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HOW MUSLIM COUPLES RENEGOTIATE MARITAL RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS IN LONG−DISTANCE RELATIONSHIPS

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Abstract

This study examines how Muslim couples renegotiate marital rights and obligations in long−distance relationships (LDR) when physical separation challenges conventional marital arrangements. It aims to identify mechanisms for renegotiating reciprocal rights and responsibilities concerning *nafkah lahir* (material maintenance), *nafkah batin* (emotional and intimate needs), and mutual protection, using Maslow's hierarchy of needs as an analytical lens rather than a validated model. This qualitative multiple−case study examines three village cases in Kecamatan Keliling Danau, Kabupaten Kerinci, Jambi, Indonesia. Data were collected from January to February 2026 through interviews with eight informants, including wives and migrant husbands, supported by observation and documentary evidence. Data analysis employed deductive−inductive coding and source triangulation. The findings indicate that couples renegotiate marital rights and obligations through agreed remittance schedules, delegated household authority, scheduled communication, and kin−based support. Material rights and obligations, particularly wives' entitlement to financial maintenance and husbands' responsibility to provide it, are relatively successfully negotiated. However, emotional and intimate needs and mutual protection remain partially fulfilled because communication and family support cannot fully replace physical presence. These limitations become more pronounced when income is unstable or communication is inconsistent. The study concludes that physical separation does not suspend marital rights and obligations under Islamic family law but transforms their practical fulfilment. Furthermore, needs across Maslow's hierarchy are fulfilled unevenly rather than sequentially. This study contributes a preliminary conceptual mapping of renegotiation mechanisms in Muslim long−distance marriages and provides insights for strengthening Islamic family counselling practices at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA).

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana pasangan Muslim menegosiasikan ulang hak dan kewajiban perkawinan dalam hubungan jarak jauh (LDR) ketika keterpisahan fisik menantang pola hubungan perkawinan konvensional. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi mekanisme negosiasi ulang hak dan tanggung jawab timbal balik terkait nafkah lahir, nafkah batin, dan perlindungan bersama, dengan menggunakan hierarki kebutuhan Maslow sebagai lensa analitis, bukan sebagai model yang telah tervalidasi. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus jamak yang mencakup tiga kasus desa di Kecamatan Keliling Danau, Kabupaten Kerinci, Jambi, Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan pada Januari hingga Februari 2026 melalui wawancara terhadap delapan informan, termasuk istri dan suami perantau, yang didukung oleh observasi dan bukti dokumenter. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan pengodean deduktif−induktif dan triangulasi sumber. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pasangan menegosiasikan ulang hak dan kewajiban perkawinan melalui kesepakatan jadwal pengiriman nafkah, pendelegasian wewenang rumah tangga, komunikasi terjadwal, dan dukungan berbasis kerabat. Hak dan kewajiban material, khususnya hak istri atas nafkah serta tanggung jawab suami untuk

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memenuhinya, relatif berhasil dinegosiasikan. Namun, kebutuhan emosional dan intim serta perlindungan timbal balik hanya terpenuhi sebagian karena komunikasi dan dukungan keluarga tidak sepenuhnya dapat menggantikan kehadiran fisik pasangan. Keterbatasan ini semakin terasa ketika pendapatan tidak stabil atau komunikasi tidak konsisten. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa keterpisahan fisik tidak menangguhkan hak dan kewajiban perkawinan menurut hukum keluarga Islam, tetapi mengubah cara pemenuhannya secara praktis. Selain itu, pemenuhan kebutuhan dalam hierarki Maslow berlangsung secara tidak merata, bukan secara berurutan. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi berupa pemetaan konseptual awal mengenai mekanisme negosiasi ulang dalam perkawinan jarak jauh pasangan Muslim serta menawarkan masukan bagi penguatan praktik bimbingan keluarga Islam di Kantor Urusan Agama (KUA).

INTRODUCTION

Long—distance relationships have become a visible feature of contemporary family life as employment opportunities (Li et al., 2018), economic pressures, education, and migration encourage spouses to live in different locations for extended periods. For Muslim couples, this arrangement does not dissolve marriage or suspend the rights and obligations established through the marital bond (Hale et al., 2019). Instead, physical separation changes how spouses provide financial maintenance, maintain emotional and intimate relationships (Crandall et al., 2020), make household decisions, and protect one another. A husband working away from home may continue providing material support through regular remittances, while a wife managing the household may assume additional responsibilities in childcdare, budgeting (Khairuddin et al., 2020), and daily decision—making. At the same time, distance can limit companionship, emotional reassurance, shared parenting, and assistance during family difficulties (Rojas et al., 2023). These circumstances may create unequal burdens and uncertainty about how reciprocal marital responsibilities should be fulfilled. This issue is important for Islamic family law because its principles concern both the recognition of marital rights and duties and their practical implementation in changing social conditions. Examining these experiences can clarify how Muslim couples sustain family relationships when living together is not possible in practice.

