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The Singlehood Lifestyle (‘Uzubah): A Socio-Legal Analysis within the Framework of Fiqh al-Munakahat

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Abstract

This study examines the phenomenon of the singlehood lifestyle (‘uzubah) in Arsopura Village, Skanto District, Keerom Regency, and evaluates it through the lens of Fiqh al-Munakahat (Islamic jurisprudence on marriage). Although marriage is strongly encouraged in Islamic law as a means of preserving lineage, maintaining social stability, and fulfilling the Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (objectives of Islamic law), a number of residents in Arsopura both men and women choose to remain unmarried into advanced adulthood. Using a qualitative field research design with phenomenological and sociological approaches, data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The analysis reveals that the choice to remain single is predominantly influenced by psychosocial factors such as the comfort of living independently, fear of marital responsibility, distrust arising from negative relational experiences, and economic considerations, reinforced by limited social interaction and weak family influence. These factors although valid from a sociological standpoint do not constitute legitimate ‘udhr shar'ī (acceptable reason) within the framework of Islamic jurisprudence. From the perspective of Fiqh al-Munakahat and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, the practice of permanent singlehood in Arsopura contradicts the normative purpose of marriage, especially ḥifẓ al-nasl (the preservation of lineage) and the maintenance of religious and social order. The study concludes that while singlehood may be understood as a personal preference shaped by contemporary social pressures, it does not align with Islamic legal principles. This research underscores the need for community-based religious education, marriage counseling, and socio-religious engagement to harmonize personal autonomy with Islamic marital norms.

Keywords: *‘Uzubah; Singlehood Lifestyle; Fiqh al-Munakahat; Maqasid al-Sharī'ah; Socio-Legal.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji fenomena gaya hidup lajang (‘*uzubah*) di Desa Arsopura, Kecamatan Skanto, Kabupaten Keerom, dan mengevaluasinya melalui kacamata *Fiqh al-Munakahat* (hukum Islam tentang perkawinan). Meskipun pernikahan sangat dianjurkan dalam hukum Islam sebagai sarana untuk menjaga keturunan, mempertahankan stabilitas sosial, dan memenuhi *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* (tujuan hukum Islam), sejumlah penduduk Arsopura, baik pria maupun wanita, memilih untuk tetap lajang hingga usia dewasa. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain

penelitian lapangan kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologis dan sosiologis, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, pengamatan langsung, dan dokumentasi. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa pilihan untuk tetap lajang terutama dipengaruhi oleh faktor psikososial seperti kenyamanan hidup mandiri, ketakutan terhadap tanggung jawab pernikahan, ketidakpercayaan yang timbul dari pengalaman hubungan yang negatif, dan pertimbangan ekonomi, yang diperkuat oleh interaksi sosial yang terbatas dan pengaruh keluarga yang lemah. Faktor-faktor ini, meskipun valid dari sudut pandang sosiologis, tidak memenuhi syarat sebagai alasan yang sah (*udhr shar'ī*) dalam kerangka fiqh Islam. Dari perspektif *Fiqh al-Munakahat dan Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, praktik kesendirian permanen di Arsopura bertentangan dengan tujuan normatif pernikahan, terutama *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (menjaga keturunan) dan pemeliharaan ketertiban agama dan sosial. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa meskipun kesendirian dapat dipahami sebagai preferensi pribadi yang dibentuk oleh tekanan sosial kontemporer, hal itu tidak sejalan dengan prinsip-prinsip hukum Islam. Penelitian ini menekankan perlunya pendidikan agama berbasis komunitas, konseling pernikahan, dan keterlibatan sosial-religius untuk menyelaraskan otonomi pribadi dengan norma-norma pernikahan Islam.

Kata kunci: '*Uzubah*; Gaya Hidup Lajang; *Fiqh al-Munakahat*; *Maqasid al-Syariah*; sosial-hukum.

