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**The Changing Meaning of *Kafa'ah* under the Influence of Social Change:
A Study of Generation Z Family Law Students at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh**
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Abstract

The concept of *kafa'ah* (marital compatibility) in Islamic marriage has undergone significant transformation in response to contemporary social change. This study examines the evolving understanding of classical *kafa'ah* among Generation Z, focusing on students of Islamic family law at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. A mixed-methods approach was employed, with data collected through questionnaires administered to 100 respondents, preliminary interviews with 30 participants, and direct observation. The findings indicate that traditional elements of *kafa'ah*, including religiosity, lineage, economic status, profession, and freedom from physical or moral defects, remain relevant. However, contemporary considerations such as shared life goals, educational background, common interests, and gender equality have emerged as primary criteria in partner selection. This shift is strongly influenced by globalization, exposure to digital media, and evolving discourses on gender equality. Generation Z demonstrates a tendency to reinterpret classical concepts by integrating modern values while maintaining essential religious principles. This study recommends the development of Islamic family law frameworks that are more contextual, adaptive, and responsive to generational dynamics while remaining faithful to foundational Islamic teachings.

Keywords: *Kafa'ah*, Social Change, Generation Z, Family Law

Abstrak

Konsep kafa'ah (kesepadanan dalam perkawinan) dalam pernikahan Islam telah mengalami transformasi yang signifikan sebagai respons terhadap perubahan sosial kontemporer. Penelitian ini mengkaji perkembangan pemahaman terhadap konsep kafa'ah klasik di kalangan Generasi Z, dengan fokus pada mahasiswa Hukum Keluarga Islam di UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran (mixed methods), dengan pengumpulan data melalui kuesioner yang diberikan kepada 100 responden, wawancara awal terhadap 30 partisipan, serta observasi langsung. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa unsur-unsur tradisional kafa'ah, seperti religiusitas, nasab, status ekonomi, profesi, serta bebas dari cacat fisik atau moral, masih dianggap relevan. Namun demikian, pertimbangan kontemporer seperti kesamaan tujuan hidup, latar belakang pendidikan, kesamaan minat, serta kesetaraan gender muncul sebagai kriteria utama dalam pemilihan pasangan. Pergeseran ini sangat dipengaruhi oleh globalisasi, paparan media digital, serta berkembangnya wacana tentang kesetaraan gender. Generasi Z menunjukkan kecenderungan untuk menafsirkan kembali konsep klasik dengan mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai modern, sambil tetap mempertahankan prinsip-prinsip dasar keagamaan. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan pengembangan kerangka hukum keluarga Islam yang lebih kontekstual, adaptif, dan responsif terhadap dinamika generasi, tanpa meninggalkan komitmen terhadap ajaran-ajaran dasar Islam.

Kata kunci: *Kafa'ah, Perubahan Sosial, Generasi Z, Hukum Keluarga*

Introduction

The concept of *kafa'ah* in the Islamic marriage law has undergone significant transformation over time. In pre-Islamic Arabia, *kafa'ah* primarily emphasized equality in lineage, race, and ethnicity. However, as societies evolved, the understanding of *kafa'ah* expanded and diversified. In contemporary contexts, particularly among Generation Z, who live amid globalization and extensive exposure to digital media, the concept is interpreted within a more complex and multidimensional framework. Today, the criteria associated with *kafa'ah* often include religious commitment, social status, economic standing, profession, educational background, and other relevant factors.¹

In certain communities, *kafa'ah* continues to be understood as requiring absolute equality in specific aspects of social life. For instance, individuals from affluent families may be expected to marry partners of similar economic standing, while those from highly educated backgrounds are encouraged to seek spouses with

¹ Siti Dian Natasya Solin et al., "Batak Customary Marriage: A Study of the Prohibition of Same-Clan Marriage and Its Relevance in the Contemporary Era," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 7, no. 1 (2024), p. 62; Muslim Zainuddin et al., "Protection of Women and Children in the Perspective of Legal Pluralism: A Study in Aceh and West Nusa Tenggara," *Samarah* 8, no. 3 (2024), p. 1948–73.

comparable educational attainment.² Although *kafa'ah* is generally recommended in the process of partner selection, it is not considered a legal prerequisite for the validity of a marriage contract. Nevertheless, the principle remains significant, as compatibility in key areas may facilitate mutual understanding and contribute to marital harmony.³

It is evident that the meaning of *kafa'ah* has shifted considerably across historical periods. One major factor contributing to this transformation is social change, which refers to alterations within a society's structure, systems, and institutions resulting from evolving patterns of human interaction. These changes are shaped by both internal dynamics and external influences, which collectively redefine social norms, values, and expectations, including those related to marriage and compatibility.⁴

The transformation in the meaning of *kafa'ah* cannot be separated from the forces of globalization and the pervasive influence of digital media, both of which have significantly shaped contemporary perceptions of marriage.⁵ Generation Z, in particular, demonstrates a more critical and individualized approach to partner selection. A study by Ali and Hassan indicates that digital platforms have become a primary source of understanding the Islamic law for this generation; however, the information accessed is often fragmented and consumed instantaneously, which may lead to partial or superficial interpretations. At the same time, developments in contemporary Islamic legal thought call for a contextual reinterpretation of *kafa'ah*. Whereas classical Islamic jurisprudence frequently emphasized parity in social and economic status, modern perspectives tend to prioritize equality in religious commitment, moral character, and readiness to establish a harmonious household.

From a theoretical and conceptual standpoint, *kafa'ah* possesses a strong foundation in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*).⁶ Classical jurists generally agree that *kafa'ah* constitutes a right of the prospective wife and her guardian (*wali*). Accordingly, a prospective wife may refuse or seek annulment of a marriage arranged by her guardian if the prospective husband is deemed incompatible.⁷ For

² Mursyid Djawas et al., "The Integration Between Syara'and Ade'in Marriage Tradition Bugis Bone, South Sulawesi," *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pranata Sosial* 18, no. 2 (2023), p. 342–64.

³ Misran Ramli et al., "Unveiling Illegal Marriages in Aceh: Examining the Role of Unofficial Qadi," *El-Mashlahah* 14, no. 2 (2024), p. 409–30.

⁴ Abd Rasyid, *Perubahan Sosial dan Strategi Komunikasi (Efektivitas Dakwah dalam Pembangunan)*, Cet Pertama, Jawa Timur: WADE Group, (2018), p. 1-149.