Research on long—distance relationships has examined communication practices, emotional intimacy, trust, commitment, and the effects of geographical separation on couples. Studies of migrant households have also discussed remittances, gendered responsibilities, parenting across distance, and the ways relatives support families when one spouse is absent (Fadhilah et al., 2025). Within Islamic family law, scholarship has addressed the husband's duty of maintenance, the wife's marital rights, mutual responsibilities, and the principles of affection, mercy, and protection in marriage (Saidah & Fahmi, 2023). However, these bodies of literature have often developed along separate analytical paths (Ungel et al., 2020). Research on long—distance relationships tends to emphasise psychological and sociological dimensions, while Islamic family law studies explain marital rights and obligations through normative legal principles (Muthalib, 2022). Consequently, less attention has been given to everyday processes through which Muslim spouses negotiate the meaning and fulfilment of those rights and obligations under prolonged separation. In particular, material maintenance, emotional and intimate needs, and mutual protection require examination as interconnected marital concerns (Jamhuri, 2021). Maslow's hierarchy of needs may offer a limited analytical lens for describing these dimensions without treating the hierarchy as a universally validated or strictly sequential model in practice.

Previous studies provide foundations for understanding relational challenges arising from separation and the normative expectations governing Muslim marriage. Research on long—distance relationships explains how couples use communication routines, trust—building, and planned visits to preserve intimacy, while studies of migration show how remittances and kinship networks sustain household livelihoods. Islamic family law literature establishes that marital responsibilities are reciprocal and extend beyond financial provision to include good treatment, companionship, and protection according to spouses' capacities and circumstances. Nevertheless, these approaches do not fully explain how couples negotiate competing expectations when direct co—presence is disrupted (Giangreco, 2021). Nor do they show why material obligations may be arranged more successfully than emotional needs or mutual protection (Peng et al., 2024). This study addresses that limitation by bringing Muslim couples' lived experiences into dialogue with Islamic family law and using Maslow's hierarchy as a supplementary interpretive framework. Rather than testing Maslow's theory, it uses the framework to organise discussion of material, emotional, and security—related needs. The study is a focused qualitative inquiry into negotiation mechanisms, not a universal account of all long—distance Muslim marriages within this particular local research setting.

The purpose of this study is to examine how Muslim couples renegotiate marital rights and obligations when living apart for prolonged periods and to identify the mechanisms that enable or constrain their fulfilment. It focuses on material maintenance (*nafkah lahir*), emotional and intimate needs (*nafkah batin*), and mutual protection, while considering communication agreements, household decision—making, remittance arrangements, and kin—based support. This study argues that physical separation does not eliminate marital rights and obligations under Islamic family law but transforms the practical arrangements through which spouses exercise and fulfil them. It further argues that these arrangements are experienced unevenly: material responsibilities may be negotiated through explicit financial agreements, whereas emotional intimacy and mutual protection may remain difficult to maintain without direct physical presence. Maslow's hierarchy of needs serves as an analytical lens for interpreting these differences, rather than as a fixed sequence or validated predictive model. Using a qualitative multiple—case study involving three villages in Kecamatan Keliling Danau, Kabupaten Kerinci, Jambi, this research seeks to identify renegotiation mechanisms and develop a preliminary conceptual mapping that can inform Islamic family counselling practices and future research on Muslim long—distance marriages.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a multiple—case study design to examine how Muslim couples renegotiate marital rights and obligations in long—distance relationships. The research was conducted in three village cases in Kecamatan Keliling Danau, Kabupaten Kerinci, Jambi, Indonesia. The cases were selected to provide contextual insight into households experiencing prolonged spousal separation, rather than to achieve statistical representation. The unit of analysis was the marital relationship, with attention to the arrangements through which spouses addressed material maintenance, emotional and intimate needs, and mutual protection. Eight informants participated, comprising wives whose husbands lived or worked away from home and migrant husbands. Participants were included because of their direct experience of long—distance marriage and their ability to describe household arrangements and marital negotiations. The study focused on their accounts and the local circumstances shaping those experiences and daily family responsibilities. This design enabled comparison across cases

while retaining the social and relational context of each household. It was appropriate because the research questions concerned processes, meanings, and practical negotiation mechanisms that could not be adequately understood through numerical measurement alone.

