



Research Article

# The Prohibition of Adultery in Islam: A Study through Social and Psychological Perspectives in Contemporary Society

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**Abstract:** Adultery is one of the behaviors that is strictly prohibited in Islamic teachings because it is considered to destroy moral order, family, and social structure in society. This study aims to analyze the prohibition of adultery not only from a religious normative aspect, but also through a social and psychological perspective in the context of contemporary society. Socially, adultery triggers family disintegration, increased divorce rates, births outside of marriage, and social stigma for women and children born out of wedlock. From a psychological perspective, this behavior has an impact on emotional disorders such as guilt, anxiety, depression, and loss of self-esteem. The research uses the library research method by examining classical Islamic sources, empirical research results, and modern psychological studies. The results of the study show that the prohibition of adultery in Islam is not merely a moral rule, but has strong social and psychological relevance in maintaining individual honor and social stability. In the modern era, which is characterized by technological advances, openness of information, and shifting values, efforts to prevent adultery need to be approached comprehensively through moral education, family strengthening, and digital literacy based on Islamic values. Thus, the prohibition of adultery becomes an integral part of forming a moral, mentally healthy, and civilized society.

**Keywords:** prohibition of adultery; mentally; healthy; civilized society; Study.

## 1. BACKGROUND

Humans are basically given lust by Allah within themselves as desires, both lust for property and for the opposite sex as explained in His word Surah Al-Imron verse 14. In addition to being given lust, humans are also the only creatures given reason by Allah, which is basically given to think logically to manage the earth, as the purpose of humans to be caliphs. In many ways, it is said that the most dominant human elements that influence actions are reason and lust, if behavior is based on reason then it will produce good and healthy deeds (Fahmi, 2016). Good management of lust and reason will have a side effect on the realization of human actions. Poor management of lust is balanced by today's entertainment that cannot be filtered properly, making many people lulled into adultery, even though Allah has prepared the pleasure of having relations after marriage (Bahri, 2023).

Human infatuation with something they've never done before is a manifestation of deep curiosity, but this matter has been heavily influenced by lust and the influence of Satan's incitement. Some human actions that disobey God's prohibitions will lead to sin and mere self-gratification. Data from the past three years shows that more than five district/city religious courts have been attacked by teenagers seeking marriage dispensations for various reasons, from avoiding adultery to having sexual relations with a majority of minors. Victims of these inappropriate actions have social consequences. Society views the perpetrators and their families differently, and from a social perspective, families are also under scrutiny because they are deemed unable to fulfill their mandate as parents in educating their children (Azwar & Elfia, 2021). Cooperation between members is necessary to develop better individuals. In the case of adultery, both parties are victims,

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but from a social perspective, female victims are more visible, with physical and psychological changes, even emotional changes, which can be caused by hormones during the embryonic stage.

Adultery is a deviant behavior that is not only prohibited by religion but is also seen as a violation of social norms and moral values prevailing in society. Adultery is an act that does not comply with prevailing norms in society. In various cultures, sexual relations outside of legal marriage are seen as an act that destroys family harmony, disrupts social stability, and negatively impacts an individual's psychological development. Therefore, the prohibition of adultery is not only based on religious teachings but also has a strong basis from a social and psychological perspective, where this prohibition will also protect society and the psyche of children. This prohibition will also protect children from acts of sexual violence or those that lead to adultery.

From a social perspective, adultery can trigger family disintegration, cause social jealousy, and lead to the birth of a generation without clear legal protection, often family breakdowns occur due to different perspectives between family members. Meanwhile, from a psychological perspective, adultery often causes various emotional impacts such as guilt, loss of self-esteem, especially for women, anxiety disorders to psychological trauma, both for perpetrators and victims, instability of the heart after the act of adultery results in excessive thoughts about societal expectations and many things. In the view of modern society which is increasingly permissive towards free sex, the phenomenon of adultery becomes a complex and challenging issue to handle, this adultery behavior indirectly causes wounds in the hearts of both victims and perpetrators.

Therefore, the researcher wishes to further research and study adultery from a social and psychological perspective. It is hoped that this will serve as a reminder to avoid His prohibitions and become a public concern, so that matters related to adultery will not occur in the future. This paper will present the prohibition of adultery from a social and psychological perspective with the presentation of data classified as qualitative research. Because the data presented and analyzed are not in the form of quantitative numbers, but rather sourced from the study and analysis of literature data related to the material. The research approach for this article uses an interdisciplinary literature study with a phenomenological perspective. In this article, the author attempts to present an in-depth understanding of adultery from a social and psychological perspective in the present day. The author does not look at the phenomenon that is happening now but rather goes further than that, the author tries to uncover behind the phenomenon both from the psychology of the perpetrator and the social experience directly.

