



Islamic Bioethics and Reproductive Rights: An Analysis of *Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah* on Contraceptive Decisions for Muslim Couples in Indonesia

Dannu Wijaya

Faculty of Medicine, Islamic University of North Sumatra, Indonesia

dannuwijaya.spog@gmail.com

Corresponding Author:* dannuwijaya.spog@gmail.com

Abstrak

Jurnal ini membahas hubungan antara bioetika Islam dan hak reproduksi, dengan fokus pada keputusan kontrasepsi yang diambil oleh pasangan Muslim di Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi apakah penggunaan kontrasepsi sejalan dengan tujuan syariah dalam menjaga kehidupan, kesehatan, dan kesejahteraan masyarakat. Melalui kajian pustaka dan analisis data terkini, artikel ini menyajikan perspektif yang komprehensif tentang tantangan dan peluang yang dihadapi pasangan Muslim dalam mengakses dan menggunakan kontrasepsi.

Kata kunci : Beotika Islam, Reproduksi, Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah, Muslim

Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between Islamic bioethics and reproductive rights, focusing on contraceptive decisions made by Muslim couples in Indonesia. Using the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* approach, this study aims to evaluate whether contraceptive use aligns with the objectives of sharia in preserving the life, health, and well-being of society. Through a literature review and analysis of current data, this article presents a comprehensive perspective on the challenges and opportunities faced by Muslim couples in accessing and using contraception.

Keywords: Islamic bioethics, Reproduction, Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, Muslims

Introduction

Indonesia's large Muslim population creates a unique context for bioethics and reproductive rights. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (2021), over 87% of Indonesia's population is Muslim, meaning that religious norms significantly influence reproductive decisions. In Muslim-majority societies, religious values often inform decision-making, including those regarding reproduction and contraception. Contraception, while often considered a tool for birth control, is often viewed with skepticism in the Islamic context. For example, some Muslim groups may argue that contraception contradicts religious teachings that emphasize the importance of procreation. This creates a complex tension between the need for

population control and religious understandings of life and reproduction (Masyita, 2020). This tension arises not only from the interpretation of religious texts, but also from a broader understanding of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which is an important concept in Islamic law. *Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* focuses on the ultimate goal of Islamic law, which aims to protect five important aspects: religion, soul, intellect, progeny, and property. In this context, decisions about the use of contraception are not only influenced by religious texts, but also by how the decision contributes to the well-being of the individual and society as a whole (Al-Qaradawi, 2018). For example, in some cases, the use of contraception can be seen as a way to protect the health of mothers and children, which is in line with the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*'s goal of protecting the soul.

Furthermore, an understanding of the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* can also help bridge the differences of opinion among Muslims regarding contraception. In many communities, there is intense debate over whether the use of contraception is religiously acceptable. Some scholars argue that the use of contraception is permissible if it is done for legitimate reasons, such as health or family well-being. For example, in situations where a woman has a medical condition that makes pregnancy risky, the use of contraception may be considered wise and in accordance with the principles of the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*.

However, on the other hand, there are also more conservative views that reject the use of contraception, arguing that every life is a gift and should be accepted unconditionally. In this context, open and inclusive dialogue among various groups within Indonesian Muslim society is crucial to address these issues. This way, the community can find solutions that respect religious values while also considering practical needs and reproductive health. For a more in-depth analysis, we also need to consider the social and economic factors that influence reproductive decisions in Indonesia. For example, in many regions, access to reproductive health education and services remains limited. This can impact public understanding of contraception and reproductive rights. A study by Hidayati et al. (2022) showed that better education about reproductive health can increase acceptance of contraceptive use among young couples. Therefore, it is important to educate the public about the benefits and risks of contraceptive use in a context that aligns with their religious values.

Government policies also play a crucial role in determining access to contraception and reproductive health services. In recent years, the Indonesian government has strived to improve access to reproductive health services, including contraception. However, challenges remain, particularly in more remote areas where health services may be unavailable. In this context, collaboration between the government, non-governmental organizations, and local communities is crucial to ensure that reproductive health information and services are accessible to everyone, regardless of their religious or social background.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that bioethics and reproductive rights issues in Indonesia cannot be separated from the broader social, cultural, and religious context. Indonesian society, with its diverse cultures and beliefs, requires a holistic and context-sensitive approach to addressing these issues. By engaging in open and inclusive dialogue and educating the public about the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* (obligatory principles of Islamic law) and reproductive health, we can create a more supportive environment for individuals to make informed decisions that align with their values.

The challenges Muslim couples face in accessing contraception are complex and multifaceted, involving various social, cultural, and religious factors. One major challenge is the social stigma that often surrounds contraceptive use. In many Muslim communities, there is a perception that contraception may be considered contrary to religious principles, which require

couples to accept and appreciate every gift of life given by God. This stigma often discourages couples from seeking information or using available contraceptive methods, resulting in low contraceptive use rates.