⁵ Zulkarnain, Habib Iman Nurdin Sholeh, and Ahmad Zaenul Muttaqin, "Local Wisdom in Seimbangan Traditional Marriage Practices: A Maqāsid Sharī'ah Perspective," *Ijtihad : Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan* 24, no. 1 (2024), p. 119–37.

⁶ Abidin Nurdin et al., "Tujuan Hukum Islam Untuk Kemaslahatan Manusia: Penerapan Kaidah Fiqhiyah Dalam Bidang Ekonomi Dan Hukum Keluarga," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 5, no. 1 (2022), p. 41.

⁷ Darmawan et al., "Marriage Dispensation and Family Resilience: A Case Study of the Bener Meriah Shariah Court, Aceh Province," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 22, no. 2 (2022).

instance, the Shafi'i school identifies lineage, religious observance, personal independence, and profession as key considerations in assessing compatibility. Importantly, the notion of compatibility does not imply absolute equivalence in all attributes. Rather, annulment may be sought when significant disparities, considered legally or socially detrimental, result in harm or disadvantage to the aggrieved party.⁸

Ultimately, *kafa'ah* should be understood in light of its original objective: the realization of a prosperous family characterized by *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (affection), and *rahmah* (compassion). Marital harmony is fostered when spouses cooperate in fulfilling the essential aims of marriage. A resilient marriage is one that satisfies both the physical and spiritual needs of each partner, thereby enabling the family to perform its spiritual, psychological, socio-cultural, educational, reproductive, environmental, and economic functions effectively.⁹

This conceptual gap becomes particularly significant when examined in the context of family law students. On the one hand, they are prospective legal practitioners who are expected to master normative doctrines of Islamic family law comprehensively. On the other hand, they belong to Generation Z and are therefore shaped by emerging social values and digital culture. Preliminary findings indicate that approximately 60 percent of these students acknowledge a shift in the meaning of *kafa'ah*. Nevertheless, no prior research has specifically investigated how family law students understand, negotiate, or potentially reconstruct this concept within their academic and social contexts.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to analyze students' levels of understanding and acceptance of the classical concept of *kafa'ah*, to identify contemporary criteria of compatibility considered relevant, and to examine the dominant factors contributing to this shift in interpretation. By doing so, this research seeks to bridge the gap between established Islamic legal theory and the socio-cultural realities experienced by Generation Z.

Previous research by Hendra Karunia Agustine and Yadi Supriyadi (2023) identified a tendency among younger generations to reinterpret traditional parameters of *kafa'ah*, prioritizing shared hobbies, lifestyle compatibility, and similar worldviews an orientation strongly influenced by global values disseminated through social media.¹⁰ Similarly, a study by Atik Andrian (2024) examined the evolving dynamics of *kafa'ah*, yet it did not specifically address the perceptions of family law students as future practitioners who are normatively expected to possess a rigorous understanding of the concept. This omission is significant, as their

⁸ Mursyid Djawas et al., "Creating Family Resilience in Indonesia: A Study of 'Marriage Guidance' Program in Aceh and South Sumatera," *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 17, no. 1 (2022), p. 299–324.

⁹ Salma Nida, "Konsep *Kafa'ah* dan Dampaknya terhadap Ketahanan Keluarga," *Isti'dal : Jurnal Studi Hukum Islam* 9, no. 2, (2022), p. 213-230.

¹⁰ Hendra Karunia Agustine and Yadi Supriyadi, "Tinjauan Fikih Munakahat terhadap Pandangan Generasi Z Mengenai *Kafa'ah* dalam Pernikahan," *Al Mashalih - Journal of Islamic Law* 4, no. 1 (2023), p. 45-57.

interpretive framework will likely shape the future application of Islamic family law.¹¹ Whereas prior studies have largely focused on either the doctrinal formulation of *kafa'ah* or the general impact of social media, the present research concentrates specifically on how the meaning of *kafa'ah* is shifting among Generation Z, particularly among family law students, who occupy a strategic position at the intersection of normative legal training and contemporary social transformation.

This study employs a mixed-methods approach in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently and analyzed in an integrated manner to ensure complementarity and strengthen the validity of the findings. The qualitative component adopts a descriptive-analytical approach aimed at obtaining an in-depth understanding of the shifting meaning of *kafa'ah* among Generation Z, particularly in relation to Islamic legal principles and the continued relevance of the classical concept in the contemporary context. The sources consulted include *hadith*, classical and contemporary scholarly works, and peer-reviewed journal articles relevant to the research topic, accessed through both library collections and reputable online databases.

The quantitative component utilizes a survey design. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to assess respondents' levels of knowledge and perceptions regarding the evolving meaning of *kafa'ah* in the context of social change. The instrument employed a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained; respondents' identities were not disclosed, and personal information was excluded from the appendix and subsequent analysis.

A 20-item questionnaire was developed based on the conceptual framework of the study to capture Generation Z's understanding of *kafa'ah*. Prior to the main distribution, a pilot study was conducted with 30 purposively selected family law students, both male and female, to assess the clarity and reliability of the instrument. The study applied convenience sampling due to time and resource constraints, as well as the voluntary nature of participation. The finalized questionnaire was distributed over a two-week period and completed by 100 purposively selected respondents. Reliability testing produced a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.87, indicating a high level of internal consistency and suggesting that the instrument was statistically reliable for measuring the intended constructs.

The Concept of *Kafa'ah* in Islam

The concept of *kafa'ah* in Islamic marriage constitutes an important aspect of Islamic jurisprudence, particularly in discussions concerning compatibility between prospective spouses. Classical jurists have devoted considerable attention to this concept in determining the extent to which equality or proportionality between a prospective husband and wife should be considered. Generally, *kafa'ah* is

¹¹ Atik Andrian, "Kriteria *Kafa'ah* dalam Perkawinan di Dunia Islam Kontemporer," *Madani: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin* 1, no. 12 (2024), p. 972–81.

understood as compatibility in specific aspects intended to preserve stability and harmony within marriage. Etymologically derived from the Arabic term meaning “equal,” “comparable,” or “balanced,” *kafa'ah* (or *kufū*) denotes parity between two parties. In *Fiqh al-Sunnah*.¹² Sayyid Sabiq explains that in Islamic marriage law, *kafa'ah* signifies that a man should be commensurate with his prospective wife in terms of social status, lineage, character, and wealth.¹³

Similarly, in *Al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuhu*, Wahbah al-Zuhaili elaborates that etymologically *kafa'ah* means equality, while terminologically it refers to proportionality between husband and wife aimed at preventing harm or deficiency in particular aspects of marital life. He further analyzes the perspectives of various *madhhab* imams, emphasizing that the underlying objective of *kafa'ah* is to maintain balance between spouses in order to avert potential discord or social stigma that may arise from significant disparities. According to this view, imbalance in certain socially or legally significant factors could lead to tension and instability within the household.¹⁴

The issue of *kafa'ah* thus occupies a central position in the process of selecting a life partner. Consequently, it warrants careful consideration by prospective spouses. Within the marital context, *kafa'ah* extends beyond religious similarity to encompass moral character, social status, educational background, and economic condition. Compatibility across these dimensions is expected to foster mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation, thereby strengthening the foundation for a stable and harmonious marital relationship.

