



Comparative Analysis of Acceptance of Interfaith Marriages Among Various Islamic Sects

Ilham Saputra *

*Esa Unggul University,
Jakarta, Indonesia*

Email: ilham.saputra@esaunggul.ac.id

Melinda Oktaviani

*Indonesian Islamic University (UII),
Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

Email: melinda.oktaviani@uii.ac.id

* corresponding author

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Abstract:

This research examines the acceptance of interfaith marriages among various Islamic sects, with a focus on Sunni, Shia, and others, in the context of *maqāṣid ash-shari'ah*. Using qualitative methodology, this research involved in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to collect data from ulama, community leaders, and individuals involved in interfaith marriages. Data analysis shows significant variation in acceptance of interfaith marriages between sects, which is influenced by religious education, interreligious interactions, and local policies. This research also explores how education and policy can be used as tools to increase interfaith dialogue and tolerance. The research results suggest that inclusive religious education and policies that support interfaith activities can strengthen tolerance and interfaith understanding in Muslim societies. These findings offer important insights for a better understanding of the complexities of interfaith marriages in the context of Islamic



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Introduction

Interfaith marriages in the Islamic context show deep complexity in terms of regulations and theological views. According to Islamic doctrine, marriage is not only a union between two individuals, but also an institution strictly regulated by Sharia law, which originates from the Koran and Sunnah. The Qur'an, in Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:5), explicitly allows Muslim men to marry women from among the Ahl al-Kitab, namely groups who have accepted the holy book before the

arrival of Islam such as Jews and Christians. . This verse is often used as the basis for allowing interfaith marriages to take place within certain limits agreed upon in Islamic jurisprudence.

On the other hand, Surah Al-Baqarah (2:221) emphasizes the prohibition on Muslim women from marrying non-Muslim men, making it clear that religious differences in marriage can have serious implications for the integrity of faith and offspring. This provision reflects the principle that in Islam, marriage is more than just a social bond; it is a spiritual contract that must strengthen religious identity and harmony in the household. This view not only confirms the theological foundation of marriage law in Islam, but also emphasizes the role of religion as a determinant of the principles of family life. Therefore, the interpretation and application of these verses is very important in defining the structure and boundaries of interfaith marriages in various social and cultural contexts in the Islamic world.

Differences in interpretation of Islamic teachings regarding interfaith marriage between various sects are a phenomenon that reflects the diversity of theological and jurisprudential approaches in Islam. According to Surah Al-Baqarah [2:221], a Muslim is strictly prohibited from marrying polytheists (polytheists), which shows a clear boundary between what is permitted and what is prohibited in the structure of marriage in Islam. However, Surah Al-Ma'idah [5:5] permits a Muslim to marry a woman from the "ahl al-Kitab", namely groups who have holy books recognized in the Islamic tradition, such as Jews and Christians. The interpretation and application of these verses differ significantly between Sunni and Shia sects, for example, with some Shia scholars being stricter in determining who falls into the category of "ahl al-Kitab", often limiting this category to strictly defined individuals. following the original teachings of their religion without assimilating polytheistic beliefs or fundamental changes in their doctrine.

This diversity of interpretations is not only a reflection of

fundamental theological differences, but also reflects a response to the different social and cultural conditions in which Muslim communities exist. For example, Muslim communities in regions that have significant historical and social interaction with Jews and Christians tend to have more inclusive views about marriage with ahl al-Kitab compared to communities that are isolated or have historical conflict with these groups. This approach directly influences local and national policies regarding the legal and social status of interfaith marriages. The study of these various approaches is important for understanding the contemporary dynamics of religious identity, tolerance, and social integration among Muslims, as well as assisting in the formation of policies that are sensitive to diverse religious and cultural contexts.

This research specifically aims to explore and compare how the principles of Maqāṣid asy-Shari'ah are interpreted and applied in the context of interfaith marriages among various Islamic sects. Maqāṣid asy-Shari'ah, which is formulated to safeguard five essential aspects – religion, soul, reason, lineage, and property – offers a broad framework for understanding how Islamic law is designed to achieve the welfare of the people. For example, in protecting religion, Islamic law strictly limits marriages that can threaten the integrity of Muslim faith. Surah Al-Baqarah [2:221] prohibits Muslim marriages with polytheists because it is considered to cause damage to the integrity of the faith. This link between marriage regulations and the objectives of sharia emphasizes the importance of maintaining identity and the strength of faith in the family structure.

