



Husband–Wife Relations from the Salaf Perspective and the Challenges of Modernity: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

This study examines husband–wife relations from the Salaf perspective and analyzes the challenges posed by modernity to contemporary Muslim family life. Employing a qualitative, normative-comparative approach through library research, the study uses the Qur'an, hadith, classical tafsir, and classical fiqh literature as primary sources. At the same time, contemporary scholarly works serve as secondary sources. The findings indicate that, from a Salaf perspective, marital relations are founded on spiritual responsibility, moral commitment, qiwamah, mu'asyarah bil ma'ruf, and the complementary distribution of roles. In contrast, modernity has transformed family relations through individualism, egalitarian values, dual-income family patterns, and digital culture, resulting in more flexible and negotiative marital relationships. Comparative analysis reveals that modernity presents both opportunities and challenges: it strengthens partnership and shared decision-making, yet simultaneously risks weakening several fundamental Islamic values, particularly those related to responsibility, trust (amānah), and long-term family commitment. The study contributes theoretically by providing a comparative framework between classical Islamic family law and contemporary social realities and offers practical insights for developing adaptive Muslim family education. Future studies are recommended to incorporate empirical approaches in diverse socio-cultural contexts.

Keywords: husband-wife relations; salaf perspective; modernity; comparative analysis

Article Info

Article History:

Received: 22-05-2026 Accepted: 23-06-2026 Publish: 30-06-2026



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: 10.51590/waraqat.v11i1.1344

Introduction

The husband-wife relationship constitutes one of the central discussions in Islamic family law because it plays a significant role in establishing a harmonious and civilized family. In the classical Islamic legal tradition, particularly during the Salaf era, the relationship between husband and wife was understood as both a social and spiritual bond built upon responsibility, compassion, and cooperation in managing family life.¹ Marriage was not merely viewed as a biological relationship or a social contract, but also as an act of worship and a trust (*amānah*) with moral and religious dimensions. The Qur'an emphasizes that the primary objective of marriage is to create tranquility, love, and affection, as stated in the following verse:

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 so that you may find tranquility in them, and He placed between you affection and mercy.”*²

Based on this verse, Salaf scholars positioned the husband-wife relationship upon the principles of *mu'asyarah bil ma'ruf* (good and proper treatment), *mawaddah* (love), and *rahmah* (compassion), accompanied by a distribution of rights and obligations oriented toward family welfare.³ Within this framework, the concept of *qiwamah* as stated in Qur'an An-Nisa': 34 is understood as the husband's responsibility to provide financial support, protection, and leadership within the family rather than a justification for domination over the wife. Therefore, the marital relationship in the Salafi perspective is based on the principle of complementary roles, positioning husband and wife as partners who support one another in maintaining family stability and harmony.⁴

However, modernity has brought significant transformations to the social structure, culture, and patterns of Muslim family relationships. Developments in education, urbanization, industrialization, globalization, and the increasing participation of women in public and professional spheres characterize modernity. These changes have influenced the distribution of roles within the household, shifting from a complementary model toward a more flexible and egalitarian pattern. Contemporary marital relationships increasingly emphasize equality in decision-making, domestic responsibilities, and economic contributions. Furthermore, the development of digital media and popular culture has influenced society's perception of marriage, leading to marital relationships being understood not merely as moral and spiritual responsibilities but also as relationships oriented toward personal satisfaction and individual freedom.⁵

¹ Muhammad Husni Abdulah Pakarti et al., “The Construction of Islamic Law on Marriage: A Normative Study of Rights, Harmony, and Its Limits,” *Al-Battar: Jurnal Pamungkas Hukum* 2, no. 2 (2025): 99–111, <https://doi.org/10.63142/al-battar.v2i2.172>.

² “Alquranul Karim,” n.d.

³ Umi Khusnul Khotimah, “Membangun Kesetaraan Relasi Suami Isteri Dalam Keluarga Menurut Al-Qur'an,” *MISYKAT Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Quran Hadist Syari Ah Dan Tarbiyah* 7, no. 2 (2022): 235, <https://doi.org/10.33511/misykat.v7n2.235-248>.

⁴ Siti Aisyah and Ahdiyatul Hidayah, “The Concept of Qiwamah and Its Implications for Gender Justice in Islamic Family Law in Indonesia,” *An-Nisa Jurnal Kajian Perempuan Dan Keislaman* 16, no. 2 (2023): 251–68, <https://doi.org/10.35719/annisa.v16i2.181>.

⁵ Nopi Pratama and Asep Wijaya, “Studi Realitas Wanita Kerier Dalam Mewujudkan Keluarga Sakinah Dalam Masyarakat Modern,” *Ar-Risalah Media Keislaman Pendidikan Dan Hukum Islam* 21, no. 2 (2023): 313, <https://doi.org/10.69552/ar-risalah.v21i2.2149>.

These social transformations have generated significant tensions between the normative principles of Islamic family law and the lived realities of contemporary Muslim families. From a normative perspective, marital relations in Islam are traditionally grounded in the foundational principles of responsibility (*mas'ūliyyah*), protection (*ḥimāyah*), cooperation (*ta'āwun*), and complementary roles within the household. These principles are primarily derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah through the methodological framework of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, which governs the interpretation, derivation, and application of legal rulings within Islamic jurisprudence. In the Salaf tradition, legal reasoning is not merely textual but also hermeneutical, involving layered interpretive tools such as *dalālat al-alfāz* (semantic implications of texts), *qiyās* (analogical reasoning), *ijmā'* (scholarly consensus), and considerations of *maṣlahah* (public welfare) within the boundaries of revelation.