Introduction

In recent decades, the rise of singlehood as a lifestyle choice has become a global socio demographic trend affecting both Western and non-Western societies. Economic pressures, shifting gender roles, urbanization, and changing value orientations have contributed to the declining rates of marriage across many countries. This transformation indicates that marriage, traditionally viewed as a normative life milestone, has increasingly become a matter of individual preference rather than a societal obligation (Himawan, Bambling, 2017). Within Muslim communities, however, this shift raises deeper normative and theological questions, as Islamic law emphasizes the centrality of marriage for the preservation of lineage, moral stability, and social order (Timonen & Doyle, 2014). The growing acceptance of voluntary singlehood presents a unique tension between contemporary lifestyle choices and long-established religious norms.

This global trend also manifests strongly in Arsopura Village, Keerom Regency, Papua, where a significant number of men and women consciously choose not to marry despite having reached a socially and religiously appropriate age. Field observations reveal that comfort in living alone, fear of household burdens, difficulties in finding compatible partners, and economic instability are among the recurring factors driving this *'uzubah* (singlehood) lifestyle. Although these individuals acknowledge the religious importance of marriage, they deliberately

prioritize personal autonomy and emotional comfort, resulting in prolonged or even permanent singlehood. This phenomenon creates a socio-religious paradox within a Muslim-majority setting, where Islamic teachings consistently encourage marriage and discourage celibacy. Consequently, understanding the socio-legal implications of this lifestyle becomes essential for assessing its alignment with or conflict from the principles of *Fiqh al-Munakahat* (Islamic jurisprudence on marriage).

Several scholarly works have examined the rise of singlehood from various disciplinary perspective. Raymo et al. analyzed the increasing average age of marriage in East Asia and linked it to structural socioeconomic factors(Raymo et al., 2020). Apostolou and Patsiamika's research found the role of sociosexuality, career orientation, and personality traits (Dark Triad) factors in singleness preferences (Apostolou, 2022). Kislev points out that a decreased desire for relationships correlates with lower life satisfaction among single individuals, so not all singlehood is synonymous with psychosocial loss (Kislev, 2021). A qualitative analysis in Japan by Brinton et al. highlights how the dynamics of dating bureaucracy, the partner market, and social norms influence the postponement or avoidance of marriage in the East Asian context (Brinton, Mun, 2021). Furthermore, research that conceptualizes "singlehood as an identity" maps the categories of single identities (counter-normative, peripheral, core) and their implications for stigma and social policies (Kislev, 2024). Finally, recent cross-country studies underscore the diversity of singlehood experiences (voluntary vs. involuntary profiles) and the different well-being consequences, which highlight the need for a local and contextual approach when examining this phenomenon in marginalized Muslim communities, such as Arsopura (Rodrigues & Guedes, 2025).

This study addresses an important gap by examining the *‘uzubah* lifestyle in Arsopura Village through an integrated socio-legal and empirical lens. Its novelty lies in systematically uncovering the socio-cultural and economic factors shaping voluntary singlehood, exploring how unmarried individuals interpret marriage and religious obligation, and critically assessing the compatibility of this lifestyle with *Fiqh al-Munakahat* within a marginalized Muslim community in Papua a context rarely examined in Islamic family law scholarship. The urgency of this research stems from the increasing visibility of non-marital lifestyles that challenge the normative assumptions of Islamic legal doctrine, particularly in peripheral regions where socio-economic vulnerability and cultural transitions intersect. By situating lived experiences alongside normative Islamic legal principles, this study provides timely insights for policymakers, religious leaders, and community stakeholders to develop culturally responsive yet theologically grounded strategies for family

guidance, marriage counseling, and community religious development, while also contributing to broader debates on the adaptability of Islamic law within diverse and evolving social contexts.

Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative field research design, in which the researcher directly investigates the lived experiences of individuals in Arsopura Village, Skanto District, Keerom Regency who voluntarily choose *'uzubah* (singlehood) and abstain from marriage. Arsopura was intentionally selected as the research site because it represents a community where the singlehood lifestyle is not incidental but has emerged as a visible, persistent socio-religious phenomenon. As a result, the location functions as the primary source of both empirical data and contextual understanding.

