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SINGLEHOOD AMONG GENERATION X MEN IN CUNGKUP, LAMONGAN: A FIQH AL-AWLAWIYYAT PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Singlehood among Generation X has become an increasingly prominent social reality amid changes in family structures, economic dynamics, and shifts in social and religious values. In religious communities, the choice to remain unmarried is often seen as a deviation from the ideal norm of marriage, yet in practice the decision is frequently based on rational considerations, social responsibilities, and an orientation toward a meaningful and beneficial life. This study analyzes singlehood among Generation X men from the perspective of fiqh al-awlawiyyat *(the jurisprudence of priorities), which emphasizes setting priorities in practicing Islamic teachings on the basis of benefit (*maslahah*) and the individual's real circumstances. The study employs a qualitative approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews with ten unmarried men in Cungkup Village, Lamongan, and a review of the literature. The findings indicate that singlehood among these men is not rooted in a rejection of marriage but represents a form of personal* ijtihad *in weighing priorities among religious devotion, family responsibilities, economic stability, and social contribution. From the perspective of* fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, the choice to remain unmarried can be understood as a contextual decision that does not contradict Islamic values as long as it aims to secure benefit and prevent harm (*mafsadah*). This study is expected to enrich the discourse on social jurisprudence and to foster a more inclusive understanding of singlehood in contemporary Muslim societies.*

Keywords: *Singlehood, Generation X, Fiqh al-Awlawiyyat, Maslahah, Marriage Delay.*

Abstrak

Melajang di kalangan Generasi X semakin menjadi realitas sosial yang menonjol di tengah perubahan struktur keluarga, dinamika ekonomi, serta pergeseran nilai sosial dan keagamaan. Dalam masyarakat religius, pilihan untuk tidak menikah kerap dipandang sebagai penyimpangan dari norma ideal pernikahan, padahal dalam praktiknya keputusan tersebut sering didasarkan pada pertimbangan rasional, tanggung jawab sosial, dan orientasi pada kehidupan yang bermakna dan bermanfaat. Penelitian ini menganalisis fenomena melajang pada laki-laki Generasi X dari perspektif fiqh al-awlawiyyat *(fikih prioritas), yang menekankan penetapan skala prioritas dalam mengamalkan ajaran Islam berdasarkan kemaslahatan (*maslahah*) dan kondisi nyata individu. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, dengan data yang dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam terhadap sepuluh laki-laki lajang di Desa Cungkup, Lamongan, serta telaah pustaka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa melajang pada laki-laki tersebut tidak berakar pada penolakan terhadap pernikahan, melainkan merupakan bentuk* ijtihad *pribadi dalam menimbang prioritas antara pengabdian keagamaan, tanggung jawab keluarga, stabilitas ekonomi, dan kontribusi sosial. Dari perspektif* fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, pilihan untuk tidak menikah dapat dipahami sebagai keputusan kontekstual yang tidak bertentangan dengan nilai-nilai Islam selama bertujuan meraih kemaslahatan dan mencegah kerusakan (*mafsadah*). Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memperkaya wacana fikih sosial dan*

menumbuhkan pemahaman yang lebih inklusif tentang melajang dalam masyarakat Muslim kontemporer.
Kata Kunci: *Melajang, Generasi X, Fiqh al-Awlawiyyat, Maslahah, Penundaan Pernikahan.*

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INTRODUCTION

Islam regards marriage as an important institution in human life with both devotional and social dimensions. The Qur'an describes marriage as a means of attaining tranquility of soul, love, and compassion between spouses, as affirmed in Surah al-Rum [30]: 21:

وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا لِّتَسْكُنُوْٓا اِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَّوَدَّةً وَّرَحْمَةً ۗ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾

"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 love and mercy. Surely in that are signs for people who reflect."[1]

Conceptually, this verse defines marriage as a relational institution oriented toward psychological and spiritual tranquility, not merely the fulfillment of sexual needs. The phrase *litaskunu ilaiha* indicates that marriage aims to bring a sense of security, emotional stability, and peace of mind.[2] The term *mawaddah* refers to active love realized through commitment and responsibility, while *rahmah* denotes empathetic compassion, especially when one partner is weak, ill, or facing limitations. Within the framework of Islamic jurisprudence and social ethics, al-Rum [30]: 21 can also be understood as the ideal (normative) standard of marriage rather than an obligation imposed uniformly on every individual. The verse therefore does not automatically deem a person who has not married, or does not marry, as deviant; rather, it portrays the noble values and purposes of marriage when the institution is undertaken in conditions that allow *sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah* to be realized. This understanding is relevant to *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, which weighs readiness and benefit as the basis for determining legal priorities.