To strengthen the analytical framework, this study also engages Western legal philosophy, particularly normative legal theory and socio-legal perspectives, as complementary epistemological lenses. Normative legal theory provides a framework for examining law as an ideal system of rights, duties, and obligations. At the same time, socio-legal approaches illuminate how legal norms are negotiated, contested, and transformed within social practice. The integration of these frameworks is epistemologically justified because both traditions, despite differing ontological foundations, address the dynamic relationship between normative legal ideals and empirical social realities. Whereas Islamic legal methodology grounds normativity in divine revelation, Western legal philosophy—especially in its contemporary socio-legal form—offers analytical tools for examining legal adaptation amid changing social conditions. Thus, combining *uṣūl al-fiqh* with legal philosophical inquiry enables a more comprehensive understanding of marital relations as both a normative religious institution and a socially evolving construct.

However, contemporary family practices reveal substantial transformations influenced by individualism, egalitarian values, consumer culture, and digital technology. Consequently, concepts such as *qiwāmah* (male authority and responsibility), financial maintenance (*nafaqah*), and role distribution are increasingly reinterpreted in ways that diverge from their formulations in classical jurisprudence. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the Salaf tradition itself is not entirely monolithic. Classical jurists associated with the Salaf exhibited differences of opinion (*ikhtilāf*) on several dimensions of marital relations, including the scope of spousal obedience, household labor obligations, women's economic agency, and the practical application of *qiwāmah*. These variations demonstrate that classical fiqh contains interpretive plurality rather than a single rigid model of family relations.

This internal diversity within the Salaf tradition reinforces the importance of approaching classical jurisprudence as a rich and dynamic legal discourse rather than as a uniform legal doctrine. The tension observed today, therefore, should not be understood merely as a binary conflict between “traditional” and “modern” values, but as a complex interaction between scriptural normativity, juristic interpretation, and socio-historical change. Accordingly, a comparative analysis is necessary to examine both the continuity and transformation of husband-wife relations in contemporary Muslim society, while critically assessing how Salaf-based legal principles are preserved, reinterpreted, or contested in modern contexts.

Several previous studies have discussed Muslim family relations from various perspectives. Samsul Arifin and Khairuddin (2023), in their study on harmonious families within Islamic law, found that family harmony is built through spiritual and material aspects, including the

sharing of roles between husband and wife in managing household affairs.⁶ Muhammad Ikbali (2022), in his study entitled *Rights and Obligations of Husband and Wife According to Islamic Law in Constructing Sakinah Family*, explained that husbands and wives possess equal status within marriage. However, they have different rights and obligations according to Islamic teachings.⁷ In addition, Suud Sarim Karimullah et al. (2023), in their study of changing gender roles in contemporary Muslim families, argued that social and cultural transformations have shifted the distribution of responsibilities between men and women in modern Muslim households.⁸

Another study conducted by Beni Ashari (2024) examined the interaction between social change and Islamic family law in family decision-making. The study demonstrated that women's roles in family decision-making have changed significantly in line with modern social developments, although Islamic law traditionally positions men as heads of households.⁹ Meanwhile, Ahmad Ass'ari and Dian Diyanti Putri (2025), in their study on the construction of *sakinah* family among millennial Muslim couples, found that *sakinah* families are understood as dialogical, egalitarian, flexible, and emotionally supportive relationships shaped by Islamic popular culture and digital media experiences. These studies indicate that husband-wife relations within Muslim families continue to transform as a result of social change and modernity.¹⁰

Nevertheless, based on the literature review, no previous research has specifically examined husband-wife relations from a Salafi perspective in relation to the challenges of modernity using a comparative analytical approach. Previous studies generally focused only on harmonious family concepts, marital rights and obligations, or changing gender roles from normative or sociological perspectives. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in its comparative analysis of the concept of marital relations from a Salafi perspective and the transformation of Muslim family relations in the modern era. This study particularly highlights how modernity may reduce the principles of marital relations from a Salafi perspective, especially regarding *qiwamah*, financial responsibility, complementary roles, and a family orientation grounded in trust (*amanah*) and piety (*taqwa*).

This study aims to analyze husband-wife relations from a Salafi perspective and examine how modernity has transformed marital relations in contemporary Muslim families. Furthermore, the study conducts a comparative analysis to identify the challenges posed by modernity and to evaluate the relevance of Islamic family law values in responding to contemporary social dynamics. The discussion focuses on *qiwamah*, financial responsibility (*nafaqah*), and the distribution of complementary roles as important dimensions of marital relations.

This study employs a qualitative research design using a normative-comparative approach. The research method employed is library research, using the Qur'an, hadith, classical tafsir,

⁶ Samsul Arifin and Khairuddin K, "Konsep Keluarga Harmonis Dalam Konteks Hukum Islam," *Al-Adillah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 3, no. 1 (2023): 13–25, <https://doi.org/10.61595/aladillah.v3i1.485>.

⁷ Muhammad Ikbali, "Rights and Obligations of Husband and Wife According to Islamic Law in Constructing Sakinah Family," *Al-Masba'ir: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 3, no. 2 (2023): 130–42, <https://doi.org/10.52029/jis.v3i2.94>.