The concept of *kafa'ah* predates Islam and was already practiced among pre-Islamic Arabs, who placed considerable emphasis on lineage when assessing compatibility between prospective spouses. In pre-Islamic Arabia, societal norms dictated that a husband and wife should be equal in terms of race, ethnicity, and social status. Terms such as *mudarra* and *hajin* reflected these distinctions: offspring of a man of non-Arab descent and a woman of Arab descent were called *mudarra*, whereas the reverse combination produced *hajin* children. Under the inheritance laws of the time, *hajin* offspring were denied inheritance rights.¹⁵ With the advent of Islam, such distinctions were abolished, as the Qur'an emphasizes that tribal affiliation and social hierarchy hold no intrinsic value before God, promoting equality and justice among all believers

Scholarly discussions on *kafa'ah* have been extensive, encompassing books, journal articles, and academic research. The criteria for assessing compatibility

¹² Ahmad Fauzan and Hadi Amroni, “The Concept of Sakinah Family in the Contemporary Muslim Generation,” *AL-ADALAH* 17, no 1, (2020), p. 51–70.

¹³ Sayyid Sabiq, “*Fiqh Sunnah*,” diterjemahkan oleh Nor Hasanuddin, dkk, Jilid 2, Cet. Ke I, Jakarta Selatan: Pena Pundi Aksara, (2006), p. 225.

¹⁴ Wahbah Al-Zuhayli, “*Al Fiqh Al Islami Wa Adillatuhu*,” diterjemahkan oleh Abdul Hayyie al-Kattani, dkk, Jilid 9, Cet. Ke 9, Jakarta: Gema Insani, (2011), p. 45.

¹⁵ Ashwab Mahasin, “Reinterpretasi Konsep *Kafa'ah* (Pemahaman dan Kajian terhadap Maqasid Shari'ah),” *Al-Syakhsyiyah: Journal of Law & Family Studies* 2, no. 1 (2020), p. 21-37.

between individuals, however, remain largely subjective. Classical *fiqh* identifies factors such as religion, property ownership, lineage, and physical attributes as relevant indicators of compatibility. Nonetheless, there is considerable divergence among jurists regarding which factors should be prioritized in determining a prospective spouse's suitability. The four principal Sunni schools of thought, Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali offer differing perspectives on the aspects that constitute *kafa'ah* in the context of contractual validity in marriage:

Within the Hanafi school of thought, *kafa'ah* is understood as the existence of a balance or equivalence between the prospective husband and wife, who are to become lifelong partners. This balance encompasses multiple dimensions, including descent, religious adherence, freedom from enslavement, wealth, knowledge, and professional standing. In the Hanafi framework, *kafa'ah* is closely linked to the authority of the guardian (*wali*); if the guardian perceives a significant imbalance between the prospective spouses, he may annul the marriage. Even if the marriage contract has already been formalized, the guardian retains the right to dissolve the union in cases where incompatibility is deemed to jeopardize marital harmony.¹⁶

The Maliki school of thought adopts a relatively more flexible perspective on *kafa'ah* compared to the Hanafi school. Maliki scholars emphasize religion and moral integrity, defining *kafa'ah* in terms of the absence of defects that could entitle the wife to exercise *khiyar* the option to continue or annul the marriage such as insanity, impotence, or other serious incapacities.¹⁷ In this school, *kafa'ah* is considered a relative measure, with greater weight given to religious and ethical compatibility than to social or economic status. A man of lower social standing but possessing strong religious devotion is therefore regarded as suitable to marry a woman from a higher social class, illustrating the school's prioritization of piety over material or social considerations.¹⁸

The Shafi'i school of thought, in contrast, aligns more closely with the Hanafi perspective regarding the assessment of *kafa'ah*. Shafi'i scholars identify six primary factors in determining compatibility: religion, lineage, occupation, personal independence, wealth, and physical appearance. Among these, descent and social status are considered particularly significant. In practice, a man of lower social standing than his prospective wife may be deemed unsuitable, and the guardian (*wali*) has the authority to annul the marriage if sufficient parity is not observed, reflecting the school's emphasis on social and familial expectations in addition to personal attributes.¹⁹

¹⁶ Edi Susilo, "Nalar Kritis terhadap Konsep *Kafa'ah* dalam Hukum Keluarga Islam," *Nizham: Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 01 (2021), p. 10-26.

¹⁷ Iffah Muzammil, *Fiqh Munakahat (Hukum Pernikahan dalam Islam)*, Tangerang: Tsmart Printing, (2019).

¹⁸ Syaikh Abdurrahman Al Juzairi, "*Fikih Empat Mazhab*," Jilid 5, Pustaka Al-Kausar, (1999), p. 111.

¹⁹ Syaikh Abdurrahman Al Juzairi, "*Fikih Empat Mazhab*," Jilid 5, Pustaka Al-Kausar, (1999), p. 111.