To explore the subjective meanings, motivations, and socio-religious considerations behind the *'uzubah* lifestyle, this study integrates phenomenological and sociological approaches. The phenomenological approach enables the researcher to uncover the essence of participants' lived experiences, including how they perceive, interpret, and rationalize their decision not to marry. In contrast, the sociological approach situates these personal narratives within broader social structures, community norms, and religious expectations (R, 2010). Data were collected using three complementary techniques: (1) participant observation, which allowed the researcher to record natural behaviors, daily routines, and interactions of individuals living as lifelong singles; (2) in-depth semi-structured interviews with unmarried men and women, family members, religious figures, and community leaders; and (3) documentation, including community records, local narratives, and relevant textual materials. Observation alone was insufficient to capture the deeper reasoning behind participants' choices; therefore, follow-up interviews were conducted to clarify perceptions, motivations, and social pressures that were not visible in surface-level behavior.

The data analysis process followed the standard procedures of qualitative interpretive analysis, consisting of (1) data reduction through coding and categorization, (2) data display in narrative and thematic formats, and (3) conclusion drawing and verification. All emerging findings were cross-checked using triangulation, including source triangulation (comparing accounts from different participants) and method triangulation (comparing findings from observation, interviews, and documents). This process ensured analytical rigor, credibility, and consistency between empirical findings and theoretical interpretation within the framework of *Fiqh al Munakahat*.

Result and Discussion

Characteristics and Factors Causing the Emergence of the 'Uzubah Lifestyle in Arsopura

The phenomenon of a permanent '*uzubah* (single lifestyle) in Arsopura Village, Skanto District, Keerom Regency, is a social phenomenon that arises as a result of multidimensional interactions between psychological, economic, cultural, local social structures, and personal experiences of the perpetrators. In the midst of Islamic teachings that strongly advocate marriage as a refiner of religion, a harmonizer of human instincts, and a means of raising lineage or *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (Zuhdi & Nasir, 2024), some residents of Arsopura take a different position by choosing to remain single until old age some have even passed the age of 50 without ever getting married. This phenomenon becomes even more interesting because it takes place in an area that socially still holds the value of family, but at the same time shows a transformation of more individualistic life preferences. This sub-discussion seeks to elaborate on the internal and external factors that shape the decision of the perpetrators to live the '*uzubah* lifestyle, based on field data obtained through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and explanations from informants who know the social context of the perpetrators.

Field findings indicate that the comfort of one's own life is the most dominant reason motivating a person to choose a single life. From a psychological perspective, comfort is closely tied to the need for autonomy, freedom of self-determination, and the desire to manage life without additional rules imposed by family institutions (Poitras et al., 2021). LS a man over 40 years old revealed that he feels freer and less burdened when living alone (LS, 2024). His statement, "*If I have a wife, I am afraid of being regulated in living life, so I can't do anything freely,*" describes a form of fear of losing autonomy. This fear is the anxiety that marriage will take control of her personal space, narrow her life choices, or add obligations that she feels are not in line with her life preferences. Within the framework of the theory of adult developmental psychology, a person who has been living alone for a long time will experience self-sufficiency reinforcement, a condition I which independence maintained for many years strengthens the belief that living alone is the best option.

Meanwhile, SR, a woman who also chooses to live single, provided a similar explanation: freedom is the main reason she does not get married (SR, 2024). For SR, being single means having space to express themselves without restrictions, free to travel, work, and manage life priorities

without intervention. This perspective aligns with the concept of self-preference orientation, which refers to a person's tendency to prioritize personal preferences over social demands, such as marriage. Thus, the comfort of one's own life is not just a pragmatic decision, but has become a value orientation inherent in the identity of the perpetrators.