In the context of interfaith marriages, the application of Maqāṣid asy-Syari'ah often becomes complex, especially when it concerns issues of descent and preservation of property. From a hereditary perspective, Islamic law emphasizes the importance of educating children in an environment that maintains Islamic values, as underlined in Surah Luqman [31:13-19], where the importance of teaching monotheism to the younger generation is emphasized. Regarding the preservation of assets, the Shari'a

urges fair financial transactions and inheritance, which can be an issue in interfaith marriages, where different inheritance rules may apply. Therefore, this study examines how different Islamic sects balance these provisions with diverse social and legal realities, examining to what extent flexibility in the interpretation of sharia is acceptable to support the basic principles of Islam without compromising its essence.

In an effort to understand more deeply the practice and perception of interfaith marriages among various Islamic sects, this research adopted an in-depth qualitative methodological approach. In-depth interviews will be conducted with various stakeholders, including ulama, community leaders, as well as individuals who have direct experience with interfaith marriages. This approach allows researchers to capture rich and in-depth perspectives, which are often missed in quantitative analysis. In addition to interviews, document analysis will be carried out to explore textual interpretations of primary sources such as the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as fiqh works relevant to this issue. This is in accordance with the research methodology in previous studies which shows the effectiveness of qualitative approaches in understanding the nuances and complexity of religious practices in diverse social contexts (Smith, 2018; Hussein, 2020).

The sources and arguments used in this research include verses from the Qur'an and Hadith which specifically regulate marriage, such as Surah Al-Ma'idah [5:5] which allows Muslim men to marry Ahl al-Kitab women and Surah Al-Baqarah [2:221] which prohibits Muslim marriage with non-Muslims. This research will also refer to the works of great scholars who have dissected this topic, such as the work of Ibn Taimiyyah who explored the limits and conditions of marriage with non-Muslims in the context of *Maqāṣid asy-Syari'ah*. In addition, references will be taken from contemporary studies which discuss the different interpretations of Islamic sects on the issue

Comparative Analysis of Acceptance of Interfaith Marriages Among Various Islamic Sects of interfaith marriage, providing a broader context for religious practices which often intersect with social, cultural and political issues (Al- Jabiri, 2017; Al-Farabi, 2019). Through this collection of data and sources, the research hopes to offer a comprehensive and in-depth perspective on the views and practices of different Islamic sects in dealing with interfaith marriages.

This research proposes that understanding and acceptance of interfaith marriage among various Islamic sects can help shape more inclusive policies and strengthen social coherence in plural societies. By highlighting differences in interpretation and practice among Sunni, Shia and other communities, this study aims to offer recommendations that can assist in the negotiation of religious identity and social integration. According to Muhammad Arkoun, an approach to understanding the plural 'Islamic reality' requires recognition of the hermeneutical and theological diversity that exists within Islam itself, which emphasizes the need for broader intersectorian dialogue (Arkoun, 1994). This study hopes to contribute to that dialogue by identifying factors that facilitate or hinder interfaith marriages, offering a broader perspective on how the principles of *maqāṣid asy-shari'ah* are interpreted and applied in different contexts.

In developing this analytical framework, this research will critically examine how the textuality and contextuality of Islamic law are translated into social practices and legal policies in various Muslim communities. Referring to works such as that of Hallaq (2009) which dissects how sharia has been adapted in various socio-political contexts throughout history, this research will assess how modernity, globalization, and intercultural interactions influence the understanding of Islamic law regarding interfaith marriages. The connection between religious texts and social reality, as stated by Hallaq, demands an approach that considers both doctrinal and social aspects of this problem, encouraging policies oriented towards reducing conflict and increasing tolerance and mutual understanding

Methods

This research method will use a qualitative approach to deepen understanding of how various Islamic sects—Sunni, Shia, and others—perceive and implement the norms of interfaith marriage. Data will be collected through a series of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with ulama, community leaders, and individuals in interfaith marriages from each sect. In addition, a document study will be carried out to collect fatwas, articles and publication materials related to interfaith marriages. Content analysis of this textual data will be carried out to assess how Islamic legal texts are interpreted in different contexts. The main aim of this approach is to identify the main themes, variant interpretations, and prevailing practices, which will provide a comprehensive picture of the spectrum of acceptance of interfaith marriage within the Muslim community.

