

The Perceptions of Leading Aceh Scholars Regarding *Pre-Wedding* Photography

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Abstract

Prewedding is a term derived from English which, in Indonesian, refers to photographs taken before a wedding. This means that all proceedings carried out before the wedding ceremony and captured in photographs are considered *prewedding* photographs. Prewedding photography is now widely recognised. Prewedding photographs are often used as keepsakes in the form of documentation, much like those taken at *the wedding reception*. Speaking of *the wedding reception*, we will naturally discuss the decorations and adornments that embellish each room; one of these is the display of *pre-wedding* photographs, namely images of the bride and groom-to-be posing together, taken prior to the *ijab qabul* or the marriage contract. The background to this research is the presence of intimate scenes or poses that frequently violate Islamic norms, particularly in the Aceh Besar region, and are contrary to Islamic law. This study aims to determine 1) the practice of *pre-wedding* photography in Aceh Besar; and 2) the perceptions of religious scholars in Aceh Besar regarding *pre-wedding* photography. The research methods employed in this study comprise *field research* and *library research*. The findings indicate that the practice of *pre-wedding* photography in Aceh Besar begins with an initial meeting between the

photographer and the couple, followed by an agreement on the cost of the photo shoot. This is then followed by the photo shoot itself. As for the views of religious scholars in Aceh Besar, it can be concluded that pre-wedding photography is permitted provided it does not contravene Islamic law; however, it may be deemed haram if the prospective bride and groom—who are not yet legally married—engage in pre-wedding photography involving *khalwat* (being alone together without a valid marital bond), or *ikhtilat* (the mixing of men and women), as such actions come close to *zina* and violate Islamic norms.

KEYWORDS: Pre-wedding, Photography, Religious Scholars.

Introduction

A *pre-wedding* photo shoot is a photo session for the bride and groom-to-be held in the run-up to the wedding. *Pre-wedding* photography is also referred to as wedding photography. This activity involves taking photographs of the couple before they marry, which are used for wedding invitations, greeting cards, or displayed during the wedding ceremony.¹

Pre-wedding photography is a Western custom that is now becoming increasingly popular amongst the Indonesian public. *Pre-wedding photography* is closely linked to marriage. It can also be described as the period leading up to the wedding, during which the bride and groom-to-be have their photographs taken with concepts and attire in keeping with the chosen theme. These photographs are used as displays, on wedding invitation profiles, and as decorations at the event.²

Marriage is a most noble and sacred institution, signifying worship of God by adhering to the prescribed rules. Article 1 of Law No. 1 of 1974 of the Republic of Indonesia on Marriage states that marriage is a physical and spiritual union between a man and a woman as husband and wife, with the aim of forming a

¹ <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/86195-ID-perancangan-fotografi-pre-wedding-gaya-d.pdf>, accessed on 15 March 2025.

² <https://kumparan.com/info-psikologi/mengenal-pengertian-prewedding-dan-manfaatnya-21APPweTERm/full>, accessed on 5 February 2025.

happy and lasting family (household) in accordance with God the Almighty. Marriage is also known as ‘perkawinan’, which derives from the word ‘nikah’, meaning ‘to bring together’ or ‘to unite’, and is also used to denote sexual intercourse (*wathi*).³

A marriage is valid if it fulfils its essential elements and conditions. However, in practice, certain marriage customs have become established traditions and are regarded as community obligations. The wedding reception is one such example of these customs, or ‘*walimatul urs*’ in Arabic. As an important and sacred event, a marriage must be announced to the community in order to dispel any unfavourable preconceptions. The announcement is generally made during a wedding ceremony or ‘*walimatul urs*’ (*walimatul urs*). The purpose of this wedding ceremony is to ensure that the community recognises that the bride and groom are legally husband and wife. It is also hoped that this announcement will prevent any slander against the couple.

A *walimah* is a celebration and an expression of gratitude following the marriage ceremony. This event also informs the community about the new family. A *walimah* can also be a way for the family and community to show their support for the couple. The purpose of the *walimah* is to strengthen the bond between the couple.⁴ When discussing a *walimah*, we naturally turn to the decorations and arrangements that adorn each room, one of which is the display of *pre-wedding* photographs. Recently, the ‘culture’ of *pre-wedding* photography has become increasingly popular, whereby the bride and groom-to-be have a photo shoot together, which takes place before the *ijab qabul* or the marriage ceremony.