In addition to comfort, doubts and fears of fostering a household emerge as the next significant factor. This fear is related to the shadow of the challenges of marriage that are considered too severe. LS admits that whenever she talks about marriage, what comes to mind is the burden of taking care of children and a wife, increased financial obligations, and the potential for domestic conflicts. His statement, "*I feel unprepared for all of that,*" indicates the existence of marital anxiety, which is anxiety about the psychological, social, and financial consequences of a marriage bond (LS, 2024). The same sentiment was conveyed by HR, who felt increasingly apprehensive about getting married as he grew older. He realizes that his age is no longer young, which makes him even more doubtful whether he can meet his expectations as the head of the family (HR, 2024). In the psychological literature, this kind of fear is related to self-doubt, which is doubts about one's abilities, often experienced by individuals who have passed the ideal period for marriage or lack sufficient relational experience.

In the social context of Arsopura, the doubt of fostering a household is also influenced by observations of the reality of other people's marriages. Some perpetrators admitted to seeing domestic conflicts around them, especially related to livelihood issues, verbal violence, and economic burdens. These observations create a collective perception that marriage is a challenging institution and can be a source of psychological distress. In theory, this experience is referred to as vicarious learning, which is the indirect learning attitudes and decisions through the experiences of others.

The next factor is the difficulty of finding a partner who fits the criteria. The perpetrators, both men and women, admitted that the standards they set were never met, despite having met many people. LS said that in his entire life, he had never found a woman who was really compatible with him. Meanwhile, the PM revealed that many of the women he met only approached him when he had money, then disappeared when his financial situation became difficult (PM, 2024). These experiences give rise to trust issues, which are a distrust of the opposite sex that develops out of disappointing relational experiences. When individuals experience minor betrayals, manipulation, or one-sided benefits in a relationship, their tendency to avoid romantic relationships increases.

In addition, SM, one of the speakers, admitted that he did not find a woman he considered truly loyal. In sociological studies, this condition is related to the concept of the ideal mate schema, which refers to the imagination of the ideal partner that is sometimes unrealistic or overly high, thereby narrowing the chances of finding a suitable partner. In a society with low social mobility such as Arsopura, the opportunity to meet a partner is indeed very limited (SM, 2024). Daily activities are relatively limited to the same area, social networks are not very widespread, and access to cross-group interaction is relatively low. This makes the difficulty of finding a partner according to the criteria even more real.

Economic factors are another important variable that repeatedly appears in interviews. LS, for example, revealed that his odd job is considered insufficient to support his family if he were to get married (LS, 2024). In the economic rationalization paradigm, a person postpones or rejects marriage due to a rational calculation that marriage will significantly increase their financial burden. In Arsopura, the limited economic reality, coupled with income instability, makes the perpetrators feel unable to follow traditional marriage processes such as proposals and receptions, as well as the cost of living after marriage. When the perpetrators see other families experiencing economic difficulties after marriage, these concerns get stronger.

In interviews, the perpetrators also expressed the view that their income is sufficient to live independently, but not enough to support their family. This awareness of maintenance responsibilities indicates that they understand Islamic and social norms regarding husbands' obligations. However, economic unpreparedness leads them to choose to avoid marriage in order to avoid financial failure or incapacity. Nevertheless, some perpetrators actually have a good home, job, and physical condition, suggesting that the perception of "not being capable" leans more toward subjective fear than objective conditions.

Although the comfort of single life is quite strong, the surrounding community has responded to this phenomenon of '*uzubah* in a variety of ways. NR, one of the public informants, revealed that the perpetrators are often the target of innuendo or cynical views in public places (NR, 2024). Some people consider the behavior of not marrying until old age as something unnatural and violates local cultural values that uphold the importance of family. However, others view this as an ordinary phenomenon, as it has been happening for quite some time in the village. This stigma is part of social labeling, a process in which society assigns certain labels to individuals or groups that do not meet social standards (Mu'minah, 2015).