Social change marked by modernization, globalization, and shifting social structures has, however, had significant implications for individual life patterns, including choices about marital

[1] Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama RI, 2022), QS. al-Rum [30]: 21, https://quran.kemenag.go.id/.

[2] Fadwa Nabilah and Ahmad Nurrohim, "Sakinah Resilien dalam QS. Ar-Rum [30]: 21: Rekonstruksi Makna Keluarga Sakinah melalui Pendekatan Tafsir Maqāṣidī," *Al-Hukmi: Jurnal Hukum Ekonomi Syari'ah dan Keluarga Islam* 7, no. 1 (2026).

status.[3] Whereas in traditional societies marriage was seen as a normative and almost inevitable stage of life, in modern societies values have shifted so that marriage is treated as a personal choice that can be postponed.[4] Some individuals choose to remain single for a time on rational grounds, such as educational attainment, economic stability, physical and mental health, and psychological readiness.[5] This shows that the decision not to marry immediately is not simply a rejection of the institution of marriage but an adaptive strategy in response to the complex demands of modern life.

One phenomenon increasingly visible in modern social dynamics is singlehood, namely the condition of individuals who consciously choose not to marry and not to maintain a long-term romantic relationship.[6] Singlehood is no longer understood merely as a transitional phase toward marriage; it has developed into a life choice shaped by social, psychological, economic, and personal factors, as well as by family demands.[7] In societies that still treat marriage as the ideal social value, single individuals often face social pressure, negative stereotypes, and strong normative expectations.[8] Singlehood thus becomes not merely a personal status but a social issue laden with value constructions and moral judgments.[9]

Singlehood occurs not only in individualistic urban areas but is also beginning to appear in rural areas with strong social ties and religious values.[10] One context worth examining is Cungkup Village, Pucuk District, Lamongan Regency. According to the village head, 80 percent of men in the village remain unmarried, including members of Generation Z, Millennials, and even Generation X men who are already in their forties. This contrasts sharply with rural culture, which generally treats marriage as a marker of social adulthood and a source of status legitimacy within the community. In a religious and communal social environment, remaining single in

[3] Claudia Geist, "Marriage Formation in Context: Four Decades in Comparative Perspective," *Social Sciences* 6, no. 1 (2017), https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci6010009.

[4] Mega Puspita et al., "Marriage Delay and Economic Rationality: A Socio-Theological Study on Poverty Fear among Young Indonesian Muslims," *Hayula: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies* 10, no. 1 (2026), https://doi.org/10.21009/hayula.010.01.02.

[5] Raissa Putri Fadhillah et al., "Decision Making to Delay Marriage of Women in Early Adult Phase," in *Proceedings of the 2nd International Seminar on Psychology* 4 (2019).

[6] Romadoni Kun Annisa, Belladiena Azmi, and Achmad Chusairi, "Alasan Individu Melajang: Sebuah Studi Literatur," *Buletin Riset Psikologi dan Kesehatan Mental* 5, no. 1 (2025).

[7] Sofeeyah Mohamad Sidik, Jonathan Han Loong Kuek, and Raihan Munira Moh Sani, "Exploring the Factors and Challenges of Involuntary Singlehood and Its Impact on Psychological Well-Being among Women in Malaysia," *Cogent Psychology* 13, no. 1 (2026), https://doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2026.2623274.

[8] Dimitri Mortelmans, Elke Claessens, and Gert Thielemans, "Defining and Measuring Singlehood in Family Studies," *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 15, no. 3 (2023), https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12520.

[9] Nayelli Muñoz and Mariana Torres, "Contexts of Loneliness in Women Choosing Voluntary Singlehood: A Qualitative Study in Mexico," *Psychology of Woman Journal* 6, no. 4 (2025), https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.pwj.4594.

[10] Bagus Kusumo Hadi et al., "The Phenomenon of Lifelong Singles in Indonesia: An Islamic Law and Psychological Health Study," *Usraty: Journal of Islamic Family Law* 2, no. 2 (2024), https://ejournal.uinbukittinggi.ac.id/usraty/article/view/8704.

mature adulthood can give rise to social pressure, stigma, and particular moral judgments from the surrounding community.[11]

From the perspective of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, which emphasizes prioritizing benefit and preventing harm, this phenomenon should be analyzed more contextually.[12] This approach holds that the recommendation to marry in Islam applies when marriage brings benefit and does not impose an undue burden on the individual.[13] Contemporary socio-theological studies report that marriage is often postponed because of economic considerations, uncertainty about the future, and fear of the responsibilities of marriage.[14]