The Hanbali school of thought defines *kafa'ah* as equality and equity between husband and wife within the marital relationship. According to this school, five key elements are assessed: religion, occupation, financial capacity to provide dowry and maintenance, freedom from slavery, and lineage.²⁰ The Hanbali approach bears similarity to the Maliki perspective, prioritizing religious commitment and moral character as the most decisive factors in determining compatibility. While social considerations such as wealth and lineage are acknowledged, they are not regarded as barriers to marriage if both parties freely consent, highlighting the school's relative flexibility and focus on ethical and spiritual compatibility.²¹

From a comprehensive perspective, *kafa'ah* encompasses multiple dimensions, including similarity in religion, social status, economic standing, moral character, and education. Compatibility across these aspects is believed to reduce potential conflicts within the household and strengthen the foundation of marital harmony. Among these dimensions, similarity in religious beliefs and practices is considered the most critical, serving as the cornerstone for establishing a family characterized by peace (*sakinah*), love (*mawaddah*), and compassion (*rahmah*).²² This principle is reflected in the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah, in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said.²³

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ تُنْكَحُ الْمَرْءَةُ لِأَرْبَعٍ لِمَالِهَا وَلِحَسَبِهَا وَلِجَمَالِهَا أَوْ دُودِ) رَوَاهُ
وَلِدِينِهَا فَاطْفَرُ بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ تَرَبَّتْ يَدَاكَ

A woman is married for four reasons: her wealth, her lineage, her beauty, and her religion. Choose one who has good religion, and you will be successful." (HR. Abu Dawud).

This hadith clearly identifies wealth, lineage, beauty, and religion as the principal criteria for selecting a spouse, with religion explicitly emphasized as the most important factor.²⁴ Within this religious framework, *kafa'ah* understood as proportionality and compatibility in faith, piety, and moral integrity is paramount. When choosing a life partner, assessing similarity in religious commitment ensures

²⁰ Imaro Sidqi and Mhd Rasidin, "The Concept of *Kafa'ah* in the Nineteenth Century Javanese Muslim Scholars' View: A Study on the Ulama Rifi'yah's Thought," *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum dan Syar'iah* 15, no. 1 (2023), p. 144-162.

²¹ Syaikh Abdurrahman Al Juzairi, "*Fikih Empat Mazhab*," Jilid 5, Pustaka Al-Kausar, (1999), p. 111.

²² Edi Kurniawan et al., "Early Marriage, Human Rights, and the Living Fiqh: A Maqasid Al-Shari'a Review," *Al-Risalah: Forum Kajian Hukum Dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 20, no. 1 (2020), p. 1-15.

²³ Paimat Sholihin, "*Kafa'ah* dalam Perkawinan Perspektif Empat Mazhab," *SEMJ: Sharia Economic Management Business Journal* 2, no. 1, (2021), p. 1-13.

²⁴ Anwar Hafidzi Fakultas Nor Ipansyah, Hamdan Mahmud, Ruslan, "Penetapan Sekufu dalam Kitabun Nikah Al-Banjari," *Syariah : Jurnal Hukum dan Pemikiran* 21, no. 1 (2021), p. 125-33.

that the marriage rests on a shared foundation of values and ethical conduct.²⁵ Consequently, religious and moral considerations take precedence over social or economic factors; a prospective spouse who exhibits strong faith and virtuous behavior is considered suitable even if other attributes, such as wealth or social status, differ.²⁶

Differences of opinion among scholars regarding the concept of *kafa'ah* are not intended to create division; rather, they reflect varying perspectives shaped by contextual and interpretive factors. Proponents of *kafa'ah* view it as a mechanism to prevent errors in selecting a suitable spouse, ensuring compatibility and stability in marriage. Opponents, however, argue that strict adherence to *kafa'ah* can foster discrimination and social exclusion, as it may impose rigid criteria that disadvantage certain individuals. These divergent views are often influenced by the scholars' social environment and prevailing societal structures, highlighting that legal interpretations cannot be entirely separated from the social context in which they develop. The diversity of opinions on classical *kafa'ah* demonstrates that the concept is inherently flexible rather than fixed, allowing for adaptation to changing social conditions.²⁷

In contemporary society, rapid social change has prompted scholars to reconsider the relevance of *kafa'ah* within the framework of Islamic justice. Some modern scholars contend that the concept is more cultural than a strictly binding Sharia obligation and therefore requires reinterpretation to align with present-day social realities. While *kafa'ah* continues to influence social practice, a more nuanced view is emerging, emphasizing that marital harmony depends primarily on shared values, mutual understanding, and collaborative responsibility in building a family characterized by *sakinah* (peace), *mawaddah* (love), and *rahmah* (compassion). Consequently, contemporary discourse on *kafa'ah* in Islamic legal studies is increasingly shifting from socio-economic indicators toward the assessment of moral and value-based compatibility as the foundation for a stable and fulfilling domestic life.

The Transformation of the Concept of *Kafa'ah*

Modern societal developments have significantly influenced various phenomena within Muslim communities, with corresponding implications for legal frameworks, including Islamic law. The concept of *kafa'ah* in Islamic marriage

²⁵ Dina Ameliana and Sheila Fakhria, "*Kafa'ah* Sebagai Barometer Pernikahan menurut Madzhab Syafi'i," *Legitima: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 4, no. 2 (2022), p. 136–53.

²⁶ Jasmianti, "Konsep *Kafa'ah* dalam Pernikahan (Studi Komparatif Imam Syafi'i dan Ibn Hazm)," *Hukumah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 7, no. 1 (2024), p. 1–15.

²⁷ Mustafid Mustafid et al., "Alternative Legal Strategies and Ninik Mamak Authority: Dual Administration of Malay Marriage in Koto Kampar Hulu, Riau," *Journal of Islamic Law* 5, no. 1 (2024), p. 1–18; Mufrod Teguh Mulyo et al., "The Power of Husband-Wife Communication in Building Family Resilience and Preventing Divorce: A Study of Maṣlaḥah Mursalah," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 17, no. 2 (2023), p. 125–36.

exemplifies such transformation, evolving in response to social change, reinterpretations by contemporary scholars, and the dynamics of globalization and intercultural interaction. These processes have increasingly highlighted differences in social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, prompting reconsideration of traditional criteria for marital compatibility.

Social changes across Muslim societies have notably impacted how *kafa'ah* is understood and applied in marriage law.²⁸ In classical jurisprudential traditions, factors such as lineage, social status, profession, and wealth were considered central to determining a prospective spouse's suitability. In contrast, contemporary scholars and thinkers increasingly emphasize moral integrity, ethical conduct, and responsibility within the household as primary indicators of compatibility.

