

## Pre-Wedding Photo Tradition Before the Ceremony: Analysis of Community Perceptions of the MUI Fatwa in North Sumatra

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### Abstract

Pre-wedding photos have become part of popular culture carried out by brides-to-be, including in Pangkalan Village. However, there is a gap between the level of knowledge and public practice regarding Islamic law regarding these activities. In response to this phenomenon, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of North Sumatra Province issued Fatwa Number 03/KF/MUI-SU/IV/2011 which expressly prohibits pre-wedding photos before the marriage contract. This study aims to examine the perception of the people of Pangkalan Village towards the existence and implementation of the fatwa. This study uses an empirical method with a field research approach. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with four couples who had taken pre-wedding photos, four religious leaders, and three mosque teenagers, and supported by observation and documentation. The results of the study showed that even though 75.61% of the public knew the MUI fatwa related to the ban, the practice of pre-wedding photos before the marriage contract was still prevalent, even with poses that were not in line with sharia values. Religious leaders fully support the fatwa and emphasize the importance of avoiding the practice of khalwat, ikhtilat, and physical touch that are prohibited in Islam. Meanwhile, mosque youth understand the rationale behind the fatwa, but face challenges in the form of social pressure and a desire to follow popular culture trends. Public perception of this fatwa is influenced by psychological factors, family environment, and local culture that develop in the community.

**Keywords:** MUI Fatwa, *Prewedding Photos*, Perception.

### Abstrak

Foto *prewedding* telah menjadi bagian dari budaya populer yang dilakukan oleh calon pengantin, termasuk di Desa Pangkalan. Namun demikian, terdapat kesenjangan antara tingkat pengetahuan dan praktik masyarakat terkait hukum Islam mengenai aktivitas tersebut. Menanggapi fenomena ini, Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Provinsi Sumatera Utara mengeluarkan Fatwa Nomor 03/KF/MUI-SU/IV/2011 yang secara tegas melarang foto *prewedding* sebelum akad nikah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji persepsi masyarakat Desa Pangkalan terhadap keberadaan dan implementasi fatwa tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode empiris dengan pendekatan studi lapangan (*field research*). Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan empat pasangan calon pengantin yang telah melakukan foto *prewedding*, empat tokoh agama, dan tiga remaja masjid, serta didukung oleh observasi dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun 75,61% masyarakat mengetahui fatwa MUI terkait larangan tersebut, praktik foto *prewedding* sebelum akad nikah masih lazim dilakukan, bahkan dengan pose yang tidak sejalan dengan nilai-nilai syariat. Tokoh agama sepenuhnya mendukung fatwa tersebut dan menekankan pentingnya menghindari praktik khalwat, ikhtilat, serta sentuhan fisik yang dilarang dalam Islam. Sementara itu, remaja masjid memahami rasionalitas di balik fatwa, namun menghadapi tantangan berupa tekanan sosial dan keinginan untuk mengikuti tren budaya populer. Persepsi masyarakat

terhadap fatwa ini dipengaruhi oleh faktor psikologis, lingkungan keluarga, serta budaya lokal yang berkembang di masyarakat.

**Kata Kunci:** Fatwa MUI, Foto *Prewedding*, Persepsi.

## Introduction

Pre-wedding *photos* have become a common culture for brides-to-be in Indonesia, including in rural areas.<sup>1</sup> This phenomenon has become one of the series in the wedding ceremony before the contract.<sup>2</sup> This activity not only serves as visual documentation, but also represents the expression of love, the identity of the couple, and the social image that they want to display to the public, both through social media and in the reception.<sup>3</sup> Although initially more popular among urban communities, this tradition has now spread to remote villages as access to photography technology and digital media has grown.<sup>4</sup>

These pre-wedding *photos* have various purposes, including as a form of personal documentation, visual elements in wedding invitations, and used as souvenirs at the wedding.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the photos have also become part of the social media trend, where the bride-to-be shares their special moments as a form of expression of happiness as well as self-image in digital public spaces. As the times develop, many are influenced by changes in traditions or trends in society that have become habits so that they do not care about the laws that govern them. As before the wedding, there is a custom to do *pre-wedding photos*. The development of the times will be beneficial if it is in accordance with religious teachings.<sup>6</sup>

However, if it is contrary to religious teachings, it is unacceptable. This includes the phenomenon of *pre-wedding photos* which usually depict actions that violate Islamic law. Among them are *ikhtilat*, *kasyful aurat*, and *tabarruj*, which are related to the opposite sex and contain elements of *khalwat*, so religious leaders pay close attention to it<sup>7</sup>. As in QS. Al-Isra':32 Allah SWT has said:

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<sup>1</sup> R D S Dinata and AASI Pradnyanita, "Foto Prewedding Bali Dalam Kategori Wacana Estetika Postmodern," ... *Seminar Nasional Desain* ... 4 (2021).