These photographs are subsequently used to decorate their wedding favours, featured on invitation cards, and even used to decorate the wedding venue. A neatly arranged backdrop, intimate poses between the couple, and a beautiful

³ Abdul Rahman Ghazali, *Fiqh Munakahat*, (Jakarta: Kencana, 2003), p. 7.

⁴ Adindha Putri Arifianing Kasih, “Public Perceptions of Pre-wedding Photographs in Wedding Invitations from an Islamic Law Perspective,” Undergraduate Thesis (Purwokerto: IAIN Purwokerto, 2019), p. 3.

location are some of the key elements in creating *pre-wedding* photographs. Consequently, many couples engage in practices that are not yet permitted under Islamic law, as the *ijab-qabul* or marriage contract has not yet taken place between them; for example, posing whilst embracing, holding hands, or sitting on each other's laps.⁵

During the time of the Prophet, *pre-wedding* photography never took place, as it is not part of the Sunnah of marriage. In Islam, as long as there is no valid *ijab-qabul* between a man and a woman, they remain in the same status as non-mahram individuals. Although couples who undertake pre-wedding photography are, in principle, intending to marry, they are still obliged to uphold the boundaries established by religion. This is similar to what the Messenger of Allah taught regarding the rules of *taaruf* as a means of strengthening the bond and mutual understanding between the prospective bride and groom.

In the Qur'an, Allah has emphasised the boundaries between non-mahram men and women in their interactions, stating: "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their private parts; that is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is All-Aware of what they do" (Surah An-Nur [24]: 30). In this verse, Allah SWT commands the Prophets and the believers to always guard and protect their gaze from things that are harmful and forbidden for them to look at. However, should one's gaze inadvertently fall upon something forbidden, it must be immediately averted to avoid looking at such forbidden things. Furthermore, Allah commands His Messenger to urge believing men to guard their private parts against immoral acts such as adultery, homosexuality and the like. Guarding one's eyes from looking at forbidden things and guarding one's private parts from committing adultery or homosexual acts are good and pure deeds, both for the soul and for one's faith.

⁵ Ahmad Zahro, *Contemporary Fiqh*, (South Jakarta: PT Qaf Media Kreativa, 2017), p. 242.

Likewise, in Surah An-Nur [24], verse 31, it is stated: “And tell the believing women that they should guard their gaze and guard their private parts, and not display their adornments (awrah), except what is (ordinarily) visible. And let them draw their veils down over their chests, and not display their adornments (private parts), except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husbands’ fathers, or their sons, or their husbands’ sons, or their male relatives, their sons, or the sons of their male relatives, or the sons of their female relatives, or their fellow Muslim women, or their female slaves, or their elderly male servants who have no desire (for women), or children who do not understand the private parts of women. Nor should they stamp their feet— —so that the jewellery they conceal may be recognised. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, so that you may prosper.” This means that Allah commands His Messenger to remind believing women not to look at things that are unlawful for them, such as the private parts of men or women, particularly the area between the navel and the knees for men and the entire body for women. Likewise, they are commanded to guard their private parts (farji) so as not to fall into the pit of adultery, or be seen by others. Likewise, women are required to cover their heads and chests with a headscarf, so that their hair, necks and chests are not visible.

It is clear that every Muslim man and woman must protect their gaze and private parts from things prohibited by religion, and maintain appropriate boundaries in their interactions with non-mahram individuals. This also applies to those intending to marry but who are already engaging in intimate behaviour and the like; such conduct is certainly not permitted in Islam.

The custom of holding *pre-wedding* photo shoots is also frequently found in Aceh Besar Regency, particularly amongst residents living in areas where religious knowledge is well-understood. *Pre-wedding* photo shoots have become a trend and part of the culture amongst the community today, including the people of Aceh Besar, leading to changes in behaviour and lifestyle. The practice of *pre-wedding*

photography often contravenes Islamic norms due to the poses and clothing involved. Poses such as hugging or holding hands, and excessive adornment prior to the marriage ceremony, have become a cause for concern amongst some religious scholars in Aceh Besar.

This phenomenon is worth studying because the Aceh Besar region has a Muslim majority who should understand Islamic law, and there are also many ulama and Islamic boarding schools in Aceh Besar that should be providing the community with insight and knowledge. Therefore, the researcher wishes to examine the perceptions of the ulama of Aceh Besar regarding this issue.