The transformation in understanding *kafa'ah* is largely driven by broader social shifts. Urbanization, higher levels of education, and global connectivity are reshaping the values deemed relevant in marriage. This trend is particularly evident among Generation Z, born between 1995 and 2010. As digital natives, they are characterized by confidence, creativity, and connectivity, with a strong aptitude for technology and social interaction. These traits accelerate the reevaluation of traditional *kafa'ah* criteria: Generation Z tends to critically assess and question aspects they perceive as irrelevant, favoring compatibility in life vision, ethical values, career aspirations, and shared interests over socioeconomic parity or lineage.²⁹ This evolution in the concept of *kafa'ah* is further reinforced by at least three developments in contemporary Islamic legal thought, which collectively shape the reinterpretation of marital compatibility in modern contexts.

First, there is a growing awareness of gender equality. Contemporary perspectives increasingly recognize women's right to choose their life partners without being constrained by strict social restrictions. In classical traditions, the guardian (*wali*) had the authority to reject a prospective husband deemed unsuitable or "unequal" to the woman under his care. In contrast, modern Islamic legal thought emphasizes the woman's freedom to select her spouse as a fundamental right. This position aligns with the broader Islamic principle that both men and women possess the autonomy to determine their life paths, including choosing a partner.³⁰ Islam grants women equal rights to express consent in marriage, ensuring their agency in selecting a spouse.³¹ Consequently, restrictions based on *kafa'ah* that rely solely on

²⁸ Nur Atikah Binti Jailan and Madya Zuliza Binti Mohd Kusrin, "Compatibility (*Kafa'ah*) in Islamic Marriage: A Literature Review," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 13, no. 11 (2023), p. 146–56.

²⁹ Hadion Wijoyo et al., *Generasi Z & Revolusi Industri 4.0*, Jawa Tengah: Pena Persada (2020).

³⁰ Mursyid Djawas and Nurzakia Nurzakia, "Perkawinan Campuran Di Kota Sabang (Studi Terhadap Faktor Dan Persepsi Masyarakat Tentang Dampak Perkawinan Campuran)," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 2, no. 2 (2019), p. 307.

³¹ Doni Azhari and Syihabuddin Qalyubi, "The Rights of Sasak Noble Muslim Women in Choosing A Mate: An Analysis of the Marriage of Noble Women With Jajar Karang Men From the Perspective of Islamic Law," *Al-Adalah* 20, no. 2 (2023), p. 381–404.

social factors are increasingly seen as incompatible with the Islamic ideals of justice and equity.³²

Second, the influence of digital media and cross-cultural interaction has reshaped the understanding and application of *kafa'ah*. Digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok have transformed communication and social interaction while decentralizing traditional religious authority. Consequently, narratives about *kafa'ah* are no longer solely determined by classical scholars (ulama) but are also shaped by influencers, content creators, and peer communities. This democratization of discourse has encouraged Generation Z to reconsider compatibility criteria, aligning them more closely with contemporary values rather than rigid traditional norms.³³

The impact of digital media is particularly evident in cross-cultural and interethnic marriages, which have become increasingly common in the modern era. Historically, marriages often occurred within socially homogeneous environments, with individuals marrying within their own ethnic or social group. Today, many Muslims marry across cultural, ethnic, and even national boundaries, reducing the relevance of classical *kafa'ah* criteria such as lineage, social status, or economic parity. In this context, many contemporary scholars and intellectuals argue that *kafa'ah* should prioritize shared moral values, alignment in life vision, and mutual responsibility in fostering a harmonious and stable household, rather than adhering strictly to traditional social or economic measures.³⁴

Third, the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approach to Islamic legal studies provides a fresh perspective for understanding *kafa'ah* in the context of marriage. The *maqāṣid* framework emphasizes that marriage should not only be legally valid but also contribute to the happiness, well-being, and inner peace of both spouses. Central principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, justice, welfare, and harmony, suggest that rigid interpretations of *kafa'ah* should not prevent individuals from marrying based on mutual love and understanding.³⁵ Accordingly, contemporary Islamic legal thinkers argue that the effectiveness of a marriage should be measured by how well partners fulfill their respective roles within the household, rather than by materialistic or social indicators alone. In this sense, *kafa'ah* should be understood not merely as formal equality but as a tool for achieving spiritual, emotional, and social harmony

³² Deni Maulani Hidayat, "Relevansi Konsep *Kafa'ah* dalam Perkawinan Islam: Studi Literatur terhadap Perspektif Klasik dan Modern," *Rarabi: Journal of Islamic Marriage and Civil Law* 1, no. 1 (2025), p. 1-18.

³³ Muhammad Habibi Siregar et al., "Digital Fiqh and Ethical Governance: Negotiating Islamic Normativity and Online Narcissism in Contemporary Indonesia," *Juris: Jurnal Ilmiah Syaria* 24, no. 1 (2025), p. 181-91.

³⁴ Deni Maulani Hidayat, "Relevansi Konsep *Kafa'ah* dalam Perkawinan Islam: Studi Literatur terhadap Perspektif Klasik dan Modern," *Rarabi: Journal of Islamic Marriage and Civil Law* 1, no. 1 (2025), p. 1-18.

³⁵ Zahrul Mubarrak et al., "The Urgency of the Islamic Law and Contemporary Societal Challenges: The Flexibility of Al-Maslahah in Determining the Hierarchy of Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah," *El-Usrah* 8, no. 1 (2025), p. 344-65.

in accordance with the objectives of Islamic law.

In academic discourse, the relevance of classical *kafa'ah*, particularly regarding equivalence in social, economic, or professional status has been widely debated. Some scholars contend that excessive emphasis on material factors contradicts the egalitarian spirit of Islam, which prioritizes piety and moral integrity as the primary measure of dignity. From this perspective, rigid adherence to social or economic equivalence may perpetuate discrimination and undermine justice and individual freedom in marital choice. Conversely, others maintain that considering equivalence in background remains prudent (*ihtiyath*), serving as a precautionary measure to minimize potential sources of domestic conflict.³⁶

Contemporary marital patterns illustrate the shifting priorities in *kafa'ah*. Religious compatibility is increasingly viewed as paramount, while employment, income, and formal education are no longer considered primary determinants of marital suitability. For example, it is now common to observe marriages in which the wife earns more than the husband, such as a civil servant spouse married to a private-sector employee or where the husband may be unemployed. Educational disparities are also prevalent: a wife with a college degree may marry a husband with only a high school diploma, or vice versa, and occupational status may differ significantly. In some cases, age differences are also reversed, with the wife being older than her husband. These developments underscore the evolving understanding of *kafa'ah*, highlighting the increasing emphasis on shared values, moral alignment, and household cooperation over traditional social or economic equivalence.³⁷

In conclusion, the transformation of *kafa'ah* in modern Islamic marriage reflects a significant shift from a framework grounded primarily in social and economic status toward one that emphasizes moral values, ethical responsibility, and mutual understanding in establishing a household. This evolution aligns with broader social and legal developments across Muslim societies, where increasing attention is being given to individual autonomy and the freedom to select one's life partner.