## 2. THEORETICAL STUDY

Zina comes from the Arabic word "*zina*" which means shameful or evil, and in terminology or terminology is defined as sexual relations between a man and a woman who are not legally married (not bound by marriage). In Islamic law, zina is divided into 2, namely *zina muhsan* and *zina ghairu muhsan*, the main thing that distinguishes between the two is the status of the perpetrator. *Zina muhsan* is an act of adultery committed by a person who is married or has a legal partner, while *zina ghairu muhsan* is an act of adultery committed by a person who does not have a legal partner or is not married ( Hanapi & Fitri, 2024).

The definition of adultery according to the priests of several schools of thought: The Malikiyah School provides a definition of adultery, namely sexual intercourse committed by amukallaf with the genitals of a human (woman) which does not belong to her in an agreed manner and there is an element of intention. Hanafiyah Madzhab Zina is the term for unlawful sexual intercourse using the genitals of a living woman and not by force in a just country carried out by people who adhere to Islamic law, and the woman is not hers and there is no doubt about hers

Adultery is a violation of religious law and a major sin prohibited in Islam. It is also a violation of moral norms and the sanctity of life (Laili & Sofa, 2025). Allah's diction in the Qur'an has explained a lot regarding the prohibition of adultery, Al-Isra' verse 32 which is related to the letter Al-Anbiya verse 91 as follows:

*"And do not approach adultery: indeed adultery is an abominable act and a bad path" (QS Al-Isra' verse: 32)*

*"And (remember the story of) Mary, who maintained her honor, then we breathed it into her (body) from us and we made her and her children a great sign (of Allah's power) for the universe." (QS Al-Anbiya :91)*

There have been several interpretations from various tafsir scholars regarding the meaning of the verse about adultery, including "And remember (O Messenger) the story of Maryam, the daughter of Imran, who guarded her honor from haram acts, and she did not commit vile acts throughout her life. Then Allah sent Jibril to her. Then he blew on the collar of Maryam's clothes. The blow reached her womb. Then Allah created the Messiah Isa Bin Maryam through this blow. Finally Maryam conceived him without a husband. So in this situation, he and his son became a sign of God's power and a lesson for all creatures until the Day of Resurrection, so great was the power of God who upheld his honor.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

In compiling this article, data collection was carried out through library research. The data analysis technique was carried out using a descriptive-analytical approach. In this study, the author read and collected other people's written works related to the research conducted for data collection, as well as library sources. In addition, data collection was obtained from articles, journals, and books, which were useful for reviewing relevant literature related to the Prohibition of Adultery in Islam: A Study Through Social and Psychological Perspectives in Contemporary Society.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Adultery according to Religion

According to the Shafi'iyah scholars as quoted by Abdul Qadir Audah, zina is defined as inserting the penis into the genitals, which is forbidden because it is an act that is without doubt and tends to cause lust. The Hambaliyah opinion, Zina is defined as committing a heinous act, namely sexual intercourse involving both the genitals and the anus (not the genitals) between a woman and a man without marriage. This definition shows that zina includes all forms of sexual intercourse outside of marriage between two people, but there is a slight difference in the views of the Hambaliyah school which emphasizes that zina is a heinous act, whether carried out on the genitals or non-genitals (buttocks). Based on several definitions of zina above, it can be concluded that zina is sexual intercourse (inserting the penis into the vagina) without a valid marriage bond and between different sexes, which can damage a woman's honor (rupture of the hymen in the vagina) (Zulkarnain, 2023).

Adultery not only damages the individual who does it, but also has a major impact on society, the dangers of adultery are not only in moral damage, but also in society. In this case, adultery is also considered a betrayal of the trust given in a marital relationship, more deeply adultery is considered a violation of God's rights, which has the potential to bring His wrath. In the book *Mahfudzot Fadhoilul Iman* emphasizes that the impact of a divine relationship is a decrease in one's level of faith, which can cause doubts in belief in God and loss of peace (Laili & Sofa, 2025).

### **Adultery According to Society**

Social norms state that interpersonal relationships are unavoidable, and this relates to the theory of social interaction. Human needs cannot be met alone, necessitating skills and interaction with others. In the context of adultery, this interpersonal relationship begins with consensual interaction between members of the opposite sex (Muhammad, 2021). Several theories related to adultery are also discussed in social perspective theory studies, ranging from Emile Durkheim's theory of social deviance to feminist theory. The following is the theoretical basis (social perspective) for adultery:

#### ***Theory of Social Deviance – Emile Durkheim***

Durkheim stated that deviance is a normal part of society and serves social functions, such as reinforcing moral boundaries and stimulating social change. However, high rates of adultery indicate a condition of anomie—a situation where social norms weaken or lose their power to regulate individual behavior. In societies experiencing anomie, behaviors such as adultery become more common due to the weakness of collective values (Suwandi, 2024).