⁸ Suud Sarim Karimullah et al., "The Changing Role of Gender in Contemporary Muslim Families," *Martabat: Jurnal Perempuan Dan Anak* 7, no. 2 (2023): 167–88, <https://doi.org/10.21274/martabat.2023.7.2.167-188>.

⁹ Beni Ashari, "Interaksi Antara Perubahan Sosial Dan Hukum Keluarga Islam: Sebuah Studi Kasus Tentang Peran Perempuan Dalam Pengambilan Keputusan Keluarga," *Mabahits: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 5, no. 02 (2024): 80–90, <https://doi.org/10.62097/mabahits.v5i02.1988>.

¹⁰ Ahmad Ass'ari and Dian Diyanti Putri, "Konstruksi Makna Keluarga Sakinah Pada Pasangan Muslim Milenial: Kajian Sosiologi Keluarga Dan Fiqh Munakahat," *ISME: Journal of Islamic Studies and Multidisciplinary Research* 3, no. 1 (2025): 42–50, <https://jurnal.mymalewa.org/index.php/ISME/article/view/205>.

and classical fiqh literature as primary sources that represent the Salaf's understanding of marital relations. Secondary sources are drawn from contemporary academic journals, scholarly books, and prior studies that discuss modernity, changes in family structures, and gender relations within Muslim families.

Result and Discussion

Husband–Wife Relations in the Salafi Perspective

In the Salaf perspective, the relationship between husband and wife is understood as a sacred bond (*mītsāqan ghalīẓan*) rather than merely a social contract. However, it is important to acknowledge that the Salaf tradition is not entirely monolithic. Classical Islamic scholarship contains substantial juristic disagreements (*ikhtilāf*) regarding various aspects of marital relations, including the scope of spousal obedience, the extent of domestic responsibilities, women's economic autonomy, and the practical interpretation of *qiwāmah*. These differences emerged from varying interpretive methodologies, legal reasoning, and contextual considerations among early Muslim jurists. Despite such diversity, Salaf scholars generally agreed on several foundational principles: marriage constitutes a solemn covenant oriented toward tranquility (*sakinah*), affection (*mawaddah*), compassion (*rahmah*), and the preservation of family welfare. Thus, the following discussion primarily focuses on these shared normative foundations while recognizing the plurality of interpretations embedded within classical fiqh literature. The Qur'an describes marriage as a strong covenant, as stated in the following verse:

وَأَخَذْنَ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

“And they (your wives) have taken from you a solemn covenant.”¹¹

The primary objective of marriage is to attain tranquility (*sakinah*) and to cultivate love (*mawaddah*) and compassion (*rahmah*), as emphasized in QS. Ar-Rūm: 21. Therefore, marital relations during the Salaf era were constructed upon spiritual and moral values that positioned the household as a space of worship and moral formation.¹² This principle is further reinforced by the Qur'anic verse describing the reciprocal closeness and protection between husband and wife:

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ

“They are garments for you, and you are garments for them.”¹³

Such a relationship is also founded upon the principle of *mu'āsyarah bil ma'rūf* (living together in kindness), as mentioned in QS. An-Nisā': 19, which emphasizes the obligation of husbands to treat their wives with dignity, gentleness, and respect. This principle is in line with the statement of the Prophet, *shallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*:

خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِهِ وَأَنَا خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِي

“The best among you are those who are best to their families, and I am the best among you to my family.”¹⁴

¹¹ “Alquranul Karim.”

¹² Arifin and K, “Konsep Keluarga Harmonis Dalam Konteks Hukum Islam.”

¹³ “Alquranul Karim.”

¹⁴ Muhammad bin 'Isa bin Saurah Al-Tirmidzi, *Sunan Al-Tirmidzi*, vol. Cet. I (Al-Dar al-'Alamiyyah, 1439).

Furthermore, the concept of *qiwāmah* in QS. An-Nisā': 34 was understood by Salaf scholars as a form of responsibility entrusted to the husband in leading the family through financial support, protection, and household management, rather than as a justification for absolute domination. In classical fiqh, the obligation of maintenance (*naḥk*) is regarded as a direct consequence of a valid marriage contract. It constitutes the primary foundation of the husband's responsibility toward family welfare.¹⁵

On the other hand, the wife occupies an essential position as a partner in safeguarding family honor and carrying out domestic responsibilities and child education. The ḥadīth stating that a wife is a leader in her husband's household demonstrates the existence of complementary responsibilities rather than an unequal relationship.

The Prophet *shallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam* himself frequently consulted with his wives, indicating that family relations within the Salaf tradition prioritized cooperation and appreciation of one another's opinions. This practice is consistent with the Islamic principle of consultation (*shūrā*), as stated by Allah *Ta'ālā*:

وَأْمُرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ

*"And their affairs are conducted through consultation among them."*¹⁶

Thus, husband–wife relations in the Salaf perspective can be understood as a relationship oriented toward piety, affection, and the complementary distribution of roles aimed at preserving family welfare (*maṣlahah*).¹⁷ This principle confirms that the structure of marital relations in the Salaf tradition was not based on domination but on trust, responsibility, and cooperation grounded in Islamic values.