Following the conceptual exploration of *kafa'ah* in scholarly discourse, the present study examines the theory in practice by investigating the perspectives of prospective family law practitioners. The next section presents empirical data on students' perceptions and understanding of both classical and contemporary interpretations of *kafa'ah*.

³⁶ Suwanto Abbas et al., "Penerapan *Kafa'ah* dan Weton dalam Perkembangan Sosial-Hukum Perkawinan di Jawa Timur," *Nurani: Jurnal Kajian Syari'ah dan Masyarakat* 25, no. 2 (2025), p. 493–513.

³⁷ Sri Astuti A. Samad and Munawwarah Munawwarah, "Adat Pernikahan Dan Nilai-Nilai Islami Dalam Masyarakat Aceh Menurut Hukum Islam," *El-USRAH: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 3, no. 2 (2020), p. 289; Wardana Said et al., "Marriage Traditions and Family Resilience in Bugis Bone Society: A Study of Islamic Law and Islamic Education," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 8, no. 3 (2024).

Student Perceptions of Classical and Contemporary *Kafa'ah* Concepts

Table 1: Student Perceptions of Classical and Contemporary *Kafa'ah* Concepts.

* Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Neutral (N), Disagree (TS), Strongly Disagree

No	Statement	Likert Scale				
		SS	S	N	TS	STS
1	The concept of <i>kafa'ah</i> in classical fiqh which includes equivalence in terms of religion, lineage, profession, wealth and freedom from defects is a comprehensive and precise definition.	29	63	7	1	0
2	Compatibility is the determination of harmonious criteria between prospective husband and wife who are going to get married. .	38	33	25	4	0
3	The element of religious equality is the most important and non-negotiable condition for <i>kafa'ah</i> .	61	26	12	0	1
4	Equivalence in terms of economic and financial readiness (as a form of wealth/maal) is a relevant consideration in <i>kafa'ah</i> to create a stable household.	28	33	29	5	5
5	Even though <i>kafa'ah</i> is not a mandatory requirement for marriage, <i>kafa'ah</i> aims to create a family that is sakinah, mawaddah, warahmah so that the basic principles remain relevant.	61	26	11	0	1

(STS)*

Source: Questionnaire Results (2025)

The results indicate that Generation Z students generally continue to recognize the relevance of the classical *kafa'ah* concept, albeit with a selective and hierarchical understanding. Overall, 92% of respondents acknowledged the classical framework, which encompasses religion, lineage, profession, wealth, and freedom from defects, as a comprehensive guide to marital compatibility. Within this framework, the aspect of religion received the strongest emphasis: 87% of respondents in item 3 affirmed that religious similarity remains the primary foundation of compatibility, in line with the majority of jurists and hadith guidance. This priority is consistent across the Shafi'i, Hanafi, Hanbali, and Maliki schools of thought, which similarly emphasize the selection spouses who have strong religiosity, while other factors are considered complementary.³⁸

³⁸ Nurlaelah Abbas et al., "Theological Impact of Marriage for Religious Minority Families in Bali and Makassar," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 9, no. 1 (2025).

Acceptance of other elements, however, is more varied. The aspect of wealth or financial readiness, examined in item 4, elicited mixed responses: 61% of respondents regarded it as relevant to household stability, 29% were neutral, and 10% rejected it as an important criterion. This suggests that while economic capability remains a consideration, particularly in terms of the husband's ability to provide a dowry and cover daily living expenses rather than luxury, view it as less central than religious and moral compatibility.³⁹

The foundational purpose of *kafa'ah*, namely the creation of a peaceful, loving, and compassionate family, continues to be strongly endorsed, with 87% of respondents in item 5 affirming its relevance, even though it is not a legally mandated requirement. Collectively, these findings indicate that Generation Z students preserve the normative essence of *kafa'ah*, particularly its religious and moral dimensions, while reinterpreting socio-economic criteria to align with contemporary priorities in marriage.

Factors Influencing Students' Opinions on *Kafa'ah*

Table 2: Factors Influencing Students' Opinions on *Kafa'ah*.

No	Statement	Likert Scale				
		SS	S	N	TS	STS
1	The development of technology and digital media has also influenced my perspective in assessing the criteria for potential partners	28	33	29	5	5
2	In choosing a partner, having the same vision, mission and life goals is prioritized over having the same social status or descent.	61	26	11	1	1
3	Equality in the level of education between prospective husband and wife is a very important element of <i>kafa'ah</i> today.	44	33	20	1	2
4	The economic stability and financial prospects of the prospective partner are very important considerations in <i>Kafa'ah</i> .	30	30	31	7	2
5	Compatibility of character, hobbies and lifestyle are included in the <i>kafa'ah</i> criteria which are considered important for household harmony.	35	28	30	6	1

³⁹ Muh. Nasiruddin Ahmad Azaim Ibrahimy, Nawawi, "Kriteria *Kafa'ah* dalam Perkawinan :," *Al-Ahkam Jurnal Ilmu Syari'ah dan Hukum* 5, no. 2 (2020), p. 128-143.

6	Gender equality without discrimination and patriarchy is an important value that must be reflected in today's <i>kafa'ah</i> practices.	31	53	14	1	1
7	Women have the same rights and freedoms as men in choosing their life partner.	52	33	13	1	1

* Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Neutral (N), Disagree (TS), Strongly Disagree (STS)*

Source: Questionnaire Results (2025)

A more transformative finding is observed in the contemporary criteria for *kafa'ah*, which reflect a clear shift from traditional measures based on descent and social status toward compatibility grounded in shared values, life vision, and personal harmony.

This shift is particularly evident in the prioritization of a shared life vision. In item 2, 87% of respondents indicated that alignment in vision, mission, and life goals takes precedence over similarities in social status or lineage. Personal compatibility, such as alignment in character, hobbies, and lifestyle also emerged as highly important, with 63% of respondents in item 5 emphasizing these factors as essential for household harmony. This high level of agreement suggests that successful marriage is increasingly understood not merely as fulfilling social obligations but as cultivating a meaningful interpersonal relationship characterized by emotional connection and mutual understanding.