Research Methodology

The research methods employed in this study comprise *Field Research*—which utilises information obtained from the research subjects, hereinafter referred to as respondents, through observation or interviews—and *Library Research*, which utilises written materials such as books and other documents.

Field research was conducted to obtain primary data in the form of the opinions of ulama in the Suka Makmur sub-district of Aceh Besar regarding the ruling on *pre-wedding* photographs. The literature review involved studying Islamic legal texts concerning the ruling on *pre-wedding* photographs according to Islamic scholars and ulama. Data was collected through open-ended interviews with several prominent ulama in Aceh Besar Regency. Furthermore, data was also obtained through a literature review of relevant Islamic texts and books.

Definition of *Pre-wedding* Photography

As times change, technology has become increasingly sophisticated, leading to the creation of innovations that facilitate access and meet everyday needs. This,

in turn, has brought about significant changes—both positive and negative—for the general public.⁶

One such development is photography. A photograph is a still image, whether in colour or monochrome (black and white), produced by a camera that captures an object, event, or scene at a specific moment in time. Activities related to photographs are referred to as photography. Etymologically, the word ‘photograph’ derives from the Greek ‘photos’, meaning light, and ‘graphien’, meaning to write or draw.⁷

One of the functions of photography is to document human activities. This is because photographic works can serve as archives and immortalise specific moments. Almost every moment in a person’s life, encompassing a wide range of activities, can be photographed for documentation purposes.

Pre-wedding photography is one such form of photography. *The term ‘pre-wedding’* itself comes from English and refers to photographs taken before the wedding. Essentially, any proceedings carried out prior to the wedding ceremony and captured in photographs are classified as *pre-wedding* photographs.⁸

The concept of a *pre-wedding* shoot usually encompasses several elements, such as the location, the attire worn, and the poses or gestures of the bride and groom. The concept behind the *pre-wedding* photoshoot is determined by both the photographer’s vision and the couple’s requests. Over time, *pre-wedding* photography has come to be regarded as one of the initial steps leading up to the wedding.

⁶ Muhammad Djakfar, *Religion, Ethics, and Economics*, (Malang: UIN Press, 2007), p. 3.

⁷ Alex Saputra, “A Review of Islamic Law Regarding Pre-Wedding Photography,” *Journal of Islamic Studies in the Malay Region*, Vol. 4, No. 2, (2021), p. 118.

⁸ The Meaning and Definition of Pre-Wedding Photography – KemejingNet, accessed on 5 February 2025.

Purpose and Uses of *Pre-wedding* Photography

Pre-wedding photos, or photo shoots taken with one's partner before the wedding, have become a fairly popular tradition nowadays. The purposes of these photo sessions vary widely, with a range of intentions behind them.

The following are some of the general purposes and uses of *pre-wedding* photos:⁹

a. Preserving memories

Pre-wedding photos can serve as a unique keepsake for the future, preserving stories or memories for the couple that allow them to revisit the past.

b. Strengthening the couple's relationship

The process of a *pre-wedding* photo shoot involves cooperation and joint planning, which can strengthen the couple's relationship.

c. Enjoying time together

A *pre-wedding* photo session can be the perfect moment for a couple to enjoy time together in the run-up to their wedding day.

d. Getting used to the camera

For some people, a *pre-wedding* photo shoot is an opportunity to get used to posing in front of the camera, so they feel more at ease when their photos are taken on their wedding day.

e. Deciding on an outfit concept

Through *pre-wedding* photos, couples can identify a suitable photo concept and gain plenty of inspiration for their upcoming wedding, such as traditional, glamorous, casual or themed styles.

f. Meeting wedding needs

Wedding *Pre-wedding* photos are necessary to fulfil wedding requirements, such as wearing a wedding dress or other attractive outfits.

⁹ <https://siapnikah.org/apakah-foto-prewedding-itu-penting-ini-pertimbangannya/>, accessed on 10 February 2025

g. As a keepsake

Originally, *pre-wedding* photos were used as a keepsake of the sweet moments in a relationship before entering married life.