Interestingly, despite facing social stigma, the perpetrators still maintained their decision. This indicates a high level of self-determination;

they make decisions based on strong personal preferences and are not easily influenced by social judgment. Family encouragement also seems ineffective. SN, one of the families of the perpetrators of *'uzubah*, said that the family often gave advice, encouraged them to get married, or even offered help finding a partner, but all these efforts were unsuccessful (SN, 2024). The perpetrators seem to have a strong personal conviction, which is a deep belief that living single is the best option. When a personal belief has been rooted and strengthened by consistent life experience, external pressures, including family pressures, no longer have the power to change those decisions.

Thus, the phenomenon of the *'uzubah* lifestyle in Arsopura is seen as a complex socio-psychological construct. It is not simply the result of the absence of a partner. However, it is a combination of the need for autonomy, fear of commitment, negative experiences in relationships, limited social structures, and certain economic perceptions. In addition, new values that tend to be individualistic are beginning to emerge in traditional communities such as Arsopura, showing a transformation of life orientation that was previously not prominent. All of these factors form a collective mindset that allows a permanent single lifestyle to develop and survive in a society that actually still holds strong family values.

Perpetrators' Perceptions of Marriage and Social-Community Responses

The perception of the *'uzubah* perpetrators in Arsopura Village towards marriage reveals a different construction of meaning from the general view of Indonesian society which has positioned marriage as a sacred, ideal, and standard of one's maturity (Raymo et al., 2020). In Indonesian culture, especially in areas with strong customary ties, marriage is not only understood as a form of religious perfection, but also as a sign of social perfection (Al Farisi et al., 2023). On the other hand, for the *'uzubah* perpetrators in Arsopura, marriage is no longer seen as a way to achieve peace, regeneration of descendants, or the practice of religious teachings. They see marriage as an institution that presents more obligations than tranquility, more often creates burdens than happiness, and has the potential to add more difficulties than provide solutions. This view is the result of personal experience, long-term social observations, and life preferences that begin to change as social developments in their environment unfold.

LS, one of the perpetrators of *'uzubah*, gave a fairly representative picture in the interview. He stated that marriage for him was not something that brought comfort to life, but a phase that actually added to the hassle due to the responsibility for his partner and children (LS, 2024). For him, family life is synonymous with added emotional burdens,

financial demands, and the risk of conflict. This view illustrates a shift in values from marriage as necessity to marriage as burden (Santoso et al., 2022). This shift does not appear suddenly; it from the interaction between personal life experiences and observations of surrounding households marked by with conflict, economic hardship, and emotional instability.

In many cases, the negative perception of '*uzubah* perpetrators of marriage is formed by traumatic or disappointing relational experiences. Some of them witnessed the marriage of parents or relatives that were not harmonious, giving the impression that marriage was synonymous with quarrels, domination of the couple, and heavy economic burdens. The experience is then internalized as a general picture of marriage, thus giving rise to a tendency to avoid the bond. This is in accordance with Bandura's observational learning theory, which explains that a person can form beliefs and behaviors from observing others’ result. In the context of Arsopura, the observation of problematic households forms a negative perception that is difficult to change.

In addition, the poor perception of marriage is reinforced by concerns about the loss of individual freedom. The '*uzubah* practitioners consider that marriage will limit personal space for movement, reduce autonomy, and demand compromises that are difficult to make. The freedom to dictate daily activities, travel, or regulate the rhythm of life is considered the most valuable aspect for them and marriage is perceived as a threat to all of that. This kind of perception cannot be separated from the long-term experience of independent living. A person who has lived alone for many years usually develops self-sufficiency, which is the feeling of being able to manage life without the help of others (Emmy Wassénius, Miina Porkka, Magnus Nyström, 2023). When an individual reaches a certain level of self-sufficiency, the emotional need for a partner gradually diminishes, and marriage is no longer seen as an urgent necessity.

In addition to the freedom factor, the issue of age also strengthens negative perceptions of marriage. Many '*uzubah* perpetrators realize that their age has passed the ideal period of marriage. This suggests they will have difficulty adjusting to household dynamics, particularly in terms of communication, role sharing, and marital responsibilities (Petrowski et al., 2015). This condition produces an attitude of self-doubt or doubt about one's ability to carry out the role of husband or wife. The belief that oneself is "too late" or "not ready enough" emotionally becomes stronger, as we get older and the opportunity to meet potential partners decreases (Zihan Dang, 2025). This psychological process then strengthens the decision to remain single.