Data were collected from January to February 2025 by the researcher through semi—structured interviews, observation, and document review. Interviews involved eight informants, including wives remaining in the household and husbands working away from home, and explored marital rights, financial maintenance, emotional and intimate needs, communication, household decisions, and mutual protection. An interview guide containing open—ended questions was used to ensure that the main topics were addressed while allowing participants to explain experiences in their own terms. Follow—up questions clarified examples, differences, and changes in household arrangements. Observation was used to record relevant aspects of household and community contexts, while documentary evidence provided additional information where available. Field notes were maintained to document observations and contextual details according to each participant's availability. The researcher coordinated participant contact, conducted the interviews and observations, and organised the documentary materials. Data collection took place in the three village cases in Kecamatan Keliling Danau. The combination of these techniques enabled comparison between participants' accounts and contextual evidence, while reducing reliance on a single source of information. Participation was based on informed consent and voluntary involvement.

Data analysis followed a deductive—inductive coding process. First, interview materials, observation notes, and documentary evidence were organised and reviewed repeatedly to develop familiarity with the data. Relevant statements were then identified and coded, using initial categories informed by the research focus: material maintenance, emotional and intimate needs, mutual protection, communication, household authority, and support from relatives. Additional codes were developed inductively when participants described experiences that did not fit the initial categories. The codes were compared within each case and across the three cases to identify recurring patterns, differences, and relationships between negotiation mechanisms and the fulfilment of marital rights and obligations. Maslow's hierarchy of needs served as a supplementary interpretive lens for examining material, security—related, and relational needs; it was not treated as a validated measurement instrument or a fixed sequence. Analytical interpretations were checked against the original accounts and documentary evidence. Rigour was strengthened through source triangulation, comparison across cases, careful documentation of coding decisions, and attention to evidence that challenged emerging interpretations. These procedures supported contextual credibility and a transparent link between the data, analysis, and conclusions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Renegotiating Material Rights and Obligations

The findings reveal that material maintenance (*nafkah lahir*) is the most consistently renegotiated dimension of marital obligations among Muslim couples in long—distance relationships. Four spousal informants describe arrangements based on predetermined monthly financial transfers, with some wives receiving delegated authority to manage household expenditures. H1 explains, "I transfer on the 25th of every month; the amount was agreed together before I left, so my wife manages how it is used." W1 confirms that

this arrangement allows her to determine household priorities without repeatedly requesting financial support. Village informants K1 and K2 independently confirm that similar arrangements are commonly practiced in their respective communities. Documentary evidence concerning domestic remittance flows further supports the existence of regular financial transfers. These findings indicate that physical separation does not necessarily prevent husbands from fulfilling their financial responsibilities or wives from exercising their rights to household maintenance. Instead, couples establish explicit agreements that redistribute financial management authority while maintaining the husband's responsibility to provide material support.

However, the effectiveness of material renegotiation varies according to household economic circumstances. The comparison between W1/H1 and W2/H2 demonstrates that predetermined financial agreements do not automatically guarantee consistent fulfilment. In the first household, the husband's relatively stable employment enables regular transfers and allows the wife to manage expenditures according to previously established priorities. In contrast, H2 reports irregular payments because of unstable employment conditions: "Sometimes I send later when work is slow, and that causes arguments over the phone." W2 confirms this difficulty, explaining that she has borrowed money from her mother twice during the previous year to meet household needs. This variation demonstrates that income stability is a significant factor influencing the practical fulfilment of financial obligations. Although both couples have experienced approximately three years of long—distance marriage, their financial arrangements produce different outcomes. Thus, the effectiveness of material renegotiation depends not only on mutual agreement but also on the husband's economic capacity and the predictability of household income.