The Ruling on *Pre-wedding* Photography in Islam

Early Islamic scholars have explained the status of photography since its emergence. A Sheikh from Egypt named Muhammad Bakhit Al-Muth'i, in his book entitled "Al-Qaul Al-Kahfi fi Ibadah At-Tashwir Al-Futughrafi", addressed the issue of photographs taken with a camera. Regarding this matter, there is a difference of opinion (khilaf) amongst the scholars. In his view, photography is halal and mubah. He bases his opinion on the illat (legal rationale) mentioned in the hadiths which prohibit and curse those who draw, on the grounds that it is akin to imitating the creation of Allah SWT.¹⁰ This refers to things such as images and statues that resemble Allah's creation.

Specifically, Islam does not address the ruling on *pre-wedding* photography, as cameras did not exist at the time the Qur'an was revealed, and consequently the concept of *pre-wedding* photography had not yet emerged. Furthermore, we cannot find any hadiths of the Prophet that specifically address the ruling on *pre-wedding* photography. This is because the era we live in today differs from the time of the Prophet.

However, aside from all that, the ruling on *pre-wedding* photography can be determined by the process involved. In Islam, the ruling on *pre-wedding* photography depends on several factors relating to the purpose, context, and manner in which the photography is carried out. Generally speaking, Islam does not prohibit photography, but there are several principles that must be observed to ensure that the practice is in accordance with religious teachings.

¹⁰ Yusuf Al-Qardhawi, "Fiqh Muqasid Syariah", Translated by Arif Munandar Riswanto, (East Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2007), 74

The following are the factors that influence the ruling on *pre-wedding* photography:

a. Purpose and intention

Every action requires intention, especially when it relates to acts of worship to Allah SWT, such as prayer, fasting, the Hajj, zakat, and so on. In the world of photography, if the purpose of *pre-wedding* photography is to commemorate happy moments before the wedding, and the intention is to preserve memories in a form that does not contravene Islamic law, then it is, in principle, not prohibited. However, if the photographs are used for improper purposes, such as to show off or attract the attention of others in a manner inconsistent with Islamic teachings, then this may become problematic.

It is narrated by ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab that the Messenger of Allah said:

Meaning: “Verily, deeds are judged by intentions, and verily, every person shall be rewarded according to what they intended. Whoever migrates for the sake of Allah and His Messenger, then his migration is recognised by Allah and His Messenger. And whoever migrates for the sake of worldly gain or a woman he wishes to marry, he shall receive only that which he sought.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

b. Clothing worn

One of the important matters in Islam is covering one’s ‘awrah. If, in *pre-wedding* photographs, the couple do not cover their ‘awrah properly – for example, by wearing revealing clothing or attire that does not conform to Islamic norms – then such photographs become haram. Couples taking *pre-wedding* photographs should ensure that the clothing they wear complies with Islamic law, namely that it covers the ‘awrah properly.

Allah, the Exalted, says:

‘Meaning: “O children of Adam, verily We have sent down to you garments to cover your private parts and fur (as material for clothing to adorn

yourselves). (However,) the garment of piety is the best. Such are some of the signs of Allah's power, so that they may always remember." (Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 26).

c. The Presence of the Opposite Sex

In Islam, non-mahram individuals (particularly between men and women) must observe the boundaries regarding modesty and interaction. If *pre-wedding* photographs are taken in a manner that fails to uphold proper etiquette and boundaries between non-mahram men and women (for example, posing in a manner that is too close or intimate), this may be considered a violation of Islamic law. Ideally, during a *pre-wedding* photo shoot, the relationship between the couple-to-be should continue to observe the boundaries set by Islamic law, such as avoiding any physical contact that constitutes a breach.

Allah SWT says:

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّوْجَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

Meaning: "Do not approach adultery. Verily, it is an abominable act and the worst of paths." (QS. Al-Isra' [17]: 32).

Many scholars interpret Allah SWT's command "Do not approach adultery" as having a deeper meaning than the phrase "Do not commit adultery", because the Qur'an uses the phrase "Do not commit adultery", which implies that not only is adultery itself forbidden, but also acts that lead to it—such as the intimate behaviour seen in the *pre-wedding* photos mentioned above—are likewise prohibited. In relation to this, the reason the Qur'an states "Do not approach adultery" is that this phrasing carries a deeper meaning and specifically addresses the behaviours of *ikhtilat* (mixed-gender socialising) and *khalwat* (seclusion between unrelated men and women), which frequently occur in society.¹¹

¹¹ Sheikh Imam Al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi*, Translated by Ahmad Khotib, *Surah Al-Hijr, Al-An'am, Al-Isra' and Al-Kahf*, (Pustaka Azzam: South Jakarta, 2008), p. 627.