<sup>2</sup> Sami Faidhullah and Nurul Huda, "Prewedding Photo Culture According to a Review of Islamic Law (Study in the Community of South Amuntai District)," *AL-RISALAH* 20, no. 01 (2024): 27–39.

<sup>3</sup> Zahirah Khan and Zaimatus Sholikhah, "The Law of Prewedding Photos in the Perspective of Contemporary Fiqh," *Journal of Mu'allim* 7, no. 1 (2025): 36–60. <https://doi.org/10.35891/muallim.v7i1.5788>

<sup>4</sup> Elsa Martina Rosa, "Analysis of the Cultural Phenomenon of Pre-Wedding Photos in Society: A Study of Takhrij and Hadith Syrah," *Journal of Religious Research*, vol. 1, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v1i1.14405>

<sup>5</sup> Anak Agung Ngurah Micko Indrawan, I Made Saryana, and I Made Bayu Pramana, "Strengthening Instagram Content as a Promotional Media for Prewedding Photo Business at Dinarastika Films," *Retina Journal of Photography* 3, no. 1 (2023): 43–52. <https://doi.org/10.59997/rjf.v3i1.2039>

<sup>6</sup> Silvana Herman, "Islamic Law Analyst on the Phenomenon of Prewedding Photo Studies in Parepare City" (IAIN Parepare, 2020).

<sup>7</sup> Alex Saputra, "A Review of Islamic Law on the Implementation of Prewedding Photos," *PERADA* 4, no. 2 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.35961/perada.v4i2.395>

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّوْجَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً ط وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

Meaning: And do not approach adultery, for adultery is an abominable deed and a bad way.<sup>8</sup>

Seeing this culture, the North Sumatra MUI fatwa has also issued and stipulated its law based on MUI Fatwa Number 03/KF/MUI-SU/IV/2011. The fatwa strictly prohibits *pre-wedding photos* because they contain elements of *ikhtilat* and *khalwat*, which states that: "*prewedding photos* that contain photos of the bride and groom posing with hands, hugging and the marriage contract has not been carried out, then the law is haram. If a photo is needed or desired as an indication of the identity of who is getting married, then it should display the photos of the bride and groom politely, cover the *awrah* and not violate Islamic law. That way, the desire to still display photos of the bride and groom can be fulfilled but does not violate the *shari'a*".<sup>9</sup>

The results of a survey conducted in Pangkalan Village revealed that the majority of the community, which is 75.61%, understands the existence of a fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) regarding the practice of pre-wedding photos before the marriage contract. However, there are around 24.39% of people who do not fully understand the limits of pre-wedding practices that are allowed according to the fatwa. This condition shows that there is a significant gap between knowledge and practice carried out in society. Although most people claim to know and understand the MUI fatwa, the reality on the ground shows that many of them still do pre-wedding photos with poses that are not in accordance with Islamic law, such as hugging or holding hands. This is because some people consider these actions as commonplace and commonly done, without realizing or heeding the implications of the *sharia* it contains. This phenomenon indicates a difference between the theoretical understanding of fatwas and its practical application in daily life, which is influenced by social, cultural, and environmental factors. In other words, formal awareness of fatwas has not been fully translated into consistent behavior in accordance with religious provisions. This situation requires a more effective approach to education and socialization, as well as a deeper understanding so that the fatwa can be carried out consequentially by all levels of society in Pangkalan Village.

Based on a literature review on *prewedding* photo culture from previous research, both from libraries, websites, and so on. The author found several studies related to this research, including: Thesis by Adinda Putri Afrianing Kasih (2022), "People's Views on *Prewedding* Photos in Wedding Invitations from an Islamic Law Perspective (Case Study of Semampir Village,

<sup>8</sup> Kementerian Agama RI, *Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya* (Surabaya: Halim, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Ahmad Musyafi' Isyfa'lana, "Review of Mui Fatwa Number 03/Kf/Mui-Su/IV/2011 on Pre-Wedding Photos as a Pre-Wedding Tradition," 2024.

Banjarnegara District, Banjarnegara Regency)". The research conducted is a field research, namely to find out directly the views of the people of Semampir Village about *prewedding* photos in wedding invitations. Teenagers generally view the process and results of *pre-wedding* photos as not in line with Islamic law, while elders view the process in *prewedding photos* as in line with Islamic law, but the results of the *pre-wedding photos* are not in accordance with Islamic law. The religious leaders highlighted that the process and results of *the pre-wedding* photos were not in line with Islamic law<sup>10</sup>. The first difference found in the previous study is that the focus of the research on the public's view of prewedding photos contained in wedding invitations is reviewed from Islamic law, while this study focuses on public perception reviewed from the MUI fatwa on *prewedding* photos. The two locations in the previous study were in Semampir village, Banjarnegara District, Banjarnegara Regency, while in this study it was located in Pangkalan Village, Aek natas District, North Labuhanbatu Regency.