The renegotiation of material obligations produces important changes in household management and spousal authority. Through predetermined remittance schedules and delegated financial decision—making, wives acquire greater responsibility for determining expenditure priorities, managing household resources (Fox, 2022), and addressing immediate domestic needs (Musthofa & Firdaus, 2022). Meanwhile, husbands maintain their financial responsibilities despite their physical absence (Puranachaikere et al., 2021). This arrangement transforms the practical distribution of marital roles without necessarily eliminating the underlying rights and obligations recognized within Islamic family law (Aziz et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the experience of W2/H2 demonstrates that financial delegation becomes vulnerable when remittances are delayed and household resources are insufficient. In such circumstances, wives may depend on extended family members to meet immediate needs, creating additional economic and relational pressures (Handayani, 2020). The findings therefore suggest that material renegotiation is relatively successful when financial agreements are supported by stable income and mutual commitment. Its transformative implication lies in the emergence of a more negotiated household economy in which financial responsibility remains connected to the husband while everyday expenditure authority is increasingly exercised by the wife.

Renegotiating Relational Obligations, Mutual Protection, and Household Management

Unlike material maintenance, the renegotiation of relational obligations (*nafkah batin*) demonstrates only partial success among the interviewed couples. The principal mechanism identified is the establishment of scheduled communication rituals intended to maintain emotional intimacy and family involvement despite physical separation. W1 explains, "We video call every night at 8, even if just 15 minutes; it is important so the children also see their father." H1 independently confirms this routine, indicating that

communication is understood as a shared responsibility rather than an obligation performed exclusively by the wife. However, regular communication cannot fully replace physical companionship and direct assistance. H1 acknowledges, "Video calls help, but if a child is sick or there is a big problem, I can only listen; I cannot help directly." This limitation illustrates the difference between maintaining emotional contact and fulfilling relational responsibilities through physical presence. Consequently, communication rituals provide an alternative means of exercising spousal care, but their effectiveness remains limited when family members require immediate emotional, physical, or practical assistance.

Communication consistency emerges as a critical factor shaping the success of relational renegotiation. W2 describes difficulties arising when her husband is occupied with work and cannot maintain regular communication: "Sometimes he is busy working, so the calls are short or sometimes he does not answer, and that makes me suspicious." This experience contrasts with the more consistent communication arrangement maintained by W1/H1. The KUA informant KUA1 confirms that inconsistent communication is among the most frequently reported complaints in counselling involving long—distance couples, often becoming more significant than financial difficulties. Beyond communication, mutual protection and household management are renegotiated through extended family and community networks. R1 and the village heads describe informal monitoring and assistance provided by relatives, neighbours, and community members. W2 explains that when emergencies occur at night, she contacts her sister—in—law or neighbours before informing her husband. Although these arrangements provide immediate assistance, they also redistribute responsibilities to other family members (Abubakar et al., 2021). W1 acknowledges that her mother—in—law sometimes becomes tired of providing repeated assistance. Thus, communication quality and kinship availability influence whether relational responsibilities can be maintained without creating additional burdens.

The findings demonstrate that relational renegotiation transforms the distribution of emotional care, protection, and household responsibilities across spouses and extended family networks. Scheduled communication enables couples to maintain emotional connections, while relatives and neighbours provide practical assistance when husbands are physically unavailable (Acedera & Yeoh, 2018). Nevertheless, these mechanisms offer only partial substitutes for direct companionship and protection (Sumari et al., 2021). The comparison between W1/H1 and W2/H2 indicates that consistent communication and available kin support contribute to more stable relationships (Ali & Khairuna, 2017), whereas inconsistent contact and strained family assistance increase relational vulnerability (Suheri, 2020). The mapping of findings onto Maslow's hierarchy further illustrates this uneven pattern (Ekşi & Ershad Uddin, 2023): physiological needs are generally addressed through financial provision, safety needs remain dependent on economic predictability and kin support (Fauzan, 2021), and love (Azmi et al., 2024), belonging (Daud et al., 2021), and esteem are more fragile because they rely on consistent emotional interaction and mutual recognition (Pandya, 2025). Self—actualization receives little attention in the informants' accounts (Hussin & Fauzi, 2023). These findings suggest that long—distance marriage involves two interconnected but differently sustained dimensions: material security and relational well—being (Murdiana et al., 2025). Accordingly, renegotiation requires more than financial arrangements; it also requires consistent communication, shared responsibility, and sustainable support networks.