As we know, it is not permitted to hold hands or make physical contact with a woman who is not a mahram and with whom one is not married. Physical contact with a member of the opposite sex who is not a mahram is haram. What makes it permissible for a man to touch a woman is the conclusion of the marriage contract. As long as she is not married—and there is no marriage contract—a woman's status remains the same as that of any other non-mahram woman. According to a narration from Ma'qil ibn Yasar, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

لَأَنْ يُطْعَنَ فِي رَأْسِ أَحَدِكُمْ بِمَخِيطٍ مِنْ حَدِيدٍ خَيْرٌ لَهُ مِنْ أَنْ يَمَسَّ امْرَأَةً لَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ

Meaning: “Indeed, for one of you to be stabbed in the head with an iron needle is better for him than to touch a woman who is not his mahram.” (Narrated by Thabrani)

However, *pre-wedding* photo shoots often become an occasion for displays of intimacy between couples, and sometimes—whether consciously or not—such practices may involve elements of *khalwat* and *ihktilat*. According to Abdullah Syah, a *pre-wedding* photoshoot—in this context—refers to intimate poses taken by a prospective husband and wife who have not yet formalised their marriage contract. Consequently, such practices are prohibited because, , they are not yet legally husband and wife, and this is not permitted under Islamic principles.

The Practice of *Pre-wedding* Photography in the Aceh Besar Community

A *pre-wedding* photo shoot is a photo session undertaken by the bride and groom-to-be before the marriage ceremony. These photos are often used for wedding invitations, as souvenirs, and displayed during the reception.¹²

¹² Azmi Abubakar et al., “Islamic Religious Guidance Material on *Pre-Wedding* Photography (An Analysis of Maqasid al-Shari’ah Regarding the Process of Pre-Wedding Photography by Prospective Brides and Grooms in Gampong Jok Tanjong, Padang Tiji Sub-district)”, *Journal of Education and Training*, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 109.

As is the case in Aceh Besar, any act that violates established boundaries is prohibited. Currently, the *pre-wedding* culture in Aceh Besar is causing increasing concern amongst the community because the poses adopted are not in accordance with Islamic law, which stipulates that the bride and groom should not touch or hold hands before the marriage contract (*ijab kabul*) is performed. The practice of *pre-wedding* photography by prospective brides and grooms in Aceh Besar regency has been influenced by external cultures, with couples adopting intimate poses that are not permitted under Sharia law, such as embracing before they are legally married. Although it has become a popular trend, this practice often sparks controversy regarding the values of Islamic Sharia.

The trend of *pre-wedding* photography has become a topic of discussion and even a serious consideration amongst young people in Aceh Besar. It has even led to changes in community behaviour and influenced their lifestyles. The abundance of offers for *pre-wedding* photography services with attractive concepts is one of the reasons why some engaged couples are keen to try it.

The *pre-wedding* photography process in Aceh Besar, based on an interview with Halis, the owner of Kamadroframe, begins with an introductory meeting between the photographer and the couple-to-be, with the aim of getting to know one another better. They then agree on the cost of the photography service. As for the location, *pre-wedding* shoots are more often carried out outdoors, as it is usually the client who decides on the venue. As for the cost, a photoshoot with Halis ranges from 1 to 5 million rupiah. They offer three packages, namely:

- a. The standard pre-wedding package costs Rp 1,000,000
- b. Medium pre-wedding ceremony package for Rp 1,850,000
- c. The Pro Package (covering the wedding ceremony, pre-wedding shoot, reception and post-wedding photos) at Rp 5,000,000

Regarding the concept (poses) during the photo shoot, Halis gives clients the freedom to decide for themselves. Thus, clients determine the style according to their own wishes. In terms of poses, although there are boundaries that must

be observed for those who are not mahram, there are still occasionally prospective brides and grooms who pose whilst holding hands or embracing. And this, of course, violates Islamic law.¹³

From the interview with the source, it can be concluded that couples having *pre-wedding* photos taken in Aceh Besar have fallen into sinful practices that have become part of the local culture. Most of them are young people who are aware of current trends, particularly engaged couples from middle- to upper-income backgrounds.