Modernity and the Transformation of Husband–Wife Relations

This transformation can be observed in many contemporary Muslim societies, including Indonesia. Increasing access to higher education and women's participation in the labor market have contributed to the emergence of dual-income families, where both spouses share economic responsibilities.¹⁸ In addition, the widespread use of digital technology and social media has altered patterns of communication and decision-making within households, leading to more egalitarian and negotiable forms of marital relationships. Similar trends have also been reported in several Muslim-majority countries, where changing socioeconomic conditions have encouraged the reinterpretation of traditional gender roles and family responsibilities. These developments illustrate that modernity does not merely affect the external aspects of family life but also reshapes the underlying values and expectations that govern husband–wife relations.¹⁹

One of the main factors driving this transformation is economic change. Rising living costs, increasing educational expenses, and the demands of modern lifestyles have led many families to rely on multiple sources of income. Consequently, wives are increasingly involved

¹⁵ Farkhan Muhammad, "Konsep Mu'āsyarah Bil Ma'rūf Perspektif Al-Qur'an Surat An-Nisa' Ayat 19," *Al-Inṣāf - Journal Program Studi Abwal Al Syakhshīyyah* 1, no. 2 (2022): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.61610/ash.v1i2.12>.
¹⁶ "Alquranul Karim."

¹⁷ Kholis, "Memahami Hadis Tentang Kepemimpinan Laki-Laki Atas Perempuan Dalam Konteks Ke-Indonesiaan," *Mukaddimah: Jurnal Studi Islam* 7, no. 1 (2022): 114–31, <https://doi.org/10.14421/mjsi.71.2946>.

¹⁸ Lailan Nahari, "Peran Istri Yang Bekerja Dalam Keluarga: Analisis Maslahat Menuju Keseimbangan Tradisi Dan Kebutuhan Keluarga," *Islamic Circle* 5, no. 2 (2025): 30–47, <https://doi.org/10.56874/islamiccircle.v5i2.2192>.

¹⁹ Karimullah et al., "The Changing Role of Gender in Contemporary Muslim Families."

in work outside the home to support family finances. As a result, husband–wife relations have shifted because economic responsibility is no longer viewed solely as the husband’s obligation, as emphasized in classical fiqh constructions. This transformation has produced the phenomenon of dual-income families, which requires a more balanced distribution of domestic responsibilities.²⁰

In addition, modernity has also altered educational and social awareness. Broader access to education for women has generated new demands for equality in family decision-making. Wives are no longer viewed merely as executors of domestic duties but increasingly as equal partners in determining family direction, including decisions concerning children’s education, economic matters, and social relations. This phenomenon has encouraged the emergence of more egalitarian relationship models, in which family authority is no longer concentrated entirely in the husband’s hands but is instead built through consultation and mutual agreement.

The transformation of husband, the globalization of values and culture, also influences wife relations. The rapid flow of information through mass media and social media has introduced concepts such as individual freedom, personal autonomy, and gender equality. These values have gradually influenced public perceptions of marriage. In this context, marriage is no longer understood solely as a bond based on responsibility and devotion, but is often reduced to an emotional relationship dependent upon individual satisfaction. When such satisfaction is perceived as unfulfilled, divorce is frequently considered a reasonable solution. This condition contributes to increasing vulnerability to domestic conflict in modern families.²¹

Advances in communication technology have likewise affected patterns of marital interaction. Social media creates broad spaces for communication while simultaneously introducing new challenges, such as shifting privacy boundaries, the potential for digital infidelity, and the emergence of idealized household standards shaped through online representation. Moreover, digitalization has transformed family communication from direct, intensive interaction to shorter, more fragmented exchanges. In some cases, this development has reduced the quality of emotional interaction between spouses, thereby potentially disrupting household harmony.²²

Accordingly, modernity has transformed husband–wife relations from traditional models based on complementary role division into more dynamic and negotiable relationships. These changes may be understood as responses to contemporary social demands, yet they also present serious challenges to the values of marital relations within the Salaf perspective. Such transformations often create tensions between classical fiqh norms and contemporary social realities, necessitating deeper comparative analysis to formulate a Muslim family model that remains adaptive yet aligned with Islamic principles.²³

Challenges of Modern Marital Relations that Reduce the Salaf Perspective

²⁰ Nahari, “Peran Istri Yang Bekerja Dalam Keluarga: Analisis Maslahat Menuju Keseimbangan Tradisi Dan Kebutuhan Keluarga.”

²¹ Angela Florida Mau, “Tantangan Perkawinan Di Tengah Perubahan Sosial: Perspektif Keluarga Kontemporer,” *RISOMA: Jurnal Riset Sosial Humaniora Dan Pendidikan* 3, no. 1 (2024): 91–107, <https://doi.org/10.62383/risoma.v3i1.511>.

²² Nan Wu and Siti Ezaleila Mustafa, “Effects of Social Media Use on Family Relationship Quality: A Systematic Review,” *Forum Komunikasi*, 2024, 195–228, https://doi.org/10.24191/FK.V19i1.2024_10.

²³ Toha Ma’arif, “Relevansi Konsep Nafkah Dalam Hukum Keluarga Islam Terhadap Dinamika Kehidupan Modern,” *Al Fudjy: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 7, no. 2 (2025): 96–109, <https://doi.org/10.55606/af.v7i2.1669>.