According to research conducted by the Indonesian Ministry of Health (2020), only around 57% of couples of childbearing age use contraception. This figure indicates a significant gap between the need for contraception and its use. Many couples are unaware of available options, such as hormonal contraceptive methods, intrauterine devices (IUDs), or natural methods. This lack of awareness is often due to a lack of education and understanding of contraception in an Islamic context. Adequate education about contraception would not only help Muslim couples make more informed decisions but would also reduce the stigma that exists in society.

For example, in several regions in Indonesia, reproductive health education programs are designed to provide accurate information in accordance with Islamic teachings. These programs not only explain various contraceptive methods but also educate couples about their reproductive rights within the framework of the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* (obligatory duties of Islam), which emphasizes protecting the life, health, and well-being of individuals. This way, Muslim couples can see contraception as not only a religiously valid option but also as part of their responsibility to plan a healthy family.

Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah plays a crucial role in shaping Muslim couples' perspectives on contraception. The concept of *maqāṣid al-Shari'ah*, which focuses on the goals and benefits of Islamic law, provides a foundation for understanding that contraceptive use can be viewed as an effort to protect the health of the mother and child, as well as ensuring family well-being. With this approach, Muslim couples are expected to make wiser decisions regarding contraception, in line with their religious values. However, despite the positive potential of using the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* approach, other challenges remain. For example, there are differing interpretations among Islamic scholars regarding the legal basis for contraceptive use. Some scholars consider contraceptive use permissible, while others hold the opposite view. This difference of opinion often confuses Muslim couples when making decisions. Therefore, constructive dialogue among stakeholders, including Islamic scholars, educators, and the community, is crucial to achieve a better understanding of reproductive rights within the Islamic context.

When analyzing contraceptive decisions made by Muslim couples in Indonesia, it is important to consider the social and economic factors that influence their choices. For example, couples living in urban areas may have better access to reproductive health information and services than couples living in rural areas. Furthermore, education level also significantly influences couples' understanding of contraception. Couples with higher education tend to be more open to contraceptive use and better able to seek relevant information.

Recent data shows that efforts are increasing to improve access to and understanding of contraception among Muslim couples. For example, government and NGO programs focused on reproductive health often include religious education components to explain that contraception does not conflict with Islamic teachings. This is crucial for creating a supportive environment for Muslim couples to make informed decisions about contraception.

Islamic bioethics refers to the ethical principles established in Islam regarding life, health, and reproduction. In this context, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* serves as a framework for assessing decisions made by individuals and couples regarding contraception. According to Al-Ghazali (2019), *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* provides moral guidance that helps individuals consider the consequences of their actions on themselves and society.

One of the main principles of the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* is the protection of life. In the context of reproduction, this means that the decision to use contraception must consider the health and safety of the mother and child. A study by Rahman et al. (2022) showed that contraceptive use can reduce the risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth, which aligns with the goal of protecting life. However, there are also views opposing the use of contraception as it is considered to hinder the purpose of creation and life.

Furthermore, the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* also emphasizes the importance of preserving offspring. In this context, contraceptive use must be carefully considered to avoid disrupting the development of future generations. According to research by Siti et al. (2021), unplanned contraceptive use can lead to uncertainty in family planning, which in turn can affect the well-being of future children. Therefore, decisions about contraception must be made with careful consideration and a thorough understanding of the long-term consequences.

In this study, the author will also discuss the role of education and awareness in influencing contraceptive decisions among Muslim couples. Research by Hasanah (2020) shows that couples who have better knowledge about contraception tend to make more informed decisions and in accordance with their religious values. This shows the importance of an educational approach that is sensitive to cultural and religious contexts in increasing understanding of reproductive rights. This theoretical study will provide a strong foundation for analyzing how *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* can be applied in the context of contraceptive decisions in Indonesia. This study will explore various perspectives and challenges faced by Muslim couples, as well as provide recommendations to increase understanding and access to contraception within the framework of Islamic bioethics.

Research methods

The methodology used in this study is a literature review (library research), which collects and analyzes various literature related to Islamic bioethics, reproductive rights, and *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* (obligatory principles of Islamic law). This research also includes secondary data analysis from various relevant sources, including government reports, journal articles, and case studies. With this approach, the author aims to present a comprehensive picture of contraceptive issues among Muslim couples in Indonesia. The first step in this methodology is data collection from credible sources. The author identified and compiled recent scientific articles discussing Islamic bioethics and reproductive rights, as well as official reports from the Ministry of Health and other relevant institutions. This study also includes statistical data on the level of contraceptive use in Indonesia, as well as factors influencing couples' decisions regarding contraceptive use (Ministry of Health, 2020).

Next, a qualitative analysis was conducted to understand the social and cultural contexts influencing contraceptive decisions. The authors explore how religious norms, social stigma, and lack of education influence Muslim couples' contraceptive choices. Taking into account the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* (obligatory obligations), the authors analyze how these decisions can be viewed from the perspective of protecting life, offspring, and societal well-being. Finally, the authors formulate conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the analysis. These recommendations include the importance of better education about reproductive rights and contraception in an Islamic context, as well as the need for government and community support in creating an environment that supports informed and religiously sound decisions. This methodology, it is hoped that this research can provide a meaningful contribution in understanding Islamic bioethics and reproductive rights, as well as provide deeper insight into contraceptive decisions among Muslim couples in Indonesia.