Negative perceptions of marriage are also shaped by past relational experiences, such as disappointment in a romance or the experience of being taken advantage of by the opposite sex. For example, some

perpetrators recounted experiences of being abandoned after providing financial assistance or experiencing emotional manipulation from potential partners. Such experiences give rise to trust issues which then lead to excessive caution in establishing relationships. When trust issues predominate, individuals tend to avoid romantic relationships as a self-protective mechanism (Sedikides, 2021). In a society with limited access to social interaction, such as Arsopura, negative experiences are difficult to balance with wider opportunities for social gatherings. As a result, negative perceptions of relationships and marriage tend to persist strongly.

The community's response to the *'uzubah* phenomenon in Arsopura shows a pattern of ambivalence. On the one hand, the community shows social acceptance of this phenomenon, as it has been ongoing for a long time and is considered part of the dynamics of local life. They see that the choice of a single life is an individual right, as long as it does not violate social rules or harm the community. This approach is more pragmatic as long as the perpetrator lives independently, does not cause social problems, and still behaves well, people tend not to have problems with their single status.

However, there is still a strong normative view that a person should get married. In the view of some people, marriage is a social obligation, a symbol of maturity, and part of customary and religious norms that should not be ignored. The insinuations or sneers that are sometimes received by *'uzubah* perpetrators show that the community still holds traditional values about marriage. Views such as "unnatural" or "strange" to those who are not married reflect that society still views marriage as a measure of individual success and maturity.

This social response in the form of stigma shows a clash between collective norms and personal choices. Societies that hold fast to traditional values often view marriage as a must, so individuals who choose not to marry are considered "not meeting social standards." This kind of stigma creates psychological pressure for the perpetrators, although not strong enough to change their decision. Such social pressure often manifests itself as comments in public places, mild banter, or cynical views from neighbors (Darrington et al., 2015). However, the *'uzubah* perpetrators in Arsopura seem to have internalized their life choices so strongly that social pressure has no significant influence.

The family response shows a deeper dynamic. Families feel a moral responsibility to encourage their family members to marry, both to ensure the survival of offspring and to avoid social stigma from the surrounding community (Tweed, 2021). In Papuan culture, including Keerom, the family unit is very important as a social identity, and having unmarried family members can be considered something less than ideal. Therefore,

families often make various efforts such as giving advice, setting positive examples, inviting discussions, and even trying to find a partner. However, all these efforts have not come to fruition because the decision to remain single is based on deeply personal beliefs that have been formed over many years.

When the family's impulses are repeated but unsuccessful, the family ends up taking a more passive stance, accepting the situation even as it still holds out the hope that the family member will one day be willing to marry. This position suggests that in family dynamics in Arsopura, the tug of war between family norms and individual preferences is more often won by personal preference. This is interesting because it shows a shift in the value of family relationships: although families still hold normative values, they do not impose their will violently; instead, they respect the life choices of family members.

In the context of broader social relations, the phenomenon of *'uzubah* in Arsopura affects the social position of the perpetrators in society. On the one hand, the perpetrators are valued because they are considered independent, able to cope with personal needs without inconvenience to the family, and have financial independence (Aydın, 2023). They are seen as mature individuals who can manage their own lives. But on the other hand, they are seen as not fulfilling the ideal social role, which is to build a family and pass on the lineage. For some people, not marrying means not carrying out one aspect of social identity as an adult in the community.