Modernity has brought substantial changes to social structures and human lifestyles, including within the Muslim family. In the Salaf perspective, husband–wife relations are understood not merely as social relations but also as spiritual and normative bonds, because marriage is regarded as part of worship and a trust (*amanah*) that must be maintained with responsibility and sincerity.²⁴ Such relations are founded upon protection, cooperation, and reciprocity, with complementary role divisions between husband and wife aimed at achieving tranquility, harmony, and the preservation of family honor and lineage continuity.²⁵ Consequently, marriage in the Salaf tradition is not merely an emotional relationship but a system of moral responsibility that requires patience, sacrifice, and a long-term orientation toward family welfare.

However, modernity has introduced changes that affect not only the technical aspects of family life but also paradigms concerning the meaning of marriage itself. Modernity promotes lifestyles that are increasingly individualistic, rationalistic, and pragmatic, leading to marital relations being increasingly interpreted as spaces for fulfilling personal and emotional needs rather than as long-term responsibilities that entail submission to moral and spiritual values. This paradigm shift has posed serious challenges that may diminish the value of marital relations within the Salaf perspective. These challenges may be categorized into several major aspects.

1. Individualism and Personal Autonomy

One of the most fundamental challenges in modern marital relations is the strengthening of individualistic culture. Individualism places personal freedom as the highest value, prioritizing personal rights, autonomy, and self-interest over social obligations and collective commitment.²⁶ Within household life, individualism tends to view marriage as a relationship that must provide complete freedom for each spouse, including in lifestyle, career, and social relations. Consequently, marital relations shift from commitment- and sacrifice-based relationships to ones centered on compatibility and satisfaction.

Marriage within the framework of individualism is often perceived as an emotional contract that may end whenever one party no longer experiences comfort or psychological benefit. This condition normalizes divorce as a rapid solution whenever conflict arises, even for problems that could otherwise be resolved through communication and patience. Unlike the Salaf perspective, which views family life as a space for moral cultivation and spiritual discipline, individualism instead strengthens ego-centered behavior. It weakens the willingness to compromise, forgive, and accept imperfections. In the long term, this pattern may weaken family solidarity and damage children’s psychological stability, both of which require a stable family environment.

2. The Shift in the Concept of Leadership (*Qiwamah*)

The second challenge concerns the shifting understanding of the husband’s leadership within the household (*qiwamah*). In the Salaf tradition, *qiwamah* is understood as a trust attached to

²⁴ Toto Suharto, “MEMBINA KELUARGA MUSLIM DI ERA GLOBAL: Pergumulan Antara Tradisi Dan Modernitas,” *Musāwa Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Islam* 10, no. 2 (2011): 205, <https://doi.org/10.14421/musawa.2011.102.205-214>.

²⁵ Sandy Diana Mardlatillah and Nurus Saadah, “Pola Relasi Suami Istri Sebagai Upaya Meningkatkan Kelanggengan Perkawinan,” *Sociocouns: Journal of Islamic Guidance and Counseling* 2, no. 1 (2022): 59–68, <https://doi.org/10.35719/sjigc.v2i1.12>.

²⁶ Nicolaus Copernicus University and Slawomir Tykarski, “The Evolution of Modern Marriage: From Community to Individualization. Theological Reflection,” *Cauriensia. Revista Annual de Ciencias Eclesiásticas* 14, no. 2019 (2019): 581–92, <https://doi.org/10.17398/2340-4256.14.581>.

the husband's responsibility to maintain family stability, protect household members, and manage family affairs with justice and wisdom. Leadership is not interpreted as a symbol of absolute superiority but rather as a moral responsibility bounded by compassion and fairness.²⁷

Nevertheless, modernity has introduced discourses of equality that often interpret leadership as a form of patriarchal domination. Consequently, the concept of *qiwamah* is frequently criticized, or even rejected, in favor of absolute partnership models that eliminate structured roles and responsibilities.²⁸ In some situations, partnership models may strengthen communication and consultation; however, problems arise when such partnerships lack clear boundaries. Households may lose decision-making structures, turning every issue into an endless arena of negotiation that can lead to emotional exhaustion and prolonged conflict.²⁹ Conversely, modernity has also produced another extreme, in which some parties rigidly maintain *qiwamah* without considering consultation and compassion, thereby generating domestic authoritarianism that is increasingly rejected by modern society. Both extremes distance marital relations from the Salaf understanding of *qiwamah* as a trust-based responsibility.

3. The Reduction of Financial Responsibility and Economic Roles

Modernity has also brought drastic changes to family economic structures. During the Salaf period and within classical fiqh traditions, financial maintenance (*nafkah*) constituted the husband's primary obligation as a form of family protection and care. Maintenance was understood not merely as material provision but also as a symbol of moral responsibility, affirming the husband's role as head of the household.³⁰ However, modern economic realities such as high living costs, urbanization, and rising educational and lifestyle demands have compelled many families to rely on dual incomes.