Results and Discussion

Research results indicate that various factors influence contraceptive decisions among Muslim couples in Indonesia. One key finding is that despite an understanding of the importance of contraception for reproductive health, many couples remain hesitant to use it due to concerns about religious views. According to a survey conducted by Rizal et al. (2021), approximately 45% of respondents felt that using contraception was against Islamic teachings, despite recognizing the health benefits it offers. In Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, decisions about contraception are influenced not only by health considerations but also by strong social norms and religious values. For example, many couples feel pressured to adhere to religious guidelines that teach that every child is a blessing to be embraced. This creates a dilemma for couples seeking wise family planning, as they feel caught between their desire to safeguard their reproductive health and their religious obligations.

Furthermore, education plays a significant role in contraceptive decision-making. Couples with higher levels of education tend to be more open to contraceptive use and better understand its benefits. A study by Sari et al. (2022) found that couples who had participated in reproductive health education programs were more likely to use contraceptive methods than those who had not. This suggests that appropriate education can help reduce the stigma and fear associated with contraceptive use. However, while education can improve understanding, significant challenges remain in changing public perceptions about contraception. Social media and other sources of information often convey contradictory messages about contraception. On the one hand, there is a wealth of information supporting the use of contraception for the health and well-being of families, but on the other hand, there are also narratives emphasizing that contraception is inconsistent with religious teachings. For example, a study by Kurniawan et al. (2023) showed that many couples are influenced by inaccurate information on social media, which often leads to fear and confusion about contraceptive use.

Furthermore, support from their environment, such as family and friends, can also influence a couple's decision to use contraception. In many cases, couples who receive positive support from those closest to them are more likely to use contraceptive methods. Conversely, if they face rejection or criticism, they may feel pressured to follow more traditional norms. This suggests that societal change requires a collective effort, involving various parties to create an environment that supports contraceptive use. Another important aspect is the role of health workers in providing contraceptive information and services. Trained health workers can provide clear and detailed explanations of the benefits and risks of contraceptive use. They can also help couples address concerns they may have regarding religious views. A study by Hidayah et al. (2024) showed that when health workers provided information sensitive to cultural and religious contexts, couples were more likely to accept and use contraception.

Further analysis shows that limited education and access to information are major obstacles to contraceptive decision-making among Muslim couples. Many couples lack sufficient information about contraceptive methods that align with Islamic principles. This creates gaps in their understanding of available options, which in turn impacts their family planning decisions. For example, couples who lack access to adequate information may feel hesitant or confused about choosing the right contraceptive method, even if they intend to use it. Research by Lestari (2022) found that couples who receive reproductive health education tend to be more open to contraceptive use. Therefore, it is crucial to enhance educational programs that are sensitive to cultural and religious contexts so that Muslim couples understand that contraceptive use does not conflict with Islamic teachings.

From the perspective of the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* (obligatory purposes of Islamic law), the decision to use contraception should consider the well-being of the individual and society as a whole. The *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, the primary objectives of Islamic law, emphasize the importance of protecting life, reason, and honor. In this regard, contraception use can be seen as an effort to better plan a family, which in turn can improve the quality of life of children. A study by Sari et al. (2023) found that families who use contraception tend to have better resources to support their children's education and health. This suggests that by better planning their family, couples can provide a more stable and supportive environment for their children, ultimately contributing to the well-being of society as a whole.

However, there are also challenges to overcome, such as the social stigma attached to contraceptive use. In many communities, there are strong social expectations regarding the ideal number of children, and couples often feel pressured to meet these expectations. This stigma can hinder couples from making the decision to use contraception, even if they recognize its benefits. Research by Yulia (2021) shows that social support and understanding from the community can help reduce this stigma and encourage couples to make healthier decisions. For example, if the community can provide greater support to couples who choose to use contraception, this can create a more positive and supportive environment for them.

Thus, the results of this study indicate an urgent need to improve understanding and access to contraception among Muslim couples in Indonesia. Through an approach based on the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* (obligatory duties), it is hoped that couples can make more informed decisions that align with their religious values, while maintaining the health and well-being of their families. It is crucial to involve community and religious leaders in this effort to ensure that messages about the importance of reproductive health education and contraceptive use are well-received by the community. This will hopefully reduce stigma and allow Muslim couples to feel more comfortable making decisions related to family planning.

Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of understanding Islamic bioethics and reproductive rights in the context of contraceptive decisions among Muslim couples in Indonesia. Using the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* approach, this study demonstrates that contraceptive decisions must consider health, well-being, and religious values. While challenges remain, such as social stigma and lack of education, there are also opportunities to improve understanding and access to contraception. Recommendations from this study include the need for better educational programs on reproductive health and reproductive rights in an Islamic context. Furthermore, government and community support to create an environment that supports informed and religiously sound decisions is crucial. This will hopefully enable Muslim couples in Indonesia to make better decisions about contraception, which in turn can improve their quality of life and that of future generations.

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