Educational equality has also emerged as a significant contemporary consideration. In item 3, 77% of respondents affirmed that comparable educational attainment is an important component of modern *kafa'ah*. This emphasis reflects social realities, where marriages in which a woman holds a higher degree than her husband—such as a bachelor's degree compared to the husband's elementary education—may attract gossip or social scrutiny, potentially causing familial or communal discomfort. Beyond social perception, educational parity facilitates better communication, shared perspectives on life issues, and mutual support in personal and career development, all of which contribute to the stability and growth of the marital relationship. Overall, these findings indicate that Generation Z increasingly interprets *kafa'ah* through the lens of shared values, personal compatibility, and mutual growth, signaling a shift from formalistic social and economic criteria toward relational and developmental dimensions in marriage.

Economic stability and financial prospects remain important considerations in contemporary *kafa'ah*, as reflected in item 4, where 60% of respondents agreed on its relevance, while 31% remained neutral. This suggests that economic factors are perceived as one of several foundational elements in marital compatibility rather than the sole determinant. While financial readiness is acknowledged as important, it is ranked below considerations such as shared life vision and gender equality. For some, economic capability forms the basis of marital security; for others, it is

important but not decisive.

Classical interpretations of *kafa'ah* often emphasized material equality prior to marriage, with wealth or property forming a key criterion for suitability. In the modern context, however, economic parity need not exist at the outset; financial compatibility can develop progressively after the marriage is established. Nonetheless, the sustainability and stability of a marital relationship remain closely linked to economic management, as financial difficulties continue to be a common source of domestic conflict and divorce.⁴⁰

Similarity in financial and economic capacity can directly influence the quality of family life and overall well-being. Couples with comparable economic backgrounds are generally better able to plan collaboratively for the future, including managing household finances, investing in children's education, and allocating resources to strengthen family life. When spouses share aligned perspectives on financial matters, they are more likely to work together toward common goals, reinforcing both practical cooperation and the marital bond.

The data from item 6 indicates that 84% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that gender equality, free from patriarchal constraints, should be reflected in contemporary *kafa'ah* practices. This strong endorsement signals a clear rejection of rigid and gender-biased interpretations of *kafa'ah*, which historically restricted women's roles to the domestic sphere or evaluated them primarily by family background. Such traditional interpretations have practical implications in the Islamic family law; for instance, in cases of domestic conflict that could lead to divorce, women were often expected to remain obedient and refrain from asserting their basic rights as wives.⁴¹ In the modern context, however, principles of democracy, justice, and human rights, shaped by education and globalization encourage a more equitable understanding of marital responsibilities. Islam itself establishes complementary duties for men and women while affirming equality in dignity, rights, and moral accountability, recognizing individual differences and capabilities.⁴²

In alignment with this perspective, 85% of respondents in item 7 agreed that women possess the same rights and freedoms as men in choosing a life partner. This reflects a contemporary reinterpretation of the classical *kafa'ah* criterion of independence, which historically distinguished between slaves and free individuals to determine compatibility. In modern Indonesia, where slavery no longer exists, independence is understood in terms of personal autonomy, freedom in communication, rejection of patriarchal restrictions, and women's career choices.

⁴⁰ Zurifah Nurdin, Suryani, and Agusten, "From Classical *Kafa'ah* to Contemporary Economic Justice: A Hadith-Based Legal Reassessment in Islamic Family Law," *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 10, no. 2 (2025), p. 809–30.

⁴¹ Siti Rahmawati, "Mainstreaming of Gender Equality in Islamic Family Law: Opportunities and Challenges," *Samarah* 4, no. 2 (2020), p. 360–74.

⁴² Mohamed Sulthan Ismiya Begum et al., "Gender Equity in Muslim Family Law: Modern and Contemporary 'Ulamā's View," *Al-Ahkam* 34, no. 2 (2024), p. 221–56.

Contemporary Islamic legal thought increasingly prioritizes women's freedom to select a spouse without undue social constraints, reflecting Islam's principle that all individuals have the right to determine their life path, including marital decisions.⁴³

According to Generation Z, freedom in the contemporary era is understood as the freedom to express diverse communication styles, to move beyond patriarchal constraints, and to pursue independent careers for women. From a modern perspective, women's right to choose their own partners without rigid social restrictions has gained increasing recognition. In classical tradition, however, guardians possessed the authority to reject prospective husbands deemed unsuitable for the women under their guardianship. In contrast, modern interpretations of Islamic law tend to prioritize women's autonomy in selecting their life partners. This perspective is supported by the view that Islam, in principle, upholds individual freedom in determining one's life path, including the choice of a spouse.

External factors have reinforced this shift in understanding. Digital media, acknowledged by 61% of respondents in item 1 as shaping their perspectives on partner selection, serves not only as a source of information but also as a space for disseminating narratives about equality, love, and partnership. These influences have filtered into Generation Z's understanding of *kafa'ah*, leading to strong support for criteria such as gender equality and the elimination of patriarchal norms, as evidenced by the 84% approval rate in item 6.

Collectively, these findings demonstrate that Generation Z is not rejecting *kafa'ah* but is actively redefining its parameters. The emphasis has shifted from traditional measures of background equality to prioritizing harmony in life vision, shared values, and mutual respect, reflecting an evolving and contextualized understanding of marital compatibility.

Shifting Meaning of *Kafa'ah*

Table 3: Shifting Meaning of *Kafa'ah*

No	Statement	Likert Scale				
		SS	S	N	TS	STS
1	The concept of <i>kafa'ah</i> according to classical Islamic jurisprudence needs to be adapted (reinterpreted) to the social conditions of modern society so that it remains meaningful.	44	37	16	2	1
2	The elements of <i>kafa'ah</i> do not have to be applied rigidly and comprehensively, but can be prioritized according to the context of individual needs.	40	39	17	4	0

⁴³ Rusdaya Basri, *Fiqh Munakahat 4 Mazhab dan Kebijakan Pemerintah* (Sulawesi Selatan: Kaaffah Learning Center, 2019).