This ambivalence of society suggests a shift in values: although traditional norms about marriage are still strong, the space for individual choice is beginning to open up as a more modern and individualistic mindset develops. The tension between traditional norms and modern preferences is what makes the *'uzubah* phenomenon in Arsopura so interesting. It is not only an individual phenomenon but also a social phenomenon that describes the shift in values within a community. On the one hand, people have maintained their traditional view of the importance of marriage, but on the other hand, they have begun to accept that not everyone should get married. This phenomenon can be understood as the result of a slow but continuous social change, a shift from a highly normative society to one that begins to recognize personal choices, even though they have not fully accepted them. The persistence of this phenomenon and the growing preference of perpetrators shows that the permanent single lifestyle has become part of the new social identity in Arsopura.

Analysis of Fiqh al-Munakahat on the Practice of 'Uzubah

The phenomenon of *'uzubah* (living permanently single) in Arsopura Village cannot be separated from the Shari'a provisions regarding the recommendation of marriage, the prohibition of leaving marriage without *shari'i* (lawful) reasons, and the position of marriage in *Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law). Normatively, marriage in *fiqh* (jurisprudence) is not only an ethical recommendation, but also an instrument for realizing human welfare through the *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (protection of lineage), *ḥifẓ al-dīn* (protection of religion), and the maintenance of social stability. In QS. An-Nur: 32, the commandment to marry a person who is worthy of marriage is accompanied by a guarantee of sustenance from Allah for those who are afraid of economic hardship. This verse is seen as a strong postulate that material concerns should not be used as an excuse to postpone or reject marriage, a view widely emphasized in classical and contemporary jurisprudence literature. In a hadith narrated by Bukhari Muslim, the Prophet PBUH emphasized that not marrying for religious reasons or certain personal reasons is a form of deviation from his sunnah, so that the choice of living alone permanently is considered not in line with the sharia orientation regarding family and social reproduction.

In the context of this study, the practice of *'uzubah* in Arsopura needs to be analyzed through two frameworks: first, whether the perpetrators have *'udzur syar'i* (acceptable reason) to not marry; second, whether their reasons fall into the category *of ḥarām li-ghayrihi* (forbidden by causes), i.e. acts that are basically *mubah* (permitted) or *halal* (lawful) but become prohibited due to external causes. Scholars such as Wahbah al-Zuhaili and Sayyid Sabiq emphasized that marriage can change the law to become mandatory for people who are able and are worried about falling into immoral acts if they remain single. This is in line with the view of the *Ẓāhiriyyah madhhab* (textual) which states that marriage is obligatory for people who have the physical and financial ability to do so. At the field data, the *'uzubah* perpetrators in Arsopura do not experience extreme financial barriers, do not experience chronic health conditions, and do not have Sharia limitations that prevent marriage. Instead, they have jobs, homes, physical abilities, and expressions of independence that enable marriage (Santoso et al., 2022).

In the analysis *of Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah*, the decision to remain single is permanently contrary to the purpose of preserving lineage. Al-Ghazali explained that the sustainability of the *ummah* (people) is part of the benefit of *dharuriyyah* (offspring) that cannot be ignored (Al-Ghazālī, 1993). Yusuf al-Qaradawi in his view on marriage added that choosing not to marry without Sharia reasons can be categorized as an act that is contrary to the Shari'a's orientation towards the formation of the family and the strengthening of the *ummah* (Al-Qardhawi, 2008). Therefore, the

decisions of 'uzubah perpetrators based on factors of personal comfort, trauma, doubt, or lifestyle preferences cannot be seen as legitimate '*udzr* in *fiqh*. Furthermore, these actions have the potential to reduce social stability because marriage is an instrument for the formation of family structures that are the pillars of Muslim society.

However, the analysis of *fiqh* must also take empirical reality into account. In some modern literature, the phenomenon of marriage postponement is studied as part of social transformation and value shifts. A study by Al-Krenawi that discusses family dynamics in Muslim societies found that changes in social structures, economic pressures, and increasing individualization are factors driving shifts in orientation towards marriage. In a similar review (Alean Al-Krenawi, 2022), Mahmood emphasized that the choice of single life in some urban Muslim communities is an adaptive response to contemporary socio-economic pressures (Saqib Mahmood, Muddasar Ghani Khwaja, 2019). Nevertheless, these two studies agree that *fiqh* orientation still positions marriage as an ideal institution despite social realities showing a variation in practice. The phenomenon in Arsopura is not identical to the urban context, but some value mechanisms such as individualistic orientation, personal freedom preferences, and negative experiences in relationships, show patterns that are sociologically parallel to these global tendencies. To provide a comparative picture, the following table summarizes the relationship between the reasons for '*uzubah* found in the field and its legal position in jurisprudence (summarized from Wahbah al-Zuhaili, Sayyid Sabiq, and contemporary commentary Yusuf al-Qaradawi):