a. Trends and practices in Aceh

Pre-wedding photoshoots in Aceh are generally carried out by the bride and groom-to-be in the run-up to the wedding ceremony, often a week before the big day. The couple behave as if they were already husband and wife, even though the marriage ceremony has not yet taken place. Typically, many couples choose to hold these photoshoots either indoors, in a studio, or at attractive *outdoor* locations, such as beaches or places that have gone viral online.

b. Sharia and cultural issues

Islamic values serve as the guiding principles and form the basis of the deeply ingrained customs and traditions of Acehnese society. This role has long been upheld by the people of Aceh, dating back to ancient times, and has thus become a distinct identity of the Acehnese people. Cultural shifts within Acehnese society represent a social phenomenon reflecting changing patterns of behaviour amongst the people. This phenomenon occurs in line with human nature, which often seeks change—whether in small or significant matters.¹⁴

¹³ Interview with Halis, owner of Kamadroframe, on 18 March 2025

¹⁴ Muhammad Husen, *Adat Aceh*. (Banda Aceh: Aceh Provincial Department of Education and Culture, 1970, in Azmi Abubakar et al., “Islamic Religious Guidance Material on *Pre-Wedding* Photography (An Analysis of Maqasid al-Shari’ah Regarding the Process of Pre-Wedding Photography by Prospective Brides and Grooms in Gampong Jok Tanjong, Padang Tiji Sub-district)”, *Journal of Education and Training*, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 110.

There are concerns that the practice of *pre-wedding* photography in Aceh Besar may violate Sharia norms, such as physical contact before marriage and wearing clothing that does not comply with Islamic regulations. The process of taking *pre-wedding* photographs in Aceh Besar opens the door to acts that border on adultery. In Surah Al-Isra' verse 32, Allah SWT states: "And do not approach adultery; indeed, adultery is an abominable act and an evil path." The command to avoid adultery is intended to steer people away from such a despicable act.

c. Public opinion

Although some reject this practice on religious grounds, many couples feel that *pre-wedding* photography is an important part of modern wedding celebrations and has become part of the local culture. Research indicates that, despite violations of Islamic values in this practice, many prospective brides and grooms still engage in it due to the influence of trends and a desire to capture their special moments. The practice of pre-wedding photography in Aceh Besar reflects a complex cultural shift, in which traditional and modern values interact with one another. The community faces the challenge of balancing following trends with adhering to religious teachings.

The Perceptions of Religious Scholars in Aceh Besar Regarding *Pre-wedding* Photography

To explore these views, the researcher conducted interviews with two religious scholars from Aceh Besar: Tgk. Rahmat Fajri, Head of the 'Misbahul Wara' Islamic boarding school, and Tgk. H. Faisal M. Ali, S.Sos, Head of the 'Mahyal Ulum Al-Aziziyah' Islamic boarding school. Both boarding schools are located in Aceh Besar Regency. These two religious scholars were selected because they serve as role models for the majority of the people of Aceh Besar.

The researcher posed three questions to the two religious scholars, namely: 1) What is the ruling on photographs taken at a wedding? 2) What is the ruling on pre-wedding photographs taken before the marriage ceremony? 3) What is the ruling on pre-wedding photographs taken after the marriage ceremony in an intimate setting, which are then included on the wedding invitations and displayed during the wedding reception?

Regarding the first question on wedding photographs: Tgk. Rahmat Fajri explained that in Islam, it is preferable for photographers not to take pre-wedding photographs before the *ijab qabul*, as this may lead to *zina* (adultery), *khalwat* (being alone together), and *tabaruj* (indecent exposure). From a general Islamic perspective, photography is permitted as long as it does not violate the rules established in Islamic law. This is because photographers have a responsibility to uphold the sanctity and validity of marriage in accordance with religious teachings. In fact, images captured using a mobile phone camera are permissible, as they do not create a new object resembling Allah's creation, but merely record an existing event. In truth, photography is a relatively new phenomenon; it did not exist in the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Consequently, scholars differ on the ruling on photography. However, the majority of contemporary scholars state that photography in Islam is *mubah* (permissible), provided that the process of taking the photograph does not contravene established Islamic law.¹⁵

Moving on to the second question, regarding pre-wedding photos taken before marriage, Tgk. Rahmat Fajri explained that *pre-wedding* photos involving *khalwat* (being alone together without a lawful bond) are *haram*. This is because such practices border on *zina* and violate the norms of Islamic . The values of Islamic law are often overlooked in the practice of *pre-wedding* photography with one's prospective spouse prior to the marriage contract.¹⁶