Under these circumstances, wives often actively participate in economic activities through employment outside the home, making the dual-income family model increasingly common. Although wives' economic contributions may represent positive cooperation, modernity has simultaneously reduced the meaning of *nafkah*. Financial provision is no longer understood as the husband's primary obligation but rather as a completely shared responsibility. In some cases, husbands even feel relieved of financial obligations because their wives earn independent incomes. Such conditions can lead to a neglect of responsibility and weaken the relational structure established in classical fiqh.³¹

Moreover, economic changes may create imbalances in financial authority. When wives earn higher incomes, some husbands experience role identity crises that may trigger psychological conflict and relational tension. On the other hand, dual-income models often impose a double burden on wives because, despite working in the public sphere, domestic

²⁷ Urfan Hilmi et al., "The Shift in the Husband's Leadership and Its Consequences to Family Goals," *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas* 3, no. 2 (2023): 335–40, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jis.v3i2.28186>.

²⁸ Nur Faizah, "Konsep Qiwamah Dalam Yurisprudensi Islam Perspektif Keadilan Gender," *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 11, no. 1 (2018): 13–22, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ahwal.2018.111102>.

²⁹ Siti Nur Has Winda and Muhammad Zainuddin Sunarto, "Integration of the Roles of Men and Women in Forming a Harmonious Family," *International Journal of Science and Environment (IJSE)* 5, no. 3 (2025): 193–202, <https://doi.org/10.51601/ijse.v5i3.176>.

³⁰ Ahmad Alamuddin Yasin et al., "Transformation and Sustainability of Livelihoods in Muslim Families," *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 8, no. 2 November (2023): 485, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v8i2.6722>.

³¹ Muhammad Maghfurrohman, Nonik Fajariyani, and Lalu Supriadi Bin Mujib, "Peran Pemenuhan Nafkah Keluarga: Studi Pemikiran Ulama Hukum Islam," *Ar-Risalah Media Keislaman Pendidikan Dan Hukum Islam* 22, no. 1 (2024): 1, <https://doi.org/10.69552/ar-risalah.v22i1.2174>.

responsibilities continue to fall on them. Such imbalances potentially undermine household harmony and weaken marital relations.³²

4. Absolute Gender Equality and Role Conflict

Gender equality has become a dominant theme of modernity and has positively contributed to expanding educational access, protecting women's rights, and rejecting domestic violence. However, challenges arise when equality is interpreted absolutely, namely as total sameness in all aspects of family life without considering differences in responsibilities and role characteristics.³³ Absolute equality frequently regards role division within the Salaf and classical fiqh perspectives as structural discrimination that must be eliminated, thereby viewing the husband's leadership and financial responsibilities as patriarchal constructs.

In practice, such perspectives may generate role conflict because both husband and wife demand identical authority and equal task distribution.³⁴ The main problem with absolute equality lies in the disappearance of complementarity. The Salaf perspective emphasizes that the household is not an arena of competition but rather a cooperative partnership based on mutually complementary roles. Yet when equality is interpreted as total sameness, marital relations may become contests for authority that generate tension, particularly over decision-making, child-rearing responsibilities, and family priorities.

Furthermore, absolute equality imposes new psychological pressures, especially on women, because modernity demands that women achieve economic and social success while simultaneously remaining ideal in domestic roles. This condition increases emotional burdens and exhaustion, thereby rendering household stability more fragile.³⁵

5. Popular Culture and Digital Media

Popular culture and digital media represent powerful modern challenges influencing marital relations. Social media functions not only as a communication medium but also as a force shaping new perceptions and standards concerning marriage. Modern households are frequently exposed to portrayals of ideal lives characterized by romance, luxury, and conflict-free relationships, thereby creating unrealistic expectations within actual family life. This condition generates strong tendencies toward social comparison, in which couples compare their household conditions with artificial standards displayed in digital spaces.³⁶

Moreover, digital media create opportunities for relational disruptions, such as digital infidelity, hidden communication, and emotional relationships that exceed acceptable boundaries. Easy access to communication through digital applications often becomes a source of marital conflict, particularly when such interactions breed suspicion or erode

³² Ronit Waismel-Manor, Asaf Levanon, and Pamela S Tolbert, "The Impact of Family Economic Structure on Dual-Earners' Career and Family Satisfaction," *Sex Roles* 75, no. 7–8 (2016): 349–62, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-016-0620-3>.

³³ Dewi Agustina et al., "Peran Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Keluarga Sebagai Pilar Keadilan Sosial," *Jurnal Ilmiah Kedokteran Dan Kesehatan* 4, no. 2 (2025): 23–42, <https://doi.org/10.55606/klinik.v4i2.3866>.

³⁴ Wahyu Wahyu, Suwandi Suwandi, and Aunur Rofiq, "Feminism in Islam: Its Relation to the Rights and Responsibilities of Career Women in Domestic Spaces," *International Journal of Nusantara Islam* 11, no. 2 (2023): 289–99, <https://doi.org/10.15575/ijni.v11i2.27967>.

³⁵ Desi Noviliani Desi and Fadzlurrahman Fadzlurrahman, "The Dual Role of Career Women within the Family: An Islamic Legal Perspective on Female Civil Servants in Indonesia," *ADHKI: JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC FAMILY LAW* 5, no. 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.37876/adhki.v5i2.215>.