Table 1. The Suitability of the Reason for 'Uzubah of Arsopura Perpetrators with the Category of Syar'i Reasons for Postponing Marriage

The Reason for the Perpetrator of 'Uzubah	Qualification as 'Udzur Syar'i	Fiqh Description
Comfortable living alone	Not eligible	Excluding sharia reasons; in the category of personal preferences.
Fear of building a household	Not eligible	Fear does not preclude obligation; can be overcome with family education.
Hard to find a partner	Partially feasible	It is feasible if there is really no halal partner; but in the case of Arsopura it is more because of personal standards.
Economic concerns	Not feasible (in this case)	QS. An-Nur: 32 is a reference that economic unrest does not allow leaving marriage.

Relational trauma	Conditionally eligible	Only worth it if the trauma is severe, not an ordinary experience or disappointment.

Based on the table, it can be concluded that the reasons for the perpetrators of *'uzubah* in Arsopura are mostly not included in the category *of 'udzur shar'i*. Thus, from the point of view of *Fiqh al-Munakahat*, the practice of *'uzubah* in Arsopura is closer to the act of abandoning the *sunnah muakkadah* (highly recommended acts) without Sharia reasons, and in some conditions can even be close to *haram* (forbidden) if the perpetrator has the ability and is also worried about falling into forbidden things. Marriage is a social spiritual obligation that not only meets biological needs, but also maintain family order and the sustainability of the people. Although there are exceptions for certain scholars such as Imam Nawawi or Ibn Taymiyyah who lived without marriage, the exclusion is based on considerations of knowledge, devotion, or great benefits that go beyond individual benefits. The condition of the people of Arsopura does not qualify for such benefits.

Analogously, this phenomenon also has an impact on social relationships, public perception, and family stability (Mortelmans et al., 2023). From a human rights perspective, choosing not to marry is a personal right but for a Muslim, this right is limited by the provisions of the Shari'a. This shows the need for educational measures and socialization of family *fiqh* in Arsopura to balance individual rights and religious norms. Family counseling, psychological assistance, and strengthening religious social networks need to be presented as part of *islāḥ al-mujtama'*, an effort to improve society through religious and social approaches. Thus, *fiqh* analysis does not only state the law, but also provides a direction of settlement in accordance with the social context of the Arsopura community.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of *'uzubah* in Arsopura Village reflects a complex interplay of psychological comfort, socioeconomic constraints, relational distrust, and increasing individualization of lifestyle choices within a rural Papuan Muslim community. While these factors are sociologically intelligible, they do not constitute legitimate *'udhr shar'ī* within the framework of *Fiqh al-Munakahat*, which positions marriage as a normative institution aimed at preserving lineage, religious values, and social stability. The findings indicate that the choice to remain unmarried is predominantly driven by preference rather than necessity, thereby diverging from the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* oriented vision of Islamic family law. Accordingly, this study recommends the development of integrated

community based interventions, including religious literacy programs that contextualize marital norms, accessible marriage counseling services, and sustained psychosocial support to address anxieties and misconceptions surrounding marriage. In addition, local religious authorities and community leaders are encouraged to strengthen culturally sensitive *da‘wah*, provide targeted guidance for adults of marriageable age, and institutionalize structured premarital education that balances normative teachings with lived social realities. However, this study is limited by its focus on a single village and its qualitative approach, which restricts the generalizability of the findings and does not capture generational or regional variations in the practice of *‘uzubah*.

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