Thesis by Irfan Helmi (2016), "Prewedding Photo Culture in the View of Islamic Law." This research uses a qualitative type of research. This study states that according to Islamic law, those who do not have a marriage bond, it is haram to make out intimacy, together like husband and wife. Moreover, clothes that reveal the awrah and the absence of hijab further add to the haram of *the pre-wedding* photoshoot<sup>11</sup>. The differences in the previous study were reviewed from Islamic law, while in this study it was reviewed from the fatwa of the North Sumatra MUI.

Journal by Elsa Martina Rosa (2021), "Analysis of the Cultural Phenomenon of Pre-Wedding Photos in Society: A Study of Takhrij and Syarah Hadith". The result of this study is that *pre-weddings* that are popular in the community involve elements of *khalwat*. The *pre-wedding law* is haram because *khalwat* has been prohibited since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) because it invites heinous acts. Except as long as there are no unlawful elements and the purpose is only to make the invited guests recognize the bride and <sup>12</sup> groom. The difference in the previous study is that it uses the method of *takhrij* and *hadith syarah* while this study uses a qualitative method with an empirical study.

Based on the initial survey, as many as 75.61% of the people of Pangkalan Village admitted to knowing the existence of the fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) regarding the practice of pre-wedding photos before the marriage contract. Although this level of knowledge is

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<sup>10</sup> Adinda Putri Afrianing Kasih, "People's Views on Prewedding Photos in Wedding Invitations from an Islamic Law Perspective," *Thesis* 1, no. 5 (2022): 19–19.

<sup>11</sup> Irfan Helmi, *Prewedding Photo Culture in the View of Islamic Law (Case Study of Aris Photographer, Jl. Harvest Citi Blok 1V No.15, Cibubur)*, *Revista Brasileira de Ergonomia*, vol. 3, 2016.

<sup>12</sup> Rosa, "Analysis of the Cultural Phenomenon of Pre-Wedding Photos in Society: A Study of Takhrij and Hadith Syarah." <https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v1i1.14405>

quite high, the reality on the ground shows that the practice of pre-wedding photos still often violates the established sharia restrictions, such as hugging poses, holding hands, and other physical interactions that are not allowed before officially getting married. This condition is an indication of the gap between theoretical knowledge about fatwa and real implementation in society. For this reason, this research is designed to answer three main problem formulations, namely: first, how exactly is the practice of prewedding photos taking place in Pangkalan Village; second, how the public perception of the MUI fatwa regarding the pre-wedding photo; and third, what factors shape public perception regarding the fatwa.

The main purpose of this study is to identify and comprehensively understand the perception of the people of Pangkalan Village towards the MUI fatwa that regulates the rampant practice of prewedding photos, especially in the context of compliance with sharia norms. With the results obtained, it is hoped that this research can make a meaningful contribution in an effort to increase public understanding of the limits of sharia that must be maintained in prewedding photo activities. In addition, the results of the research are also expected to be able to be the basis for policymakers, religious leaders, and other stakeholders to formulate educational strategies and more effective approaches in overcoming the gap between theory and practice in society.

### **Research Methods**

This research is an empirical study using *field research* where data is obtained through direct observation in the field.<sup>13</sup> Empirical studies are chosen because they allow researchers to analyze phenomena based on facts and realities at the research site.<sup>14</sup> The type of research used is descriptive-qualitative, which is research that aims to describe and analyze to collect data in the form of words and not numbers.<sup>15</sup> In this study, data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted using *the purposive sampling method*, which is to select informants who are considered to have knowledge and experience that are relevant to the research topic.<sup>16</sup> The informants consisted of four couples who took *pre-wedding* photos, four religious leaders, and three mosque teenagers. Observations were made to see how the community responded to the MUI fatwa on *pre-wedding* photos in daily life practices, especially in wedding preparation. Meanwhile, documentation is used to collect

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<sup>13</sup> Ahamad Rosidi, M Zainuddin, and Ismi Arifiana, "Methods in Normative and Sociological Law Research (Field Research)," *Journal of Law and Government* 2, no. 1 (2024): 46–58. <https://doi.org/10.31764/jlag.v2i1.21606>

<sup>14</sup> David Tan, "Legal Research Methods: Exploring and Reviewing Methodology in Conducting Legal Research," *Nusantara: Journal of Social Sciences* 8, no. 8 (2021): 2463–78.

<sup>15</sup> Basri Bado, *Qualitative Approach Model: An Analysis in Scientific Research Methods, Introduction to Qualitative Methods*, 2021.