At the data analysis stage, the grounded theory method will be used to develop a theoretical understanding of the dynamics of interreligious interactions in the context of marriage. This process involves the codification of the qualitative data collected, followed by the development of categories and themes that emerge from the data. This aims to build a conceptual framework that can explain how aspects such as religious identity, social norms, and theology interact in interfaith marriage decisions. Narrative analysis techniques will be used to explore the subjective experiences of research participants, allowing researchers to dig deeper into the personal and social influences that influence decisions in interfaith marriages. It is hoped that the results of this research will provide valuable insights for a better understanding of the complexities of interfaith marriages in the context of Islamic plurality.

Results and Discussion

Variants of Interpretation of Religious Texts in Interfaith Marriages

In studies regarding the acceptance of interfaith marriages among various Islamic sects, interpretive analysis of religious texts plays a key role. Based on data collected through in-depth interviews and document studies, it was revealed that there are significant differences in the way various sects interpret the verses of the Qur'an, especially Surah Al-Ma'idah [5:5] and Surah Al-Baqarah [2:221]. Sunnis, for example, tend to have a more conservative approach, often limiting interfaith marriages to Ahl al-Kitab only, in keeping with the literal interpretation of the verse. On the other hand, some groups within the Shia sect show a tendency for more contextual interpretations, considering social and cultural factors in applying these teachings. The hermeneutic approaches adopted by these sects not only reflect their theological views, but are also influenced by the socio-political context in which they operate. For example, in Muslim communities in Western countries, where interreligious interactions occur frequently and where social integration is important, a tendency is found for a more liberal interpretation of interfaith marriages. Data suggests that in this environment, both Sunni and Shiite clerics may be more open to interfaith marriages, recognizing the need for harmonious coexistence between followers of different religions.

Furthermore, content analysis of fatwas and articles published by Islamic institutions shows that these differences in interpretation are often accompanied by in-depth arguments regarding the importance of maintaining Islamic identity in the context of interfaith marriages. Some clerics emphasize that although such marriages are technically acceptable, there must be a guarantee that the children of such marriages will be raised in the Islamic faith. This reflects broader concerns about the continuity of religious and cultural identities in multicultural

contexts. In discussing these findings, it is important to consider how power and political dynamics within Muslim communities influence the interpretation of Islamic law. From data analysis, it appears that in some cases, intersectorian tensions can influence the way views are interpreted and conveyed to society. For example, in situations where certain sects dominate the socio-political context, their interpretation of interfaith marriage tends to be more normative and adopted as the standard. The results of this research illustrate the complexity of interpreting religious texts in the context of interfaith marriages and highlight the importance of an inclusive approach in discussing this issue. Given these differences, further dialogue between sects within Islam is recommended to achieve deeper understanding and respect for the diversity of interpretations that exist. This conclusion also emphasizes the importance of broad-minded and adaptive religious education, which can accommodate the plurality of religious interpretations in an increasingly global Islamic society.

Community Acceptance of Interfaith Marriages

Community acceptance of interfaith marriages in various Islamic sects reflects the complexity of interactions between religious values, social norms and the influence of modernization. Through qualitative analysis, data collected from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions shows that there is a wide spectrum in society's acceptance of interfaith marriages. In the Sunni community, it was found that there is a greater tendency to maintain traditional interpretations that emphasize strict restrictions on marriage with non-Muslims, except with Ahl al-Kitab, in accordance with the guidelines of Surah Al-Ma'idah [5:5]. On the other hand, respondents from the Shia community often show a more liberal approach when it comes to interfaith marriages, especially in urban areas and in communities that have frequent interactions with non-Muslims. Several respondents emphasized the importance of context and

the need for greater adaptation to changing social conditions. This is in line with the views of several Muslim scholars who suggest that interpretation of Islamic law must be responsive to social realities and the growing needs of Muslims.