The *fiqh al-awlawiyyat* approach is also consistent with research showing that remaining single can be understood multidimensionally, not merely as a rejection of traditional values but also as a consequence of social rationality and personal needs that have changed in the modern era.[15] Several studies in Islamic law and social psychology affirm that a person's circumstances, such as mental readiness and economic stability, influence the decision whether to marry, without reducing this choice to a mere violation of religious norms.[16]

Against this background, this study analyzes singlehood among Generation X through the lens of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat* to examine how Islamic law understands and orders the priority of marriage under actual conditions.[17] The analysis is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the balance between religious norms and social reality, and to offer a fair, benefit-based view of unmarried men in Cungkup Village, a phenomenon that has so far received little academic attention.[18] Previous studies have examined singlehood from psychological, sociological, and normative-religious perspectives, particularly regarding psychological well-

[11] Karel K. Himawan, "Menikah adalah Ibadah: Peran Agama dalam Mengkonstruksi Pengalaman Melajang di Indonesia," *Jurnal Studi Pemuda* 9, no. 2 (2020), https://doi.org/10.22146/studipemudaugm.56548.

[12] Hasriah Hasanuddin et al., "Menunda Pernikahan karena Karier: Analisis Fikih Kontemporer dan Maqashid Syari'ah," *Maqasid: Jurnal Studi Hukum Islam* 15, no. 1 (2026), https://journal.um-surabaya.ac.id/Maqasid/article/view/29811.

[13] Ahmad In'am Awaluddin, "The Phenomenon of Early Marriage and Marriage Postponement in Indonesia from the Perspective of Maslahah Mursalah," *Maddika: Journal of Islamic Family Law* 6, no. 1 (2025), https://doi.org/10.24256/maddika.v6i1.6624.

[14] Puspita et al., "Marriage Delay and Economic Rationality."

[15] Siti Nurheliza and Muhammad Amar Adly, "The Phenomenon of Marriage Delay in the Modern Era from an Islamic Law Perspective (Case Study of Master's Students in Family Law at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra)," *As-Sais: Jurnal Hukum Tata Negara/Siyasah* 10, no. 1 (2026), https://doi.org/10.30821/as-sais.v10i1.28203.

[16] Awaluddin, "Early Marriage and Marriage Postponement."

[17] Mega Meirina, "Hukum Perkawinan dalam Perspektif Hukum Positif dan Hukum Islam," *Ahkam: Jurnal Hukum Islam dan Humaniora* 2, no. 1 (2023), https://doi.org/10.58578/ahkam.v2i1.785.

[18] Pricilla Pascadeany Frelians and RA Vita Astuti, "Manajemen Komunikasi Stigma pada Perempuan Lajang," *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 21, no. 1 (2024).

being, loneliness, social stigma, and Islamic legal views on single individuals.[19] Studies that specifically examine singlehood among Generation X men in religious rural areas, emphasizing their social experiences and an Islamic value analysis grounded in *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, remain relatively limited.[20] This study is therefore important for understanding singlehood more contextually by placing it within a framework of weighing benefit (*maslahah*) and harm (*mafsadah*), so that remaining single is not seen merely as a deviation from the norm of marriage but as a socio-religious reality that deserves proportional and balanced study.[21]

Several previous studies show that singlehood is related to psychological conditions and socio-religious constructions. Marcella Mariska Aryono and Robik Anwar Dani found a significant negative relationship between psychological well-being and loneliness among older adults who chose to remain single: the greater the loneliness, the lower the psychological well-being.[22] Karel K. Himawan, in "Menikah adalah Ibadah: Peran Agama dalam Mengkonstruksi Pengalaman Melajang di Indonesia," shows that religion plays an important role in helping individuals interpret single life and provides social support in facing societal norms that regard marriage as a form of worship.[23]

Bagus Kusumo Hadi and colleagues, in "The Phenomenon of Lifelong Singles in Indonesia: An Islamic Law and Psychological Health Study," explain that Islam still leaves room for individuals to remain single according to their circumstances and life goals, provided the choice rests on devotional intentions and benefit.[24] Similarly, Husnun Nahdhiyyah, in her study of celibacy and childfree choices from the perspective of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, emphasizes the importance of educating the public so that these phenomena are understood proportionally and assessed in terms of priorities and benefit in social life.[25]

Previous research has thus focused mostly on psychology, loneliness, childfree choices, or Islamic law in general, and has addressed women and men without examining the practice of remaining single in terms of benefit and the priorities of the shariah, rather than solely from

[19] Rahmadianty Gazadinda, Maria Mutiara, and Christina Pasaribu, "Pengaruh Kesepian dan Status Hubungan Romantis terhadap Kualitas Hidup pada Perempuan Lajang Dewasa Muda di Indonesia," *Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengukuran Psikologi* 10, no. 2 (2021).