3	Differences in social status or descent are not the main obstacle to continuing a relationship to the level of marriage.	40	39	21	4	1
4	Global values such as equality, justice, and individual freedom have influenced the way I interpret <i>kafa'ah</i> in marriage.	35	39	21	4	1
5	The shift in understanding of <i>kafa'ah</i> among Generation Z is a natural thing as an impact of social, cultural and technological changes.	28	39	27	4	2
6	There is no doubt about the knowledge of choosing a partner for students, because it is studied every day on campus.	39	29	27	4	1
7	As a family law student, it is necessary to understand the concept of <i>kafa'ah</i> both normatively and contextually.	47	41	11	1	0
8	The implementation of the <i>kafa'ah</i> concept in the future needs to be more flexible in adapting to social dynamics, but still be guided by basic Islamic values.	53	33	12	1	1

* Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Neutral (N), Disagree (TS), Strongly Disagree (STS)*

Source: Questionnaire Results (2025)

The analysis in Table 3 demonstrates a strong awareness among family law students, particularly those of Generation Z, of the dynamic nature of *kafa'ah* and the importance of a contextualized approach. In item 1, 81% of respondents agreed that a reinterpretation of classical Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) is necessary to ensure that the principle of *kafa'ah* remains relevant and meaningful amid the evolving social, economic, and value systems of the contemporary society. The differences in socio-cultural conditions between historical and modern contexts underscore the need for legal adaptations that address current societal needs while remaining firmly grounded in the primary sources of the Qur'an and Hadith, thereby promoting a more beneficial and functional framework for family life.⁴⁴

This perspective is further reinforced by item 2, in which 79% of respondents agreed that the elements of *kafa'ah* need not be applied rigidly or comprehensively,

⁴⁴ Suud Sarim Karimullah and Arif Sugitanata, "Pembaharuan Konsep *Kafa'ah* dalam Perkawinan," *Jurnal Keislaman* 5, no. 1 (2022), p. 63-74.

but can instead be prioritized according to individual and contextual needs. This flexible approach reflects an understanding that the core purpose of *kafa'ah* is to safeguard the well-being of the household; strict adherence to all classical criteria may, in fact, hinder the attainment of the primary goals of marriage: *sakinah* (peace), *mawaddah* (love), and *rahmah* (mercy). By emphasizing key elements, such as religion, morals, and personal responsibility over factors like descent, social status, or ethnicity, the application of *kafa'ah* becomes more adaptive to contemporary realities, particularly in societies characterized by increasing individual awareness, higher education, and greater social mobility.

Awareness of the global context is also evident among respondents, with 74% in item 4 acknowledging that international values such as equality, justice, and individual freedom have influenced their interpretation of *kafa'ah* in marriage. In an era where gender equality and human rights are increasingly emphasized, *kafa'ah* can be understood as recognizing the rights, dignity, and agency of every individual, irrespective of social or economic status. This perspective is particularly relevant in marriage, where societal pressures often encourage unions based on perceived “equivalence” in wealth, education, or family background. The presence of 21% neutral responses and 5% disagreement, however, suggests that the internalization of these global values is gradual and varies among students.

Similarly, 79% of respondents in item 3 agreed that differences in social status or lineage are not a significant barrier to marriage. While cultural norms may view equality in social background as a means to avoid stigma or social judgment, such similarities are not essential in Islam. Couples from similar social backgrounds may share expectations and aspirations that reduce potential conflicts, but these factors are secondary to moral and spiritual compatibility.⁴⁵

The Islamic principles emphasize that the primary requirement for marriage is devotion and the willingness to establish a household characterized by *sakinah* (peace), *mawaddah* (love), and *rahmah* (mercy), rather than equivalence in social status. The marriage of Bilal ibn Rabah, a former slave, to a woman from a respectable family exemplifies this principle, demonstrating that moral and spiritual values are prioritized over worldly or social distinctions. This underscores the enduring Islamic focus on ethical and spiritual alignment as the cornerstone of marital compatibility.⁴⁶

These findings demonstrate a clear tendency among Generation Z students to prioritize shared understanding and values over shared social or familial backgrounds. In item 5, 67% of respondents agreed that the shift in the understanding of *kafa'ah* among Generation Z is a natural outcome of social, cultural, and technological changes, although 27% remained neutral.

⁴⁵ Shofwan Supardiyono, Farkhani, Umar Multazam, “Menakar Urgensi Penerapan *Kafa'ah* dalam Pernikahan,” *Al-Ittihad Jurnal Pemikiran dan Hukum Islam* 11, no. 2 (2025), p. 18–32.

⁴⁶ Muhammad Khakim Ashari and Zumrotus Sholikhah, “Reconstructing the Concept of *Kafa'ah* in Marriage: The Perspective of Islamic Law and Social Reality,” *Al-Khass: The Indonesian Journal of Islamic Law* 1, no. 1 (2025), p. 14–23.

As prospective legal practitioners, students display a dual awareness of both normative and contextual aspects of marriage law. In item 6, 68% of respondents felt confident in their knowledge of partner selection due to their academic training, with 27% remaining neutral. This awareness deepens in item 7, where 88% affirmed the necessity of understanding *kafa'ah* both normatively and contextually, while only 1% disagreed and 11% were neutral.

The overall perspective is captured in item 8, where 86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the future application of *kafa'ah* should be more flexible, adapting to social dynamics while remaining grounded in Islamic values. This reflects a recognition of the need for a more contextualized interpretation of *kafa'ah*, guided by fundamental principles such as religion, lineage, economic and professional considerations, with the ultimate goal of establishing families free from inequality and incompatibility.

Conclusion

The concept of *kafa'ah* in Islamic marriage law has undergone a significant transformation among Generation Z family law students at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. While the core principles of classical *kafa'ah*, including religion, lineage, property, profession, and freedom from defects, remain relevant, a paradigm shift is evident. Generation Z prioritizes shared life vision, alignment of values, gender equality, compatibility in character and hobbies, and moral harmony over traditional social and material parameters. This shift is closely linked to globalization, exposure to digital media, and increasing awareness of gender equality, which together encourage the reinterpretation of traditional values in contemporary contexts. The study demonstrates that Generation Z still views *kafa'ah* as relevant but approaches it more contextually, emphasizing faith and morals as the most critical elements for building a harmonious household. Therefore, understanding of *kafa'ah* must continue to evolve, allowing for its application in diverse social contexts while remaining anchored in essential Islamic principles. In doing so, the objectives of the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* are realized, supporting the establishment of family life that is *sakinah* (peaceful), *mawaddah* (loving), and *rahmah* (compassionate).

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