<sup>16</sup> Jonaedi Efendi, Jhonny Ibrahim, and Prasetijo Rijadi, "Legal Research Methods: Normative and Empirical," 2016.

secondary data in the form of MUI fatwas, articles, and news related to *prewedding photo culture*.<sup>17</sup>

The analysis technique in this study uses a qualitative analysis model, which includes three stages: first, data reduction, namely data from interviews and observations will be selected to focus on information relevant to the formulation of the problem. Second, the presentation of data, namely data will be presented in the form of a narrative to facilitate the identification of themes or patterns. Third, draw conclusions, namely based on the themes that emerge, the researcher will draw conclusions to understand more deeply the perception of the Pangkalan village community towards the MUI fatwa on *pre-wedding* photos and the factors that affect these perceptions.<sup>18</sup>

## **Research and Discussion Results**

### **Perception Theory and Its Implementation in Prewedding Photo Cultural Practices in the Base**

Jalaluddin Rakhmat states that perception is an experience gained by gathering information and interpreting messages about objects, events, or relationships<sup>19</sup>. Perception is the brain's process or ability to translate stimuli into human sensory apparatus<sup>20</sup>. There are different perspectives in human perception. There are people who see things as good or negative, which has an impact on visible or real human actions<sup>21</sup>. From the description above, it can be drawn that perception is information received through the five human senses to gain understanding and understanding of the surrounding environment. There are indicators in perception, which have three signs:<sup>22</sup>

1. Absorption of stimuli or objects from outside the individual, The first sign indicates that the stimulus or object is absorbed and absorbed by the five senses, which produces an image in the brain;
2. Understanding or understanding of objects, the second sign shows that images in the brain are interpreted so that an understanding of an object is formed;
3. Assessment or evaluation of objects, the third sign shows that after an understanding of an object has been formed.

In understanding how a person forms perception, there are two main theories that are often used as a basis. First, the theory of constructive perception which states that humans actively "construct" their perceptions by selecting and processing the stimuli received, then combining

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<sup>17</sup> Iman Jalaludin Rifa'i, "The Scope of Legal Research Methods," *Legal Research Methodology* 6 (2023).

<sup>18</sup> Eko Murdiyanto, *Qualitative Research Methods (Qualitative Research Systematics)*, Yogyakarta Press, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Jalaluddin Rakhmat, *Perception in the Teaching and Learning Process* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pres, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> Sarwono, *Introduction to General Psychology* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2010).

<sup>21</sup> Suharman, *Cognitive Psychology* (Surabaya: Srikandi, 2005).

<sup>22</sup> Adnan Achiruddin Saleh, *Introduction to Psychology* (Makassar: Akasara Timur, 2018).

them with previous memories, experiences, and knowledge. In this context, perception is not a passive result of the reception of information, but rather a complex process of interpretation and influenced by internal factors of the individual. Second, the theory of direct perception which argues that perception comes directly from the reception of information in the surrounding environment without a complicated interpretation process. According to this theory, individuals perceive and understand stimuli directly as they are, so perception is considered a real reflection of the external environment. These two theories provide different but complementary perspectives in explaining how individuals can have different perceptions of the same phenomenon, including in terms of understanding the MUI fatwa on prewedding photos.<sup>23</sup>

In addition, Pangkalan Village is located in Aek Natas District, North Labuhanbatu Regency, with an area of 3,224 ha. The village is bordered by Ujung Padang to the north, Bandar Durian to the south, Adian Torop to the west. To the east of this village is the Aek pamienke plantation. Pangkaan Village has a population of about 1898 people, consisting of 70% Muslims and 30% non-Muslims. In addition, Pangkalan Village still maintains cultural traditions that are usually carried out in wedding receptions, both according to Javanese and Batak customs. One of the Javanese traditions that is still practiced is jarkep or rarely kebraid, while in Batak tradition the gondang tradition is still known. This cultural diversity shows that the people of Pangkalan Village continue to preserve customs and culture in their lives.<sup>24</sup>

Along with the times, the wedding culture in Pangkalan Village has also undergone significant changes. Old traditions that used to focus more on traditional processions such as proposal and wedding preparation, are now starting to be accompanied by the emergence of a new culture, namely prewedding photos. This phenomenon shows that the bride-to-be in the village is starting to adopt modern trends in their wedding preparations. The culture of pre-wedding photos is not only a symbol of modernization, but also reflects the influence of social media and globalization that has brought changes in the behavior patterns and habits of the local community in welcoming the wedding day.

### **Legal Analysis of *Prewedding Photos* Based on the Fatwa of the North Sumatra MUI**

In Arabic, "fatwa" means advice, answer, or opinion<sup>25</sup>. What is meant is an official decision or advice given by an institution or individual with recognized authority, delivered by a mufti or scholar in response or answer to a question asked by a fatwa requester (mustafti) who has no direct

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<sup>23</sup> Solso, *Cognitive Psychology Eighth Edition* (Jakarta: Erlangga Publisher, 2017).