[20] Frelians and Astuti, "Manajemen Komunikasi Stigma."

[21] Gracetia Ratna Honesty Maryanto, Karel Karsten Himawan, and Hanif Akhtar, "Self-Compassion Increases Life Satisfaction in Singles Who Want to Get Married," *ANIMA Indonesian Psychological Journal* 39, no. 1 (2024), https://doi.org/10.24123/aipj.v39i1.5493.

[22] Marcella Mariska Aryono and Robik Anwar Dani, "Hubungan Psychological Well Being dengan Loneliness pada Lansia yang Memilih Melajang," *Proyeksi: Jurnal Psikologi* 14, no. 2 (2019), https://doi.org/10.30659/jp.14.2.162-171.

[23] Himawan, "Menikah adalah Ibadah."

[24] Hadi et al., "Phenomenon of Lifelong Singles."

[25] Husnun Nahdhiyyah, "Study of Fiqh Aulawiyat on Celibacy and Childfree in the Reality of Social Life," *Jurnal Al-Qadau: Peradilan dan Hukum Keluarga Islam* 11, no. 1 (2024), https://doi.org/10.24252/al-qadau.v11i1.48930.

social, psychological, or normative-religious angles. The novelty of this study lies in linking the phenomenon of men who remain single, or postpone marriage, into their forties with the perspective of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat* (the jurisprudence of priorities). This approach is used to understand how a person's decision not to marry can be viewed through considerations of benefit (*maslahah*) and potential harm (*mafsadah*), and how the scale of priorities in Islamic law shapes that life choice. Within the framework of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, every human decision is assessed not only in terms of whether an act is permissible but also by the extent to which it yields greater benefit and minimizes negative effects for oneself and for society. The choice of some men to remain single is therefore not necessarily a deviation from social norms; it may be a decision grounded in personal circumstances, social responsibilities, or particular life goals considered more pressing. Through this approach, the study seeks a more comprehensive understanding of singlehood, particularly among older men, by viewing it through the values of benefit and the priorities of the shariah in social life.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a field research design and a case study approach.[26] The approach was chosen to obtain an in-depth, contextual understanding of singlehood among Generation X men, particularly the reasons, life experiences, and social and religious considerations behind the choice to remain single.[27] The research was conducted in Cungkup Village, Pucuk District, Lamongan Regency, with ten unmarried Generation X men aged around forty as research subjects. Informants were selected by purposive sampling based on criteria relevant to the research focus.[28]

The data comprised primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through field observation and semi-structured interviews designed to explore in depth the views, experiences, and religious considerations of the ten informants in choosing singlehood. Secondary data were drawn from works of Islamic jurisprudence, scholarly journals, academic books, and other relevant supporting documents. These sources were used to strengthen the theoretical framework and to provide a normative basis for analyzing the field findings. Data were analyzed qualitatively through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the analysis, the concept of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat* served as the analytical tool for weighing the benefit and harm of the singlehood

[26] Mudjia Rahardjo, *Studi Kasus dalam Penelitian Kualitatif: Konsep dan Prosedurnya* (Malang: UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim, 2017).

[27] Rafliyanto, "Menimbang Moralitas dan Rasionalitas: Studi Kritis Fenomena Tren Nikah Muda dan Penundaan Perkawinan melalui Perspektif Maqashid Syariah dan Teori Tindakan Sosial Max Weber," *Jurnal Restorasi Hukum* 8, no. 1 (2025), https://doi.org/10.14421/v16nh673.

[28] Rahardjo, *Studi Kasus*.

experienced by the informants.[29] Data validity was maintained through source and method triangulation, comparing interview results, observations, and the literature, so that the findings have academically defensible credibility.[30]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Singlehood among Generation X in Cungkup Village, Pucuk, Lamongan

Singlehood among Generation X is an increasingly prominent social reality, accompanying changes in family structures, economic dynamics, and shifts in social and religious values in contemporary society.[31] Generation X, generally defined as those born between 1965 and 1980,[32] occupies a distinctive position as a transitional cohort that has experienced significant change from traditional ways of life toward modernity, including in how it understands the institution of marriage. In Muslim societies, marriage is normatively positioned as the ideal of adult life, yet not every individual is able, or chooses, to realize it. Recent studies show that the decision to remain single does not always reflect a rejection of religious values but is a rational response to the social, economic, and psychological conditions that adults face.[33]