Data analysis also reveals that educational and economic factors play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards interfaith marriage. Among Muslim communities with higher levels of education and greater international exposure, there is a greater tendency to accept interfaith marriages. This shows that education and exposure to various cultures can broaden understanding and tolerance of differences, which is in line with previous research which found that education influences religious and social attitudes. Furthermore, analysis of focus group discussions highlights that Muslim youth in large cities often have a more inclusive view of interfaith marriage. Many of them consider that personal compatibility and equality in relationships are more important than religious similarities. This signals a shift in values that may be influenced by globalization and social media, where the concepts of personal freedom and human rights are gaining more prominence. From the results of this analysis, it is clear that the acceptance of interfaith marriages in the Muslim community is not only influenced by theological factors alone, but also by various social and cultural factors. The importance of social and economic context in shaping legal interpretations and social attitudes suggests the need for a more dynamic and flexible approach in dealing with the issue of interfaith marriage in contemporary Muslim societies.

The Impact of Family Dynamics in Interfaith Marriages

Interfaith marriages bring their own complexities to family dynamics, especially in the context of Muslim society which highly values religious compatibility in marriage. This research uses data from in-depth interviews with families involved in interfaith marriages from various Islamic sects, revealing how religious identity influences family relationships,

parenting, and social integration. Data analysis shows that many families experience significant stress and challenges in maintaining cohesion and harmony. Conflict often arises from differences in views about religious practices at home, such as religious education for children. Some respondents reported that pressure to choose one religious identity for children often caused tension between partners and extended to wider family members. In some cases, these differences also affect participation in wider community activities, where one partner may feel isolated or unwelcome because of their religious differences.

On the other hand, some families show a high level of adaptation and tolerance. In this example, an interfaith couple successfully creates an inclusive household environment, promotes the values of both religions and teaches their children about diversity and tolerance. Factors that support this adaptation often include support from the extended family, good education about religion and culture, and a social environment that is more open to diversity. However, there are also tensions arising from external pressures. Society and religious groups sometimes place significant pressure on interfaith families, which can lead to social isolation or even ostracism. These findings indicate an urgent need for better strategies in supporting interfaith families, particularly in providing resources and support to help them overcome these challenges. The conclusion of this discussion underscores the importance of understanding the internal and external complexities faced by families in interfaith marriages in the context of Muslim societies. Supporting these families is not only important for the well-being of the individuals and families involved, but also for the broader social health of a plural and multicultural society. This research confirms the need for a more inclusive approach and a deeper understanding of the interactions between religious identity, family, and society.

The Role of Religious Leaders in Regulating Norms for Interfaith Marriages

The role of religious leaders in shaping attitudes and policies towards interfaith marriage shows a significant influence on the practice and interpretation of Islamic law in various Muslim communities. Through in-depth interviews and content analysis of collected fatwas, this research reveals that religious leaders play a key role in navigating between religious texts and changing social contexts. Religious leaders from the Sunni sect tend to be more conservative in interpreting verses relating to interfaith marriages, often citing Surah Al-Baqarah [2:221] as the basis for the prohibition on marriage with non-Muslims, except for Ahl al-Kitab in accordance with the provisions of the Surah Al-Ma'idah [5:5]. On the other hand, interviews with Shia religious leaders show slight variations in interpretations that are more flexible depending on the social and cultural context in which they find themselves. Some Shia leaders in countries with minority Muslim populations are more open to interfaith marriage, recognizing that the need for social integration and coexistence often requires a more inclusive interpretation. This suggests that geographic and demographic factors play an important role in how religious leaders respond to these controversial issues.

Analysis of fatwas issued in various countries shows an interesting pattern: in countries with a majority Muslim population, fatwas tend to be more rigid in implementing interfaith marriage laws. Meanwhile, in countries with minority Muslim populations, fatwas are more likely to provide concessions with certain conditions that facilitate adaptation and coexistence with wider society. For example, a fatwa in Indonesia allows interfaith marriages as long as the non-Muslim couple is willing to learn and respect Islamic principles. This discussion opens up opportunities to further explore how interfaith dialogue and religious education can be integrated into community programs to increase interfaith understanding and

tolerance. Religious leaders, with their strategic role in society, can be important mediators in this dialogue, not only in the context of interfaith marriages, but also in broader aspects of religious life. The conclusions that can be drawn from the results of this research emphasize the importance of considering the social and cultural context in the interpretation of Islamic law. Religious leaders, as guardians of tradition and reformers in society, have the responsibility to adapt Islamic teachings to dynamic social realities, without sacrificing basic religious principles. This requires a balance between adherence to the text and responsiveness to the needs of the congregation, which is the main challenge in managing the issue of interfaith marriage.