<sup>24</sup> (Saiul, January 30, 2025)

<sup>25</sup> Mahmud Yunus, *Arabic-Indonesian Dictionary* (Jakarta: PT. Mahmud Yunus Wa Dzurriyah, 2010).

connection to the <sup>26</sup>matter. Therefore, a fatwa is a decision of a mufti or an expert opinion on an issue or an official answer to legal questions and concerns. In 2011, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of North Sumatra, chaired by Mr. Drs. H. Darul Aman, M.Ag., issued fatwa number 03/KF/MUI-SU/IV/2011, which stipulates the law to use premarital photos, also known as *prewedding photos*.

A close, intimate, or cuddly photo of the bride-to-be is displayed on the same invitation card as the photo before the ceremony. So with this background, the question arises about how the Islamic perspective responds to this phenomenon. Therefore, the fatwa was made based on the consideration of verses of the Qur'an and Hadith.<sup>27</sup> The verses used are as follows:

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَاءِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ الْوَلَدَ مِنَ الْوَلَدِ أَوْ إِيَّاهُ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ لَا يَرَوْنَ عَوْرَتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

Meaning: Say to the believing women, "Let them lower their gaze and keep their modesty, and not show their ornaments except what they normally see". And let them cover their veils over their breasts, and not reveal their ornaments except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers, or their children, or their husbands' children, or their brothers, or their brothers' children, or their sisters' children, or Muslim women, or their slaves, or male servants who have no physical need, or children who do not understand the aurat of women. And let them not strike their feet so that what they hide from their ornaments may be known. And repent to Allah, O you who have believed, that you may be blessed. (QS. An-Nur :31).<sup>28</sup>

In this verse, Allah commanded the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to tell the believers to avert their eyes from seeing what is forbidden by Allah. They should restrain their eyes from seeing anything that is forbidden except what is allowed. If they accidentally saw something forbidden, they should immediately avert their eyes. The Hadith used is as follows:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا يَخْلُونَ رَجُلٌ بِامْرَأَةٍ

Meaning: "From Umar bin Khattab Ra. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Do not let any of you make khalwat with anyone." (H.R. Bukhari).

In the hadith, being alone with men and women who are not mahrams is haram.

<sup>26</sup> Fuad Thohari, *Fatwas in Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Jejak Pustaka, 2023).

<sup>27</sup> Ahmad Musyafi' Isyfa'ana, "Review of Mui Fatwa Number 03/Kf/Mui-Su/IV/2011 on Pre-Wedding Photos as a Pre-Wedding Tradition."

<sup>28</sup> Republic of Indonesia, *Qur'an and Its Translation*.



عَنْ ابْنِ بُرَيْدَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِعَلِيٍّ يَا عَلِيُّ لَا تُتَّبِعِ النَّظْرَةَ النَّظْرَةَ فَإِنَّ لَكَ الْأُولَى وَلَيْسَتْ لَكَ الْآخِرَةُ

Meaning: "From Ibn Buraidah from his father, he said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to Ali: "O Ali, do not follow the first (accidental) view with the next view, for the first view is for you and the last view is not for you" (H.R. Abu Dawud & Tirmidhi).

The phrase "don't follow the first view with the second view", which means don't continue afterwards and don't make a second look after the first view. "Because for you the first" means that the view of the jewel is innocent if done unintentionally, and "because for you the second" means that the next view is sinful because it is done intentionally, so that he sins because of it. From this it is clear that it is not permissible to look at a foreign woman on purpose and continue to look at her after the first sight. It is not allowed to look at any part of her body, regardless of whether she is beautiful in your eyes or not. Either arouses sexual desire or is accompanied by imagination, and whether it is pleasurable or not.

### **Perception of the Base Community on the MUI Fatwa on *Pre-Wedding Photos* Before the Contract**

The practice of *pre-wedding photos* before the contract that became the object of the research was a *pre-wedding photo* taken by the people of Pangkalan Village, Aek Natas district, North Labuhanbatu Regency. The following is a list of names of people interviewed by the researcher along with their perceptions or views on the MUI fatwa regarding *pre-wedding photos* before the contract. This interview was conducted from January 25, 2025 until the results were obtained.

#### **1. Prospective couples who practice *pre-wedding photos***

The bride-to-be couples who carried out the practice were Ramadani and Fachru, Aulia and Arif, Siti and Adi, Lia and Pram. The following data was obtained from the researcher's interviews with the perpetrators of pre-wedding photos before the contract which focused on the reasons that drove the implementation of *prewedding photos*, perceptions or views of the MUI fatwa on *prewedding photos*, and the factors that shaped these perceptions.