Locally, this phenomenon is found in Cungkup Village, Pucuk District, Lamongan Regency, where a number of Generation X men in their forties remain unmarried into middle adulthood. The field research shows that the respondents' singlehood is not a temporary phase but has become a long-term way of life, a pattern also reported among single adults in middle adulthood elsewhere in Indonesia.[34] Most respondents still view marriage positively as an ideal institution. They have not, however, made it their main priority, because they weigh other aspects of life that they consider more urgent. This finding indicates a shift in life priorities that cannot be separated from the social and economic dynamics facing Generation X. Singlehood among Generation X in Cungkup Village also reflects a process of negotiation between normative religious values and the realities of daily life. Respondents seek to apply religious teachings in proportion to their abilities and circumstances. Within this framework, remaining single can be understood as a form of personal *ijtihad* in setting life priorities, in which securing benefit and avoiding harm are the main considerations.[35] Singlehood among Generation X therefore needs to

[29] Salman Al Farisi, "Childfree dalam Perspektif Fiqh al-Aulawiyyat," *Maqasid: Jurnal Studi Hukum Islam* 10, no. 2 (2021), https://journal.um-surabaya.ac.id/Maqasid/article/view/16059.

[30] Rahardjo, *Studi Kasus*.

[31] Gazadinda, Mutiara, and Pasaribu, "Pengaruh Kesepian."

[32] Vida Jessica Yosefina and Megawati Batubara, "Intergenerational Climate menurut Generasi X dan Generasi Y pada Karyawan PT. TI," *Jurnal Psikologi Sains dan Profesi* 5, no. 3 (2021).

[33] Maryanto, Himawan, and Akhtar, "Self-Compassion."

[34] Siefra Andrea Natasha and Dinie Ratri Desiningrum, "Wanita Lajang Dewasa Madya: Sebuah Studi dengan Pendekatan Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis," *Jurnal Empati* 7, no. 1 (2020).

[35] Hadi et al., "Phenomenon of Lifelong Singles."

be analyzed through a more inclusive and contextual approach so as to represent this socio-religious reality fully and in a balanced way.

Causes of Singlehood among Generation X Men in Cungkup Village

The findings show that economic factors are the most dominant explanation for singlehood among Generation X men. Unstable incomes, limited access to decent work, and fear of being unable to fulfill the obligation of providing maintenance (*nafkah*) are the main reasons respondents postpone or forgo marriage. In the respondents' view, marriage is not only an emotional bond but also an institution that demands long-term financial readiness. Remaining single is therefore seen as a preventive step to avoid economic problems, household conflict, or social dependence in the future. This view reflects a strong economic rationality in the life decisions of Generation X men, who tend to regard marriage as a major responsibility that should not be undertaken without adequate material readiness. In a rural setting where sources of income are relatively limited and fluctuating, economic uncertainty reinforces respondents' caution. Singlehood is thus understood not as a failure to meet social norms but as an awareness of one's own limits and of one's moral responsibility toward a future spouse.[36]

Besides economic factors, family responsibilities, particularly caring for elderly parents, also significantly influence the choice to remain single. Many respondents place filial duty toward their parents as a priority that must come before personal interests, including marriage. In addition to caring for elderly parents, some respondents care for a sibling with an intellectual disability. In certain circumstances, these responsibilities demand a great deal of time, energy, and money, so that respondents feel they have little room to build a household of their own. This shows that the decision to remain single arises from ethical and relational considerations, not merely individualistic impulses.

The respondent with a chronic illness showed a different decision-making dynamic from the other respondents. A long-term, recurrent health condition requiring continuous treatment shapes his view of marriage and family responsibilities. For him, chronic illness affects not only his physical condition but also his psychological stability, his ability to work, and his confidence in social relationships. In this context, marriage is perceived as an institution laden with obligations, so he feels a need for more careful deliberation before deciding to marry. He expressed deep concern about his ability to perform the role of husband optimally, particularly in fulfilling the obligations of maintenance and protection toward a spouse.

Dependence on routine medication and physical limitations leave him feeling vulnerable. His concern is directed not only at himself but also at the burden a spouse would bear if the marriage took place. Remaining single is therefore understood as a form of moral responsibility

[36] Puspita et al., "Marriage Delay and Economic Rationality."

not to cause harm to others. Chronic illness also affects his relationship with his social environment. On the one hand, he experiences empathy and support from his family and the surrounding community; on the other, he does not wish to trouble others or depend on them excessively. In a rural community that values independence and men's responsibility as heads of families, chronic illness often creates social pressure of its own. He is aware of social expectations regarding masculinity and household leadership, which he finds difficult to meet in an unstable state of health.

