influenced by new culture or the current lifestyle which emphasizes more on independent freedom. The discussion explained by the researcher regarding the fourth factor, namely environmental and lifestyle factors, gives rise to a tension between the perception of Gen Z and the principles of Islamic family law sociology. This factor indicates that a change in values is occurring, and this needs to be carefully considered in the development of Islamic family law that is more adaptive to the changing times, especially for Gen Z in the present era.

## Conclusion

The discussion regarding the phenomenon of delaying marriage has been addressed in the previous chapter, along with its relation to several theories explained in the second chapter. In this final chapter, the researcher will conclude the research results concerning the factors that influence Gen Z to delay marriage at an age that is already considered ideal, as well as how it relates to the principles of Islamic family law. The following conclusions will be explained in detail regarding the research results above. There are several factors that influence Gen Z in the phenomenon of delaying marriage. The first is economic factors, which shape the perception that Gen Z is reluctant to marry due to not having capital or not having found a job yet. The second factor is the desire to pursue a career and education with high achievements in the future. The third is due to the influence of social media on Gen Z's way of thinking regarding the principles of marriage in Islamic family law. The last is the factor of environment and socio-cultural conditions that often occur, especially in big cities. From all of the above factors, personal considerations and social circumstances emerge. This aligns with modernization theory, which causes changes in an era, as well as rational choice theory, which makes individuals choose their own options by considering long-term benefits and losses, and social action theory, which is relevant to Gen Z's perception of personal choices influenced by environmental and cultural factors.

The relevance of Gen Z's perception of the principles of Islamic family law, with various factors experienced by some Gen Z in Jember Regency related to the phenomenon of delaying marriage, slightly contradicts the principles of Islamic family law, especially the perceptions justified by economic factors, social media, and environmental and cultural factors. In this regard, Gen Z is more dominant in personal interests or freedom, leading to a mindset of postponing marriage, which is different from some Gen Z who prioritize education and careers. It is understandable that, although in Islam we are encouraged to seek knowledge as much as possible, this phenomenon depicts a shift in societal norms that must be addressed wisely. Therefore, understanding both aspects is important so that they can go hand in hand.

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