##### **a. The Couple of Ramadani and Fachru**

From Ramadani's statement, it is true that he has carried out *prewedding photos*. So in this case, the researcher asked the reason for taking the photo and the perception of the MUI fatwa on *prewedding photos*, the following is the respondent's answer:

"We know that the photo is forbidden in Islam, especially if we do it by hugging. But we just want the photo to be a memory of our youth that is only done once in a lifetime. In our opinion, it all comes back to the intention. As long as there is no excessive physical touch, we don't think it's a big deal."<sup>29</sup>

From the interview, the purpose of the Ramadani and Fachru couple in carrying out *pre-wedding* photos is nothing but documentation or a memento photo that captures their beautiful moments, with a hugging pose. And they have found out that the *pre-wedding photos* they take are not in accordance with religious rules.

b. Aulia and Arif Couple

Aulia said that it was true that they had done *pre-wedding photos* before the marriage contract. Then the researcher asked several questions with the respondents' answers as follows:

"I did *pre-wedding photos* because I wanted to have a memento before officially getting married. In addition, *prewedding* photos are used for wedding invitations. We do the pose only holding hands, not too intimate to still look polite. If I look at this fatwa only as a guide, but the decision is still in the hands of each one. We follow this because almost all of my friends who get married do *prewedding* photos, so I feel it's natural to follow them."<sup>30</sup>

From the results of the interview with Aulia's informant, it can be concluded that the decision to do a *pre-wedding photo* before the contract was driven by documentation reasons and wedding needs, as well as the influence of social trends and the surrounding environment. Although there is a MUI fatwa that limits intimate poses in *pre-wedding photos* before the contract, according to him as long as the photo session is carried out by avoiding excessive physical contact, then this is not a problem.

c. Siti and Adi's Couple

Siti and Adi confirmed that they had a photo shoot before the wedding. Then the researcher interviewed several questions related to this research, with the respondents' answers as follows:

"We want to have documentation before marriage and keep up with the trends. The family also supported us as long as we did not violate religious laws, we were just holding hands. And regarding the MUI fatwa on *pre-wedding* photos, we agree that the limit is important".<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> (Ramadani, January 25, 2025).

<sup>30</sup> (Aulia, January 27, 2025)

<sup>31</sup> (Siti, January 25, 2025)

Based on the results of the interview, the couple Siti and Adi took pre-wedding photos for the reason of wedding documentation and followed a trend that is common in society. Despite knowing the existence of a MUI fatwa, according to him, not all *prewedding photos* violate Islamic law, as long as they are done with reasonable limits.

d. Lia and Pram Couple

The researcher also asked several questions related to the research, with answers from the respondents namely:

"We do this because it is part of the wedding preparation and becomes a memory before marriage. We do poses with hands and some hug. And now *premarriage* has become common in modern marriages. We respect the fatwa, but for us as long as the photo is done politely there is no problem." <sup>32</sup>

Based on the results of interviews with four informants who took *pre-wedding photos* before the contract, it can be concluded that the main reason they carried out the *pre-wedding* photo session was for personal documentation, following modern wedding trends, as well as as part of wedding preparation, as used for invitations. Although there is a MUI fatwa stating that *pre-wedding* photos with intimate poses before the contract are not in accordance with Islamic law, the four informants have a more flexible perception of the fatwa. They respect the MUI fatwa, but still see *prewedding* photos as something that can be done as long as they are within reasonable limits, such as dressing modestly and avoiding overly intimate poses.

## 2. Religious Figures

The religious leaders referred to here are those who provide religious understanding or lectures directly in the community. There are 4 religious figures in this study, namely:

- a. Ustad Fitra (24 years old), the researcher asked what Ustadz's personal opinion was on the MUI fatwa on *pre-wedding photos* before the marriage contract. With respondents' answers:

"So this is it, as a scholar I fully support this MUI fatwa. This fatwa was born not without a basis, but through an in-depth study by competent scholars in their fields. (Sighs) This is actually a classic problem. In Islam, the relationship between a man and a woman who is not a mahram is very strict. Well, in the practice of *pre-wedding* photos before marriage, there are often khalwat (alone without a mahram), ikhtilath (mixing that is not in accordance with sharia), and physical touch that is forbidden. Pre-wedding photos before marriage are at risk of approaching adultery, that's why the MUI gives a warning. After all, why

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<sup>32</sup> (Lia, January 26, 2025)

rush? You can wait until after the contract, so it's calmer and more barokah."

<sup>33</sup>

Ustadz Fitra expressed his full support for the MUI fatwa, emphasizing that the decision was based on an in-depth study by scholars. He expressed his concern about the potential for sharia violations in the *pre-wedding* photo session, such as *kehalwat* (alone without a mahram), *ikhtilath* (mixing that is not in accordance with sharia), and forbidden physical touch. Although he gives leniency with strict conditions (for example, the presence of a companion and no intimate poses), he advises couples to wait until after the marriage contract for the sake of halalness and blessings.