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DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that Muslim couples in long—distance marriages renegotiate marital rights and obligations through practical arrangements that accommodate prolonged physical separation. These arrangements primarily involve agreed remittance schedules, delegated authority over household expenditure, scheduled communication, and support from extended family members and the surrounding community (Masrukhin & Damayanti, 2020). The fulfilment of material obligations (*nafkah lahir*) appears relatively more stable than the fulfilment of relational obligations, although its consistency depends on the husband's employment and income conditions. In the more stable case (Firdawaty et al., 2024), the husband transfers an agreed amount regularly (Nasution et al., 2024), while the wife manages household expenditure according to family priorities. In contrast, irregular income disrupts remittance arrangements and may require the wife to seek temporary financial assistance from relatives (Ryan et al., 2020). Relational obligations, including emotional and intimate needs (*nafkah batin*), are only partially fulfilled through scheduled calls and digital communication (Junaidy et al., 2026). Mutual protection is also maintained partly through assistance from relatives and neighbours. Overall, the findings indicate that physical separation does not eliminate marital responsibilities but changes the mechanisms through which couples exercise (Bridgman et al., 2019), distribute, and fulfil them.

These differences can be understood through the interaction of economic stability, communication quality (Ja'far & Hermanto, 2021), and the availability of family support. The relative success of material arrangements is associated with the ability of couples to establish clear agreements before or during the husband's migration (Bouzenita & Boulanouar, 2016). Regular remittances provide financial predictability (Garabiles et al., 2017), while delegated spending authority enables wives to respond directly to everyday household needs (Ahmad et al., 2024). However, these arrangements become vulnerable when employment is unstable or income is delayed (Ştefan et al., 2020). The difficulties experienced by the second couple illustrate that an agreement alone cannot guarantee the fulfilment of financial obligations when the husband's economic capacity is constrained (Khamim et al., 2025). Relational arrangements face a different limitation because digital communication can maintain contact but cannot reproduce physical presence, shared activities (Cui et al., 2021), or immediate assistance (Rasskazova et al., 2016). Scheduled calls may strengthen emotional connection when both spouses participate consistently (Holtzman et al., 2021), but irregular communication can generate suspicion and dissatisfaction. Family and community networks help address practical gaps (Fu, 2024), although their capacity is limited by availability and fatigue (Dohlman et al., 2019). Thus, renegotiation depends not only on mutual agreement but also on the economic, technological, and social conditions surrounding each marriage.

Wives assume greater responsibility for daily financial management and household decisions, while husbands continue to carry the obligation to provide material maintenance despite their physical absence (Compton, 2024). This arrangement demonstrates that delegated authority can become an adaptive form of household governance rather than an automatic transfer or abandonment of marital responsibility (Bland & DeRobertis, 2020). Nevertheless, the partial fulfilment of emotional needs and mutual protection indicates that financial provision cannot independently sustain marital well—being (Allen et al., 2019). Communication difficulties may weaken trust, while reliance on relatives can reduce immediate vulnerability but may also place additional responsibilities on extended family members. Viewed through Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Acevedo, 2018), physiological

needs are comparatively more consistently addressed through remittances, whereas safety, belonging, and esteem remain more dependent on income predictability, communication quality, and reciprocal recognition. Evidence concerning self—actualization is limited because future—oriented planning was not a prominent feature of the reported experiences. These patterns show that the fulfilment of needs is uneven and context—dependent rather than sequential. Consequently, marital well—being requires attention to both material security and relational care.

The findings both complement and extend previous research on long—distance relationships, migration, and Islamic family responsibilities. Studies of long—distance relationships have generally emphasized communication, intimacy, trust, and the use of digital technologies to maintain emotional connection (Abbas, 2020). The present findings support the importance of these factors but show that scheduled communication does not necessarily resolve the limitations created by physical absence (Stewart et al., 2021), particularly when spouses require immediate support during illness or household emergencies (Desmet & Fokkinga, 2020). Research on labour migration has highlighted remittances (Papaleontiou—Louca et al., 2022), gendered household responsibilities (Anuyah et al., 2023), and the role of extended kin in managing family life across distance (Guo et al., 2019). This study similarly identifies remittances and kin—based assistance as important mechanisms, while demonstrating how these arrangements operate alongside delegated household authority and continuing marital obligations (Healy, 2016). Meanwhile, normative discussions of Islamic family law commonly explain the husband's responsibility for maintenance and the reciprocal rights of spouses (Montag et al., 2020). The present study adds an empirical perspective by examining how these responsibilities are negotiated in everyday circumstances (Noltemeyer et al., 2021). Its distinctive contribution is therefore to connect the practical organization of long—distance marriages with the continuing fulfilment of rights and obligations under Islamic family law.