³⁶ Andy Satria et al., "Penegakan Hukum Pernikahan Perceraian Di Era Digital Apa Tantangan Dan Solusinya," *ALADALAH: Jurnal Politik, Sosial, Hukum Dan Humaniora* 2, no. 2 (2024): 30–35, <https://doi.org/10.59246/aladalah.v2i2.766>.

mutual trust.³⁷ Furthermore, excessive dependence upon digital devices reduces the quality of direct communication between spouses. In many cases, couples live within the same household yet experience emotional distance because each is more attached to virtual worlds, producing phenomena of digital loneliness that weaken psychological intimacy.³⁸

More broadly, popular culture promotes permissive values that normalize unrestricted freedom, uncommitted lifestyles, and the notion that marriage is merely an individual choice without moral responsibility. Such values contradict the Salaf perspective, which views marriage as an institution safeguarding honor, lineage, and social morality. Therefore, the penetration of popular culture and digital media affects not only couples' behavior but also broader societal understandings regarding the purpose of marriage itself.³⁹

Accordingly, the challenges of modernity for marital relations are not limited to social and economic dimensions but also encompass values and worldviews regarding marriage. Modernity encourages household relations to become more flexible and negotiable; however, it can also reduce Salaf principles such as trust (*amanah*), responsibility, complementary roles, and a worship-oriented family life.

Comparative Analysis: Salaf Perspective vs. Modern Marital Relations

Comparative analysis of the Salaf perspective and modern marital relations reveals fundamental differences in understandings of marriage, role structures, and relational orientations within the household. In the Salaf perspective, marriage is understood as a normative bond encompassing dimensions of worship, trust (*amanah*), and moral responsibility. Husband–wife relations are not perceived as temporary contractual relationships but rather as institutions intended to preserve honor, establish tranquility, and realize family welfare (*maṣlahah*).⁴⁰ In contrast, modern marital relations frequently shift toward more flexible and negotiable social relationships in which emotional fulfillment and personal satisfaction become dominant. This paradigm shift makes modern households more vulnerable to instability when facing value conflicts, differing expectations, or socioeconomic changes.

In terms of relational structure, the Salaf perspective emphasizes the complementary distribution of roles. Husbands are positioned as primary providers of maintenance, protection, and leadership (*qiwamah*), whereas wives are responsible for maintaining household stability, family honor, and children's education.⁴¹ This division is not intended to create inequality but rather to distribute responsibilities in ways that ensure balance and order within the household. However, within modern contexts, these roles have transformed due

³⁷ Ismail Arsyad, L. Sudirman, and Islamul Haq, "The Implications of Social Media Use on Household Harmony: An Analysis of Divorce Rates in Wajo Regency," *Socio-Economic and Humanistic Aspects for Township and Industry* 3, no. 4 (2025): 922–33, <https://doi.org/10.59535/sehati.v3i4.617>.

³⁸ Pingkan Rumondor, "Is There an Application for Improving Marital Satisfaction? An Overview of Smartphone Usage in Urban Young Adults' Marital Interactions," *Makara Human Behavior Studies in Asia* 23, no. 1 (2019): 97, <https://doi.org/10.7454/hubs.asia.1190718>.

³⁹ Angga Adi Pratama, "Pengaruh Maraknya Kasus Perceraian Public Figure Terhadap Pandangan Masyarakat Umum Tentang Pernikahan Dalam Hukum Islam," *Bacarita Law Journal* 5, no. 1 (2024): 75–87, <https://doi.org/10.30598/bacarita.v5i1.13707>.

⁴⁰ Muchlis Muchlis, "Wali Mujbir Dan Kebebasan Memilih Pasangan Bagi Perempuan Persepektif Ulama Kontemporer Dan Fiqh Klasik," *ASASI: Journal of Islamic Family Law* 3, no. 1 (2022): 49–61, <https://doi.org/10.36420/asasi.v3i1.196>.

⁴¹ Musyarrifah Abdul Kadir, "Pemberdayaan Perempuan Sebagai Kepala Keluarga Dalam Konstruksi Sosial Rumah Tangga," *Dinamika Penelitian: Media Komunikasi Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 23, no. 02 (2024): 270–91, <https://doi.org/10.21274/dinamika.2023.23.02.270-291>.

to economic demands, social changes, and increasing female participation in the workforce. Consequently, marital relations are increasingly built upon role negotiation and flexible responsibility sharing. While such transformations positively contribute to openness in communication and the reinforcement of partnerships, they simultaneously generate challenges such as role conflict, blurred responsibility structures, and tensions regarding authority within the family.

Another significant difference concerns the value orientation underlying marital relations. The Salaf perspective situates family relations within moral and spiritual frameworks, meaning that husband–wife relations are not merely social agreements but rather part of a religious commitment. Accordingly, concepts such as patience, sacrifice, and family endurance become central values. Conversely, modern relations are strongly influenced by individualism and personal autonomy, which interpret marital happiness primarily as individual psychological achievement.⁴² Within this framework, marital relations are measured through emotional comfort, character compatibility, and personal fulfillment. When these expectations are not achieved, divorce or separation is often regarded as a realistic solution. At this point, modern relations may be considered more vulnerable because marriage is not always viewed as a long-term trust (*amanah*) but rather as a relationship that can change to suit individual needs.⁴³

Regarding family leadership, the Salaf perspective interprets *qiwamah* as a trust requiring responsibility and justice rather than domination. Husbands are obliged to lead families through protection, care, and wise household management.⁴⁴ However, in modern marital relations, the concept of male leadership often encounters two extremes: some reject it entirely as patriarchal, while others maintain it rigidly without considering consultation and compassion. Consequently, tensions arise between classical fiqh norms and modern realities, generating interpretative debates within Islamic family law. Modern marital relations ultimately tend toward egalitarian models, yet frequently lose the conceptual boundaries that distinguish equality as proportional justice from equality as absolute sameness.