- b. Ustad Hamdani (35 years old), the researcher asked what the respondents' views were on the MUI fatwa on prewedding photos. With respondents' answers:

"(Nodding slowly) this MUI fatwa is actually a form of prudence in maintaining the purity of Islamic law. We must understand that in Islam, the relationship between a man and a woman who is not a mahram has clear limits. Islam has its own standards. Just like we have safety standards in driving. We can't say "ah it's okay" just because many people do. Marriage is worship. Start your household journey in a barokah way. Believe me, true happiness is when we obey God's rules. Post-wedding photos will actually be more meaningful and happy because you are halal." <sup>34</sup>

Ustadz Hamdani views the MUI fatwa as a form of prudence in maintaining Islamic law. He emphasized that marriage is worship, so it must begin in a barokah way. According to him, *pre-wedding photos* after marriage are actually more meaningful because the couple is already in halal status.

- c. Ustadzah Biah (47 years old), the researcher also asked what his view was on the MUI fatwa on this pre-wedding photo. With respondents' answers:

"This fatwa is actually a form of the love of the ulama for the ummah. I often see in the field, many couples have unknowingly violated the limits of sharia in the pre-wedding photo session. Starting from being alone without a mahram, physical contact, to poses that are inappropriate for those who are not halal. The problem is often due to a lack of deep religious understanding, being influenced by trends on social media and pressure from photo vendors who want the concept of wah." <sup>35</sup>

Ustadzah Biah sees this fatwa as a form of the concern of the ulama for the ummah. Based on his observations, many couples have unknowingly violated the limits of sharia during *pre-wedding photo sessions*, such as physical contact and inappropriate poses. He highlighted the causative factors, such as a lack of understanding of religion, the influence of social media, and pressure from photo vendors who wanted luxury concepts.

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<sup>33</sup> (Fitra, January 29, 2025)

<sup>34</sup> (Hamdani, January 30, 2025)

<sup>35</sup> (Biah, February 1, 2025)

d. Ustad Sidin (49 years old), he said that:

"The fatwa is true. In Islam, anything that comes close to adultery is forbidden. Pre-wedding photos before marriage are like digging a hole, it can fall over time too. Don't be fooled by modern terms! I used to see a couple, at first it was just an ordinary photo. Eh, hold hands, hugs, finally... (pause) It's better not to let it happen. Times may change, but the sharia remains! Don't let it go to hell because of the trend. It is better to say that it is ancient in this world than to regret it in the hereafter. Don't be fooled by the western styles! Marriage is worship, not exhibitions. Post-marriage photos are more afdol, halal, and barokah. Believe!<sup>36</sup>.

Ustadz Sidin was firm, stating that everything that is close to adultery, including *pre-wedding* photos before marriage, must be avoided. He warned of the dangers of a "slippery slope" and criticized modern trends that are contrary to the sharia. According to him, it is better to be considered ancient than to regret it in the hereafter. He emphasized that *prewedding* photos should be done after marriage to be more afdol and barokah. Based on interviews with four religious figures, it can be concluded that all respondents agreed to support the MUI fatwa on *pre-marriage* before marriage contracts, although with slightly different arguments.

3. Teenagers of the Al-Ikhlas Mosque, Pangkalan Village, Aek Natas District, North Labuhanbatu Regency

The selected mosque youth are an unmarried group of young people aged 18-26 years, who are active in religious activities and usually have a fairly good understanding of Islamic teachings. *The researcher asked what their view was on the MUI fatwa on pre-wedding photos before the contract, with the respondents' answers:*

- a. Sri (24 years old, S1 UIN Syahada Padang Sidimpuan), Sri said: *"I'm a bit confused, because now pre-wedding photos have become a trend. But if the reason is not to violate religion, then yes, I understand. It may just need a more detailed explanation, the biggest challenge to this fatwa is social pressure. The problem is that now there are so many pre-wedding photos before marriage, so if we don't participate, it is thought to be outdated"*. Sri admitted that she was confused because *pre-wedding photos* had become a trend, but she understood the reason for the prohibition fatwa for religious compliance.
- b. Dewi (23 years old, S1 UNIMED), Dewi said: "In my opinion, the fatwa is reasonable because before marriage, it is not allowed to be too close. But I also see many friends

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<sup>36</sup> (Sidin, February 2, 2025)

who still take *pre-wedding photos* but keep their distance, like they don't hold them. So it may depend on the way it is executed. The challenge is more about yourself. Sometimes we want to follow trends or want to exist on social media. But if you know why, you have to be able to do it." Dewi agreed with the fatwa because before marriage, couples should not be too close. However, he saw many who still took *pre-wedding photos* by keeping their distance.

- c. Hidayat (25 years old, SI UNIMED), Hidayat said: "As a man, I agree with this ban. The problem is that sometimes *prewedding photos* make us let go, for example holding hands or intimate poses. Waiting for the marriage to come out of nowhere. For men, the challenge is more of a temptation to follow a partner. For example, our boyfriend asks for a *pre-wedding photo*, but we don't want to violate religious rules. You have to be able to communicate well." She agreed with this prohibition because pre-wedding photos could trigger sharia violations (such as touching or intimate poses).