The Impact of Singlehood on Men in Cungkup Village

The social impact of singlehood on middle-aged men in Cungkup Village is evident in the daily experiences they report. Several respondents said that they often receive unpleasant treatment from their social environment, such as repeated questions about their marital status, comparisons with peers who already have families, and even subtle mockery linking their singleness to inadequacy or a lack of attractiveness as a partner. Such experiences of negative stigma are consistent with the sociological literature, which shows that single individuals often face damaging social stereotypes, such as being seen as less warm, less socially skilled, or less successful in their personal lives, all of which can lower their psychological well-being.[37]

In the local context, the stigma attached to being single also often leads to loneliness and alienation. Negative public views of singles can produce deep social pressure, making individuals feel that they are regarded as "abnormal" or "incomplete" if they remain alone in middle adulthood. Studies in Indonesia show that negative stereotypes of singles, although often discussed with reference to women, also affect psychological well-being more generally, including disrupted mental health and discomfort with being single.[38] Social pressure on single men can also intensify emotional experiences such as loneliness and anxiety. Although some individuals develop healthy coping strategies, the stigma associated with singleness can lead to psychological isolation and low social support, which in turn may worsen their quality of life. International studies likewise show that social discrimination and a lack of social support can mediate the relationship between marital status and psychological well-being, with single individuals tending to report lower well-being than those in romantic relationships or marriages.[39]

Overall, the impact of singlehood on Generation X men in Cungkup Village reflects a complex social phenomenon, not merely a life choice but also an experience with significant psychological and social consequences. Negative stigma, age-related fears, and the social pressure

[37] Frelians and Astuti, "Manajemen Komunikasi Stigma"; Mortelmans, Claessens, and Thielemans, "Defining and Measuring Singlehood."

[38] Gazadinda, Mutiara, and Pasaribu, "Pengaruh Kesepian"; Natasha and Desiningrum, "Wanita Lajang Dewasa Madya."

[39] Mohamad Sidik, Kuek, and Moh Sani, "Involuntary Singlehood"; Muñoz and Torres, "Contexts of Loneliness."

attached to being single show that the phenomenon can affect individuals' mental and social well-being and therefore calls for social approaches and policies that are responsive to the realities of their lives.

Analysis of Singlehood among Generation X from the Perspective of Fiqh al-Awlawiyyat

In contemporary Islamic legal thought, *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, or the jurisprudence of priorities, is an approach that emphasizes weighing benefit (*maslahah*) and avoiding harm (*mafsadah*) in determining the shariah's stance toward complex social realities.[40] The approach was introduced in response to the need for more contextual *ijtihad*, based not only on normative texts but also on the realities of individual and communal life.[41] *Fiqh al-awlawiyyat* thus positions Islamic law as adaptive, proportional, and humane in facing social dilemmas, including the choice not to marry.[42]

Long-term singlehood can be analyzed through the lens of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat* as a question of legal priority.[43] Studies in socio-religious contexts show that in cases such as divorce, celibacy, or living without a partner, aspects of benefit and harm must be weighed before determining the appropriate ruling.[44] In a study of celibacy and childfree choices from the perspective of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, for example, legal normativity is assessed not only by whether something is permissible but also by its real effects on the welfare of individuals and society. That study found that although celibacy may not contradict the shariah, priority is still given to marriage, whose benefits outweigh the potential harms of living without a partner.[45]

The interviews with men still single in their forties in Cungkup Village yielded three groups among the ten informants.

First Group: Unstable Income and Family Caregiving

For the first group, the reasons for postponing marriage or choosing to remain single are unstable income, the responsibility of caring for elderly parents, and the responsibility of caring for a sibling with a mental disability; four of the ten informants gave these reasons. This shows that economic factors and family responsibilities are the main considerations in setting life priorities before entering marriage.[46] The Qur'an addresses the problems these informants face in Surah al-Nur [24]: 33:

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[40] Teguh Ifandi and Idaul Hasanah, "Konsep Maslahat dan Mafsadah menurut Imam Al-Ghazali," *Tsaqafah* 21, no. 1 (2024).

[41] Al Farisi, "Childfree."

[42] Dedi Dedi, Athoillah Islamy, and Abdul Aziz Harahap, "Paradigma Fikih Prioritas dalam Fatwa Ekonomi Syariah di Indonesia," *Jurnal el-Qanuniy: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Kesyariahan dan Pranata Sosial* 8, no. 1 (2022).