Legal Regulations and Divergence in Interfaith Marriages

In analyzing how regulations and laws in various Muslim-majority countries affect interfaith marriages, this research reveals significant variations that impact social policy and legal practice. Data collected from interviews and document analysis shows that there are sharp differences between the laws applied in countries with a majority Sunni population compared to countries with a Shia majority. For example, in some Sunni countries, interfaith marriages are more strictly regulated and often require the conversion of the non-Muslim partner's religion. Meanwhile, in some Shia countries, there is a little more leeway in this regard, especially regarding marriages between Muslims and followers of the Book religion. Furthermore, these regulations are not only influenced by theological interpretations, but also by geopolitical and socio-economic factors that influence domestic policies. In countries experiencing high levels of social and political pressure related to religious identity, marriage regulations tend to be stricter. This is an effort to maintain the purity of religious identity or as a response to external political pressures that influence domestic policies. On the other hand, countries with higher levels of social

tolerance and religious integration tend to have regulations that are more inclusive and supportive of diversity.

Data analysis also shows that differences in these regulations often reflect differences in law enforcement. In some countries, although formal laws allow interfaith marriages, practice in the field can differ greatly due to social pressure or the attitude of legal officials who may not fully support the implementation of these laws. This indicates a gap between the law on the books and the law in practice, where local interpretation and social attitudes play an important role. From the perspective of *maqāṣid asy-syari'ah*, these findings raise questions about how law can be designed to strengthen the objectives of sharia in creating social welfare, while taking into account the diversity of legal interpretations in various communities. This discussion points to the importance of legal reform that not only considers religious texts but also the broader social, economic and political context in which the law is implemented. In conclusion, the results of this research suggest the need for deeper dialogue between stakeholders in various Muslim-majority countries to explore more effective ways of regulating interfaith marriages. It embraces a more holistic approach that combines theology, law, and society into policy formulations aimed at reducing inter-religious tensions and promoting social harmony.

Increasing Interreligious Dialogue and Tolerance Through Education and Policy

At this point, we will explore the role that education and policy can play in increasing interfaith dialogue and tolerance among Muslim communities who hold diverse views on interfaith marriage. Through data collected from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, it appears that understanding and attitudes towards interfaith marriage vary greatly between sects and communities. Educational factors, especially inclusive religious education, play a key role in forming attitudes of tolerance and acceptance. Data analysis

shows that communities with greater access to moderate and inclusive religious education tend to be more open to interfaith marriage. For example, in some urban communities with high levels of education and frequent interfaith interactions, there is a greater tendency to accept interfaith marriages, compared with more isolated and homogeneous communities. This shows that exposure to religious diversity through education has a positive impact on interreligious tolerance.

In addition, the results of the discussion show that policies designed to promote inclusivity and interfaith dialogue can strengthen social networks and reduce prejudice. Examples of these policies include government initiatives that promote joint activities between Muslim communities and other religious communities, such as dialogue forums, joint social activities, and community projects that include members from various religious backgrounds. These activities not only strengthen tolerance but also build deep understanding and respect for differences. In this context, the role of religious and community leaders becomes very important. Leaders who have progressive and open views are often seen as those who can reduce tensions and promote shared values. According to the data, religious leaders who are actively involved in interfaith dialogue and show examples of tolerant behavior have a significant influence in shaping the attitudes of their communities. Based on the results of this analysis, it is recommended that educational development strategies that emphasize the importance of tolerance, intercultural and religious understanding, and policies that support dialogue initiatives should be a priority for policy makers and religious leaders. Through this approach, it is possible to overcome some of the social and religious challenges that arise from the issue of interfaith marriage, as well as promote harmony in a plural and dynamic society.

Conclusion

This research reveals that the perception and acceptance of interfaith marriage within the Muslim community varies significantly between different Islamic sects. The study results show that inclusive education and greater social interaction between followers of different religions tend to lead to more tolerant attitudes and greater acceptance of interfaith marriages. Policies that support interfaith dialogue and tolerance not only help reduce stigma but also strengthen social coherence in plural societies. Therefore, joint efforts are needed from religious leaders, policy makers, and educational institutions to promote the values of diversity and interfaith understanding, which will enable interfaith marriages to be considered as part of broader social diversity.

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