Based on the results of the interview, the three respondents understood the reasons for the fatwa and acknowledged the challenges in implementing it, both from social pressure and personal temptation.

### **Factors That Shape the Perception of the Base Community Towards the MUI Fatwa on Pre-Wedding Photo Culture Before the Contract**

Based on the results of the research, if it is associated with theory, there are several factors that affect the process of forming public perception of the fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) regarding the culture of prewedding photos before the marriage contract. First, psychological factors. An individual's psychological condition greatly affects the way they interpret and understand information, including in this case religious fatwas. Differences in emotional maturity, experience background, and cognitive capacity play a role in shaping the public's response to the fatwa. This is evident from the diverse responses of the public to the ban on prewedding photos, which shows that each individual's religious ability is different in interpreting information obtained through the five senses, which is then processed into a perception. These perceptions are not always objective, but are often influenced by needs, expectations, personal values, and the urge to conform to the social environment. Therefore, even though normatively the public knows the existence of the MUI fatwa, its interpretation and application still depend on the internal psychological factors possessed by each individual.

Second, the family factor. The family is the closest environment that has a significant influence in shaping individual perspectives and attitudes towards various social and religious

issues. If a person grows up in a family that has the perception that the existence of the MUI fatwa regarding the prohibition of pre-wedding photos is important and should be used as a guideline in carrying out traditions before marriage, then it is likely that the individual will internalize similar values and views. On the other hand, if the family views prewedding photos as simply a part of modern culture that does not contradict religious values as long as they are done in a polite manner, then the perception will be inherited and influence the individual's attitude towards the practice. Thus, the family factor not only plays a role in shaping a person's initial perception, but can also be a reinforcing or even transformative agent of an individual's perspective in responding to a social phenomenon, including in this case religious fatwas issued by authorities such as the MUI.

Third, cultural factors. Individual perceptions of the MUI fatwa on pre-wedding photos are also greatly influenced by the culture and customs that prevail in the local community. This can be seen from the views among the public who position the fatwa as a guideline or rule that must be obeyed, but with an interpretation that is adjusted to the cultural values that they have adopted for a long time. In the process of forming perceptions, people tend to understand and interpret fatwas according to the local cultural framework that shapes their mindset and attitudes. Therefore, variations in understanding the MUI fatwa are very likely to occur, depending on how strong the local culture is in receiving and internalizing the information. Thus, culture is not only a social background, but also plays an active role in shaping the interpretation and implementation of fatwas in people's daily lives.

Fourth, social factors and the influence of the media also strengthen the formation of public perception. Social pressure from the surrounding environment, the desire to follow the growing trends on social media, and the increasing access to information are important variables that affect people's perceptions of prewedding photo practices. Social media functions as a space for popular cultural expression as well as a medium for the dissemination of modern values and lifestyles that are often contrary to religious norms. This condition puts people in a dilemma between the desire to keep up with the development of trends that are loved by many people and the obligation to comply with the MUI fatwa as a religious guideline. Thus, social and media influences not only shape perceptions, but also determine the pattern of prewedding photo culture practices among the people of Pangkalan Village.

Thus, the results of the researcher's analysis show that the perception of the people of Pangkalan Village towards the MUI fatwa regarding pre-wedding photos before the contract is the result of dynamic interaction between internal factors, namely psychological and family, as well as external factors, namely cultural and social. The complex interaction between these factors creates

diverse and layered patterns of perception in society. Therefore, efforts to increase awareness and compliance with the MUI fatwa must be carried out with a holistic and contextual approach, which is able to accommodate the uniqueness of psychological conditions, family influences, cultural values, and social dynamics of the local community. This approach is important so that the message of the fatwa is not only understood theoretically, but also can be accepted, internalized, and applied effectively in the daily lives of the people of Pangkalan Village.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the practice of prewedding photos in Pangkalan Village is still commonly carried out before the marriage contract for various reasons, including as a form of documentation, following modern wedding trends, and meeting visual needs for wedding invitations. However, some couples do poses that are not in accordance with Islamic law, such as hugging or holding hands. The majority of the public (75.61%) understand the existence of the fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) regarding the prohibition of khalwat and ikhtilat, but there is still a gap between knowledge and implementation. Couples who do a pre-wedding photo session generally think that as long as the pose is done politely and not excessively, then it does not contradict the teachings of Islam. Religious leaders unequivocally support the MUI fatwa, emphasizing the importance of avoiding khalwat, ikhtilat, and physical touch that are prohibited before marriage. Meanwhile, mosque youth understand the theological reasons behind the fatwa, but acknowledge that there are challenges in its implementation amid social pressure and the dominance of popular cultural trends. Public perception of this practice is shaped by various factors, including social influences, local cultural values, and varying levels of religious understanding.

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