[43] Ifandi and Hasanah, "Konsep Maslahat dan Mafsadah."

[44] Nahdhiyyah, "Study of Fiqh Aulawiyat."

[45] Nahdhiyyah, "Study of Fiqh Aulawiyat."

[46] Annisa, Azmi, and Chusairi, "Alasan Individu Melajang."

وَلْيَسْتَعْفِفِ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَجِدُوْنَ نِكَاحًا حَتّٰى يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖۗ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَبْتَغُوْنَ الْكِتٰبَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوْهُمْ اِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيْهِمْ خَيْرًاۖ وَّاٰتُوْهُمْ مِّنْ مَّالِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْٓ اٰتٰىكُمْۗ وَلَا تُكْرِهُوْا فَتَيٰتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاۤءِ اِنْ اَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا لِّتَبْتَغُوْا عَرَضَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَاۗ وَمَنْ يُّكْرِهْهُّنَّ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

"Let those who cannot afford to marry keep themselves chaste until Allah enriches them from His bounty. If those whom your right hands possess seek a contract of emancipation, grant it to them if you know there is good in them, and give them some of the wealth of Allah which He has given you. Do not compel your slave women to prostitution, if they desire chastity, in order to seek the transient goods of worldly life. Whoever compels them, then surely, after their compulsion, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."[47]

The verse states that those not yet able to marry are encouraged to preserve their chastity (*'iffah*) until Allah grants them the means. It shows that Islam does not impose marriage on a person who is not yet ready, whether economically, physically, or mentally. Instead, such individuals are commanded to guard their honor and avoid acts that may lead to sin.

The verse also affirms that the ability to marry is a gift from Allah granted at the proper time. A person who has not yet married is therefore not viewed negatively as long as he can maintain his morals and chastity. In this context, the verse conveys that patience, self-control, and moral integrity are important values for those who are not yet married. As for the duty to care for one's parents, it is addressed in Surah Luqman [31]: 14:

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِۚ حَمَلَتْهُ اُمُّهٗ وَهْنًا عَلٰى وَهْنٍ وَّفِصَالُهٗ فِيْ عَامَيْنِ اَنِ اشْكُرْ لِيْ وَلِوَالِدَيْكَۗ اِلَيَّ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿١٤﴾

"We have enjoined upon humankind [goodness] toward their parents. His mother carried him in increasing weakness, and his weaning is in two years. [Our command is:] Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the final return."[48]

Table 1**.** Maslahah–Mafsadah Weighing for the First Group (4 Informants)

Aspect	Marrying	Delaying marriage (unstable income; caring for elderly parents; caring for a sibling with an intellectual disability)
Legal ruling	Obligatory (wajib)	Obligatory (wajib)
Maslahah (benefit)	2	4
Mafsadah (harm)	3	3

Source: Researchers' analysis of interview data.

Weighing the benefits and harms involved shows that the benefits of postponing marriage are greater, even though marriage is obligatory or recommended for those who are able. The

[47] Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya*, QS. al-Nur [24]: 33.
[48] Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya*, QS. Luqman [31]: 14.

reasons include an unstable economic situation, caring for a sick parent, and caring for a sibling with an intellectual disability. If the informants were to marry, it is feared that they could not focus on caring for their parents and siblings; and as heads of households, they fear being unable to bear full responsibility because their income is not yet stable.

Among the maxims of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, this case falls under the consideration of benefit expressed as "giving precedence to an interest that is certain over one that is merely presumed or doubtful."[49] With respect to harm, the relevant maxim is *al-darar yuzal*, "harm must be removed as far as possible":

الضرر يزال

Where benefit and harm conflict, the following maxim applies: "a minor harm is tolerated, unlike a major one, when it secures a preponderant benefit."[50]

يغتفر في المفسدة اليسيرة ما لا يغتفر في المفسدة الكثيرة إذا كان في ذلك تحصيل مصلحة راجحة

Second Group: Unstable Income

The second group consists of five informants who postpone marriage because their income is not yet stable. The Qur'an addresses this in Surah al-Nur [24]: 32:[51]

وَاَنْكِحُوا الْاَيَامٰى مِنْكُمْ وَالصّٰلِحِيْنَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَاِمَاۤىِٕكُمْۗ اِنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا فُقَرَاۤءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖۗ وَاللّٰهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٣٢﴾

> *"Marry off those among you who are single, as well as the righteous among your male and female slaves. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty. Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing."*