From the perspective of maintenance (*nafkah*) and economic roles, the Salaf perspective emphasizes that financial support is the husband's primary obligation, carrying both spiritual and moral dimensions of responsibility. Meanwhile, modern marital relations demonstrate significant changes through the increasing prevalence of dual-income families, in which wives also contribute to the family economy.⁴⁵ In certain contexts, this transformation strengthens the household's economic resilience; however, it also generates new challenges, such as a reduction in the husband's maintenance responsibilities, the emergence of double burdens on wives, and inequalities in financial authority within the family. Modernity has also produced new tensions in the husband's role identity when economic responsibility is no longer entirely centered on him. This indicates that modern economic transformations affect

⁴² Laili Qotrunnada and Siti Masyithoh, "Peran Akhlak Dalam Membangun Keharmonisan Rumah Tangga Pada Era Modernisasi Moral," *Jurnal IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 3 (2025): 755–61, <https://doi.org/10.61104/ihsan.v3i3.1511>.

⁴³ Menelaos Apostolou, "Economic Development and Marriage Stability: Evidence for a Concave Relationship Between per Capita Income and Divorce Rate," *Social Sciences* 14, no. 8 (2025): 466, <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14080466>.

⁴⁴ Aisyah and Hidayah, "The Concept of Qiwamah and Its Implications for Gender Justice in Islamic Family Law in Indonesia."

⁴⁵ Nahari, "Peran Istri Yang Bekerja Dalam Keluarga: Analisis Maslahat Menuju Keseimbangan Tradisi Dan Kebutuhan Keluarga."

not only material aspects of family life but also the psychological structure and power relations within the household.⁴⁶

Regarding conflict management, the Salaf perspective emphasizes gradual problem-solving and reconciliation principles primarily aimed at preserving family unity. Conflict is viewed as part of life's trials to be resolved through communication, advice, and consultation. By contrast, modern marital conflicts are frequently influenced by social pressures, demands for personal freedom, and high standards of happiness. Modernity also accelerates family disintegration through instant-problem-solving cultures, leading to divorce being perceived as an easier solution. Additionally, digital media intensifies conflict through social comparison, privacy disturbances, and opportunities for digital infidelity, phenomena absent from classical social realities.⁴⁷

Therefore, the comparative analysis demonstrates that marital relations in the Salaf perspective are oriented toward piety, clearly structured responsibilities, and complementary role divisions. In contrast, modern marital relations tend toward more flexible, egalitarian, and negotiable patterns. Such transformations may be understood as adaptations to contemporary social dynamics; nevertheless, they also potentially reduce the normative values that form the core of husband–wife relations within the Salaf tradition. Consequently, there is a need to formulate a Muslim family model that integrates the foundational values of the Salaf perspective—such as trust (*amanah*), responsibility, protection, and compassion—with modern realities that demand cooperation, consultation, and role flexibility within household life.

Conclusion

The main findings of this study indicate that husband–wife relations in the Salaf perspective are fundamentally rooted in spiritual responsibility, moral commitment, and the complementary distribution of roles. In contrast, modern marital relations are increasingly shaped by flexibility, negotiation, and individual autonomy. The comparative analysis reveals that modernity offers both opportunities and challenges: while it strengthens partnership, communication, and shared decision-making, it also risks weakening core Islamic marital values such as *qiwamah*, *amanah*, and long-term responsibility.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the discourse of Islamic family law by offering a comparative framework that bridges classical normative teachings and contemporary social realities. It enriches scholarly discussions by demonstrating that the apparent tension between tradition and modernity need not be understood as a binary opposition but rather as a dynamic interaction that requires reinterpretation within Islamic legal and ethical boundaries.

In practical terms, the findings provide important insights for Muslim families, marriage counselors, Islamic scholars, and policymakers. They suggest the need for educational and counseling models that emphasize not only legal rights and obligations but also emotional intelligence, communication skills, and adaptive role negotiation within marriage. Such

⁴⁶ Ahmad Muhammad Naseh, “Fenomena Keikutsertaan Isteri Dalam Pemenuhan Nafkah Perspektif Hukum Islam,” *Mabahits: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 5, no. 02 (2024): 69–79, <https://doi.org/10.62097/mabahits.v5i02.1974>.

⁴⁷ Fatin Syahirah Rosli et al., “The Influence of Social Media on Marital Conflict: An Analytical Study Through the Lens of Maqasid Al-Shariah in Preserving Family Stability and Dignity,” *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* IX, no. VII (2025): 598–608, <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.90700049>.

practical approaches may help strengthen family resilience amid rapid social and technological change.

Based on these findings, this study recommends further empirical research into contemporary Muslim family practices across diverse sociocultural contexts to better understand how Islamic marital values are negotiated in everyday life. In addition, Islamic family education programs should be developed to promote a balanced understanding of marriage that integrates normative Islamic principles with the demands of modern society.

Acknowledgment

The authors thank the editors and the anonymous reviewers of *Waraqat: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* for their careful reading and constructive criticism, which improved the clarity and coherence of this article. Appreciation is also extended to colleagues at the Sekolah Tinggi Dirasat Islamiyah Imam Syafi'i Jember for their input on earlier drafts. This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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