¹⁵ Interview with Tgk Rahmat Fajri, Head of Dayah Misbahul Wara', on 24 February 2025.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Similarly, in an interview with Tgk. H. Faisal M. Ali, S.Sos, regarding pre-wedding photos taken before marriage, he stated that poses such as hugging or holding hands before the marriage contract render the pre-wedding photo session haram. However, if the photos are taken separately, in a modest manner, and with the aurat covered, this may then be tolerated.¹⁷

Tgk. H. Faisal M. Ali, S.Sos, also added that *pre-wedding* photographs are permitted if the purpose is to document the marriage, provided they are taken in a modest manner, with the couple separated, their aurat covered, and without contravening Islamic law. This is deemed permissible and is classified as ‘mubah’ (permissible but not recommended).¹⁸

Regarding the third question, Tgk. H. Faisal M. Ali, S.Sos explained that *pre-wedding* photographs which do not involve physical contact, maintain a distance between the couple, and cover the aurat are considered permissible. However, it must also be emphasised that such photographs serve a purpose, such as providing cover art for wedding invitations, without contravening religious values.¹⁹

We can understand that, if a couple wishes to take *pre-wedding* photographs, it is strongly recommended that the session be conducted in a modest manner, with the couple separated, and with their aurat covered. Photographs must be taken in accordance with the principles of Sharia law so as not to contravene Islamic teachings.

Tgk. H. Faisal M. Ali, S.Sos, urges that every activity, including *pre-wedding* photoshoots, be carried out with good intentions and as part of the celebration of the marriage bond, rather than for purposes that conflict with religious norms.

Tgk. Rahmat Fajri also stated in an interview that *pre-wedding* photos are an adoption of Western culture that is incompatible with Islamic values. He criticised

¹⁷ Joint interview with Tgk. H. Faisal M. Ali, S.Sos, Head of the Mahyal Ulum Al-Aziziyah Islamic Boarding School on 4 March 2025.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

this trend as it can lead to excessive adornment and behaviour bordering on adultery. He added that he was also concerned that *pre-wedding* photos are often posed as if the couple were already husband and wife, even though there is no legal bond between them, with poses involving physical contact, gazing into each other's eyes, and even embracing. This, in turn, prompted his criticism of the practice of *pre-wedding* photography.

It can be concluded that the view of the religious scholars of Aceh Besar regarding the ruling on *pre-wedding photography* is that it is permissible as long as it does not violate the rules established by Islamic law, such as being conducted separately (without physical contact), being modest, and covering the 'awrah. However, it may also be haram when prospective spouses who are not yet legally married engage in pre-wedding photography with poses such as hugging or holding hands before the marriage contract (*akad nikah*).

Conclusion

The practice of *pre-wedding* photography in Aceh Besar begins with an introductory meeting between the photographer and the couple planning the session, with the aim of getting to know one another better. They then agree on the cost of the photography service. For the location, pre-wedding photo shoots are usually held outdoors, as clients typically choose the venue. As for the cost, a photoshoot at Halis ranges from 1 to 5 million rupiah.

As for the concept of the photo shoot, Halis gives clients the freedom to decide. Regarding poses, while there are boundaries that must be observed for those who are not mahram, couples occasionally pose while holding hands or embracing. This, of course, contravenes Islamic law.

The view of the religious scholars of Aceh Besar is that *pre-wedding photography* is haram because it involves *khalwat* (being alone together without a lawful bond) and *ikhtilat* (the mixing of men and women). This is because such practices come close to *zina* and violate Islamic norms. However, if a couple wishes to take

photographs before *their wedding*, it is strongly recommended that the session be conducted in a modest manner, with the couple separated, and with their aurat covered. Photographs must be taken in accordance with the principles of Sharia law so as not to contravene Islamic provisions.

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that the public gain a better understanding of religious law and study the religious rulings regarding what is permissible and what is not, so as not to fall into violations of Islamic Sharia. It is also recommended that religious scholars and leaders of Islamic boarding schools (dayah) raise greater awareness of this issue, whether through sermons or religious study sessions with the community, so that such violations can be minimised. Furthermore, for future researchers, there are still many aspects of this issue that can be explored, as this topic warrants more in-depth study to produce more accurate research findings.

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