These findings have several implications for Islamic family counselling and the development of a more context—sensitive understanding of marital responsibilities. At the conceptual level, marital rights and obligations should be understood not only through their formal allocation under Islamic family law but also through the practical arrangements that enable their fulfilment when spouses live apart (Fitriani & Aziz, 2019). Counselling services at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) could encourage couples to establish clear agreements concerning remittance schedules, household expenditure, decision—making authority (Lussier, 2019), communication routines, and procedures for responding to emergencies. Such agreements should be realistic and periodically reviewed, particularly when employment conditions or family needs change. Counsellors should also address emotional communication, mutual trust, and the distribution of caregiving responsibilities rather than treating financial provision as the sole indicator of marital responsibility. At the policy level, premarital and family guidance programmes could incorporate specific materials on long—distance marriages, including strategies for maintaining relationships and mobilizing family support without creating excessive burdens for relatives. Methodologically, future research should involve more couples and a wider range of migration circumstances to examine how these mechanisms differ across socioeconomic and cultural settings.

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CONCLUSION

This study examines how Muslim couples renegotiate marital rights and obligations when they live apart for extended periods. The findings show that physical separation changes the practical fulfilment of marital responsibilities but does not remove them. Couples maintain material obligations (*nafkah lahir*) through agreed remittance schedules and delegated authority over household expenditure. These arrangements are comparatively effective when the husband's income is stable and transfers are made regularly. However, delayed or irregular income can disrupt household finances and lead wives to seek temporary assistance from relatives. Relational obligations, including emotional and intimate needs (*nafkah batin*), are fulfilled only partially through scheduled telephone and video communication. Although these practices help spouses maintain contact, they cannot fully replace physical presence or provide immediate assistance during illness and household emergencies. Mutual protection is also sustained partly through support from relatives, neighbours, and community members, although this support has limits and may create additional burdens. Overall, the findings indicate that material responsibilities are more consistently negotiated than relational responsibilities, while the success of both depends on economic stability, communication quality, and available social support.

The study contributes to Islamic family law scholarship by showing how marital rights and obligations are practised under prolonged physical separation. Conceptually, it advances an understanding of marital responsibility that considers not only the formal allocation of rights and duties but also the everyday mechanisms through which spouses fulfil them. The findings highlight negotiated remittances, delegated household authority, communication routines, and kin—based assistance as interconnected arrangements in long—distance marriages. The study also demonstrates the analytical usefulness of Maslow's hierarchy for mapping the uneven fulfilment of material, safety, belonging, and esteem—related needs, while recognizing that the framework is an interpretive lens rather than a validated or sequential model. Methodologically, the multiple—case qualitative design provides contextual insight into differences between couples whose arrangements are relatively stable and those constrained by income and communication difficulties. This approach connects normative discussions of Islamic marital obligations with spouses' lived experiences in their everyday family and community settings. The findings may directly inform Islamic family counselling by encouraging attention to financial arrangements, emotional communication, mutual protection, and shared decision—making rather than focusing exclusively on financial maintenance.

This study has limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. The research involved a small number of informants and a specific geographical setting in Kecamatan Keliling Danau, Kabupaten Kerinci, Jambi. Therefore, the findings are context—dependent and should not be generalized to all Muslim couples in long—distance marriages. The cases reflect particular employment, income, communication, and family—support conditions, which may differ elsewhere. In addition, the available evidence provides more detail about material maintenance and communication than about intimate needs, long—term marital adjustment, and shared future planning. The use of Maslow's hierarchy as an analytical lens also requires caution because the study does not test the model or establish a fixed sequence of need fulfilment. Future empirical research could usefully involve a larger and more diverse group of couples, include longitudinal interviews, and compare different migration patterns, socioeconomic backgrounds, and cultural settings. Further studies could examine children and extended family perspectives

to understand broader household effects. Such comparative research would further meaningfully deepen overall understanding of how Islamic marital rights and obligations are negotiated across diverse social, cultural, and economic contexts.

DECLARATIONS

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Cholid Septeria: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing — Original Draft. Ahmad Jamin: Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Writing — Review & Editing. Fauzan Khairazi: Formal Analysis, Investigation, Validation, Writing — Review & Editing. Widiya Yul: Investigation, Data Curation, Literature Review, Writing — Review & Editing. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Access to any interview or participant—related data is subject to ethical considerations and participant confidentiality.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial or personal interests that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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