#### ***Strain Theory – Robert K. Merton***

According to Merton, deviant behavior arises when individuals lack legitimate means to achieve socially desirable goals (Azis & Ridwan, 2025). Adultery can be understood as an escape or alternative to legitimately unfulfilled emotional or sexual needs, for example due to delayed marriage, economic inequality, or relationship dissatisfaction (Hapsoro, 2023).

#### ***Labeling Theory (Social Labeling) – Howard Becker***

Becker explains that someone is considered deviant because they are labeled as such by society. In the context of adultery, this labeling is often directed primarily at women, who then experience social marginalization, even though in many cases, involvement in adultery is bipartisan. This labeling can worsen an individual's psychosocial well-being and reinforce social stigma (Becker, 2023).

#### ***Social Control Theory – Travis Hirschi***

Hirschi stated that individuals avoid deviant behavior because they have strong social ties to their families, schools, and communities. If these ties weaken, the risk of deviant behavior—such as adultery—increases. Adultery can occur in individuals who lack strong emotional attachments, moral commitments, or internal control over religious and social norms (Hirschi, 2017).

#### ***Social Conflict Theory – Karl Marx (modern approach)***

Within the framework of conflict theory, adultery can be viewed as a product of power and social inequality, where dominant groups (e.g., men or the elite) tend to control the narrative about sexuality and often objectify women's bodies. The media and entertainment industries, which commodify sex, also contribute to permissive behavior toward adultery (Novel & Dinanti, 2020).

#### ***Structural Functionalism Theory***

This approach views society as an interconnected system (Ferdino & Handayani, 2024). If the function of institutions such as family, religion, and education weakens, moral values will also decline. Adultery is an indicator that the social system is not functioning harmoniously—for example, in fostering the values of loyalty, self-control, and responsibility.

#### ***Social Feminism Theory***

This theory argues that moral standards regarding adultery are often unfair to women, and that the regulation of women's bodies by social norms or law is often patriarchal (Anwar et al., 2024). In a social context, adultery is also inextricably linked to issues of sexual violence, exploitation, and unequal gender power relations.

A survey conducted by Azwar and Elfia, involving a large sample, found that many people strongly disagreed with the public's response to adultery. Indonesia's heterogeneous and deeply rooted society, with its strong traditions, contributes to the rapid spread of information, which can quickly destroy the well-established morality and honor within society (Azwar & Elfia, 2021).

### **Adultery According to Psychology**

When adultery leads to pregnancy outside of marriage, many parents then expel their children, refusing to consider them back. However, in the contemporary era, the phenomenon of children becoming pregnant outside of marriage is reflected in the prevailing religious understanding within society. Marriage due to this pregnancy outside of marriage is just as sacred as any other marriage. This is what occurs in the development of the marriage process carried out by guardians for their children who have become pregnant outside of marriage. This is what shapes the role of parents, which in sociological studies is considered part of the social structure within the community (Bahri, 2023).

Freud viewed human behavior as driven by unconscious drives, particularly libido (sexual drive). He believed that adultery can arise as an outlet for repressed or unfulfilled sexual urges. If the id (lust), ego (mediator), and superego (morals) are unbalanced, individuals can more easily fall into deviant behavior, including adultery. When the superego (moral values) is weak or dysfunctional, adultery becomes more likely to occur as a form of satisfying instinctual drives (Fikri et al., 2023).

It's a major concern that adultery is now very loosely regulated, with little supervision from parents, the community, or schools. Unfiltered social interactions, primarily due to advanced technology, have led to rampant adultery, even to the point of being pursued as a profession, sacrificing self-respect. Psychologically, a person who commits adultery will feel guilty and live a life filled with guilt toward themselves and their parents.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusion**

Adultery, whether in an Islamic context or examined socially and psychologically, can be detrimental to many parties. In a religious context, the perpetrator will clearly be punished according to applicable religious law, and socially, they will face social sanctions, ranging from negative public perception to negative impacts on society. Adultery is not only a dirty act but also a heinous one. Adultery in today's era is very loose, under the supervision of parents, the community, and schools. Social interactions that cannot be properly filtered, primarily due to sophisticated technology, have made adultery rampant, even to the point of being made a profession at the expense of self-respect. However, psychologically, someone who commits adultery will feel guilty and throughout their life will be shrouded in guilt toward themselves and their parents.

### **Suggestion**

All parties, including individuals, society, government, and religious institutions, have an important role in maintaining the sanctity and honor of sexual relations and promoting justice and truth in society according to Islamic law.

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