This verse urges Muslims to help and encourage single people, both men and women, including righteous slaves, to marry. It shows that marriage is regarded as an important institution in Islam for preserving honor, building families, and creating a harmonious social life. It also affirms that poverty should not be an obstacle to marriage, since Allah promises sufficiency to those who marry with good intentions. The verse thus conveys that marriage is part of the effort to maintain morality and social stability and should be supported by the social environment so that it can be realized.[52]

[49] Dedi, Islamy, and Harahap, "Paradigma Fikih Prioritas."
[50] Ifandi and Hasanah, "Konsep Maslahat dan Mafsadah."
[51] Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya*, QS. al-Nur [24]: 32.
[52] Eko Zulfikar, "Tinjauan Tafsir Ahkam tentang Hukum Pernikahan dalam Al-Qur'an Surat Al-Nur Ayat 32–33," *Mahkamah: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 5, no. 2 (2020).

Table 2**.** Maslahah–Mafsadah Weighing for the Second Group (5 Informants)

Aspect	Marrying	Delaying marriage (unstable income)
Legal ruling	Obligatory (wajib)	Not strictly obligatory (uncertain prospects)
Maslahah (benefit)	3	1
Mafsadah (harm)	1	3

Source: Researchers' analysis of interview data.

Weighing benefit and harm, the informants' choice to remain single shows that the choice between remaining single and marrying is not determined by economic conditions alone but by a broader consideration of life's benefits. For some informants, remaining single for a time is a strategy of self-preparation, yet marriage is ultimately still seen as the better path because it is believed to bring emotional stability, social support, and blessing in family life. This perspective reflects an effort to balance economic realities with the social and religious values held by the community. Moreover, were the informants to marry, they would be protected from *zina* (unlawful sexual relations) and from negative social stigma.

Among the maxims of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, this case falls under the principle of "giving precedence to a greater interest over a lesser one." With respect to harm, the relevant maxim is *la darar wa la dirar*, "there shall be neither harm nor reciprocal harm":

لا ضرر ولا ضرار

Where benefit and harm conflict, the maxim *dar' al-mafasid muqaddam 'ala jalb al-masalih* applies: "averting harm takes precedence over securing benefit."[53]

درء المفاسد مقدم على جلب المصالح

Third Group: Chronic Illness

The third group consists of one of the ten informants, who postpones marriage, or chooses to remain single, because he suffers from a chronic illness.

Table 3**.** Maslahah–Mafsadah Weighing for the Third Group (1 Informant)

Aspect	Marrying	Delaying marriage (chronic illness)
Legal ruling	Obligatory (wajib)	Not particularly recommended
Maslahah (benefit)	2	1
Mafsadah (harm)	1	2

Source: Researchers' analysis of interview data.

In some circumstances, a person chooses to postpone marriage because of illness. Such a decision is usually based on the fear of being unable to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of a spouse optimally. Some views, however, hold that marrying in such circumstances can bring

[53] Wahyu Akbar and Athoillah Islamy, "Fikih Prioritas dalam Fatwa Kehalalan Vaksin Covid-19 di Indonesia," *Al Iqtishod: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Penelitian Ekonomi Islam* 10, no. 2 (2022).

greater benefit. A spouse can provide emotional support, attention, and care during illness, so that recovery can proceed better. Marriage is also seen as a way to preserve one's honor and avoid suspicion or slander in the future. In social life, having a spouse often serves as moral and social protection that helps keep social interaction within proper bounds. For some, therefore, marrying despite poor health is still regarded as the wiser choice because it brings support, preserves honor, and strengthens the bonds of shared responsibility. Among the maxims of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, the relevant consideration of benefit is "giving precedence to a strong future interest over a weak immediate one."

CONCLUSION

This study found several factors influencing the informants' decision to remain single, including unstable income, family responsibilities, health conditions, and considerations of mental and social readiness for household life. Among these reasons, some informants showed considerations that are implicitly aligned with the principles of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, namely giving precedence to what is more important and more beneficial over what could cause hardship or harm if forced. In these cases, remaining single for a time is seen as an effort to prepare oneself to carry out the responsibilities of marriage better in the future.

Some informants, however, chose to remain single on grounds not fully consistent with the maxims of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, owing to factors such as a long-established habit of living alone, worry about changes in lifestyle, and the influence of the social environment. Notably, most informants did not have an in-depth understanding of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat* as a principle for setting life priorities. Nevertheless, in practice, some of their decisions implicitly reflected these principles, while in other cases their considerations were more personal and did not fully weigh benefit and harm as taught in *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*.

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